ORGANIZING FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN MANITOBA

Small Scale Farmers, Communities of Resistance, and the Local Food Movement

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ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, a number of high profile incidents affecting small scale farmers in Manitoba have given rise to vibrant communities of resistance. These communities are developing alternative ways of thinking about and engaging with food and agriculture in the province for food systems transformation. Based on empirical research involving 18 interviews with urban-based activists and farmers, and one focus group, this study examines these catalytic moments and the conditions under which they form to better understand whether and how they contribute to the creation of an emerging food sovereignty movement in Manitoba. I argue that although not all initiatives were successful in achieving stated goals, they did have positive political and social impacts, mainly through the building of community and development of collective voice. Despite the diversity found within the local food movement, and a tense relationship between decision-makers and small scale farmers, these communities of resistance leveraged opportunities for change and captured the attention of regulators to advance the local food community in Manitoba. In doing so, they are creating the conditions within which the radical discourse and practice of food sovereignty is beginning to emerge.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all those working for food systems change in Manitoba, including the small scale farmers and other local food allies who participated in this study. May we continue working together in building the local food movement.

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TABLE 1: LIST OF ACRONYMS

CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
DFM	Direct Farm Manitoba
FEAST	Farmers and Eaters Actively Sharing the Table
FMAM	Farmers Market Association of Manitoba
GATT	Global Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
HMLFI	Harvest Moon Local Food Initiative
MFC	Manitoba Food Charter
MPC	Manitoba Potato Coalition
NDP	New Democratic Party
NFU	National Farmers Union
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PAR	Participatory Action Research
RMFF	Real Manitoba Food Fight
SFM	Small Farms Manitoba
SSFWG	Small Scale Food Working Group
STM	Sharing the Table Manitoba
WTO	World Trade Organization

I think what they thought was that this was just a fad and that they would squash it and [we] would get discouraged and quit, but instead it just revved up.

- *Greg Wood, butcher & farmer*

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the 1980s, the global food system has been marked with a period of increased trade liberalization, privatization, and further consolidation of transnational agribusiness. These trends have resulted in disproportionate impacts for small scale and family farmers living in rural communities and engaged in local food provision activities, including the loss of control over communities, health, and the rural environments upon which they base their livelihoods (Anderson, 2016; Ayres & Bosia, 2011; Hart, McMichael, Milder, & Scherr, 2016; Wiebe & Wipf, 2011). The food sovereignty movement seeks to recapture farmer and community control over food production systems, and understands local markets and building direct to consumer relationships around food as pathways to revitalize rural landscapes. The food sovereignty response to dispossession in the food system is locally grounded and shaped by the social, economic and political contexts of particular places. This movement often mobilizes different strategies over time, seeking to confront the shifting landscape of the neoliberal corporate food system and its impacts in specific locales. In Canada, food sovereignty has been taken up by many organizations including, among others, Food Secure Canada, the National Farmers Union (NFU), and the Union Paysanne in Quebec (Desmarais & Wittman, 2014). There is also an emerging scholarly literature on the theory and practice of food sovereignty in Canada (Andrée, Cobb, Moussa, & Norgang, 2011; Desmarais & Wittman, 2014; Kamal, Linklater, Thompson, Dipple, & Ithinto Mechisowin Committee, 2015; Levkoe, Bebee, & Wakefield, 2012; Wittman, Desmarais, & Wiebe, 2011).

The literature about food sovereignty in Canada is growing, yet very little exists on the potential for food sovereignty in Manitoba. My research helps to fill this gap by analysing elements of the local food movement in Manitoba that includes small scale farmers and their

urban-based allies in this province to determine what their experiences can contribute to the theory and practice of food sovereignty, and examine what this practice looks like on the ground.

1.1 Background and Rational

Food sovereignty has been mobilized in Manitoba through the NFU, a founding member of the transnational agrarian movement, La Via Campesina, that first conceptualized the term (Desmarais & Wittman, 2014). Indeed, the NFU has a long history of support for alternatives to the neoliberalization of agriculture, including defending family farming and orderly marketing (Desmarais & Wittman, 2014).

Indigenous communities have also begun mobilizing the concept of food sovereignty in Manitoba, however the concepts and practices of Indigenous food sovereignty remain distinct from the food sovereignty discourse in the literature (Martens, 2014). Indigenous understandings of food sovereignty surround protecting traditional food ways against continual pressures of colonization (Desmarais & Wittman, 2014; Grey & Patel, 2015), addressing issues such as treaties and government policy (Martens, 2014) while animating traditional food systems that have been sustainable for millennia (Shawki, 2015). Indigenous food sovereignty advocacy is taking place in Manitoba, evidenced perhaps most publically by the first annual Indigenous Food Sovereignty Summit held in Winnipeg in the summer of 2016 (Four Arrows Regional Health Authority, 2016). While groups such as the Manitoba Food Charter, Sharing the Table Manitoba, and more recently Direct Farm Manitoba, have included Indigenous voices and engaged in Indigenous food sovereignty issues regarding food provision and access, few farmer-led groups in the province have meaningfully acknowledged or included Indigenous food providers, and further work needs to be done to connect via ally-ship settler and Indigenous groups working toward food sovereignty in the province.

In Manitoba, there is a growing demand for local food, as evidenced by the increasing number of farmers markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms, and small scale farms engaging in direct-to-consumer markets. However, access to alternative, direct markets and the ability to produce products in demand by local consumers is in some cases hampered by government regulation or marketing board rules. Although I return to specific cases in Chapter 3, I want to provide glimpses here into some of the events because of their impact on the environment in which I conducted my research. In 2013 Clint and Pam Cavers from the small scale farm Harborside Farms in Manitoba, won a provincial competition for their cured meat products hosted by the Department of Agriculture.[1] The prize named these cured meats the best new local food product, and awarded the Cavers funds to continue their development. Three months later, the Cavers were ordered to halt sales of their cured meats after a new inspector was assigned to their case who reinterpreted the guidelines for the production of these meat products. In late summer, inspectors from a different arm of the same department seized the cured meat products from the farm, claiming the Cavers had continued to sell them to local restaurants without approval. The inspectors deemed the meat unsuitable for human consumption, but did not allow the product to be tested as such before it was destroyed, though this same product had been sampled by the Minister of Agriculture at the provincial competition only three months prior (Anderson, 2014; Laforge, Anderson, & McLachlan, 2016).

Three years later, in late summer of 2016, the Manitoba Chicken Producers announced a new Annual Specialty Quota program, designed to serve niche markets in the province with fresh, Manitoba-raised chicken year round. The program would replace the exemption permit program that had been in operation in the province since supply management was introduced in

[1] In 2016, following a change in provincial government, the name of the department was changed from Manitoba Agriculture Food and Rural Development (MAFRD) to the Department of Agriculture. This also represented a change in mandate as "Rural Development" was moved to the Department of Indigenous and Municipal Relations

Manitoba in 1968 (Chicken Farmers of Canada, 2017; Manitoba Chicken Producers, 2016). During a question period following a meeting with small scale farmers, a spokesperson for the Manitoba Chicken Producers revealed that many aspects of the new program were incompatible with what farmers perceived to be possible, and could result in some farmers reducing the number of birds they raised, or ceasing to raise chicken altogether despite strong local demand. In addition, it was noted the program was designed and implemented without adequate consultation with those who would be affected by the program changes, or with Direct Farm Manitoba, the newly formed group recognized by government and mandated to speak on behalf of small scale direct market farmers in the province (Sivilay, 2016).

These types of events triggered remarkable civil society mobilization in the province, including the formation of a community-based network, Sharing the Table Manitoba, and subsequently, the direct-marketing group called Direct Farm Manitoba, aimed at raising the profile of small scale and direct market food providers in the province (Anderson, Sivilay, & Lobe; 2017). Members of these groups and others, including Small Farms Manitoba, the Harvest Moon Local Food Initiative, and individual farmers, scholars, and activists have formed organizations, campaigns and networks allowing food providers and allies to advocate for policies that support local food systems (Laforge, et al., 2016).

Importantly, much of the social activism discussed above may be traced back to involvement in earlier local food advocacy in Manitoba, including the "spud war" that led to the creation of the Manitoba Potato Coalition (Kives, 2010; Rance, 2010), and the development the Manitoba Food Charter (Levkoe, Bebee, & Wakefield, 2012). Indeed, a key aspect of this research is to better understand how the history of local food systems advocacy in Manitoba informs more current activism.

The organizations, groups and networks engaged in local food systems advocacy operate independently of one another, but come together at certain times to create vibrant communities of resistance. This research examines how small scale farmers and non-farmer allies in Manitoba self-organize as a local food movement to create a diverse, alternative food system, despite a political and economic climate that favours large scale, industrial agriculture.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this research are to identify areas of action in which small scale farmers and local food allies have come together in communities of resistance to advocate for small scale farming issues in Manitoba, under what circumstances they have organized, the benefits and challenges of various strategies used, and whether it is contributing to a more politically active local food movement, and thus the promotion of food sovereignty in Manitoba. In pursuing these objectives, this research will:

1. Discuss the contexts in which small scale farmers and local food allies have advocated for small scale farming issues in Manitoba.
2. Analyze the organizations, networks and groups involved, the strategies employed, and their social and political impacts, and
3. Explore the potential for food sovereignty within this local food movement.

1.3 Outline of Thesis Chapters

This thesis proceeds as follows. The remainder of this chapter discusses the research methodology and methods. Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature that informed my research and analysis. Since food sovereignty resists the corporate food system that has been strengthened by neoliberal agricultural trade policies, I discuss how this system developed and its impacts in Canada. Then, I outline key elements of food systems transformation and food

sovereignty, including theories of food systems transformation and alternative markets for advancing the food sovereignty movement. Chapter 2 also outlines my research design. Chapter 3 explores the various organizations, networks and campaigns active within the local food movement in Manitoba over the past several years and the contexts under which they formed. Chapter 4 discusses the political and social impacts and outcomes of these groups. In Chapter 5, I address challenges that the local food movement faces and examine their implications for food sovereignty activists. In the final chapter, I present an analysis that situates this local food movement within the context of the literature, examining its role in food systems transformation, and highlighting the potential for food sovereignty.

1.4 Situating the Researcher

It is important to explain my own positionality within the local food movement since it has certainly shaped my research interests, questions and approach. This status as "inside researcher," where the researcher is part of the community being investigated and has previously existing relationships with research participants, enhances the research design process and quality of data collected (Sherry, 2008). I was a small scale direct market farmer in Manitoba from 2011 to 2017, and for the past six years I have been actively involved in local food advocacy. As such I was situated uniquely within the community, and well positioned to undertake this study. As a researcher embedded in this context, I took with me throughout the design, data analysis, and writing of this thesis project, the voices of my community. While I was certainly situated within the community I interviewed, as a seasonal and urban farmer I faced different challenges than rural producers. That is, I was impacted less by the regulatory and policy challenges explored in this research project. Taking the critical eye of a researcher while

acknowledging how my involvement shaped my perspective was an important tension to acknowledge and negotiate throughout the research project.

In my role as a community organizer and local food activist with Sharing the Table Manitoba, I witnessed different groups come together, not always officially, but through several individuals' participation in multiple groups which often served to connect their ideas and actions. Through these interactions, groups informally coordinated their activities to share space while also building collective momentum. I witnessed and participated in the political navigation that was required in this dance, and although at times motivations and intentions were not clear – as the apprehension sparked by the 2013 Harborside Farms raid hung over the community – I saw that a new sort of community was being created around an emerging political 'awakening', or 're-awakening'.

Most participants interviewed in this research project participated in some way in the political space formed by Sharing the Table Manitoba following the farm raid. Some had a long history of local food systems advocacy in Manitoba while others joined in the political momentum created following the farm raid. Some spoke more easily about the values of food justice and structural violence while others focused more on the practical, but no less important questions of defending their livelihoods and access to local food, and some discussed connections between these perspectives. It was these diverse values and motivations I encountered as a community organizer that set me on this path of inquiry. It was my hope that this research project would also help me make sense of my own experiences.

Indeed, as a community organizer, I saw my role as fulfilling the interests and needs of the community. My perception was that my own participation in the local food community was primarily about facilitating the spaces in which critical discussions could take place, while

activating the outcomes of these conversations. In this role, I balanced the goal of creating open and inclusive spaces to engage diverse perspectives in order to achieve strong buy-in for subsequent action, while also ensuring that network participants felt somewhat protected in the wake of the Harborside Farms raid. Most often, I attempted to achieve this balance through transparency, ensuring that all participants in phone and email conversations were identified, as the network was primarily animated through these communication channels. As time went by, and the farm raid – the event that instigated the creation of the Sharing the Table network – was pushed further back in the collective memory, the interest in engaging in critical conversations about the food system seemed to likewise fade for many. As a community organizer I struggled to make sense of the dynamics at play: while concessions by the state had been made, they remained focused on one area of grievance, and in my mind the discussions we had started were still very much relevant and necessary.

In undertaking this course of study while simultaneously reflecting on my role within the community, I am reminded of Clendenning, Dressler, and Richards (2016) words: "the challenge for both food sovereignty and food justice movements…is recognizing how their strategies are influenced by neoliberalism and finding ways to navigate around the omnipotence of the corporate food regime" (p. 175). This is a challenge especially pertinent for activism and research into the dominant food regime in the global North where the ideology and the effects of neoliberalism are entrenched – as if to feel obvious, normal, and uncontested. Through this research, I have learned new theories and ways of understanding food sovereignty activism that illuminate the role and relevance of the critical politics and voice of Sharing the Table Manitoba within the local food movement. And I myself have found theoretical grounding as an activist, a

better understanding of food movement dynamics, and the importance for this movement to become more collaborative, supportive, and active for food systems transformation.

1.5 Methods

For this research, I spoke with 26 community members through 18 semi-structured interviews and 1 focus group. I also examined scholarly literature, reports, and media content to complete my data collection. Approximately two-thirds of respondents were farmers and one-third were non-farmer allies. 56% of respondents were male and 44% female. I identified stakeholders based on my own knowledge of the community, focusing on small scale farmers engaged in direct marketing who are active in rural social movement activities, as well as non-farmer participant allies.

I conducted interviews with key informants involved in recent local food organizing, including one interview with the Executive Director of Direct Farms Manitoba (n = 1) and 8 interviews with participants of Sharing the Table Manitoba (n = 10). To gain specific insight into previous local food organizing, I also conducted 7 interviews with key informants from the Harvest Moon Local Food Initiative (n = 4), Small Farms Manitoba (n = 1), the Manitoba Potato Coalition (n = 1), organizers of the Manitoba Food Charter (n = 2), and the chair of the Small Scale Food Working Group (n = 1). I also interviewed two (n = 2) representatives from the Department of Agriculture who liaise with small scale farmers. Additionally I conducted 1 focus group with the Direct Farm Manitoba board of directors (n=7).

Although affiliation with these groups was my main motivation for approaching respondents to participate in this research, our conversations often included related groups and

activities in which they are currently involved. It is important to note that most respondents have participated and do participate in several of the groups listed above.[2]

My intention through the focus group and interview process was to begin by creating comfortable, conversational spaces for respondents and I to discuss the purpose of the research. This was important to me especially because some respondents may have been hesitant about on-record documentation in light of the Harborside farm raid, despite, in most cases, our pre-existing relationship, and I wanted them to feel comfortable while signing consent forms and speaking with an audio recorder present. Indeed, Berg (2009) notes that an interview is not a natural communication exchange, and that the interviewer takes on a professional role when conducting research interviews. I knew this role would change the nature of my relationship with those respondents I knew, perhaps introducing a different power dynamic, and I was interested in minimizing this impact as much as possible, similar to participatory action methodology which seeks to create a non-hierarchical research interaction (Berg, 2009). I accomplished this in different ways for the focus group and the interviews. For the focus group I provided dinner for the participants, with an additional objective to incentivize as many respondents to participate as possible. I also tried to find times and locations that were beneficial to the majority of the group, meaning the Direct Farm Manitoba focus group was held over supper before their monthly board meeting. For interviews, I travelled to the respondents' homes or place of work whenever possible to meet them at their convenience, in spaces where they felt comfortable. Some farmers I interviewed farm as a family unit, and as such I interviewed several farmers together, resulting in some interviews with two to three respondents.

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[2] For example, two of the Sharing the Table Manitoba participants and one Harvest Moon Local Food Initiative participant interviewed were also Direct Farm Manitoba board members at the time of data collection. Almost half the respondents have been or are involved in more than one of the groups listed above. This type of overlap led to three respondents each participating in one focus group and one interview regarding different group activities. In several interviews I attempted to traverse the various groups to which each respondent was affiliated.

To develop rapport, I also shared experiences from my own life and attempted to infuse interviews with the natural reciprocity of a conversation. Indeed, some feminist researchers argue the interviewer should offer up self-disclosures to develop genuine relationships beyond that of interviewer-interviewee (Berg, 2009). Following this, I approached my conversations as opportunities to establish or deepen relationships with members of the local food community. I offered words of encouragement for respondents who expressed feelings of struggle in their advocacy efforts, and I practiced repeating information back to respondents to help them feel heard, as well as confirm I understood their points. This is a practice Berg (2009) refers to as "echoing" (p. 141) in which the interviewer communicates he or she understands what the interviewee is talking about in order to elicit more complete and detailed responses. We spent time discussing informal things, as friends do, and as I was visibly pregnant for all of my data collection, this offered a natural topic of conversation for all my in-person discussions, further helping establish rapport.

I also referred to my own experiences as a small scale farmer within the local food community, where appropriate, in order to establish common ground. As Berg (2009) notes, common ground can assist respondents in offering up their own account on the research topic. I tried to place my questions within the natural flow of the conversation, as per a semi-structured interview, respecting participants' responses and participation by not asking them to repeat themselves if they had already spoken to a topic, instead adjusting the organization of interview questions. Indeed, as I was speaking with people from various backgrounds (farmers, activists, government representatives, academics, etc.) I often let people talk to avoid unintentional interruptions and respect various pacing and pausing habits (Berg, 2009).

Berg (2009) notes that interviewers must be carefully prepared and practiced in advance, creating a "self-conscious performance" (p. 132). Along these lines, I prepared in advance for each interview and focus group, rehearsing the questions to find a natural flow, practicing how I would present my area of research in a concise and understandable way, and leaving room to discuss the consent form. For preparation, I also developed a checklist of housekeeping items to address with each participant, and reviewed what I knew of their participation in local food advocacy to ensure I could develop a strong exchange and properly acknowledge their contributions. The result, particularly with the in-person discussions, were lengthy and rich conversations with participants about local food systems and small scale farming in Manitoba.

Interviews and focus groups were semi-structured and conversational, audio recorded and transcribed. I kept a journal of field notes to help prepare follow-up questions and remember new areas for further study. I also used this journal to analyze my interview performance for continued improvement, and to record a reflexive account of myself as a researcher within my own community. In this way I followed Berg's (2009) role of interviewer as director, in which the interviewer has to hold simultaneously an active interviewer role and an outside observer role from which to reflexively assess ones performance.

I then transcribed all audio files, giving each participant a three digit identification number derived from a random number generator found online at the Oregon State University website. While most participants did consent to their names being identified in this research, some did not. Since this is a small community, and I give a fairly significant amount of detail of each organization, network, or campaign, I felt that by using numerical identification I was better able to maintain their confidentiality. I uploaded all transcripts into the online mixed methods

data analysis program, Dedoose, where I coded them to establish common themes, many of which came from my questions, but several also emerging from participant responses.

There were several purposes for the interviews I conducted. I asked respondents about their participation in various organizations, networks and campaigns around small scale and direct market farming in Manitoba (A copy of the interview questions can be found in Appendix A). I asked about those groups specifically, as well as the small scale and direct market farming community in Manitoba more generally. In particular, I was interested to hear about various areas of activity in which people have come together on small scale and direct market farming issues, how and why small scale farmers and local food allies alike have worked together, what strategies have worked and what challenges remain, to establish whether or not respondents felt we were moving toward a more politically engaged and active local food community here in Manitoba. Most importantly, the interview questions were designed to help me better understand if and how building communities of resistance was leading to food systems transformation and the emergence of a food sovereignty movement in Manitoba.

In designing my research, I considered the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach that engages community members as co-researchers, moving through iterative cycles of analysis, planning, action, and evaluation so that appropriate solutions are derived from local experiences (Fals Borda, 2001; Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon 2014; Berg, 2009). As a member of this community, it is important to me that my research contributes to the creation of critical dialogues on issues of local food at the community level. However, I concluded that following strict PAR methodology for a community of this size would be too cumbersome for the purposes of completing my Masters thesis research. In many ways, however, the design of the research was crafted through community engagement, as it is a direct result of my discussions and

activities within the community over the past seven years. Although I did not follow a strict PAR protocol, it is my hope that the process of conducting the research has stimulated and will foster even further critical conversations within the local food community and lead to deepening a collective analysis and increasing awareness of local food action. Indeed, in informal conversations after the fieldwork was completed, some respondents revealed reflections stemming from our recorded conversations that indicated they were continuing to engage critically with the topics discussed. My experience to date reveals, as has been the case with others (Kemmis et al., 2014) that the nature of research and critical inquiry can stimulate the cycle of theory and practice among participants.

During fieldwork, I made changes to my original research design. I omitted the line of questioning regarding direct marketing as a pathway to building community, and instead focused on the questions relating to the actions, strategies, and outcomes of advocacy work. I introduced this change as I reviewed and focused my research objectives, deciding to concentrate my lens on the activities and impacts of the various initiatives. The second change involved removing one group from my study since my requests for interviews with representatives of the Manitoba Chicken Producers went unanswered.

In Manitoba local food providers and their allies are actively resisting the corporatization of the food system that is primarily focused on large scale agriculture and producing commodities for export markets. In these communities of resistance, the local food movement is building community, becoming more politically active by advocating for local control and local food systems, and capturing the attention of decision makers to advance food systems transformation in the province. This chapter has presented the research objectives and questions and provided a glimpse into the food movement context and dynamics in Manitoba; it also

explained the research methodology and methods. I now turn, in the next chapter, to a review of the literature that informed my research, and a discussion of the research design.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW & RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1 Neoliberalism and the corporate food regime

The rise of neoliberal economic and political policies in the late 1970s corresponds with the introduction of what has been referred to as the corporate food regime (McMichael, 2005; Fairbairn, 2010; Clendenning, Dressler, & Richards, 2016). Neoliberalism is defined by Harvey (2005) as a political economic ideology that seeks to advance public well-being through the expansion of markets that is facilitated through the logics of privatization, deregulation, and free trade. The market is central to neoliberalism, becoming an "ethic in itself" (Harvey, 2005, p. 3) whereby public well-being is furthered through expanding the reach of market transactions to encompass all human activity, including things traditionally outside its reach, such as history, culture, the environment, and even daily life (Harvey, 2005; Alkon & Mares, 2012). While the market ideal is predicated on competition and fairness, the on-the-ground results are "extraordinary monopolization, centralization and internationalization of corporate and financial power" (Harvey, 2005, p. 203), pointing to contradictions in theory and practice. Indeed, the rise of neoliberalism corresponds with increasing social inequality globally, and the restoration of power among the economic elite (Harvey, 2005).

The neoliberal project ushered in a new role for the state in relation to the market. Following the Second World War, international relationships and states were reformed and restructured to prevent re-creating the conditions that preceded and created the war (Harvey, 2005; McMichael, 2005). In trying to find the correct balance of state and market, fiscal and monetary policy was enacted that understood market transactions as bounded by social and political constraints, and thus requiring state regulation (Harvey, 2005). This model broke down toward the end of the 1960s with the rise of inflation and unemployment that lasted for much of

the 1970s (Harvey, 2005). At the end of the 1970s, as neoliberal policy began to take hold in the political and economic policy of dominant states, namely Britain and the United States, a new approach to economic activity was promoted based in decreasing the role of the state in market affairs (Harvey, 2005). Under this system the role of the state was still important, but it was refocused to building and strengthening the foundations of neoliberalism by facilitating the privatization of public goods and services, and the creation of new markets through deregulations, tax incentives and the hollowing of social services, among other means (Harvey, 2005).

The decrease of state influence in economic, political, and social life has been called “roll-back” neoliberalism (Peck & Tickell, 2002 p. 388). In the absence of meaningful state interventions such as appropriate regulations and the provision of social services, civil society is now expected to participate in its own problem-solving, although paradoxically, on grounds dictated by the state (Harvey, 2005; Guthman, 2008; Herbert, 2005; Larner & Craig, 2005; Alkon & Mares, 2012; Trauger, Claeys & Desmarais, 2017). In neoliberal society, community groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as food justice groups, in many cases, are left to effectively fill the gap left by the state as it withdraws from its role of providing social services, creating what Wolch (1989) refers to as a “shadow state” (quoted in Herbert, 2005, p. 851). Scholars warn, however, that as grassroots groups, community organizations, and NGOs begin to participate in service provision and claim this space as rightfully theirs, they effectively prop up the neoliberal state by legitimizing its withdrawal from these activities (Harvey, 2005; Herbert, 2005). Indeed, a significant critique of some food activism is the participation of many food based initiatives in activities that are bound by the neoliberal ideals they claim to confront (see Guthman, 2009). What is needed then, are activist groups that understand the role of the

neoliberal state, its impact in their communities and on their practices in order to avoid participating in its reproduction and instead work for food systems transformation.

Although neoliberalism is often conceptualized as a broad political and economic theory, it is not easily reduced to a singular ideology or political apparatus because of its diverse practices and affects (Larner, 2000) that are unique to local social, political, and economic contexts. As such, these practices are diverse and fragmented, encompassing a range a phenomena that are often unconnected (Harvey, 2005; Guthman, 2008; Peck & Tickell, 2002; Larner, 2000; Herbert, 2008). Peck and Tickell (2002) argue that neither a definition couched solely in local particularities of neoliberalism, nor generalized global accounts can fully capture the characteristics of the neoliberal project. Therefore, any understanding of neoliberalism must balance between these two spaces, linking the local contexts with global trends (Peck & Tickell, 2002).

The rise of neoliberal political and economic policy with its focus on free trade and privatization, has had significant impact on the global food system and has ushered in what McMichael and Friedmann refer to as the corporate food regime (1989). This food regime arose as an outcome of neoliberal government policy and regulations that supported agri-business and transnational corporations to better compete in global markets. As a result, agriculture and finance outgrew national limitations, facilitating globalization and giving increasing power to those able to participate in this new market reality (Fairbairn, 2010). The inclusion of agriculture in the Uruguay Round of the Global Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) shifted the balance of power in agriculture. These negotiations, which culminated in the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement in Agriculture in 1995, transferred the responsibility for feeding populations from nation-states to the global marketplace. The WTO Agreement institutionalized economic

neoliberalism that aims to privatize food market relations. For communities and in some cases national governments, this shift marked a significant loss of control over their food markets, land, environments, and rural cultures (McMichael, 2005; Wittman, Desmarais & Wiebe, 2010; Wiebe & Wipf, 2011).

The WTO Agreement on Agriculture created a context in which some countries were better situated to benefit from the new trade rules because of favourable domestic policies and subsidies (McMichael, 2005; Clendenning et al., 2016). Governments and corporations in the global North provide uneven subsidies and trade policies to encourage the growth of large farms producing grains, oilseeds, and other crops for export markets. This drives down the cost of agriculture products, resulting in commodity dumping on the world market, and lowering local market prices in developing countries at the expense of small farmers (Clendenning et al., 2016). As farms are consolidated, large-scale farmers often organize in newly formed agribusinesses, which are able to access beneficial domestic subsidies while depressing prices, supporting the 'get-big-or-get-out' mentality that has led to a mass exodus in farming. The result has redistributed global agricultural practice and land use, where the majority of commodity crops are grown in countries that are able to compete in the global marketplace, while other countries have decreased their support for agriculture (McMichael, 2005; Clendenning et al., 2016; Laforge et al., 2016). Thus agriculture has shifted from use-value for domestic consumption to exchange-value for the global marketplace (McMichael, 2005; Clendenning et al, 2016; Laforge et al., 2016). Indeed, the corporate food regime has created an industrial food system that is globally integrated and dominated by states with favourable domestic policies and subsidies whereby transnational agribusiness enjoys favourable returns on investments while small producers and family farmers increasingly struggle to maintain their livelihoods (McMichael,

2005; Wittman, Desmarais & Wiebe, 2010; Fairbairn, 2010; Wiebe & Wipf, 2011; Clendenning et al., 2016).

The Canadian government supported the inclusion of agriculture in the WTO Agreement, emphasizing trade liberalization and economic productivity for export markets (Qualman, 2011; Desmarais & Wittman, 2014; McInnes, Fraser, Gedalof, & Silver 2017). Agriculture in Canada is now more globally integrated than ever, ranking as the fifth largest exporter and sixth largest importer of food products in 2010 (McInnes et al., 2017). Agriculture is a hugely efficient economic sector in which production almost doubled between 1989 and 2009 through increased use of technology and genetically modified seed (Qualman, 2011). The sector accounted for 8.1% of total gross domestic product growth in 2010, and provided 1 in every 8 jobs (McInnes et al., 2017).

While Canadian agriculture has been very efficient and productive by certain standards, it has failed to maintain socially just and environmentally responsible food systems (McInnes et al., 2017; Qualman, 2011 & 2017; Desmarais & Wittman, 2014). Since the 1980s, national policy and programs have shifted away from supporting farmer livelihoods, instead emphasizing efficiency and increased production, especially for export markets. Farmers are now expected to be market responsive and self-reliant, earning their livelihood through the market alone (Qualman, 2011; Wiebe & Wipf, 2011; Desmarais & Wittman, 2014). Neoliberal approaches to agriculture allow corporations to externalize environmental costs to benefit economic growth. Canada's ambitious agri-export agenda can largely be attributed to increased dependence on fossil fuel derived farm inputs, such as chemical fertilizers and pesticides (Qualman, 2011). Meanwhile, almost 2.5 million Canadians are food insecure, and farmer incomes have declined as a result of low commodity prices (McInnes et al., 2017; Qualman, 2011).

As agriculture on the Canadian prairies is increasingly corporatized and consolidated, family farming in many cases has become unviable. The loss of farmers' power in the market place and net income has destabilized the livelihoods of small and medium sized farmers, thus eroding the social, economic and environmental capital that forms the base of rural resilience (Qualman, 2017; Anderson, McDonald, Gardiner, & McLachlan 2014; Laforge et al., 2016). In the 30 years from 1986 to 2016 the number of farm operators in Manitoba has declined by 45.9% to 14,791 (Statistics Canada, 2006, 2016).

As is the case in other parts of Canada, rural communities in Manitoba are experiencing a crisis of depopulation, loss of services and poverty (Senate of Canada, 2008). This means that young people are dissuaded from taking up farming as a livelihood and the majority of Manitoba farmers are now nearing retirement age (see Statistics Canada, 2016) and few have succession plans in place (LaForge et al, 2018). Consequently, the future of farming in Manitoba is uncertain. Government and industry are focused on agriculture in terms of export-oriented markets of beef, grains and oil-seeds (Agri-LMI, 2014). While the province's Department of Agriculture promotes local agriculture and food businesses through programs such as Buy Manitoba, Open Farm Day, and the Great Manitoba Food Fight, these programs tend to romanticize agriculture while obscuring the neoliberal focus of provincial agricultural policy (Laforge, et al., 2016).

The impacts of neoliberalism on the food system are significant for both food providers and eaters. Neoliberal policies and programs force small and medium sized farmers off of their land and out of their livelihoods, contributing to rural-urban migration through policies that favour urban areas as centres of financial institutions and private interests (Harvey, 2005). As a result of these policies and programs, people's relationship to and knowledge of food has

changed, distancing eaters from food providers and the places where food is produced. The resulting disconnection strips meaning, cultural significance and appreciation from our food experiences while undermining our ability to make decisions about our food (Wittman, Desmarais & Wiebe, 2010). This distances production from consumption, and food providers from – and as – eaters, relinking them through market-based functions of buying and selling, and market-based identities of producer and consumer (Bello & Baviera, 2010).

2.2 Food Sovereignty

In response to the creation of distance and the loss of control over food systems, farmers and eaters alike have been in search of alternatives that reconnect food with communities and ecological health, recognizing the importance of farmers, the environment, culture, and democracy in our food systems. Food sovereignty has been taken up in communities, institutions and some states in different parts of the world as a way to directly challenge the neoliberal construction of agriculture, calling for the removal of power from corporate agribusiness and reinstating it to farmers and communities that work and live in constant connection with these landscapes (Wittman et al., 2010). Indeed, food is a key site from which to study neoliberalism and resistance to it (Guthman, 2008).

Food sovereignty is defined as "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, p. 2). First proposed in 1996 by the transnational agrarian movement La Via Campesina, food sovereignty was conceptualized as an alternative to food security which relied on privatised market solutions and transnational, globally integrated markets to address hunger (McMichael, 2010; Fairbairn, 2010; Wittman et al., 2010). From a different orientation, food security became a popular concept in the 1970s, and was widely used

by national governments, international organizations, and transnational agribusiness to promote technological, market, and political solutions to hunger and food access (Patel, 2009; Hopma & Woods, 2014). Fairbairn (2010) describes food security as the "neoliberal manifestation of the response to hunger and the food crisis" (p. 27). Facilitating the project of globalization, this shift in discourse focused on household food security and individual purchasing power, within a framework of liberalized agriculture markets and diminished state regulation (Fairbairn, 2010). Although it is concerned with appropriate and adequate access to food that meets dietary needs and preferences, food security avoids the discussion of social control of food systems (Patel, 2009). Food security shifted focus to daily economic choices facing individuals in a free market instead of expecting nation-states to implement policies ensuring their populations were fed. As a result, food security has served to justify the dominant productivist policies and neoliberal economic agenda of the industrial food system that treats food as a commodity (Fairbairn, 2010; Wittman et al., 2010).

While food security reinforces and legitimizes neoliberal practices of capitalist over-production, food sovereignty offers an alternative vision of the food system. As a counter-frame, food sovereignty advocates for full food systems transformation that upends neoliberal conceptions of agriculture and food. Food sovereignty advocates respond to the corporate food regime by refusing to adopt the commoditization of food and individualizing language of food security, instead food sovereignty focuses on social access to food where decisions about food production are rooted in equitable exchanges. Food sovereignty promotes a whole systems approach that prioritizes sustainable peasant agricultural practices, empowered communities, food producer solidarity, and collective rights over resources. Importantly, food sovereignty politicizes the food system, naming those who benefit from the supposedly neutral market

dynamics of agriculture in global trade, and rejecting their control of the food system (Fairbairn, 2010; Wittman et al., 2010; Bacon, 2015). Indeed, by politicizing the food system in this way, food sovereignty movements enact a powerful strategy to undermine the corporate food regime; by making power more visible, it then becomes more easily named, confronted, and negotiable (Melucci, 1998 as referenced in Trauger et al., 2017).

In 2007, at the first international Forum for Food Sovereignty, participants established the following six pillars of food sovereignty to expand the collective definition and understanding of food sovereignty (Martens, 2015; Shawki, 2015): 1) food for people and not a commodity; 2) the livelihood and work of food providers are of central importance; 3) food systems should be localised and not dependent on unaccountable agribusiness; 4) control over food systems belongs in the hands of local food providers and communities; 5) traditional food knowledge and skills are critically important; 6) food production methods should work with nature, enhancing the contributions of ecosystems, and improve resilience (Nyéléni, 2007). Taken together, these principles show that food sovereignty focuses on democratic control over food and production resources (Holt-Gimenez & Shattuck, 2011), and implicates consumers as well as producers, developing solidarity by lessening the gap between these two groups (Martens, 2015; Wittman, Desmarais & Wiebe, 2010).

Over time, the food sovereignty movement has evolved – shaped and defined by the specific contexts in which food sovereignty is employed. While food sovereignty provides an important unifying framework at the global level, more recently researchers have begun to examine what food sovereignty looks like in particular places. On the ground, food sovereignty is defined through struggles in specific political, economic, and social contexts (Desmarais & Wittman, 2014). Schiavoni (2016) argues, there is no predetermined path or prescription for food

sovereignty, “it must be defined and articulated as it is being constructed” (p. 13). As a result, the movement can encompass multiple, overlapping, and sometimes competing efforts (Hopma & Woods, 2014; Schiavoni, 2016). Because it is articulated in specific places, local definitions of food sovereignty may look different from those used in international forums, as regions, nations and communities must determine what food sovereignty means to them based on their own specific contexts (Di Masso & Zografos, 2015; Shattuck, Schiavoni & VanGelder, 2015; Hopma & Woods, 2014; Desmarais & Wittman, 2014; Wiebe & Wipf, 2011; Ayres & Bosia, 2011).

As it emerged in response to the specific historical, political and ideological context of neoliberalism and accompanying corporate food regime (Fairbairn, 2010), food sovereignty is an oppositional movement against the accumulation by dispossession characteristic of neoliberal economic and political policies – in which dispossession is fragmented and particular to local places. Thus, responses such as food sovereignty intended to transform capitalist systems are also local and particular in nature (Harvey, 2005), creating what Gibson-Graham (2006) refer to as a “globally emergent form of localized politics” (p. xxi) where a focus on local particularities provides a foundation upon which to engage with national or global scales.

In many instances, especially in the global North which includes Canada, the food sovereignty movement emerges amid policies and economies in which neoliberalism is already entrenched in everyday life. Here food sovereignty works in the “in-between” (Clendenning et al., 2016, p. 169) spaces of neoliberalism. In this context it is important for food sovereignty advocates to recognize how their strategies and actions are influenced by the prevailing rationales of neoliberalism to understand what food sovereignty might look like in these contexts (Clendenning et al., 2016). It can be difficult to know what alternatives look like within food activism when, under neoliberal subjectivities, so much of what is perceived to be possible falls

within the ideals promoted by the corporate food regime (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Guthman, 2008). Since neoliberalism acts to limit the context in which communities can imagine and enact alternatives, it thus becomes increasingly difficult to make linkages and form solidarity between food sovereignty actors (Clendenning et al., 2016).

In this context, activist groups may work toward food systems change that helps destabilize the balance of power in the corporate food regime without using the language of food sovereignty (Figueroa, 2015; Visser, Mamonova, Spoor & Nilkulin 2015; Gupta, 2015; Ayres & Bosia, 2011). These groups may more readily talk about food democracy or sustainable food systems based on what they know and what resonates in their communities, while engaging in the work of food sovereignty (Ayres & Bosia, 2011). As Ayres and Bosia (2011) show, although rural farmers in Vermont are more likely to use different language, they have adapted the food sovereignty frame, making it relevant to their context in order to create an environment in which food sovereignty can take root in rural regions. In this case, food sovereignty is less about class struggle or state intervention; here, resistance is on a smaller scale, meaningful for those engaged in daily and strategic local acts of resistance to the industrial food system. These subversive acts, echoing James Scott's (1987) 'weapons of the weak', create a "less easily discernable discourse potentially far more accessible and acceptable" to those "too occupationally preoccupied or financially constrained to travel great distances to attend…protest summitry" (Ayers & Bosia, 2011, p. 51). Indeed, the process of articulating food sovereignty based on local experiences and understandings, is important for food systems transformation.

2.3 Food sovereignty and food systems transformation

Food sovereignty represents a pathway for food systems transformation. Holt-Giménez and Shattuck (2011) offer a compelling framework for characterizing approaches to the food

system. They identify the character, nature, approaches, and degree of change sought by various social actors engaged in food initiatives that address hunger, the food crisis, and food system change. Their analysis focuses on four trends: two that maintain and enable the corporate food system, and two that confront the corporate food system through global movements for food systems change. The latter two trends, labelled progressive and radical (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011), are particularly important for this study.

The progressive trend in global food movements mobilizes through a food justice discourse and can primarily be found in the Global North, among the middle and working classes (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011). The focus here is on local food sheds and family farming with a large contingent of urban agriculturalists, CSA and direct market farmers. The progressive trend is practice oriented, focusing on local production and processing of food, and alternative business models such as worker owned co-operatives (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011). In urban areas, this trend focuses on food access for underserved communities, while in rural areas small farmers seek policies to support organic and family farming. Though actors within this trend are generally aware of the global framework that undergirds the corporate food regime, the focus remains on local or national level work (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011). This focus on local community control and mobilization is both a strength and a weakness for progressive groups. They are vibrant parts of food systems transformation, successfully engaging grassroots groups, but as a result of their local focus, their efforts are fragmented and decentralized in nature. According to Holt-Giménez and Shattuck (2011), this disconnection presents a problem for structural food systems change.

The radical trend for food systems transformation is primarily characterized by the discourse of food sovereignty. The radical approach is sympathetic to much of the grassroots

engagement found within the progressive stream and engages in many similar activities to provide strategies for transformation. However, progressive based approaches alone are seen as insufficient to mount the systemic critique of the corporate food system required to bring about meaningful food systems transformation (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011). Fundamental food systems transformation requires a shift of society away from the hegemonic neoliberal economic and political policies that support the corporate food system, to focus instead on addressing issues of entitlement, and redistribution of wealth and power (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011; Alkon & Mares, 2012). Thus, food sovereignty also provides strong resistance to neoliberalism through its critique of the corporate food regime (Alkon & Mares, 2012). While progressive and radical trends promote similar practices such as agroecology, and actions to strengthen local community-based food systems, and promote traditional knowledges – and for this reason have been said to look similar (Schiavoni, 2009) – radical food sovereignty understandings go further, addressing systemic issues that present barriers to scaling up grassroots initiatives (Holt-Gimenez & Shattuck, 2011; Alkon & Mares, 2012).

In tackling systemic issues, the food sovereignty movement does engage with the state, (see Desmarais, Claeys & Trauger, 2017) however the nature of these engagements and the role of the state in advancing food sovereignty are complicated and contested (Shiavoni, 2016; Trauger, et al., 2017). Food sovereignty activists engage the state by making political demands, but also *push up* beyond the state, building solidarity with the global food sovereignty movement, and *push down*, opting out of state systems in favour of more direct and socially embedded exchanges, understanding that the state is complicit in the corporate food system and designed to protect the interests of transnational agri-business (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011; Trauger, 2014 & 2017; Roman-Alcalá, 2018). When social movements pressure the state and

achieve concessions, agreements can develop between state and social actors to address the problem at hand, creating openings in which movements that desire to remain autonomist may be overtly or implicitly shaped and impacted by the hegemonic power of the state (Roman-Alcalá, 2018).

The ways that neoliberalism creates subjectivities through the intrusion of the market ethic into everyday life makes resistance more difficult. The market ideal of the corporate food regime is a hegemonic discourse that takes itself to be an unquestionable part of everyday life, to strong de-politicizing effect (Fairbairn, 2010). Under this subjectivity, food movements focus more on activities that promote local economic development or increasing local knowledge, as opposed to claiming political space (Clendenning et al, 2016). The atomizing effect of this reality exacerbates individuality and isolation, denying the collective power of communities and making it difficult to perform community differently (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Blay-Palmer, Sonnino & Custot, 2016), limiting the context in which communities can imagine and develop alternatives (Clendenning et al., 2016; Guthman, 2008). As a result, many progressive initiatives claiming to resist neoliberalism in the abstract end up reproducing it through their responses, showing how the corporate food regime tends to co-opt activist demands (Alkon & Mares, 2012; Guthman, 2008; Fairbairn, 2010). In addition, even in this convergence, radical and progressive movement efforts are heterogeneous compared to the homogenizing effect of neoliberal projects within the food system that constrain their potential scope (Holt-Gimenez & Shattuck, 2011; Alkon & Mares, 2012; Clendenning et al., 2016). As Guthman (2008) notes, "neoliberalization limits the conceivable because it limits the arguable, the fundable, the organisable, the scale of effective action" (p. 1180). More involvement of food justice activities with the theories and practices of food sovereignty can have the radicalizing effect of communicating the macro-political and

place-based impacts of neoliberalism and the consequences for the food system and food movement activities (Alkon & Mares, 2012; Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011). Understanding how neoliberalism works in these contexts serves to make it more visible, a necessary precondition to finding the cracks in which to enact the politics of the possible, but also for knowing what food movement activities can help create those cracks (Guthman, 2008). Upon gaining some ground, these cracks can become autonomous spaces where food sovereignty can be more fully realized, but they must be maintained through continuous making and remaking to exist under the homogenizing influence of the corporate food regime (Gibson-Graham, 2006).

Food systems transformation can only be enacted by adopting key strategies of convergence and solidarity among food movement actors to develop enough political power for food systems transformation. As two sides of the same food movement, radical and progressive efforts create a "movement of movements" (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011, p. 116) that together employ pragmatic and positive strategies that build alternatives, and also confrontational strategies that request changes to the structural conditions within which these alternatives operate (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011; Roman-Alcala, 2018). Additionally, connections are needed among various strategies employed by these trends – connections between movements to delink from neoliberal systems and movements to transform or dissolve them need to be found, as an "urgent theoretical and practical task" (Harvey, 2005, p. 203). Strong alliances are needed between heterogeneous food movement approaches (Holt-Gimenez & Shattuck, 2011; Alkon & Mares, 2012) to create communities of resistance that have the power to confront the hegemonic nature of the corporate food regime for food systems transformation (Blay-Palmer, et al., 2016; Gupta, 2015).

2.4 Food sovereignty and local alternative markets

The particular places where food is produced and raised, consumed and marketed are essential sites for potential food systems transformation. For this reason, localisation is a central piece of the food sovereignty framework (Hopman & Woods, 2014; Robbins, 2015; Soper, 2015). Local food systems offer alternatives to the dominant food system, creating and maintaining the "defensible life space" (Kopka, 2008, p. 46) of rural food producer livelihoods that are continually at risk of being eroded by the neoliberal state, yet fundamental for food sovereignty. Of central concern is that communities must have the power to define their own food and agricultural systems, including their own markets (Trauger, 2014; Wittman, Desmarais & Wiebe, 2010; Soper, 2015). Farmers as well as other groups concerned with the global food system have turned to localisation as a way of mitigating the impact of the corporate food system (Ayres & Bosia, 2011). For some, focusing on the local means increasing community control of food production and consumption (although, this can also lead to 'defensive localism' that is exclusionary, see Feagan, 2007). For others, localism is more explicitly about resisting food commodification and capitalist food politics, often by mobilizing local food movements (Ayres & Bosia, 2011).

By creating local food markets that return control over food production to communities, alternative markets engage in potentially transformative action (Blay-Palmer et al., 2016; Laforge et al., 2016; McInnes et al, 2017). Local control over food systems strengthen rural communities and rural autonomy; both of which are critical for food sovereignty. Without rebuilding rural infrastructure and reviving rural communities, local food systems cannot succeed (Ayres & Bosia, 2011; Wiebe & Wipf, 2011). Alternative food systems can address issues of rural regeneration by stimulating economic development, bringing together otherwise

disconnected rural communities, encouraging rural land use for agroecological production, and ensuring adequate incomes for farmers (Anderson et al., 2014; Hart et al., 2015; Wiebe & Wipf, 2011).

Alternative markets based on local food reduce the distance between producer and consumer, which contributes to the creation of food communities, highlighting important aspects of food sovereignty, such as local markets, local economies, and local production (Robbins, 2015; Kopka, 2008). Robbins (2015) points to several ways food sovereignty efforts resist the distance created by the corporate food regime through relocalization. Most obviously, the focus of local food systems addresses the distancing between where food is produced and where it is consumed, but relocalization efforts also address more complex forms of distance. Relocalization re-places the market and re-embeds it in social and material 'thingness' resisting the abstraction of market mechanisms promoted by financialization (Robbins, 2015). It also addresses the distancing of peasants and smallholders from their land due to enclosure and privatization through strong calls for local control. Food sovereignty efforts mitigate urban-rural divides, dealing with issues such as hunger and urbanisation through local, and even urban, food production. Finally, food sovereignty efforts re-join agriculture and natural processes separated as part of the metabolic rift, promoting concepts of agroecology that work with, and regenerate, landscapes (Robbins, 2015).

The reduction of distance between producers and consumers through the practice of localism for many is a counter to the "dislocations" (Harvey, 2005, p. 171) enacted by the neoliberalization of the food system and the creation of the corporate food regime (Feagan, 2007; Robbins, 2015). Direct markets based on face-to-face interaction between farmers and consumers build local markets through direct sales, promoting community development in ways

commodity agriculture cannot (Hinrichs, 2000; Trauger, Sachs, Barbercheck, Brasier & Kiernan, 2010). While the importance of price and other instrumental concerns are still present in direct markets, they are also embedded with social ties and personal connections. These socially embedded direct markets infuse market relations with reciprocity, social connections and trust relationships between food providers and their consumers (Hinrichs, 2000, 2003).

Creating communities around direct marketed local foods also serve the dual purpose of responding to social and cultural needs of the community while providing the farmer with adequate income (Trauger et al., 2010). Small scale farmers often engage in farm activities that serve purposes beyond growing products for market. Through activities such as educational tours, helping community members find particular food items, and reconnecting people with the land, farmers are responding to the needs of their neighbours and thus contribute to the creation of community based on the business of their farm (Trauger et al., 2010). However different types of direct markets may commodify this relationship to greater degrees than others. Hinrichs (2000) warns that for direct markets to become transformative alternatives, romanticized assumptions about face-to-face relationships must be tempered.

Indeed, the ability of local food markets to constitute alternatives to the corporate food regime is not without contention and should not be uncritically linked to food sovereignty efforts (Robbins, 2015). Local markets may even work against the principles of food sovereignty, such as markets that promote an individualizing approach to social change where the focus is on 'voting with your fork'. This proposed solution is seen to represent a neoliberal turn in food advocacy, merely creating a niche market within the industrial food system (Guthman, 2008; Fairbairn, 2010, 2012; Di Masso & Zografos, 2015; Figueroa, 2015; Robbins, 2015; McInnes et al., 2017). As Guthman (2008) argues, the focus of food activism on localization often ignores

how neoliberalism works in particular places, viewing it as a hegemonic and place-less force that renders local solutions inherently good, and resistant to capitalist forces. In this conception, a winners and losers dichotomy is created where local populations are seen as victims of neoliberalism and champions of its resistance without critically analyzing their potential involvement in its production and reproduction (Guthman, 2008).

Food sovereignty activists, however, contest head-on the neoliberal corporate food regime, thus aiming for locally articulated understandings of food sovereignty that respond to local contexts (Alkon & Mares, 2012). Following this argument, strategies for food systems transformation that *push down* to the local level and opt-out of the state systems that prop up the corporate food system, embody food sovereignty to the extent that they serve to delegitimize the corporate food system, destabilizing the homogenizing effects of neoliberalism. For Ayers and Bosia (2011) and Trauger (2014), food sovereignty is not limited to engaging with global acts of resistance, large scale movements and protests, as we see from groups such as La Via Campesina and their members such as the National Farmers Union. Acts of "micro-resistance" (Mittleman, 2004, as quoted in Ayers & Bosia, 2011, p. 50) contribute to food sovereignty by casting doubt on the legitimacy of the corporate food system. This can include creating direct farmer to eater markets or other alternative local markets, and lobbying government for regulations that protect alterative local food products and markets (Ayers & Bosia, 2011). Farmers often choose these types of resistance because – echoing the argument by Shiavoni (2016), and Desmarais and Wittman (2014) for local understandings of food sovereignty – this is what resonates in their own social and political settings.

For Trauger (2014), local markets allow communities a way to opt-out of the daily life of the state, and thus the creation and legitimization of its structures. Through local markets, people

can contest the state that is in many ways beholden to the corporate food system, by not commodifying food or adhering to food production regulations (Trauger, 2014). Trauger acknowledges that while local food markets may produce inequalities, local food systems based in food sovereignty deliberately negotiate economic ideas and practices to develop new economies and economic actors. One example of this new economic thinking is engaging in the concept of "subsidiary" (Trauger, 2014, p. 1145) where decision-making in market transactions occurs at the lowest scale, between the fewest people possible, such as agreements made between producers and consumers about what foods are safe to eat (Trauger, 2014). And so, the local food movement contributes to food sovereignty insofar as these 'micro-resistances' take up the meanings of food sovereignty in creating alternative practices "that seek to secede from the unsustainable global capitalist model of mass consumption and unlimited growth" (Ayers & Bosia, 2011, p. 60). These activities are important contributions to the greater community of resistance needed for food systems transformation.

2.5 Research Design

Drawing from the theoretical and empirical considerations discussed above, my research examines how the local food movement in Manitoba develops relationships and then builds upon these shared experiences to advocate for food systems transformation towards food sovereignty. In addition to using the conceptual frameworks of food sovereignty and the corporate food regime, this research also draws on cultural politics and social movement theory to demonstrate how Manitoba rural social movements are creating new perspectives of the food system.

Hart et al. (2015) use the term 'rural producer movements' to broadly refer to self-organized groups that come together for collective action for the goals of economic development, stabilization of rural communities, the sharing of experiences and knowledge, and championing

of land rights for current and future farmers (Hart, et al., 2015). Rural producer movements are characteristic of social movements in that they frame activities in ways that create meaning, while mobilizing political, economic, and natural resources to accomplish their goals. They often frame their objectives as grievances, opportunities and rights, or as central to cultural values and identity (Hart, et al., 2015). In my study, I amend this term slightly to make space for other actors within the social movement, including urban allies, using instead the language of "rural social movement" and more frequently "local food movement".[3]

Social movement scholars use the term 'collective identity' to show how shared everyday experiences develop culture and common understandings, thus forming a base for collective action (Staggenborg, 2008). In social movement theory, actors contest dominant views that do not serve them, and instead advocate for the types of society considered desirable (Dagnino, 1998). In this way, they emphasize alternative perceptions that unsettle dominant paradigms to enact a cultural politics (Dagnino, 1998; Escobar, 1998). Cultural politics are invoked when social actors embodying different meanings and practices come into conflict with each other (Escobar, 1998). As my study reveals, governing bodies such as the Department of Agriculture and Manitoba Chicken Producers embody policies and regulations that follow neoliberal agricultural trends, focusing on commodity agriculture for export markets that favour agribusiness models of farming and encourage the 'get-big-or-get-out' mentality. Rural social movements in the province must negotiate this system that largely overlooks small scale production methods when advocating for the policies and programs that would support their livelihoods and foster food sovereignty. Building active communities, or communities of

[3] Although the concept of "rural producer movements" presented by Hart et al, is useful in thinking of ways rural populations surrounding food provision present as social movements, the term is limited to speaking as rural food providers in the market context of producers, and omits them as consumers. It also evokes the concept of a producer group, which is a particular method of organization within the agricultural sector. It omits from its activities space for other actors such as urban allies.

resistance, around local food has helped shape a culture and common identity that can form the basis for collective action while enacting a cultural politics through organizing for local food. The creation of community through shared lived experiences has been an important catalyst for engaging in advocacy work that is leading toward food system transformation and ultimately the potential for food sovereignty in Manitoba.

3: MOBILIZING STRUCTURES

In conducting this research, I interviewed participants from seven different initiatives within the local food movement in Manitoba that have been engaged in activities geared toward protecting the interests and livelihoods of small scale farmers. What follows is a discussion of the groups interviewed, how they began, and what issues they addressed. I also discuss their chosen mobilizing structures, strategies, and activities used to meet their goals. While I present these groups in chronological order of when they emerged, many of their activities in fact occurred concurrently, which will become evident as the text unfolds. The result is more a web, or community, of resistance than a linear manifestation.

3.1 Manitoba Food Charter

The Manitoba Food Charter (MFC) initiative developed a province wide food charter in 2006, and was animated by a group of Manitobans interested in finding new ways of engaging citizens and government in policy development on food issues in the province. The food charter was to identify areas of action for the advancement of community food security in Manitoba (Creating a Manitoba Food Charter, 2005).

The motivation for the MFC began with the National Food Security Assembly that took place in Winnipeg in 2004. At the Assembly, that had attracted food and policy advocates from across Canada, it became apparent that community food security and public policy in Manitoba, as elsewhere, needed to be connected more strongly (Lobe, 2005). Looking for ways to channel momentum from the Assembly, the Local Organizing Committee hosted a meeting later that year during which they discussed the proposal to pursue a province-wide process to develop a food charter for Manitoba (Lobe, 2004; Heasman, 2007) in order to strengthen connections and promote dialogue. As one organizer put it "…we needed some kind of a policy framework and

we needed a way to shift public policy to a more friendly way of dealing with food and food sovereignty" (693). The idea of creating the MFC drew from experiences of food charters developed in Toronto and Saskatoon, but scaled up to the provincial level on the suggestion of participants to include Northern and rural populations (Levkoe, 2014). One organizer involved with the MFC reflected on this decision,

> I think there was some sense that no, let's not just make it Winnipeg because a big, big issue for our people is the price of food in the North. That needs to be addressed. That's not a city issue, that's a province issue… But then there was also this urban-rural disconnect that has been identified for years in this community. (693)

In March 2005, over 40 people gathered from across the province, endorsed the idea of a MFC and began to develop the process for its development (Creating a Manitoba Food Charter, 2005; Heasman, 2007). Participants from this meeting formed a steering committee, volunteering to participate in this process with the help of small amounts of funding and a hired part time coordinator (804). In identifying who should be involved in the process, participants at the meeting agreed it was important to be as diverse and inclusive as possible, amongst both the organizers and those they would consult. As one participant put it:

> I recall [we] were very intentional about being as consultative as we possibly could be. Because, at least from our understanding was the definition of a food charter was that it had to be community grounded, community built, community initiated to some extent, so we're community members so it was community initiated. But I think we were fairly quick to bring on any other stakeholders from, you know, from the ag farming side to retail… (693)

They also developed strategies for involving government and soliciting their support for the food charter (Creating a Manitoba Food Charter, 2005). The steering committee submitted funding applications to conduct public consultations across the province (Heasman, 2007).

Ultimately, the consultation process for the Charter included 71 stakeholder and community meetings across the province that were held between March 2005 and February

2006. To overcome barriers of geographical distance across the province, organizers put together a bin of supplies, facilitation instructions, and shipping materials that were sent from one community to another (804). Manitobans were also able to participate via a survey questionnaire. In total the process engaged 1700 Manitobans on concerns related to the food system and food security in the province (Heasman, 2007).

Subsequently, a drafting committee was formed to amalgamate the consultation results into a one-page food charter. They engaged in rigorous debate about what the final community formulated policy document should include. As one organizer explained,

> [The drafting committee] worked hard, and fought about language, and fought about coding and fought about what are the central issues and how do we frame it? There was a big argument on the human right to food, should the human right to food be in there? Should food sovereignty language be in there? All of those were major conversations that were had by those 6 at the table. And so that in itself was an interesting conversation. Because we were asking these policy wonks to work with… not the latest theory or the wonderings about policy context but, about [feedback on the local food system] that had come from communities. (804)

At a public workshop, community members consulted on a draft of the Charter and provided recommendations for implementation. A final version, translated into Cree and French was launched in May, 2006 (Heasman, 2007).[4]

The food charter was designed to be a one-page document to involve government and community in policy development and programs that work toward community food security. Individuals and organizations were invited to sign the food charter and commit to steps they could take toward community food security (Heasman, 2007). Through the MFC process, communities reclaimed control over policy levers that shape the local food system.

[4] In 2009, the organization formally changed its name to Food Matters Manitoba (Levkoe, 2014).

3.2 Manitoba Potato Coalition

The Manitoba Potato Coalition[5] was a single issue-based action campaign, explicitly advocating for small scale farmers in Manitoba against proposed regulations by Peak of the Market. In 2009, Peak of the Market, a marketing board that regulates root vegetable production in the province, served a cease and desist order to a Manitoba potato farmer who was a vendor of a local, independent grocery store called Crampton's Market (Crampton's Market, 2009a). Peak of the Market had begun enforcing the law that states all farmers – including "small growers"[6] growing less than 5 acres who were by definition not members of the marketing board – must be licensed with Peak of the Market in order to sell potatoes in Manitoba (Crampton's Market, 2009b). Up until this time, Peak of the Market had generally turned a blind eye to small growers selling at road-side stands, seasonal grocers and farmers' markets (Kives, 2010). Crampton's Market was now unable to purchase immature potatoes from the Manitoba potato farmer, despite Peak of the Market not handling this category of potato (Crampton's Market, 2009a). Erin Crampton, the owner of Crampton's Market, became active in advocating for small growers to be legally able to supply farmers markets, independent grocers, and roadside stands without interference from Peak of the Market.

Crampton turned to the public for support using a letter writing campaign and phone calls targeting Peak of the Market, the Minister of Agriculture and local MLAs (Crampton's Market, 2009c). As a result of public pressure, Peak of the Market subsequently allowed farmers to legally grow and sell potatoes at farmers markets and roadside stands without requiring a license. Trevor Schreimer, the farmer in question who was growing only immature potatoes, was granted

[5] Also referred to in some media articles as the Potato Coalition of Manitoba.

[6] "Small growers" is the term Peak of the Market uses to describe farmers that are growing too few acres to be members of the marketing board.

a concession and allowed to continue to sell to Crampton's Market, provided Peak of the Market be allowed to inspect his property annually to ensure he was not growing potatoes for winter storage. Farmers were still disallowed from selling mature storage potatoes to any retail outlets in Manitoba (Crampton's Market, 2009e).

In March 2010, just before planting season, the conflict renewed when Peak of the Market enacted rules once again targeting "small growers" requiring them to register for a permit (Crampton's Market, 2010a; Kives, 2010). Peak also required seasonal vendors selling these potatoes to obtain a permit, which had to be linked to a farmer's permit so Peak could trace the sales. Roadside stands and farmers markets selling potatoes from small growers also had to obtain permits from Peak of the Market. Restaurants and year-round grocers were not allowed to apply for permits and had to purchase potatoes through Peak of the Market (Crampton's Market, 2010a). Sales of these potatoes were only allowed in bulk and not in bags as was custom (Rance, 2010), and farmers were not allowed to sell them during the winter months starting November 1 annually (Crampton's Market, 2010a; Kives, 2010; Rance, 2010). This new development was thought to affect approximately 80 to 100 "small growers" across the province (Skerritt, 2010). Just as farmers thought regulations on local potatoes were easing up, Peak of the Market had clamped down.

In response to this increasing control of the market, the Manitoba Potato Coalition (MPC) was formed. As a group of concerned citizens including farmers, retailers, chefs and farmers markets, the Coalition sought to confront the new Peak of the Market regulations for small potato growers in the province (Manitoba Potato Coalition, n.d.). The coalition formed because a tipping point had been reached: Peak of the Market had now earned a reputation for being uncooperative to all but a few growers (see Friesen, 2010), and previous meetings between small

growers and Peak had been unfruitful. As a result, farmers were increasingly fed up with the impasse, and it was soon to be spring, so quick action was required to allow planting to go ahead as scheduled (916). Additionally, limiting the sale of local potatoes to the summer months would hinder plans for a new year-round farmers' market in downtown Winnipeg (Kives, 2010). The Coalition captured the interest of farmers with about fifty of them attending the first meeting.

Crampton, with help from Schreimer, the farmer served the original cease and desist order by Peak of the Market, again stepped forward as key organizers of the Coalition. For Crampton, her role as a retailer allowed her to take the lead in these activities: "I'm the one who did the big push, and the reason for that is, I don't care. There's nobody who's going to shut me down, I'm not growing anything, I have nothing to risk, so it made it very easy to be the big loudmouth" (916).

Crampton again focused energy on raising public awareness of the onerous regulation. As she explained:

> The only plan that we had was, make sure that the public knows what is going on, because Peak of the Market was selling themselves as "we support local vegetables" right? "We support local farmers, we're here for local farmers" Then what are you doing for these guys? It can't just be an old boys club of whoever's growing the most and has the most quota, so we wanted to show that incongruity and hopefully pressure them to do the right thing. (916)

The MPC hosted a letter writing campaign, a fundraising dinner with local chefs, a billboard campaign throughout Winnipeg, and a blog to communicate the latest developments to the public (Cramptons Market, 2010a; Rance, 2010). They met with farmers to hear their concerns and developed a proposal for Peak of the Market (Crampton's Market, 2010b). They also approached key industry members, business owners, and organizations to support the campaign.

As a result of their efforts, the MPC was invited to meet with the Minister of Agriculture, and later Peak of the Market. By April 16, 2010, Peak of the Market announced an immediate

five acre exemption for all small potato growers. The final agreement also included a one acre exemption for small root crop producers, and the freedom to sell year round to farmers' markets, independent grocers, roadside stands and restaurants free from any permits or inspections (Manitoba Potato Coalition, 2010). Peak of the Market also agreed to work with the MPC to rewrite the regulations to be more inclusive (Crampton's Market, 2010b) and consult with the MPC on any future issues (Manitoba Potato Coalition, 2010). For its part, the Coalition was to remain a watchdog for other regulations that might encroach on small farmers (Friesen, 2010).[7]

3.3 Harvest Moon Local Food Initiative

The Harvest Moon Local Food Initiative (HMLFI) is a network food buying club initiated to increase access to local, healthy farm fresh food in Manitoba while paying farmers a fair price and using practices that benefit the land, local families and communities for a more sustainable food system (CED in Manitoba, 2011).[8] Through on online marketplace connecting farmers and eaters, the HMLFI allows eaters to purchase high quality, sustainable foods directly from local farmers while preserving farmland, providing livelihoods for small scale producers, and thus helping to support the strengthening of rural communities in Manitoba (Harvest Moon Local Food Initiative, nd.). The HMLFI launched in 2008 with 14 farming families offering exclusively meat products that were pooled then marketed and distributed by the HMLFI. Later it transitioned to the current model – a web-based market of a diversity of local food products from individual farms and delivered collectively to various drop-off locations in Winnipeg, Brandon, and rural Manitoba (Anderson, et al., 2014; Harvest Moon Local Food Initiative, nd.). In addition to collective marketing, the HMLFI committed to training farmers in sustainable

[7] Although Erin Crampton remains engaged in small scale farmer issues in Manitoba, the MPC has not engaged in any additional activities since 2010.

[8] The HMLFI began as part of the Harvest Moon Society but has since become its own entity.

agriculture practices and the local food marketplace, and sharing their findings through public outreach (Anderson, et al., 2014).

The HMLFI formed in response to the desire among farmers to begin or increase direct-to-consumer marketing of their food in response to growing consumer interest in local food. By combining marketing and delivery but maintaining farm identity, farmers were able to find innovative solutions to the time and resource demands of direct marketing (255). The need for marketing support was particularly acute for the HMLFI as member farmers were based exclusively in western Manitoba, several hours from the main market of Winnipeg (Anderson et al., 2014).

Farmer members are involved in every aspect of the HMLFI. Each member is expected to participate in rotation with packing the orders and making the monthly deliveries. They also participate in the various working groups designed to carry out the Initiative's objectives, including governance, operations, and new farmer committees. For technical support in areas like accounting or web development, the HMLFI hires specialists (255).

Although the primary objective of the HMLFI is to increase access to sustainable local food through the market, in 2014, it faced regulatory barriers, causing its member farmers to speak out. Following the Harborside Farms raid – who were members of the food buying club – the HMLFI began to examine their own potential exposure after discovering that various farmer members were receiving conflicting information from local government inspectors who had differing interpretations of provincial regulation (556). Consequently, some members of the HMLFI requested a meeting with the Department of Agriculture to clarify the regulations to ensure that members were complying. These conversations, however, opened farmer members up to increased regulatory scrutiny, leading to a cutback of available food products; indeed, as

one participant indicated “we lost half our products” (255). The HMLFI was ordered to cease marketing ungraded eggs and uninspected chicken, items that may only be sold at the farm gate, while they could no longer sell jams and jellies without nutrition labelling that are sold at farmers’ markets. In co-operating to find innovative solutions to the challenges of direct marketing, the HMLFI found itself in a regulatory grey area, not fitting farm gate, farmers’ market, or retail regulations (see Stevenson, 2014).

Although provincial regulators were eventually able to find solutions and common ground with the HMLFI regarding online sales and pooled deliveries, the omission of uninspected chicken and ungraded eggs, in particular, represented a significant cut to the HMLFI’s market. Though farmer members had not anticipated becoming local food advocates, the impact of these regulatory decisions was significant to their livelihoods (255). Rallying their customers, they took advantage of the government organized public consultations on provincial food safety regulations that were happening in 2014 to voice their concerns to provincial representatives. Customers signed a petition on their behalf that was then presented to the Minister of Agriculture. Research respondents claim that this petition, along with continuing pressure from the still recent Harborside Farms raid, helped significantly in landing them a meeting with the Minister of Agriculture. As one respondent put it: “What happened at the Cavers farm between what they were trying to do and the inspector, that big clash that happened there…I think that that sort of created, that was the catalyst to a bunch of stuff happening, for meetings, for clarity...” (556).

At that meeting, the Minister invited representatives of the HMLFI to participate on an upcoming government mandated Small Scale Food Roundtable (255) designed to address the needs of small scale food producers and processors in Manitoba (Lees, 2015). The HMLFI

struggled to remain viable after the regulatory challenges and still are unable to sell uninspected chicken, ungraded eggs, and jams and jellies without nutritional labelling, through the buying club; however, they have increased the number of drop off locations and continue to search for creative ways to collectively market their products.

3.4 Sharing the Table Manitoba

Sharing the Table Manitoba (STM) is a grassroots network of local food providers and non-farmer allies, including farmers, hunters, fishers, rural and urban eaters, chefs, community organizers, activists, and researchers, engaging Manitobans in discussions on the importance of community-based sustainable food systems (Sharing the Table Manitoba, 2015a). It emerged from the political organizing within civil society in response to the Harborside Farms raid. This raid was the most visible point of a larger probe by provincial regulators, as other small scale farmers also received unexpected visits from inspectors around this time.

The raid sparked a surge in political organizing among farmers and their allies in Manitoba. An awareness campaign called The Real Manitoba Food Fight (RMFF) was spearheaded by university students and their instructors who had been scheduled to visit Harborside Farms on the day of the raid. Focusing on raising public awareness, the students engaged the media with interviews, opinion articles, and development of a video of the raid and local food community response (259).[9] The objective was to discuss the incident and the existing regulatory environment for small farmers,[10] while also creating space for public debate around local food systems in the province more generally (Anderson et al., 2017). Following the students' contributions, the local food community extended the momentum into more sustained

[9] The video can be found at http://realmanitobafoodfight.ca/video/

[10] One-size-fits-all food safety regulations are understood by Manitoba small scale farmers to be a barrier to direct marketing and the development of local food systems more generally (Laforge et al., 2016).

political lobbying, carrying the energy into a group entitled Farmers and Eaters Actively Sharing the Table (FEAST). This newly formed group dovetailed with the Fostering Sustainable Regional Food Systems research project covering six rural agricultural communities across Manitoba and focussed on sustainable local food. In the course of that research, participants had named regulatory challenges as an important barrier to furthering sustainable local food systems (Laforge & Avent, 2013). One of the co-instructors of the students who started the RMFF was a researcher on this project and she invited research participants to attend a FEAST meeting in early 2014 to discuss the evolving regulatory developments. Many came to the meeting, concerned about the outcomes of the farm raid and potential implications for their own farms (259). At this point, the key organizers of FEAST were the authors of the research project in partnership with a representative from Food Matters Manitoba (see Laforge, et al., 2014).

In August 2014, in an effort to acknowledge the diversity of food providers in Manitoba, and with a desire to liaise with government, FEAST changed its name to Sharing the Table Manitoba (Anderson, et al., 2017; Laforge, et al., 2016). As one instigator of this newly formed group explained:

> We needed something…some way to respond to [what was going on with the Cavers], but then there was a sense that, if [the RMFF] seemed to be mainly an internet presence, going to media and a little bit in your face… we wanted something that was a little bit more behind the scenes so that it wasn't so 'fighty', [not so] food fight kind of language (804)

Sharing the Table seeks to balance the confrontational approach of the RMFF with a more collaborative tone to represent farmer interests and local food issues. This resulted in the forming of a grassroots network of local food enthusiasts interested in creating space for discussions on local food policy, regulations, and the importance of sustainable, community based food systems (Sharing the Table Manitoba, 2015b). Organized in a decentralized way, its goals and activities

are loosely guided by a steering committee with one volunteer coordinator who facilitates communication across the network and gathers the network together on a semi-regular basis.[11] As its name implies, Sharing the Table is an intentionally informal network, "modelled after the metaphor of a community meal, where people can come together regularly and convivially to share ideas, strengthen relationships and contribute to a grassroots food movement in the province" (Anderson et al., 2017, p. 176).

In early 2015, a report published by the Small Scale Food Working Group recommended that small scale farmers and processors should self-organize to voice their interests to government (Lees, 2015). Participants of STM and some external voices asked whether STM should step into this role and take advantage of this opportunity to formalize interactions with government. Consequently, the steering committee began to discuss whether that direction lined up with the group's vision.[12] A primary concern was that STM would have to become a formal and sector-based organization to be recognized by government as speaking on behalf of small scale farmers and processors. Participants believed that this would reshape the membership and mandate of the network in ways that misinterpreted the local food system as divided between producers and consumers, while STM sought to emphasize connections within the food system. One participant reflected on this decision,

> All the sector based organizations, which is what we were being pushed toward… If you're just going to be farmers, you now play the specialist game and you can divide all the farmers – and there was strength in saying, no no no, we're not going to be separated in that way, we would like to have that diversity of voices at the table that represent the food system, like the type of system that we are trying to create. (804)

Based on these concerns, the steering committee ultimately decided not to pursue the opportunity for formal governmental recognition (for a more fulsome discussion, see Anderson et al., 2017).

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[11] Prior to entering and while conducting my graduate program, I was the coordinator of the network.

[12] This discussion was part of a community research project and is documented in Anderson, et al., 2017.

While this conversation was occurring, the provincial government, along with the Small Scale Local Food Working Group hosted a meeting in November, 2015 open to all small scale farmers and processors in the province to discuss the formation of representative group. Many Sharing the Table participants attended the event. As a result of this process, the sector based group Direct Farm Manitoba was formed (this is discussed in more detail below). During the formation of Direct Farm Manitoba, some participants shifted their energy to that initiative, particularly those who had been most interested in the potential of the network to form a sector-based group to provide representation to government (088; 399). Participants recognized Direct Farm Manitoba and STM as complimentary mobilizing structures and saw ways in which an activist decentralized network such as Sharing the Table could compliment the focused sector-based organization of Direct Farm Manitoba. Indeed, several individuals continue to participate in both groups, allying energy and ideas (Anderson, et al., 2017).

To date, participants of Sharing the Table Manitoba remain in contact and are keeping the network connected and aware of pertinent developments, thus maintaining its role as an informal network of allies. Occasionally the network will meet for a shared meal. It continues to be seen as a place where farmers and allies can openly share their experiences, build relationships, and engage in critical dialogue about the local food system, modelling alternative ways of doing community, by building a politically engaged food-focused network (804; 872; 399; 063; 893).

3.5 Small Farms Manitoba

Small Farms Manitoba (SFM) operated as a social enterprise business model; it organized an online directory designed to connect eaters with local farms to encourage local food consumption. The directory also served as the foundation for a network of farmers who shared interests in connecting directly with their customers and maintaining transparent business

practices. The goal was that through market interaction, farmers and eaters could develop connections that transform into relationships and food choices built on trust and transparency. In this way, the directory would help build a more resilient local food system (Small Farms Manitoba, n.d.). SFM was operated by its founder and coordinator, Kalynn Spain.

SFM began in the summer of 2013 when Spain, an aspiring farmer, travelled across Manitoba visiting farms, collecting stories and photos to compile into an online database while learning farm skills (Small Farms Manitoba, n.d.). While attending the Growing Local conference[13] in 2013 she learned about the need for a directory of local farms from a presentation on the findings of a research project entitled Fostering Sustainable Inter-Regional Food Systems (the same research project that fed into FEAST). After completing her undergraduate degree, Spain applied for funding from Manitoba Alternative Food Research Alliance to support the creation of a directory of local small farms (628). Spain contacted twelve farmers she knew across the province and relied on word of mouth to visit the rest. By the end of the summer Spain had visited over eighty farms (Small Farms Manitoba, n.d.). As she travelled, she published farm stories and photos on her blog, Freelance Farmer (Freelance Farmer, n.d.). In her conversations she continued to hear about the need for a directory and a stronger connection among farmers. As she explained,

> I think the biggest need that I saw was people just wanting to talk to somebody. So they definitely just wanted to make a connection… So that was the biggest, that's the biggest commonality that I've seen, that farmers need each other, and they're really really really curious about what other farmers are doing. (628)

Moving ahead with the creation of the directory, she enlisted the expertise of graphic designers and web developers she knew who provided services at a discount. The directory launched with

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[13] Growing Local was an annual conference organized by Food Matters Manitoba. For many years it was an unofficial meeting place for local food advocates in Manitoba.

great success in January, 2014 under the name of Small Farms Manitoba (Small Farms Manitoba, n.d.).

Small Farms Manitoba required its members to adhere to several principles. Though these changed over time, generally they required directory members to run sustainable small farms, where farmers were interested in building relationships with their customers and other farmers. Member farm businesses were to maintain transparency in their production methods, and participate in SFM events (Small Farms Manitoba, n.d.; Spain, n.d.).[14] For the inaugural year, membership in Small Farms Manitoba was free. Initially, Small Farms Manitoba offered only directory listings, however in 2015 Small Farms Manitoba expanded to offer more services and began a paid membership structure with two types of memberships: a basic membership included a farm profile on the directory, and an advertising membership included additional advertising services. In addition to the directory, SFM began to offer events such as farm tours and job fairs (Small Farms Manitoba, n.d.), a social media presence and a job board. Spain explained in her interview that she was also invited to speak at several events about the nature of small scale farms in the province.

Another prominent activity of SFM was its annual conference launched in January, 2015. The excitement of the inaugural conference exemplified what Spain had been hearing about small farmers desiring more connection, as she explained in an interview,

> Going into 2015 then I was planning the conference … oh man, that was so good, it was so amazing. There were so many people! I didn't even know how to prepare for that one, I was just like I'm going to rent this big hall. Were you there? It was so incredible! I think you were helping too, everyone just pitched in that day because it was such a gong show [because] I didn't realize there would be so many people that would come out.

[14] As Small Farms Manitoba grew and evolved, these membership requirements followed suit.

The activities of SFM were determined in large part from the community Spain was building as she solicited advice from her members and informal advisors. Indeed, the social capital built up by Spain during her summer visiting farms was a main driving influence of SFM. As she explained:

> I literally was building my activities off of other people's ideas, and momentum. I didn't feel like I was pushing any sort of agenda. I didn't feel like I was coming in and saying "I'm going to do this!" or whatever, and I have to do that, or I have to do this. It was more that, I was like, let's try some farm tours or whatever. And then people were like "oh you should do…" like I was so influenced by what people were telling me because everybody was super invested in it.

In a way, Spain felt less like she was running a business built on her own ideas and more like the animator of something built collaboratively by the community.

While Spain was intentional in keeping SFM apolitical and did not engage in the regulatory conversations happening with Sharing the Table Manitoba at the time, its work in developing awareness of small scale farmers across the province through the online directory was a prerequisite for developing the relationships and united voice needed for other groups to begin to engage in advocacy work.

As the directory grew, Spain began to focus on the financial stability of SFM. In 2016 she increased membership offerings again, including more levels of membership and a la carte services. The growth of the directory required an increasing amount of energy and resources to maintain integrity in the listings, so Spain launched a crowd funding campaign in 2016. Important to the success of the directory were Spain's visits to each member farm to learn about their production practices. Through Spain's relationships with farmers, SFM helped consumers "find food and products from farmers who are transparent in their business practices" (Spain, n.d., para. 3) by providing insight into the farms and production methods of local farmers. With the steadily increasing membership, it was difficult to continue the practice of visiting each farm.

Forty new farms had joined the directory over the course of two years (Winnipeg Free Press, 2015) bringing membership up to 120 farms at the time of the crowd funding campaign (Spain, n.d.), later that year that number was over 150 (Martens, 2016).

Eventually the business model became unsustainable and Spain began to run out of energy. In late 2016 she began the transfer of the directory, conference, and other activities of SFM to the newly created Direct Farm Manitoba organization (Stevenson, 2016; Direct Farm Manitoba, 2018). While SFM ended in January, 2016, Spain continued to work with Direct Farms Manitoba on contractor agreements into 2016.

3.6 Small Scale Food Working Group

The Small Scale Food Working Group (SSFWG) was a government mandated working group of representatives from food and agriculture organizations, businesses and non-profits, as well as small scale food producers and processors (Manitoba Agriculture, n.d.). The working group mandate included describing the small scale food production and processing sector, increasing awareness of and promotion for small scale food in Manitoba, beginning a dialogue to help producers and processors take advantage of economic opportunities, while maintaining food safety remained a top priority for Manitoba (Lees, 2015). In January, 2015 the working group published a report of its findings that were presented to the Minister of the Department of Agriculture that included twenty-one recommendations to move the sector forward (Manitoba Agriculture, n.d.).

The SSFWG was formed in response to issues that arose between inspectors and small scale food processors due to inconsistent applications of food processing regulation in the Department of Agriculture during the transition from federal to provincial meat inspection systems (Lees, 2015), including the Harborside Farms raid. The department struggled with

balancing the roles of promotion and extension with regulatory oversight, resulting in the rise of tensions and misunderstandings between inspectors and processors (Lees, 2015). Dr. Wayne Lees was appointed to chair the working group designed to "build and strengthen the small scale production and processing sector that included direct farm marketing" (Lees, 2015, p. 6). Dr. Lees had been the Chief Veterinary Officer for Manitoba Agriculture from 2005 until 2014 (Province of Manitoba, 2005; Province of Manitoba, 2014). Although retired he was brought back to chair the working group (977).

The working group was comprised of seventeen participants including representatives from the Harvest Moon Local Food Initiative, Food Matters Manitoba, Direct Farm Manitoba, Manitoba Food and Beverage,[15] Keystone Agricultural Producers, the Canadian Culinary Federation, Community Supported Agriculture Manitoba, and independent local food processors, retailers, and chefs. Of these participants, five were themselves small scale farmers (Lees, 2015). Participants were invited to join in the working group based on their roles, interest and expertise. The group's facilitator reflected on the selection process in an interview, "Well, the stakeholders were suggested. I will say it wasn't really a democratic process, but it was a selective process where certain people who had particular expertise or were in particular sectors were asked to become part of the working group" (977).

The process and activities needed to produce the report were developed by Dr. Lees in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture (977). The working group met in person six times to put together a report of recommendations to government on small scale food issues (Lees, 2015). To do so, they reviewed information collected from consultations by the Department of Agriculture, including three public meetings, surveys filled out by producers and

[15] Formerly the Manitoba Food Processors Association

consumers, five group consultations and thirty individual consultations with key stakeholders (Lees, 2015). Although these consultations were important to assess public perceptions of small scale food production and processing and some of the issues involved, the working group participants' discussions formed the basis of report recommendations (977).

A significant outcome of the SSFWG for the local food community in Manitoba was a 65 page report outlining 21 recommendations in five different areas including regulatory issues, technical advice, business tools, marketing and distribution, and policy, advocacy and governance (Lees, 2015). The final report and recommendations were presented and accepted by the Minister of Agriculture in January, 2015 (Manitoba Agriculture, n.d.).

Progress on the recommendations began shortly after the report was published. The Department of Agriculture reassigned a production specialist to provide support and extension services for small scale producers. Another staff person working with food processing business development was identified to focus on the needs of small scale processors. A food business development guide was prepared for food processors to help them develop or grow their businesses. An online list of certified community kitchens available to food processors to rent was published online (Manitoba Agriculture, n.d.; 010). According to the Department of Agriculture media release, the response also included a study on collaborative marketing and distribution channels, the clarification of terms around direct marketing and collective distribution, and the formation of a committee by the Farm Products Marketing Council[16] to examine options for small farms to manage within the supply management system (Manitoba Agriculture, n.d.). The Manitoba Egg Producers took action on the recommendation to increase small scale producer options within supply managed industries, raising the laying hen exemption

[16] The Farm Products Marketing Council is the provincial council that supervises producer managed boards and marketing commissions.

limit from 99 birds to 300 (Staff, 2015). Most notably, the Department of Agriculture hired an organization to facilitate a meeting of small scale food providers and processors to decide how to respond to the recommendation that small scale food providers and processors self-organize (CanSustain, 2015). This facilitated meeting began the process that eventually developed into Direct Farm Manitoba.

The report, co-created by government and civil society actors, generated significant concessions for small scale farmers and the local food movement in Manitoba. In 2016, the year after the report was published, a new provincial government was elected ending seventeen years of New Democratic Party (NDP) leadership in Manitoba with the Conservative Party coming to power (Lee, 2016). As continued action on the SSFWG report recommendations requires political will, the extent to which a new provincial government impacts the strategy and progress of the local food movement will be addressed in later chapters.

3.7 Direct Farm Manitoba

DFM is a direct marketing member based non-profit co-operative that represents and advocates for direct market farmers and farmers markets in Manitoba to regulators and the public, as well as connects them to business development resources (Direct Farm Manitoba, 2018).

DFM developed in response to the need identified by the small scale farming community to represent their interests to government in a way that would be recognized. These discussions became increasingly urgent as small scale farms came in conflict with regulation, most notably in the Harborside Farms farm raid. One DFM co-ordinator explained the context,

> There had just been a series of situations… in which it was really clear that because there was nobody who could liaison with the province who could be the face, who could, you know, have any…integrity, you know? That it was easy to write the group off. (070)

The development of DFM was catalyzed by the Small Scale Food Working group report recommendation that a process be facilitated in which small scale producers be allowed to organize themselves (Lees, 2015). The report acknowledged that small scale producers and processors felt their voices were not being heard, and that trust was lacking between small scale farmers, commodity groups and government representatives. In order for the provincial government to understand the interests of small scale farmers they needed a unified group recognizable by government, otherwise these interests would continue to be sidelined (Lees, 2015). The recommendations of the working group helped solidify discussions within the small scale farming community. One DFM board member instrumental to the development of the group explained this dynamic,

> …having an outside perspective show that in the opinion of the report, and the report's authors, that an organization was important, was very important. To hear from sort of that third person perspective – you guys need to get yourselves together – was an important difference, whereas early discussions were like yeah, maybe we should do this. (617)

While previous groups such as STM focused on broader goals, the SSFWG report brought the provincial government on board with those small scale farmers who wanted to create a government-recognized group of producers to speak on behalf of farmers.

Following the SSFWG report recommendations, the Department of Agriculture hired the third party organization CanSustain to work with the SSFWG to facilitate discussions on organizing. A five member steering committee was formed from SSFWG participants to work with CanSustain to facilitate a daylong event to advance the discussion of a small scale food sector organization. In November, 2015 a group of over forty people, mostly small scale food providers, attended the public facilitation, concluding that while they lacked consensus on what structure would be most beneficial, there was a desire to pursue a formal organization

(CanSustain, 2015). At the meeting a group of twenty participants, almost half of those in attendance, volunteered to carry on the conversation by forming a steering committee to continue to explore organizational structures (CanSustain, 2015).

In January 2016, this committee voted to form a standalone organization that would take over the existing Farmers Market Association of Manitoba (FMAM) co-operative structure through an amendment to the by-laws. FMAM represented member farmers markets in Manitoba, primarily through a liability insurance program, and FMAM board members confirmed it would welcome this fresh mandate that would expand its mandate to include the needs of direct market farmers (Meeting notes, 2016). This was an attractive option because taking over an existing organization would relieve some of the administrative burden of beginning a brand new organization (250). In March, 2016 the FMAM membership voted to accept the by-law changes and the organization was given the name the Direct Farm Marketing Association of Manitoba (personal communication, 24 March, 2016), which later changed to DFM (Stevenson, 2016b). The board is comprised of seven members, and although all are individual producers, some represent the interests of direct market farmers and others the interests of farmers markets (707).

The work of DFM is to advocate for their membership to government and the public, and connect them to economic opportunities (Direct Farm Manitoba, 2018). A significant activity for DFM is to maintain space for direct market farmers in policy discussions, as one board member stated,

> …it's just being that greasy wheel. A greasy wheel that they may pay attention to… there's an accountability whether it be government or the commodities that they need to recognize that this is a sector and they have to figure out ways in which they include and are inclusive. (070)

DFM also carries on the services of FMAM, and in January 2017 further expanded their activities when they took over the direction and services of SFM (Stevenson, 2016c) including its marketing tools and business resources. DFM has also taken on the Department of Agriculture's role in co-hosting the Direct Farm Marketing Conference, which is now amalgamated with the SFM conference. Because its membership is comprised solely of direct market producers and processors, most activities of DFM happen during the winter months (707).

DFM raises funds mainly through memberships, offering an individual membership for direct market farmers and a group membership for farmers markets. A third proposed category of membership for non-producer allies was rejected on grounds it might leave the group vulnerable to non-producer influence (Stevenson, 2016a) and lead to issues of credibility (Meeting notes, 2016). Organizers wanted to ensure the voice and direction of the group was focused on producers (Meeting notes, 2016).

In its advocacy role, DFM took on several actions in its first year. It met with the Minister of Agriculture to make introductions and initiate a general discussion of the issues (Stevenson, 2016b). It also spoke on behalf of its members regarding the Manitoba Chicken Producers' annual specialty quota program, and co-ordinated a successful appeal on behalf of three member farmers before the Manitoba Farm Products Marketing Council (Direct Farm Manitoba, 2018; Stevenson, 2017; 399). While the ruling did not include everything DFM requested, an important result of the appeal was the recognition of the new organization. Additional activities include participating in consultations as a recognized producer group, running awareness campaigns on social media, and most recently researching the development of a membership initiated mentorship program (Stevenson, 2018a; 617). At most recent reporting,

DFMs membership included 150 farmers and the majority of the province’s 75 farmers markets (Stevenson, 2018b).

The local food movement in Manitoba has advanced as issues arose for small scale farmers and local food activists in the province. The various organizations, networks and campaigns outlined in this chapter, show that small scale farmers and their allies have various approaches to issues within the local food system. Their actions show that despite, or because, of their differing approaches, they collaborate for food systems change. The result is a diverse local food movement that addresses grievances using multiple strategies. Examining the how, where and why in which these initiatives emerged is important because the history of how they work together determines how the local food movement functions, and what strategies it chooses. While social movement strategies are not static, instead shifting with changing contexts, the initial actions and relationship building that takes place by the various organizations, networks and campaigns that animate a social movement informs and provides the foundation for subsequent activity. We now look to the impact and outcomes of the strategies employed by these initiatives to examine whether the local food community is advancing its political claims for food systems transformation in Manitoba.

4: IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES FOR FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE

This chapter examines the outcomes and impacts of the various organizations, networks and campaigns for food systems change in Manitoba. In Manitoba, the social and political impacts and outcomes of local food systems activism can be understood as falling into the following five categories: development of community and ally-ship, development of rapport and a mutual understanding of the issues, realization of political voice and advocacy, engagement in public education and dialogue, and capturing the attention of decision-makers. The first three categories loosely follow the process described by new social movement scholars for the creation of collective identity, that is, that shared experiences provide participants the basis from which they can then build a sense of collective agency, or the feeling that they can create change through collective action (Staggenborg, 2008; Snow & Coregall-Brown, 2015). The final two sections of the chapter describe in more detail the strategies and impacts of these collective actions. Analyzing the research findings in this way sheds light on the specific ways in which these groups are contributing to a more socially and politically engaged local food movement.

4.1. Development of Community & Ally-ship (Collective Identity)

Building community and developing relationships has been significant for the local food movement, and integral to food systems change in Manitoba. Many groups identified community building as an important aspect of their strategy, and/or impactful outcome of their activities. Creating spaces for people to come together was an important aspect of developing community. Events such as conferences, farmer-to-eater deliveries, and social activities provided in-person opportunities for community members to get to know one another. Often, annual conferences were the only chance farmers had to connect with other producers from across the province. A conference organizer explained one aspect of this dynamic as follows: “[Farmers] wouldn’t even

attend the workshops, they would just hang out during the workshops and go for beers after…" (628). When SFM began holding an annual conference directed toward small scale farmers, attendance was much larger than anticipated. As Spain explained, this clearly indicated the desire for connection within the community,

> …all of those people coming out was outstanding…because it really showed us all that there's a need for a connection, or a desire, a curiosity about what this all means…that there wasn't a conversation about that happening, and I think that people …were looking to talk about it. And a safe place to talk about it too, I think that's a key factor. Most of the farmers that I talked to were feeling alone, and they felt like they were the rebels within their communities, in some way.

During farmer-to-eater deliveries,[17] direct-market farmers were able to connect with their consumers. Interactions between farmers and eaters contribute to socially embedded local markets that allow for the creation of relationships that close the gap between producers and consumers. One direct market farmer spoke of the importance of these relationships for the creation of alternative food systems,

> We are so appreciative to meet all these eaters, these appreciative eaters, these educated eaters, because there isn't a huge [number] of people who are as thoughtful and as responsive to, you know, [when you think back to] the 80s and 90s and first generation of the 2000s, eating junk food and losing cooking skills and losing gardening skills, and [now] there's this resurgence and re-growing of skills that have been lost and we're part of that, which is really nice… And they appreciated the way [the animals] were raised, because it's a lot of work, it's a lot of hands on work farming the way we do compared to a big farm or a feedlot. Geez it's a lot of work. (556)

For many farmers, personal interaction with the people they are feeding is a strong motivation for direct marketing (088, 556, 255).

Social activities also provide opportunities for farmers to develop relationships amongst themselves and HMLFI, SFM, STM, and DFM facilitate social activities for this purpose.

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[17] At farmer-to-eater deliveries, also called direct-to-consumer deliveries, farmers bring pre-ordered goods to a pick-up location that is central to their market, where customers come to pick up their food directly from their farmer.

Indeed, even though small scale farmers could be viewed as competitors within a limited market, as one farmer noted, the sense of community is much stronger than individual business interests,

> So my experience is that farmers like to eat, play music, drink together, hang out on the roadside, sit at the coffee shop for an hour in the mornings, go to the socials on Saturday night. So I think there is a lot of collaboration that happens, and just because you're your own boss it doesn't necessarily deter community values, or working together. (872)

Events such as holiday parties, shared dinners, and even Annual General Meetings all create spaces for socialization and opportunities to build community around local food (255, 872, 804).

SFM and STM, in particular, enhanced community building in Manitoba. SFM aimed to connect farmers with eaters to promote the direct market in Manitoba, and in the process made farmers more visible to one another, enabling them to connect more easily. Although this was not the primary objective of the directory, the impact for the small scale farming community was significant. Through the online directory and farm visits, Spain found that farmers have a strong desire to overcome geographical distance and make connections with likeminded farmers,

> I noticed that when the directory was launched, then farmers were telling me that they were excited about [looking up] other farmers [on the directory], like they wanted to know what other farmers were doing. And I had farmers who had been farming for 15 years or so, tell me that they were so excited to just look through other farmer's profiles. And I was like, what? I created this as a marketing tool! So that kind of said something! (628)

The creation of the directory was seen by several respondents as pivotal in raising the awareness of small scale, direct marketing farmers in Manitoba, and helped the local food movement gain momentum, as one respondent reflected,

> That's, I think, where the commonality came about with someone producing grass fed beef and selling at the farmers market, and someone producing vegetables and selling at the farmers market, and maybe it's the markets themselves that allowed for those connections to be made. But I think it was also things like Small Farms Manitoba [that got] people to realize that, you know, maybe I'm off in one corner of the province surrounded by quote-unquote 'conventional agriculture' and I sort of feel like a voice in the wilderness, but wait a second… someone on the other side of the province is essentially doing the same thing as me whether it's with the same or

> similar commodities or products, or not. That was – I think – where the movement really started to gain momentum, where people were not feeling isolated, they were feeling there were a lot of commonalities with other businesses in the sector. (603)

Not only did SFM raise the profile of small scale farming in Manitoba by revealing the number of small scale farmers and the diversity of foods being produced for local markets, it was also instrumental in facilitating community building.

STM also participated in building community around local food in the province through hosting communal meals and critical conversations. Instead of a formal organization or terms of reference, the structure of the network was based on relationships, but also had a deliberate political angle (804). Although the network was open to the public, the relational ties between those who joined created a "semi-private, semi-public space" (893) in which participants could engage in discussion on alternative, small scale farming practices. Having this space was especially important in the wake of the Harborside Farms raid, when farmers felt these farming practices put them at risk for similar action by the province (062, 893, 804, 259, 027). In creating this relational space, one participant farmer noted STM could "do some things to experiment or to resist in a way that carves out an alternative kind of possibility to the predominant system" (893). For this farmer, the relational nature of STM and its activities were essential in creating the space to imagine these alternatives, as he continued,

> There are the kinds of things you can find out through – that people are willing to communicate officially, and then there are things that people will say when they're gathered around a table with food in a more familial kind of setting, where they share things that they won't share when they're speaking in an official kind of space (893)

Indeed, another important characteristic of the STM space was that communication was protected yet open, as another participant farmer highlighted, "I think people maybe felt a little freer to say things that they may not have said had it been a structured and funded organization.

So it was sort of like a safe space, and I feel like that was well communicated" (399). Intentionally eschewing formal organization, the informality of the network also increased the sense of community among participants. One participant noted the difference between the informality of STM and formality of DFM in communication,

> Even the way that the emails are sent out, for instance DFM bccs everybody, whereas STM everybody can see everybody else's email address, as like an act of solidarity … I really appreciated knowing what company I'm in… Am I just like, one of 1000? Or am I one of 25 [who] I can actually call, and have an email conversation with, or meet face to face? I think that that is really rare, and I like it. (872)

The relationships established within the STM network are important in part because they can be activated if needed. In the wake of the Harborside Farms raid, farmers felt it was important to have community members present to bear witness and show solidarity should inspectors show up at their own farms. Through engaging with STM and the political-relational nature of the network, participants built solidarity that could be leveraged if needed. Speaking between himself and another farmer, one STM participant explained the scope of this dynamic,

> We had never sat in a meeting together, but should something have come up where…they needed, at your place or at my place where there were voices needed, then… the relationship was actually there before we even knew each other. We totally would have advocated for each other, because the infrastructure of Sharing the Table begun and has always been about relationships. (063)

In this instance, even though these farmers had never attended a STM meeting at the same time, through the online discussion and transparent communication practices of STM, relationships and solidarity could be built among the small scale farming community.

4.2. Development of Rapport and Mutual Understanding of the Issues (Collective Agency)

In Manitoba, building community has been important in facilitating the development of mutual understanding and shared values for small scale farmers and urban-allies. Indeed, building knowledge and developing rapport within the community was an outcome of all

organizations, networks and campaigns in this study, and for some it was also a primary objective. Different initiatives involved different actors in these discussions based on their strategy. For the MFC and STM, it was important to include producers but also non-producers who had an interest in local food systems and could speak about them from multiple viewpoints (804, 063). For the MFC, starting food related conversations at the community level created a place for the public to exchange views about the food system, as one MFC organizer explained,

> [MFC consultations] also provide[d] a place [for communities] to gather, just one time, and to hear, 'huh, that person thinks the blueberry harvest was bad this year because climate change, well that's interesting'. 'This person doesn't think the fresh water fish marketing board is actually helping fishers, well that guy does' and so you open pockets of difference in community, and try to create a space for them to talk through that. (804)

STM was likewise interested in engaging all Manitobans in critical conversations about local food issues and brought people together from diverse backgrounds in the development of mutual grievances. In speaking about the role of STM within the local food movement, one farmer participant highlighted this diversity,

> Sharing the Table hasn't concerned itself with anything other than, what is making your life difficult? And that's whether you're a chef, whether you're somebody who wants to access certain types of food, or whether you're somebody who's producing a certain type of food, it's all about – what's making your life hell, what's not working for you. (063)

In many ways, the relational spaces developed by STM foster a common understanding of the issues by providing semi-protected, safe spaces bound by relationships for participants to voice their grievances with the food system. In these fora, participants can discuss farming or processing practices that perhaps restore traditional food cultures, reconnect producers and consumers, or maintain rural livelihoods and landscapes, but fall outside of the regulatory guidelines, and are considered illegal in Manitoba.

Other groups focused on building rapport and mutual understanding of common barriers exclusively among producers. DFM establishes common grievances among its membership of direct market farmers. Indeed, the motivation for organizing a producer group such as DFM was that it would give small scale farmers a unified voice, able to bring grievances forward to government and industry groups. DFM is a space where producers can identify common regulatory barriers impacting direct marketers, as one DFM board member explains, "so [areas where producers are experiencing barriers], those kinds of situations are places where we would naturally want to say, hey, does that make sense, or is that even accomplishing the goal of safety, or whatever the goal is? Is it really doing that?" (088). The SSFWG likewise organized producer interests only, however the focus and impact here was on developing rapport among farmers of all sizes, as Dr. Lees reported,

> I think there's been a lot of misunderstandings laid to rest as well…what I found as I was doing these consultations is that there's sort of a tug between what is called 'big agriculture' and 'small agriculture' where each were sort of not respecting the other. So I think some of that has been laid to rest a little bit. (977)

Leading up to the working group there was a lot of frustration among farmers particularly in response to the Harborside Farms raid, however the SSFWG created a forum for relationship building and the development of mutual respect and trust among participants, as one participant shared, "I think coming in, everyone was pretty mad and pretty sceptical. The farmers… nobody trusted the other guys. And by the end it was just like, we sat down together, we're all people, and we understand each other's position better, a lot better" (255). The development of trusting relationships was the foundation upon which rapport and a collective understanding of the issues could emerge as grievances, and ultimately be articulated into demands and recommendations to the state.

4.3 Realization of Political Voice and Advocacy (Collective Voice)

Not only is the local food community in Manitoba becoming more socially connected, but these connections are also facilitating increased political engagement for food systems change. Members of the community are increasingly engaging in public organizing activities, pointing out failings of the current food system and asking for change. As this section now argues, the organizations, networks and campaigns that share collective understandings of small scale farming and local food issues are important centres from which a collective political voice has formed. DFM and STM both organized to give political voice to small scale farming issues and were designed to engage in sustained action to create channels through which farmers and allies could express their political voice. One STM participant explained this function, "Even though… I've never been to a Sharing the Table meeting, I always knew that my voice could be heard through it" (872). Producers can channel their voice through DFM to resolve issues with regulators, as one respondent noted, "And I think [the formation of DFM] kind of created a bit of a pathway then for people to start to have their voices heard. There will always be technical issues and problems that arise, but at least now there's a pathway for resolving them" (977). Without the unified voice of DFM, farmers' interests were being sidelined in the development of policy and regulation. One board member explained the situation,

> Before they couldn't hear, you could get basically sideswiped because they don't hear from us, they wouldn't even hear from our members. So there's no room to speak, no voice. So [for] government…[and] the other lobby groups, they don't have to worry about a group that has no voice. (088)

Several respondents recognized that a unified group voice was needed to gain recognition with the provincial government (255, 088, 617, 445), as one government representative noted, "the formation of Direct Farm Manitoba…to me, that was just so critical to get a common voice for the sector, who can then start to address a number of [issues]" (603). Groups that engage in

sustained activity hold space for the local food community to voice grievances and demands as they arise.

Creating relationships between consumers and producers through engagement in direct, socially embedded markets also developed political voice. Two long time farmers and local food advocates expressed similar sentiments. For one, eaters advocate on her behalf when educated about restrictive regulations,

> I know my customers get very upset when I can't supply [them]. You know, those times of years when the hens don't lay, they get very upset, and then when I come to them and say, 'hey, the rules are changing … the government doesn't want me to sell this food to you' then they turn into advocates, and I think that's really important, because government may not do what people want, but they hear. (445)

For the other, customer advocacy is the result of relationships built up over time, through repeated market transactions that are embedded in trust, in-person relationships, and other social ties found in alternative markets. He explains the situation at the farmers market he attends,

> Suppose that the city decided tomorrow, or the public health people said no more farmers markets. I'm pretty confident that we could assemble a pretty angry mob pretty quickly. And that's a pretty good place to be at, right? So, and that's built up, one relationship at a time, and you're not really explicitly thinking…I want this person to be on my side forever, you're just trying to make that transaction. …Instead it's been, we have all these wonderful relationships with these people built on mutual trust and benefit, and suddenly we need them. Do you think that they would rally to our aid? I think they would, and they have. When we've put out an email or whatever, saying call your counsellor, the phones have rung off the hook. (617)

In this case, engaging in alternative markets facilitates long term relationships that can be activated should consumer access to local food be threatened.

Importantly, these organizations, networks and campaigns create communities that offer protected spaces from which issues can be put forth into public spheres. Following the Harborside Farms farm raid and additional visits from provincial inspectors, small scale farmers

felt their livelihoods were at risk. One farmer describes how protected community spaces allowed his voice to be heard in the media,

> Even some of the op-ed stuff … from my perspective was exactly why I was a part of [STM] in the first place, was that … viewpoints that I held were getting put into the public sphere, and the person's name on it – it was exactly how I felt about it, but the person's name on it was [someone else] and if somebody wants to chase this backwards it's not coming to me, right? … But there were like, 8 or 10 of us that said – we need to talk about this! Because this is affecting us, like seriously, but…we don't want it coming back, because it will, I guarantee that it will. And it's not friendly when it comes. (063)

These safe spaces are important because the very act of speaking up could leave farmers open to unwanted regulatory oversight, as one campaign organizer explains, "Most farmers are too close to it, and worried about exposure. So if the one person says 'but I grow this' then you've just admitted it, and a lot of the marketing boards are known to be using fairly large hammers when it comes to smaller producers" (916). And so, for farmers whose livelihoods were at stake, these communities allowed them to exercise a political voice with less exposure.

While organizations, networks and campaigns create protected spaces at the provincial level, they are also formed informally at smaller scales, created by local food communities around individual farms. For these farmers, educated eaters willing to advocate for their food community meant not only could the farmers speak out, but they could also act out in politically engaged ways. One eater describes the impact for her farmers,

> And I still get product and food from another farm that is not government inspected, producing contraband food, and is doing it because they've got a community of eaters that are supportive of them, and I think the province realizes if they try to get in there and mess with it, that it's been made known that there's this passionate network of people attached to that farm that will take it to the wall, and make a huge public deal about it. (027)

In this case, an active community of eaters centred around a local farm and making informed decisions about their food choices created a protected space for farmers to exercise political

voice in a way that represents more subversive and daily acts of resistance. According to one long-time local food advocate and farmer, more farmers are actively creating alternative markets and food systems by saying,

> …heck with policy and regulation, we're just going to do what we know is right to do. And who cares about milk and egg marketing, I have customers for my product, I should be able to grow for them, and I will and I am. So that kind of voice is emboldening in that, we don't see the authorities coming down on them, and so…as long as it…grows at a reasonable rate, there's an awareness out there among policy makers and the larger farm organizations that this is a movement that won't be stopped. (191)

This engagement in the grey market is one way in which the local food movement enacts more subversive resistance to the dominant food system, in a context where larger scale protest may not yet seem appropriate, as this farmer continues,

> [This context where farmers are ignoring regulations, and authorities are backing off] is I think allowing for the voice of small farmers not to be – we don't have to all kind of rise up and drive our tractors on the street to get attention, I think there is a fair amount of stuff happening in the background that keeps the issue alive and progressing. (191)

These informal, farm-based networks, or food communities, provide safe spaces that protect alternative ways of enacting community, and allow farmers and allies to become more politically engaged and develop political voice.

Coming together increases the strength of political voice, an important function of the various groups, networks and campaigns. One farmer explains, "you have a much more powerful voice if you're all together than if you're just one guy" (255). One example of this in Manitoba is the appeal brought against the Manitoba Chicken Producers regarding the proposed Annual Specialty Quota Program. In this case, DFM stepped in to organize the appeal among a number of farmers to increase its cohesion and thus its strength – as one appeal participant pointed out,

"You can tell the other chicken producers that were in our fight there, if it hadn't have been as a group, they would have just rolled over" (664).

Advocacy and political voice is also developed in part through witnessing action that produces positive results on similar issues, thus increasing political engagement over time. As several participants noted, examples that succeed at activating community members and moving demands forward increase the likelihood of engaging in action again, attracting new participants, or encouraging others to instigate their own activities (916, 250, 617). For example, the MPC disrupted power dynamics between farmers and decision-makers, showing farmers what was possible, as Crampton describes,

> I feel like it was something that gave permission to people to say no to a system that didn't work for them…After this, I felt there was a much more clear understanding…that you can fight it, right? Because before that I think there was a lot of, 'we can't do this because someone will bust us if we grow 5.1 acres' or what have you, so that was a big change. (916)

Seeing other people stand up for themselves and local food providers changed the mentality among farmers about the options available to them. Similarly, the Annual Specialty Quota Program appeal ruling against the Manitoba Chicken Producers discussed above represented another success for direct market farmers that respondents felt would encourage more participation in similar future actions, as one DFM board member recounted,

> The significance of this win was that the [Farm Products Marketing Council] actually went against the [Manitoba Chicken Producers], and I never thought that that was going to happen either…it was huge, and I think the next time that comes up, that same issue or another issue, there will be more people that are willing to step in front and step forward for sure. (250)

The organizations, networks and campaigns of the local food community represent important centres from which individual and collective political voice has developed, through spaces that foster critical engagement, communal strength of voice, and building confidence through

examples. Through these channels we see a more politically engaged food movement in Manitoba.

4.4 Public Education and Dialogue

Public education has been used as a strategy to increase awareness of issues and barriers facing small scale farmers, and deepen the discussion of the local food system more generally among Manitobans. It has also been an outcome of organizations, networks and campaigns organizing for food systems change. Educating the public was a key strategy for the MPC as Crampton explained, “several farmers had tried to chat with Peak of the Market and had been unsuccessful in their conversations, we thought we will do a big media push, because nobody knows that this is going on…” (916). Making the public aware of the issue increased support for the campaign because it engaged people emotionally, as Crampton explains,

> I feel that the customer felt very lied to. They had seen Larry McIntosh talking into a carrot in a farmers field [in television and other advertisements] and they thought Peak [of the Market] means supporting local farmers, and then once the truth came out that this is a regulated product, you’re not legally allowed to grow potatoes for sale and all of these things, people were very very upset when they found that out. (916)

Likewise, when HMLFI customers learned the reasoning behind why they were no longer able to purchase some of the buying club’s most popular products, they began to speak to their elected representatives (255, 556, 495). The RMFF campaign also played an important role in educating the public and other farmers about the challenges with provincial regulators, as one organizer and farm researcher pointed out,

> I actually think that the Real Manitoba Food Fight … educated a lot of people about the challenges that farmers face with food safety regulations. And I can say that definitively because when I did [a national survey of new farmers] in 2015, respondents from Manitoba [said] – food safety regulations are a big problem… From other regions you wouldn’t necessarily hear that, and it’s not because their food safety regulations are any better, it’s because it had come up in Manitoba and

> people were aware of the issues, they understood them, they felt confident talking about them. (259)

Public education that encourages action and puts pressure on decision makers is a key strategy for local food groups in Manitoba where organizational support for expressing grievances and articulating demands is developing, but remains in its infancy.

Educating the public has also been a strategy to deepen the conversation of the local food system among the general population. STM in particular has written op-eds, reports, a book chapter, and smaller pieces of writing regarding specific issues facing farmers and the local food system in Manitoba more broadly. STM participants discussed the importance of this writing for deepening local understandings of the food system, "We as farmers, maybe just as our personality, we want to do things ourselves… but I think legitimizing our work really needs that written voice … otherwise we're just talking to each other" (872). Another STM participant continued on,

> And [the writing] connects to the broader conversation that's going on around food and land and sustainability internationally. Like …that book that's coming out, [about] the community-based learnings around food sovereignty – if you read one [chapter] all by itself you might go, 'oh, interesting' but if you read that in the context of [the other chapters that discuss] all the other work that's going on [globally]…you start to see huh, we're working at similar things here. So I think it builds that solidarity locally, but I think the university [writing] piece…it spreads that recognition that this is a part of that. (804)

STM participants understood the importance of educating the public to develop solidarity locally, as well as situating the work happening in Manitoba within global struggles for food systems transformation, to create a global sense of place.

4.5 Capturing the Attention of Decision-Makers

Most grievances of the organizations, networks and campaigns outlined in this study involve barriers to local food production, and access to local markets. Consequently, these

groups have primarily sought to achieve their goals for food systems change through the state and other decision-makers who regulate and otherwise define the context in which food is produced and sold in the province.[18] While public education was a strategy for raising awareness of barriers facing small scale farmers and deepening the discussion on local food issues in the province, it also succeeded in capturing the attention of decision makers through the creation of public pressure. This strategy was used by the MPC, RMFF and HMLFI in order to obtain meetings with the Minister of Agriculture and other decision-makers to discuss grievances and develop solutions (916, 027, 255). This is a successful strategy in large part because it involves people from diverse backgrounds representing various areas of the food system, now educated on the grievances in question, participating in making demands by signing petitions, writing letters to elected officials, and stimulating media engagement. Crampton explains this impact for the MPC,

> [We] got a group of potato growers together, and they tried to grab the St. Norbert Farmers Market, Manitoba Farmers Market Association, and whoever else was involved in the industry to bring them together to say we need to put pressure on to change this…A lot of people in the [food] industry [joined us], [one woman who owns a popular Winnipeg food business], she went to the Minister and had a chat with him, we had [a popular local chef] who came with us. So we needed all these different people from all these different areas saying this matters to us and this affects us, and our industry because of this. So that was very important. (916)

Engaging diverse perspectives shows grievances are shared beyond one interest group, and is effective at putting pressure on decision-makers quickly. The MPC stirred public emotions in just a few weeks, "in the span of 6 weeks we got a lot of media play, people became very aware of the issue … there was a lot of anger" (916). Likewise, the RMFF caught the attention of decision-makers quickly, seemingly catching the provincial government off guard, as one

[18] These regulators include the provincial government (including both the Department of Agriculture and Manitoba Health), supply managed boards (such as the Manitoba Chicken Producers), and orderly marketing co-ops, (like Peak of the Market).

respondent explains, “I think it shocked the government almost, with how quickly it seemed to be a visible issue…they got enough visibility and put enough pressure on that government at the time for them to actually do something” (088). One STM participant noted that the campaign’s swift reaction to the raid likely gave the Department of Agriculture some hesitation in the inspections they were carrying out, “there hasn’t been anything, any noise the way that there was around the [Harborside Farms raid and] with a few different farms, since then. And I wouldn’t be surprised if it was like – ‘oh, there’s a bit of a, there’s a voice out there’” (063). Another STM participant agreed, surmising that this voice had created “background noise” (804) causing the Department to proceed with caution regarding future inspections, “recognizing that there are connections out here that you can’t quite get your finger on, that will cause you to be careful” (804).

For the MPC, HMLFI, and the RMFF, applying this pressure began dialogue with regulators and decision makers. Crampton explains how this came about for the MPC,

> [W]e met with the Minister of Agriculture and explained it to him …and my understanding is the Minister spoke with Peak [of the Market] and said if you don’t fix this and make a solution, I’ll fix it on my end. And so we had one meeting with Peak of the Market where they agreed to our request (916)

A HMLFI farmer explains how customer pressure worked in their favour, “our customers made a petition, organized by one of our organizers, and they sent that to the Minister [of Agriculture], and he invited us in to talk to him” (255). A campaign organizer with the RMFF explains the impact of public pressure for that campaign,

> I think that the Real Manitoba Food Fight…was a success in that there was a ton of government [engagement] – which you could argue was productive or not, but it brought people to the table who otherwise would not have been talking to each other, which I think was really important. (259)[19]

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[19] These meetings with provincial government representatives were facilitated by a mediator and organized through Food Matters Manitoba (027).

The strategy of leveraging public pressure to influence decision-makers has proven to be effective at creating change for the local food movement in Manitoba and has led to some long term impacts. Members of the HMLFI were invited to participate in the SSFWG report to impact future policy and regulation for small scale farmers (255). Because of her work with the MPC, Crampton was invited to sit on the Farm Products Marketing Council to represent small scale farmer interests in supply managed and orderly marketing industries (916). The RMFF played an important role in impacting how the provincial government interacts with small scale farmers, bringing awareness to the mishandling of the Harborside Farms raid which led to the creation of the SSFWG (088, 977). Comparing this strategy to her experience working for food systems change within the formal channels of the provincial government, Crampton said,

> I spent 5 years on the Farm Products Marketing Council and I felt change, to be effective from the inside, is a long, arduous, almost impossible process, because it becomes political very quickly. And so I have learned that public pressure is the number one indicator of change. (916)

In a province where official avenues for engagement have previously been ineffective or non-existent, local food advocates have found alternative ways to engage the state.

Leveraging political opportunities has also been important to the success of these campaigns. For the MPC, new Peak of the Market regulations revealed the organization's attitude toward small scale farmers, an attitude that contravened the primary advertising message of the farmer-owned non-profit, as Crampton explained,

> Peak of the Market was selling themselves as 'we support local vegetables'… 'We support local farmers, we're here for local farmers.' Then what are you doing for these guys, right? It can't just be an old boys club of whoever's growing the most and has the most quota and, … we wanted to show that incongruity and hopefully pressure them to do the right thing. (916)

The proposed regulations and general treatment of small growers revealed that Peak of the Market represented the interests of only a portion of vegetable producers, at the expense of local growers selling directly to consumers. This incongruity represented a political opportunity that MPC leveraged in order to gain the attention of decision makers.

The RMFF also capitalized on a political opportunity offered by the Department of Agriculture. The widely publicized Harborside Farms raid was rendered even more egregious when the narrative positioned it alongside the Minister himself sampling and praising the cured meats his department shortly thereafter labelled unfit for human consumption and destroyed. This provided a unique political opportunity for the RMFF, a clear narrative to engage the public and put pressure on decision-makers.

The HMLFI also benefitted from a political opportunity. Most customers of the buying club lived in Winnipeg in ridings held at that time by the New Democratic Party, it was those Members of the Legislative Assembly that began addressing the regulatory barriers the HMLFI was facing in parliamentary proceedings. The New Democratic Party has traditionally held urban ridings in Winnipeg where most of the provincial voting population is concentrated, while the Conservative Party wins most rural seats. According to one HMLFI member, the HMLFI demands garnered this parliamentary attention because the New Democratic Party was entering into an election year unsure they would be re-elected, "They knew they were going to be in the fight of their life at the next election, right? They couldn't lose the Winnipeg ridings because they're never going to get the rural" (495). According to him, because of this uncertainty, the provincial government needed to show they were taking action regarding these concerns, leading to the meeting with the Minister of Agriculture, and invitation to participate in the SSFWG. In

all three of these campaigns, leveraging a political opportunity increased pressure and captured the attention of decision-makers.

Groups such as the MFC, DFM and the SSFWG sought a different strategy for capturing the attention of decision makers, choosing to foster collaborative relationships between the provincial government and the local food movement for food systems change. For the MFC, consulting with community members throughout the province on the state of the food system drew the attention of the Manitoba government, as one MFC organizer explains, "when we talked to government about what we were doing they were all excited, and they were paying attention, because we were talking to people and organized in order to represent what people were saying, which is political, and they recognized that" (804). The MFC engaged in a strategic campaign to include government representatives, recognizing the need for buy-in at the provincial level in developing the food charter (804). Indeed, after the food charter was launched and generated the organization Food Matters Manitoba, the MFC, operating under the organizational name Food Matters Manitoba, continued to liaise closely with the provincial government. Following the Harborside Farms raid, due to the organization's close ties with government, it facilitated several meetings between small scale farmers and allies – who would later organize STM – and Department of Agriculture representatives (027, 191). One STM participant explains the importance of this function, and the resultant conversation,

> …that one meeting in Carman where [about] 3 or 4 people from the department of Agriculture met with a group of small farmers …[Many] of us spoke very passionately about what quality food really is, and how important it is for customers to be able to access that in as pure a form as possible. And I think that was useful for the Department of Agriculture to hear us speak in person in [what] was such an intimate setting with so many of us there... And I think [that] Food Matters Manitoba played an important role [in organizing that meeting], because they were very accepted in the…power circles as being an important voice; research based, connections with Aboriginal communities, and weren't too provocative. (191)

In this case, cultivating a relationship with the provincial government early on allowed the organization that grew out of the MFC to facilitate direct conversations between small scale farmers and provincial representatives on important issues.

The SSFWG was also designed to capture the attention of decision makers and form a collaborative relationship with government. Although it existed at arm's length from the Department of Agriculture, it had close links to the provincial government. The SSFWG itself was government mandated, and the facilitator was a recently retired, long time senior employee of the Department of Agriculture (977). The process was developed and the working group participants were chosen in partnership with the Department (977). These linkages ensured the outcomes of the report would capture the attention of decision makers. Indeed, upon its completion, the Minister of Agriculture officially accepted the final report and all its recommendations (977).

The SSFWG report had an impact on regulators and decision-makers as evidenced by their response to the recommendations (977, 010, 603). Regulators such as the Manitoba Egg Producers responded to one report recommendation for supply managed industries be more inclusive of small scale farmers by increasing non-quota exemptions (977). Perhaps most notably, the provincial government moved forward with the recommendation to facilitate the formation of an organization such as DFM, as one government representative explains, "I think the biggest thing from that report was a greater emphasis on assisting that group to become organized" (010). There were also changes to the internal functioning of the Department of Agriculture, as the government representative continues,

> When we look at our yearly mandate, small scale activities are [now] always part of it. It never used to be before. They're very conscious to make sure that small scale is part of our mandate now… When our branch, for example, does their yearly – it's based of course on what the government of the day [is] wanting to have happen –

> when they're putting together their work plan…it's not a big document, it can be fairly vague. [But]…the words 'small scale' are very specifically put in this document, and that didn't happen before. (010)

As a result of the SSFWG process and report recommendations, small scale farming issues were prioritized within the Department of Agriculture, highlighting a broader, historical trend within the Department explained by another government representative,

> [T]he department is just getting its house in order and figuring out – okay, we've gone to this specialist model, versus the olden days of an agriculture representative, where in every community there was kind of a generalist. So as time went on…I think some of the focus on direct marketing farming was a bit lost… the unintended consequence was that a diversified farm, or a small farm doing unique things was maybe not serviced as much. (603)

The activities of the SSFWG, along with the other organizations, networks and campaigns advocating for local food systems, are helping to reverse this trend and create the conditions for food systems transformation. Thus, the SSFWG successfully captured the attention of decision makers through developing a collaborative relationship with the provincial government, for significant political impact.

Likewise, DFM is organized to foster a working relationship with government in order to address issues collaboratively. Similar to the MFC and SSFWG, the provincial government was involved in the process of forming DFM, in this case as facilitators and participants. Throughout the facilitated process, small scale farmers continued to indicate the need for a representative group to work with government in addressing small scale farming needs, as one organizer explains,

> Another success I think is that we actually convinced the former [NDP] government, to…recognize that direct marketing of the higher risk products like meat was not going to go away. They couldn't squash it. They had to accommodate it, at least a little bit. I think that's a huge success, we didn't get everything we wanted, but we made a direct farm organization that's just sitting there ready to work with the government, you know, should things go wrong or to help things go right. (445)

The impact of DFM is that government and other regulators now have to pay attention to the interests of direct marketers in a new way, as one DFM representative explains, "There's an accountability whether it be government or the commodities that they need to recognize that this is a sector and they have to figure out ways in which they include and are inclusive" (070). And decision-makers are paying attention, as one DFM board member explains, "We've been to several industry wide consultation meetings since the group formation. I think at this point we're firmly established on the roster of industry representation within Manitoba. We're part of the dialogue in a way we never were before" (617). Another example of decision makers paying attention was evident in the favourable ruling following the chicken appeal DFM coordinated; the DFM board member continues,

> [It was] a clear moral victory in the sense that nothing like this had ever been tried before without being laughed out of the room. And you look at people who have challenged decisions of supply marketing commodity groups across the country – there's a hearing and then the gavel falls and that's it, get out. So the fact that they gave us anything is a huge victory. We didn't get everything we wanted, and it doesn't really affect that many people, but at least, I think the next time we phone one of these groups they're going to pick up the phone. That was our objective all along, was to say, look, there's this other perspective that deserves to be heard from. (617)

Direct market farmers are engaged in dialogue at the regulatory level, and decision makers are beginning to pay attention to direct marketers in new ways.

For the provincial government, the formation of DFM marked a change in communication with direct market farmers, a formation of a group that could liaise between these farmers and the provincial government, as one government representative explains,

> I think what was really important was to have…I'm not saying there needs to only be one group, there needs to be other groups to do specific things, but there was no one group that really could say, we represent the broad interests of this group of direct farm marketing. And so I think having that at least then the government knows who to go to. They can say 'look, we're doing district consultation on this new round of programming, come to our consultation.' (603)

The formation of DFM marked the beginning of a new collaborative relationship, as described by the government representative, “I think the government didn’t have an understanding of the needs of the sector. And I think that is understood much better now… it’s understood better on both sides, and there’s the capacity to work together” (603). Developing this capacity to work together is important for implementing the recommendations of the SSFWG report, as the government representative continues, “For most of the recommendations there was a role for government to play, but it was too difficult for government to do by itself…it couldn’t be done with a small set of individuals, much easier to do with a group” (603). In organizing DFM, direct market farmers developed a collaborative relationship and a new way of communicating with the provincial government.

The groups involved in this study succeeded in constructing a collective identity, and in doing so helped strengthen common understandings of the issues and barriers for local food production, and market access. The local food movement has also begun to identify demands and strategies for food systems change that represent an increasing awareness of how to leverage opportunities to create change in the province, and a desire to claim political space. While the various initiatives have engaged in collective action, and some campaigns have been successful, avenues for ongoing organizing have been more difficult to set up and maintain. Perhaps one of the most important challenges for the local food movement in Manitoba is to increase its capacity for ongoing engagement with the issues. Overall, the responses outlined in this chapter show that the local food movement is becoming more socially connected and politically engaged in the contribution to food systems change. However challenges will have to be addressed. In addition to the difficulty maintaining ongoing organizing, community members employ different frames and worldviews that inform their understanding of the nature of those issues and what

their underlying causes are, leading to various approaches to food systems change and perspectives of desirable outcomes. It is these types of challenges, and the extent to which they impact the local food movement more broadly, that I take up in the next chapter.

5: CHALLENGES FOR FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFOMRATION

Developing relationships and community around local food helped increased the social and political impacts of the various organizations, networks and campaigns working for food systems change in Manitoba. However, the potential for food sovereignty and meaningful food systems transformation remain constrained by several challenges. This chapter examines several key challenges activists must address to more fully engage the principles of food sovereignty in Manitoba, this includes the diverse actions and messaging of the local food movement over time, and the evolving relationship between small scale farmers and the regulators that define the playing field within which small scale farmers operate, and represent the legal edges of what is possible for local food in Manitoba.

5.1 Diverse and shifting strategies in the local food movement

The local food movement in Manitoba is ideologically diverse, as evidenced by the range of responses to issues and barriers mobilized by the various organizations, networks and campaigns. This diversity stems from different understandings of root causes and appropriate strategies of action, as emphasised by one respondent, "there are different tacks that people are taking to what they think the work looks like" (804). As outlined earlier, some initiatives were focused on working with regulators to create change, others worked to create change by putting pressure on regulators, and still others saw regulators as illegitimate and ignored them all together. The convergence of these various initiatives into communities of resistance whereby responses and actions are layered, is considered itself a strategy. As one long time food activist put it,

> And so I think the mixture of the various organizations…was our strength… there was real value, I mean, that's revolutionary theory 101 that there be no one definable central organizing body, because that becomes too easy a target, and if we have a

> variety of voices, from a variety of us speaking to people who can make a difference, then there's bound to be a better effect. (191)

Another long-time local food activist shared a similar sentiment,

> And some folks you can just see them go [rolls eyes] I just want to go with my torch to city hall and tell everyone how mad I am. Great, go do it… And you need that balance, you need to have both of those types of people. But you can't expect the torch bearer to do the by-laws, and the by-law type person really isn't that effective a torch bearer … So you've gotta have both. (617)

However, another local food activist acknowledged that as the local food movement gains political power and initiatives seek to gain momentum and increase pressure on decision makers, this diversity may result in conflicts over resources,

> I'm not saying this is unique to Manitoba by any means, but one of the issues of Manitoba… is [that it is] a relatively small place, and so when…turf wars have happened, I think it's really detrimental to coalition building, because how are you supposed to build trust and respect, and these really important relationships if, at the same time, people are trying to… outsmart each other, and get to this money faster, or whatever it is. And…that's a systemic problem. That's not a personality problem, or an individual problem, that's a problem with the system we're in. (259)

Despite this, the respondent went on to explain that while a lack of available resources could lead to conflict, in other ways it has the potential to build solidarity across initiatives,

> And so, I think there is still a lot happening in Manitoba and a lot of coalition building that is still happening, and maybe the fact that Manitoba has, at this stage, so few resources available…I think in some ways that's been good for coalition building… It means nobody has anything, so we have to all work together. (259)

Indeed, the challenge of mobilizing material and human resources such as funding, skills, knowledge and experience was a practical concern voiced by several respondents involved more directly in community organizing activities.

Ideological diversity in the local food movement has also resulted in disagreements regarding strategy and appropriate actions. The MPC experienced disagreements among allies;

Crampton explained how one ally downplayed the scale of impact for new Peak of the Market regulation,

> She actually said to me, 'Erin, our farmers just grow such a wide variety of stuff that if they can't grow potatoes they'll just grow something else'. So there was a huge lack of understanding as to how these regulations actually affect people at farmers markets, really small producers, small stores like ours… (916)

For the HMLFI, making the decision to move forward with activism, such as engaging their customer base in petitions, other campaigns, and pursuing meetings with regulators, seemed not to sit well with some members who decreased their engagement in HMLFI activities, as one member farmer explained, "…they weren't too keen on doing a lot of advocacy and attracting attention…[so] they just kind of quit putting effort into it, they just sell their stuff and walk out the door" (255). In an organization with a strong culture of member participation in daily activities, this marked a significant change.

For STM, disagreements regarding strategy arose as they worked to maintain the community's momentum and level of political engagement that resulted from the Harborside Farms raid. In an effort to maintain this energy, STM considered scaling up to strike a formal organization designed to impact policy and liaise with the provincial government. The STM steering committee went through lengthy discussions about the vision and strategy of the network and, as mentioned earlier, ultimately decided to remain a decentralized network. Although disagreements were largely amicable, the result was that those who disagreed with this direction refocused their energy on the formation of DFM. For some it was difficult to see the value of a decentralized network, one of these individuals spoke about his disagreement with this perceived direction of STM, "without some goals I think it can be a nice social club, but if people already have their social clubs and aren't looking to it for [another one] then [meetings don't advance the local food movement], it's kind of… we part ways and we all still agree"

(088). This perspective is at odds with others who continue to animate the STM network, such as one respondent who argued, “for me…the strong part at the beginning was it was relational and it was explicitly political” (804). Another STM participant agreed, arguing that the network continues to create space for important critical conversations within the local food community,

> Sharing the Table Manitoba [is] a very grassroots initiative …it has a name, and ideas that go along with it that came out of…food sovereignty and access to good food…it’s sort of loosely organized, and in my mind the power of it is that it’s quite nimble, right? …the energy for Sharing the Table Manitoba comes out of the people who [are] involved, and I feel like its power sort of comes from this preparedness [to offer a critical voice] for policy issues that arise. (399)

Certainly ideological differences in the local food movement can result in disagreements over appropriate action strategies.

Another challenge for local food activists who are working for food systems transformation in Manitoba is how best to maintain the critical voice of the movement as its strategies change over time, in response to shifts in the local context. Several respondents reflected on changes to the local food movement in Manitoba as local and organic food made inroads into mainstream culture through books and movies such as the Omnivore’s Dilemma and Food Inc. that increased awareness of issues related to the corporate food regime (804, 556, 063, 872). One long-time local food activist described how the understanding of issues and levels of participation by actors involved in the local food movement seemed to change over time,

> [Peoples’ grievances are] being heard more…I would say awareness of social and environmental justice issues has never been higher…I think [the local food movement has] enough traction that people feel it’s not going to live or die on [any single individual’s] involvement. And I think that’s true…I think there is enough momentum that, [for example] a [well known long time local food advocate choosing to focus on something else] hasn’t caused some sort of catastrophe. Things are still trucking along…there [are] so many more people that are contributing. (617)

Another long-time local food activist explained that momentum from the organic food movement[20] had contributed to the local food movement (191). This, along with the various groups, organizations and networks developed within the local food movement, and engagement from academics that examined "what the local food movement looks like within the global context," (191) had led to "fantastic growth in the movement" (191).

The local food movement has also experienced an increase in small scale farming and local food provision in the province through CSAs, direct-to-consumer sales, farmers markets, and local food grocers. Several respondents registered excitement with how this livelihood is increasingly becoming more attainable and normalized in Manitoba,

> Five years ago, we would go to the [Growing Local] conference, and we would talk, and we'd have Joel Saletin in, and other guest speakers fly in, and there was a lot of talk. I think right now, more than ever…we've got more boots on the ground and people are actually [producing food now], farmers markets [have expanded in number and size], there are more vegetable growers…[there's] fish, and meat products now, specialized products at the market, and then there are more consumers going to the market. (308)

One experienced local food activist explained how the rise of small scale farming in the province over the past few decades, along with the increased visibility of these farms through SFM's online directory, represented a big step forward for the movement,

> It's just become much more normalized. The big awareness for me was when Kalynn Spain came through here, interviewing various farmers here and then putting up a website of the smaller scale direct marketing farmers of southern Manitoba. And when it was all said and done I think the first time this website was up …there were 80 farmers on there, and I thought I was in pretty good touch with who these farmers were, and I just realized I maybe knew, at most a quarter of these people. And that suddenly this was exploding into, definitely into a movement…(191)

[20] The organic food movement and the organizations that animated it, including the Organic Food Council of Manitoba, and the Manitoba Organic Alliance, were named by several respondents as establishing early momentum around alternative food systems in Manitoba that fed into the local food movement (191, 893, 445, 063).

Not only has there been a rise in the number of small scale farms in Manitoba, but farmers are coming from a variety of backgrounds, motivations, and worldviews, as one respondent explained,

> There are so many new entrants, and of all types. Some cases it's a generational farm that then, maybe it didn't really change too much, and the next generation has taken that type of farming on. Or we've also seen [situations] where there are farms that have gotten really large, and then one of the kids from that family decides, well, I like farming, but I don't want to do it that way. I want to do direct market farming. So then they're kind of new into the sector. There are also people who have no farm background whatsoever and are coming out of the city (603)

The increase in small scale farming in Manitoba is in part a response to the desire to address the disconnection between producers and consumers, between the people and the places where their food is grown, a sentiment captured by one respondent while reflecting on the local food movement,

> [It's] alienation and connection. …[A] lot of young people are just saying… I just need to farm. Like, it's not a strange thing for people to say now. It's kind of like, I see [examples], I understand what this provides. [People are] finding ways to connect that passion, and if it doesn't turn into a livelihood, it turns into a subsistence… And so that's just not strange anymore. (804)

Many of these new small scale farmers included local food activists who had themselves begun farming. As a result, the local food movement in Manitoba has been effective in advancing an alternative food system.

As awareness increased and more people began farming, the strategy of the local food movement shifted. Whereas local food advocates had previously argued for large-scale, systemic change, they began to focus on policies and programs that would solve everyday problems of local food production and access. This was explained by one respondent,

> People who were passionate advocates 10 to 15 years ago are now practitioners… they're involved in farming activities that takes them out of the public realm and into their own business. Their businesses are succeeding and they're making something work, and they're no longer the rebel shouting on the street corner;

> they're now marketers and producers. So, some of the wind is out of the sails is my sense, but at the same time, there's a strength in a lot of people working towards their own goals in a way that seems more sustainable. People are talking about some of these food issues, and how their farm is contributing to [solutions] … and there's way less conversation about how the world should be in an ideal universe, and shaking our fists at the powers that be, and being more or less ignored, right? (617)

Small scale farming represented a turn toward prefigurative politics – or the strategy of embodying the desired society (Leach, 2013) – whereby activists used new tactics of modelling the system they desired to achieve, to continue working at destabilizing the corporate food regime. In response to the changing local context, this new approach shifted messaging toward more practical demands, asking for concessions that were more easily addressed and amenable to regulators as part of a long term strategy for change. Another long-time local food activist explains this strategy,

> Free up the whole system? I don't think we're going to get that. So I think people are fairly prudent, and everybody pushes on their own little area and over time we get closer and closer to that freedom that we think would facilitate much more growth in small scale farming. But I think that it's so important to be patient at this point. (191)

Another long-time food activist explains how this shift has been strategic, "We used to talk about how terrible the conventional food system is. And it is. But it does feed people. And so, as soon as you polarize an issue, you're losing, right? …I think we're just starting to understand how to move issues forward in a more effective but gentler way" (445). Yet another respondent echoed this sentiment with an example, "I don't think people now go to farmers markets because they want to screw over Coke. That false dichotomy is no longer top of mind" (617).

Indeed, as the landscape around local food in Manitoba shifted, so did the movement's strategies and tactics. Many Manitobans were becoming more aware of problems rooted in the corporate food regime and the benefits of localized food systems. Additionally, there was a surge

of engagement by both farmers and eaters in alternative local markets. This change predicated a shift in strategy for the local food movement, turning away from more contentious politics to embrace the prefigurative politics of providing food for one's neighbours through alternative exchanges. This led to new grievances based in the daily concerns of small scale farmers, which were better received by decision makers such as the provincial government, allowing the movement to become more effective at moving demands forward.

Although this was a change in strategy to gain concessions from government for movement advancement, the degree to which this could lead the local food movement to disregard the more radical goals for systemic change is of concern for some activists. Indeed, as local food access has become more desirable and regulators have begun to engage with local food activists, one respondent noted the potential for the movement's more radical edges to be softened, providing an example of the organic movement,

> I know the whole movement changed…I remember a very distinct turning point when the word 'organic' became a word with official legal standing. And that really was a transition… that for me marked the moment when we changed from 'organics' being a kind of movement to being an industry sector… As [alternatives] from outside the [dominant] system gain relevance, the [dominant] system kind of pulls them towards itself, or into conversation with itself in a way that [could co-opt them]… once you move into conversations where you're relating to institutional power, then the conversation becomes about…what are the standard guidelines that we can nail down somehow, and [that engagement has the potential to] make this energy that's really coming from outside the system, [and designed] to challenge the system… integrate into the system. (893)

By relating to institutional power, social movements that seek to transform the food system can, in some cases, end up being shaped and even integrated into the system by powerful institutional forces. While increasing engagement with power holders can be an impactful strategy, the challenge for local food activists is how to ensure the movement continues to pursue contentious politics that demand systemic and transformative change for food sovereignty.

While the local food movement in Manitoba has been successful at building community, sustaining the organizations that support the local food movement has been more challenging. A few respondents spoke specifically to this issue, highlighting a few contributing factors. One talked about the inclination for some community members to view informal social networks as adequate structures to support and foster the local food movement,

> A lot of times the discourse that I heard was that, we don't need a formal organization, we don't need an institution, we don't need…a new version of Manitoba Farm Mentorship, … we're okay without it. We have these other connections, we have these other resources, and the problem is that that's not really true. I think people were maybe over emphasizing the role that those social networks play. I think they [do] play a critical role, but I think, especially in 2012 when things like Manitoba Farm Mentorship [a mentorship program serving small scale farmers] had just ended, and Food Matters Manitoba [formerly the MFC] was … moving away from new farmers and farm issues as a whole, there really was a void. (259)

Community members felt these organizations offered valuable services and attempted to maintain some activities informally, however the loss of support for these initiatives represented a step back in developing the local food movement, as this respondent continued, "I think part of [the problem] was there were no resources to fill that void, and so people were [saying] 'I guess we [have to] do something better' but not really being able to follow through" (259).

Indeed, the lack of support and resources to maintain ongoing initiatives has been a challenge for the local food movement in Manitoba. Another respondent spoke to this, "There's a dynamic at play that somehow makes us…break up and restructure our organizations on a regular basis. One is the fact that often funding is available more for start-up than for institutional maintenance" (893). Because of this trend, organizations that advocate for and serve the needs of small scale farmers may run for a certain length of time, then fold or shift their objectives based on what funding is available. This start-and-stop pattern has made it difficult to build momentum within the local food movement over time.

5.2 Relationship between small scale farmers and regulators

The nature of the relationship between small scale food providers and provincial regulators presents another important challenge for activists working toward food sovereignty in Manitoba. The majority of the challenges respondents raised regarding local food provision involved tensions with regulators, giving rise to the various organizations, networks, and campaigns outlined in this study. Complex, inconsistently interpreted and applied regulations that were not appropriate to the scale and unique production methods of local food providers was a challenge regularly raised by respondents. A Department of Agriculture employee characterized this complexity and gave some explanation through this response:

> There are some products that you can sell at a farm gate you can't sell at a farmers market. It's very strange, but anyway… eggs and chickens you can sell at the farm gate uninspected, but you can't go across the road… [laughter] they're so old those rules it's crazy. The Act is very old…There hasn't been any political will to change it yet, so, who knows when it's going to change and if it's going to change. (010)

The antiquated regulations brought into question their validity for local food activists, as one expressed, "it's like really archaic regulations. They're not based in science" (872). Farmers and inspectors alike were aware of the out-dated nature of the regulations and how this impacted enforcement, as one farmer explained, "the main thing was that you never got a straight answer, because …there was a guideline, there were the rules and regulations, but it was so out-dated" (495). According to another farmer, unclear regulations were often the source of conflicting interpretations among inspectors, "different inspectors that covered different municipalities, or areas…they seemed to have a different understanding of what they were going to enforce. So all the producers were getting mixed messages" (556). As one local food activist pointed out, conflicting interpretations also stemmed from a lack of communication among inspectors, "So one inspector will say, yes, build this table like this, and another inspector will come and say no

no no, not like that. So there's a huge lack of communication within inspection" (916). Complicating things further, regulations for small scale production and processing are enforced by different arms of government. One Department of Agriculture employee tasked with clarifying the regulations following the SSFWG recommendations explained, "because of the shared jurisdiction between Manitoba Agriculture and Manitoba Health in enforcing the same regulation… I had to talk to people from both sides, and it was apparent that there was some variation in how it was being enforced" (603).

Complex regulations and policies were also found among orderly marketing and supply managed industries, as one local food activist outlined, "depending on the industry, in supply management anyway, some are more transparent than others. Some are veiled in mystery where even the members in them don't even understand how it all works" (916). This local food activist went on to explain how this kind of regulatory environment makes it challenging for small scale farmers to advocate for themselves, "When the regulations are very convoluted it can be hard for anyone to understand them fully. So if you don't understand them fully how can you ask for more appropriate regulation to be applied to your situation?" (916).

Another challenge several respondents spoke of was the distrust for regulators that permeated the small scale farming community in the wake of the Harborside Farms raid. One local food activist explained this impact for the local food community,

> I don't think we quite realized the blanket of…I mean repression is too hard a word, but…of silence, of self-censorship, among farmers, that they wouldn't come out assertively to say what they're doing in the climate … following the raid that the Cavers had experienced. And a couple of other farmers had experienced visits from the Veterinary Office of Manitoba Agriculture… so people were pretty careful not to raise their heads up if they were chicken, milk or diary [farmers], or some of those kinds of industries. (191)

Another local food activist, speaking of a meeting held among small scale farmers and allies shortly after the raid, explained how feelings of fear and powerlessness permeated the group,

> There was so much tension in the room, and there were so many people who were…really concerned, and yet they wouldn't tell us their name, and they wouldn't speak openly. Like there was all this fear in the room, but people were concerned that they…were going to be next, and…you could tell that they were upset and they felt powerless. (259)

For these farmers, the Harborside Farm raid felt like a door had been closed on building any sort of working relationship, as one local food activist explained,

> [There] was something monumental that happened in this community of small farmers, and people were like, 'holy, this could happen to me, aren't [the Cavers] doing everything right?' There was this realization that there's a bigger issue in Manitoba really related to direct farm marketing and small scale agriculture… And there wasn't a supportive environment to nurture these products coming to market. It was like, 'we're going to shut you down, we're going to make a big deal about it, we're going to use you as an example, and we're going to use our heavy government hand to stop you in your tracks, and make sure that nobody else does this again.' (027)

This action, along with the complex and inconsistent regulatory environment, served to break trust required between regulators and local food advocates to develop appropriate solutions. This local food activist continued, illustrating what a regulatory response might look like in the context of a healthful relationship between regulators and local food providers,

> Rather than going in being like, 'this isn't really above board you guys, let's work together to find a solution and create a new framework, or do some research to figure out how could we make this a viable food product for you, … wouldn't it be great to have this in Manitoba?'… That's the [kind of] government leadership that I would like to see in all of this, that it's not really the reality. (027)

The provincial government in Manitoba had failed to create this supportive environment and trusting relationship with local food providers, as evidenced and exacerbated by actions such as the Harborside Farms raid.

Local food providers have also become familiar with a repertoire of strong arm tactics used by regulators that shapes the farmer-regulator relationship and further breaks down trust. During the Harborside Farms raid, the province was seen to be using their "heavy government hand to…make sure that nobody else does this again" (027). Following the raid, sharing the story publically played an important role in educating the public and putting pressure on decision makers, however the Cavers were warned by the province to stop publicizing the event, "They told us, 'when you speak to the media, it makes it very difficult to work with you'" (Clint Cavers, quoted in Laforge, et al., 2016).

Supply management and orderly marketing boards have likewise used strong arm tactics. One local food activist explained Peak of the Market's use of onerous regulations that led to the MPC campaign,

> There were these huge cumbersome set of regulations around [growing potatoes on less than five acres]… The land location became [a] very sticky [issue], it felt like there [was] this very strong armed organization, that might threaten fines and seize equipment, [that] now wants to know exactly where you are and exactly who you're selling to, so they could go… we don't know the intent clearly, but the thought was [that Peak of the Market would] be able to go to the stores then, and check up to make sure that you're doing exactly what you say that you're doing. (916)

Another example was Manitoba Chicken Producers' collection of private customer information,

> I know [one farmer] wrote a letter asking for an exemption for her chickens because she was raising [close to the allowed limit]. [She] said to the [Manitoba] Chicken Producers 'I need an exemption, I need to have 2500 [chickens] because I have all these customers that want them.' And they're like, 'great, send us their names, phone numbers, email addresses and land locations of all different customers, how many [chickens] they bought, [all of these records] for the last 5 years' and she's like, [what about] privacy [laws]! Can I even do that? …Now you're [requiring of me] something that is so onerous that you're [suggesting to] me you're not going to [grant the extension], (916)

Most recently, new regulations imposed by the Manitoba Chicken Producers required increased collection, and multiple filings of more detailed farmers' personal and business information,

including driver's license numbers, resulting in increased paperwork for hatcheries. One farmer talked about the implications of this change in reporting requirements,

> I think it's just another way that's maybe an intimidation tactic. For [the hatchery owner] it was just an annoyance and a waste of her time. …she's super pissed off. If you think about it, every small holder…basically everybody goes through her, and how much extra paperwork [that means she has to do], it's crazy. And also, if you send your birds to Waldners, which is the only place to get them processed unless you do them yourself, they also have your paperwork and name on file too. So I just don't understand. There's the original sign up, then the legal signing, then we send ours to Waldners, so we have them recorded a third time…I've never experienced personal threats from the [Manitoba Chicken Producers], but …why else would that tactic exist, you know? (872)

These types of actions by regulators such as the provincial government and supply managed boards has, over time, had had an impact on the relationship with local food providers in the province. The way regulators have engaged with small scale farmers was seen by one farmer to speak to a larger perception of local food providers as powerless, "I do wonder if farmers are seen as kind of like, you know, these idiot rural people, or people who aren't able to organize. There's an assumption made about…oh they just sit on their farm and don't do anything" (872). Meaningfully engaging local food providers as stakeholders in policy making, such as through the process undertaken by the SSFWG, is important for effective policy and can help reduce tensions to repair this relationship, as one respondent noted,

> ...thinking about the people who eat and who grow food participating in framing the rules that allow them to do their work, or allow them to access food….I think if we don't have that, then I think we have policy that's by default going to do something we don't want it to do, or we have no idea that it's doing (804)

This respondent went on to say that these engagements require a level of trust that has been elusive between the local food movement and regulators, "I don't think there's the trust in the community to have really good conversations about that…and I think [building and maintaining that trust is] never-ending work" (804).

The Harborside Farms raid resulted in a surge of civil society mobilization, and cooperation between small scale farmers and regulators, offering hope that trust was being rebuilt. However, it is unclear whether this cooperation marks a change in provincial government attitude toward small scale farmers that can withstand changes in provincial politics. The SSFWG report published in 2015, the year prior to the provincial election, had marked a significant step forward in building the trust and understanding needed between the provincial government and small scale farmers. The report's recommendations gave the province grounds to facilitate and support the organizing of small scale farmers with the creation of DFM. However, following the 2016 provincial election in which the Conservative Party came to power, the relationship between DFM and the Department of Agriculture seemed to cool. That year, a significant concession that had been won by the local food movement – the appointment of a production specialist for small scale food providers within the Department of Agriculture – was lost. One DFM board member explained the shift in relationship, "that relationship [with the Department] feels a little cold right now, I'd say, compared to before" (255). DFM was a new organization still establishing its mandate, and board members felt they had begun to understand how this extension specialist could continue to strengthen the relationship between local food providers and the Department when the position was lost, as one board member explains, "We almost felt like we were just starting to understand [the role of our specialist] and what we could do with [him], and we started getting a list [of issues to work on] and then he was gone" (250). One DFM board member who had liaised with government in other areas gave some explanation of these shifting priorities,

> Government likes to do what's … 'sexy' at the time. That people will pay attention to or listen to, it's the new thing – and I've lived through this first hand – and it usually lasts two or three years and then they forget about that then they shuffle someone off to somewhere else because it's past and they're onto the next new

> thing. It's about reacting and … saying yes for this thing right now, but government has a bad record for staying with those projects or seeing those things to fruition. (664)

The production specialist, in this case, was re-assigned to his previous position in aquaculture. This DFM board member, also knowledgeable about aquaculture in Manitoba, went on to hypothesize about the move, pointing out the financial implications for the province, "There are six players out there right now [in aquaculture] looking at putting in millions and millions of dollars into the province. So, yeah, that's one of the reasons I'm sure they moved him over" (664). Although the move of this staff person away from small scale food production to aquaculture has not been seen as a significant loss to either Department employees or DFM board members (603, 255), it represents a shift in government resources away from small scale food providers toward more specialist production and investment, protecting the interests of capital. While government representatives refused to speculate the extent to which these changes were the result of a new party in power provincially (603), food sovereignty advocates will have to think strategically about the conditions in which engagement with the state can either advance or deter their efforts.

The actions of Manitoba regulators show their priorities aim to protect capital and other logics of neoliberalism, such as specialization and standardization that favour large agri-business. Moving the small farm production specialist back to a more financially lucrative sector, the Department of Agriculture transitioning to a specialist model of agricultural extension, and complex and inconsistently applied regulations designed for standardized production methods, show how the priorities of regulators in Manitoba do not lie with the local food system or small scale food providers. The result has been a clash of perspectives between small scale farmers and regulators. The uncertain state of regulations for small scale production has led to a sense of cynicism among some farmers, as illustrated by one respondent,

> that's what [one farmer] got caught in… he needed a second signature on his daily temperature inspection reports. Who's the second person that's going to sign it? There is no second person. So … you just fake some other signature …And you can do that, or you can try to fight that, and that's a trail of tears… if you're going to say to the bureaucrat, this is stupid that you're asking for all this paper work, *you're just talking a totally different language* (emphasis added) and they're not going to appreciate that. So you play the game, and it feels very cynical. (617)

Another farmer spoke of her frustration discussing with inspectors from Manitoba Health, Manitoba Agriculture, and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency the barriers to marketing pasture laid eggs beyond the farm gate,

> I had a B.F.O. (Big Fucking Oh!), like okay, it's the process. The egg has to go over a candling table, and be put in a fresh carton, and that's all they care about. They do not care about how healthy the egg is. Well I do. … That's the big divide. They don't give two shits if the chicken is freaking dusted in antibiotics and whatever, every day of its life, and never sees a drop of sunlight, they don't give a shit, as long as it goes over a candling table and a grading machine. *We were talking about completely different things*, (emphasis added) but we still have to live by their rules. (556)

These responses exemplify the opposing worldviews held by regulators and small scale food providers on topics of food safety and health, and ways in which small scale farmers enact a cultural politics.

When considering moments of tension between small scale farmers and regulators in Manitoba, there are a number of examples where small scale farmers and their allies, in their negotiations with government, managed to open cracks in which to enact a politics of the possible and exercise power. Respondents spoke of a number of these occasions of negotiation, such as the following,

> Initially when farmers markets started they took…the license that [a local fair] had… and basically used that as the benchmark for what a farmers market permit should look like…and all they did was they accepted that there would be gaps in between [the days] – instead of 14 consecutive days – and I remember the very first permit had the word 'consecutive' struck out and a little initial over the top, so instead of being 14 consecutive days it was 14 days. And that became restrictive on markets eventually that they wanted to be open for a longer season… at the St.

> Norbert Market we had the power of popularity, and I think two years we just ignored it [and stayed open longer]. And then they made a big deal about it, and I said, well let's just buy a second permit. I think it was $40 or [something cheap] like that. There was nothing anywhere that said…you were restricted to only one permit a year …[however], there was a very bureaucratic person who, in her own head thought that that was the limit, so we actually incorporated a separate farmers market to take out the second permit. And we only had to do that once, and then they [realized], this is stupid… Now I think you can take out a permit for as many days as you want. (617)

The farmers market coordinators chose to do what they felt was reasonable in providing a market for local foods despite restrictive regulations, and the province conceded.

Another farmer and long-time food activist spoke about how small scale farmers aware of regulations choose to flout them, driven by a different set of values, and the practical reality that community members wanted their food,

> [A]nd there's people … who tend to be saying, well, heck with policy and regulation, we're just going to do what we know is right to do. And who cares about milk and egg marketing, I have customers for my product, I should be able to grow for them, and I will and I am. So that kind of voice is emboldening in that, we don't see the authorities coming down on them, and so…as long as it remains reasonably – it grows at a reasonable rate, you know there's an awareness out there among policy makers and the larger farm organizations that this is a movement that won't be stopped, and they appear to be very anachronistic, really old side of control if they bear down on this kind of movement, so they're reluctant to do that, I'm sure. (191)

This example shows that regulators understand small scale farmers hold power through providing a social good. They also realize that interactions over regulations require the negotiation of this power for the state to maintain its legitimacy. Put more plainly, they cannot raid or otherwise crack down on a small scale farm without showing violations are egregious, or they will experience pushback from the community. Simply violating the regulations is not enough for the public to agree with this strong-handed state action, particularly in light of increased awareness of the inappropriate nature of the regulations. One local food activist spoke

about the power held by the local food community and how it served to protect spaces of autonomous food exchanges between small farmers and their customers,

> I still get … food from another farm that is not government inspected, producing contraband food, and is doing it because they've got a community of eaters that are supportive of them, and I think the province realizes if they try to get in there and mess with it, that it's been made known that there's this passionate network of people attached to that farm that will take it to the wall, and make a huge public deal about it, and … it's a little bit like … opposite ends of a magnet that can't come together, it's like, okay let's do this little dance, and every once in a while one will push in on the other, (027)

In this example, power held by the local food community is increased to the extent that eaters are known to be politically active and advocate for their farmers and the type of food system they desire. The creation of activist communities around farms helps reveal the power dynamics between the dominant food system and small scale alternatives.

A third example of exercising power in the local food system occurs where farmers are familiar with regulations, the policies and worldviews that undergird them, and the role of the state in enforcing them. The out-dated, unclear regulations that govern provincial small scale food production provide an arena of negotiation because they allow for multiple interpretations, not only among inspectors and enforcers, but also between regulators and farmers. Because of this, some farmers use them as a tool to negotiate state power, as one respondent explained,

> And I know people in the direct marketing sector who go around with the binder of all of the regulations in their car so that, you know, when they get pulled over, or when an inspector says something, they are familiar, they're more familiar with the business than the inspector because their business is so unique, they'll go page etcetera etcetera, 'Nope, it says this! And this is why I'm doing it this way'. (603)

Unclear regulations, combined with unique methods of production allow farmers who have a good understanding of the regulations and other legislation to negotiate with decision makers, revealing another crack, and arena to exercise power.

Considering the challenges presented by strategic shifts within the local food movement and the nature of the relationship between small farmers and regulators in the province is important to establishing the transformative potential of the local food movement in Manitoba. Whether transformative potential exists, or is taking the shape of an emerging food sovereignty movement is something I address in the concluding chapter.

6: THE POTENTIAL FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN MANITOBA

The purpose of this research was to analyse the local food movement in Manitoba to understand whether or not, and how, it is fostering an emerging food sovereignty practice and discourse in the province. This study has addressed the research objectives by identifying the various organizations, campaigns, and networks active within the local food movement in Manitoba, and examining the activities and issues they were addressing. By discussing their political and social impacts, my thesis revealed the ways in which these initiatives contributed to the creation of collective identity, collective agency and collective voice, propelling the local food movement forward while educating the public and impacting decision-makers. My study also outlined potential challenges for the local food movement, including the movement's ideological diversity, changes in strategy, and the strained relationship between small scale farmers and regulators. This final chapter addresses the third research objective that seeks to identify the potential for food sovereignty within the Manitoba local food movement.

6.1 Discussion

The primary focus of agriculture in Manitoba is large scale agri-business producing commodities for export markets, made possible by a strong neoliberal policy and regulatory environment favouring competitiveness in the international marketplace. Despite this, there is growing interest in local, regenerative, and community based food systems, exemplified by the increase in the number of farmers markets, direct-to-consumer markets, and CSA farms, as well as the organizations, campaigns and networks examined in this study that aim to protect and advance the interests of small scale farmers and local food markets. Together these initiatives converge in a community of resistance that embodies the local food movement. This movement has been very successful in normalizing small scale food production and local direct markets in

Manitoba, and in doing so, it is beginning to solidify its ideological foundation. However, more intense and deep work is needed if the local food movement in Manitoba is to engage more fully in food sovereignty.

While the local food movement in Manitoba upholds many of the principles of food sovereignty, it lacks the critical politics of food sovereignty movements across the globe that call for systemic changes to the corporate food regime undergirded by neoliberal values. Considering again the framework offered by Holt-Giménez & Shattuck (2011) that categorizes food movements that confront the corporate food regime as either progressive (oriented toward food justice) or radical (oriented toward food sovereignty) in nature, I contend that the local food movement in Manitoba primarily meets the criteria of a progressive food justice trend. Following the progressive trend, the local food movement in Manitoba is centred in the global North, among the middle and working classes, and animated by direct market, CSA, and family farmers, along with urban allies and agriculturalists. Taken together, their primary focus has been the practice of creating local food sheds by increasing market access for local food providers through the creation of farmers markets, direct-to-consumer sales, and other alternative business and market structures for local food. Most advocacy work has focused on creating more of these types of market opportunities by overcoming barriers faced by local food providers.

The local food movement in Manitoba also experiences the challenges and shortfalls of the progressive, food justice trend when it comes to contributing to meaningful food systems transformation. The fragmentation and ideological diversity of the local food community historically, present the most significant challenges for the local food movement in Manitoba. This was evident in the diversity of organizations, campaigns and networks outlined in this thesis, and their various approaches to challenges in the food system. The fragmentation of the

local food movement is further highlighted by the start-and-stop pattern of various actions, making it challenging to build momentum in the movement. Many initiatives had short tenures; some were issues based, and dispersed more or less when the issue was resolved such as the MPC and the SSFWG; others such as the MFC have transitioned their objectives, and SFM merged its activities with DFM. As such, in some instances it is difficult to speak of this diversity of initiatives as a cohesive movement. While this remains a key challenge, the movement is beginning to move toward ideological consolidation based on a common understanding of the issues, evidenced in part through the SSFWG report and creation of DFM.

In addition, the local food movement in Manitoba is not immune to the hegemonic power of neoliberalism. As previously discussed, a common critique of the local food movement in North America is that it is more interested in progressive reform than radical transformation, and thus ends up recreating market ideals and values that undergird the same system they seek to replace (Guthman, 2008). In Manitoba, one example of the dominance of this market ethic is in the changing language used by the local food movement. Previously, farmers were described as "small" or "small scale" as indicated in the names of two initiatives including Small Farms Manitoba, and the Small Scale Food Working Group. However, those two initiatives are no longer operating, and the new producer organization Direct Farm Manitoba, which is ongoing and incorporates the work of both SFM and the SSFWG, speaks of these same farmers as "direct market" farmers, defining them through their engagement in the marketplace. Indeed, because the local food movement is fragmented and only populated by a small number of initiatives at any given time, it is easily dominated by the perspectives and values of whichever group is most active. Not only does the language of "direct market" farmers represent an ontological shift in the movement towards primarily market based understandings of local food providers, but it also

shifts away from broader understandings of additional values and objectives often at play in production systems and engagements with natural resources and communities that operate on a small scale. A market focus means that demands of the movement are primarily related to market access for local producers, leaving out other actors within the food system including those who are unable to access local foods. This market focus represents another way the movement is fragmented, and recreates neoliberal values by only acknowledging actors who are able to engage in market exchanges.

Furthermore, the local food movement in Manitoba exhibits progressive food movement trends in that it desires to carve out space alongside conventional agriculture as opposed to dismantling it. In this way it sees solutions to its problems coming from "do[ing] democracy better" (Trauger, 2014, p. 1140). This is evidenced by the creation of structures within the local food movement, such as DFM, that is designed to engage with the state as a producer group to create space for small scale farmers within the conventional agriculture system (in which it is common to have producer groups), in order to enhance the state's knowledge of, and decision-making regarding, small scale farmers. According to Trauger (2014), the strategy of engaging with the state, when performed uncritically, ignores inherent problems with the state when it is captured by capital and primarily driven to protect and expand capital interests which, in the food system, are primarily represented by large agri-business. When this is the case, lasting food systems transformation cannot be achieved primarily through the state. However, when performed critically, engaging the state can be a strategy to advance food sovereignty, insofar as movement actors recognize the limitations of the state, and disengage if or when the strategy no longer serves to advance the movement's interests.

6.2 Emerging food sovereignty

Just as progressive and radical food movement trends overlap (Holt-Giménez and Shattuck, 2011), the local food movement in Manitoba also includes elements of a food sovereignty approach. In Manitoba, the local food movement is slowly moving beyond progressive understandings of food systems change to include an emerging radical food sovereignty discourse that addresses systemic issues within the food system. We see this most clearly in the work of the MFC and STM, as these two groups intentionally create spaces for critical conversations regarding the food system in Manitoba. The MFC created these spaces in the 71 consultations held across the province for the development of a provincial food charter. STM has also created semi-private spaces in which participants are encouraged to create alternative perceptions and understandings around food systems that allow them to do community differently (Gibson-Graham, 2006). In this way, they confront neoliberal values of the corporate food regime that so easily produce individualizing subjectivities that make it difficult to imagine alternatives to the dominant methods of production and marketing (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Blay-Palmer et al., 2016). In these spaces, STM participants emphasize building community and trusting relationships around food as a political act.

The local food movement in Manitoba has also shifted the perception of what is possible for small scale farmers and the local food system, and who should be involved in decision making regarding the food system. Through the public direct actions of the MPC and the RMFF, farmers have begun to realize there are alternative responses to illegitimate and unjust actions of power-holders. There is also a radical trend towards of food sovereignty in the local food movement emerging in the political spaces claimed around individual farms or small communities. Increasingly, within these communities there are examples of farmers in

relationship with their eaters knowingly ignoring inappropriate and unjust regulations, performing instead a different type of community, practicing new models of economic thinking including concepts like subsidiary (Trauger, 2014), in which healthy local foods are exchanged between neighbours without interference from the state. These types of exchanges exemplify the "micro-resistances" described by Mittleman (2004, as quoted in Ayers & Bosia, 2011, p. 50) where opting out of the state apparatus serves to delegitimize its hegemonic effect. While these activities are hyper-local in nature, when farmers and eaters engage in them critically, seeking to secede from the neoliberal values embedded in the corporate food regime (see Ayers & Bosia, 2011), these exchanges have the ability to link local action with global impacts and address the metabolic rift that distances and abstracts production and consumption. This critical engagement in the food system helps create the conditions in which the discourse and practice of food sovereignty can begin to emerge.

Similarly, the local food movement provincially may now also benefit from opting out of the state apparatus. Given the preliminary signals from the new provincial government indicating a cooling relationship between the state and DFM, and the historical tension between regulators and farmers in Manitoba, strategy that advances the local food movement for food sovereignty may now require the movement to function autonomously. Indeed, as the local food movement makes progress and experiences setbacks, the context can, and often does, require strategically rethinking movement tactics (Roman-Alcalá, 2018). Initiatives such as STM that seek to remain relatively autonomous from the state and create new political spaces may offer some direction. Although autonomist movements do not capture the state explicitly, their actions have real impacts on participants and observers by helping to reshape hegemonic narratives in ways favourable for food sovereignty discourse to emerge (Roman-Alcalá, 2018). Autonomist

movements are more likely to embrace food sovereignty, partly because they seek autonomy from the state in cases where and when the state has been captured by the powerful forces of neoliberalism.

Thus, the local food movement in Manitoba both engages with the state, and beyond the state in ways that foster an emerging food sovereignty movement while remaining predominantly entrenched in a progressive, food justice approach. It is a context, however, in which food sovereignty is still being defined and moulded. This is consistent with how food sovereignty functions in diverse local contexts, and reinforces food sovereignty as a *process*, rather than an outcome, or a fait accompli (Shiavoni, 2016). The local food movement in Manitoba contains within the seeds of food sovereignty, and the potential for these seeds to grow if nurtured.

6.3 Recommendations

To advance food sovereignty in Manitoba, first, several initiatives that are already in place within the local food movement need to continue. The movement needs to persist in working in the cracks to claim power, creating spaces in which to imagine alternative ways of building community and food systems, and making demands of the state that advance the radical approach of food sovereignty.

Secondly, the local food movement must continue to link up and align objectives and actions and in doing so, build and maintain strong communities of resistance. Current connections are strong, but vulnerable, as only three of the seven initiatives are ongoing, and human resources among them are limited. These relationships must be maintained and protected, and move beyond coming together at certain flashpoints, such as the Harborside Farms raid, to build more lasting collaborations. Building a lasting community of resistance is especially

important in light of the powerful nature of neoliberal influences in the food system. Without meaningful convergence, radical movements for food systems change will be unable to build the political power necessary to fully realize food systems transformation, especially when confronted by the homogeneous nature of the corporate food regime (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011). This convergence is also important because the food movement needs to be able to advance clear political proposals in response to potential future crisis in the food system, but will be unable to do this without a common understanding of the issues and necessary action (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011).

Most importantly, convergence between food justice and food sovereignty efforts is needed to provide theoretical grounding for the diversity of activities presented between these approaches. While actions for food systems change are creative and diverse, without the grounding discourse of food sovereignty found within the radical trend, they often remain restrictive in their focus on local, and often specific issues (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011). In Manitoba, this was evident particularly in campaigns like the MPC that tackled individual regulations, and organizations such as DFM that formed to deal with the interests of a particular group within the food system. Holt-Giménez and Shattuck (2011) point out that these groups often function without an "ideological compass" (p. 132) and as a result can turn either towards a more radical engagement of food systems issues, or toward reformist and neoliberal trends that more readily recreate the conditions of the corporate food regime. Because they lack ideological grounding, activities in the progressive trend are able to conform to diverse politics, making them pivotal to the direction of the food movement more broadly. Influenced by reformist or neoliberal trends they may weaken the food movement, to the benefit of the corporate food regime. Influenced by radical trends, they can strengthen it to the benefit of food sovereignty

(Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011). For the local food movement in Manitoba, this means that initiatives that take a clear food sovereignty approach, such as STM, must create strong, ongoing alliances with groups such as DFM and the HMLFI that focus on justice issues, to help strengthen the local food movement, by grounding it in the radical discourse of food sovereignty.

The local food movement in Manitoba also needs to understand how its work fits within the global movement for food systems change. While the local food movement currently *engages with the state* through grievances and demands produced primarily through DFM, and *pushes down*, past the state through initiatives of STM and more localized farm food communities, it struggles to *push up* past the state to build solidarity with the global food sovereignty movement for food systems change that would enable a global sense of place within the local food movement. Pushing up and out in this way would ground the movement ideologically in the discourse of food sovereignty by understanding the issues of the local food movement within the broader context of neoliberalism and the corporate food regime. Doing so would also help protect against the creation of the "defensive localism" outlined by Feagan (2007, p. 36) that brings with it a potential xenophobia and mistrust of the 'other', instead stressing homogeneity and minimizing internal differences. While threads of upward connectivity exist within the local food movement in Manitoba, characterized most specifically through the writing of STM, it remains very nascent in the movement as a whole and must be expanded and strengthened.

Food sovereignty, conceptualized as a process, has established some roots in the local food movement in Manitoba. While the movement remains small, in terms of the number of organizations and activists involved, the ongoing initiatives developed by DFM and STM hold some promise. These initiatives help create political spaces for the local food movement and thus

open opportunities for further debate within the movement on the what, who, and how of food sovereignty in Manitoba. Importantly, for food sovereignty to be an emancipatory rural politics (Calvário, Desmarais & Azkarraga-Etxagibel, forthcoming), the local food movement in Manitoba will need to interact with and integrate, the perspectives and demands of the marginalized, Indigenous peoples, and immigrant populations. Whether or not, and how, the local food movement in Manitoba works in solidarity with these groups is an important area of further research.

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APPENDIX A: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Local food movement activists

1. What was/is your role in your organization/campaign/network?
2. How did your organization/campaign/network develop?
3. Who was/is involved in your organization/campaign/network?
4. What did/does your organization/campaign/network advocate for?
    a. Did/do you have a particular goal?
5. What strategies did/do you focus on?
    a. What types of actions did/do you take?
6. What has been successful?
7. What has been a challenge?
8. What motivated you to become involved in this work?
    a. Why?
9. How has the landscape of small scale and direct market farmer-led advocacy in Manitoba evolved over the past several years?
    a. Why/why not do you think there has been this change in activity?
10. Do the various organizations, campaigns and networks advocating for local food issues work together?
    a. Why or why not?
    b. What has been the result of this collective work?
11. Has this work helped unify small scale farmers in Manitoba?
    a. Why/why not?
12. How does it fit into other local food advocacy work in Manitoba? (that may have come before or after?)

Government of Manitoba representatives

1. How has the landscape of small scale and direct market farmer-led advocacy in Manitoba evolved over the past several years?
2. Has this had an impact on the province's understanding of direct-market farmer needs? How?
3. Has there been a change in policy priorities regarding direct-market farms, or small scale farms in the province since the Conservative party took office?
    a. If yes, can you describe the change?
    b. If no, why?
4. The previous Manitoba government implemented a Small Scale Food Working Group, which produced a report of recommendations, are you familiar with it?
    a. How has government acted on these recommendations thus far?
5. What will the government do with this report going forward?

APPENDIX B: Focus Group Questions

Direct Farm Manitoba board members

1. What is Direct Farm Manitoba (DFM)?
2. How did DFM develop as an organization?
3. Who is involved in DFM?
4. What does DFM advocate for?
5. What strategies does DFM use?
6. What have been some successes for DFM?
    a. Some challenges?
7. How has the landscape of local food activism and awareness changed in the province over the past few years?
    a. Why/why not do you think there has been this change in activity?
    b. How does DFM fit into this landscape?
8. Has it been challenging to gather support from the broad range of direct marketers?
    a. Why or why not?
9. Is collaboration and working together important for the development and success of the local food community?
    a. Why or why not?
10. Has this work helped unify small scale farmers in Manitoba?
    a. Why/why not?

APPENDIX C: Informed Consent Form, Interviews

Department of
Environment and Geography

Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2N2
Telephone (204) 474-9667
Fax (204) 474-7699
environment_geography@umanitoba.ca

Informed Consent Form (Interview)

Research Project Title: Organizing for Food Sovereignty
Researchers: Jeanette Sivilay (Masters Student)
Sponsors: Research Manitoba

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

I am undertaking research for a Masters thesis project to examine how direct-market farmers and their consumer counterparts advocate for local, sustainable food systems in Manitoba, and thus contribute to an emerging food sovereignty in the province. A summary of research findings will be made available to those who wish to receive it upon completion of data analysis (March, 2018).

The session will take less than 60 minutes. During this time, a series of open-ended questions will be asked, which are designed for you to freely speak your mind.

An audio recording device will be used while the session is being conducted. The captured information will be used to generate transcripts of the session. If you agree to participate in research, your transcript will be made available to you for review within three months of this session for you to correct any inaccuracies or identify details you feel could compromise your anonymity should you request it. The outcomes of these sessions will be incorporated into a thesis research project that focuses on how small scale farmers in Manitoba self organize to create sustainable and diverse community food systems.

All of the information that you provide will be kept strictly confidential. All physical information will be stored in a locked cabinet and all digital information will be encrypted and password protected. The information will be accessible only by the researcher and two co-advisors on this project and will be destroyed following completion of the project (June, 2018).

In order to celebrate the importance of your voice and experiences, we will (where possible) identify people by name in any outcomes that arise from these sessions. However, you may choose to remain anonymous, if you so wish. Indeed, you will be free to withdraw at any point in this process without consequence by contacting the researcher at the contact information provided below before April 1, 2018. Should you withdraw your consent, all transcripts and recordings will immediately be destroyed.

If you have any questions about the research project, please contact Jeanette Sivilay by phone at xxx.xxx.xxx, or by email at xxxxxxxx@myumanitoba.ca.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or by email at humanethics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

In conclusion, please indicate in the check-off boxes below whether you are interested in participating in this research.

A	☐ Permission to audio-record for research purposes, which will later be transcribed & analyzed OR ☐ No permission to audio-record for research purposes
B	☐ Permission to release identity in any research outcomes that arise from these interviews; OR ☐ No permission to release identity in any research outcomes that arise from these interviews

Also please indicate if you are interested in the following:

☐ Yes, I would like to receive a summary (i.e. pamphlet) of the research outcomes in the future; OR ☐ No, I would not like to receive a summary (i.e. pamphlet) of the research outcomes in the future

If you indicated that you would like to receive a summary of research outcomes, please provide your contact information below:

Address ________________________________Phone Number ________________

Email Address ____

Name __________________________________

Affiliation (if any) ____________________________

______________________________________ _________________________________

Participant's Signature Date

APPENDIX D: Informed Consent Form: Focus Groups

Department of
Environment and Geography

Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2N2
Telephone (204) 474-9667
Fax (204) 474-7699
environment_geography@umanitoba.ca

Informed Consent Form (Focus Group)

Research Project Title: Organizing for Food Sovereignty
Researchers: Jeanette Sivilay (Masters Student)
Sponsors: Research Manitoba

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

I am undertaking research for a Masters thesis project to examine how direct-market farmers and their consumer counterparts advocate for local, sustainable food systems in Manitoba, and thus contribute to an emerging food sovereignty in the province. A summary of research findings will be made available to those who wish to receive it upon completion of data analysis (March, 2018).

The session will take less than 90 to 120 minutes. During this time, a series of open-ended questions will be asked, which are designed for you to freely speak your mind.

An audio recording device will be used while the session is being conducted. The captured information will be used to generate transcripts of the session. If you agree to participate in research, your transcript will be made available to you for review within three months of this session for you to correct any inaccuracies or identify details you feel could compromise your anonymity should you request it. The outcomes of these sessions will be incorporated into a thesis research project that focuses on how small scale farmers in Manitoba self organize to create sustainable and diverse community food systems.

All of the information that you provide will be kept strictly confidential. All physical information will be stored in a locked cabinet and all digital information will be encrypted and password protected. The information will be accessible only by the researcher and two co-advisors on this project and will be destroyed following completion of the project (June, 2018). As a focus group participant it is also asked that you respect the confidentiality of your fellow participants.

In order to celebrate the importance of your voice and experiences, I will (where possible) identify people by name in any outcomes that arise from these sessions. However, you may

choose to remain anonymous, if you so wish. Indeed, you will be free to withdraw at any point in this process without consequence by contacting the researcher at the contact information provided below before April 1, 2018. Should you withdraw your consent, all transcripts and recordings will immediately be destroyed.

If you have any questions about the research project, please contact Jeanette Sivilay by phone at xxx.xxx.xxxx, or by email at xxxxxxxx@myumanitoba.ca.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or by email at humanethics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

In conclusion, please indicate in the check-off boxes below whether you are interested in participating in this research.

A	☐ Permission to audio-record for research purposes, which will later be transcribed & analyzed OR ☐ No permission to audio-record for research purposes
B	☐ Permission to release identity in any research outcomes that arise from these interviews; OR ☐ No permission to release identity in any research outcomes that arise from these interviews

Also please indicate if you are interested in the following:

A	☐ Yes, I would like to receive a summary (i.e. pamphlet) of the research outcomes in the future OR ☐ No, I would not like to receive a summary (i.e. pamphlet) of the research outcomes in the future.
B	☐ Yes, I consent to being contacted for a follow up interview, should the researcher require further information or clarification; OR ☐ No, I do not consent to being contacted for a follow up interview.

If you indicated that you would like to receive a summary of research outcomes, please provide your contact information below:

Address ________________________________Phone Number ________________

Email Address ____

Name __________________________________

Affiliation (if any) ____________________________

______________________________________ _________________________________

Participant's Signature Date