

Social and Ecological Thought: A Case Study of Tall Grass Prairie Bread Co.

by

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ABSTRACT

It has become clear that the business-as-usual approach to management—in which the primary goal of the firm is to maximize profit—is insufficient for fostering the well-being of people and the planet. Despite the dominance of the neoliberal, profit-maximizing and market-centric economy, firms that follow an alternative people and nature-centric approach do exist, and can, in fact, thrive in such an economy. This study examines the following three research questions: *1) What motivates people to operate a firm according to an integrated narrative that is people and nature-centric (particularly when it goes against the dominant societal narrative)? 2) What does it look like for a firm to operate in this way? And, 3) How do firms that value people and planet over profit survive in a competitive landscape that values profit-maximization?* This paper provides an in-depth case study of Tall Grass Prairie Bread Company, an organization that values people and the planet more than profit. This firm has operated for more than 30 years and employs more than 50 people. I draw from stakeholder theory and radical business philosophies such as Social and Ecological Thought management and the ecologizing perspective to understand how Tall Grass operates. Participant observation, qualitative interviews and archival analysis were used to collect data for this study. My findings show that, regarding the first research question, in the case of Tall Grass, spirituality is the motivating factor for the firm to follow the ecologizing philosophy. Regarding the second research question, Tall Grass's cycle of success is perpetuated by their unwavering philosophy to prioritize people and the planet over profit, which prompts them to implement business practices that are consistent with Waddock's (2021b) six core values of ecologizing. These practices allow them to build meaningful, non-instrumental, long-term relationships with their various stakeholder groups. With regard to the third research question, Tall Grass's stakeholders happily forgo economizing behaviour to support and belong to an ecologizing firm and community, which allows Tall Grass to maintain financial viability, and reinforces and informs their philosophy. Implications for stakeholder theory and the operationalization of radical business theories are also discussed.

Keywords: business philosophy, ecologizing, flourishing, non-instrumental relationships, stakeholder relationships, socio-environmental well-being, people and nature-centric firms, Social and Ecological Thought management, spirituality.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

With climate change, global warming, and social justice issues becoming prevalent in contemporary society, the need for significant and even radical change has become well-established (IPBES, 2019; IPCC, 2021; IPCC, 2019; UNEP & UNEP-CCC, 2020; Wallace-Wells, 2019). Businesses in particular are responsible for a significant amount of the social and ecological injustices affecting the world today. In fact, from an environmental perspective alone, the largest 1,200 corporations in the world produce more than \$5 trillion USD of negative ecological externalities annually (Dyck & Manchanda, 2021; Juniper, 2018; Makower et al., 2020). Despite this, the traditional business-as-usual philosophy remains dominant in Western society (Fieldman, 2014; Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015; Wright & Nyberg, 2017). While ESG and sustainability reports are becoming increasingly more common (Christensen et al., 2021; GRI, 2022; KPMG 2021; Schaltegger & Wagner, 2006), the vast majority of companies that maintain a profit-maximizing business philosophy are still missing the socio-environmental mark (Dyllick & Muff, 2016; Landrum, 2018; Upward & Jones, 2015).

From a broader societal perspective, some scholars argue that market systems and economic structures should shift in order to welcome more integrated, holistic, and socio-environmentally-focused narratives, rather than perpetuate individualistic, market-centric, profit-maximizing narratives (Korten, 2015; Lovins et al., 2018; Monbiot, 2016; Waddock, 2021a; Waddock, 2021b). Waddock (2021b) in particular, introduces an *ecologizing* framework that represents an integrated perspective that is centered on people and the planet. She contrasts this framework with the dominant *economizing* narrative that is associated with the neoliberal, business-as-usual approach.

Several important research questions arise around the socio-environmentally conscious firms that strive to adhere to philosophies aligned with perspectives such as Waddock's (2021b) *ecologizing* framework. This study will examine the following three research questions: 1) *What motivates people to operate a firm according to an integrated narrative that is people and nature-centric (particularly when it goes against the dominant societal narrative)?* 2) *What does it look like for a firm to operate in this way?* And, 3) *How do firms that value people and planet over profit survive in a competitive landscape that values profit-maximization?*

This paper provides an in-depth case study of Tall Grass Prairie Bread Company, an organization that values people and the planet more than profit. This firm has operated for more than 30 years and employs more than 50 people. While Waddock (2021b) theorizes from a more abstract, societal perspective, this study brings the ecologizing framework to a more practical, organizational level. Not only does Tall Grass demonstrate how the ecologizing framework can be made practical, it also illustrates how this framework can be sustainable while operating within a traditional neoliberal society.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Radical vs. Traditional Business Philosophies

This study fits under the umbrella of Social and Ecological Thought (SET) management, as described by Dyck et al. (2018) who describe and contrast SET management with Triple Bottom Line (TBL) and Financial Bottom Line (FBL) management. In their framework, SET management would be considered a radical business philosophy, and TBL and FBL would be considered traditional business philosophies. Each philosophy is grounded in a particular moral-point-of-view.

SET management is based on the moral point of view of virtue ethics. This business philosophy emphasizes an organization's ability to achieve happiness (flourishing) by acting virtuous within its community. From this perspective, "the purpose of business is not to make as much money as possible, but rather to provide goods and services that benefit society" (Dyck et al., 2018, p. 19). The virtue theory perspective views financial maximization as unethical and instead argues that 'enough is enough' when it comes to money and consumption/production practices. The SET management approach also aligns with the moral philosophies of traditional Indigenous wisdom and Eastern worldviews which emphasize the interconnectedness of humans with each other and with nature. These perspectives are also consistent with Waddock's (2021b) framework of ecologizing.

The SET approach operationalizes the four management functions (planning, organizing, leading and controlling) differently than the FBL and TBL approaches do. For example, with regard to planning, the SET approach aims to develop SMART 2.0 goals—objectives that are significant, meaningful, agreed-upon, relevant and timely (Dyck et al., 2018). This approach also involves all stakeholders in the decision-making process and considers the externalities (both positive and negative) created by their actions. SET managers work alongside their stakeholders to implement and monitor their goals and are more likely to emphasize bottom-up rather than top-down learning processes. With respect to organizing, the SET approach to management emphasizes the actual *process* of organizing, the relational competencies of individuals, and the team or group level of analysis. SET managers include external stakeholders in the organizing process, and value experimentation, sensitization, dignification and participation as the fundamentals of organizing. In relation to leading, SET management emphasizes the idea that social and ecological well-being can be optimized using the Big 5 personality traits –

conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, emotional stability, and openness to experience (Dyck et al., 2018). The SET manager monitors the socio-ecological externalities associated with their firm operations, focuses on meaning, community and belongingness, and aims to anticipate and serve the needs of their stakeholders. SET management operationalizes control by using value loops that help to identify key performance standards and using bottom-up information systems that help them monitor the processes and outcomes associated with socio-environmental well-being. SET managers evaluate performance in a relational way that involves multiple stakeholder groups and SET managers expect help from others to make the necessary changes.

In contrast to SET management, the more common Triple Bottom Line (TBL) is grounded in an enlightened consequential utilitarian moral-point-of-view which “suggests that ethical management seeks to improve an organization’s financial well-being, especially via reducing negative social and ecological externalities” (Dyck et al., 2018, p. 16). The TBL management philosophy prioritizes financial maximization while simultaneously striving to reduce negative social and/or environmental externalities (Elkington, 2017). With respect to the four functions of management, the TBL approach to planning is consistent with that of the FBL approach, unless there is a business case that would make the adoption of SET practices profitable. In relation to the organizing management function, the TBL approach focuses on: the *content* of organizing with only some emphasis on the process; mostly rational rather than relational competencies; and mostly the individual rather than group level of analysis. The TBL manager focuses primarily on including internal stakeholders in the organizing process but sometimes includes external stakeholders. The TBL approach consists of an enlightened version of standardization, specialization, centralization and departmentalization for its organizing fundamentals. Finally, the TBL approach to both leadership and control is consistent with that of the FBL approach, unless there is a business case that would make the adoption of SET practices profitable.

The Financial Bottom Line (FBL) philosophy is grounded in a consequential utilitarian moral-point-of-view which “focuses on optimizing an action’s rightness (and limiting its wrongness) as measured by its effects on the net overall happiness outcome for everyone involved” (Dyck et al., 2018, p. 13). The FBL perspective typically uses financial well-being as a proxy for social and ecological well-being, arguing that money can be used by specific actors to purchase the particular forms of social and ecological well-being that they value. The FBL perspective focuses solely on profit maximization and leaves socio-ecological welfare to other

stakeholders such as non-profit organizations and the government which sets the norms and regulations that businesses follow (Dyck, et al., 2018). The FBL approach to planning focuses on developing SMART goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, results-based and time-specific. Plans are typically developed by managers alone and attempts to reduce the firm's negative externalities are rare. FBL managers make sure that plans are followed and goals are met, and they tend to focus on top-down rather than bottom-up learning processes. The FBL management approach to organizing emphasizes the *content* of learning along with rational competencies and the individual level of analysis. The organizing process focuses primarily on the firm's internal stakeholders. The four fundamentals of organizing are the conventional standardization, specialization, centralization and departmentalization. The FBL approach to leading emphasizes the potential for the Big 5 personality traits to maximize the financial well-being of the firm. Additionally, the FBL manager focuses on the efficiency and productivity of the firm, along with the firm's instrumental relationships. They put more emphasis on achieving the organizational goals than on anticipating and serving the needs of their stakeholders. The FBL management approach to control involves the establishment of performance standards through value chains. The FBL approach monitors performance through the use of top-down information systems that aim to maximize efficiency, productivity and profits. Performance is evaluated by a rational, top-down approach and managers would respond by taking action on their own rather than seeking help from others.

While many believe that the Triple Bottom Line management approach is sufficient to address contemporary social and ecological crises caused by (FBL) business (e.g., Dybdahl, 2019; Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002; Elkington, 1997; Stead & Stead, 2014, Schulz & Flanigan, 2016), there is evidence that it is no longer an adequate approach to tackling the continuously expanding social and ecological issues of our world (Dyllick & Muff, 2016; Landrum, 2018; Upward & Jones, 2015). The TBL perspective aims to balance the needs of social, economic and environmental stakeholders or to simultaneously maintain social, economic, and environmental sustainability. At first glance, this appears reasonable and laudable. However, the TBL perspective defines economically sustainable companies as those who “guarantee at any time cashflow sufficient to ensure liquidity while producing a persistent above average return to their shareholders” (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002, p. 133). From this, it is understood that the TBL approach prioritizes financial maximization over social and ecological well-being. In many

cases, this approach can result in ‘greenwashing’ as a firm fails to uphold itself to its social and environmental claims in order to preserve profits (Bansal & Clelland, 2004; Seele & Gatti, 2017). The TBL approach also calls for minimizing the negative socio-ecological externalities associated with business (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002; Elkington, 1997). Again, on the face of it, this sounds reasonable. However, in the wake of our current climate crisis, simply minimizing existing negative externalities is hardly enough. Indeed, scholars increasingly emphasize the importance of also enhancing positive externalities in order to foster the well-being of people and the planet (Dyck et al., 2018; Dyllick & Muff, 2016; Landrum, 2018; Upward & Jones, 2015).

In response to the shortcomings of TBL management, there has been a call for an increase in organizations that follow practices consistent with the Social and Ecological Thought approach to management (Dyck et al., 2018; Dyck & Manchanda, 2021). Offered as a more radical alternative to the TBL and FBL management philosophies, the SET philosophy argues that some businesses strive to simply maintain financial viability rather than prioritize financial maximization. By remaining financially viable, these firms develop the ability to prioritize social and ecological welfare, and in turn, not only minimize negative socio-ecological externalities but also enhance positive ones (Dyck et al., 2018).

The literature has other conceptual frameworks comparable to the SET management philosophy. For example, Hernández and Muñoz (2021) offer a conceptual framework of ecocentric management in an effort to better define what causes certain organizations to prioritize environmental well-being. Similar to SET theory, Landrum (2018) argues that organizational sustainability has the potential to go beyond the business case. The author proposes a sustainability spectrum on which ‘strong sustainability’ and ‘very strong sustainability’ occupy one side and resemble similar characteristics to those of the Social and Ecological Thought approach. In contrast, ‘very weak sustainability’ and ‘weak sustainability’ resemble the FBL and TBL approaches to management. Similarly, Dyllick and Muff (2016) conceptualize three levels of sustainable business which they categorize as Business Sustainability 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0. The first level is referred to as ‘Refined Shareholder Value Management’ and is similar to the traditional FBL framework. The second level is referred to as ‘Managing for the Triple Bottom Line’ and—as the name would suggest—is consistent with the TBL management framework. The third level is called ‘True Sustainability’ and is most consistent with the SET approach to management. The True Sustainability approach “shifts its

perspective from seeking to minimize its negative impacts to understanding how it can create a significant positive impact in critical and relevant areas for society and the planet” (Dyllick & Muff, 2016, pp. 165-166). This is congruous with the SET view of enhancing positive social and ecological externalities rather than solely minimizing them. Upward and Jones (2015) propose a ‘Strongly Sustainable Business Model’ (SSBM) that prioritizes social and environmental well-being over profit which is also akin to the SET mindset. Marcus et al. (2010) provide three distinct views of the business-society-nature interface that can be compared to the SET, TBL, FBL approaches. The *disparate view* sees business as completely separate from nature and society. This aligns with the FBL approach which leaves the responsibility of socio-ecological well-being to other stakeholders. The *intertwined view* is more of a relational perspective that sees nature and society as somewhat integrated with, and important to, the systems of business. This is analogous with the TBL approach which views minimizing socio-ecological issues as a financial opportunity. Finally, the *embedded view* sees business, society and nature as “nested systems”, meaning that business is nested in society, which is nested in nature (Marcus et al., 2010, p. 402). Therefore, if nature is not taken care of and cannot thrive, neither can society or business. This view best addresses social and environmental issues and is the most consistent with the SET philosophy.

Waddock’s Ecologizing Perspective

Analogous to the SET vs. more traditional TBL and FBL paradigms, Waddock (2021b) introduces an ecologizing vs. economizing framework building on a perspective suggested by Frederick (1995). In an earlier paper centred on narratives within well-being economics, Waddock (2021a) describes the profit-maximizing, business-as-usual paradigm as evident in the profit-centric FBL and TBL approaches, and contrasts it with an *integrated or people and nature-centric* narrative that is characterized by “life-centered, holistic, integrated economies” overlapping with the SET approach (p. 163). Building on this, Waddock (2021b) contrasts an integrated *ecologizing* perspective with the traditional business-as-usual *economizing* approach. The economizing or business-as-usual approach is characterized by self-interested, wealth-maximizing, individualistic, and exploitative values; all of which perpetuate and contribute to the destruction of our planet (Waddock, 2021b).

In contrast, the ecologizing perspective is characterized by six core values. *Stewardship of the whole* focuses on developing a holistic ethic of care for all of society. This value contrasts

with the economizing view which values low cost inputs and therefore exploits and takes advantage of others and nature. *Collective value* emphasizes the holistic well-being of everyone and allowing all beings to flourish. This value contrasts with the economizing view that money is the proxy for wealth and should therefore be given the highest value. *Cosmopolitan localism* prioritizes the local along with empowered participation and bottom-up decision-making practices. This value contrasts with the economizing view that wealth and power should be condensed at the top, and decisions can and should be made by leaders at distant headquarters. *Regenerativity, reciprocity and circularity* highlight the importance of circular production and consumption practices that avoid toxins, eliminate waste, and employ biomimicry. This value contrasts with the economizing view which provides little or no regard for externalities that are created. *Relationality and connectedness* emphasize collectivism rather than individualism, and the fact that all beings are embedded within society which is embedded within nature, and all are connected to and affected by each other. This value contrasts with the economizing view that a ‘whole’ can be better-managed when compartmentalized and reduced into its various parts. Finally, *equitable markets and trade* prioritizes social and ecological well-being in business practices, with particular emphasis on ensuring the production of goods and services that are truly good and actually serve society. This value contrasts with the economizing view that exploits others actors in the market via, for example, using supplier or buyer power.

Waddock’s (2021b) six core ecologizing values certainly sound like they could address social and ecological crises while simultaneously enhancing organizational well-being, happiness, and fulfillment. So why has the integrated approach not displaced the business-as-usual approach? There are at least three possible reasons: 1) Managers may lack the will to put the integrated approach into practice; 2) Managers may lack the imagination or know-how to put the integrated approach into practice; 3) Managers may not expect the integrated approach to be viable and able to withstand competitors who follow a business-as-usual approach. This study will explore each of the three concerns, by describing a firm that exemplifies the six core values of the ecologizing perspective and by describing how putting the ecologizing perspective into practice has contributed to the firm flourishing in its community despite facing competition from economizing firms.

Stakeholder Theory and Community-Building

Because the SET approach generally—and the ecologizing perspective specifically—prioritizes social and ecological well-being (stakeholders) over financial well-being (shareholders), the literature in stakeholder theory (e.g., Freeman, 1984) is of particular relevance for this study. Freeman (1984) defines a firm's stakeholders as “any group or individual who is affected by or can affect the achievement of an organization's objectives” (p. 5). According to Freeman and McVea (2005): “The purpose of stakeholder management was to devise methods to manage the myriad groups and relationships that resulted in a strategic fashion” (p. 183). The traditional view of stakeholder theory emphasizes the importance of dealing with stakeholder groups in order to help resolve organizational conflicts and improve corporate governance along with profitability (Freeman, 1984; Freeman & McVea, 2005; Freeman & Reed, 1983). The traditional perspective of stakeholder management focuses on doing so for the achievement of profit-centric corporate interests (e.g., Henisz, 2014).

This profit-centric stakeholder management philosophy tends to treat stakeholders instrumentally, rather than intrinsically valuing them in a way that fosters (beyond-instrumental) social or ecological well-being. In the profit-centric approach, primary stakeholders who directly affect the profitability of a firm are given priority; the firm's secondary stakeholders who do not directly or immediately contribute to a firm's bottom line often get neglected and overlooked (Clarkson, 1988; Clifton & Amran, 2011; Post et al., 1996).

The literature on stakeholders in relation to socio-environmental sustainability is quite extensive (e.g., Clifton & Amran, 2011; Buysse & Verbeke, 2003; Gao & Zhang, 2006; Gibson, 2012; Nemetz, 2015). For example, Clifton and Amran (2011) found that the conventional stakeholder approach to management is in fact “poorly equipped to assist managers in the execution of their obligations to progress a sustainable world” (p. 133). Buysse and Verbeke (2003) analyzed the connections between stakeholder management and environmental strategy and found that the firms with the most proactive environmental strategies were connected with a more expansive range of stakeholders. Gao and Zhang (2006) discuss the value of using social auditing as a CSR strategy to engage and build stronger relationships with the stakeholders of a firm. Gibson (2012) argues that the natural environment should *not* be treated as a stakeholder of the firm because “doing so is theoretically vague and lacks prescriptive force” (p. 15). Instead he argues that the focus should be on human sustainability which can be more directly related to

quantifiable action. Nemetz (2015) analyzes the effects of government and community institutions on the sustainability engagement of large, publicly-traded firms in 25 countries. She found that there was higher engagement in countries where there existed “an optimal level of national government institutional power and in national communities with positive norms supporting sustainability and citizen-based political action” (p. 1). Research in this area tends to view stakeholders through an instrumental lens and fails to capture the holistic interconnectedness between the firm and its stakeholders.

Along similar lines, some literature explicitly discusses community and collaboration in relation to stakeholders of organizations (Goodman et al., 2017; Hornik et al., 2016; Liyanaarachchi et al., 2021; Ramachandra & Naha Abu Mansor, 2014). Goodman et al. (2017) identified eight different roles played by various stakeholders in the sustainability-oriented innovation processes of European firms. In the realm of the environment and public health, Hornik et al. (2016) found that individuals and institutions did not distinguish between ecological and social injustices, but rather saw them as interconnected issues. From a marketing perspective, Liyanaarachchi et al. (2021) developed a ‘Stakeholder Repositioning Strategy’ in the context of the Australian bushfires where Indigenous cultural practices were used to help manage the fires. Ramachandra and Naha Abu Mansor (2014) address the value of the stakeholder approach in the context of community engagement programs. They argue that using the approach makes the evaluation process more holistic and gives stakeholders a sense of ownership over the program itself. While such studies take a more integrated and holistic approach, most of this literature does not take an explicitly non-profit-centric approach to the stakeholders of a firm; it continues to focus on the instrumental value of community engagement. Apart from the nuances of community-building through stakeholder relationships being implied in radical sustainability theories such as the SET and ecologizing perspectives, a specific literature discussing stakeholders as community from a non-instrumental perspective is missing from organizational theory.

Rather than reductively seeing stakeholders as part of the external environment of an organization, the embeddedness perspective adopts a more holistic approach and suggests that firms and their stakeholders are co-members of a larger ecological and social whole. This notion of embeddedness is inherent in radical business philosophies such as the SET and ecologizing perspectives. This concept was briefly discussed earlier with Marcus et al.’s (2010) embedded

view which sees business, society, and nature as “nested systems” embedded within each other (p. 402). The significance of embeddedness is also implied by Waddock (2021b) in her discussion of socio-ecological systems. Waddock affirms that “economies are actually *part of* societies, which in turn are part of the natural ecology” and “humans are not separate from and do not have ‘dominion over’ nature” (p. 37). This acknowledgement that businesses cannot thrive or even function without society and nature magnifies the importance of highlighting business philosophies which value and prioritize social and environmental well-being.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

To answer my research questions, I conducted an in-depth case study of a long-standing and exemplary SET firm: Tall Grass Prairie Bread Company, located in Winnipeg, Manitoba. A local artisanal bakery founded in 1990, Tall Grass has always placed its grassroots values and beliefs about the importance of people and planet above its desire to maximize profit. Having been in operation for more than 30 years and currently employing more than 50 individuals, their longevity and size makes Tall Grass particularly worth studying. The case study format allowed me to accrue a wide breadth and depth of data on the bakery and to answer both broad and specific qualitative and quantitative questions about them. Tall Grass's unique management style and organizational values, paired with their longevity and size, make them an excellent firm for a case study (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Creswell, 2014; Gray, 2014).

Research Context

Recently described as an “incredible pioneer and leader in the community”, the seeds for Tall Grass Prairie Bread Company were planted in discussions around a kitchen table in the early 1980's (Chapman, 2020a, p. 7). In those years North American farmers received the same amount of money for their product as they had one hundred years prior. Local farmers were losing their land to large corporations and global trade was really taking off. Farmer suicide rates were climbing as small farms were being forced out of their businesses by large corporations. Tabitha Langel—one of Tall Grass's founding partners—had a close neighbor who was a farmer who took his life during these times. In order to keep their farm and make a viable living, the amount of money grain farmers earned for their wheat in each loaf of bread needed to triple.

A group initially came together to form the Grain of Wheat Bread Co-op in 1986, which baked bread out of a church and sold it at a price which allowed the farmers to earn a viable living. They bought their own mill, milled their own local flour, and made their bread with organic, local ingredients. Only one other bakery in the country was doing something similar at the time (Chapman, 2020d). The group was inspired by the likes of political leader Tommy Douglas, Mahatma Gandhi, the environmental poet Wendell Berry, E. F. Schumacher's book *Small is Beautiful*, and The Land Institute (a non-profit organization in Salina, Kansas dedicated to sustainable agriculture).

Encouraged by the growth and success of the Grain of Wheat Bread Co-op, Langel and four partners opened the first Tall Grass Bakery location in the Wolseley neighborhood of Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1990. When bankers deemed the venture unprofitable and refused to invest in them, a small number of individual investors came forward and lent them money. One of the founding owners suggested the bakery be named Tall Grass Prairie to represent the dwindling vegetation in the region. The company purchased ten acres of tallgrass prairie when they got their name. When they paid back their investors, they bought ten more acres in each of the investors' names. When the bakery first opened, customers shared their recipes for Tall Grass to use. A CBC News article explained, "One person offered their mother's recipe for making rye bread; another requested Langel replicate a favourite muffin they didn't have time to make themselves" (CBC News, 2020).

Chapman (2020b) describes the bakery's opening day on September 8, 1990:

"[T]hey baked 30 loaves of bread, two dozen muffins and 12 cinnamon buns. When they opened their doors at 10 a.m., there were 200 people lined up. They had planned a bread blessing, but after 10 minutes there was no bread left to bless! A customer graciously gave back their loaf, and they blessed it, broke it, and ate it together" (p. 22).

In the fall of 1991, shortly after Tall Grass had opened and as the farm crisis became increasingly worse, around 10,000 people in support of farmers protested in Winnipeg on Portage Avenue. (Martin, 2016). Reflecting on this experience and the societal shifts occurring at the time, former owner Ray Epp explains in an interview with the Winnipeg Free Press, "The bakery was about the possibility of creating a non-violent economy" (Martin, 2016, p. 9).

In 2002, Tall Grass opened their second location at The Forks, a sacred and central place in Winnipeg where two rivers meet, known as a peaceful trading place dating back 6,000 years. They added a new storefront called Grass Roots Prairie Kitchen at The Forks location in 2006 to complement the bread and pastries with ready-made meals and preserves such as salsa, pickles and jam. Tall Grass brought their flour mill from their Wolseley location to The Forks in 2009. They mill organic whole spelt and organic Red Fife whole wheat flour almost daily. Today, while only 2 or 3 cents from a conventional loaf of bread goes back to the farmer, 14 to 15 cents from a Tall Grass loaf is paid to the farm. More than 70 percent of the bakery's ingredients are sourced locally within a radius of 200 miles. The bakery was recently featured in an article in *Bakers Journal* which eloquently summarizes Tall Grass's baking practices:

“Tall Grass promotes organic, natural, local agriculture and uses only certified organic or locally produced grains, seeds, produce and basic ingredients in its products. It works closely with Manitoba farms and local businesses and celebrates the ancient tradition of bread making using special varieties of local organic grains such as organic whole-wheat Red Fife flour, organic spelt, organic rye, and more recently, desem, a type of sourdough starter. Whole grain is milled daily into fresh flour using their own stone mills” (Cross, 2022).

Two of the five founding partners are still owners today: Tabitha Langel and Lyle Barkman. They were joined by Tabitha’s husband Paul Langel in 2010. French baker Loïc Perrot, who joined Tall Grass as an employee in 2005, became an owner in 2013. These four individuals now make up the ownership of Tall Grass.

Of notable importance is how well Tall Grass fits within—and has shaped—its local community. The Wolseley neighborhood in which the original bakery is located has been described as “more than just a community – it’s a culture” (Chapman, 2020d, p. 11). Lovingly known throughout Winnipeg as the ‘Granola Belt’ for its grassroots, hippie energy, the neighborhood is filled with “creativity, social awareness and diversity, which are all characteristics that Tall Grass Bakery exemplifies” (Chapman, 2020d, p. 11). Tall Grass has become so loved by the community that real estate properties listed for sale nearby are often advertised as being within walking distance of Tall Grass Bakery. The bakery is described as having a “nurturing, community spirit” and being “a welcoming place for family and friends to gather in Winnipeg’s Wolseley community” (Chapman, 2020a, p. 7). An article in the *Canadian Mennonite* explains that Tall Grass “has always been about doing what is just and what is good for the land and for the people” (Rempel Petkau, 2014, para. 15).

Tall Grass has developed a reputation city and nationwide. The bakery is often referred to as an institution in its community (Chapman, 2020f). Their story was told on an episode of Stuart McLean’s radio show *Vinyl Café*. Chapman (2020b) explains that the response to this particular episode was overwhelming, and it became one of McLean’s most popular episodes ever. Tall Grass owner Paul Langel describes going to one of McLean’s shows in person and hearing the audience react to a Tall Grass reference: “In his monologue he mentioned Tall Grass and literally 2000 people burst into a standing ovation, I mean that’s *insane!* We’re just a little bakery... but it is *so much more*” (P. Langel, personal communication, August 27, 2021).

As mentioned, Tall Grass is considered a pioneer of the small organic local bakery industry in Winnipeg. While there was only one other bakery of their kind in Canada back in 1990,

several of Tall Grass's employees went on to start their own small local bakeries in other areas of the city and province. Today the city has at least six bakeries that use local or organic ingredients. Tall Grass has welcomed this industry growth and even described this as their variation of franchising. Tabitha Langel told CBC News: "Global trade, as big as ever. Amazon seems to own the world, [...] But in the middle of that, there's people swimming in the other direction. And that's good" (CBC News, 2020). Today there are many small local bakeries in Winnipeg and across the country, but few as socio-environmentally-minded as Tall Grass. Under the same CBC news report, a user commented on the article saying the following:

"Another shining example of how someone should run a business. You go in and you're struck with the organization and design of the place, balanced with beautiful and soothing aesthetics. The aroma wafts up your olfactory area and brings you peace and contentment. You're served by well-trained personnel that care. The ingredients of what you're eating are carefully chosen - no worries here. In essence: It's run by management who envisions themselves [as] customers and are constantly asking themselves what they would want. They become us so they understand us. Want a BA in business administration? Study businesses like this. There aren't so many around so choose carefully. It will be time well spent for a future well managed" (CBC News, 2020).

Finally, it is worth underscoring that Tall Grass was founded for the purpose of improving the lives of its stakeholders; specifically local farmers and their local community in general. This view of stakeholders as a community is noteworthy because it is not consistent with the conventional approach. *While the traditional approach seeks to manage stakeholders for the benefit of the firm, Tall Grass's approach appears to manage the firm for the benefit of the stakeholders.* This will become more evident in the findings below.

Research Methods and Data Collection

Several data collection methods were used in this case study. First, participant observation was used to integrate the researcher into the Tall Grass environment. I spent approximately 12 hours working at the bakery alongside employees doing various tasks such as canning vegetables, chopping ingredients, packaging bread, and interacting with customers and employees. Throughout this process I interacted with employees, customers and suppliers in order to better understand the environment and culture of Tall Grass. These hands-on, in-person working experiences occurred sporadically over a period of several months. A field notes journal was kept to record thoughts, observations and ideas from each of these experiences. The journal contains fifteen pages of written notes from these participant observation sessions.

Second, in-depth qualitative interviews with individuals from different stakeholder groups were conducted. These stakeholders included all four owners, six employees, four customers, and three suppliers. The interview protocol for each stakeholder group consisted of a series of open-ended questions for the interviewee to answer from their own unique perspective. This allowed for data to be collected from the perspective of multiple stakeholders of Tall Grass, which in turn resulted in a more expansive dataset. Each interview was recorded and subsequently transcribed for analysis.

Interviews with owners were the most extensive and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes each. These interviews all took place in-person at one of the two Tall Grass locations. Interview questions for owners included: “Please tell me about the management structure at Tall Grass?”, “Who are Tall Grass’s key stakeholders?” and “How would you describe Tall Grass’s business philosophy?” (see *Appendix One* for an exhaustive list of interview questions for owners). In total there were four owner interviews, resulting in 325 minutes of interview recordings, and 63 pages of interview transcripts.

Interviews with employees took on average 30 minutes each and mainly took place in-person at Tall Grass. Four were in-person and two were over Zoom. Interview questions for employees included: “What does a typical shift look like for you?”, “How would you describe the relationships you have with other stakeholders of Tall Grass?” and “How would you describe Tall Grass’s business philosophy?” (see *Appendix Two* for a full list of interview questions for employees). In total there were six employee interviews, resulting in 173 minutes of interview recordings and 40 pages of interview transcripts.

Interviews with suppliers lasted about 15 minutes each and took place over the phone. Interview questions for suppliers included: “Please tell me about your relationship with Tall Grass Bakery”, “What effect do you think Tall Grass has had on other organizations and their community?” and “How would you describe Tall Grass’s business philosophy?” (see *Appendix Three* for a complete list of interview questions for suppliers). In total there were three supplier interviews resulting in 46 minutes of interview recordings and 11 pages of interview transcripts.

Interviews with customers lasted about 15 minutes each and, due to COVID restrictions, took place over the phone and via Zoom. Three interviews were conducted over the phone and one was via Zoom. Interview questions for customers included: “Why do you choose to shop at Tall Grass Bakery?” “How would you describe your interactions with the people at Tall Grass?”

and “How would you describe Tall Grass’s relationship with its community?” (see *Appendix Four* for a list of interview questions for customers). In total the four customer interviews resulted in 56 minutes of interview recordings and 13 pages of interview transcripts.

Third, I met approximately once a month with one of the owners of Tall Grass over a six month period to ask specific follow-up questions and gain new insights about the bakery. I kept a field notes journal in which I recorded all of my observations and informal interactions with various stakeholders at the bakery. I recorded my thoughts and experiences of each interaction in order to further enrich the data set. These informal meetings resulted in eight pages of notes in my journal.

Finally, I collected and examined archival materials pertinent to my study, including relevant articles and literature on Tall Grass. There were 19 archival items in total: 6 articles, 4 blogposts, 1 book, 1 poster in a community newsletter, 2 webpages, 1 social media story, 1 radio show episode, and 3 videos. These resulted in a total of 6 minutes of video and 172 pages of text and images (see *Appendix Five* for a more detailed account of this material).

These research methods were discussed and approved by the board members at Tall Grass who were very supportive of the project. The interview questions and methodology were approved by the Research Ethics Board. The data collection for this study was conducted over a period of about 8 months from August 2021 to March 2022. Information about the recruitment process, consent and confidentiality is described in detail in *Appendix Six*.

Data Analysis

The interview transcripts were analyzed and coded in QDA Miner, the qualitative data analysis software. Each transcript was first coded based on a number of specific concepts that emerged from the interview data. These were then bundled together to form overarching themes amongst the interview questions.

In the first round of coding, each transcript was analyzed to identify more narrow and specific reoccurring concepts within the data. The first group of specific first-order codes included *management style, philosophy, decision-making, organizational culture, financial decisions, tension/balance, humility, people/planet over profit, and spirituality*. This group was later bundled together under the broad second-order category of *management philosophy*. The second group of first-order codes included *community, employees, suppliers, customers, owners, other organizations, and the environment*. This group also included the relationship between

each stakeholder, *employees* ↔ *owners*, *customers* ↔ *owners*, *community* ↔ *owners*, *suppliers* ↔ *owners*, *other organizations* ↔ *owners*, *owners* ↔ *owners*, *customers* ↔ *employees*, *suppliers* ↔ *employees*, *suppliers* ↔ *customers*, *employees* ↔ *employees*, *suppliers* ↔ *community*, *employees* ↔ *community*. These were later bundled under the overarching second-order category of *stakeholder relationships* in the second round of coding.

Thus, the key overarching themes that became relevant to the study included *management philosophy* and *stakeholder relationships*. The *management philosophy* theme included any mention of management style, decision making, business philosophy, organizational culture, financial decisions, ideas relating to tension or the need for balance in the firm, humility of the ownership/management team, spirituality, or the deliberate choice to place people and the planet over profit. The *stakeholder relationships* theme included reference to any stakeholder group (i.e., community, employees, suppliers, customers, owners, other organizations and the environment) along with any reference to the relationships between or amongst any stakeholder group. The first and second-order coding process is also illustrated in Table 1 below. The two overarching themes were later used in my findings to operationalize Waddock's (2021b) six core values, as well as in my findings regarding how stakeholders reciprocal actions contributed to financial viability. Both themes served as key concepts in my understanding of Tall Grass Bakery's cycle of success, and in its integrated framework of non-instrumental stakeholder relationships.

Table 1: First-Order Concepts and Second-Order Themes Coded in Data Analysis

First-Order Concepts	Second-Order Themes
Management style, business philosophy, decision-making, organizational culture, financial decisions, tension/balance, humility, people/planet over profit, spirituality	Management philosophy (people and planet over profit)
community, employees, suppliers, customers, owners, other organizations, the environment, employees \leftrightarrow owners, customers \leftrightarrow owners, community \leftrightarrow owners, suppliers \leftrightarrow owners, other organizations \leftrightarrow owners, owners \leftrightarrow owners, customers \leftrightarrow employees, suppliers \leftrightarrow employees, suppliers \leftrightarrow customers, employees \leftrightarrow employees, suppliers \leftrightarrow community, employees \leftrightarrow community	Stakeholder relationships (non-instrumental, holistic)

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

This study found that Tall Grass has three defining characteristics related to it being a people and nature-centric firm: 1) an unwavering philosophy that places social and environmental well-being above profit; 2) an ability to put their philosophy into practice which 3) serves to develop meaningful and longstanding relationships with each of their stakeholder groups (which in turn enables Tall Grass to remain financially viable despite its business-as-usual competitors). In particular, Tall Grass’s people and nature-centric philosophy and practices allow the firm to foster and maintain incredible stakeholder relationships. These, in turn, permit Tall Grass to remain financially viable and thus continue to stay true to their overarching philosophy. This cycle, depicted in the model in Figure 1 which arose from the data, allows Tall Grass to continue to flourish and remain successful in a neoliberal market society that values profit above all else.

Figure 1: Tall Grass Bakery’s Cycle of Success

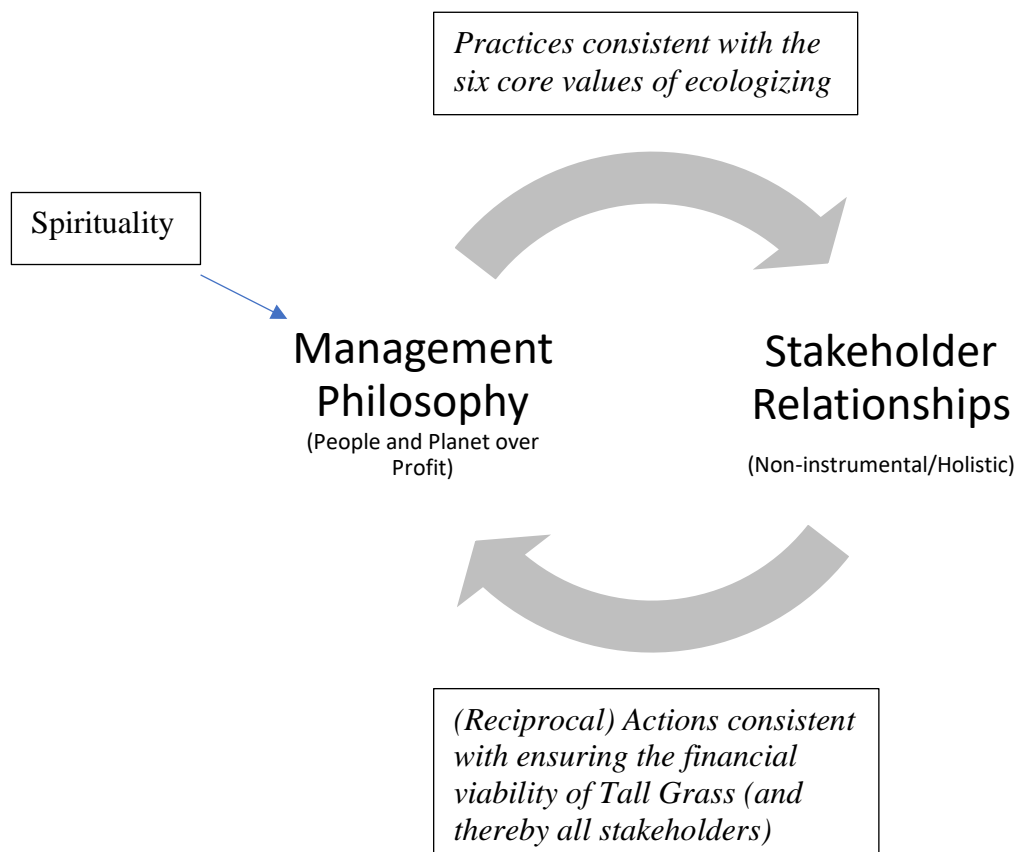


Figure 1 illustrates the cycle which keeps Tall Grass viable and allows it to adhere to its unique business philosophy. Tall Grass's philosophy of prioritizing people and the planet above profit grew out of and is fueled by the spiritual values and beliefs held by the Tall Grass owners. This compels the firm to implement practices that are consistent with Waddock's (2021b) six core values of ecologizing. These practices lead to the flourishing of holistic, non-instrumental relationships with Tall Grass stakeholders. These stakeholders happily forgo economizing behaviour in order to support and belong to an ecologizing firm and community. The ecologizing behaviour of their stakeholders allows Tall Grass to remain financially viable and this reinforces and informs their people and nature-centric philosophy. Tall Grass is then able to maintain their philosophy and make any necessary adjustments based on stakeholder actions and feedback.

Spirituality as Tall Grass's Philosophical Motivation

The first part of the research question—*What motivates people to manage their firm based on an integrated narrative that is people and nature-centric (particularly when it goes against the dominant societal narrative)?*—is essentially asking why an organization would choose to swim in the opposite direction of the current or go against the status quo. For Tall Grass the 'why' is rooted deeply in the faith and spirituality of their management team. Their sense of spirituality and connectedness is an expression of their identity: it is simply who they are. In an article for the *Canadian Mennonite*, Rempel Petkau (2014) wrote that the owners of Tall Grass emphasized “the critical role of faith, prayer and the support of their faith community on this journey” when discussing the bakery (para. 2). Their spirituality is also deeply intertwined with the bakery's business philosophy. In the same article, owner Paul Langel notes, “Our philosophy is hugely shaped by the community and our faith” (Rempel Petkau, 2014, para. 16). Owner Tabitha Langel describes how meaningful it is to her that the philosophy of the bakery lines up with the values of her faith. When asked what Tall Grass means to her, she said, “for me it's a vocation, it's not a job. That's what it means to me. It's a way of life that lines up with Grain of Wheat Church values. So it's integrated.”

This faith also plays a significant role in the bakery's relationship with the community. This is illustrated in the following excerpt from Tabitha Langel's response to being asked what effect she thought Tall Grass has had on the community:

“[...] I think also there's a spiritual side. [Before we opened] we really prayed, 'Are we called to try and live [the dream of this bakery] out in our community?' Like that was a

very serious question, and we used community discernment. We met with elders, we met with people in our community, and we were fully prepared if they would've said, 'No, don't do it, this won't work,' or, 'You shouldn't' – we wouldn't have. So I think that's one reason why it's felt so solid, because we had—it wasn't just us. It was a community of farmers who said, 'Yes, we would love to supply you.'”

Similarly, when asked what Tall Grass's key to success was, Tabitha explains the connection between their philosophy, their faith, and the community:

“I would say having a philosophy-driven business. I think that is a vision—having a vision and sticking to it. Being faithful to it. I think that is the key to Tall Grass's success. That we haven't had major shifts. And the people that I see looking to buy-in [i.e., new owners], I think they will modernize some things, but I don't think they will stray far from the philosophies. You have to stand for something and give back to the community. Like we donate *so* much food to shelters. And that feels great! We never brag about it because... I guess there we're Christian. When Jesus said, 'If you parade your good deeds, you've had your reward.'”

An employee describes how the ownership's integrated approach allows them to express their values through the firm which contributes to their success:

“This is the fabric of who they are. Like the way they live their life, the way they do business, it's all intertwined. It's very enmeshed. And they are committed to what they do, and they have a lot of committed and dedicated customers and suppliers” (Employee).

The evidence clearly shows that the Tall Grass management team chooses to operate using an integrated approach that is centered around people and the planet because of the values associated with their spirituality and faith. These values are deeply rooted in the business philosophy of the bakery which, in turn, dictates their business practices and how they interact with and relate to their community (i.e., their stakeholders).

It is important to note that the management team at Tall Grass also deliberately practices spiritual inclusivity. They are respectful and open to all religions and traditions practiced by their stakeholders, even non-spiritual ones. They value diversity and inclusivity and this is evident in the quote below.

“[We want] everyone to be welcome, as if we were addressing the divine in them. So hospitality has always been really the hallmark of welcoming, and making the bakery... Although we have political biases, quite often in an election we will make a cake for each party. And our thing is, at the bakery everyone should be welcome. It's a peaceful place where bread is served” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

Defining the Tall Grass Philosophy

Having established in the previous section that Tall Grass's philosophy is informed by its owners' spirituality, we will now turn to describing Tall Grass's philosophy.

In a local publication entitled *Anthologie* featuring Tall Grass for the bakery's 30th anniversary, Chapman (2020d) summarized the bakery's philosophy as follows:

“[B]ake from scratch using freshly milled, organic grains, support the well-being of small, local organic farmers, change people's perspective on how food should be grown, made and taste, support diversity, fair wages, sustainable business practices, and create a community and environment where everyone is welcome, even if they do not share the same beliefs” (p. 13).

The owners of Tall Grass described the overarching philosophy in various ways. These included operating as if people and the earth mattered and ensuring that all of their stakeholders' needs are met. One owner listed five elements that they felt were key to the philosophy. These were: 1) generosity, 2) ethics, 3) the magic of baking¹, 4) the FISH! philosophy² and 5) the politics of operating as if people and the earth matter. Fairness and respect were also mentioned a number of times by both owners and employees in relation to the philosophy of the business.

Below are three key quotes from the data that characterize Tall Grass's overarching philosophy. See *Appendix Nine* for a more exhaustive list of quotes relating to their business philosophy.

“*As if people and the earth mattered.*’ That’s our overarching theme or philosophy that seems to keep coming back all the time. And you know what, it comes back because it’s true. People do matter the most. It isn’t profit, unlike what you would normally read of the North American business magazines and so forth” (Lyle Barkman, Owner).

“Their philosophy is about fairness and feeling good about what they do [...] their philosophy is at the heart of who they are. [...] it’s how the business is built around the philosophy of supporting local, organic, treating the farmers fairly, paying them a good wage. Even back in the day when farmers were struggling to make ends meet, [the owners]

¹ One owner described baking as a magical experience: “Bakeries are magical places. [...] it’s magical to step in here. The smell of cinnamon in the air [...] We also have a fan [...] and it blasts out over Wolseley all these aromas, and we shamelessly put it on” (Lyle Barkman, Owner).

² The FISH! Philosophy is a well-known business philosophy modelled after the Seattle Pike Place Fish Market that has proven to boost employee morale and in turn provide customer satisfaction. The philosophy is characterized by four principles: 1) Be there 2) Play 3) Make their day 4) Choose your attitude. For more information visit: <https://www.fishphilosophy.com/what-is-fish/>

decided, ‘Nope, we cannot pay the going rate. We have to pay more because it’s only fair.’ So their success is with the people they deal with, with their suppliers, as well as with their staff, the way they treat us” (Employee).

“The business philosophy... well, it’s not about getting the cheapest product! It’s about supporting the local farmers, supporting organic farming. And that kind of bleeds into every other [aspect]... [...] It’s about being good to the environment. And the people who farm it, paying them a fair amount for the product that they’re providing” (Employee).

The Philosophy of People and Planet over Profit. Based on the data, it became clear that Tall Grass’s philosophy is not necessarily concrete and specific, but rather holistic and all-encompassing. It is evident that there are numerous values, beliefs and characteristics that make up Tall Grass’s philosophy, but upon analysis, it became clear that the majority of these can fall under one umbrella: the prioritization of socio-environmental well-being over profit. Tall Grass deliberately chooses to place more value on its stakeholder groups –including the environment—than on maximizing profit. This is evident in practically every facet of the business, from who they hire, the suppliers they choose to source their ingredients and packaging from, and the support they provide to their community. Below are three illustrative quotes from the data that exemplify Tall Grass’s deliberate choice to place people and the planet above profit. See *Appendix Ten* for a more exhaustive list of quotes relating to placing people and the planet above profit.

“We’re *not* totally bottom-line driven. Like, really the fundamentals are that *all* the stakeholder’s needs should be met. [...] So that then dictates your profitability. If you let wages go into the \$20 range slowly, yeah, most food places don’t want that. They don’t want career people, because they’re too expensive. But we’re saying, well, ‘We welcome career people,’ but there’s a huge cost to that! So if that’s your philosophy—you want to pay your suppliers fairly, you want to treat your employees fairly—there isn’t much left at the end. And we make a decent wage. So in some ways that’s the fundamental decision. You have your vision: you want to be local; you want to be organic as much as possible; you want to mill your own flour. Those are all enormous cost points. [...] So the business vision is really shaped by the philosophy underneath it, you know. And I often say, ‘Boy, our vision costs us enormously!’” (Paul Langel, Owner)

“In the end when we do the financial reports from the accounting firm, when they produce our financials at the year end, [the owners] don’t stress about not making a huge amount of money, netting a lot. It’s about having done the right thing and we made it through another year, here we go, let’s set out and do it again” (Employee).

“[Because of COVID] last year was not a stellar year financially [...] but each year at Christmastime [the owners] give all the employees two extra weeks of pay, it’s a bonus. So

in spite of the fact of hardly making any money, they were committed to somehow paying this two week bonus to all their employees. So at Christmastime everybody had an extra two weeks of pay. [The owners] did that” (Employee).

Tall Grass’s philosophy is not “pie-in-the-sky” ideals. Rather, it serves to inform the everyday operations of the firm in a very tangible way. Tall Grass Bakery’s ability to stay true to its socio-ecological business philosophy for more than three decades has allowed it to thrive and flourish despite our society’s dominant neoliberal regime. A number of the bakery’s stakeholders credited this unwavering philosophy as a key to Tall Grass’s success. Below are three illustrative quotes from interviews with three different owners that exemplify Tall Grass’s unwavering philosophy. See *Appendix Eleven* for a more exhaustive list of quotes relating to Tall Grass’s immutable values and beliefs.

“We hold ourselves to the philosophy. Like all decisions run through that grid. That’s how we make decisions. So our philosophy is the single—‘Will it help this or not?’—that’s the first lens” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

“It’s funny because Tall Grass is very different from the other bakeries. [...] Where Tall Grass started with an idea, with a philosophy and they expanded into the bakery, not the other way around. So that’s what makes it really interesting, for me anyway. [...] The philosophy stayed. And sometimes it’s easy to shift, you know, when the business grows and you think, ‘Oh, maybe we should cut this and cut that to make more money here.’ But they didn’t. So that was really... that’s what sets this bakery apart in some ways” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).

“I think it’s also a huge success that we’ve never wavered on the philosophy. Even when there was conflict we’ve never had conflict over the core elements of our beliefs, which is local, organic, fair treatment of employees. We had never any conflict over that, not even once... like, amazing” (Paul Langel, Owner).

Insofar as Tall Grass’s philosophy is consistent with Waddock’s (2021b) ecologizing framework, it is appropriate to use the six core values of the ecologizing framework as a conceptual framework to describe how Tall Grass’s philosophy is evident in its operations.

Putting the Six Core Ecologizing Values into Practice at Tall Grass

The second element of the research question is, *How does a firm operate using an integrated narrative that is people and nature-centric and what does it look like for them to do so?* This can be examined by describing how Tall Grass operationalizes Waddock’s (2021b) six core values of the ecologizing framework. Table 2 below summarizes the six core values, including contrasting the economizing and ecologizing perspectives, and provides an overview

of how they are put into practice in the context of Tall Grass Bakery. It is useful to note that there is considerable overlap among the core values and their operationalization, as is appropriate for a holistic approach like the ecologizing framework (Waddock, 2021b).

Table 2: How Tall Grass Operationalizes the Six Core Values of Ecologizing

Six core values	Economizing counterpart	Ecologizing operationalization	Tall Grass practices (especially implications for stakeholders)
1. Stewardship of the whole	Take advantage of (exploit) others and nature (low cost inputs)	Take care of others (especially the marginalized and voiceless)	<i>Take care of planet (soil) and people (farmers, hire refugees, pay living wage)</i>
2. Collective value	Financial value (invisible hand); view money as a proxy for wealth/well-being	Value socio-ecological well-being more than money	<i>Prioritize healthy soil, flourishing community, happy families, reconciliation and social justice</i>
3. Cosmopolitan localism	Decisions made at distant headquarters (wealth/power condensed at the top)	Ensure decisions are locally-made, place-based, and bottom-up	<i>Work with local place-based organizations, consensus decision-making among owners, consult often with other stakeholder groups</i>
4. Regenerativity, reciprocity, circularity	No regard for reducing negative externalities (e.g., industrial agriculture)	Become aware of and reduce negative, and enhance positive, externalities	<i>Support regenerative agriculture, use reusable and returnable pie plates, use biodegradable and compostable packaging, compost and donate leftover food</i>
5. Relationality and connectedness	We can manage the “whole” if we reduce it into its parts	Recognizing that everything is inherently inter-connected	<i>Treat stakeholders as holistic community, not instrumentally</i>
6. Equitable markets and trade	Exploit others using supplier/buyer power	Ensure that fair returns are granted to market participants along the supply, production, and distribution chains	<i>Fair price to farmers, living wage to workers, fair price to customers</i>

The first value, *stewardship of the whole*, focuses on developing a holistic ethic of care for all of society. At the individual firm level this can be put into practice by taking care of others, particularly the marginalized or voiceless. Tall Grass operationalizes this value in multiple ways.

First, they take care of the land and soil by sourcing certified organic ingredients to ensure that soil health is being maintained for future generations. They take care of their community by donating food and money to various local charities. They take care of their employees by paying a living wage and hiring marginalized individuals such as newcomers, refugees and seniors.

These themes are evident in the following quotes.

“I find it very hard to understand how a culture as smart as this one will treat the food industry the way it does. [...] What do we need more than food? Water. Water and food. The two most basic needs, we disrespect. So I think I’m most passionate about trying to change that. Good food, connected to the land and to people, gets treasured again, or respected. Respect I think is at the heart of it: respect the people who grow [the food]; respect the land itself; respect the people who work; and respect the customers. Respect all through the circle. But for me it’s the land” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

“They support local. That’s their main ... and sustainability. Like business, but obviously also ecological sustainability. And just really support, like when they donate money. When you support marginalized people, it brings everyone up, and they get that” (Employee).

“When I look at our immigrant employees, they’re phenomenal. And they get paid what *everybody* gets paid. I mean it’s a wonderful place for them to land. You know, a *safe* environment where you’re respected” (Paul Langel, Owner).

The second core value of the ecologizing framework, *collective value*, emphasizes the holistic well-being of everyone and allowing all beings to flourish. At the individual firm level this can be put into practice by deliberately valuing social and environmental well-being more than their own financial well-being. As we have seen, Tall Grass operationalizes this value in many ways, including: choosing to purchase environmentally-friendly packaging that is significantly more expensive than the low-cost alternative; enhancing the well-being of the soil even though doing so does not provide financial benefit to the firm; enhancing the well-being of their employees and hiring people with barriers to the workforce; encouraging long-term employees and paying them a living wage which cuts into their profit margin significantly; and paying their suppliers a fair price for their organic product thereby contributing to the well-being of their suppliers and the soil even though Tall Grass could choose to source from less expensive suppliers.

“I mean they can get cheaper supplies, like cheaper flour and cheaper grains on the industrial side of things. But they chose to support the local, which it does cost them more to buy supplies, but they were able to stick with that model and that supply and still be able to market their product at a price that the community is still willing to buy and support. And it’s worked for them!” (Supplier)

“In packaging, for instance, they just found a new supplier for packaging. The price of the packaging is three times what we’ve been paying until now, but this is compostable. So that means we can get rid of the Styrofoam, that means we can get rid of more of the plastic. So it does not matter to the owners that this means this is going to cut into their bottom-line, into the money that they make as owners. It’s about doing the right thing, what they consider to be the right thing. The wheat they buy, the price they pay for organic is considerably higher than what they could buy regular production supplies for. Buying fruit, vegetables from the Hutterites. They pay them a fair price, they don’t try to go for the least expensive, they go for what’s fair” (Employee).

The third ecologizing value, *cosmopolitan localism*, prioritizes local business along with empowered participation and bottom-up decision-making practices. At the firm level this can be put into practice by prioritizing local inputs and outputs, and making place-based decisions with input from a range of stakeholders. Tall Grass operationalizes this value in multiple ways. First, they choose to source their ingredients from local farmers and Hutterite colonies. In order to maintain the integrity of the bakery and serve the communities that support them, they deliberately remain small and refuse to franchise. Franchising in the traditional sense could dilute the business philosophy and subsequent bakeries could easily be co-opted by TBL or FBL owners and managers that follow the economizing paradigm. All decisions at Tall Grass are made by the management team using consensus, and mediation has been used to resolve challenges as they arise. Input from various stakeholders (customers, suppliers, employees and the community) is always welcome and taken into consideration. Here are some quotes that illustrate this core value.

“Tall Grass has always been a farm-oriented type of operation. They’re very supportive of local farmers and local products. So I mean it’s not just us that’s supplying it, there’s multiple local farmers that are supplying them. And they’ve been a big promoter of local agriculture. And it’s been a good working relationship all the way along. So it’s just been great dealing with them anyway” (Supplier).

“So the other thing we’ve fully committed to is to mediation if there’s problems [among us as owners]. So that we can work respectfully together, not with all kinds of hidden branches. That I think has *tremendously* enhanced the culture at Tall Grass, because we’ve passed that on to the staff: that differences have to be acknowledged, worked on, and the outcome is not agreement, it’s a respectful understanding of each other’s position, and no gossip” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

“They are preposterously and beautifully intentional about how owners and staff communicate, and that staff feel a part of what’s happening. Just in terms of like... I know that the owners are in constant communication about decisions, and they’ve even done

mediation and this sort of thing. It's very much kind of a community business culture rather than the super corporate culture" (Former Employee) .

"We really have a connection with the locals, which is great. So different. It's not comparable to a big store, and I think that's their success" (Employee).

"Sometimes getting smaller is beneficial. We don't have a 'grow at all cost' vision. At the same time we have to grow our sales because of inflation every year, so we normally in about June do a roughly 4% price hike every year. [...] So that type of growth is important. But it is not important for us to, let's say, franchise. And that might differ for different owners, [...] but as a team we're not interested" (Paul Langel, Owner).

The fourth value, *regenerativity, reciprocity and circularity*, highlights the importance of circular production and consumption practices that avoid toxins, eliminate waste, and employ biomimicry. At the firm level this can be put into practice by becoming aware of and reducing negative externalities while simultaneously working to enhance positive externalities. Tall Grass operationalizes this value by supporting regenerative agriculture through their use of organic suppliers, switching to biodegradable packaging, eliminating food waste by composting and donating leftovers, and employing eco-friendly merchandising methods such as their reusable pie plate program. With regard to the latter, the bakery stopped using foil pie plates and instead sells their pies in reusable metal plates that customers can keep if they like. "In an effort to avoid using foil pie plates. Tall Grass purchased 10,000 pans and introduced their reusable pie plate program" (Chapman, 2020b, p. 23). They charge a \$5 deposit for the plate (which customers get refunded to them if and when the plate is returned) but the plate is worth much more than \$5. The following quotes illustrate Tall Grass's commitment to reducing negative externalities and enhancing positive ones.

"They're consistent in how they want to package things, even the reusable pie plates that people have to return and get their money back for it. It's about being good to the environment" (Employee).

"We just felt it was important to at least try and do something at the local level to support small family farms that were trying to look after the land in a very wonderful, caring way" (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

"We stone-mill all our organic grains, and we purchase sifted organic blends of flour, and that's just been a given. Through all the owners that have been in Tall Grass through the years, that thing has never wavered. Nobody has come ever into a meeting and said, 'You know, we could cut 40% off of our input costs if we didn't use this organic flour all the

time.’ That doesn’t happen. That’s been actually something to be quite thankful for” (Lyle Barkman, Owner).

“Nothing ever gets wasted! We compost and our day-olds get donated” (Tall Grass employee, in Chapman, 2020e, p. 27).

Note that, given the interrelationship among the six core values (Waddock, 2021b), other examples of how this core value is evident in Tall Grass practices have already been alluded to in previous descriptions. For example, the importance of choosing organic suppliers is discussed in more detail in reference to Tall Grass’s relationships with both their suppliers and the environment. Similarly, the use of biodegradable packaging was discussed in reference to *collective value*.

The fifth ecologizing value, *relationality and connectedness*, emphasizes collectivism rather than individualism, and the fact that all beings are embedded within society, which is embedded within nature, and all are connected to and affected by each other. At the firm level this can be put into practice by understanding that everything and everyone is inherently interconnected, and acting as such. Tall Grass operationalizes this value by treating each of its stakeholders as part of a holistic community rather than instrumentally as a means to a profitable end. Tall Grass’s physical facilities have been designed with transparent partitions so that all of their stakeholders (employees, customers, suppliers, neighbors, the community, and other organizations) can see their milling and baking processes. In other words, bakers are not face-less backroom workers who are creating commodified products: rather, they are people you can see and identify with, whom you can observe in their craft. This also allows stakeholders to witness the entire baking process and feel more connected to the inputs, the baked goods, and to the people who had a hand in making them. Tall Grass also displays a map showing customers where in the province each farmer or supplier is located.

“I think that there is an intentional connection to the rural element, and a personal connection to the farmers that makes it also meaningful for the agriculture aspect, you know. There’s the wheat, there’s the mill, there’s a direct line from land to table that is visible in the bakery. You can see it if you walked around and hung around enough at The Forks. Just walking around the building throughout the day, you’d be able to see the entire process. From the farmer’s coming in, to the milling, to the weighing, to the flour, to the baking, to the selling, to the cleaning. Having an open bakery like that is also part of it too” (Employee).

Tall Grass also develops relationality and connectedness beyond how they source and bake goods. For example, they take part in social justice movements and community endeavors in

ways that help educate and expand their customers' point of view. The following quotes illustrate how Tall Grass relates and connects to the community in ways that transcend the instrumental baking, buying and selling of bread.

“[In terms of how we've affected customers] I think we've talked the food politics well, indirectly. Like this map [interviewee points to map of suppliers on wall at The Forks location] has been a big one. [...] So I think we've taught the philosophy. Also by things we've done. Like when the climate strike was on, we shut down both [the bakery and the kitchen], and paid staff. We didn't force staff to go [participate in the climate march]. We just suggested that they are on pay, and we would appreciate if they would show up. So things like that. We've always been very proactively involved with *Every Child Matters*. We get involved with causes and customers get drawn into it, some of them, building awareness. Like I know we stopped on July 1st, we stopped for a moment of silence here. And in the line-up there was an Aboriginal, clearly someone who was into the day. And behind her was this White woman who hadn't at all been drawn in. So I briefly said why we were doing this, what it was about, and the White woman turned to the Aboriginal woman and said, 'I'm so sorry, I really don't know much about this and I should.' That was such a good moment for me. So it matters what we do, however small” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

“I remember one year, helping out, assembling a bunch of sandwiches for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission when it was first happening in Winnipeg. Every single year there's a friend of our family, her school kids come and use Tall Grass to bake a bunch of cookies for a bake sale, as a space to use for that. And staff... I've baked pies there for a wedding before.... I don't know, it feels like Tall Grass—I wouldn't quite say it's a community space because I don't think *everyone* has that in. But certainly Tall Grass affects the customers, the families of the staff, and the farmers. But I think its roots have gone far beyond that because they are a business that also wants to benefit the community too” (Former Employee).

Finally, the sixth value, *equitable markets and trade*, prioritizes social and ecological well-being in business practices, with particular emphasis on ensuring the production of goods and services that are truly good and actually serve society. As we have seen, at Tall Grass this can be put into practice by ensuring that fair financial returns are granted to market participants along the supply, production, and distribution chains.

“When we are going through a price hike, we really think twice about it. It's not something that we do lightly. We have a wide range of customers. Some people are very well off, and some others are not. So you have to think about everybody. So we always try to keep some items at an affordable price. I guess bakery products are a bit of a staple of life in some ways, *bread* anyway. So I find it very hard to see the price of bread going up and up and up. I find this difficult because I know for some people it's a basic. Less and less, but still, it's a necessity item” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).

In addition to operationalizing this value by paying its suppliers and employees fair wages, and by keeping prices affordable for consumers, this value can also be put into practice by choosing to produce goods that are healthy and enhance the well-being of people and the planet, and producing these goods in an ethical and environmentally-sustainable way. Tall Grass operationalizes this by providing products that use nutritious, wholesome, organic and local ingredients.

“Our goal from the beginning was healthy bread. However, once we made a few cinnamon buns, the cinnamon buns took over. And I think once you open your doors, the public also owns you. It’s a partnership. And you can’t decide for them, you can’t say, ‘I’m only going to make six dozen cinnamon buns because they’re not healthy for us’. *Laughs* So it’s definitely this dance with... we do mill every day, like that’s still what we do. And we’ve kept on with the healthy bread. And in the last few years we’ve really upped into sourdough and desem breads, they *are* healthier. And that has been... like we’ve been kind of also relentless with putting good bread out there, and buns. But much to our surprise and dismay, sweets are probably 50-60% of what we do. But our cookies are nutritionally *way* healthier than most; same with our muffins” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

“It’s hard to imagine, like I say, not having Tall Grass there. [...] We would have a very difficult time finding things that are healthy to enjoy, both in goodies and also their bread of course” (Customer).

In sum, the six core values of ecologizing pervade all aspects of Tall Grass’s daily operations, from the suppliers they choose to source their ingredients from, to the products they choose to produce, to the marginalized individuals they choose to employ. A hallmark of these values is that Tall Grass’s practices go beyond instrumental and economizing behaviors (as shown in Table 2), a theme that will be developed further in the next section.

The analysis thus far has examined the first two parts of the research question, identifying the motivation for Tall Grass’s philosophy, and how that philosophy has been put into practice in a way that operationalizes the six core values of the ecologizing framework. The next sections will examine how specific outcomes of these practices have helped Tall Grass remain financially successful and maintain an unwavering commitment to its management philosophy, even in the face of mainstream competitors.

Non-instrumental and Holistic Stakeholder Relationships

The third part of the research question is, *How can a people and planet-centered firm survive and even thrive in a business-as-usual market-centric economy?* From the data it quickly became obvious that the emphasis Tall Grass places on its stakeholder relationships is not only a

key part of their philosophy, but also a key part of their success. Each key stakeholder group – owners, employees, customers, suppliers, other organizations, the community and the environment—is treated as integral and indispensable to the bakery and its ability to fulfill its philosophy. But it also goes beyond this, in at least two important ways. First, stakeholders are treated with dignity and respect in ways that go beyond their instrumental relationship to Tall Grass, and in ways that motivate stakeholders to reciprocate by engaging with Tall Grass in ways that go beyond the stakeholders’ economizing interests. Second, as we shall see, because Tall Grass sees and treats their stakeholders as part of a larger inter-connected whole that goes far beyond the bakery, the stakeholders in turn better recognize that they are part of this and make positive contributions to this larger whole by engaging with Tall Grass.

The meaningful and long-term relationships that Tall Grass has built with their stakeholders allows the bakery to survive and thrive despite the neoliberal market regime. Tall Grass takes a holistic, non-instrumental approach in how they relate to each of their stakeholder groups. Put differently, this means that they view their stakeholders as part of a holistic community, more than just a means to an end. Ironically, this non-instrumental, holistic approach to their relationships plays a key role in Tall Grass’s success. Because each stakeholder is treated as part of a larger community, they become more likely to act in ways that contradict the business-as-usual perspective, and instead their actions align with the ecologizing approach. Being part of this community results in stakeholders supporting Tall Grass even if this goes against each stakeholder’s economizing interests.

The remainder of this section will describe how (1) Tall Grass’s treating stakeholders in non-instrumental ways results in stakeholders reciprocating by treating Tall Grass in beyond-instrumental ways, and how (2) in so doing everyone learns to value the experience of contributing to and benefitting from belonging to a larger, ecologizing and flourishing community – where true happiness comes from being connected with others (as is consistent with Tall Grass’s philosophy).

Owners. The management structure of Tall Grass is made up of the four current co-owners. The relationships amongst the ownership group allows the bakery to uphold and adhere to the ecologizing philosophy. The way in which the owners at Tall Grass treat each other is highly indicative of and provides the foundation for how they treat other stakeholders of the bakery. A key element to the owners’ relationships is respect. The owners maintain respect and

appreciation for each other. They maintain integrity in their business and personal lives and deliberately make an effort to keep peace amongst themselves. This is exemplified by their decision-making practices.

“These four people go to church together. They live in the same community. They own a business together. That is *intense*. And somehow they manage to maintain integrity in their business and their personal lives with each other, and then somehow show up in church Sunday morning and still look at each other. Business can be—it’s tough, right? There’s a lot of decisions, and they don’t always agree. But in the end they maintain their respect for each other and appreciation for each other. And it has not always been easy. And that is really quite impressive” (Employee).

A notable feature of the management structure is that all decisions are made via consensus, not by votes or shares. Everyone gets a say and everyone gets heard. They use professional mediation services when necessary to ensure fair and respectful communication amongst members of the firm. The owners have said this has helped them immensely.

“In a nutshell it’s just... we work it together. I don’t think I’ve ever seen a decision that consensus hasn’t been applied. And we deal in our resources as if they matter. That means *people, the earth, communities*, these things are taken really seriously. [...] And we try to operate within the parameters that we would like to live on this earth for a long time” (Lyle Barkman, Owner).

“I think the hardest tension has probably been among the owner group. We got thrown together and we didn’t go to business school, so some of our philosophies are—we differ in terms of expectations... of work. [...] We’re not always on the same page, and in terms of practice, like living out the philosophy. So we’ve done a lot of mediation” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

The way in which Tall Grass owners treat each other non-instrumentally is illustrated by their willingness to hire professional services to ensure peace among the owners. This creates a sense of cohesion and satisfaction that transcends other ownership groups that may have divisive decision-making processes (e.g., in economizing firms). In a recent case, the owners were considering opening a third location in a different neighborhood in Winnipeg. This new location would have provided them with a larger space for baking and food production, which they very much need. However, this was during the turbulent time of COVID-19 when many things were uncertain and the price of renovating a new space would have been much higher than usual. Three owners were very much for opening this third location, and one owner was opposed to the idea. After meeting and discussing both sides, the three owners originally wanting to open the third location understood that it might not be the right time. If they had made decisions via

voting or shares, the one opposing owner could have easily been out-voted. However, with open communication and honest discussion, the group was able to see both sides of the issue and come to the best conclusion for the firm.

In sum, Tall Grass owners willingly engage in time-consuming, expensive, peace-building consensus decision-making, mediation and conflict resolution whenever necessary. It is appropriate, and somewhat ironic, that this happens in an exemplary ecologizing firm. If it needs to happen at such a firm, what does this say about economizing or TBL firms?

In addition to their unique decision-making style, there are some distinctive ownership rules. An owner of Tall Grass must actively work in the bakery, and cannot simply be a passive shareholder who moves away but holds on to their stake. This ensures that owners stay connected with their stakeholders, interact with them face-to-face on a regular basis, and thus are more likely to treat them non-instrumentally. Meanwhile, absentee owners who are more distant from day-to-day relationships with stakeholders may become increasingly inclined to see the ownership in instrumental terms. This rule is illustrated by former owner Ray Epp, who was featured in an article in the *Winnipeg Free Press*. Martin (2016) writes, “You won’t find his name on the Tall Grass ownership list. Epp had to sell his share when he left Manitoba, a rule he helped build into the business to ensure it stayed grassroots and local [i.e., connected to stakeholders]” (p. 4). Another rule is that children of current owners cannot automatically inherit their parent’s shares of the bakery, which ensures that owners are deliberately chosen so that the well-being of the bakery is preserved.

The owners’ non-instrumental commitment to each other and to others is also evident to other stakeholders. One employee said, “They’re just good examples of being good stewards of the earth and truly being in business for the sake of job creation and connections with people.” The care exemplified by the owners towards each other extends to a care for other stakeholders, as evident in and expressed by the ongoing commitment to their non-instrumental business philosophy and business practices, which clearly provide owners with a great deal of meaning and satisfaction (and a desire to perpetuate their philosophy and these practices). This is illustrated in the following quote:

“I’ve never forgotten that all stakeholders matter. If you abuse one of them, in the long run it derails. [...] And staff is really important. That’s one of my great joys, to create that level of employment [for our staff], and a decent place [to work]” (Paul Langel, Owner).

Ultimately, the Tall Grass ownership forgoes economizing behavior to support and belong to an ecologizing firm and thereby an ecologizing community. They do this by deliberately acting in non-instrumental ways with each other and with other stakeholders. They use a bottom-up decision-making approach along with consensus amongst ownership and mediation when necessary. They relax their need to maximize profits and instead spend more money on their employees, their organic suppliers, and their community. They act as though all their stakeholders are interconnected and part of a holistic community, which in turn creates satisfaction and meaning for them and, fosters wider societal and ecological well-being. See *Appendix Twelve* for an exhaustive list of quotes relating to the ownership of the bakery.

Employees. The management at Tall Grass foster deep and meaningful long-term relationships with their employees. Tall Grass employees recognize and appreciate how owners treat each other. They also value and acknowledge that this care spills over into how owners treat employees in non-instrumental ways.

“They are preposterously and beautifully intentional about how owners and staff communicate, and that staff feel a part of what’s happening. Just in terms of like... I know that the owners are in constant communication about decisions and they’ve even done mediation and this sort of thing. *It’s very much kind of a community business culture rather than the super corporate culture.* [...] they pay a living wage for full-time dedicated staff. They’ve hired people, you know, newcomers to Canada, and try to have those people represented in decision-making” (Former Employee).

“I think that the owners for me have been—even on a personal level, when there’s been stuff going on with the family—they’re so supportive. Or with remote learning on and off over the last two years [because of COVID], just accommodating that for me because I had to be home with my kids. So yeah, they’re very supportive and it shows, especially with the bakers, like people are here for a long time for the most part. There’s a lot of long-term employment which I think says a lot about our company” (Employee).

“[The owners] give me a lot of autonomy. And there’s just a lot of trust between the owners, with each other, as well as with their employees. [...] And just the respect that they show me and other employees makes... I think it just lays a good foundation for reciprocating that” (Employee).

“[The owners] let you do your job, and they appreciate what you’re doing, so it’s a two-way thing. So that’s always great. I would never be able to work for somebody who I don’t have a good relationship with, because I would quit right away and say, you know, ‘It sounds too much like work’. You have to have fun” (Employee).

Respect is a key element to the relationships Tall Grass fosters with its staff. In particular, the management team highlighted the importance of appreciating and honouring the working class, facilitating peace amongst their employees, and having informal consulting meetings with staff in order to foster communication and gather feedback.

“The relationship we have with the staff, I think it’s always been ahead of a lot of preoccupations. It’s always at the forefront of our thought when we come up with decisions or something like this. Staff well-being will always be ahead” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).

Because Tall Grass treats its employees with trust and respect, it allows the owners to form relationships with employees that flourish. Tall Grass employees are paid a living wage and are encouraged to develop their career at the bakery. Many Tall Grass employees have been with the firm for more than a decade and their wages have risen steadily throughout their tenure. Because of the positive relationships that the ownership has with their employees, the bakery is able to retain long-term employees and maintain low rates of attrition.

“They treat their staff well, so you get long-term staff like me, or [name of employee], or [name of employee]. Like, we’ve all been here over 10 years, you know” (Employee).

Tall Grass also values diversity and inclusivity, and deliberately chooses to hire people with barriers to the workforce. This includes newcomers, refugees, single parents, seniors, and people with language barriers. For example, owner Tabitha Langel noted that one of their first employees back in 1990 was a gay man. The following quotes further describe instances where Tall Grass chose to hire marginalized individuals:

“I was a stay at home mom for 10 years and when I was looking for work after that point... it took me a long time because not many people want to hire someone who’s been at home for 10 years. These guys gave me a chance though!” (Employee)

“When they hire people to work for them it’s not just because they think this person would do the best—‘This person would help us make the most money’ or whatever, ‘be good at this or that.’ Sometimes they hire people purely because they want to give them a chance. Because they feel like they need a leg up, and maybe this is the place where they can get that leg up. I remember getting to know one of the supervisors when I first started. The supervisor of the counter at The Forks was a woman who moved here from another country, who did not even speak English when she got here, she hardly knew any English. And they hired her as counter staff because they saw potential in her, looking at her resume. And they hired her, and she ended up being the supervisor of the counter for years. And when they hired her she hardly spoke a lick of English. She said it was so incredibly stressful, but they gave her a chance, and she fought and fought and she did it. And I just think that is phenomenal. I think to pay somebody a fair wage to do a job speaking a

language that they hardly know, keeping your fingers crossed that the customers are going to be understanding, I think that's amazing" (Employee).

"Well even, you'll notice that a lot of the people that work there are people who are new to this country. Sometimes we have clerks who you can tell their English—they have a little struggle with English but [the owners are] always willing to support people who need a job" (Customer).

As employees witness this non-instrumental treatment from the Tall Grass ownership, they reciprocate by wanting to treat Tall Grass in ways that go beyond their own instrumental or economizing concerns. This is evident in how employees perceive their jobs as meaningful and in their deep level of commitment to Tall Grass.

"[Because of COVID] the owners have taken a decrease in salary right? Okay, they pay their employees the bonus [at the end of the year]. Then Canada Day is coming up, and the owners are saying, 'You know, we should really do something in light of everything that's going on in the Indigenous world, like right now [the residential school grave sites] coming to light. How can we just take advantage of this huge day?' Right, like Canada Day is huge for sales. And they decided that they wanted to give 100% of their income, as you know, to an Indigenous charity. And Paul said to Tabitha, 'I think we need to keep this under wraps. We'll put up a sign at the counter, but I don't want this to be a big splash. We're doing this because this is the right thing to do. Don't shout it from the rooftops.' And to me that is... it's not about getting more business. It's about just doing the right thing because it's the right thing to do. *And that makes me so proud to work for them*" (Employee).

Not only has the ownership team created meaningful, respectful and trustworthy relationships with their staff, allowing them to feel valued, the bakery also ensures that its employees feel connected to the community and other stakeholders. While the small scale and loyal customer base allow employees to develop meaningful relationships with regular customers, employees are also given the opportunity to connect with the bakery's suppliers (see *suppliers* section for more detail). Through the bakery's community support endeavours, employees are able to also feel connected to the local community, society at large, and the environment (see *community* section for more detail). This motivates employees to respond in non-instrumental ways because Tall Grass helps them feel connected to a larger 'whole'.

"The farmers, I see them, I recognize their faces. [...] They've had farm tours. [The owners] bring staff out to the farmers and we spend the day there" (Employee).

"So those relationships amongst staff and also with customers—like I still run into Tall Grass customers, and they still know exactly who I am, and I know exactly who they are.

So those relationships still last even beyond Tall Grass. Tall Grass builds community even beyond its actual sales” (Former Employee).

“I don’t know if there’s been a job that I’ve found myself smiling so much? Because you’re serving cinnamon buns to people and they’re happy. They’re usually there because they have the day off or they’re going to a party and they’re grabbing something like, you know, on a good day. And you’re helping them with that. So yeah, I always found it super enjoyable, super rewarding” (Former Employee).

All of these elements allow Tall Grass employees to feel valued and be part of a larger community. They forgo economizing behaviour and instead support and belong to an ecologizing firm and community. Their job is more than just a paycheck and they truly enjoy their work. This is evident in how Tall Grass keeps employees for long periods of time and they have low rates of attrition, further contributing to their financial viability. See *Appendix Thirteen* for a more exhaustive list of quotes relating to Tall Grass’s relationship with its employees.

Customers. Tall Grass has a unique and impressive relationship with its customers characterized by three key elements. The first is transparency. The bakery has an open glass design in all spaces for their customers to see their baking processes. The open-view design of the bakery allows customers to put a ‘face’ on the bakers who make the products. These small practices help to personalize stakeholders, connecting them to each other rather than treating them as a commodity. The bakery also has a map of suppliers to show customers exactly where the bakery’s ingredients are from. Owner Tabitha Langel said this has had a significant impact on customers. This allows customers to put a name and place to where their food comes from, making them feel more connected to the land and to the food.

Another aspect of transparency is in the sharing of recipes. Tall Grass willingly shares all of its recipes with customers.

“They’ll give out recipes as long as people promise not to sell them. So I think, once again, it’s a community place. [Tall Grass] just wants Winnipeg to be eating good food, whether it’s from there or elsewhere” (Former Employee).

“We don’t believe in animosity or in hiding our recipes. We’re free with our recipes, customers can have them. They just can’t promote them as their own. But all this secrecy... Co-operation is what will get us further. There’s a saying we use a lot, and it’s a Buddhist saying actually: ‘If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with friends.’ And we’re into far” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

And this sharing of recipes goes both ways, with customers having reciprocated and provided recipes to Tall Grass.

“I think there are some recipes we are still using that started with you know, it was brought by a customer. I think what we do for Christmas, the Vinarterta which is an Icelandic cake, it was brought by a customer. And now we are doing like 500 every year!” (Loïc Perrot, Owner)

“Well gosh, we were one of the first customers. I don’t know what year that was. [...] For many years we’ve searched out the natural foods—the way I’ve always been in my own life, way, way back many decades, anyways—and we always wanted not only natural fruits and vegetables, but good bread. And [the bread at Tall Grass,] that’s good bread! We had an interest in—well we baked bread at some point ourselves, and we even tried sourdough. And I came across a very excellent book on sourdough, which I gave to Tabitha around the time when she was starting out. And I asked her if maybe she could have success making real good sourdough bread, and of course, she has! So ever since then, we’ve been making a good use of all that she has to offer at her bakery” (Customer).

A second notable dimension of Tall Grass’s relationship with customers is open communication that goes far beyond the transactional or instrumental sense. Rather, Tall Grass uses a more personal form of communication that makes stakeholders feel truly seen, heard and valued. In each regular meeting I had with one Tall Grass owner at each of the bakery locations, I was struck by how often our conversations were politely interrupted by passers-by saying ‘Hi’ and stopping for a quick chat. I would always get introduced and immediately feel like part of the conversation. These passers-by were often long-time customers, and on other occasions included former employees, distant family members, and on one occasion, a former Manitoba premier and his wife.

This open communication is clearly valued by customers, who reciprocate by providing valuable feedback that Tall Grass truly listens to, welcomes and reinforces. This reciprocal dialogue is illustrated in the following quotes:

“I think we also listen to our customers. It’s not just, ‘Our way or the highway.’ I personally like to get feedback on what we do and how we could do better. [...] So that kind of relationship is also very important, it’s not just your way and, ‘I know better, you just listen.’ *It’s about sharing and exchanging*” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).

“[My interactions with Tall Grass employees are] always excellent. They’re very personable, and they’re very interested in what they’re baking. One time we went there and we got a kind of a rye bread, and the seeds weren’t quite right so we mentioned it to the baker and he realized the supplier hadn’t given him the right type of seeds. So they’re very

good at if you have any suggestions, they're very interested in their product. [...] They are very friendly people, there's no doubt about that" (Customer).

"Customers say, 'Well do you have this thing? This item?' It's just a question, you know, you could walk up to any place and say, 'Do you have this?' And Tabitha's answer is always—if we don't have it, 'No, but maybe we should make it!' And then it'll get on her train of thought where she then goes and probes all the bakers' minds to see what they think about it, to see if anybody has a good recipe, where that could fit in" (Employee).

The third element of Tall Grass's relationship with its customers is community. Customers understand that by supporting Tall Grass they are also supporting their local community and their environment. A customer notes, "[Tall Grass has] been a touchstone on how to do business with the bigger picture of the planet in mind" (Chapman (2020e, p. 27).

It is worth noting, again, that Tall Grass's support for the large community and environment is not part of an instrumental strategy to attract customers. Indeed, rather than look for fanfare and customer recognition, Tall Grass often supports the community and environment without publicizing it and instead deliberately avoids creating fanfare (e.g., donated bread). For example, recall that when Tall Grass donated 100% of their Canada Day profits on July 1, 2021 to 1 JustCity, a local Indigenous charity, they only posted a small sign at the counter to notify paying customers. As mentioned by an employee:

"Paul said to Tabitha, 'I think we need to keep this under wraps. We'll put up a sign at the counter, but I don't want this to be a big splash. We're doing this because this is the right thing to do. Don't shout it from the rooftops.'" And to me that is... it's not about getting more business. It's about just doing the right thing because it's the right thing to do" (Employee).

These three elements foster a sense of trust, fairness and respect between Tall Grass and its customers. Customers trust that Tall Grass has their best interest at heart and they feel connected to the bakery.

"We are quite known for our good service, that's one of the reasons customers come back. And a while ago—there's this doctor, he's a retired doctor, he and his wife come, because he's really into healthy eating. And he said to me at Christmas, he wanted to thank me. And I said, 'You should thank the staff.' He said 'I do!' He said, 'I can't tell you what it means as far as feeling like you belong to the circle. I just walk up there, I get a big smile, and they start reaching for my favourite thing, because they know.' He said, 'It's just like coming home!'" (Tabitha Langel, Owner)

In sum, customers recognize and appreciate how Tall Grass acts and treats them in ecologizing ways—ways that are characterized by and foster transparency, open communication,

and community. Customers are willing to forgo economizing behaviour and instead pay extra for a loaf of bread at Tall Grass. This allows them to be part of this holistic ecologizing community, and they remain loyal to Tall Grass despite the availability of low-cost (and low-quality) alternatives. See *Appendix Fourteen* for a more exhaustive list of quotes relating to Tall Grass's customer relationships.

Suppliers. Trust, respect, fairness, generosity and open communication are also qualities associated with Tall Grass's supplier relationships. Tall Grass's key suppliers are small local organic wheat farmers and local Hutterite colonies. Recall that the bakery was started out of a need to support local farms who were struggling to remain viable. Since then, the effect that Tall Grass has had on its suppliers is profound. This is true not only from a financial business standpoint, but from an emotional well-being standpoint as well.

“The first time that [a particular farmer] brought in a shipment of grain and I was baking, I introduced him. There were about 5 or 6 customers, so I introduced them. And he was a big burly farmer. Everybody spontaneously just started cheering. And he just started crying. He said, ‘I always feel so unwelcome in the city, because it’s not for us. It’s the first time I’ve ever experienced [this feeling]’” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

“At its fifth anniversary, Tall Grass Prairie decided to throw a party and invite all the farmers. About 400 people came, and when the farmers were introduced, people cheered. The farmers were visibly moved” (Rempel Petkau, 2014, para. 13).

Note that these quotes are not only about the relationship between farmers and Tall Grass. These quotes also underscore how Tall Grass connects farmers and customers, and how both relish this sense of interconnectedness facilitated by Tall Grass. Indeed, when suppliers come to the bakery, they get regularly introduced to customers in order to foster those stakeholder connections. The bakery also arranges farm trips about once each year where employees are able to spend a day and tour a supplier's farm. This allows the employees to develop stronger relationships with other employees and suppliers.

Not only does Tall Grass pay their farmers a fair price for their product, they also respect price hikes and don't haggle with their suppliers. They foster meaningful organic relationships with each supplier.

“[Our relationships with suppliers are] very, very positive because we don't haggle over price, we respect price hikes, and we meet regularly [...] with our main suppliers to look ahead” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

“We don’t negotiate the farmers into the ground. When we started we asked them, ‘What do you need [to make a viable living]?’ And then we said, ‘Let’s try!’ And it’s worked. We don’t get rich, but we make a good living, that’s good enough, you know” (Paul Langel, Owner).

“Well many of [our suppliers] we have been with for 15 years, so they’re kind of like family. [...] Routinely when the farmers come we know they’re coming. One of the owners will free themselves up and sit down and have lunch with them, because at The Forks we have soup and sandwiches. Quite often we introduce them to the customers if customers sit down. [...] Generally, we’ve never in all the years signed a contract with a farmer. We just do handshakes, conversations around the table, and, ‘How’s your family doing, what do you need?’ We don’t bicker, we try and make it work for each other. And *huge trust*” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

A number of suppliers sell Tall Grass most of their crop, and several credit the bakery for helping them in the beginning stages of their operations and for keeping them viable to this day.

“It was Tabitha’s warm and welcoming ear and an awful lot of encouragement that got us started” (spelt supplier, quoted in Chapman, 2020c, p. 24).

“Well we kind of joke and laugh about it, but we wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for [Tall Grass]... because like I say, when Mom and Dad first talked to Tabitha and Lyle in 2000, Dad was just switching over to organic at that point. So that’s when they were supplying them with wheat. But as time went on and they were looking for different products, that made us venture out to try different grains. And most of the product lines that we have now is because Tall Grass had requested [them] and we just kind of filled that need for them, which we found out that other people need the same kind of products there too. So I mean *we pretty much owe everything we have now to what Tall Grass has initiated for us*” (Supplier).

“Well we’re farm direct, so we’ve had a huge impact. Like when Tall Grass started, it was a real farm crisis in ’90. Farmers nearly got nothing, and we found these organic farmers. And Tabitha and those owners, those people who started Tall Grass, met with them and said, ‘What do you need [to get paid for your grain in order] to make it [i.e., to survive financially]?’ And it was like five times or more what the market was. And we said, ‘Let’s try, let’s see if this works.’ So we really put several farms on their feet. [...] But in terms of the farm, like the grain, we have two main suppliers, three of our grains, that’s been huge for them. Because they could sometimes sell us their entire crop, you know. And we’ve always had a good relationship. So in that way, we’ve had a big, big impact on that part” (Paul Langel, Owner).

Tall Grass’s suppliers willingly forgo other short-term opportunities to maximize their financial well-being and instead choose to supply Tall Grass because they value being part of community. This was evident in one instance where there was a run on wheat and organic wheat farmers were offered astronomical prices from firms in other parts of North America.

“About five years ago, I don’t know why or how, but there was an incredible spike in wheat prices. They just shot up. And all of our organic suppliers got calls from New York, from Toronto. So three of our suppliers called us at the time and said, ‘We’ve been offered this and this, and they would send a truck to the farm, one shot deal.’ And we said to all of them, ‘You know what, you need to make a decision in the best interest of your family, your farm. We will find other sources. We’ll free you up.’ And in the end none of them went for it [i.e., the one-shot deal]. Which I think tells the story in itself. They said, ‘You know what, New York won’t know who we are next year. You always know who we are.’ So I think the trust is very high, and [there is] incredible respect” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

“Our main suppliers are farmers [...] And those farms are pretty much working or growing those grains for us, for Tall Grass. I know the whole wheat, the Red Fife is an old variety of grain, and it’s only one farmer and his whole crop is grown for us. It’s all for Tall Grass. And it’s especially now—I don’t know if you’re aware of the situation right now with the draught? So the price of wheat is going up and there is more demand and not enough supply. He could very well sell his grain for much higher to people that would outbid us, but he still sticks with us. So that says a lot. I mean we get a lot from the colonies, a lot of our fruit, vegetables.. it’s almost like a market *laughing* [...] So it’s all local, and it keeps the economy local so the money stays around, and it benefits everybody” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).

Because several employees of Tall Grass went on to start their own businesses, Tall Grass’s suppliers have also benefited with a wider customer base.

“Well, one thing with Tall Grass is they have a pretty large staff. So I know they’ve had a few bakers that came through their operation, and then the bakers kind of quit working there, and they started up their own operation. And they tend to give us a call looking for product type of thing! So we supply a few of their bakers that they used to have. So it’s been kind of spreading the word, of supporting local foods and that. So I mean it’s been a big help in the community that way, and it’s been nice to see that other people are taking on what Tall Grass has been doing too” (Supplier).

In sum, suppliers clearly value being treated in beyond-instrumental ways by Tall Grass, and the opportunity to connect to the end customers, and they reciprocate in kind. See *Appendix Fifteen* for a more exhaustive list of quotes relating to Tall Grass’s supplier relationships.

Other Organizations. Other organizations in the context of Tall Grass’s stakeholders include other small local bakeries and other local firms in similar industries. In contrast to the mainstream economizing perspective, which focuses on out-competing and gaining power of others in one’s industry (e.g., Porter, 1980, 1985), Tall Grass exhibits and fosters a spirit of community-building and mutual collaboration among other organizations who share its desire for businesses that promote local and healthy options. It can be argued that Tall Grass has become a sort of ‘mother tree’ for the local bakery community. When they started in 1990, there was only

one comparable bakery in the entire country. Now 30 years later, there are more than a dozen small local artisanal-style bakeries in the province of Manitoba alone. Several Tall Grass employees have gone on to start their own local bakeries in other parts of the city and province. Tall Grass embraced and welcomed this.

“For a while there, a new bakery was being started by our staff every three years. But we always kind of rejoiced with that, because who’s not to like a society that is slowly filling up with better food? So that was a good thing” (Lyle Barkman, Owner).

“We’ve always welcomed... we were the first from-scratch bakery. We’re surrounded by them now. [...] But we actually welcome all of that because most of—like Pennyloaf, Sleepy Owl, these are bakers who trained here, and we’ve always been very supportive. We think the more small businesses, the better. [...] We’ve had many of our staff... like there’s a bakery in Brandon that mills [their own flour], and that was one of our staff for 10 years. And when she left we gave her a mill as a gift. So we welcome from-scratch, we think that’s the revolution, it’s easier for these companies to buy local” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

“When you hear Tabitha talk about other bakeries opening, it’s always that like, ‘This is great. It’s just furthering the local food movement in Winnipeg.’ And it feels like they’ve always been a huge proponent of more bakeries popping up, more local food” (Former Employee).

The Tall Grass owners also describe how much they welcome more local bakeries and hope to see more organic bakeries moving forward.

“In some ways we felt very alone being the only organic bakery in town, which is sad in some ways. I mean, I wish that more bakeries would be organic and using organic flour. But there is a cost” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).

“We wished more of them would stick with the organic, but these bakeries put out wonderful product so we have a really good relationship with most of them, almost all of them actually” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

These other bakeries credit Tall Grass for influencing them and for supporting them in their own ventures.

“My husband/business partner and I both worked at Tall Grass. That’s actually where we met. They’ve certainly influenced us in a lot of ways, like ethically sourcing ingredients and baking from scratch. We actually refuse to make cinnamon buns because, ‘How could you compete with a Tall Grass cinnamon bun?’” (Sleepy Owl Bread in Chapman, 2020f, p. 29)

“[Tall Grass was] tremendously encouraging when we were getting started at Hildegard’s in Wolseley. Now we buy from many of the same farmers. Winnipeg has a very strong and

welcoming community of independent bakeries, and we can thank Tall Grass for fostering a market that barely existed when they started 30 years ago” (Hildegard’s Bakery in Chapman, 2020f, p. 29).

Similarly, Tall Grass has influenced the inception of organizations in related industries. There was an instance when a bank decided to offer financial assistance to another small local firm based on their previous experience with Tall Grass.

“A few years ago the bank that refused our first loan came and apologized. They said, ‘We should’ve listened, and we didn’t. Give us another chance, we’re ready now’. We said ‘Thank you very much, that’s great, but we’re very happy with—we’re kind of credit union people’. But an interesting thing that happened to that bank is the people that started Half Pints Brewery [...] wanted to start a brewing company kind of on Tall Grass principles. ‘Local grain, local beer, made here, you can *see* what we’re doing.’ So he went to the bank and the bank said, ‘No’. So he went back and said to them, ‘You know what?’ –and by then we were ten years old— ‘From what I hear in the underground you said *no* to Tall Grass. We are only wanting to do what Tall Grass did, and make a beer instead of bread. Are you sure it’s the smart thing to do? Do you want to be that kind of a bank?’ And the bank changed its mind. So on their first bottle—I have one up in my desk—they say, ‘Goes great with Tall Grass multigrain bread’” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

Not only does Tall Grass abstain from seeing smaller bakeries as competitors to be defended against, these other organizations, particularly similar bakeries who could be seen as Tall Grass’s competitors, similarly choose to forgo economizing behaviour by instead collaborating with and respecting other local bakeries such as Tall Grass. They do not attempt to encroach on Tall Grass’s customer base by operating in the same neighborhood, or use Tall Grass’s recipes to sell as their own. Rather, they share suppliers and help each other when needed. These positive relationships with other organizations help to foster this reciprocal holistic ecologizing community that benefits all parties. See *Appendix Sixteen* for a more exhaustive list of quotes relating to Tall Grass’s relationship with other organizations.

Community. Tall Grass’s community relationships include those with non-profits, charities, other community organizations, the Wolseley neighborhood, and the larger city of Winnipeg more generally. Tall Grass often gets involved with other community organizations and events. Their efforts don’t go unnoticed. They “always keep a watchful eye, not only on our small community, but on the entire planet” (Chapman, 2020a, p. 7). Tall Grass has “taken part in several petitions for social causes including seed sovereignty, fresh water, and world hunger” and has “always felt that when the public good is being threatened, it’s alright to be political” (Chapman, 2020b, p. 23).

“Yeah, [we collaborate with the community] quite far and widely. Because there are organizations all over the place that care about the same things that we care about. So, if there are... particularly issues concerning agriculture, inputs, growing things, scientists being disenfranchised, farmers being disenfranchised. We aren’t a political organization, but we will get political if we need to” (Lyle Barkman, Owner).

“We do a lot with soup kitchens. Like, at Wolseley, it’s Agape Table. Here we do... it’s a bit of Siloam Mission sometimes, and the other one I can’t remember the name... but we give—pretty much all our day-old [bread] is going to those organizations. MCC a lot, if they have an event they would always ask us for donations and we’re always happy to give and to donate” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).

Several Tall Grass employees emphasized the amount of effort that Tall Grass puts into supporting the community.

“They do a lot. Tabitha has connections to a lot of local organizations, like Ma Mawi, and like I think they just donated to 1 JustCity. So they do a lot. And they don’t broadcast it, you know? It’s genuine. And people get that, I think” (Employee).

“Tall Grass also has some interesting partnerships with a few different community organizations. Like, from the very beginning leftover food was being donated; that’s a pretty classic thing. But then it has also participated in a couple Mennonite Central Committee events for an organization called Anna’s House [...]. So yeah, it feels like there’s always kinds of initiatives happening where the bakery is allowing people to use that space to kind of further community projects” (Former Employee).

Customers of Tall Grass also realize and acknowledge how the bakery relates to the community and they voice their appreciation and support for the bakery because of it.

“Tabitha has a real feeling for community sharing and charitable situations, especially in times when people don’t have. She’s very community-minded” (Customer).

“I think they’re very honest, they’re very wanting to assist others in society. They’re what you call an example of how businesses *should* react to their society. A really good impression. I think they have donated some surpluses they have had, over time, to the needy and things like that” (Customer).

“They’re very supportive to the Native population, which is so important at this time” (Customer).

In response to this, the community itself has supported Tall Grass immensely and various stakeholders of the firm attest to this.

“The Wolseley area; when they first started their operation, they had really good community support right from the get go for the past [over thirty] years. So I mean the

community's been behind them quite a bit as far as supporting them and supporting us" (Supplier).

"I think it's rooted in a community of people that are around them, too. You notice it most of all in Wolseley, I would say. People say that they support us regardless of things that happen. [...] *They just want to see it be successful, based on the kind of people that we are, the kind of owners that they know that we are*" (Employee).

"The respect is overwhelming to me. And I think the first time I realized that [...] Stuart McLean was in town. And he had interviewed us, we had been on his program and so he invited us to his show. [...] So he talked about getting off the train and going to The Forks. And he talked about the importance of that site, and he said, 'And then of course I had to have a Tall Grass cinnamon bun.' And the concert hall just erupted in a massive cheer that went on and on. I just wept, I just couldn't—I couldn't believe it. That was for me, a moment, that I don't—I'm still overwhelmed at that. Like when you say, 'I'm from Tall Grass', what happens at the dentist... what happens—of course the cinnamon bun is the big thing, but the amount of times people would say, 'We know you are fair, so we trust you'" (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

It is clear that Tall Grass's stakeholders view the bakery as a valuable part of the local community. One customer described Tall Grass as "a real winning combination for The Forks, and for Winnipeg!" Similarly, an employee lauded Tall Grass by saying "they're community-minded people in general, and so the connection of having your work where you live, in the community that you live in, I think it's a really great model." See *Appendix Seventeen* for a more exhaustive list of quotes relating to Tall Grass's community relationships.

Environment. Tall Grass has also fostered an intentional and important relationship with the land and a deep connection to the places in which their bakeries are located. The owners make it clear that the environment is not an afterthought, but an important and intentional stakeholder that is treated as such. It is also implied that there is a reciprocal relationship wherein the environment and the bakery are naturally-inclined to support each other.

"Well in our philosophy we say we want a business where *everyone* is in the circle. And I think that is true, I don't know who is more important because the farmers—if the customers wouldn't buy in, the farmers couldn't sell, we couldn't have the philosophy we do, the staff wouldn't get paid what they get paid. So I think it is a circle, truly. And a stakeholder is also the environment, because we've pulled the carbon footprint. *Mother Earth is in our circle*" (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

"We try to operate within the parameters that we would like to live on this Earth for a long time. And if Tall Grass's parameters for the inputs—for the grain particularly, and rural ag[riculture] inputs were all paid attention to, we would extend this world's useful life—

which at this point I feel is standing on the brink of absolute disaster. So, we're pretty mindful of that" (Lyle Barkman, Owner).

Tall Grass's connection to nature and the land in general is recognized often as an important feature of their business model.

"That's where it all came from, really, I think was a connection to place. [...] Tabitha and other friends in the Wolseley area realizing that there was a movement in the 80's towards corporatized agriculture, and that Manitoba farmers were suffering. So they saw a problem in their place and saw that farmers were in trouble and, yeah, evolved to make a bakery that got as much of its product from places nearby" (Former Employee).

"The love for nature... the *real* thing. I don't know how to say it, but they really want here the organic stuff to be—the people are more aware of what [they]'re eating. There was the time, be aware of what's around you, what's growing, what is important in life. And don't think that the chocolate milk is coming from a brown cow, you know, that kind of thing (Employee).

"As a counter person what I loved most about working there probably were the stories behind every single product, and how so many ingredients in those products were connected to place. Like these strawberries were from *this* farm *here*, and the rhubarb was from *this* monastery, like the nuns helped us with the rhubarb. The Red Fife wheat that's often used has such a long history here in Manitoba. And yeah, so many ingredients are tied to place. And so many of the people that work at Tall Grass work there because they love Manitoba, and they love Manitoba products, and they want to showcase that in baking" (Former Employee).

"Environmentally, I would say that Tall Grass was a pioneer. In the 90's nobody cared about organic, nobody knew even what it was. It was really not on the radar at all. They had to wait until what—2000?—to get really started at that time. But Tall Grass was already there. They are not the only ones, but it was really a tiny little market, with very little acknowledgment from the people. [...] So I think environmentally, Tall Grass has always been a pioneer. And you see people like Lyle, for example, who's always thinking of new ways of cutting the carbon footprint. You know, having the new silo there allows you to only have four trips to the farm instead of one every three weeks. So it seems like a detail but it's all based on the environmental protection" (Loïc Perrot, Owner).

This deep connection to the land and the bakery's sense of place is also recognized as a key feature to Tall Grass's success and viability.

"They were providing local and organic product before it was trendy to provide that. And I think that there's a lot of people who are loyal to that. I think that Tabitha's ability to really understand where the products come from and the connection to the earth, it's so evident that people are drawn to that" (Employee).

“Place is very important to Tall Grass. Again, I think it’s part of the key to their success—to *our* success I should say, in that sense. And it is a kind of community bakery, again in the same answer. But also based on the geography of Manitoba, I think that there is an intentional connection to the rural element and a personal connection to the farmers that makes it also meaningful for the agriculture aspect, you know” (Employee).

The Forks, where two major rivers meet, and where the second Tall Grass bakery is located, is a sacred and ancient place where peaceful trading took place for thousands of years. The stakeholders of Tall Grass are quick to acknowledge how special this is.

“I often walk in here at six in the morning. There’s nobody except our bakers. And I’ve such an overwhelming sense of gratefulness. Because I do believe there’s a spirit here. You can’t erase something like 5,000 years of peaceful trading. Because the Aboriginal people always said, ‘There will be no war here. This is a trading place, no war.’ And they didn’t. No war. It is really amazing. And you feel it, to me I feel it, I feel it in the air. I see it as an *enormous* privilege to be able to be here. That goes *way* beyond business. You walk on holy ground. And I do *deeply* believe that” (Paul Langel, Owner).

“The Forks is an excellent region too, because it’s where Winnipeg sort of began, and so many people go down there, and they’re being exposed to good food! So it’s an excellent place. And as a gathering place it used to be... but now you talk about gathering in Winnipeg, and any major event is always at The Forks. Just like the Natives used to meet where the two rivers came together, so another important gathering place” (Customer).

“For me, the place here, The Forks, is home. [...] I just like the energy. Again it’s a meeting place. The historical signification of the First Nations, that’s not lost on me. I think it’s a privilege to be working here. It’s really the... for me when I think of Winnipeg, I think of The Forks. That’s the first thing that comes to mind: The Forks. It’s where it started and now what they’ve done with The Forks is amazing” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).

The Wolseley neighborhood location of the original Tall Grass bakery is an equally special place.

“I think both locations are incredibly special. And there is a providential—to me there is a spiritual component to it. Like Wolseley is magical, it truly is magical” (Paul Langel, Owner).

“On a Saturday morning, the Tall Grass corner is just *bumping*, you’re going to see at least three people you know. Someone’s probably busking if it’s summer, you know. Even if you don’t know people you’re saying ‘Hi’ to each other. So it has just a presence in the place that it’s in, in Wolseley” (Former Employee).

“[Wolseley] is where it all started. I’ve talked about the community and how strongly it’s being supported by that community. It’s such a great place to go. [Tall Grass] *is* Wolseley in some ways. [...] It’s a gem, it’s really a gem. That place could be there forever. It feels

like it's part of the community. There would be a big hole if it was not there, I think" (Loïc Perrot, Owner).

Tall Grass acts as a sort of hub for its various stakeholders. It has positioned itself as a gathering place for all of its stakeholders, and this applies to both of their locations. Additionally, their surrounding community has identified Tall Grass as a pillar of the neighborhood (Chapman, 2020d). Tall Grass and its locations are inextricably intertwined in a way that creates immeasurable value for both the business and its community. See *Appendix Eighteen* for a more exhaustive list of quotes relating to Tall Grass's relationship with the environment.

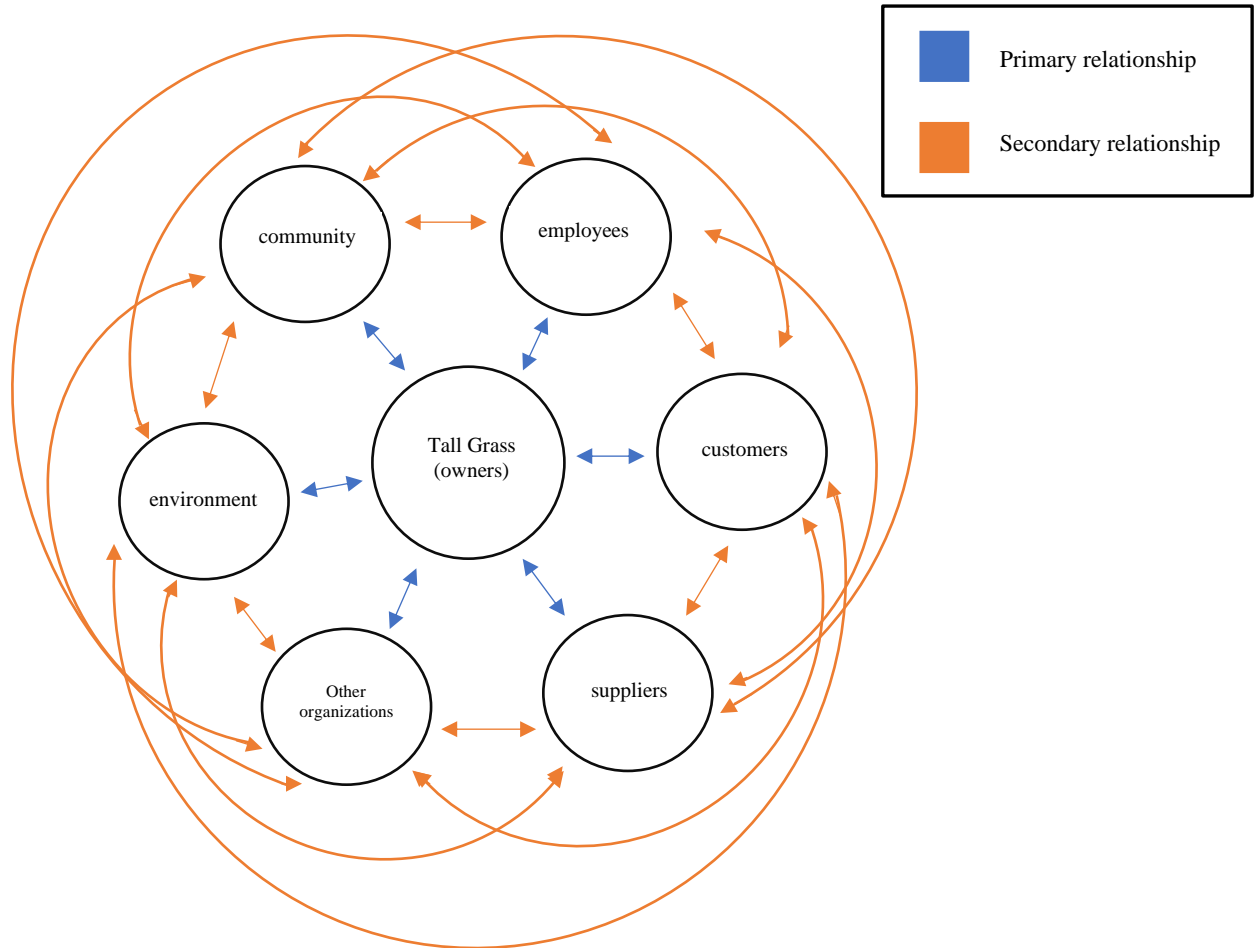
An Integrated Framework of Non-Instrumental Stakeholder Relationships

Tall Grass deliberately fosters connectedness not only with its stakeholders dyadically, but also between all its stakeholder groups. This concept is well-described by Chapman (2020e), "Community comes in many aspects, made up of the daily reality of various networks purposely developed and maintained, all intersecting and supporting one another, a virtual dome that surrounds and protects" (p. 27). Tall Grass connects each stakeholder group to one another: farmers to customers; employees to suppliers; their community to the environment; and so on. This holistic sense of community and connectedness is a metaphorical umbrella for the way Tall Grass treats all of their stakeholders. This connection allows all Tall Grass stakeholders to thrive and flourish, which in turn allows for the increased well-being of the larger community. This inherent sense of interconnectedness is described by owner Tabitha Langel when she says, "[Tall Grass] seeks to support organic agriculture and shorten the distance from field to table and create a communication between all the players, the customers, the farmers, the staff, [and] the processors."

In short, it becomes clear that Tall Grass fosters relationships with their stakeholders on two different dimensions. First, they create primary stakeholder relationships, characterized by how Tall Grass relates to each stakeholder group in non-instrumental terms. Second, they foster secondary stakeholder relationships by helping their stakeholders feel connected with *each other* in non-instrumental terms. This second dimension is particularly unique considering that most conventional economizing firms give little attention to connecting their stakeholder groups with each other, even from an instrumental perspective. This dimension is also important as it results in the sense of connection and community that causes stakeholders to continuously support Tall Grass. This unwavering support allows the bakery to adhere to its socio-environmental

philosophy while maintaining financial viability. These primary and secondary relationships along with the overarching interconnectedness are depicted in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: An Integrated Framework of Non-Instrumental Stakeholder Relationships



Financial Viability Reinforcing and Informing Tall Grass’s Philosophy

My analysis of the various specific stakeholder groups has shown that they value engaging with Tall Grass because of its ecologizing values and practices, and because via Tall Grass, they feel like they are connecting with and belonging to a wholesome holistic community. This in turn prompts stakeholders to reciprocate in ways that go against stakeholders’ economizing self-interests: customers pay more for a loaf of bread; employees take extra care in their vocation; suppliers forgo short-term profit-maximization; other bakeries seek to collaborate with each other; even banks start to support local. This sort of reciprocal behavior enables Tall Grass to remain financially viable and retain its unwavering commitment to its philosophy.

The fact that all stakeholders willingly support Tall Grass and its ecologizing philosophy which promotes social and environmental well-being allows the bakery to remain financially viable and continue to do the work that it does. Their ability to maintain financial viability because of the support of their stakeholders in turn reinforces and informs their ecologizing philosophy to place people and planet over profit. The owners recount how unexpected their growth has been since the bakery's inception:

“We started as a kitchen table company. Like we thought it would be a hobby nearly... like we'd have this dreamy little bakery in Wolseley. We'd all keep our jobs and we'll have three employees... Like that sense—we had no idea, like *none*, that the city would *immediately* respond. Literally the next day after we opened” (Paul Langel, Owner).

“We didn't have in mind that Tall Grass would grow. We thought it would just be, you know, a five or six person operation, and that was not to be the case. After a week we had to call in a night shift. [...] We met [our] three year spreadsheet goals... we met them in six weeks. And we were in serious... talk about growing pains, because this was not part of the plan, right? So we basically threw out all the plans and just carried on. And it kept growing and kept growing. That's kind of the story of Tall Grass. Finally it's levelled off I would say now, and it's a strange place to be actually for me, because we have been growing incessantly for 25 years” (Lyle Barkman, Owner).

If their stakeholders were not supportive of them, they would likely be forced to sacrifice parts of their philosophy in order to remain financially viable. However, this has never happened in their 30+ years of operating. The unwavering support and meaningful relationships with their stakeholders prevents the bakery from straying away from its philosophy and core values. Because of this, Tall Grass is able to continue to enhance social and environmental well-being and foster community in a holistic and non-instrumental way that benefits all of its stakeholders.

To summarize, in this way the data analysis led to developing the model presented in Figure 1. As per the depiction in the model, Tall Grass was started with a management philosophy of placing people and planet ahead of profit, a philosophy informed by the spirituality of its founders. This management philosophy influenced the operations of Tall Grass in a way that was consistent with Waddock's (2021b) six core ecologizing principles. These practices influenced how Tall Grass treated its stakeholders, consistently acting in ways that went beyond the economizing/instrumental interests of Tall Grass. Stakeholders appreciated being treated in this way, and valued having the opportunity to belong to a holistic set of beyond-instrumental relationships that connected soil, farmers, bakers, and customers. Stakeholders express their appreciation by reciprocating in kind, by being willing to forgo their own

economizing financial interests in order to enjoy their relationship with Tall Grass and the larger socio-ecological community it has created.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

This study conducted a qualitative in-depth case analysis of Tall Grass Prairie Bread Company, an exemplary SET management firm that aligns with the ecologizing framework introduced by Waddock (2021b). In-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with owners, employees, customers and suppliers of Tall Grass. Participant observation, frequent informal meetings, and archival data were also used to gain a richer understanding of the bakery. Data was analyzed using a coding scheme created in the data analysis software QDA Miner.

In particular, this study examined the following three research questions: *1) What motivates people to operate a firm according to an integrated narrative that is people and nature-centric (particularly when it goes against the dominant societal narrative)? 2) What does it look like for a firm to operate in this way? And, 3) How do firms that value people and planet over profit survive in a competitive landscape that values profit-maximization?*

Regarding the first part of the research question, this study found that, in the case of Tall Grass, spirituality is the core motivating factor for the owners to operate the firm in alignment with the philosophies consistent with frameworks like Social and Ecological Thought (Dyck et al. 2018) and the ecologizing approach (Waddock 2021b). The Tall Grass ownership team implements an integrated approach that is centered around people and the planet because of the values associated with their spirituality and faith. These values are deeply rooted in the business philosophy of the bakery which, in turn, dictates their business practices and how they interact with and relate to their community (i.e., their stakeholders). This is a valuable finding because it serves as a springboard to explore other potential motivating factors that may be evident in similar firms, which can help scholars and practitioners to better understand such organizations that enhance the well-being of people and the planet.

Regarding the second part of the research question, this study illustrated how the six core values of Waddock's (2021b) ecologizing perspective were evident and exemplified at Tall Grass. Thus, Tall Grass can serve as an example to entrepreneurs and customers seeking to create and support SET-minded and ecologizing firms. These findings are valuable because empirical research on firms that practice ecologizing/SET principles are rare. Indeed, past scholars have lauded SET principles, but quickly dismissed them as unrealistic (e.g., Ferrell, 2021; Prothero & McDonagh, 2021). This study of Tall Grass shows that they are realistic, and can be sustained for decades.

This brings us to the third and final part of the research question, namely, how is it possible for firms to sustain SET/ecologizing principles in the face of business-as-usual competitors? Based on the analysis of the data from this study, it became evident that stakeholders who experience the ecolozing treatment and belong to an ecolozing community value this more than they value participating in an economizing community. For example, customers are happy to pay a higher price when they know they are supporting their local bakery and they have developed personal relationships with the employees or owners of the firm. Similarly, farmers are happy to forgo short-term financial gains in order to maintain strong long-term relationships with Tall Grass, and Tall Grass employees are happy to see their job in a holistic rather than through a merely instrumental lens. Moreover, beyond these primary dyadic relationships, each of the stakeholders value belonging to secondary relationships (e.g., see Figure 2) where they feel connected to other stakeholder groups and the larger community in general.

The meaningful, long-term relationships that Tall Grass forms with each of its stakeholder groups allows Tall Grass to remain financially viable and therefore stay committed to their philosophy. Their unwavering philosophy to place socio-environmental well-being above their profit margin allows them in turn to continue to foster these incredible connections with their stakeholders. The combination of these factors have allowed Tall Grass to remain successful for so many years, as is evident in Figure 1. These findings are particularly valuable because as mentioned, although SET/ecologizing principles are praised, they are often deemed impractical in actuality, let alone financially sustainable for long periods (e.g. Ferrell, 2021; Prothero & McDonagh, 2021). Tall Grass's age and size, along with the understanding that they have never once drifted from their nature and people-centered philosophy help to disprove this assumption.

Implications for future research

Spirituality (RQ1). Based on these findings, there are three significant implications for future research. Building on the findings for the first research question, spirituality as a philosophical motivation was an unexpected discovery that emerged from the data. Liu and Robertson (2011) define spirituality as “interconnection with a higher power, interconnection with human beings, and interconnection with nature and all living things” (p. 35). Tall Grass operationalizes interconnectedness in their business philosophy, their primary stakeholder relationships and with their secondary stakeholder relationships that connect their stakeholder

groups to one another. This is evident in Figure 2 which depicts Tall Grass's integrated stakeholder relationships on the primary and secondary levels. Also of particular interest is Tall Grass's diverse holistic understanding of spirituality, which can arguably be considered ahead of its time. Scholars interested in studying management, spirituality and religion may find value in exploring such ideas further.

Of course, these findings are not intended to suggest that all SET firms are created or maintained by founders or managers who value spirituality and faith in the same way as Tall Grass. This discovery may be unique to this particular firm. However, it seems reasonable to posit that SET firms are motivated by people with an above-average desire to express their sense of connection to others or to nature or the sacred. For example, it would be reasonable to hypothesize that founders and managers of SET/ecologizing firms would rate their sense of connectedness to others/nature/the sacred more highly than founders and managers of TBL/FBL/economizing firms. Future research may wish to examine whether SET/ecologizing firms are more likely to be motivated by people with an above-average desire to express their sense of connection to others or to nature or the sacred in comparison to TBL/FBL/economizing firms.

A related idea that emerged from the data was that of virtue signalling, or "moral grandstanding" as referred to by Tosi and Wamke (2016). They define virtue signalling as "mak[ing] a contribution to moral discourse that aims to convince others that one is 'morally respectable'" (p. 199). Tall Grass often deliberately refrains from "parading their good deeds," as owner Tabitha Langel called it. She justified this decision by saying, "I guess there we're Christian". I found it particularly interesting that a SET/ecologizing firm such as Tall Grass—that is constantly engaging in so many positive activities that enhanced the well-being of people and the planet—would refrain from publicizing these activities, while other firms—many of whom are clearly TBL or FBL and aim solely to maximize profit—proudly flaunt their 'virtuous' practices. For example, recall that Tall Grass donated 100% of its profits on July 1, 2021 to a local Indigenous charity and only left a small sign on their counter so that customers could be made aware that their purchases were contributing to such a cause. It would be highly unlikely for a TBL or economizing firm to donate 100% of their profits on any given day; and in any event, they would likely feel inclined to participate in virtue signalling by broadcasting their

charity efforts and goodwill in newspapers, advertisements, or on social media in order to gain more customer recognition as a result.

Future research can examine whether other SET or ecologizing firms also show similar reluctance to publicize beyond-instrumental actions. If so, scholars might examine the reason for such reluctance. Perhaps such firms are managed by inherently humble individuals who wouldn't feel comfortable promoting such actions, or who may see it as morally wrong to do so. Or perhaps a firm may fear being perceived as boastful or of engaging in greenwashing by putting such actions on display.

Operationalizing Ecologizing Values (RQ2). The findings of this study provide a welcome description of how the six core ecologizing values are operationalized, as summarized in Table 2. Future research should examine two things. First, it should examine whether the findings at Tall Grass are consistent with practices at other SET firms. This will allow for developing generic theories and practices, and recognizing novel or idiosyncratic variations.

Second, future research should examine whether all six of these core values are always present, or if they can be operationalized in a sequential or piecemeal basis. If the latter, it would be interesting to study whether there are patterns in the sequence of introduction. If it is true that in the future virtually all businesses will need to become ecologizing in order to avert socio-ecological disaster, then such research is of great importance.

Beyond-Instrumental Stakeholder Relationships (RQ3). A key finding relevant to the literature on stakeholder theory is the idea that beyond-instrumental stakeholder relationships—which enable Tall Grass to go beyond fiscal goals to enhance and preserve social and environmental well-being—keep firms such as Tall Grass financially viable. This is a novel finding, and perhaps this study's most important contribution to the literature.

Recall that the traditional view of stakeholder theory emphasizes the importance of dealing with stakeholder groups in order to help resolve organizational conflicts and improve corporate governance along with profitability (Freeman, 1984; Freeman & McVea, 2005; Freeman & Reed, 1983). The traditional perspective of stakeholder management focuses on doing so for the achievement of profit-centric corporate interests (e.g., Henisz, 2014). This profit-centric stakeholder management philosophy tends to treat stakeholders instrumentally, rather than intrinsically valuing them in a way that fosters (beyond-instrumental) social or ecological well-being. In the profit-centric approach, primary stakeholders who directly affect the profitability of

a firm, are given priority; the firm's secondary stakeholders who do not directly or immediately contribute to a firm's bottom line, often get neglected and overlooked (Clarkson, 1988; Clifton & Amran, 2011; Post et al., 1996).

The findings in this study show that Tall Grass values all stakeholders equally, and includes voiceless stakeholders such as the environment in their circle (see Figure 2). Tall Grass fosters deep, meaningful, and non-instrumental relationships with its stakeholders, even when there are more profitable alternatives (e.g., Tall Grass chooses organic suppliers, hires marginalized employees). These findings contradict the traditional stakeholder theory approach and call for more diverse perspectives of how firms relate to their stakeholders.

Conventional stakeholder theory's approach to business assumes that managers and other stakeholders of a firm value materialism and individualism. In essence, it assumes that everyone is a wealth maximizer. Tall Grass is a clear case of something completely different; a firm that takes a holistic, non-instrumental approach to their stakeholders. This calls for a new approach to stakeholder theory that is instead grounded in the idea that some managers and other stakeholders are in fact more altruistic, collectivistic, and immaterial. The stakeholder literature and theories need to be expanded beyond the traditional neoliberal wealth-maximizing paradigms to include such perspectives.

The embeddedness perspective described by Marcus et al. (2010) could be integrated with stakeholder theory in order to expand from the traditional perspective that the stakeholders of a firm are simply seeking their own self-interest. Future stakeholder theory would benefit from seeing stakeholders (and focal firms) as being embedded in a larger whole. With this holistic lens as a starting framework (e.g. the secondary relationships in Figure 2), the separate dyadic relationships between a focal firm and its specific stakeholders takes on new meaning. It is social and ecological folly to think of these relationships in isolation from the larger whole. And, moreover, it is much more satisfying for all those involved to see them connected.

From this study it becomes clear that organizations such as Tall Grass should be studied and we should expand our current theories to include more radical perspectives that prioritize social and ecological well-being if we want to see significant positive societal change.

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APPENDIX ONE

Interview Questions for Owners

1. Please tell me a bit about yourself and your work experience prior to coming to Tall Grass
 - How long have you been at Tall Grass, and what position do you hold?
 - Do you enjoy your work?
 - How does Tall Grass compare to your previous jobs (if any)?
2. Please tell me about the management structure at Tall Grass.
 - How are decisions made at Tall Grass Bakery?
3. Please tell me a bit about how Tall Grass chooses which products and services to offer, and how you decide which ones *not* to offer.
4. This could be the focus of a whole different study on its own, but please describe briefly the effect COVID-19 has had on Tall Grass and how you think it will affect the firm going forward.
 - What were key changes or pivots you needed to make due to COVID-19, and who was involved in deciding to make those changes?
5. Who are Tall Grass's key stakeholders?
6. Who would you consider to be Tall Grass's competitors?
 - Does Tall Grass collaborate with other organizations? If yes, please expand.
7. Please tell me about Tall Grass's physical location, and what it means to your business.
 - E.g. describe the history of the place, biology of the place, connection to place, place as community, land, environment, space, neighbours, etc.
8. Overall, how would you describe the nature or quality of relationships between managers and other employees? (e.g., emphasis on participative management)
 - What effect has Tall Grass had on employees?
9. How would you describe Tall Grass's relationship with the community?
 - What effect has Tall Grass had on the larger community?
10. How would you describe Tall Grass's relationship with its customers?
 - What effect has Tall Grass had on customers?
11. How would you describe Tall Grass's relationship with its suppliers?

- What effect has Tall Grass had on suppliers?
12. Please tell me a bit about your organization's performance. In what ways, or by what criteria, would you say it has been a success, and in what ways has it not been a success?
 - How would you describe its performance in terms of financial well-being?
 - How would you describe its performance in terms of ecological well-being?
 - How would you describe its performance in terms of social well-being?
 - To whom is your firm accountable for its performance?
 13. Please tell me about a time when the firm dealt with a situation where there was a tension between the interests of owners and the interests of other stakeholders (e.g., return on investment vs good jobs vs environmental concerns)
 - Tell me about a time when there was a tension between short-term and long-term objectives.
 14. How important is it for your organization to grow?
 15. How would you describe Tall Grass's business philosophy?
 - For example, I've heard it described as "back to the future".
 16. What is the key to success for your organization?
 17. What does this organization mean to you, what aspect are you most passionate about?
 18. If there is one thing that you hope your organization inspires others to do, what would that be?
 - Can you think of examples of other organizations or ideas that have been key inspirations for how Tall Grass operates?
 19. What does the future look like for Tall Grass?
 20. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with Tall Grass Bakery?

APPENDIX TWO
Interview Questions for Employees

1. Please tell me a bit about yourself and your work experience prior to coming to Tall Grass
 - How long have you been at Tall Grass, and what position do you hold?
 - Do you enjoy your work?
 - How does Tall Grass compare to your previous jobs (if any)?
2. What does a typical shift look like for you?
3. How would you describe Tall Grass Bakery's success?
4. How would you describe Tall Grass's connection to place?
5. Who are Tall Grass's key stakeholders? (i.e. the groups of people or others affected by what Tall Grass does)
6. How would you describe the relationships you have with other stakeholders of Tall Grass?
7. What does the future look like for Tall Grass?
8. How would you describe Tall Grass's business philosophy?
 - For example, I've heard it described as "back to the future".
9. Why do you choose to work with Tall Grass Bakery?
10. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with Tall Grass Bakery?

APPENDIX THREE

Interview Questions for Suppliers

1. Please tell me about yourself and your organization.
2. Please tell me about your relationship with Tall Grass Bakery.
 - How long have you been working with Tall Grass Bakery?
 - Why do you choose to work with Tall Grass Bakery?
3. How would you describe Tall Grass's relationship to place?
 - How would you describe their connection to their location, their community, and land in general.
4. What effect do you think Tall Grass has had on other organizations and their community?
 - Has Tall Grass had any effect on you?
5. How would you describe Tall Grass's business philosophy?
6. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with Tall Grass Bakery?

APPENDIX FOUR

Interview Questions for Customers

1. Why do you choose to shop at Tall Grass Bakery?
 - Which location do you shop at most often?
2. How would you describe your interactions with the people at Tall Grass Bakery?
3. How would you describe Tall Grass in relation to its place/location?
4. How would you describe Tall Grass's relationship with the community?
 - What effect do you think Tall Grass has had on their community?
 - What effect do you think Tall Grass has had on other organizations?
5. How would you describe Tall Grass's business philosophy?
6. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with Tall Grass Bakery?

APPENDIX FIVE

Archival Materials related to Tall Grass Bakery used in this Study

Date	Medium	Platform	Title	Author/Speaker	Details	Length
02/12/2014	Article	Canadian Mennonite	Tall Grass from deep convictions: Bread cooperative grows out of church study of food and land issues	Evelyn Rempel Petkau	Brief overview of Tall Grass, quotes from Paul and Tabitha, and the role and effect of faith in relation to Tall Grass	4 pgs
12/02/2015	Article	Global News	The secret behind Tall Grass Prairie's renowned cinnamon buns	Shannon Cucuz	Short descriptions/fun facts about the bakery	4 pgs
03/14/2021	Article	Winnipeg Free Press	Diametrically delicious: Pi day isn't just about a mathematical constant, it's also about pies	Declan Schroeder	Highlights pies made fresh daily at Tall Grass emphasizing local ingredients	2 pgs
06/04/2016	Article	Winnipeg Free Press	Co-operative lessons of Winnipeg's Tall Grass bakery take root in Hokkaido	Melissa Martin	All about Ray Epp (co-founder of Tall Grass) - originally from Nebraska, now runs a CSA farm in Japan with his wife and four sons. "founding spirit" "original goal, original intention"	21 pgs
03/07/2022	Article	Bakers Journal	Integrity is Success	Colleen Cross	An article on Tall Grass, interviewing Tabitha who discusses barriers faced by women and the importance of local farmers	6 pgs
09/27/2020	Article	CBC News	'It's what happens when a community starts a bakery': Celebrating 30 years of Tall Grass Prairie Bread Company	Nadia Kidwai/CBC	Brief review of Tall Grass founding and history, comments on community and hope for future	3 pgs
11/22/2013	Blog Post	Tourism Winnipeg Website	Tall Grass Prairie Bread Company	PegCityGrub	Highlights some 'facts' about Tall Grass and the details about their locations and products	1 pg
12/17/2019	Blog Post	Travel Manitoba	6 Totally Manitoban Cakes + Pies that you won't be able to pass up at Christmas Dinner	Breanne Searns	Tall Grass is briefly mentioned for having Vinarteta, a traditionally Icelandic cake, on occasion.	6 pgs
10/19/2017	Blog Post	Travel Manitoba	10 Bakeries Outside the Bread Box	Reba Lewis	Briefly mention Tall Grass as a staple Manitoban bakery	10 pgs
02/06/2012	Blog Post	Canadian Living (magazine)	Whole Wheat Cinnamon Buns (recipe)	Rheanna Kish & the Test Kitchen	Recipe for cinnamon buns inspired by Tall Grass - "Inspired by the famous cinnamon buns of Winnipeg's Tall Grass Prairie Bread Company, which celebrates Manitoba's agricultural wealth by using local grains and ingredients in its many offerings..."	1 pg
2020	Book	Anthologie	Granola Chronicles: Culinary Tales from Tall Grass Bakery and Winnipeg's Wolseley Community	Yoko Chapman	Book highlighting and retelling Tall Grass's 30 year history, with input from other stakeholders in the neighborhood	61 pgs
09/2020	Newspaper -er Poster	The Wolseley Leaf	30 Years!	N/A	Poster highlighting Tall Grass's celebration of 30 years	1 pg
06/10/2006	Radio	CBC Radio's Vinyl Cafe	Tall Grass Prairie Bakery	Stuart McLean	Review of Tall Grass history, struggles opening and getting funding, and amazing success upon opening	7 pgs
06/05/2020	Social Media IG Stories	CBC Manitoba's IG Story	MB 150 Listicle	CBC Manitoba	Tall Grass pegged #85 of Manitoba's 150 Icons	1 pg
2015	Video	CBC News	Tall Grass Prairie's Wolseley bakery celebrates 25 years	Tabitha Langel	"Tall Grass Prairie Bread Company co-owner Tabitha Langel talks about the Winnipeg bakery's early years as she and others celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Wolseley location."	2 mins
02/12/2010	Video	YouTube	Tall Grass Prairie Bakery - Winnipeg, Manitoba	Tabitha Langel (Travel Manitoba YouTube Channel)	Tabitha talks about the bakery at The Forks (Description: "You've never had a cinnamon bun as delicious as those made by Tall Grass	2 mins

					Prairie Bakery at The Forks in Winnipeg, Manitoba")	
10/13/2020	Video (of speech in legislature)	Facebook	30 Years of Tall Grass Prairie Bakery	Lisa Naylor (MLA for Wolseley)	Reviews 30 year history of Tall Grass, changes in ownership, and some highlights since the pandemic began	2 mins
unknown	Webpage	Monteyne Architecture Works	Tall Grass Prairie Bakery	Monteyne Architecture Works	Describes renovation and construction addition to Tall Grass Wolseley, also won two awards! - "In addition to solving functional issues, the owners also expressed the desire to contribute positively to the pedestrian environment of the street, as well as to build the most sustainable building possible."	1 pg

APPENDIX SIX

Recruitment Process, Consent & Confidentiality

Recruitment Process

The recruitment for this case study occurred as follows. First, the owners of Tall Grass were contacted in the summer of 2021 to see if the firm was interested in participating in this study. Once they agreed, the rest of the recruitment process was designed. See *Appendix Seven* for Tall Grass's formal consent to participate in the study. To recruit stakeholders for interviews, a recruitment poster was distributed to each bakery location. See *Appendix Eight* for the recruitment poster. In order to qualify for participation in the study, participants had to be a past or present stakeholder of Tall Grass Bakery (customer, supplier, employee, or owner).

Consent and Confidentiality

Before formally interacting with each stakeholder at the bakery, they were provided with a consent form to read through and sign before they could participate in the research. For any interviews conducted via Zoom or over the phone, a consent form was provided to the interviewee via email or dictated over the phone. Interviewees were given a choice to have the interview conducted on site at Tall Grass, or privately over the phone or via Zoom. If the participant indicated on the consent form that they wished to remain anonymous, a pseudonym was used in field notes and transcriptions. In the consent form which they were given, participants were informed that their identity would remain anonymous unless they chose to waive that anonymity.

APPENDIX SEVEN

Formal Consent to Participate in Research Study

Subject: Re: Letter of Support for Research

Date: Tuesday, July 27, 2021 at 6:51:25 AM Central Daylight Time

From: Tabitha Langel

To: Savanna Vagianos

To whom it may concern,

Savanna Vagianos has our approval to work in all areas of Tall Grass Prairie Bread Company and Grass Roots Prairie Kitchen, including on the production and sales floors of the kitchen and the bakeries.

With best wishes!

Tabitha Langel

Co-owner and manager
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 26, 2021, at 2:39 PM, Savanna Vagianos <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Hi Tabitha,

I hope you're doing well and had a safe trip home. In order to proceed with my research study, I need an email from you giving your approval of me conducting my research on site at Tall Grass. Feel free to respond to this email stating your approval.

Thank you and take care,
Savanna

APPENDIX EIGHT

Case Study Recruitment Poster



Department of Business Administration
428 or 426 Drake Centre
181 Freedman Crescent
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 5V4
Telephone (204) 474-9672 or 474-8370
Fax (204) 474-7545

OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH STUDY ON TALL GRASS PRAIRIE BREAD CO.

Savanna Vagianos, a Master's student at the Asper School of Business at the University of Manitoba is conducting sustainability-related research on Tall Grass Prairie Bread Company. She asks any stakeholders who are interested in participating to contact her. She would like to interview employees, customers and suppliers about their perspective of and relationship with Tall Grass. The length of the interview will be between 15 to 60 minutes. Participants will be asked questions related to their personal experiences with and perspective of Tall Grass Prairie Bread Co. If you are willing to participate in this study, please contact Savanna at [REDACTED]. If you have any further questions about this study please contact Savanna's advisor, Dr. Bruno Dyck at [REDACTED].

APPENDIX NINE

Quotes Defining Tall Grass's Overarching Business Philosophy

- “‘*As if people and the earth mattered*’. That’s our overarching theme or philosophy that seems to keep coming back all the time. And you know what, it comes back because it’s true. People do matter the most. It isn’t profit, unlike what you would normally read of the North American business magazines and so forth” (Lyle Barkman, Owner).
- “Their philosophy is at the heart of who they are. [...] It’s how the business is built around the philosophy of supporting local, organic, treating the farmers fairly, paying them a good wage. Even back in the day when farmers were struggling to make ends meet, [the owners] decided, ‘Nope we cannot pay the going rate. We have to pay more because it’s only fair’. So their success is with the people they deal with, with their suppliers, as well as with their staff, the way they treat us” (Employee).
- “Their philosophy is about fairness and feeling good about what they do” (Employee).
- “The business philosophy... well, it’s not about getting the cheapest product! It’s about supporting the local farmers, supporting organic farming and that kind of bleeds into every other [aspect]... [...] It’s about being good to the environment. And the people who farm it, paying them a fair amount for the product that they’re providing” (Employee).
- “We’re *not* totally bottom-line driven. Like really the fundamentals are that all the stakeholders’ needs should be met. [...] So that then dictates your profitability. If you let wages go into the \$20 range slowly, yeah, most food places don’t want that. They don’t want career people. Because they’re too expensive. But we’re saying, ‘Well we welcome career people’. But there’s a huge cost to that! So if that’s your philosophy: you want to pay your suppliers fairly, you want to treat your employees fairly, there isn’t much left at the end. And we make a decent wage. So in some ways that’s the fundamental decision. You have your vision, you want to be local, you want to be organic, as much as possible. You want to mill your own flour. Those are all enormous cost points. [...] So the business vision is really shaped by the philosophy underneath it, you know. And I often say, ‘Boy our vision costs us enormously!’” (Paul Langel, Owner)
- “I have always been impressed with this, the fact that they seem to hire people of different backgrounds. And I think that’s an important aspect of their philosophy. [...] And also of course, I should mention that it’s the organic part. [...] they make a point of getting supplies from either organic Manitoba farms or any kind of supplier I think they check of ethical raising—[...] I think that’s a very important aspect of their work” (Customer).

- “Well Tall Grass has always been a farm-oriented type of operation. They’re very supportive of local farmers and local products. So I mean it’s not just us that’s supplying it there’s multiple local farmers that are supplying them. And they’ve been a big promoter of local agriculture. And it’s been a good working relationship all the way along. So it’s just been great dealing with them anyway” (Supplier).
- “I know they do a lot of support of the farmers in Manitoba, they do a lot of support for different farmers. [...] [Tall Grass is] very much for local, and the use of what is produced locally” (Customer).
- “[Tall Grass is] very generous and very supportive. [...] [They’re] a good neighbour” (Customer).
- “The questions that we continue to ask [...] are, ‘How can we be more local? More just? More environmental conscious than we were yesterday?’” — Owner, Tabitha Langel (from Stuart McLean’s Vinyl Cafe, quoted in Cross, 2022).
- “I think if you would describe their business philosophy, it would be ‘grassroots’. *laughs* There’s a reason they named their kitchen that. They’re getting their ideas for their product and how they communicate with each other, it’s grassroots, you know?” (Former Employee)
- “Well in our philosophy we say we want a business where *everyone* is in the circle. And I think that is true. I don’t know who is more important because the farmers—if the customers wouldn’t buy in, the farmers couldn’t sell, we couldn’t have the philosophy we do, the staff wouldn’t get paid what they get paid. So I think it is a circle, truly, and the stakeholders is also the environment, because we’ve pulled the carbon footprint. Mother Earth is in our circle. So that’s my take on it. I can’t see any one of them... I feel like our staff often go above and beyond, and really are a great, great part of the team” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “I think they’re very honest, they’re very wanting to assist others in society. They’re what you call an example of how businesses should react to their society” (Customer).
- “I think maybe there are slightly different takes on what that philosophy looks like depending on which owner or stakeholder you ask. [...] I feel like the common thread is treating people like people. [...] There’s a humanity in respecting what people bring to the table and putting employment first, I think. Like meaningful employment, and because, there’s two sides right. There’s the human side, and then there’s the baking side. [...] So if we firmly believe that baking is something that has been done for thousands of years and that it’s part of our humanity, or its part of this tradition or maybe traditions of what people like to eat, and it has a direct connection with the land, that forms the timeless aspect of what we do. And also the craft, too. We’re not into that kind of innovation, there’s not that much

innovation, it's just remembering what we did, that we've forgotten. But to me then there's the other side of like, it's *people* doing that, it's not just the bread, alone, standing alone. It's not just an object, the reason why we make bread is to feed people, and the reason why people are buying bread is also so that we can feed ourselves. So to me that's a beautiful circle of meaningful employment and people are using the skills that they have and learning more, like bringing what they have to the table, and then also learning more to bring to fruition what already exists in the earth" (Employee).

APPENDIX TEN

Quotes Relating to Placing People and the Planet above Profit

- “We’re *not* totally bottom-line driven. Like really the fundamentals are that all the stakeholder’s needs should be met. [...] So that then dictates your profitability. If you let wages go into the \$20 range slowly, yeah, most food places don’t want that. They don’t want career people. Because they’re too expensive. But we’re saying, well we welcome career people, but there’s a huge cost to that! So if that’s your philosophy you want to pay your suppliers fairly, you want to treat your employees fairly, there isn’t much left at the end. And we make a decent wage. So in some ways that’s the fundamental decision. You have your vision, you want to be local, you want to be organic, as much as possible. You want to mill your own flour. Those are all enormous cost points. [...] So the business vision is really shaped by the philosophy underneath it, you know. And I often say ‘boy our vision costs us enormously!’” (Paul Langel, Owner)
- “In packaging, for instance, they just found a new supplier for packaging. The price of the packaging is three times what we’ve been paying until now, but this is compostable. So that means we can get rid of the Styrofoam, that means we can get rid of more of the plastic. So it does not matter to the owners that this means this is going to cut into their bottom line into the money that they make as owners. It’s about doing the right thing, what they consider to be the right thing. The wheat they buy, the price they pay for organic is considerably higher than what they could buy regular production supplies for. Buying fruit, vegetables from the Hutterites. They pay them a fair price, they don’t try to go for the least expensive, they go for what’s fair.” (Employee).
- “[Because of COVID] last year was not a stellar year financially [...] but each year at Christmastime [the owners] give all the employees two extra weeks of pay; it’s a bonus. So in spite of the fact of hardly making any money, they were committed to somehow paying this two week bonus to all their employees. So at Christmastime everybody had an extra two weeks of pay. They did that.” (Employee)
- “In the end when we do the financial reports from the accounting firm, when they produce our financials at the year end, [the owners] don’t stress about not making a huge amount of money, netting a lot. It’s about having done the right thing and we made it through another year, here we go, let’s set out and do it again” (Employee).
- “[Because of COVID] the owners have taken a decrease in salary right? Okay, they pay their employees the bonus [at the end of the year]. Then Canada Day is coming up, and the owners are saying, ‘You know, we should really do something in light of everything that’s going on in the Indigenous world, like right now [the residential school grave sites] coming to light. How can we just take advantage of this huge day?’ Right, like Canada Day is huge for sales. And they decided that they wanted to give 100% of their income, as you know, to an Indigenous charity. And Paul said to Tabitha, ‘I think we need to keep this under wraps. We’ll put up a sign at the counter, but I don’t want this to be a big splash. We’re doing this because this is the right thing to do. Don’t shout it from the rooftops.’ And to me that is...

it's not about getting more business. It's about just doing the right thing because it's the right thing to do. And that makes me so proud to work for them" (Employee).

- “Socially I think Tall Grass is a bit of a leader in some ways. Again, the relationship we have with the staff, and I think it’s always been ahead of a lot of preoccupations. It’s always at the forefront of our thought when we come up with decisions or something like this. Staff well-being will always be ahead” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).
- “Environmentally, I would say that Tall Grass was a pioneer. In the 90’s nobody cared about organic, nobody knew even what it was. It was really not on the radar at all. They had to wait until what—2000?—to get really started at that time, but Tall Grass was already there. They are not the only ones but it was really a tiny little market, with very little acknowledgment from the people” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).
- “We had to learn about profits, the hard way, because we were not profiteers. But we also learned that the bottom line to us is the bottom line, and that’s how important it is. It has to be met, but there are very many lines ahead of it. That’s why our vehicles and our carbon footprint are all important. That’s why our workers are paid much more money than the food industry usually allots. I want them buying houses and cars and... we want them being able to afford life’s necessities, and more. And we try to operate within the parameters that we would like to live on this earth for a long time. And if Tall Grass’ parameters for the inputs—for the grain particularly, and rural ag inputs were all paid attention to, we would extend this world’s useful life—which at this point I feel is standing on the brink of absolute disaster. So, we’re pretty mindful of that (Lyle Barkman, Owner).
- “People do matter the most. It isn’t profit, unlike what you would normally read of the North American business magazines and so forth. It is *not* that” (Lyle Barkman, Owner).
- “Some companies, when it’s only about the bottom line, they don’t care about staff, they don’t care about the farmers. We don’t negotiate the farmers into the ground. When we started we asked them, ‘What do you need [to make a viable living]?’ and then we said, ‘Let’s try!’ And it’s worked. We don’t get rich, but we make a good living. That’s good enough, you know (Paul Langel, Owner).
- “In the 90s we basically put our private finances on the line. Like we nearly went broke for quite a while. We hardly made any money. Like Tall Grass made it through the first 10 years because the owners were willing to be enormously underpaid. That changed and slowly in 2000 and then with The Forks, now we’re not underpaid. We’re at a level like a teacher or social worker, roughly” (Paul Langel, Owner).
- “We’ve never been hugely profitable. We’ve always made it and we’ve always most years even been in the plus, but no money in the bank. Like the way that works in bookkeeping you know, you have \$80,000 profit but it all went to capital. Could we have done better? I’m not so sure, because when you have the philosophy that we have, it prevents you. Like we’re not as bottom-line driven. Like we accept high school kids, nobody’s on minimum wage, and the people like these who stick around, they work their way into fairly healthy wages.

So I'm not sure if we've been the best fiscal managers, we've always flown a bit by the seat of our pants. We've never been good at doing budgets. And part of it is we've always been so busy. And that still goes back to that kitchen table. And it actually takes a long time to go, 'Well, we're not a kitchen table company anymore'. Like it took 10 years to do our books properly. I mean they were all kept, but we didn't even use a computer until about 2000. And so the professionalization took a while. But it did happen. Myers, Norris and Penny then came in and they did it and now we have a great bookkeeper. I mean we've always had good accountants. But we've never been superb at fiscal management, I would say. Like our costing... and there's no good costing program so we always go, 'Uhh, well that looks okay', you know, in that way. At the same time, we pay well. 50% of our sales are payroll. That includes the owners, but we're not overpaid. Well you want to pay fair wages—you know, we'd probably be rich if we wouldn't, but we'd be unhappy. But overall, it's amazing we're here. We're doing okay. But I want us to keep on learning. I think there are things we could do better, in terms of cost. Without sacrificing our vision, you know" (Paul Langel, Owner).

- "There was a time where there was a definition for an ethical business—and maybe you know what the current one is. It used to be: if we as owners make four times as much as the bottom person, we can still be an ethical business. But we're nowhere near that [high]. But I think the new definition is ten times, which is sad. I think that's too big" (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- [It's important] to not maximize profit at the expense of jobs, because you could run a bakery pretty well by pressing buttons. I think [it's important] to use technology in a way that serves humanity" (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

APPENDIX ELEVEN

Quotes Relating to Unwavering Philosophy

- “I would say [the key to success for Tall Grass is] having a philosophy-driven business. I think that is a vision—having a vision and sticking to it. Being faithful to it. I think that is the key to Tall Grass’ success. That we haven’t had major shifts and the people that I see looking to buy-in, I think they will modernize some things, but I don’t think they will stray far from the philosophies. You have to stand for something and give back to the community.” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “We hold ourselves to the philosophy. Like all decisions run through that grid. That’s how we make decisions. So our philosophy is the single—‘will it help this or not?’—that’s the first lens” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “It’s funny because Tall Grass is very different from the other bakeries. [...] Where Tall Grass started with an idea, with a philosophy and they expanded into the bakery, not the other way around, so that’s what makes it really interesting, for me anyway. [...] The philosophy stayed, and sometimes it’s easy to shift, you know, when the business grows and you think, ‘Oh, maybe we should cut this and cut that to make more money here’ but they didn’t. So that was really... that’s what sets this bakery apart in some ways” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).
- “[Tall Grass’s success has] been consistent and stable and I think it has everything to do with the way ownership has stayed true to what they believe in as far as local and their business motto and being good employers and decent people” (Employee).
- “I think it’s also a huge success that we’ve never wavered on the philosophy. Even when there was conflict we’ve never had conflict over the core elements of our beliefs, which is local, organic, fair treatment of employees. We had never any conflict over that, not even once... like, amazing” (Paul Langel, Owner).
- “I mean they can get cheaper supplies, like cheaper flour and cheaper grains on the industrial side of things. But they chose to support the local, which it does cost them more to buy supplies, but they were able to stick with that model and that supply and still be able to market their product at a price that the community is still willing to buy and support. And it’s worked for them! And being in business that long, I mean I think they started back in... 90’s sometime, I can’t remember the exact year they started, but I mean it’s been working through quite a test of time here. So I think it’s working out quite well for them” (Supplier).
- “Through all the owners that have been in Tall Grass through the years, [the choice to use organic ingredients] has never wavered. Nobody has come ever into a meeting and said, ‘You know, we could cut 40% off of our input costs if we didn’t use this organic flour all the time’. That doesn’t happen. That’s been actually something to be quite thankful for” (Lyle Barkman, Owner).

- “We don’t change radically unless there’s a really good reason. And we haven’t changed in 32 years” (Lyle Barkman, Owner).
- “And I’m seeing at the next level of owners that are coming up here now, they’re sharing the same philosophy, so that’s kind of nice. So hopefully we can continue working with them and supplying them and help them with the business model that they’re doing there now” (Supplier).

APPENDIX TWELVE

Quotes Relating to Relationships Among Owners

- “These four people go to church together. They live in the same community. They own a business together. That is *intense*. And somehow they manage to maintain integrity in their business and their personal lives with each other, and then somehow show up in church Sunday morning and still look at each other. Business can be—it’s tough, right? There’s a lot of decisions, and they don’t always agree. But in the end they maintain their respect for each other and appreciation for each other. And it has not always been easy. And that is really quite impressive” (Employee).
- “In a nutshell it’s just... we work it together. I don’t think I’ve ever seen a decision that consensus hasn’t been applied. And we deal in our resources as if they matter. That means *people, the earth, communities*, these things are taken really seriously. [...] And we try to operate within the parameters that we would like to live on this earth for a long time” (Lyle Barkman, Owner).
- “I think the hardest tension has probably been among the owner group. We got thrown together and we didn’t go to business school, so some of our philosophies are—we differ in terms of expectations... of work. [...] We’re not always on the same page, and in terms of practice, like living out the philosophy. So we’ve done a lot of mediation” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “[The owners are] just good examples of being good stewards of the earth and truly being in business for the sake of job creation and connections with people” (Employee).
- “This is the fabric of who [the owners] are, like the way they live their life, the way they do business, it’s all intertwined. It’s very enmeshed, and they are committed to what they do, and they have a lot of committed and dedicated customers and suppliers” (Employee).
- “We are very complementary: Paul is very strong in administration; Lyle is also good at administration; finance and everything that is technical and machine. I’m more into the production line here, which is also what Tabitha is more at ease with. And she’s also great with PR, and I mean, she’s the voice of the bakery. She’s so great at representing us. So we’re all sort of very complementary” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).
- “Actually there’s quite a remarkable skillset among the four owners right now. In that everybody will participate, but it’s not everybody’s... not everything is everybody’s forte. But there’s a nice even spread of that, which is great” (Lyle Barkman, Owner).
- “I sometime feel I haven’t had a normal job for 20 years because it’s different, you know. But it’s wonderful, I love it. That’s why I don’t really want to retire yet, because I love my work” (Paul Langel, Owner).

- “We don’t have a CEO, the owners team is really the CEO. We meet roughly at the moment once a week or every two weeks. [...] That’s where all the big questions get discussed. That’s kind of the heartbeat of management. [...] So the structure is: there’s an owners team that functions like a CEO. Then we have a location management team here and in Wolseley. And in some ways that’s it, you know. It’s really not that complicated. Except I always say we’re like a football team, the minute you think you have it altogether your staff, someone either leaves or gets sick and you have to hire and the like. So it’s always a bit fluid, except baking is very stable” (Paul Langel, Owner).
- “We are strongly communal as an ownership. But we are at present three families, three different families and that kind of partnership is a little bit different, but I would describe it as extremely cooperative. Our goal was to become a co-op, but at the time we had five owners and a really good friend who advised us a lot who was part of setting up co-ops said, ‘You’re already acting so cooperatively, you have five different parties. Just get going, you can always do that later’. And the later is... I think the later still might come because there are now newer people becoming owners, the second wave of some of our employees want to buy in, and that’s terribly exciting” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “We’re incorporated. I don’t think we’ll ever be publicly owned because in fact in our bylaws, you have to be active in the company, you have to be a working member to be an owner. Because what we wanted to avoid for the future is that somebody retires to BC and then makes demands on the company. The other thing we’ve said is our kids do not automatically inherit our shares, they get the money. Because the advice we were given for our kind of partnership the hats that a parent has to wear, complicate business immensely. So our kids can work in the organization, some of them do, and have. But owning has to be unanimous” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

APPENDIX THIRTEEN

Quotes Relating to Relationships with Employees

- “They are preposterously and beautifully intentional about how owners and staff communicate, and that staff feel a part of what’s happening. Just in terms of like... I know that the owners are in constant communication about decisions and they’ve even done mediation and this sort of thing. *It’s very much kind of a community business culture rather than the super corporate culture.* [...] they pay a living wage for full-time dedicated staff. They’ve hired people, you know, newcomers to Canada, and try to have those people represented in decision-making” (Former Employee).
- “I think that the owners for me have been—even on a personal level, when there’s been stuff going on with the family—they’re so supportive. Or with remote learning on and off over the last two years [because of COVID], just accommodating that for me because I had to be home with my kids. So yeah, they’re very supportive and it shows, especially with the bakers, like people are here for a long time for the most part. There’s a lot of long-term employment which I think says a lot about our company” (Employee).
- “[The owners] give me a lot of autonomy. And there’s just a lot of trust between the owners, with each other, as well as with their employees. [...] And just the respect that they show me and other employees makes... I think it just lays a good foundation for reciprocating that” (Employee).
- “[The owners] let you do your job, and they appreciate what you’re doing, so it’s a two-way thing. So that’s always great. I would never be able to work for somebody who I don’t have a good relationship with, because I would quit right away and say, you know, ‘It sounds too much like work’. You have to have fun” (Employee).
- “The relationship we have with the staff, I think it’s always been ahead of a lot of preoccupations. It’s always at the forefront of our thought when we come up with decisions or something like this. Staff well-being will always be ahead” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).
- “They treat their staff well, so you get long-term staff like me, or [name of employee], or [name of employee]. Like, we’ve all been here over 10 years, you know” (Employee).
- “I was a stay at home mom for 10 years and when I was looking for work after that point... it took me a long time because not many people want to hire someone who’s been at home for 10 years. These guys gave me a chance though!” (Employee)
- “When they hire people to work for them it’s not just because they think this person would do the best—‘This person would help us make the most money’ or whatever, ‘be good at this or that.’ Sometimes they hire people purely because they want to give them a chance. Because they feel like they need a leg up, and maybe this is the place where they can get that leg up. I remember getting to know one of the supervisors when I first started. The supervisor of the counter at The Forks was a woman who moved here from another country,

who did not even speak English when she got here, she hardly knew any English. And they hired her as counter staff because they saw potential in her, looking at her resume. And they hired her, and she ended up being the supervisor of the counter for years. And when they hired her she hardly spoke a lick of English. She said it was so incredibly stressful, but they gave her a chance, and she fought and fought and she did it. And I just think that is phenomenal. I think to pay somebody a fair wage to do a job speaking a language that they hardly know, keeping your fingers crossed that the customers are going to be understanding, I think that's amazing" (Employee).

- “[Because of COVID] the owners have taken a decrease in salary right? Okay, they pay their employees the bonus [at the end of the year]. Then Canada Day is coming up, and the owners are saying, ‘You know, we should really do something in light of everything that’s going on in the Indigenous world, like right now [the residential school grave sites] coming to light. How can we just take advantage of this huge day?’ Right, like Canada Day is huge for sales. And they decided that they wanted to give 100% of their income, as you know, to an Indigenous charity. And Paul said to Tabitha, ‘I think we need to keep this under wraps. We’ll put up a sign at the counter, but I don’t want this to be a big splash. We’re doing this because this is the right thing to do. Don’t shout it from the rooftops.’ And to me that is... it’s not about getting more business. It’s about just doing the right thing because it’s the right thing to do. And that makes me so proud to work for them” (Employee).
- “Well even, you’ll notice that a lot of the people that work there are people who are new to this country. Sometimes we have clerks who you can tell their English—they have a little struggle with English but [Tall Grass is] always willing to support people who need a job” (Customer).
- “The farmers, I see them, I recognize their faces. [...] They’ve had farm tours. [The owners] bring staff out to the farmers and we spend the day there” (Employee).
- “So those relationships amongst staff and also with customers—like I still run into Tall Grass customers, and they still know exactly who I am, and I know exactly who they are. So those relationships still last even beyond Tall Grass. Tall Grass builds community even beyond its actual sales” (Former Employee).
- “The mediator also teaches all of our staff, every few years we all take a course in positive communication. It’s so useful, it’s so good. It makes life richer. [...] So peace-building through baking is something we take [seriously]. Also when we hire people, I tell them that in the Aboriginal tradition—especially on the West Coast—the people who prepare the food for the community have to go through a cleanse. Because the belief is, you can bake peace into a bread or discord. The spirit matters... the spirit matters. *So we spend a lot of money and energy on sorting out differences among ourselves and our staff. And I think that really makes for a wonderful workplace*” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “If somebody has a mental illness issue, we don’t automatically disqualify them [from our hiring pool]. It has to work in the workplace. If they’re willing to be transparent with us and receive all the help they can, we have those people in our midst. definitely. And it works

well. We also have a mentally challenged person at The Forks, and he's just really beloved there. He helps anybody and everybody. Where we do the most of that work [i.e., hiring marginalized people] is limited English. Because you need a tremendous amount of patience. People want to say, 'I know, I know,' and they're so proud. So I think that's where we do the bulk of our work, with immigrants. Also in helping immigrants not bring the wars from over there, here. Like we have Koreans and Japanese, and we've had to do a lot of peace-making because those two countries... the hostilities and atrocities run so deep, and the memory. So we've had to very consciously say, 'That was over there. In Canada the vision is don't bring the war here. Work together and learn to appreciate each other'. And appreciating differences is something we talk a lot about. Whether it's biodiversity in agriculture or personalities." (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

- "I can bring up anything with Tabitha and what not. If I had an issue I would feel comfortable going to her" (Employee).
- "Their success is with the people they deal with, with their suppliers, as well as with their staff, the way they treat us" (Employee).
- "I can only talk about myself and what I see, and I think it's based on respect. I think it's based on respect and we're really trying to work together, and really listen. And I think on my part, I'm really trying to listen to what's going on, you know? And I think we're very fortunate with the staff that we have. But my Dad would always tell me, 'You deserve the staff that you get'. So if you treat your staff well, then you're going to have good relationships with them. But if you don't, then don't expect to be well-treated either. So for me it's a no-brainer. It makes total sense. I think what we're trying to do is... those kind of jobs in retail and bakeries and things like that don't really attract people that want to go into a career, it's not really something that comes to mind first. It's usually young people or people in transit or in-between jobs. But what we're trying to do here is making sure that people understand that, hey, if they want they can have a long-term career with Tall Grass, and it can be quite beneficial. We have people buying houses, you know. So you're really creating jobs that are beneficial for the economy, but also for the staff themselves because they know that they're here for—they can trust the bakery about how they'll be treated and how they'll be fairly paid and things like that. For me, it's very important. If there was no staff, there would be no bakery. You could be there managing whatever, but if you don't have good staff, then you'd be working 12 hours or 18 hours a day, and you would not last very long. And I see that, I'm the one left on the floor most of the time, so I may be a bit more—and I'm sure Paul and Tabitha and Lyle are very aware of that too, in some ways I am more directly involved with everybody else so I make sure that things happen for both ways, you know. That we give and—because they give us a lot. We give a lot too, but it's a fair exchange. It's a two-way situation. And based on respect. I think respect says it all" (Loïc Perrot, Owner).
- "Socially I think Tall Grass is a bit of a leader in some ways. Again, the relationship we have with the staff, and I think it's always been ahead of a lot of preoccupations. It's always at the forefront of our thought when we come up with decisions or something like this. Staff well-being will always be ahead" (Loïc Perrot, Owner)

- “I think [a business] can grow within [its] boundaries, and you can also develop new ways of doing things that would make it easier for your staff, that would get the product a bit more consistent, and more sustainable in some ways. So in that way, in that regard, I’d like to grow into a place where people can also grow in the business, if you see what I mean. Because when you want your staff to stay, after a while you find yourself with older people, which makes sense. After a while you have to replace them, you have to bring more young people, but there’s always a certain amount of people that are getting older and more tired—it’s a physical job. So you have to make sure that you can accommodate those people too. And I think growing in that way, accommodating your staff, to make sure they’re happy to come to work and they can see themselves working for another ten or whatever years. Because you so depend on them” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).
- “I would say there’s a lot of trust [between us and our employees]. We’re fairly egalitarian. But you shouldn’t kid yourself, we still hold the power, that’s just the reality. But I think within that context of employee-manager-owner, it’s about as good as it could be. Like I feel people enjoy coming to work, they like each other. We’re not necessarily buddy-buddy with everybody, although with some we are. Tabitha is enormously skilled in that field. She’s truly... to me she’s the Mozart of HR. Like she has a natural something. I don’t have that, but I do okay. It’s her social work training also” (Paul Langel, Owner).
- “I think [Tall Grass] gives a safe, good work environment. Because we really make an effort. There is no gossip. It takes us sometimes a while if it happens, but if we find out, we end it very quickly. And people know that and really I feel there’s very, very little problems. It offers an enjoyable, reasonably well-paid, safe environment. I can mainly speak to The Forks because that’s where I am more. It’s fast-paced, which employees love, because time goes way faster than when you sit there and nobody comes. Employees have also fed back to us, we have one, [name of employee], [...] she then got a very high-end job [...], and now does all kinds of work at that level. And she said to Tabitha once that she learned so much in her years at Tall Grass. Because we’re quite deliberate about teaching friendliness, how to serve well. And those things serve you all your life you know. But I would say that when I look at our immigrant employees, they’re phenomenal. And they get paid what everybody gets paid. I mean it’s a wonderful place for them to land. You know, a safe environment where you’re respected” (Paul Langel, Owner).
- “I was also aware of the need to give vulnerable people a chance at a job. So one of the first people we hired was a vulnerable young man who came to us through a program and he had some ups and down but he was with us for seven years” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “The cross-cultural-ness makes it a challenge. An example of that is in Wolseley, the lead baker is Hutterite and her style is very brusque. She’s a perfectionist, which is not good, and her next is Japanese. And for a Japanese to have to be told what to do, to be given feedback, is an utter shame. So we’re—after six years of this—just getting close to figuring out how to feedback. Because it’s so very, very important that it’s never your fault. Whereas the rest of us go—our interior joke is ‘Even Loïc makes mistakes’. I think Loïc, and for the most part the owners, have tried to be culture builders on the floor. And because we’ve been

bakers, it's been a lot easier. Modeling, is big. And we have—I don't know if you've seen—the FISH! Philosophy. The FISH! Philosophy is our working definition. I don't have to explain it all here, or I can quickly: it comes out of a farmer's market in Seattle, Pike's Market, the biggest, most successful market, from the fish store. And it's cold work, and you get up at four to work with frozen fish. It just had such a bad culture, and one of the employees had this insight: 'I'm going to be here for the next how many years? Am I going to be this miserable? We have to change'. So he started working with, 'Let's start having fun'. It's an amazing video, but the basic principles, are first of all: Be There. Be present. Don't wear headphones, and don't wish you were somewhere else, be there. Make Each Other's Day. While you're at work, try and make it happy for other people and yours will go much better... and your customers. Play. Try and have fun while you're at work. [...] So the FISH! Philosophy is one we try to use ourselves, with each other, and with our staff. And it's very helpful" (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

- “We had a baker who was very tough, he had been a prison guard in England before he was a baker. He quit that one day because he said, ‘I realized I was angrier than the people I was supposed to look after’. And we hired him as a baker. He was very defensive, hard to communicate with. So we did what we do, we used mediation. And he and I worked through some tough issues, because I was his supervisor, and I don't like negativity on the floor. Like I realized I wanted it to work because he was a good baker and had many gifts. And after he left, and when he said farewell, he had gone through a nasty divorce, he said, ‘I realize now my divorce was unnecessary, if I had known then what I learned here’. So that's one story that has always stood out for me. I think a lot staff who've worked here—especially young students—have come back and said that when they look back on the whole experience, it was such a confidence builder because they were respected, and things were expected of them. So, it's going to be interesting to see, but I think some of the immigrants credit us incredibly with just the best employee experience possible. One of them moved to Edmonton and one of ours moved to Ontario and they just say it's just impossible to find the same” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “I think we certainly welcome diversity, which... to a fault sometimes. Communication is difficult, and teaching our culture sometimes is difficult. But we practice diversity of hiring. From the beginning I think probably our third hire was a young gay man who was very ostracized by his community. We've always celebrated diversity. I think also of age, like [name of employee] is... well, she's over 80. *points to a woman baking* She comes to bake pies once a week. She doesn't need—she worked for us full-time at one point. She doesn't need the money, we actually don't need her either. We choose. Because again, it celebrates diversity. And when Stella's was going through that whole thing, we talked saying, ‘What are we doing? Are we sure? Are we clear?’ And we realized having people like—having a mixed age group—having people like [name of employee] or [name of employee] or [name of employee], if those women saw anything they would just... be pretty, they wouldn't let anything happen to these young women, they would make sure. So I think that's something. And also the front lead-hand, again, [name of employee], is way past retirement age. She works part-time for us, she's invaluable. She ran a giftshop in Thompson for many years and she primarily chose to hire Fetal Alcohol young kids who had issues as employees. And she hired them and worked with them. And so she's great with...

our front staff are pretty quirky. And she just makes them a team, she's old-fashioned, she's strict and fair" (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

- "They are very friendly people, there's no doubt about that" (Customer).
- "I have always been impressed with this, the fact that they seem to hire people of different backgrounds. And I think that's an important aspect of their philosophy" (Customer).
- "The staff at Tall Grass that had been there when I was there and they're still there, they still feel like family. Like I don't know... you go there and it's a big hello and they're offering you food and you catch up and... you almost wouldn't be surprised to see someone at a Tall Grass staff party who doesn't even work there anymore but like, is still coming" (Former Employee).
- "All our product is eco-friendly, local, and organic. It makes me proud to work here." (Tall Grass Employee, in Chapman, 2020e, p. 27).

APPENDIX FOURTEEN

Quotes Relating to Relationships with Customers

- “[We want] everyone to be welcome. As if we were addressing the divine in them. So hospitality has always been really the hallmark of welcoming, and making the bakery... although we have political biases, quite often in an election we will make a cake for each party, and our thing is at the bakery everyone should be welcome. It’s a peaceful place where bread is served. That’s kind of our thing, yes. We probably get the most feedback from how wonderful the service is, and also because people stay long enough to make bonds with customers. Who are our customers? Amazing, amazing people, and ordinary people. We tend not to make a fuss, the mayor is a regular customer. So are quite poor people who come and buy from the day old. We have an incredible grid. But there’s no doubt I think the bulk of what drives our support is middle class conscientious people who want to commit to the environment and to ethical business, so that is a huge part of that. But there’s one woman for instance who raises money for many charities, and she runs for charities. She comes every morning for her Saskatoon bannock, and then she runs. She’ll come in, ‘Ok I want my bannock, I have to run 32 miles’. Very interesting people. Immigrants who miss grain, we also sell a lot of grain to immigrants who are so used to it, and some of them have the ability to mill. They’re not used to buying this denatured flour that’s been bleached and what not. I think our customers are also a lot of naturopaths and their patients, especially in light of the desiccating that’s happening now on crops to avoid that. So health-conscious people” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “I don’t know if we’re the only business where customers would say, ‘You haven’t done a price hike for a while are you okay? Shouldn’t you be doing one?’” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “Like everyone in Wolseley—people will come in and [say], ‘Oh, is Tabitha here?’ It’s like everybody knows her. They’re like, ‘Oh, we’re friends with her!’ It’s like, ‘You and everybody else is’, you know. *Laughs* Everyone knows them” (Employee)
- “Like the customers, we definitely have regulars that come in every day. And we know them, and a lot of them will—like they’ll have conversations so you know, ‘Oh, you just moved!’ or... like we just had one lady who’s been—she’s actually was the landlord at the building, but she just moved to BC. So she came in one last time to say, ‘Bye’. And, yeah, stuff like that” (Employee).
- “They’ll give out recipes as long as people promise not to sell them. So I think, once again, it’s a community place. [Tall Grass] just wants Winnipeg to be eating good food, whether it’s from there or elsewhere” (Former Employee).
- “We don’t believe in animosity or in hiding our recipes. We’re free with our recipes, customers can have them. They just can’t promote them as their own. But all this secrecy... Co-operation is what will get us further. There’s a saying we use a lot, and it’s a Buddhist

saying actually: ‘If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with friends.’ And we’re into far” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

- “I think there are some recipes we are still using that started with you know, it was brought by a customer. I think what we do for Christmas, the Vinarterta which is an Icelandic cake, it was brought by a customer. And now we are doing like 500 every year!” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).
- “Well gosh, we were one of the first customers. I don’t know what year that was. [...] For many years we’ve searched out the natural foods—the way I’ve always been in my own life, way, way back many decades, anyways—and we always wanted not only natural fruits and vegetables, but good bread. And [the bread at Tall Grass,] that’s good bread! We had an interest in—well we baked bread at some point ourselves, and we even tried sourdough. And I came across a very excellent book on sourdough, which I gave to Tabitha around the time when she was starting out. And I asked her if maybe she could have success making real good sourdough bread, and of course, she has! So ever since then, we’ve been making a good use of all that she has to offer at her bakery” (Customer).
- “I think we also listen to our customers. It’s not just, ‘Our way or the highway.’ I personally like to get feedback on what we do and how we could do better. [...] So that kind of relationship is also very important, it’s not just your way and, ‘I know better, you just listen.’ *It’s about sharing and exchanging*” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).
- “[My interactions with Tall Grass employees are] always excellent. They’re very personable, and they’re very interested in what they’re baking. One time we went there and we got a kind of a rye bread, and the seeds weren’t quite right so we mentioned it to the baker and he realized the supplier hadn’t given him the right type of seeds. So they’re very good at if you have any suggestions, they’re very interested in their product. [...] They are very friendly people, there’s no doubt about that” (Customer).
- “Customers say, ‘Well do you have this thing? This item?’ It’s just a question, you know, you could walk up to any place and say, ‘Do you have this?’ And Tabitha’s answer is always—if we don’t have it, ‘No, but maybe we should make it!’ And then it’ll get on her train of thought where she then goes and probes all the bakers’ minds to see what they think about it, to see if anybody has a good recipe, where that could fit in” (Employee).
- “We are quite known for our good service, that’s one of the reasons customers come back. And a while ago—there’s this doctor, he’s a retired doctor, he and his wife come, because he’s really into healthy eating. And he said to me at Christmas, he wanted to thank me. And I said, ‘You should thank the staff.’ He said ‘I do!’ He said, ‘I can’t tell you what it means as far as feeling like you belong to the circle. I just walk up there, I get a big smile, and they start reaching for my favourite thing, because they know.’ He said, ‘It’s just like coming home!’” (Tabitha Langel, Owner)
- “Well, customers.... It’s wild how well you get to know them. There’s new people, like there’s tourists coming through The Forks all the time, but there’s also people who have

very predictable patterns and are going there the same day every week or even once a day sometimes. So those become very familiar, very beautiful interactions. [...] So those relationships amongst staff and also with customers—like I still run into Tall Grass customers and they still know exactly who I am and I know exactly who they are. So those relationships still last even beyond Tall Grass. Tall Grass builds community even beyond its actual sales” (Former Employee).

- “And of course you have the customers’ demand. You cannot function if you’re not listening to your customers. *Laughs* So even though you’d like to do a bunch of sourdough bread, and whole wheat and everything, if it doesn’t work, it doesn’t work. And then you have to listen to the customers and say, ‘Hey, what would work here?’ And sometimes it’s a bit of a fine balance, knowing what will work or not. But I think because Tall Grass has been going on for so long now, we are known for what we do. And people expect that kind of product here” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).
- “We are trying to be fair with our customers. I mean you know it’s an expensive—the produce we use, a lot of them are organic—not everything—but a lot of things are organic so it comes at a price. When we are going through a price hike, we really think twice about it. It’s not something that we do lightly. We have a wide range of customers, some people are very well off and some others are not. So you have to think about everybody. So we always try to keep some items at an affordable price. I guess bakery products are a bit of a staple of life in some ways, bread anyway. So I find it very hard to see the price of bread going up and up and up. I find this difficult because I know for some people it’s a basic—less and less, but still” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).
- “It’s like a nice neighborhood business. Like my daughter is on counter, and I’m always amazed what she knows about customers. Because once they’re regulars you know about the deaths, you know about the weddings, it is astounding” (Paul Langel, Owner).
- “I used to do counter for years, now I can’t because my knees are bad and I have too much work. I am always amazed—I do the odd, you know, an hour or two hours if someone’s sick. There is a joy often among customers. I think it has had an enormous effect. You can sense it. I sense it when we did the pick-up and delivery [because of COVID]. That was an astounding experience, to have 60, 70, sometimes 100 people come and pick up their order, and the gratefulness, the joy, it was amazing. They thanked us that we did this. I think the people who are aware that we try to be just employers, they’re also very grateful. And I’m aware. Like I often notice when I go somewhere, if they’re good or bad employers. Like I love going—we deliver to St. Leon’s, I love because the staff is happy, I think they’re good employers. And I notice when they aren’t. So customers are aware of that, and they sometimes say it. ‘I love coming here because your employees are happy’. And just the good food. Like that really struck me with pick-up and delivery. Because we would have to do sometimes 100 phone calls a day and that takes a long time, three of us calling. And people would say, ‘I am so grateful that you’re doing this’. And I thought, ‘Wow’ ... because you don’t hear it that often, but when you do these calls you hear it more. So I think there is a percentage in Winnipeg, probably a tiny percentage, that is aware and that really, really loves it. But it’s a sliver of 700,000 people. We have about 220,000 transactions a year here,

pre-COVID. And out of that is a lot of repeats. So it's not like we have 300,000 customers. We probably have about 20,000." (Paul Langel, Owner).

- “People say that they support us regardless of things that happen. You notice it most strongly—leading with this example is not the best, but I would say you notice it most strongly when people complain, actually. So someone will come with a complaint about something and they say, ‘We still love you, we’re still going to shop here, but this thing, we don’t like’. And that is interesting because... to them it’s their local bakery, they are loyal to their local bakery, it’s down the street or it’s a few streets over or they went there as a kid, like I did *chuckles* and they just want to see it be successful based on the kind of people that we are, the kind of owners that they know that we are. Some of the connections are strictly personal in the sense that they know the owners or they’ve known the owners over the years for a long time, right? Or they know some of the staff, friends and family of the staff, that kind of thing” (Employee).
- “Well, one of the things we tell our staff is make their day, like even if they’re not friendly, you stay friendly. You never know where people are coming from. I don’t think the customer is always right, we don’t believe that. But we say the customer is always the customer, and this is their time and their place. So one of the hard things to do at the front that I find I always have to watch is, so people don’t socialize with each other while they’re serving the customer. I think to really honour that time and that place and that moment, and use the time to make their day. So I always say to customers, and thank them for their support, like that we do a lot of. And a lot of them I’ve gotten to know really well, some have become very close friends. I always say it doesn’t matter how good an idea you have, if nobody joins that idea. If nobody buys, it doesn’t matter, it’s just another thing on paper. So I think high respect” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “So a lot of customers—we are known—they bring cards to staff, and they have favourite staff, and we don’t mind. I mean, we respect that. Everybody has people they click with more than others” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “[In terms of how we’ve affected customers] I think we’ve talked the food politics well indirectly, like this map *points to map of suppliers on wall at The Forks location* has been a big one. And when we tell people who’ve never—they come because of the product, like they come because they want the cinnamon bun, they’re not into organic, in fact I’ll tell you a funny story after. But when you explain the philosophy they go, ‘Oh yeah, that makes sense!’ ‘Yeah, why *do* we need to support China when we can be buying from our own farmers?’ So I think we’ve taught the philosophy. Also by things we’ve done, like when the climate strike was on we shut down both sides and paid staff. We didn’t force staff to go, we just suggested, that they are on pay and we would appreciate if they would show up. So things like that, we’ve always been very proactively involved with *Every Child Matters*, we get involved with causes and customers get drawn into it. Some of them building awareness, like I know we stopped on July 1st—we stopped for a moment of silence here. And in the line-up there was an Aboriginal—clearly someone who was into the day, and behind her was this White woman who hadn’t at all been drawn in, so I briefly said why we were doing this, what it was about, and the White woman turned to the Aboriginal woman and said, ‘I’m so

sorry, I really don't know much about this and I should'. That was such a good moment for me. So it matters what we do, however small. But in terms of how badly we do it...

laughing in our first few years there was this guy who came and he wanted to talk to me, and he said, 'I've come to say goodbye, and I'm very sorry I just absolutely love your bakery, but my naturopath wants me to switch to organic food'. I said, 'But we are organic!' And we didn't have big signage, and his relief to find out we were organic, and he didn't have to switch *laughing*. So I sometimes think we're not necessarily marketers, we don't market ourself well (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

- “Well, for many years we've searched out the natural foods, the way I've always been in my own life, way, way back many decades, anyways, and we always wanted not only natural fruits and vegetables but good bread, and that's good bread! We had an interest in—well we baked bread at some point ourselves, and we even tried sourdough. And I came across a very excellent book on sourdough, which I gave to Tabitha around the time when she was starting out. And I asked her if maybe she could have success making real good sourdough bread, and of course she has! So ever since then, we've been making a good use of all that she has to offer at her bakery” (Customer).
- “[Our interactions with Tall Grass employees are] always excellent, they're very personable and they're very interested in what they're baking. One time we went there and we got a kind of a rye bread, and the seeds weren't quite right so we mentioned it to the baker and he realized the supplier hadn't given him the right type of seeds, so they're very good at if you have any suggestions, they're very interested in their product” (Customer).
- “I think [Tall Grass is] very lucky to be in this area where people... it's a mixed bag, I think—from the junkie to the professor—that lives here. But very appreciative. And I think they have a lot of support. First of all their food is fresh, and I think a lot of people are agreeing on how they grow, how they mill, what we stand for. Also a community bakery is not a bad thing to have. Because really if they're asking you how was your holiday, you know what place you take in their life. Or if you're closed for a day, 'Oh, what was going on?' you know? 'Well, the sewer line acted up so we couldn't function'. 'Oh, that's too bad are you okay now?' The back and forth conversations. Less now with the masks and the COVID and people lined up outside, but yeah we really have a connection with the locals, which is great. So different. It's not comparable to a big store, and I think that's their success. And good stuff! Like really! And if it's not good, bring it back and get something else. And listening to the customers, 'Oh I don't like this'. Or, 'I do like that, when do you have it again?' Well, there you go! Pass it on to the bakers and let's make it work” (Employee).

APPENDIX FIFTEEN

Quotes Relating to Relationships with Suppliers

- “The first time that [a particular farmer] brought in a shipment of grain and I was baking, I introduced him. There were about 5 or 6 customers, so I introduced them. And he was a big burly farmer. Everybody spontaneously just started cheering. And he just started crying. He said, ‘I always feel so unwelcome in the city, because it’s not for us. It’s the first time I’ve ever experienced [this feeling]’” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “At its fifth anniversary, Tall Grass Prairie decided to throw a party and invite all the farmers. About 400 people came, and when the farmers were introduced, people cheered. The farmers were visibly moved” (Rempel Petkau, 2014, para. 13).
- “[Our relationships with suppliers are] very, very positive because we don’t haggle over price, we respect price hikes, and we meet regularly [...] with our main suppliers to look ahead” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “We don’t negotiate the farmers into the ground. When we started we asked them, ‘What do you need [to make a viable living]?’ And then we said, ‘Let’s try!’ And it’s worked. We don’t get rich, but we make a good living, that’s good enough, you know” (Paul Langel, Owner).
- “Well many of [our suppliers] we have been with for 15 years, so they’re kind of like family. [...] Routinely when the farmers come we know they’re coming. One of the owners will free themselves up and sit down and have lunch with them, because at The Forks we have soup and sandwiches. Quite often we introduce them to the customers if customers sit down. [...] Generally, we’ve never in all the years signed a contract with a farmer. We just do handshakes, conversations around the table, and, ‘How’s your family doing, what do you need?’ We don’t bicker, we try and make it work for each other. And *huge* trust” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “It was Tabitha’s warm and welcoming ear and an awful lot of encouragement that got us started” (spelt supplier, quoted in Chapman, 2020c, p. 24).
- “Well we kind of joke and laugh about it, but we wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for [Tall Grass]... because like I say, when Mom and Dad first talked to Tabitha and Lyle in 2000, Dad was just switching over to organic at that point. So that’s when they were supplying them with wheat. But as time went on and they were looking for different products, that made us venture out to try different grains. And most of the product lines that we have now is because Tall Grass had requested [them] and we just kind of filled that need for them, which we found out that other people need the same kind of products there too. So I mean *we pretty much owe everything we have now to what Tall Grass has initiated for us*” (Supplier).

- “Well we’re farm direct, so we’ve had a huge impact. Like when Tall Grass started, it was a real farm crisis in ’90. Farmers nearly got nothing, and we found these organic farmers. And Tabitha and those owners, those people who started Tall Grass, met with them and said, ‘What do you need [to get paid for your grain in order] to make it [i.e., to survive financially]?’ And it was like five times or more what the market was. And we said, ‘Let’s try, let’s see if this works.’ So we really put several farms on their feet. [...] But in terms of the farm, like the grain, we have two main suppliers, three of our grains, that’s been huge for them. Because they could sometimes sell us their entire crop, you know. And we’ve always had a good relationship. So in that way, we’ve had a big, big impact on that part” (Paul Langel, Owner).
- “About five years ago, I don’t know why or how, but there was an incredible spike in wheat prices. They just shot up. And all of our organic suppliers got calls from New York, from Toronto. So three of our suppliers called us at the time and said, ‘We’ve been offered this and this, and they would send a truck to the farm, one shot deal.’ And we said to all of them, ‘You know what, you need to make a decision in the best interest of your family, your farm. We will find other sources. We’ll free you up.’ And in the end none of them went for it [i.e., the one-shot deal]. Which I think tells the story in itself. They said, ‘You know what, New York won’t know who we are next year. You always know who we are.’ So I think the trust is very high, and [there is] incredible respect” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “Our main suppliers are farmers [...] And those farms are pretty much working or growing those grains for us, for Tall Grass. I know the whole wheat, the Red Fife is an old variety of grain, and it’s only one farmer and his whole crop is grown for us. It’s all for Tall Grass. And it’s especially now—I don’t know if you’re aware of the situation right now with the drought? So the price of wheat is going up and there is more demand and not enough supply. He could very well sell his grain for much higher to people that would outbid us, but he still sticks with us. So that says a lot. I mean we get a lot from the colonies, a lot of our fruit, vegetables.. it’s almost like a market *laughing* [...] So it’s all local, and it keeps the economy local so the money stays around, and it benefits everybody” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).
- “Well, one thing with Tall Grass is they have a pretty large staff. So I know they’ve had a few bakers that came through their operation, and then the bakers kind of quit working there, and they started up their own operation. And they tend to give us a call looking for product type of thing! So we supply a few of their bakers that they used to have. So it’s been kind of spreading the word, of supporting local foods and that. So I mean it’s been a big help in the community that way, and it’s been nice to see that other people are taking on what Tall Grass has been doing too” (Supplier).
- “We deal a lot with Hutterite colonies. While they’re not organic, many of them are very much turning to natural and they’re hugely important in agriculture and local agriculture. So that’s really for me, because I grew up on a colony, a very wonderful respectful way to do business. Generally they’re pretty generous so they bring extras for the staff. In fact every few years we visit a farm. That’s another thing we do as staff, a staff thing we provide: we go and visit and we take along a picnic. So this year we’re visiting a Hutterite colony.

Because many people have never visited one, and they have a good story to tell. 14 families working together cooperatively, they are a cooperative” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

- “And one of the probably wise things we did when we started was to not draw that line in the sand and said, ‘We will be as organic as we can be.’ And that has allowed us to just grow and grow and grow more and more and switch over into organics. For instance, our coffee is beyond fair trade. So we buy from companies where the growers have shares in the company up here, beside getting a fair trade price. That’s kind of our goal, that kind of trade. So our grains are there. When we started it was just wheat, and now it’s... all our grains except poppy seeds -- our government still won’t allow our farmers to really grow poppy seeds so they come from Australia still. And the DeRuyck’s who grow a lot of our grains and get a lot of our grains set up a processing station, and it’s one of the biggest medium-sized processed plants on the prairies. So they want to grow confection sunflowers. We also 10 years ago started pressing our own oil. Because the same thing that is true of bread, like the prairies grow something like 80% of the oil seeds in Canada. But they get processed further away. We brought a press in from Germany that we ran at The Forks until the last few years. The Forks has really changed and the space just wasn’t there. So we negotiated with an organic farmer and the press is now on a farm around Beausejour, which is also a cooperative venture. Three, four families farming together. That’s great. So we still get organic oil, that’s really been a great adventure to say, ‘Yes, how can we make the business work?’ No profit, no margin. It’s true, you have to pay people, you have to generate money, walking that tightrope is a daily, joyous thing. We walk it gladly in a way” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “We did have [100-Mile Bread], the switch to Red Fife [wheat] changed that. We had lots of 100-mile things. The 100-mile thing was so, in a way, arbitrary. Because we had customers who said, one of our products was 125 miles and she felt she couldn’t buy it. So as local as possible. We got Saskatoons from Portage, strawberries from Portage. And we deliberately create recipes that use local product. So we’re going to buy 3,000 lbs of pumpkin this year, probably 6,000 lbs of tomatoes. Same with apples, local apples. We cut them up and freeze them. So all of that, I would say, 200 miles is a better... because the bioregion, you have to look at what is your bioregion. And there are certain things that the Winnipeg soil is not suited for. So we try and stay within 200 miles. But right now our Red Fife farmer is at Dauphin, so we run the truck up there four times a year. Again, the carbon footprint remains pretty small” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “Well the farmers [are a key stakeholder]. That was kind of the main goal when they first started was to support local, organic farming, right? And [do it] sustainably” (Employee).
- “In packaging, for instance, they just found a new supplier for packaging. The price of the packaging is three times what we’ve been paying until now, but this is compostable. So that means we can get rid of the Styrofoam, that means we can get rid of more of the plastic. So it does not matter to the owners that this means this is going to cut into their bottom line into the money that they make as owners. It’s about doing the right thing, what they consider to be the right thing. The wheat they buy, the price they pay for organic is considerably higher than what they could buy regular production supplies for. Buying fruit, vegetables from the

Hutterites. They pay them a fair price, they don't try to go for the least expensive, they go for what's fair" (Employee).

- "The farmers, again, are a big [stakeholder], because of Tall Grass, and that's the whole reason that Tall Grass exists, is to keep those farms going" (Employee).
- "[Tall Grass is] also trying to find ways to help small farms, you know. We're really trying to help small farmers that are coming up with quinoa, and all the variety of wheat like [corn?] or spelt or something like this. That will catch our interest and we'll try to develop a recipe around that" (Loïc Perrot, Owner)
- "There's a few farms... I mean I can think of at least three farms that directly relate—for whom the bakery is really important" (Loïc Perrot, Owner)
- "I find it really interesting to have the colonies—because of course, you know, Tabitha is Hutterite, so there is a connection there. But I find really interesting how she kept that connection and how it became a place here at The Forks where they come and they meet and you see them and you get to know them, it's really interesting" (Loïc Perrot, Owner).
- "Environmentally, I would say that Tall Grass was a pioneer. In the 90's nobody cared about organic, nobody knew even what it was. It was really not on the radar at all. They had to wait until what—2000?—to get really started at that time, but Tall Grass was already there. They are not the only ones but it was really a tiny little market, with very little acknowledgment from the people. And now you hear stories—particularly now that this year has been so hard on the farmers. And you have farmers that are organic, and others that are conventional, and the difference is amazing. The farmers that are organic were still about to come out with a good crop, with an okay crop, while the other guys, not as much. So I hope it will turn some people—I hope some people will realize, we need to get there. Plus there is a huge incentive now because everything that is organic is also very expensive. There is a huge demand. That's why again, I said, we were so lucky to have that relationship with our farmers, because if we didn't have the relationship, we would not have any grain. It would be very hard to get it" (Loïc Perrot, Owner).
- "You know, we are still using some white flour; we are milling most of our flour, except the white flour. We need a sifter, and we just don't have the space. So we have to buy the white flour from Eli, which is not too far. It's organic white flour, so locally grown, it fits our agenda in some ways. But because of this season, this year has been quite terrible on the farmers. Of course they want to raise the price of their flour to... quite high. So we've been trying to fight that. We feel that it doesn't really benefit the farmers, and it's a bit of an opportunistic move, because not only with COVID more people are buying flour, but because it's organic they're raising the price quite high. So we don't feel it's very necessary. You know, there is a difference between raising the price two or three dollars and raising the price by five, six, seven dollars a bag. It's quite a big difference. So yeah, there's those kinds of tensions. Other tensions... some farmers don't really understand or don't really want to go into organic. They will tell you that its... Because they don't want to go through the paperwork, they don't want to go through the process, so they don't want to go through

organic. But they are still working in some ways that is very natural, so they call it natural. But we need that—we want that organic because if you remember it's natural, then there's no control. You need to actually control. Otherwise they'll do whatever they want. One year they may go natural, but then the next year they may add a bit of this or a bit of that. So sometimes there is a bit of tension at that level, yeah. They say, 'It's natural, it's all the same!' But not exactly! Because you need to support that organic organization, you know? So that's a bit of tension sometimes. But they know what we stand for, and they never last very long. They try, but we say, 'No I'm sorry, it has to be organic'" (Loïc Perrot, Owner)

- “We make long-term relationships with our trades... Anyways, Balcaen is our plumbing and some heating—we're geothermal, primarily. The guy comes over and said, 'Yeah I said I was at Tall Grass and everybody said, 'Did you get the cinnamon buns??'' The poor young guy—he's a fairly young guy, knew his stuff—but the poor guy must've gotten skewered 'You were at Tall Grass, and there are no cinnamon buns here?!' Like the guy—he was kind of like, 'I got skewered almost', he said. So I sent a couple six packs along to kind of quell the riot over there at the Balcaen office level and whoever hangs in the building, you know? These things are... I mean there's one, our tire shop, is completely on only cinnamon buns, they don't even use currency from us. It's all measured in sixes of C-buns. One tire repair is two sixes. If I need a tool, like an air tool or something, like for checking tire pressure. I think that's two six-packs as well” (Lyle Barkman, Owner).
- “I've never forgotten that all stakeholders matter. If you abuse one of them, in the long run it derails. If you abuse your farmers you'll go so far. Like we had that moment, I don't know if Tabitha told you, when the world market about five years ago shot up, and they stuck with us! Because they knew when it's over, we'll be there. And they could've made a ton of money, but the next year, you know, the world market doesn't care about them” (Paul Langel, Owner).
- “[Our relationships with suppliers are] so very positive. And we pay on time. If we can't pay, we call and say, 'Can you wait a little bit? We're not saying we can't, we're just a bit behind'. So very transparent. We rarely, I mean we haven't had to do that in years. We generally put them first before ourselves” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “But I know for a lot of [our suppliers], they love the fact that when they come we sit down with a bowl of soup. And that's something very much, that has been a thing I do. Loïc is picking it up very much [...], he makes sure they get a bowl of soup. But it's something I've absolutely loved doing and carried forward from my Hutterite background. If you work together, you eat together, otherwise where is the joy? So I think the hospitality is something they appreciate. The respect. I mean I think paying people on time and not haggling is very respectful. We're also generous, we send them off with a loaf of bread from their product” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “I know they do a lot of support of the farmers in Manitoba, they do a lot of support for different farmers. Our son made a movie about seeds and so he had a lot to do with Tabitha, and she has been very... you know, 'support the local'” (Customer).

- “[Tall Grass is] very much for local, and the use of what is produced locally” (Customer).
- “Well, Tall Grass has always been a farm-oriented type of operation. They’re very supportive of local farmers and local products. So I mean it’s not just us that’s supplying it there’s multiple local farmers that are supplying them. And they’ve been a big promoter of local agriculture. And it’s been a good working relationship all the way along. So it’s just been great dealing with them anyway” (Supplier).

APPENDIX SIXTEEN

Quotes Relating to Relationships with Other Organizations

- “For a while there, a new bakery was being started by our staff every three years. But we always kind of rejoiced with that, because who’s not to like a society that is slowly filling up with better food? So that was a good thing” (Lyle Barkman, Owner).
- “We’ve always welcomed... we were the first from-scratch bakery. We’re surrounded by them now. [...] But we actually welcome all of that because most of—like Pennyloaf, Sleepy Owl, these are bakers who trained here, and we’ve always been very supportive. We think the more small businesses, the better. [...] We’ve had many of our staff... like there’s a bakery in Brandon that mills [their own flour], and that was one of our staff for 10 years. And when she left we gave her a mill as a gift. So we welcome from-scratch, we think that’s the revolution, it’s easier for these companies to buy local” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “When you hear Tabitha talk about other bakeries opening, it’s always that like, ‘This is great. It’s just furthering the local food movement in Winnipeg.’ And it feels like they’ve always been a huge proponent of more bakeries popping up, more local food” (Former Employee).
- “In some ways we felt very alone being the only organic bakery in town, which is sad in some ways. I mean, I wish that more bakeries would be organic and using organic flour. But there is a cost” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).
- “We wished more of them would stick with the organic, but these bakeries put out wonderful product so we have a really good relationship with most of them, almost all of them actually” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “My husband/business partner and I both worked at Tall Grass. That’s actually where we met. They’ve certainly influenced us in a lot of ways, like ethically sourcing ingredients and baking from scratch. We actually refuse to make cinnamon buns because, ‘How could you compete with a Tall Grass cinnamon bun?’” (Sleepy Owl Bread in Chapman, 2020f, p. 29)
- “[Tall Grass was] tremendously encouraging when we were getting started at Hildegard’s in Wolseley. Now we buy from many of the same farmers. Winnipeg has a very strong and welcoming community of independent bakeries, and we can thank Tall Grass for fostering a market that barely existed when they started 30 years ago” (Hildegard’s Bakery in Chapman, 2020f, p. 29).
- “A few years ago the bank that refused our first loan came and apologized. They said, ‘We should’ve listened, and we didn’t. Give us another chance, we’re ready now’. We said ‘Thank you very much, that’s great, but we’re very happy with—we’re kind of credit union people’. But an interesting thing that happened to that bank is the people that started Half Pints Brewery [...] wanted to start a brewing company kind of on Tall Grass principles. ‘Local grain, local beer, made here, you can *see* what we’re doing.’ So he went to the bank

and the bank said, 'No'. So he went back and said to them, 'You know what?' – and by then we were ten years old -- 'From what I hear in the underground you said *no* to Tall Grass. We are only wanting to do what Tall Grass did, and make a beer instead of bread. Are you sure it's the smart thing to do? Do you want to be that kind of a bank?' And the bank changed its mind. So on their first bottle—I have one up in my desk—they say, 'Goes great with Tall Grass multigrain bread'" (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

- “For example, I’ve personally worked with like five or six bakers over here that have gone to start successful bakeries in other parts of Winnipeg, so that community has expanded. Whether they consider themselves part of the Tall Grass community anymore, I’m not sure but they I think definitely have their history here and yeah, that is part of it, right?” (Employee)
- “Some [other bakeries] very much do [come to us for help]. Some are fairly proud and that’s fine. In our culture unfortunately, asking for help is seen as a sign of weakness. But for some of them we also go to them for help, like especially Sleepy Owl we have a very good relationship with, and also Hildegard. Because we were friends for years and years. They baked on the farm. They’re really a visionary, very interesting bakery. So yeah we do help each other, and an example of that is sometimes the night baker comes and a main ingredient is missing, we have a relationship where we know the other night bakers, so they call and we’ll say, ‘Ok I’ll get you some from blah blah blah’, so there’s a good relationship. We don’t believe in animosity or in hiding our recipes, we’re free with our recipes, customers can have them. They just can’t promote them as their own. But all this secrecy... cooperation is what will get us further. There’s a saying we use a lot, and it’s a Buddhist saying actually, ‘If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with friends’. And we’re into far” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

APPENDIX SEVENTEEN

Quotes Relating to Relationships with Community

- “We had to renovate [the Wolseley location], a solid little building that’s been a laundromat and all kind of uses... a store, a laundromat, and it needed renovating and we decided it was pretty amazing. We were the first people to renovate it; it was over 100 years old. It had been built so solidly that it hadn’t needed it, but then it did. So we decided to renovate it in the same spirit, to make it last for another 100 years, our renovations. So we hired a local architect. And I grew up on a farm and farmers tend not to know an awful lot about design beyond practicality, right. So I found it hard to enter into the look. But I’m so glad we did. The contractor we hired was actually a relative of one of the owners, who taught carpentry at Red River. He used a lot of re-used lumber, so this is an elevator beam. The beams on the ceiling... and I want to put a plaque up saying all of that. We need to. The beams on the ceiling are from the old Winnipeg Arena, and the ceiling at the top is scrub oak, so repurposed lumber. And also when we took it down, we didn’t haul it to the dump, the carpenter took the time to bundle up the stairs, things like the stairs, and the lumber we took down and we put it in a neat pile and we put out a sign: ‘Take me home’. And almost nothing... there were so few dump notes, people just took it and repurposed it. And the building ended up winning quite a few awards, the People’s Choice, and quite a few... We got asked to come and speak at the Architectural event several years in a row about the process of the building. We consulted the community heavily, that was the other thing. It’s a building in where the community had their say in what they wanted to see. So it’s now [13] years ago, at the time, in terms of qualifying for a loan because the thing about a business like that is you don’t have a huge stash. We definitely have savings but you don’t have huge amounts. It goes back out. We qualified for the biggest loan Jubilee Fund had ever done. I think they’ve slightly changed their mandate now but so we were really, really proud to partner with them, and still have a really close and good relationship with them. So it’s neat to know that little old nuns helped us do this” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “Yeah, [we collaborate with the community] quite far and widely. Because there are organizations all over the place that care about the same things that we care about. So, if there are... particularly issues concerning agriculture, inputs, growing things, scientists being disenfranchised, farmers being disenfranchised. We aren’t a political organization, but we will get political if we need to” (Lyle Barkman, Owner).
- “We do a lot with soup kitchens. Like, at Wolseley, it’s Agape Table. Here we do... it’s a bit of Siloam Mission sometimes, and the other one I can’t remember the name... but we give—pretty much all our day-old [bread] is going to those organizations. MCC a lot, if they have an event they would always ask us for donations and we’re always happy to give and to donate” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).
- “They do a lot. Tabitha has connections to a lot of local organizations, like Ma Mawi, and like I think they just donated to 1 JustCity. So they do a lot. And they don’t broadcast it, you know? It’s genuine. And people get that, I think” (Employee).

- “Tall Grass also has some interesting partnerships with a few different community organizations. Like, from the very beginning leftover food was being donated; that’s a pretty classic thing. But then it has also participated in a couple Mennonite Central Committee events for an organization called Anna’s House [...]. So yeah, it feels like there’s always kinds of initiatives happening where the bakery is allowing people to use that space to kind of further community projects” (Former Employee).
- “Tabitha has a real feeling for community sharing and charitable situations, especially in times when people don’t have. She’s very community-minded” (Customer).
- “I think they’re very honest, they’re very wanting to assist others in society. They’re what you call an example of how businesses *should* react to their society. A really good impression. I think they have donated some surpluses they have had, over time, to the needy and things like that” (Customer).
- “They’re very supportive to the Native population, which is so important at this time. Well even, you’ll notice that a lot of the people that work there are people who are new to this country. Sometimes we have clerks who you can tell their English—they have a little struggle with English but [the owners are] always willing to support people who need a job” (Customer).
- “The Wolseley area. When they first started their operation, they had really good community support right from the get go for the past [over thirty] years. So I mean the community’s been behind them quite a bit as far as supporting them and supporting us” (Supplier).
- “I think it’s rooted in a community of people that are around them, too. You notice it most of all in Wolseley, I would say. People say that they support us regardless of things that happen. [...] *They just want to see it be successful, based on the kind of people that we are, the kind of owners that they know that we are*” (Employee).
- “The respect is overwhelming to me. And I think the first time I realized that [...] Stuart McLean was in town. And he had interviewed us, we had been on his program and so he invited us to his show. [...] So he talked about getting off the train and going to The Forks. And he talked about the importance of that site, and he said, ‘And then of course I had to have a Tall Grass cinnamon bun.’ And the concert hall just erupted in a massive cheer that went on and on. I just wept, I just couldn’t—I couldn’t believe it. That was for me, a moment, that I don’t—I’m still overwhelmed at that. Like when you say, ‘I’m from Tall Grass’, what happens at the dentist... what happens—of course the cinnamon bun is the big thing, but the amount of times people would say, “We know you are fair, so we trust you” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “Then Canada Day is coming up, and the owners are saying, ‘You know, we should really do something in light of everything that’s going on in the Indigenous world, like right now what’s coming to light. How can we just take advantage of this huge day?’ Right, like Canada Day is huge for sales. And they decided that they wanted to give 100% of their income, as you know, to an Indigenous charity. And Paul said to Tabitha, ‘I think we need to

keep this under wraps, we'll put up a sign at the counter, but I don't want this to be a big splash. We're doing this because this is the right thing to do. Don't shout it from the rooftops'. And to me that is... it's not about getting more business. It's about just doing the right thing because it's the right thing to do. And that makes me so proud to work for them" (Employee).

- “The first few months [of COVID], [our pick-up and delivery system] was really working really well. People were very afraid, they were staying home, they wanted the delivery. So that was really good, we were trying to cater to them. But for some reason, now it seems to be less and less, which tells me that people want to go to the bakery. I think there's something about going to a bakery that is different than going to a superstore or a big supermarket. There is a relationship and a contact that you have that sometimes feels necessary, and people can't—and it reminds me a bit of France where people go to the bakery two, three times a day. They need their croissant in the morning and then the baguette at noon and then another whatever in the evening. So it reminds me of that with Tall Grass. Especially in Wolseley, it seems like the community around is really supporting the bakery. And I thought that COVID would have a bigger impact on delivery and phone-in earlier, things like that. But it didn't really. It's still going on, but not as much as I was thinking, or as I would've thought anyway. It's interesting. And I think it's because of that relationship between the bakery and the customers. It's pretty much a meeting place. So people are staying home all day long, and they still want to go to the bakery to meet someone or have an interaction with a friend or I don't know, it's interesting” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).
- “And of course the community at Wolseley again, I feel like if there was no bakery there, if there was no Tall Grass, it would feel very different. It's funny because now even in Wolseley, there is some real estate agent that is saying 'beautiful house' he's describing the house, and then 'five minute walk from Tall Grass' *Laughs* It's a selling feature! Like \$50,000 more *Laughing*. So again, that says it all too. People are coming and they know that it's unique to Winnipeg in some ways. I find that very... coming from Europe where you have little bakeries everywhere, in the same street you could have four or five bakeries competing for the same customers, so I'm used to seeing that. I'm used to seeing people talk about their bakery and why they love it, why they don't, why they arrive two hours before to get their bread. But I see that at Wolseley all the time. And people don't have to travel anywhere, it's right there. So that's something I realized. And I think the bakery, Tall Grass, is known for its participation in the community. If there is an event, people come and ask for donations and they know that they'll get something. I think that the bakery is really behind the community too. It goes both ways” (Loïc Perrot, Owner).
- “I think that they really... they've got a following in the city. They were providing local and organic product before it was trendy to provide that. And I think that there's a lot of people who are loyal to that” (Employee).
- “The start of [Tall Grass] was a clear connection to the community, they're all Wolseley people and that's where it all started. To me that's significant, right? They're community-minded people in general, and so the connection of having your work where you live, in the

community that you live in, I think it's a really great model. With this location... I'm not sure how to answer that or how to connect the two, but I mean The Forks obviously has a lot of local history and it makes sense for them to be here too" (Employee).

- "In Wolseley [Tall Grass is] a landmark. There's people buying houses in Wolseley because of it. We own the house beside the bakery so we renovated it a while back, and I wanted to know how much rent to charge, and the real estate guy said, 'Just go online, and look at the Wolseley area.' And I couldn't believe how many real estate agents advertised saying 'Walking distance to Tall Grass'. And we know people who bought their house in Wolseley because of it. But the overall relationship [with the community] is very good. And same here, like The Forks, at first we thought, 'Ah we'll just get tourists'. But there's a core that are regulars. They live here, they get their groceries probably 40-50%, maybe even more. And yeah it's phenomenal" (Paul Langel, Owner).
- "I think... like when we started, only weird people were into organic. Like literally, you know. There was the Harvest Collective in Wolseley, and organic was weird, you know. Just the crazy hippies or eccentrics. Now organic is even in the sh*ttiest corner store. And I think we had a small part of that. Maybe just a tiny one, but nevertheless. Now every Safeway has a huge organic section. And Tall Grass, with the organic stores in Wolseley on the strip where the bakery is, were forerunners. There was nothing. VitaHealth a little bit. And the larger community... I don't totally know. But I know we're famous. Like wherever I go, I don't even mention it anymore because it's too overwhelming. You say Tall Grass and their eyes light up. And to Tabitha's chagrin they mention the cinnamon bun. She wants to be famous for the bread. But we're unbelievably well-known. And we're known as a just place. That's something. I mean that is something to be proud of. But otherwise, you know, I don't really know. There was a moment, I wasn't there, [...] Stuart McLean was, when he was still alive, he was on CBC and he had 2000 people in the Concert Hall and he did his monologue. And in his monologue he mentioned Tall Grass and literally 2000 people burst into a standing ovation, I mean that's insane! We're just a little bakery... but it is so much more. I think a lot of people are aware of our food politics, and a lot don't have the foggiest clue. We had one guy who would come and ask, 'Do you bake here?' You know? Like here we're baking, and he asked, 'Do you bake?' *laughing* Like a lot of people don't have the foggiest clue what we're about, but they like the product. So for the city, we had a moment where Tall Grass was teetering on the edge, in about '98-'99, [...] And it was really at a point where we weren't quite sure. That was pre-Forks. And we went to our lawyer, Tabitha and I, and he said, 'You can't fold, you're about way more. You can't deprive Winnipeg of this'. Like it was just, 'Woah', this realization that this is a way bigger responsibility—because by then we were an institution. That was a big crisis point, but we weathered it" (Paul Langel, Owner).
- "Well OPAM we collaborate a lot with, Organic Producers Association of Manitoba. I don't know about collaborate, but we go to organic conferences. They're held bi-annually, there's one coming up in February. I'm not sure if it'll actually happen. The other is—there's another organic movement... I don't know what it is. But in terms of official, OPAM is our strongest link. We've also always had somebody on the board at the Red River College baking school. That's something we've done for a long, long time. For a long time—and we

don't now—but we used to have someone, Lyle, was on the board at the eco-network. So that's kind of it" (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

- “I think [our relationship with the community is] positive beyond anything we have tried to manufacture” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “I think also there's a spiritual side. We really prayed, ‘Are we called to try and live that out in our community?’ Like that was a very serious question, and we used community discernment. We met with elders, we met with people in our community, and we were fully prepared if they would've said, ‘No, don't do it, this won't work’, or ‘You shouldn't’ -- we wouldn't have. So I think that's one reason why it's felt so solid, because we had—it wasn't just us. It was a community of farmers who said, ‘Yes, we would love to supply you’ (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “So that's kind of a... I see it as... like sourdough, you have a seed and then it ferments the whole thing, it's a ferment. We've been a ferment [for the community], I think. And not the only one” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “Our breads would be good for three, four days. But after the first day we put them on day-old. Then all of the day-old that doesn't sell that day goes to Agape, to other soup kitchens. The individual pieces that get Saranned, there's this new downtown organization where they try and make connections to homeless people who totally distrust shelters. The people living in bus shelters, they use the food as a way of starting conversations. So all the leftover muffins, cinnamon buns, whatever is individually wrapped, goes to that organization that serves that population. We donate to RAY, Resources for Youth. During COVID we cooperated with Eli Mills and together we supplied bannock kits to the North End so that families could bake together. And the same at RAY, again cooperating with Eli Mills we made vegan pancake mixes that people could... again, they had to do something but it was, yeah. So projects like that we do a lot of. But yeah, nothing goes to waste, it all gets shared. And there's no tax advantage, there's nothing you get from it. But it feels very, very good. And I have from my social work days, this—she was a young woman then, she's a grandma now—she's on and off the street, and she says to me, she always recognizes our food, and she says, ‘I get to eat your bread and I feel better’ *laughs*” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “That particular area, as you may know, has been sort of a magnet for people who like natural living. So that's why they—for example they put a big effort against spraying for mosquitos, because they don't want those chemicals being sprayed in the neighborhood. So they call it the granola belt, standing for the favourite food of health food people. *laughs*” (Customer).
- “Tabitha has a real feeling for community sharing and charitable situations, especially in times when people don't have. She's very community-minded” (Customer).
- “Truly... The Forks without Tall Grass would be a different place. When you go on Sunday's—we go on Sunday mornings and most people are lining up to get their bread and

their goodies to eat while they're there at The Forks. And they really are very attracted to what they have to sell" (Customer).

- "Well I think The Forks is definitely an ideal location. That's their second location, the first one was on Westminster. So I think they get a very good foot traffic through The Forks. The Wolseley area, when they first started their operation, they had really good community support right from the get go for the past 27 years. So I mean the community's been behind them quite a bit as far as supporting them and supporting us. So as far as location goes I think it's been pretty good for them as far as I can tell" (Supplier).
- "They're a real winning combination for The Forks, and for Winnipeg!" (Customer)
- "Well I think they make an effort to make things available or to inform people in the French-speaking community. I'm part of that, I'm fully bilingual and most fluent. And so they actually advertise in the French paper. And especially—not every time on a regular basis but it's a weekly paper, it's a good quality paper published weekly—and especially during Festival and with Festival and Christmastime, they will make some particular foods that attract or that are French-Canadian. For instance the Tourtiere, they make that. And they also make different things depending on the season of the year, like Christmas season, the Easter, yeah. They have a great variety of options, not just breads but a variety of things as well. And of course the cinnamon buns and the croissants are a treat,. It's the fact that one of the bakers Loïc is from France, from Brittany in France, and he, like his father, is a great baker" (Customer)
- "They actually also have discounted prices for bread for instance that is two-days old or something. So this is more accessible for people, you know, who can't afford to buy the full-priced items" (Customer).

APPENDIX EIGHTEEN

Quotes Relating to Relationships with the Environment

- “Well in our philosophy we say we want a business where *everyone* is in the circle. And I think that is true, I don’t know who is more important because the farmers—if the customers wouldn’t buy in, the farmers couldn’t sell, we couldn’t have the philosophy we do, the staff wouldn’t get paid what they get paid. So I think it is a circle, truly. And a stakeholder is also the environment, because we’ve pulled the carbon footprint. *Mother Earth is in our circle*” (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- “We try to operate within the parameters that we would like to live on this Earth for a long time. And if Tall Grass’s parameters for the inputs—for the grain particularly, and rural ag[riculture] inputs were all paid attention to—we would extend this world’s useful life, which at this point I feel is standing on the brink of absolute disaster. So, we’re pretty mindful of that” (Lyle Barkman, Owner).
- “That’s where it all came from, really, I think was a connection to place. [...] Tabitha and other friends in the Wolseley area realizing that there was a movement in the 80’s towards corporatized agriculture, and that Manitoba farmers were suffering. So they saw a problem in their place and saw that farmers were in trouble and, yeah, evolved to make a bakery that got as much of its product from places nearby” (Former Employee).
- “The love for nature... the *real* thing. I don’t know how to say it, but they really want here the organic stuff to be—the people are more aware of what [they]’re eating. There was the time, be aware of what’s around you, what’s growing, what is important in life. And don’t think that the chocolate milk is coming from a brown cow, you know, that kind of thing (Employee).
- “As a counter person what I loved most about working there probably were the stories behind every single product, and how so many ingredients in those products were connected to place. Like these strawberries were from *this* farm *here*, and the rhubarb was from *this* monastery, like the nuns helped us with the rhubarb. The Red Fife wheat that’s often used has such a long history here in Manitoba. And yeah, so many ingredients are tied to place. And so many of the people that work at Tall Grass work there because they love Manitoba, and they love Manitoba products, and they want to showcase that in baking” (Former Employee).
- “Environmentally, I would say that Tall Grass was a pioneer. In the 90’s nobody cared about organic, nobody knew even what it was. It was really not on the radar at all. They had to wait until what—2000?—to get really started at that time. But Tall Grass was already there. They are not the only ones, but it was really a tiny little market, with very little acknowledgment from the people. [...] So I think environmentally, Tall Grass has always been a pioneer. And you see people like Lyle, for example, who’s always thinking of new ways of cutting the carbon footprint. You know, having the new silo there allows you to

only have four trips to the farm instead of one every three weeks. So it seems like a detail but it's all based on the environmental protection" (Loïc Perrot, Owner).

- "They were providing local and organic product before it was trendy to provide that. And I think that there's a lot of people who are loyal to that. I think that Tabitha's ability to really understand where the products come from and the connection to the earth, it's so evident that people are drawn to that" (Employee).
- "I often walk in here at six in the morning. There's nobody except our bakers. And I've such an overwhelming sense of gratefulness. Because I do believe there's a spirit here. You can't erase something like 5,000 years of peaceful trading. Because the Aboriginal people always said, 'There will be no war here. This is a trading place, no war.' And they didn't. No war. It is really amazing. And you feel it, to me I feel it, I feel it in the air. I see it as an *enormous* privilege to be able to be here. That goes *way* beyond business. You walk on holy ground. And I do *deeply* believe that" (Paul Langel, Owner).
- "The Forks is an excellent region too, because it's where Winnipeg sort of began, and so many people go down there, and they're being exposed to good food! So it's an excellent place. And as a gathering place it used to be... but now you talk about gathering in Winnipeg, and any major event is always at The Forks. Just like the Natives used to meet where the two rivers came together, so another important gathering place" (Customer).
- "For me, the place here, The Forks, is home. [...] I just like the energy. Again it's a meeting place. The historical signification of the First Nations, that's not lost on me. I think it's a privilege to be working here. It's really the... for me when I think of Winnipeg, I think of The Forks. That's the first thing that comes to mind: The Forks. It's where it started and now what they've done with The Forks is amazing" (Loïc Perrot, Owner).
- "I think both locations are incredibly special. And there is a providential—to me there is a spiritual component to it. Like Wolseley is magical, it truly is magical" (Paul Langel, Owner).
- "On a Saturday morning, the Tall Grass corner is just *bumping*, you're going to see at least three people you know. Someone's probably busking if it's summer, you know. Even if you don't know people you're saying 'hi' to each other. So it has just a presence in the place that it's in, in Wolseley" (Former Employee).
- "[Wolseley] is where it all started. I've talked about the community and how strongly it's being supported by that community. It's such a great place to go. [Tall Grass] *is* Wolseley in some ways. [...] It's a gem, it's really a gem. That place could be there forever. It feels like it's part of the community. There would be a big hole if it was not there, I think" (Loïc Perrot, Owner).
- "We did have [100-Mile Bread], the switch to Red Fife [wheat] changed that. We had lots of 100-mile things. The 100-mile thing was so, in a way, arbitrary. Because we had customers who said, one of our products was 125 miles and she felt she couldn't buy it. So as local as

possible. We got Saskatoons from Portage, strawberries from Portage. And we deliberately create recipes that use local product. So we're going to buy 3,000 lbs of pumpkin this year, probably 6,000 lbs of tomatoes. Same with apples, local apples. We cut them up and freeze them. So all of that, I would say, 200 miles is a better... because the bioregion, you have to look at what is your bioregion. And there are certain things that the Winnipeg soil is not suited for. So we try and stay within 200 miles. But right now our Red Fife farmer is at Dauphin, so we run the truck up there four times a year. Again, the carbon footprint remains pretty small" (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

- "I think the owners were living in this area, so it was pretty obvious that they started something here. But I don't know if that's your answer there. I think with Wolseley, a little bit more aware and thinking about environment, and I think they fit it in. I think it would've been hard for somebody else to start here and say, 'Oh, it's fine if you think like that but we'll do it different', or 'We are here for the money', or whatever, 'We don't care where our grain is coming from or how it's grown'. So yeah, [...] I think the success and the connection is pretty much the same, they fit right in here" (Employee).
- "So in packaging, for instance, they just found a new supplier for packaging. The price of the packaging is three times what we've been paying until now, but this is compostable. So that means we can get rid of the Styrofoam, that means we can get rid of more of the plastic. So it does not matter to the owners that this means this is going to cut into their bottom line into the money that they make as owners. It's about doing the right thing, what they consider to be the right thing. The wheat they buy, the price they pay for organic is considerably higher than what they could buy regular production supplies for. Buying fruit, vegetables from the Hutterites. They pay them a fair price, they don't try to go for the least expensive, they go for what's fair" (Employee).
- "Oh I alluded to that before, that we're in the centre of the granola belt. We were in the middle of the granola belt from day one, and it just launched us" (Lyle Barkman, Owner).
- "Place is very important to Tall Grass. Again, I think it's part of the key to their success—to our success I should say, in that sense. And it is a kind of community bakery, again in the same answer. But also based on the geography of Manitoba, I think that there is an intentional connection to the rural element and a personal connection to the farmers that makes it also meaningful for the agriculture aspect, you know. There's the wheat, there's the mill, there's a direct line from land to table that is visible in the bakery. You can see it if you walked around and hung around enough at The Forks just walking around the building throughout the day you'd be able to see the entire process. From the farmers coming in, to the milling, to the weighing, to the flour, to the baking, to the selling, to the cleaning. Having an open bakery like that is also part of it too, there's an openness of—you know in Wolseley, you notice it as well, at night. When I'm baking in there at night and the lights are on, people can see me" (Employee).
- "So what we do when we think of making a product, we try and see how much local—like to stay as local as possible. So you'll find a lot of rhubarb and Saskatoons and raspberries in our—for instance this year there were no local strawberries, and we made the difficult

decision of saying, you know what, we're not going to make strawberry jam. Because we tried to get Canadian strawberries, and were promised that they were BC. When the box arrived, they were from China. That just doesn't make sense to us. So we're telling our disappointed customers, 'Maybe next year we'll have strawberry jam'. So that's kind of some of it, because first of all from China, we should not be getting food from China. And it's too expensive, you can't. So that's some of the kinds of decisions we make. And often we look at something and say 'Okay, can we use something local instead?' And an example where that hasn't been successful is in our carrot cake we have pineapple. I've wanted to try rhubarb. I think rhubarb would make it even better, but we haven't done that because people—it's now an icon, and yeah. But local grains are definitely something we push. For years, we would get BC apples and make apple pie. And one day we realized, why are we do that? They're not even local, and they're kept artificially alive in refrigerators, why don't we freeze our local apples? There's tons of them. So that's what we do now. We hardly use any BC apples, they're all from here. We freeze them and use them in muffins and pies" (Tabitha Langel, Owner).

- "I think one of them was once we realized the impact we were making with using local flour, how that was helping people to stay on the land, pass their land onto the second generation, it was terribly exciting. And we started asking ourselves, 'Are there any other ingredients that we could make that kind of difference with?' And one of our friends who has worked a lot for MCC overseas in Bangladesh, and he said, 'In India and Bangladesh there's so many oil presses, people press oil locally'. And 70% of oil seeds—Canada grows a tremendous amount of oil seeds, especially the prairies. But they get processed mostly in Ontario and BC. So we got a local oil press at Grassroots, and that was terribly exciting again. And then it became unsustainable because The Forks—oil pressing is messy, right? You need to let it settle, you need a place to stand pails around. When The Forks vision changed more of a food court, and then a market, it became not... a we had to decide what do we do? So we actually moved it to the farm, and that's where hopefully we'll go in the next few weeks to see the oil press. So it required a pivot to start, and the oil is so beautiful. And then it required another pivot to keep it. So we're still using that oil, but this year because of the drought, there was a total lack of sunflower seeds. So as of August until the new year... sunflowers don't get harvested until sometimes January, because they have to be completely dry. We may have to go back to conventional oil and not organic sunflower. So pivot, pivot, pivot, and do what you can. And yeah, I think those are examples of the decisions that we have to make. Because we are very, very closely linked to the farm. If the farms have a failure, we have a failure, we are not tied to a big, central supplier" (Tabitha Langel, Owner).
- "In the 90's carbon footprints were very much a discussion. And because of Grain of Wheat and the philosophy of the church, to make a difference and be a presence in our community, the question was, 'Could we make our living on a business that was situated in a community where people could walk to work?' Could that work? That was the question and the quest. And it has meant—the support of the community was overwhelming. The bakery was available. It was a gift, for sure. And that has always meant an incredible amount, because they're our neighbours. I mean, we bake for our neighbours, and we know them. So that's beautiful. And then when we were asked to come to The Forks, we didn't take the invitation

seriously for quite a while. But that also seemed like a tremendous honour to be asked to be at this historic site. So when we came, I think that's in part why being so wide open to see—community participation is much—like sometimes the customers come back and ask the bakers a question, which is wonderful. So yeah, it means an awful lot to us to be downtown. Like we've been invited—real estate people have said, 'We'll front you, we'll set you up in Tuxedo, come to Tuxedo, you belong in River Heights'. And River Heights had Bread and Circus and they have Pennyloaf now. But we've always had a commitment to the old city, and I think the present group of owners is pretty clear about that. We want the core to work and be a presence. I mean we're not necessarily a bakery that is the most affordable, we've deliberately kept something like the whole wheat lower, and a lot of poor people do come and buy to get more for their money. But we've always wanted to be accessible to walk-up and bussing, as well as cars" (Tabitha Langel, Owner).