

The new governance of sustainable food systems:  
Shared insights from four rural communities  
in Canada and the EU

by

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## **Abstract**

For over half a century, industrial agricultural and food systems have developed to the detriment of rural spaces. Alongside modernization and growth, many local communities have experienced not only economic loss, but a loss of purpose and identity as well. As one response to these changes, sustainable local food systems (SLFS) initiatives are being pursued by a growing number of communities. Their belief is that an alternative paradigm based on SLFSs is needed to support vibrant rural livelihoods: by challenging unequal power relationships between food system actors, by repairing the rift between human and natural environments, or simply by breathing new socio-economic life into their declining communities.

This dissertation explores the governance mechanisms being developed between civil society, the state, and private sector actors to support SLFS initiatives. It aims to show not only *what* initiatives are developed, but *how* these alternatives are introduced and sustained. Building on governance theory and drawing from critical political economy approaches, this work argues that collaborative and reflexive governance approaches are best positioned to enable SLFS development.

To support this claim, I describe and analyze cases of SLFS initiatives pursued within four rural communities: Todmorden, UK, Wolfville, Nova Scotia and North Saanich, British Columbia in Canada, and Correns, France. These case studies highlight six categories of governance that ultimately demonstrate low to highly collaborative and

reflexive SLFS initiatives. Outlining types of governance and how they play out in practice allows us to better understand the opportunities and challenges inherent to different governance strategies and their ability to support SLFSs. Grounded in both field observations and in-depth and semi-structured interviews with community members, this work also aims to give voice to actors often marginalized in dominant food system processes.

An analysis of the case studies highlights the need for 1) strong social capital within a community; 2) a whole community approach to socio-economic development; 3) a strong role for the state; and 4) genuine multi-actor collaboration, as the foundation for SLFS growth. I conclude by considering sustainable food system research's lingering question on growth and scalability to generate meaningful food system change.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

AAC – Agricultural Advisory Commissions or Committees

AAP – Agriculture Area Plan

ACF – Acadia Community Farm

AFS – Alternative food system

ALC – Agricultural Land Commission

ALR – Agricultural Land Reserve

AMAP – *Association pour le Maintien de l'Agriculture Paysanne*

AOC – *Appellation d'Origine Controlée*

BSE – Bovine spongiform encephalopathy

BC – British Columbia

CAO – Chief Administrative Officer

CFS – Community food system

CRFAIR – Capital Regional Food and Agricultural Initiative Roundtable

CRS – Centre for Rural Sustainability

CSA – Community support agriculture

CSPC – North Saanich Community Social Planning Council

EU – European Union

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization

HQE – *Haute Qualité Environnementale*

IET – Incredible Edible Todmorden

EEM – Every Egg Matters campaign

LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

LFS – Local food system

MAS – *Méditerranée Afrique Solidarité*

MPS – Wolfville Municipal Planning Strategy

NDP – Canadian New Democratic Party

NS – Nova Scotia

NSFFS – North Saanich Food for the Future Society

PE – Political economy

RAN – Rural Agricultural Neighbourhood

SFS – Sustainable food systems

SLFS – Sustainable local food system

SLFSI – Sustainable local food system initiative

SCP – Wolfville Sustainable Community Planning task force

TNS – The Natural Step

UK – United Kingdom

UN – United Nations

US – United States of America

WCAS – Whole Community Agricultural Strategy

WFM – Wolfville Farmers market

WSI – Wolfville Sustainability Initiative

## Introduction

The new progressive era must begin with us, the people. As we change ourselves, we can begin to influence others. As we influence others, we can begin to change the world around us – at least our little piece of it. As each of us changes our little piece of the world, little by little, the whole of the world begins to change. This is the pattern of all great social and political movements of the past. (Ikerd, 2008: 59)

Like the words of Dr. John Ikerd, this dissertation stems from the belief that a groundswell of civic action supported by the right players can generate greater environmental, economic, and social sustainability; through conscious and collective action, local communities can seek to meet their current needs without compromising those of the future, and inspire change. Already, a number of municipalities across the world—from the signatories of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact of 2015 to the participants of the Rockefeller Foundation’s 100 Resilient Cities challenge— have begun to carve out an agenda in support of sustainable local food systems (SLFS). Using both formal and informal governance<sup>1</sup> strategies as the basis of their frameworks, this research offers a considered look at four rural communities’ attempts to ‘influence the world around them,’ and the opportunities and challenges that lie therein. The goal of this work is to contribute to a stronger understanding of the types of governance strategies that might enable greater sustainability within our food systems.

In a recent analysis of the current global food system, Clapp et al. (2015b) acknowledge two major competing food paradigms. One model promotes large-scale, corporate

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<sup>1</sup> Governance, the subject of Chapter 2, is defined here as the “formal and informal systems of decision-making aimed at solving socio-political problems and creating opportunities; also importantly, governance is the shared responsibilities between the state, market, and civil society” (Kooiman, 2003: 4-5).

systems based on neoliberal policies — defined preliminarily here as furthering deregulation, international trade liberalization, and privatization, and the dominance of larger agri-food sector actors. The other model supports smaller-scale, more ecological, and local food systems, where farmers and community members play a leading role in how food systems should operate. Though a majority of farming practices and national-level policies focus on the first model today, a growing alternative food movement in support of the second has begun to influence global food system discourse<sup>2</sup>. While the line between these two models often remains blurry, the discursive and practical differences between them are significant.

The current conventional agri-food model has certainly served societies over the past century to achieve greater levels of food security and safety. However, its inherently extractive and exploitive methods of operation have come under increased scrutiny (Ikerd, 2008; Blay-Palmer, 2008; Patel, 2013). The undeniable market failures brought to light by the spike in global food prices in 2008 has only deepened our awareness of a

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<sup>2</sup> In the context of this research, discourse is understood as a pattern of communication embedded in “a shared way of apprehending the world” (Dryzek, 2005: 9). Discourses are defined by their own series of assumptions and judgements through which we derive meaning, and interpret, discuss, and analyze information (ibid). As such, discourse is also inevitably connected to power and knowledge, and is in constant renegotiation. While not the focus of this research, discourse can be understood through Foucault’s notion of “regimes of truth” (1991); in this context, power is not a coercive force but a discursive one. Regimes of truth are understood as the kinds of discourses societally accepted as true. These discursive choices then determine institutional structures, policies, and politics in general, which can all be traced back to their surrounding discourses (Dryzek, 2005: 10). Discourse is tied to power and knowledge control insofar as actors strive to control it and subscribe their meaning and understandings of the world to others. In other words, to Foucault, discourse becomes an embodiment of power and knowledge as it becomes a way of conditioning social perceptions and language (Foucault, 1980). Dominant discourses are then reinforced and renegotiated through political and education systems, and the media, as well as through particular economic ideologies and social norms. In the context of food system research, understanding which discourses are advanced and which are suppressed or ignored allows us to consider how sustainable food systems —as social, economic, and political systems embedded in particular discourses themselves— have been enabled or limited over time. As noted by Gaventa (2003), power can also be understood as a positive and productive force, and can thus also be considered the means to gain leverage for change.

system in crisis, with questions being raised in popular media (e.g. Globe and Mail, 2008; The Economist, 2011), academic research (e.g. Ikerd, 2008; Berkeley Food Institute, 2015), and the public sphere alike (e.g. Oxfam, 2011; World Bank Group, 2013) on how we might sustainably feed an ever-growing population. Climate change, human food security, and food democracy scholars, amongst others, have deemed the results of such a system as environmentally, socially, and economically unsustainable (McMichael et al., 2007; Feenstra, 2011; Knezevic, 2012; Andrée et al., 2014).

Offering an alternate future to these trends, alternative food system (AFS) initiatives – which include SLFSs– are burgeoning at the local and global levels, and everywhere in between, with goals that seek to challenge the power relationships between food system actors, repair the rift between human and natural environments, and/or simply to revitalize declining rural communities. More specifically, initiatives aimed at supporting SLFSs seek to bring actors closer together through creative market and non-market interactions while encouraging some degree of environmental stewardship, food system relocation, and greater collaboration between a diversity of food system actors.

Assuming SLFSs can indeed offer new opportunities to redress our food systems, governance researchers have recently asked: “what constellation of actors can best support [more sustainable food] policies?” (Duncan 2015, 340). This work offers one answer to this question by considering governance innovations currently being developed between local civil society, the state, and private sector actors to support SLFS initiatives. Building on governance theory and drawing from critical political economy (PE)

approaches unpacked in Chapter 2, it specifically asks: which governance mechanisms best support SLFSs? Ultimately, I argue that strong collaborative and reflexive governance mechanisms are best positioned to support SLFS initiatives (SLFSI).

To support this claim, I first aim to show not only *what* initiatives are developed, but *who* is involved in them and *how* these alternatives are introduced and sustained based through a further subset of questions, which include:

1. What are the main governance characteristics of SLFSIs? And who enables them?
2. What do collaborative and reflexive governance practices look like in practice?  
How do they come about and evolve?
3. To what extent is the role of the state necessary in SLFS governance processes?

I draw on four cases of SLFSI governance at the rural municipal level – two in the European Union (EU) and two in Canada – to showcase the positive impacts and limitations of different governance processes. All motivated by inducing greater rural community resilience<sup>3</sup>, the unique experiences of Todmorden, United Kingdom (UK), Wolfville, Nova Scotia (NS) and North Saanich, British Columbia (BC), Canada, and Correns, France, serve as illustrative examples in Canada and the EU of low to highly collaborative and reflexive SLFSIs. Through the four cases of SLFSIs, I also draw out six

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<sup>3</sup> Though “resilience” has more recently been used in a primarily ecological context, the term also deals with social systems. Here, resilience refers to the ability of a given community to withstand external shocks to its infrastructure and functioning. It involves both the capacity to learn and adapt to ongoing pressures using existing resources, while also allowing for the creation of new skills and strategies (Adger, 2000; Gunderson, 2005). Particularly relevant here, to Mileti (1999), community resilience involves being able to avoid incurring devastating losses, diminished productivity, or quality of life without large assistance from an outside source.

types of governance approaches to assess which prove more or less conducive to SLFS development.

My work aims to be both academic and practical in scope, not only by giving greater depth to current scholarship on governance within local food systems, but also by proposing and showcasing possible alternatives. While there has been an increasingly extensive body of research focusing on *what* possible alternatives look like, there are far fewer analyses on *how* these alternatives can be implemented and sustained. This work ultimately demonstrates the importance of 1) strong social capital within a community; 2) a whole community approach to socio-economic development; 3) a strong role for the state; and 4) genuine multi-actor collaboration, as the fundamental building blocks for SLFS growth. These four characteristics are to be understood as a complementary set of criteria that progressively build on one another to enable effective SLFSI development. In other words, while a SLFSI displaying one of these criteria may witness positive outcomes, a SLFSI integrating all four of these characteristics is likely to experience greater success. I conclude by considering sustainable food system research's lingering question of scalability and the necessity for SLFSIs to be grounded in these four building blocks in order to generate meaningful change.

### **Why study food? Research logic**

Nothing is more essential to an individual or to a community than food. Food is a marker of culture, taste, economic status, geography and climate. It is rife with meaning and purpose, reflecting a complexity of social, political, economic, cultural, and ecological

systems (Reardon, 2000: 1). Following the idiom “you are what you eat,” Winson calls food our most “intimate commodity” (1993); yet it could easily be argued that today, our primary relationship to food has become one centered around its economic value rather than its more diverse and complex meanings.

Food systems<sup>4</sup> have greatly changed over time. From the early cultivation of crops and the domestication of animals to our current industrialized food systems, food production and consumption have shifted away from being activities based on subsistence and survival to being part of an “agricultural treadmill” (IAASTD, 2010) based on a primarily capitalist system, driven by economic and political motivations. Indeed, today’s dominant food system is increasingly shaped by profit-driven global food industry actors invoking the neoliberal logic of industrialized and globalized food production.

In 2013, the United Nations (UN) Commission on Trade and Agricultural Development put out a call to “wake up before it’s too late” in relation to agricultural systems and public policy’s role in addressing environmental issues; this report is representative of the many increasing examples of international institutions acknowledging the urgent need to develop – or in many cases return to – more ecological, localized, farmer-led systems. Early in 2011, a similar UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) publication condoned the role of environmentally-based, territorial food systems, “not to replace the global food supply chains that contribute to food security for many countries, but to improve local management of food systems that are both local and global” (2011b, 6).

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<sup>4</sup> Food systems are defined as the set of dynamic interactions between the natural and human environments resulting in the production, processing, distribution, preparation, and consumption of food (FAO, 2008). Both ‘systems’ and ‘food systems’ will be unpacked in more depth in Chapter 1.

Yet beyond ecological concerns, recent food scholarship continues to note a severe lag in governance strategies' ability to adapt or allow for food system alternatives (Clapp et al., 2015a; Duncan, 2015; Mount, 2012). More specifically, scholars question how power is distributed within food system governance, given the (limited) role of democratic engagement within these systems and the primacy given to an industrial logic for food systems (IPES-Food, 2016a). To date, the concentration of power into the hands of an increasingly smaller number of private sector actors has created a crisis in food system governance. Under our current systems, an “illusion of choice” and the race towards economic growth (Patel, 2013) distract from deeper questions of democratic accountability (von Braun and Islam, 2008; McKeon, 2015).

As such, the qualifier of ‘sustainable’ found within the term *sustainable* local food system initiatives is not used casually in this dissertation. Especially when placed in contrast to current dominant food systems, I acknowledge that “sustainability” is a highly contested and widely used term. It has become an indiscriminately used concept in policy and practice – often invoked to support opposing meanings and contradictory goals.<sup>5</sup> In this dissertation, proponents of SLFSs are understood as seeking to meet the “triple bottom line” of environmental, economic, and social sustainability (Maxey, 2006: 231). While still a broad definition, alternative food system efforts that distinguish themselves as “sustainable” tend to further trends that oppose certain facets of mainstream food

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<sup>5</sup> As mentioned by Kloppenburg et al. (2000), sustainability is often simply synonymous to “green and good” (178). As a result, a commitment to “sustainable food production” has also been used by various actors to fit their own particular interests and goals – from large-scale agribusinesses and food corporations to the smallest-scale community garden projects.

systems such as particular farming structures, farm operation sizes, environmental schemes, or social values (Lyson, 2007; Sumelius and Vesala, 2005; Kloppenburg et al., 2000); in other words, food system sustainability refers to “finding alternative to the practices that got us in trouble in the first place” (Orr, 1992: 24), at the root of which lie the rules our food systems play by.

While alternative food systems were originally pitted against conventional systems through a series of dualisms (e.g. competitive vs. community-oriented, exploitive vs. restrained, dominating vs. in harmony with nature, and specialized vs. diverse) (Beus and Dunlap, 1990), more recent scholars have sought to position sustainable agriculture away from a purely production-based understanding to one that includes issues of social justice (e.g. gender, class, and other axes of identity that result in differential access) (e.g. Allen, 1999; Allen, 2008; Dahlberg, 1993). More recently still, AFS scholars are seeking to further problematize the dichotomies perpetuated between conventional and alternative food systems, claiming that these distinctions do not sufficiently differentiate the aims and processes of sustainable alternatives to those found within dominant structures (Chiappe and Flora, 1998; Kloppenburg et al., 2000; Goodman et al., 2011). In 2000, Kloppenburg et al. conducted workshops with around 300 diverse self-identified sustainable food system stakeholders to gain a more holistic understanding of the term; a partial list of the qualifiers of sustainable food system arrangements were identified as: ecological, economical, proximate, participatory, just, healthful, and diverse. Why creating dichotomies prove problematic and how they can be addressed by a more holistic and inclusive definition of SFSs is discussed in more detail below.

## **Theoretical framework and lingering research gaps**

A growing number of scholars have already dedicated themselves to studying specific initiatives aimed at creating SLFSs. This includes studies on Food Policy Councils (Schiff, 2008; Welsh and MacRae, 1998), farmers markets (Bullock, 2000; Chubb, 1998; Connell et al., 2007), community gardens (Armstrong, 2000; Ferris et al., 2010; Reynolds, 2006), community supported agricultural (CSA) models (Conner, 2003; Mundler, 2007, Groh and McFadden, 1997), food box or good food programs (Bord, 2009), urban agriculture (Baker, 2000; Butler, 2012), and more recently, food hubs (Levkoe and Wakefield, 2011; Blay-Palmer et al., 2013). However, while each of these initiatives have developed their own set of governance mechanisms, academic research has only more recently begun to consider the broader local food networks in which they operate and their capacity to create and perpetuate real sustainable alternatives.

As such, I define SLFSs as a particular category which includes characteristics of sustainable, local, and community food systems. In contrast to the motives and practices of the dominant food model, and like local food systems, SLFSs are rooted in community and place; like sustainable food systems, they value environmental and economic stewardship alongside economic sustainability. From community food systems, SLFS draws on the values of decentralized governance, locally-rooted solutions, and strong community relationships. They are socially embedded, locally based, and rely on more democratic and collaborative ways of organizing. Municipalities are increasingly providing the space at which SLFSIs are attempted. These initiatives recognize the power of endogenous models for change and the potential for greater responsiveness to citizen

needs and interests; in other words, that food system sustainability can be achieved thanks to the actors and dynamics found *within* a community rather than from *without*.

Marsden and Sonnino (2008: 403) argue that locally-driven AFS initiatives can serve as the key “proactive development tool to promote more sustainable economies of scope and synergy.” Dubbeling and Santandreu (2003: 1) agree, noting that “it is at the municipal level that innovative policies can be implemented to guarantee the production and the equitable distribution of food in a way that meets local needs, [and capacity] to foster activities and initiatives that promote social equity and inclusion”. In response to Marsden’s call for more place-based reflexive governance (2013), collaborative and reflexive governance processes within SLFSIs can respond to dominant food system failures through both institutional mechanisms and encouraged civic engagement.

It is also for this reason that some categorization of governance initiatives is particularly useful here. By delineating a clearer typology of food system governance processes, researchers and practitioners are better able to understand the opportunities and challenges inherent to different strategies and their ability to support SLFSs. As it has been proposed in other areas of governance (e.g. see Auld et al., 2008 on market-based governance schemes), this work also suggests a possible typology for new food system governance initiatives to ultimately assess which governance processes and which ‘constellation of actors’ best enable SLFSIs. While limited to only four case studies, I outline six categories of governance initiatives including state-led, state-led with

community support/ participation, community-led, community-led with municipal support/participation, and farmer-led initiatives as well as community-state partnerships.

As such, two main fields of academic research provide the framework for this dissertation. First, my work draws on governance literature to situate the decision-making processes found with SLFSIs within broader scales and modes of governance (see research subquestion 1) (Kooiman, 2003; Jessop 2003; Minnery, 2007; Paquet and Wilson, 2011; Wallington et al., 2008). In particular, as this dissertation is first and foremost about socio-political avenues for SLFSIs, the potential for collaborative<sup>6</sup> and reflexive<sup>7</sup> governance to deliver these opportunities frames the central argument of this thesis (see research subquestion 2). Collaborative governance enables a diversity of actors to tackle issues in a common forum through collective action, fostering equal power relations during their processes (Kooiman, 2003). These are best found in community-state partnerships, and to an extent in farmer-, community-, or state-driven initiatives that receive high levels of support/participation from other actors. By working in a consensus-based setting, collaborative governance schemes allow actors to be more flexible in their decision-making (Paquet and Wilson, 2011). Similarly, reflexive governance fosters a more self-aware and learning-based approach to decision-making. In short, reflexive governance allows actors to amend or transform processes as they are no longer deemed appropriate, rather than rely on narrow problem-solving strategies (Voss

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<sup>6</sup> As described more in depth in Chapter 2, collaborative governance is described as the process through which government, community, and private sector actors develop interdependent networks to engage in consensus-oriented decision making (Ansell and Gash, 2008; Paquet and Wilson, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Defined in greater length in Chapter 2, reflexive governance refers here to the ability for governance actors and networks to use flexible, adaptive, and learning-based approaches to their decision-making processes (Voss and Kemp, 2014).

et al., 2006).

Together collaboration and reflexive governance transcend the limitations of hierarchical or less co-operative modes of decision-making. Indeed, since the earliest attempts at creating greater sustainability within our food systems, global and national policy-makers have acknowledged the need to leverage public participation and state-community partnerships to achieve policy goals (Barling and Duncan, 2014). These interactions (and how they are approached) will shape our ability to sustain our food systems in the long-term. Governance scholarship also allows a consideration of whether broader scales of influence play a defining role in municipal SLFSs; for example, a Canadian municipality may seek or even require county, provincial, or federal aid, while a European municipality may be affected by sub-national as well as European Union policy.

Further, food system sustainability does not operate in a bell jar; as proposed in his study of American agriculture, Ikerd notes a clear correlation between a lack of economic sustainability in agriculture with a lack of sustainability within society as a whole (2005). As such, the relevance of social capital and its effect on market structures remain central elements to foster the success of collaborative governance strategies that will be discussed in Chapter 1 and analyzed in Chapter 8 (Putnam, 2000; de Souza Briggs, 2003; Polanyi, 1944). In short, social capital will be shown as a fundamental building block to maintain trust and cooperation with SLFSs and ultimately to guide municipalities towards a more whole system approach to SLFSs<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Here, a whole systems approach is drawn from ‘systems thinking’, under which actors identify *all* components of a system to better understand and re-evaluate the relationships between them. This approach

In addition, while not a dissertation in political economy (PE) per se, this also adopts a PE approach, which allows me to answer how SLFSI governance innovations are occurring and whether and how they are affecting power relations within existing systems (Dupuis, 2006; MacRae, 1999; Holt-Giménez and Shattuck, 2011; IPES-Food, 2015).

When applied to food system dynamics, the PE approach particularly focuses on “disclosing the specific shortcomings and abuses of power by business and government” (Aerni, 2009: 1873); it gives insight into how SLFSI governance interacts constructively with (yet in opposition to) current neoliberal paradigms, and how the former may seek to redress the democratic deficits of the latter for “transformative” change<sup>9</sup> (Levkoe, 2011).

Indeed, initiatives aimed at building alternative food systems are extremely diverse, operate at various scales from the local to the global, and include a wide range of sectors including various state ministries and departments, business initiatives, and civil society groups. Yet a defining feature of most SLFSIs is to shift discourse and practice away from a predominantly productivist<sup>10</sup> and neoliberal model of food and agriculture to one that better addresses collective environmental, social and economic needs together. This shift is not necessarily one that competes with capitalist methods, but moves away from the “mechanistic worldview” of current systems to engender a more human- and

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is particularly useful: by understanding relationships of power between actors, by allowing for more iterative and reflexive processes, and by moving thinking and action beyond sectoral or jurisdictional boundaries.

<sup>9</sup> To Levkoe (2011) transformative change requires an integration of social justice, ecological sustainability, community health and democratic governance into AFS development. While not discussed in great depth in this work, a transformative food system is characterized by the adoption of collective subjectivities, a whole food system approach and a politics of reflexive localization.

<sup>10</sup> Described in Chapter 1, a ‘productivist’ logic refers here to the drive towards the industrialization, intensification and expansion of agriculture and agri-food systems.

environmentally-centered model for development and growth (Ikerd, 2005).

As will be seen in Chapter 1, SLFSs serve to deconstruct the artificial dichotomies created by the mainstream food system between society and economy, man and nature, food and agriculture, and between producers and consumers (Miller, 2008: 89). While creating dichotomies may prove helpful in understanding the initial logic behind the creation of SLFSIs, this research demonstrates that SLFSIs rarely fall into such distinct categories, but rather usually display some degree of hybridization. Despite their more radical-leaning facade, SLFSIs are driven by a complexity of hybridities: hybridities of scale (local, regional, and national), of economic system (capitalist and non-capitalist), of production (organic and conventional), and of decision-making (hierarchical and collaborative), amongst others.

Especially when a serious reconsideration around decision-making, power, and governance within our food systems is at stake, PE approaches are more conducive to understanding the flexible policies and practices emerging to support food system change rather than “over-regulated and top-down” models that have dominated food systems reform thus far (Marsden, 1998: 271). By focusing on structural relations of power, a PE lens informs how SLFSIs can perpetuate and be sustained in a socio-political and economic environment rife with competing actors and priorities (see research subquestion 3).

From these two frameworks, the research analyzes the four case studies by considering

which governance mechanisms are shared and which differ, which have furthered the SLFS goals they set out to meet, and which are potentially scalable and translatable.

Ultimately, this dissertation contributes to filling the gap in current food system research on how and to what extent collaborative and reflexive forms of governance come about and whether they enable SLFSs. Indeed, weaknesses within governance research on sustainable food systems have been identified as the inability to fully acknowledge the practical implications of new governance arrangements, and the failure to provide sufficient guidance on how collaborative practices for effective governance take place (Paquet and Wilson, 2011). Using the words of those working to develop these systems, this research seeks to synthesize the mindset, practices and processes that have best served to pursue SLFSIs. A more nuanced understanding of alternative governance dynamics acknowledges the flexibility and hybridity often required in SLFSs (Mount, 2012; Allen et al., 2003; Sonnino and Marsden, 2007).

### **Research methods and structure**

As will be explained in more depth in Chapter 3, case studies provide in-depth insight to understand particular theories and concepts, while acknowledging the “complexities and contradictions of real life” (Flyvbjerg, 2004: 237). The four case studies offered in this research have all been identified as seeking to adopt SLFS agendas, despite their different socio-political contexts. They were all initially identified as having a series of attributes suggested as important to SLFSI processes (Connelly et al., 2011; Goodman et al., 2011): 1) the perception of strong state-society relationships; 2) a strong presence of

sustainability discourse in municipal and/or community documents; and, 3) a significant private and farming sector self-identified as “sustainable”. Delving into each case study allows for a more in-depth understanding of SLFSI governance efforts in practice.

My choice for a Canada/EU comparison stems primarily from personal interest and connection to both those spaces. Much of my early personal experiences and academic inquiry made me understand problems around food and food security as ‘issues of the Global South’<sup>11</sup>, or at least global development issues. However, as one comes to understand political power relations through history, one quickly recognizes that our dominant food system grew out of a socio-economic and political logic developed by the Global North. This placed in my mind both the EU and Canada squarely within the dominant sphere of power and influence over food system dynamics. As I progressively deemed this dominant food system problematic, and due to my own personal ties with both France and Canada, I sought to follow the old adage of ‘putting one’s own house in order;’ in other words, my own research should seek to understand opportunities ‘at home’ before looking to prescribe strategies elsewhere. As such, the four municipal case studies chosen were specifically selected within Canada and the EU because they provide the unique opportunity to consider systemic struggles from within dominant structures.

Still, why compare the EU and Canada, given that they have such “fundamentally

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<sup>11</sup> While undoubtedly problematic, the terms Global North and Global South are used in this research to delineate power structures. The term also implies some degree of integration of the majority of the world under a dominant economic system; and has primarily been used by scholars seeking to problematize global neoliberalism (Eriksen et al., 2015). While power disparities (i.e. political, economic, social) exist within each sphere itself, these terms were used to capture the bigger –if not more superficial– picture of power within the global food system. These terms were also deliberately used instead of similar ones such as developed/developing to avoid debates on a development discourse imposed by dominant actors.

different approaches to food and farming” (Blay-Palmer, 2008: 61)? Simply put, and as explained above, both the EU and Canada operate under the same global food system from a position of power. Though similarities and differences will be discussed further in Chapter 4, both are increasingly giving way to agricultural intensification and to decisions made by large agri-food oligopolies often to the detriment of rural communities (Wiseman and Hopkins, 2001; Blay-Palmer, 2008). The EU and Canada most often allow continental or regional policies to trump sub-national rules. However, they also remain spaces where their citizens, through a variety of means, continue to play a crucial role in how food systems are shaped. Comparing local cases within Canada and the EU thus provides insight into how and why municipalities might seek to encourage SLFSIs, and how they work outside of (or within) traditional power structures.

Further exploration uncovers that sustainable food issues and their contributions to community resilience in Canada have primarily been studied in urban spaces and due to community engagement efforts (Landman, 2011; MacRae and Donahue, 2013; Blay-Palmer et al., 2013a). In contrast, both academic and policy discourse in the EU are more centered around rurality, namely through the efforts made by EU policies to adopt stronger rural development policies (De Schutter, 2012; Marsden and Sonnino, 2005; Richardson, 2000). This dissertation takes on the more European perspective of viewing rural spaces as critical sites for innovation, and hopes to give more weight to this perspective within Canadian scholarship. The justification for a rural focus stems in particular from the criticism that much of alternative food system research in Canada has become “too urban” (McMahon, 2014: 126).

Lastly, this dissertation also draws from the European concept of ‘multifunctional agriculture’ (MA). A concept central to rural development policies under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) since 2007, MA is meant to reconcile agriculture’s economic, environmental, and social roles (Marsden and Sonnino, 2008). While not central to this work, the case studies presented offer evidence on whether and how community-based SLFSs might serve as a potential nesting ground for rural development and community resilience, relating not only to how the CAP’s ‘Greening’ policies<sup>12</sup> may be further steered towards support for sustainable local level initiatives, but also to how they might serve as potential templates for Canadian municipalities seeking to develop their rural economies in new ways. Through a case study comparison, the point here is to draw out similar experiences *despite* differences in order to paint a broader picture of the opportunities and challenges that local and alternative governance structures face in seeking SLFS change.

### **Dissertation structure and normative considerations**

This dissertation is divided into eight chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 elucidate the conceptual framework for my research. Chapter 1 provides a brief historical trajectory of dominant food systems. It also offers an overview of alternative food systems, alternative food system scholarship and its critiques that informs this work. It then more specifically elaborates on local, community, and sustainable food systems which, together, make up

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<sup>12</sup> The Greening of the CAP refers to reforms made in 2013, which introduced a variety of policy tools to promote environmental sustainability in agriculture. Of note, 30% of CAP’s rural development budget is to be allocated to environmentally-mindful projects and measures, amongst other supports. Further supports are paid directly to farmers through ‘green direct payment’ on the basis that they adopt certain environmental practices (e.g. crop diversification, percentage of farmland as dedicated ecological focus areas). However, as will be briefly discussed in Chapter 8, these initiatives have been deemed unsatisfactory in meeting environmental goals and significant support to small and medium-scale farmers.

my understanding of SLFSs that drives this work. Chapter 2 unpacks new systems of governance, as processes and practices that deal with increasingly a complex and interrelated modern system of governance. While governance structures increasingly look to civil society and private actor participation, ‘new’ governance structures will be shown to depend on both neoliberal and neocommunitarian structures. SLFSIs’ adoption of ‘new’ governance mechanisms stem from the implication that traditional governance practices have somehow failed to address their needs.

Chapter 3 offers a summary of the methodologies used in my research process, and provides background for the case studies. It also offers an overview of the different social and political climates of Canada and the EU – as well as their academic differences – as they relate to SLFS development, thereby serving as the backdrop to my four case studies. Chapters 4 through 7 explore each case study in turn, highlighting major findings and observations from each local or regional SLFS effort. Each case study builds one on another, from the extreme of limited collaboration and state engagement to high levels of both at the local level. In other words, they offer a spectrum of SLFSI governance, where the impetus for change can be compared between an attempt at community-based change with low collaboration (Todmorden), a milder example of community-state action involving arms-length municipal support through medium-low collaboration (Wolfville), a stronger state-led and community-supported process despite political difficulties resulting in varied levels of collaboration (North Saanich), and finally a strong case for highly collaborative state-community partnership (Correns).

To complete this research, I conducted a series of interviews with key actors in each municipal SLFSI, including municipal officials, farmers, community organizers, and business owners, amongst others, to understand their unique experiences and opinions on their community's SLFSI development. I also drew from more informal conversations shared with community members not necessarily considered active proponents of SLFSIs themselves. Overall, these conversations all spoke to a desire to work towards a new food system paradigm based on collaboration and some degree of local autonomy. Their experiences also pointed to lingering constraints in pursuing SLFSIs; primarily, the ability to gain traction or inspire change at higher levels of action as well as the inability to forego political cleavages for broader social goals.

Scholars within the field of Canadian Food Studies have already sought to critically engage in alternative research methods to give greater visibility to those who produce our food – namely, farmers, agricultural workers, and those living in rural communities (Clapp et al., 2015b; Desmarais, 2007; Wittman et al., 2010 and 2011). This research also continues in this vein by seeking to give greater voice to those working on the ground to turn alternative imaginings into reality, and to share their stories, highlighting the complexities and contradictions of their everyday struggles.

Finally, Chapter 8 compares and contrasts the four case studies. It shows how highly collaborative and reflexive governance provides the most enabling framework for SLFSI development and rural resilience. As previously mentioned, it emphasizes the four interrelated elements of: 1) strong social capital within a community; 2) a whole

community approach to socio-economic development; 3) a strong role for the state; 4) genuine multi-actor collaboration, as the primary ingredients to support ‘the right constellation of actors’ sought out in my initial research question. Chapter 8 ends with a discussion of the limitations of SLFSIs and lingering gaps within SLFS research, namely, the major obstacles these initiatives face in seeking to grow beyond being isolated alternatives.

Lastly, like much existing food system research, the normative narrative woven throughout this work is intentional. While research processes must remain deliberative and systematic, IPES-Food deems that setting a normative benchmark is “inevitable” in scholarly studies on sustainable food system development (2015: 9). Cox similarly calls for “a critical dialogue of solidarity between movement’s processes of learning and knowledge production and their academic counterparts” (2015: 50). Activist scholarship seeks to provide work that is respected within academia while being relevant outside of it (Young, 2012). Flood et al. (2013) emphasize the role academia can play as a space for activism, in particular, in its ability to serve as a site of knowledge production that informs (and is informed by) social change (17). Though operating within an environment which often “discourages social engagement” (Flood et al., 2013: 25), academia has the potential to serve as a rewarding space to generate new and transformative knowledge. With this in mind, my research acknowledges morality not only as a component for critical reflection, but also for purposeful action (Young, 2012).

Based on the development of my own thoughts and beliefs as an academic, consumer,

and citizen, my focus on SLFSI governance is grounded in a desire to reconcile the ideals of democracy embodied by traditional formalized structures with the innovation and ‘idealism’ of community activism and private entrepreneurship. In other words, my research is driven by optimism towards the democratic process. It appreciates responsive governments, as it does the power of both cooperative action and individual champions.

This research began with the assumptions that some degree of food system relocalization is a necessary component to move towards sustainable food systems, that the development of social capital within communities is likely important, and finally, that an open-mind must be kept to consider partnerships or avenues for change that can be too quickly dismissed by an overly-polarized mind. It also began with the assumption that municipal and regional governments likely have a role to play in facilitating SLFS transitions, especially when leadership and commitment to sustainable agricultural reform at the national and state/provincial levels have been identified as either absent or weak in most jurisdictions, particularly in North America. However, engaged scholarship also forced me to better reflect on the less intuitive hybridities within SLFSIs (e.g. bridging the divide between ‘local food’ and global trade, understanding constructive application of sustainable capitalism in contrast to more oppositional goals). Activism within scholarship encouraged me to look critically at these trends to understand the deeper meaning and possibilities they offer.

Finally, while we can say that our global food system is in crisis, crisis does not only imply catastrophe. As stressed by Ikerd (2008) and Blay-Palmer (2008), crisis is defined

as “an unstable time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending” (Merriam-Webster, 2015); crisis can indicate recovery as much as it can indicate destruction. Indeed, a crisis in our food systems can be understood as a moment of opportunity rather than pessimism. This research seeks to contribute new alternatives for food system governance that go “beyond quick fixes” (IPES-Food, 2015: 11). As the case studies will show, a period of instability can become one of innovation and creative reform, in which practices and norms can be altered to favour a more sustainable future.

## Chapter 1 - Exploring dominant and alternative food systems

“The industrial model has focused on the physical body, the self, on getting more and more to consume. The sustainable model focuses instead on finding balance and harmony among all three [realms]- the physical, mental, *and* spiritual. [...] The sustainable model is based on the assumption that people are multidimensional.” (Ikerd, 2008: 75)

The literature review and concepts presented in this chapter illustrate different categorizations of alternative food systems to explain my own analysis and understanding of food system sustainability. First, it will begin with an overview of current dominant food systems and the AFSs<sup>13</sup> engendered by their perceived failures. Though lengthy, this overview answers: How and why do food systems operated today in accordance to particular structures and ideologies? Second, this chapter sets up the understanding of SLFSs and the initiatives whose governance mechanisms will be considered in the case studies. In short, I use the term SLFS to bring characteristics of local, sustainable, and community food systems together – each defined here in greater depth. In other words, this second section asks: what are SLFSs and how do they differ from mainstream trends and other alternatives? Ultimately, an understanding of dominant practices and their alternatives allows us to better understand how and why new governance structures can and must be adopted to engender food system change.

### **Systems in context: Food regimes and the making of the current food system**

A neoliberal discourse lies at the heart of current dominant food systems. To understand the movement towards food systems alternatives, it is useful to first situate today's

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<sup>13</sup> While AFSs have undeniably arisen around the world, I focus exclusively on the development of the alternatives in the Global North given the scope of the case studies presented in this work.

systems within the historical trajectory that enabled their logic. Based on insights from regulatory and world systems theories, Friedman and McMichael's (1989) seminal work on food regimes serves as the foundational text to explain the role of food and agriculture in the development of the world capitalist economy and changes to the state system (93). Predominantly structural in its analysis, it offers one of the first historically-based critiques of global capitalism in relation to food and agriculture. Briefly, food regimes "link international relations of food production and consumption to forms of accumulation broadly distinguishing periods of capitalist accumulation" (ibid: 95).

In Friedman and McMichael's work, two main regimes are identified: a first regime describes the underpinning of Europe's industrial growth in a world economy under British hegemony as well Europe's role as the "workshop of the world" (1870-1914) (1989: 99). This first period highlights the culmination of colonialism, the establishment of the nation-state system, and global trade under the British gold standard. American hegemony underpins the second postwar food regime (1945-mid-1970s). During this second regime, the United States (US) encouraged strategic industrialization of Western Europe and certain 'Third World' economies by spreading a "national agro-industrial" model of agriculture as part of its Cold War strategy (McMichael, 2004). The new capitalist world economy moves to financial transactions under the US dollar, and differences between the Global North (then "First World") and South ("Third World") are exacerbated through uneven patterns of development. This second "productivist" regime is characterized by the transnational restructuring of agriculture and further industrialization of farming. It also sees the beginning of agribusiness dominance through the "increasing separation and mediation by capital of each stage between raw material

inputs and final consumption”, associated with the logic of Fordism (Friedman and McMichael, 1989: 113).

Gramsci (1971) was the first to characterize Fordism as a type of capitalist system based on the cultural and political rationalization of mass production and consumption (Bonanno and Constance, 2001). A Fordist system operates as a ‘programmed economy,’ differing from both pre-capitalist values and unchecked ‘economic individualism’. To Gramsci, Fordism was established by consensus through coercion and persuasion; this required the submission of workers and society to particular production arrangements supported by a Fordist state, which intervened in both economy and society to facilitate its operation (Gramsci, 1971).

Kenney et al. (1989) first applied the notion of Fordism to agriculture in the context of the American agri-food sector. Over the 20th century, and particularly after the Great Depression, the Fordist system increasingly gave primacy of place to processes aimed at increasing productivity. It valued the complementarity of man and machine over craftsmanship and promoted mass consumption. Under Fordism, the agricultural sector also became the “destination of industrial outputs” including chemical and mechanical products (ibid). As a result, food increasingly became treated as a tradable good or as “commodified”. As transnational corporations had begun to organize globally, economic actors themselves also moved beyond national loyalties to operate and source from the most competitive states on the global arena. Certainly in North America, agriculture transformed into a means for capital accumulation, consequently commodifying food

away from much of its socio-cultural or environmental meaning.

Until the late 1970s, the food and agricultural system was a concern for states; food and agricultural policies reflected “a technocratic faith in the ability of states to redistribute resources if the resources [were] made available” (Patel, 2009: 664). During the two decades of the post-war period, modern capitalist societies experienced a period compromising Keynesian and Fordist thought known as “embedded<sup>14</sup> liberalism” (Harvey, 2005). Embedded liberalism allowed for the potentially contradictory growth of free trade alongside states’ ability to maintain welfare-based policies and to intervene to ensure stable employment. For agriculture, this translated into state intervention policies such as sponsored farm and commodity programs. It also included significant changes to the economic and political globalization of food and agriculture, e.g. the US gaining a hegemonic role in global agricultural production and trade and the spread of state-supported Fordism to developing countries (Kenney et al., 1989: 141). At this time, market and corporate activities remained within “a web of social and political constraints” (Harvey, 2005) that simultaneously promoted and restricted them.

However, the economic crisis of the 1970s brought on a new project: neoliberal policies

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<sup>14</sup> This notion of “embeddedness” is derived from Karl Polanyi’s *The Great Transformation* (1944), which Friedman and McMichael acknowledged played an influence in their work. Polanyi’s work, and his notion of “embeddedness” in particular, have been used by many food scholars to shed light on how changes in socio-economic structures take shape. Polanyi’s description of the rise of a modern capitalist economy and “market society” traces a similar historical trajectory to that of food regimes: from the emergence of a market society during the British Industrial Revolution in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries onwards, Polanyi describes the marked social shift caused by market society, in which social mentality changed from valuing reciprocity and redistribution to rational utility maximization (Polanyi, 1944: 47). Market society is characterized as having given the economy “an existence of its own,” where land, labour, and the “essentials of life” became unprecedentedly commodified (Polanyi Levitt, 2005: 172). For Gramscian scholars, embedded liberalism grew out of the need to compromise between the class interests of capital and labour in the wake the labour movements of the 1970s (Harvey, 2005). Embeddedness is discussed in greater depth in the latter part of this section.

came into ascendancy as a reaction to perceived failures in these statist economic policies. Proponents of neoliberalism sought to move control away from the state as the primary authority over food systems. Bonanno and Constance (2001), McMichael (2004), and Harvey (2005), all further point to the rise of neoliberalism as the major point of tension for many new social movements of the time, including the environmental, feminist, and youth movements which would all inform future alternative food movements.

To Harvey, neoliberalism was intended as a project to restore a particular class structure, proposing that “human well-being [could] best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (2005: 16). During this period, negotiating authority between the state and new non-state actors consequently fragmented power into the hands of larger privatized corporations and strengthened global institutions including the WTO or the IMF, which furthered liberal trading policies and global competition (Bonanno and Constance, 2001; Harvey, 2005; Clapp, 2011; Desmarais, 2007). States entered an unprecedented position, perpetually losing control over new transnational phenomena to avoid market distortions.

This brings us to a more current explanation of the dominant food system. Building on Friedman and McMichael’s understanding of food regimes, many have furthered a more recent third corporate food regime (1980-onwards) characterized by the roles of supranational regulation and global corporate power, the rise of new technologies,

consumer fragmentation, and financialization<sup>15</sup> in the agricultural sector (Burch and Lawrence, 2009; McMichael, 2004). McMichael attributes the rise of a new global regulatory structure to: 1) the continued dominance of international actors such as the WTO and IMF; 2) the reduction of US global dominance in food trade due to rising competition from China and Brazil; and, 3) further global corporate concentration through both horizontal and vertical integration (McMichael, 1992; McMichael, 2009).

The third food regime is characterized as a period of “flexible accumulation,” involving a globalized economy and society dominated by the use of financial capital in international markets and further weakening of the state (Harvey, 2005). Proponents of neoliberalism have furthered four pillars: deregulation, international trade liberalization, the reduction of public spending, and privatization. When applied to the food system, and as introduced above, neoliberalism has resulted in a number of changes, including (but not limited to): 1) a high level of vertical and horizontal industry concentration and consolidation, leading to a significant increase in corporate power; 2) a two-tiered market with mass produced low-quality food products on the one hand, alongside ‘high-end’ quality food products on the other; 3) patenting and intellectual property rights as a new means of profit making within the agri-food industry; 4) the related privatized governance of the food industry, including the growth of private regulation and third-party certifications; 5) the displacement of small-scale and independent food producers and processors, as the

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<sup>15</sup> Financialization refers to processes that increasingly tie the food economy to the financial investment sector; it uses the agri-food sector as a means for capital accumulation through the sale of finance capital (Burch and Lawrence, 2009; Clapp, 2011). Since the early 1990s, financialization has played a role in facilitating industry concentration within the agri-food sector (Marsden and Whatmore, 1994). In particular, the 2008 food crisis exposed the role of financialization in the current neoliberal regime by shedding light on the role of speculation on agricultural commodity future market and its role on raising food prices; indeed, as food is commodified, food-related activities become connected to sectors primarily concerned in their capacity to earn profit (Clapp, 2008).

international division of labour is reorganized around global commodity chains; 6) the accelerated dependence of non-renewable natural resources to maintain and increase the current system's levels of production; and, 7) the financialization of agri-food markets (see Allen, 2008; Clapp, 2011; Guthman, 2007). Indeed, McMichael (2004) has suggested that the emergence of our current global economy has been the result of an orchestration of "the financial class and its allies" from the 1970s extending beyond the agri-food sector.

However, both McMichael (2009) and Bernstein further describe our current food regime as one of "massive change and contradiction" (Bernstein, 2015: 11). Indeed, while neoliberalism is gaining ground, it is perhaps within agriculture that its application has been the most inconsistent. If anything, since the 1980s, the adoption of neoliberal agri-food policies hybridized with a heavily state-based system producing "significant re-regulation: new rules, new rule-making bodies, and new spheres of rule-making" (Guthman, 2007: 466). For example, despite the multilateral trade agreements laid out by global institutions, subsidization remains a major component of most developed world agricultural sectors (Margulis, 2014). In addition, alongside the exponential growth of neoliberal globalization, one also notes the corresponding rise of new social movements bringing awareness to the ecological and social downfalls of this regime.

It is perhaps for this reason amongst others that this current third food regime has also been attributed as being a post-Fordist or post-productivist one, where mass production and consumption have become fragmented into niches driven by individual identities

based on preferences and on consumers' growing concerns over quality and food safety; for example, consumption has been more recently attributed to being based on values (e.g. organic), dietary changes (e.g. vegetarianism, gluten-free), and variety (e.g. non-traditional foods) (McMichael, 2009; Murray and Overton, 2014).

Post-productivism is characterized by a shift away from quantity and cost-savings towards quality food, alternative farming practices, and state support of sustainable agriculture and environmental sustainability (Ilbery and Kneafsey, 2000). While the alternative food movements growing out of the 1980s and 1990s were considered some of the main drivers of post-productivist values in the agri-food sector, it has equally been argued these values are concerns only available to the rich, whose attention can be turned to social and environmental issues once food security is secured (Potter, 1998).

Post-productivism does not necessarily exist in conflict with neoliberal ideals; qualifying the third food regime as a purely post-productivist one is limiting. Evans et al. (2002) question the degree to which a majority of farms both inside and outside of the EU would call themselves truly post-productivist in nature. Political discourse today certainly still appears to continue to emphasize the need to compete on global markets through productivist principles over post-productivist motives (IPES-Food, 2016a). Murray and Overton (2014) similarly point to the contradiction between the continuous global pressure for farms to grow and specialize and the simultaneous rise of a market driving opportunities for small-scale and diversified farms.

If anything, these trends point to increasing disjointedness within the current food regime as well as the limitations of relying on dualistic and overly expansive theoretical concepts. In short, pitting various food regimes as Fordist/post-Fordist, or productivist and post-productivist, can limit our capacity to develop more critical and nuanced theoretical insights on the multiple dimensions of changing agri-food landscape (Evans et al., 2002). It is vital to also understand the complexity and hybridities within the current food system; only then can a more representative picture of today's food system be drawn to tease out opportunities for food system change.

Lastly, many food scholars have considered this most recent period as one which includes “re-embeddedness”. In the most general sense, embeddedness refers to the degree economic activity is constrained by social and political institutions; in his work, Polanyi offers that prior to the liberal era of the 1800s, markets were embedded in certain socio-political structures meant to mitigate or prevent the effects of the liberal market (1944). In contrast, “disembeddedness” describes the process through which the economy derives a logic distinct from other activity. Polanyi’s further concept of the “double movement” is understood as the inevitable ebb and flow between laissez-faire and regulatory policies (i.e. periods of embeddedness and disembeddedness) that constrain and encourage capitalist markets (Polanyi, 1944).

In the context of a third food regime, “re-embeddedness” refers to the growing “moral economy” that is moving market practices beyond conventional market structures. Under a moral economy, exchanges are based on social and moral sanctions instead of “free”

market forces (Polanyi, 1944: 203). For food scholars, “re-embeddedness” refers to the growing non-economic and more ethical character of specific types of alternative food systems (e.g. Fair Trade, organic agriculture, CSAs) and their markets (Sonnino and Marsden, 2006; Kirwan, 2004; Dupuis, 2009) or the rise in industry-led (or third party-certified) food safety regulation guided by social or ecological standards. In these contexts, “embeddedness” is mutually reinforced by producers and consumers who perpetuate market patterns based on more meaningful consideration of the economic, environmental, socio-cultural, and political dimensions of food.

In particular, Clark’s in-depth consideration of embeddedness (2014) gives deeper meaning to the concept of sustainability within food systems. To Clark, Polanyi understood that pre-capitalist societies organized the economy through processes of integration (e.g. reciprocity and redistribution); here, the economy served the double function of fulfilling material needs while reproducing the necessary bonds of community (Polanyi, 1944; Clark, 2014). In capitalist society, however, the commodification of labour and land created a relationship between economy and community under the dominant organizing principle of self-gain over integration (Clark, 2014: 64-65). Polanyi emphasized how “a market society” became one stripped of the necessary characteristics required to function as a human society. In other words, Clark stresses that Polanyi’s work was not a critique of the economy but of morality (2014: 70).

As such, Clark proposes that a truly transformative understanding of embeddedness lies in Polanyi’s suggestion that societies can harness modern industrial society and its

processes to:

“liberate themselves from the domination of impersonal forces and communities, beyond questions of economic stability and distribution, in order to translate their personal freedom in a relational and collective freedom organized around the reproduction of social and ecological bonds.” (2014: 65).

While Polanyi’s concepts are primarily used to reconcile market and society, Clark’s analysis explains that Polanyi saw the detrimental effect that the economy had on society by turning mutually supportive social relations into relationships based on a reductionist view of social relations that give primacy to economic logic and rationality (Polanyi Levitt, 2005; Clark, 2014). Clark’s understanding of the “Polanyi problem” does not focus on how to better embed free market and society, but rather on how industrial society can be leveraged to guarantee ethical concerns and collective freedoms as well as economic stability. In other words, Polanyi’s economically deterministic capitalist society is the aberration rather than the rule. Clark stresses that embedded liberalism is bound to fail. This is due to the inherent contradictions of instilling a mindset of gain and commodification within society over more community-oriented and ethical beliefs. Such a debate encourages us to consider the deeper implications of alternative food systems in general, and SLFS in specific, and how they must perpetuate both specific governance mechanisms and processes (discussed below and in Chapter 2) to offer lasting change.

Overall, a discussion of food regimes allows us to understand food systems as a reflection of “contested visions and discourses about food production and consumption” (Blay-Palmer, 2008); this could not be better exemplified than through the contradictory dynamics of the third food regime and the competing tensions that may confront one

another to the point of regime change — or at least some alternative to it. This thus leads us to a better understanding of the role and place of AFSs within the current food system.

### **A System in Crisis: The rise of Alternative Food Systems**

While the origins of alternative food movements and the systems they engender are debatable, their role as a growing force within the third food regime is not. Alternative food movements have been attributed to the organic agriculture movement of Germany and the UK in the 1920s as well as the American environmental and ‘back to the land’ movements of the 1970s. However, it is clear that alternative movements gained significant attraction in the 1980s and 1990s, alongside mounting concerns for the environment, the effects of globalization, food safety scares, rising levels of household food insecurity and rising rural depression, amongst other issues (Clapp, 2011; Patel, 2013; Ikerd, 2008). In recent years, these concerns have only gained further traction in popular discourse through works such as Eric Schlosser’s *Fast Food Nation* (2001), Michael Pollan’s *The Omnivore’s Dilemma* (2006), and documentaries such as *Food Inc.* (2008).

To better understand the drive towards SLFS development, this section briefly describes some of modern food systems’ ‘problem areas’ and the avenues for change pursued by AFS proponents to redress them. It may also be useful at this stage to very briefly define how systems —and thereby *food* systems, are understood in this dissertation. In the most basic sense, a system is understood as a grouping of interdependent parts that exist to meet a certain objective. This objective has higher priority than any objective of a

system's individual parts. While sub-systems may each have their own objectives, the sum of these parts work to achieve the same goal (e.g. while a human body is a system, its nervous, cardiac, or lymphatic systems each have unique functions to allow the greater whole to operate).

In his theory of social action, Parsons (2005) defines “interactions” as the primary means to sustain systems; these interactions give actors within a given system both a shared foundation and sense of reality. Luhmann (2012) adds that systems operate within a broader environment (or supra-system), from which a system has defined boundaries; for him, it is communication (rather than interactions) that serves as the self-preserving mechanism of systems; in Luhmann's understanding, communication determines which ideas or processes are valuable or meaningful to a given system.

One can recognize a system through its four functional prerequisites (Parsons's AGIL scheme). A system is a) A adaptable, namely to the environment around it, b) Goal-oriented, as actors within a system act to reach a common goal, c) Integrated, through the relatively harmonized set of values and norms shared between its actors, and d) Latent, i.e. maintained through time through self-sustaining interactions and structures. Using Parson's AGIL to delineate today's food systems, they have adapted to their environment through industrialization and specialization; they have set goals through the private and public policies and regulations that sustain them; they are made up of a series of sub-systems and integrate different actors under particular structures and processes (e.g. capitalist structures); and they can be seen as maintained particular values through both

institutionalized structures and specific socio-economic and cultural habits (e.g. subsidies for certain commodities/types of agriculture, embedded consumer habits or dietary choices). By this logic, AFSs can equally be understood as systems based on a fundamentally different set of interactions and priorities than current dominant systems, and seek to deal with the external inputs of their broader environment in different ways, as explored below.<sup>16</sup>

Discussed in more depth in the subsequent sections, AFSs are most broadly understood as systems whose discourses and practices provide some alternative path to global mainstream food trends – whether by amending current practices or by outright rejecting them. However, AFSs are not merely responses driven from ideological discontent. Support for alternatives are driven from various understandings of the ‘problem’ with our current food system, and can be understood as systems seeking to produce more ecological (Kirwan, 2004), socially responsible (Born and Purcell, 2006), and higher quality food (Ilbery and Kneafsey, 2000), through relatively small-scale production and more direct market interactions. Indeed, many AFSs are emerging as a response to marginalization of small producers who struggle to find markets for their products through conventional market channels, regardless of their production practices. In other words, AFSs are driven by a wide a range of pressures and have equally wide ranging responses to them.

Environmentally, AFS proponents acknowledge that food systems have come to heavily

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<sup>16</sup> It should be noted here that no AFS is ever fully “achieved”, as seeking alternatives is meant to serve as a direction rather than a destination. AFSs should rather be understand as being in a perpetual state of refinement.

rely on industrial agricultural practices, characterized by the primary use of fossil fuels, synthetic fertilizers and chemical pesticides. These off-farm manufactured resources supposedly allow for more predictable, repetitive and reliable production (Ikerd, 2008). However, dominant food system practices have been identified as the second largest sectoral contributor to global climate change as a result of these practices – accounting for around 13% of total world greenhouse gas emissions (Russell, 2014). Industrial agriculture has also been linked to the loss of biodiversity, increased land, water, and air pollution, and soil erosion (IPES-Food, 2016a; McMichael et al., 2007; Wiseman and Hopkins, 2000). In this regard, AFS initiatives attempt to use alternative production practices (e.g. reliance on organic, agroecological, pesticide- or hormone-free production practices) and generate consumer support for them.

In regards to food system governance, AFS proponents attribute a shift from public to private governance to the rise of neoliberalism. As mentioned above, while states drove food systems in the past, the current system has allowed large transnational corporations to “thrive under the conditions that have also played a key role in maintaining them” (IPES-Food, 2015: 5). Previously, state regulation could accommodate or be “captured” by private interests through lobbying and negotiation (Stigler, 1971). Currently, the influence of agribusinesses and agricultural industry cartels over government policy point to government-industry collusion (Bakker, 2015: 86) and become a central (though unspoken) rationale for action (Hall and Biersteker, 2002; Sodano, 2012).

Current dominant food system governance processes would appear to favour the private

sector in decision-making. At the national and global scale, greater industry concentration and vertical integration has led to the decreased autonomy and control of both farmers and consumers over how food is produced and managed (IPES-Food, 2016a). The new power relationships of private governance are particularly aimed at marginalizing certain actors along supply chains; for example, producers are increasingly beholden to private standards and demands, where compliance becomes a ‘contractual necessity’ under which smaller producers can rarely compete (Fulponi, 2006; Barling and Duncan, 2014). While private standards have existed since the 1930s, they exponentially grew in the 1990s and 2000s as a response to food safety crises and with the ulterior motive of securing niche markets (Fuchs et al, 2011; Friedman and McNair, 2008)

The universalized regulations and standards set out for international trade have progressed to dictate how producers can access the market and what they sell. This power imbalance is particularly evident in seed and agrochemical industries; in 2015, only six firms dominated 75% of the global agrochemical market, 63% of the commercial seed market, and 75% of all private sector research on seeds and agrochemicals (ETC, 2015). In these cases and others, control over the system becomes centralized in the hands of larger corporations, who then push for lower standard and quality setting in many aspects of their industry while gaining unprecedented lobbying power over the central state<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> One interesting example of the contradictory nature of AFS-type initiatives in this regard is the creation of the GlobalGAP in 1997, a European private sector-led voluntary standard-setting initiative with the goal of establishing and certifying ‘Good Agricultural Practices’ (GAP) for farmed and some aquaculture products. While a potentially valuable asset to address issues of food safety and environmental sustainability, GlobalGAP has faced criticism in their attempt to create globally applicable standards. While the quality of their environmental standards are debated, criticisms include a failure to address labour standards as part of GAP, poor transparency of their certification and auditing processes, and the perpetuation of non-inclusive top-down oversight measures to regulate food system processes (Kalfagianni and Fuchs, 2010; De Raymond and Bonnaud, 2014; Greenpeace, 2010). Scott et al. (2009) noted that such

However, neoliberalism has also encouraged some facets of AFS development, such as the drive towards entrepreneurialism and the creation of niche markets. As mentioned earlier, the shift of governance or regulatory schemes from the state to “rational individuals” can be understood as one that encourages the entrepreneurial spirit.

Entrepreneurial agency can become a way for actors to creatively respond to perceived problems themselves, rather than rely on the lengthy processes of state-based decision-making and social deliberation to create change (Burchell, 1993). As will be discussed through the case studies, our current food regime has also given way to spaces of opportunity for small- and medium-scale farmers to participate within if not alongside neoliberal structures – for example, through their inclusion in Fair Trade or Buy Local governance schemes thanks to the rise of private governance or the rise of farmers markets as an alternative market-based structure to lengthy value chains.

Similarly, AFS proponents’ focus on quality responds to the primacy given to large-scale processes and industrialization. These industrial practices are believed to have led to a significant loss of traditional, diverse, and local agricultural activities and food consumption (Abate, 2008). The benefits of knowledge sharing and innovation often found in agricultural communities have been replaced by the risk management and complex patenting schemes favoured by private governance actors (Marsden, 2012). Despite the potential “post-productivism” of the current food regime, a focus on supply and production has generally led to a loss in the quality, craftsmanship, and cultural nature of many products (Roep and Wiskerke, 2006). Along with “facelessness”, the

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standards have also served to reinforce the structural power of corporate actors (usually from the Global North) over local actors (usually in the Global South).

system has encouraged “placelessness,” in which products’ local or regional characteristics have become largely non-existent and replaced with non-traceable, standardized goods (Castells, 2004). While quality-based initiatives have often relied on state-based structures (e.g. Europe’s Protected Designation of Origin schemes), AFS initiatives increasingly rely on market-based strategies such as marketing through narratives (e.g. telling the producer’s story on a product) or traceability schemes (e.g. scanning barcodes to find out more about the process and production of a product) to ensure greater quality of product and consumer information access. In other words, while community engagement remains central to parts of AFSs’ development, there is evidence of considerable neoliberal and non-statist “do it yourself” mentalities to some facets of AFS success.

Due to the seeming contradictions raised above, AFS scholarship has increasingly sought to move away from over-stating key characteristics of either alternative or conventional systems to avoid essentializing them (Mount, 2012; Born and Purcell, 2006). This concern is addressed here in part, through the recognition that conventional and alternatives systems or paradigms are not discrete, but are represented of their respective ‘ideal types’. In other words, overemphasizing either system by a set of specific traits should be avoided to allow researchers and practitioners to gain a more nuanced understanding of the processes by which opportunities for change can be created (Friedmann, 2007; Campbell, 2004; Mount, 2012).

As stressed in particular by Gibson-Graham (2006b) and Storper (1997), expressions of

each system can be found within the other. The interplay between systems should be understood as a complex system made up of hybrid food geographies, “consisting of multiple and partially overlapping worlds in which reflexive collective action unfolds” (Storper, 1997: 255). Gibson-Graham emphasizes that focus should be placed on the diversity and hybridity of both types of systems. By doing so, we can more clearly understand the opportunities and spaces for action within them (2006b). A focus away from strict dichotomies also allows a shift away from systems working in competition against one another, and instead enables spaces to try “something fundamentally different” (Ikerd, 2008: 78). Further analysis of these types of collaborations will be considered more in depth in Chapter 2, as they allow us to understand the possibility of a system in which the state, community actors, and businesses work to support one another in shared goals rather than in opposition to each other.

Finally, health and nutrition advocates and scholars of nutrition have more recently contributed to food system scholarship to explain a further series of shortcomings within today’s current food systems. In short, and despite the abundance of food it provides, the modernization of the agri-food industry has not succeeded in eliminating people suffering from malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies across the globe (FAO, 2011a). At the same time, food preferences since the 1970s have shifted towards the increase consumption of what Winson calls “pseudo-foods”, or foods with “sugar, fat, and salt as their main ingredients, which are generally considered by nutritional scientists to be nutrient-poor” (2013). It is in part to these food’s “spatial colonization” of supermarket spaces that Winson attributes the rise of overweight, obesity, and diet-related non-

communicable diseases in both the Global North and South. While beyond the scope of this work, AFS proponents have turned to CSAs, farmers markets, mobile markets, and good food box programs, amongst other schemes, as examples of how alternative food structures could deliver healthier, whole foods to a wider range of consumers.

It is now useful to more specifically consider and define three main types of AFSs, that not only each serve as potential transformational nodes to the current system, but also make up my definition of Sustainable Local Food Systems.

### **How to transform food systems: Types of AFSs**

In his final report presentation to the UN Human Rights Council in March 2014, Olivier de Schutter, then UN special rapporteur on the Human Right to Food, condoned sustainable food systems on the basis that “it will not be enough to refine the logic of our [current] food systems – it must instead be reversed. [...] At the local, national, and international levels, the policy environment must urgently accommodate alternative, democratically-mandated visions” (2014). As mentioned earlier, AFSs set a new series of expectations on the roles of and relationships between the state, the market and civil society. Perhaps most importantly, they reveal a rich tapestry of interests and needs that can be served by different conceptualizations and practices around food systems.

Whereas AFSs have emerged in response to a broad range of issues and challenges associated with the dominant food system, and thus take a myriad of forms, I identify SLFSs as a sub-set of AFSs that have emerged in response to specific critiques. This

section considers what SLFSs are and how they differ from mainstream trends and other alternatives. It does by assessing key characteristics and critiques of the three main components that make up my definition of a SLFS: *sustainable*, *community-minded*, and *local*. Bringing these three key facets closer together, SLFSs have a greater degree of ideological coherence than the term ‘AFS’ and thus can be attributed to more specific actions and governance practices that will be explored in the case studies.

#### **a. Sustainable Food Systems (SFSs)**

This section explains the major characteristics of SFSs, and identifies key critiques raised against them. SFSs provide a first sub-category of AFSs primarily defined through their focus on environmental, social, and economic sustainability. As they remain broad in scope, SFS initiatives have been frequently criticized for unwittingly perpetuating neoliberal mechanisms and remaining unreflexive in their adoption of particular practices and processes. In response to these critiques, this work stresses that while SFSs may rely on ‘neoliberal’ elements, it is these systems’ entrenchment in more dynamic socio-cultural interactions that allow us to understand the first component of what is necessary to create space for food system change.

Following the definition of sustainability proposed in the introductory chapter, SFSs are intended to bridge the “people-economy-culture” (Cobb et al., 1999: 210) gap within current systems. In academia and practice, the development of SFSs has been as much an exercise in discourse and paradigm shifting as it has been a call to action. Current literature defines 1) environmental health and stewardship, 2) social equity, and 3)

economic viability as the three areas that must be addressed to move towards agricultural sustainability (see Feenstra, 2011; Hamm and Bellow, 2003; MacRae, 1990; Pretty, 2008). While still a broad definition, a sustainable food system is understood as “a collaborative network that integrates food production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste management in order to enhance the environmental, economic and social health of a particular place” (Feenstra, 2002: 99-106).

More recent food scholarship draws from this literature to explain how alternative food systems compete against the globalized food system, by re-embedding markets in non-market values, including environmental or social values (Goodman et al., 2012; Kloppenburg et al., 1996). In SFSs, consumers are viewed as multi-dimensional individuals and citizens rather than as the end receivers of goods (Ikerd, 2008: 75). While idealized in each case, the main characteristics of SFSs in contrast to the conventional food system are listed in Table 1.

Table 1 sets a framework for SFSs in opposition to conventional food systems. The distinctions drawn here by no means excludes conventional processes from a number of traits listed as ‘sustainable,’ but highlights the major trends pursued by each. Indeed, SFSs have often been criticized for being conventional or “neoliberal” themselves despite their stated goal to counteract the very system they are reproducing (Guthman, 2008; Brown and Getz, 2008; Alkon, 2013).

Issue Area	Conventional	Sustainable
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· uncertain to change; solution to environmental issues are technical (e.g. chemical inputs for pest and disease management; disease resistant crop development; high-input production)</li> <li>· negative externalities to environment</li> <li>· global food networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· reliable and resilient to change in the long-term (e.g. nutrient cycle analysis, traditional plant breed varieties; low external input production; seasonal foods)</li> <li>· environmental beneficial or neutral</li> <li>· local/regionalized food networks</li> </ul>
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Economies of Scale; focus on cost reduction (including labour, production, etc.)</li> <li>-aimed at increasing global trade; privatization; industry concentration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Economies of Scope; focus on environmentally-friendly and socially-equitable food production/ processing as economic generator; accessible and affordable to all</li> <li>· aimed at balancing imports with local capacity; cooperative structures; diversification</li> </ul>
Health and Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· quality based on standardization of product</li> <li>· safety based on bottom-line standards and on standardized quality &amp; safety assurance schemes (e.g. industry labels and standards, tracking)</li> <li>· focus on food as ‘engineered’ nutrition (e.g. vitamin enhancement of food, calories, macro-nutrients); processed food</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· quality based on tradition/nature/process/<i>terroir</i> (region)</li> <li>· safety based on trust-based relations; denomination of origin, transparency of food chain, and attempt for more rigorous safety standards</li> <li>· focus on food as part of broader healthy lifestyle (e.g. emphasis on fresh food, physical exercise, healthy eating habits)</li> </ul>
Socio-cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· standardization of food and taste at global level</li> <li>· contributes to cultural homogenization</li> <li>· tendency to create power inequalities within food system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· locally/regionally appropriate</li> <li>· contributes to local/regional culture and community</li> <li>· has a strong focus on knowledge sharing and education around food issues</li> <li>· aims to build food democracy</li> </ul>
Adapted from: Pothukuchi & Kaufman (1999); Marsden (2003); Lang & Hesman (2004)		

Table 1 - Characteristics of a conventional vs. sustainable food system

Critics believe that market-driven SFS initiatives (e.g. Fair trade, organic) often simply perpetuate market logic as the primary means to enable food system change due to four of their main characteristics: first, the emphasis placed on consumers' market behaviour (primarily through purchasing and 'voting with our forks'); second, the focus placed on private entrepreneurialism and the ability for small-scale producers and distributors to capture niche markets for organic, local, or value-added foods for example; third, the responsibility taken on by food-based community groups to provide consumer education and opportunities around food issues; and finally, the adoption of the neoliberal subjectivity of valuing individual over collective action as the means to maximize well-being (Alkon, 2013; Brenner and Theodore, 2005; Guthman, 2008).

Rather than giving primacy of action to the state or to community groups to govern more sustainable food systems, a number of scholars have noted that SFSs contribute to "roll-out neoliberalism" by placing the responsibility for AFS development on private actors and citizens rather than on the state (Andrée et al., 2014; Peck and Tickle, 2002). "Roll-out" neoliberalism is described as the stage following "roll-back" neoliberalism and includes the partial or total replacement of previously government-controlled resources and regulations, whether dealing with public services, industry, or social rights. In other words, as systems are privatizing, delegation of power and authority is handed to non-governmental agents or downloaded to sub-national government institutions (Eaton, 2008). Diminishing state power is not pursued in the name of greater democracy or citizen engagement but in light of neoliberal ideals, reducing "the politics of the possible by limiting discourse and action to neoliberal ways of thinking" (Guthman, 2008: 1180).

However, the dynamics labeled as “neoliberal” require greater nuance of understanding. In the case of many SFSs, the responsibility and self-determination placed on the individual is not understood as a means to perpetuate neoliberal ideals, but rather to serve as the foundation for community and even organized institutional structures. Instead, the agenda proposed by proponents of SFSs requires action to begin at the individual level before they can instill change at broader or higher scales. While all markets appear “free”, there is an understanding that economic arrangements are based on some form of implicit codification of rules and norms of *who* and *how* one can participate in the market; these markets and rules exist because of sets of dynamic socio-cultural interactions (Dupuis, 2006). Similar to the understanding gained through Polanyi (discussed earlier), the goal of SFS is not necessarily to create a system outside of capitalist production, but to “exchange it for one that is more caring but not necessarily external to capitalism” (Guthman, 2008: 1176). The question remains as to how and whether such a system can either rely on (or even create space for) particular governance mechanisms that more fundamentally challenge current food system practices?

#### **b. Local Food Systems (LFSs)**

This section provides an overview of LFSs and their key critiques. LFSs are a further sub-category of AFSs understood through their emphasis on space and reliance on shorter value chains. In contrast to the breadth of SFSs, LFSs are criticized for being too narrow in scope, relying on the sole assumption that ‘local is better’. Indeed, LFSs often fail to recognize broader regional or national influences on their ability to operate, and may even perpetuate the power inequalities of broader systems on a local scale. However,

their tendency to focus on more locally-based and polycentric governance structures begins to provide some insight into how particular types of governance processes affect food system practices.

Of all the many iterations of alternative systems, local food systems have likely proven the most pervasive. In the most general sense, local food systems are assumed to provide environmental benefits by decreasing the distance from farm-to-table and between producers and consumers. Proponents argue that relocalization makes food markets less vulnerable by providing some degree of food security for local communities (Abate, 2008: 395). From a rural development perspective, local food systems also aim to provide markets for local farmers and processors and mitigate the decline in the number of family farms and enterprises by creating opportunities at the local-level (Allen and Hinrichs, 2007). From a critical perspective on food systems, the local scale can also be considered the ultimate site of impact, at which all the effects of global, national, and sub-national food policies are brought to bear (Guthman, 2008: 1177). To local food proponents, LFS have the capacity to “re-socialize and re-spatialize” food, whereby local becomes synonymous with quality, drawing on imagery of small farms and rural environmental and social resources (Sonnino and Marsden, 2006).

However, the term “local” is often criticized for being too vague (Abate, 2008), referring to spaces anywhere between a few dozen to hundreds of kilometers. In short, local should not necessarily be equated with small-scale nor should it automatically be romanticized as more sustainable or socially just. Human geography understands that scales are both

socially constructed, the result of social and political struggle (Brenner, 2001; Born and Purcell, 2006), and that scales are fluid and subject to change (Swyngedouw, 1997). Scales are also relational, and can best be understood through how they interact with other levels; for example, since the development of the modern food system, national and international scales have dominated over the functioning and activities of lower scales, including the local scale (Born and Purcell, 2006). The capacity for change or to create new arrangements are significantly influenced, if not restricted, by current scalar arrangements.

Thus, scales are a means to empower certain actors; they represent strategies rather than goals in and of themselves (Born and Purcell, 2006). In response to existing hierarchies of scale, LFSs have often been identified as sites of resistance to larger regional, national, and global systems. The logic stems from the idea that the strategies used to perpetuate the current neoliberal arrangements have had less traction at the local level (Hendrickson and Heffernan, 2002). As described earlier, the actions perpetuated by the current neoliberal food system are based on capital accumulation through capturing larger markets and economies of scale. Though states have made themselves subject to the global scale by simultaneously attempting to regulate its activities while relinquishing governance authority to higher bodies, local actors have not bought into these hierarchies to the same degree (Friedman and McMichael, 1989).

Similar to SFSs, LFSs take on a number of characteristics that countermand dominant food system dynamics. In contrast to the primacy given to private sector regulation and

corporate actors, some LFSs favour polycentric and multi-dimensional governance structures because of their recognition of (and support for) the diversity of interests and goals pursued by various actors involved (Abate, 2008). Proponents of the local scale also seek to re-embed markets in social, cultural and environmental values (Kirwan, 2004; Hinrichs, 2003), and thus to (partially) de-commodify food.

Local food scholars have taken the notion of embeddedness to explain that the possibility to re-embed markets in certain values is increased at the local level because of the smaller scale in which producers and consumers interact (Hinrichs, 2000; Sage, 2003). In other words, LFS proponents believe that proximity contributes to the fundamental dynamics of social capital – dynamics that must be more artificially created at higher scales. A smaller scale enables local efforts to support alternative food structures that can be acted upon more quickly and seamlessly than at larger scales (Allen, 2010). To many, the local is the rational and effective scale at which more sustainable governance and provisioning can occur (Guthman, 2008: 1177). Types of LFS initiatives are summarized in Table 2.

However, because many consumers have come to identify ‘local’ food as inherently more natural and healthy food, Connelly et al. (2011) and Born and Purcell (2006) caution against what they call “fetishization of local food” (Connelly et al, 2011: 313).

‘Fetishization’ occurs when local food systems are deemed *de facto* as more sustainable and socio-economically stronger than any alternative; though lacking the same depth of meaning as “sustainable”, “local” becomes the ends rather than the means to achieve certain goals. For example, case studies from within the local food movement in

California (Campbell, 2001), and the use of local food language used by corporate actors (Mitchell, 2009), show how market-based solutions for LFSs can be co-opted by other actors as a means of accumulating capital; in these cases, market actors capture niche markets and new price premiums using local- and sustainable-food discourse, without adopting any of the non-monetary value associated with these types of initiatives (Mount, 2012).

Type	Purpose and Examples
Direct marketing	provides face-to-face interactions between producers and consumers to create social capital, create greater awareness around food production processes and conditions; shorter supply chain allow producer to retain full price of product. e.g. Farmers markets, pick-your-own, farm gates, direct restaurant sales, community supporter agriculture (CSA)
Institutional procurement	provides locally-sourced ingredients for public institutions including government, education, and public health facilities, in contrast to federally or provincially sourced food service operations that rely on large-scale private purchasing. e.g. school and university meals, municipal government cafeteria, hospital food services
Access programs	provides locally-sourced products for vulnerable groups, including low income, seniors or youth, for both emergency situations and for long-term redistribution. These often include an educational or awareness raising component. e.g. food banks, good food boxes, school programs, community gardens
Education and policy	provides education, research, outreach, and advocacy on local food issues; these might include marketing and public awareness campaigns. e.g. buy local or regional branding initiatives, food policy councils, food hubs and community food centres
Adapted from: Kirwan, 2004 and 2006; Hinrichs and Allen, 2008; Allen <i>et al.</i> , 2003; Feenstra, 2002; Guthman <i>et al.</i> , 2003; Hinrichs, 2000; Friedman, 2007; Hamm and Bellow, 2003; Andrée <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Hassanein, 2003)	

*Table 2 - Types of Local Food System Initiatives*

Lastly, over-valorization of LFSs also creates the danger of reinforcing existing power inequalities between actors at the local scale (Allen, 1999; Dupuis and Goodman, 2005). Empirical research has shown that these inequalities are usually perpetuated by the creation of higher-end niche markets that while beneficial to local producers, exclude lower income or more marginalized consumers (Allen, 1999; Andrée et al., 2015). Though any system is bound to include some while excluding others to some degree, this critique has been met with new academic interest to tease out opportunities for more “transformative” localism and initiatives aimed at creating more justice within the local food system (Hinrichs and Allen, 2008).

### **c. Community Food Systems (CFSs)**

This section highlights the key characteristics of CFSs as the third sub-category of AFSs through their attention to community-based solutions to address much larger food system problems. Building on LFSs and elements of SFSs, CFS proponents are even more aware of how social capital and community-based decision-making allows for a greater degree of power over food system practices, especially through the role that can be played by local governments. However, and as with LFSs, CFS proponents remain criticized for their inability to look beyond the local scale for opportunities to support food systems alternatives, thus warranting a need to understand SLFSs.

Because of their emphasis on community and place, I draw from the more recent North America concept of Community Food Systems and “community economies” (Gibson-Graham and Roelvink, 2009), often used to define more localized SFSs. While CFSs

have been used interchangeably with both local and sustainable food systems, they distinguish themselves by being community-oriented systems designed to enhance the environmental, socio-economic, and nutritional health of a population in a particular place (Cornell, 2015; Garrett and Feenstra, 1999).

In addition to the aspects of SFSs and LFSs listed above, CFSs place their own emphasis on: 1) community food security; 2) proximity; 3) self-reliance; and, 4) sustainability. The particularities of each component can be found in Table 3.

In contrast to other local food systems, they also place more prescriptive emphasis on community health to stress the key role of relationships within food system dynamics, where residents are encouraged to participate in the achievement of Community Food System goals (UC Davis, 2014). These may feature the use of farmers markets, schools, and community gardens as places of learning, community food kitchens, food banks, and support for home gardens.

Health and nutrition proponents have primarily fostered community food systems. Since the early 2000s, community food systems discourse has increasingly been taken up by urban planners to discuss the means towards greater community health and wellbeing (Campbell, 2004; Landman, 2011; Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999). It has also been used by rural scholars and policy-makers to understand the context for economic growth and rural development opportunities in light of increasing urban expansion (Hinrichs, 2003; Marsden 2003; Wiskerke, 2009). While sustainable and community food systems share

common characteristics, the relative emphasis on ‘community’ over ‘sustainability’ highlights the specific nuances of each system, though both remain relevant to the study of the municipal case studies presented here. ‘Community’ allows citizens to “experience a sense of belonging to a collectivity that is related to their actions” (Halkier, 2004) and the ability to garner greater influence over the system under which they live.

<b>Community food system priorities</b>	
Food security	Community Food Security (CFS) focuses on community rather than individual household needs, and seeks to give access to all community members to healthy, adequate, affordable, nutritious food. CFS tackles issues including food access and transportation, with an emphasis on low-income households, and related planning issues, which individual food security may not.
Proximity	Proximity focuses on the “local” aspect of community food systems, by placing importance on the distance between actors and components of the food system. The assumption here is that proximity creates long-term relationships of trust between all actors in the food system.
Self-reliance	Self-reliance emphasizes the capacity for a community to be self-sufficient to meet its own food needs. While non-local foods can be an asset to a community, the priority here is to seek to increase the degree of locally-sourced, processed, and procured foods. These systems seek to maintain a stable base of farms using sustainable production practices and primarily use local inputs.
Sustainability	Sustainability meets the same criteria as defined by SFSs: environmental, social, and economic. Community Food Systems favour a diversity practices that allow for long-term resilience, and the ability for current and future generations to meet their needs. Local food and agricultural businesses are intended to create jobs for residents with the goal of keeping financial capital within a given community, and thus giving opportunities for residents -and youths in particular- the ability to stay. Dietary behaviours that reflect personal, community, and environmental health are encouraged.
Adapted from: Cornell, 2015; UC Davis, 2014; Allen, 1999	

*Table 3 - Key Characteristics of Community Food Systems*

As such, CFS proponents are particularly aware of the costs associated with alternative food system processes – both to producers and consumers. For example, some have considered the possibility that AFS strategies do not always reap additional benefits for producers – who must pay additional costs for labour or marketing, or for consumers – who must often pay a premium for healthier or more sustainably produced foods (Hardesty and Leff, 2010). Others have considered the lack of access, transportation, or income disparity in addressing health and nutrition issues through the CFS lens, namely through the study of urban food deserts (Peters, 1997; Short et al., 2007). More specifically, studies in urban and rural planning have contributed by showing how municipal governments can play a pivotal role in the development of community food systems by establishing new governance alliances and institutions.

Such governance bodies include new departments of food and nutrition or food policy councils, while new governance processes include greater integration between municipal departments and community groups, more cohesive city-planning departments, or government funded projects such as Community Food Assessments (see Koc and Dahlberg, 1999; Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999; Campbell, 2004; Landman, 2011; MacRae and Donahue, 2013; Pothukuchi, 2004).

Despite unique strategies catering to different geographies and communities, community food systems supported by municipalities all seek to “connect and create greater synergies between different public domains” (Wiskerke, 2009: 376) be they environmental protection, quality of life, or education, amongst others. Over the past

decade, the inclusion of sustainable food discourse in planning agendas has grown significantly due to the recognition that food-based community initiatives significantly contribute to community wellbeing, economic development, and environmental health (MacRae and Donahue, 2013).

However, critiques from urban and rural planning scholars have also problematized the power and effectiveness for local level structures to promote lasting change, and have consequently stressed the importance of being able to scale up local level opportunities (Minnery, 2007; Pierre, 1999). For example, in an analysis of two small-scale SLFS projects in Edmonton and Vancouver, Connelly et al.'s findings stress the limits of local projects and the need to scale up smaller initiatives to have larger and more lasting impacts on the system (2011: 313). Similarly, focusing on the local scale may create a blind spot over other opportunities; for example, a focus on localization might fail to acknowledge the role of broader institutions such as the EU or federal governments' capacity to enforce sustainable policies and practices (Born and Purcell, 2006: 196). These critiques will be considered through my four case studies in Chapter 8.

#### **d. Sustainable Local Food Systems**

This final section considers SLFSs as the means to reconcile the criticisms raised against SFSs, LFSs, and CFSs. In light of the conflicts between AFSs and the dominant food systems presented throughout this chapter, SLFSs are presented here as the systems' whose initiatives are most likely to deliver sustainable outcomes. Indeed, it is from the various elements of SFS, LFS, and CFS combined that make up this work's definition of

SLFSs. The term ‘SLFS’ itself has rarely appeared in academic writing, but is slowly appearing in planning and local policy documents (e.g. Lake County, 2013) to emphasize the ability for locally-based food systems to also positively impact the environment and local people and economies.

While some might contend whether or not to place the burdens of a global food system on the shoulders of local governance, relocalizing decision-making is critical to SLFS proponents. In Ikerd’s analogy of comparing a food system to a human body (2008: 99), when individual organs are healthy, a body thrives; however, when a vital organ exceeds its limits to function, the body begins to die. In other words, and mirroring Luhmann’s claim that a system operates within a broader environment or supra system, SLFSs contribute to the better functioning of the broader environment around them, serving to mitigate and potentially even counteract the failures of other local systems; but if a local community is unsustainable, it contributes to the burdening of the system.

Taking on the logic of food system relocalization, I do not distinguish SLFS from SFS, LFS, nor CFS, but present SLFS as an amalgam of all three. The viability of SLFS stems primarily from three main characteristics: 1) a more prominent role for local government and a more tightly-knit community (derived from CFS), 2) stronger relationships between both market and non-market actors at the local scale (derived from LFS), and 3) greater environmental and socio-economic consciousness within a specific community (derived from SFS). Further, combining elements of the sub-categories of AFS described above, SLFS reconcile the criticisms laid out against all three. Beyond the formal market

transactions of SFS, SLFSs initiatives promote informal relationships that serve to re-embed them into a more community-oriented and socio-political setting.

The case studies will show that while SLFSs operate at the local level, their proponents are aware of the need to interact with higher levels of government and the broader environments around them. Yet, because citizens have also stated greater distrust towards state-level institutions to defend and privilege citizens' interests over corporate ones, local communities are identified as better able to allow people to democratically redefine their own food systems. In the context of the case studies, considering the degree to which SLFS initiatives are community- or locally-based allows us to better understand the importance of the local specificities of place, culture, and tradition in enabling particular governance outcomes (Flora and Flora, 2005).

Relatedly, I draw from the concept of “civic” agriculture (Dupuis, 2006; Lyson, 2004; Hinrichs and Lyson, 2007) to understand SLFSs. SLFS proponents seek structural change through the establishment of community infrastructures, and aim for greater community self-reliance (Connelly et al., 2011). Civic activities might include knowledge sharing, education, and events to strengthen community. Labour within these systems may also be centered on more collaborative or informal exchanges, including volunteering or engaging in co-operative schemes to produce, process and distribute food. In these scenarios, the inclusive and participatory governance processes discussed in the following chapter become central to the development of SLFSs. However, and unlike other AFSs, SLFS proponents are not afraid to capitalize on the benefits of neoliberal

practices, drawing from the advantages of value-added entrepreneurialism or more globalized markets to improve farmer livelihoods. At the same time, greater locally-based food democracy is prioritized to reclaim citizens' rights to be part of decision-making, through shorter value chains or informal economic practices, amongst others.

One way to conceptualize what SLFSs are is by bridging the logics of neoliberalism and neocommunitarianism. In brief, neocommunitarianism draws from 1970s-80s communitarianism. Communitarians emphasize social organization and community over the individual, on the basis that individuals are heavily influenced by social norms rather than their own judgements (Davies, 2012). In contrast to liberalism, communitarians also promote that relationships are humans' default state rather than choices or contractual agreements. Community is understood as the precondition for politics and morality; in other words, moral values do not transcend community structures as furthered by liberals (ibid).

More specifically, neocommunitarianism differs from neoliberalism in its focus on the concept of the 'good' choice rather than 'free' choice; Davies likens the 'good' choice with sustainability. In other words, a 'good' choice is one that recognizes short-term and long-term impacts, and is made when individuals opt for doing what is best for social wellbeing (2012: 773). In its ideal form, neocommunitarianism supports a social economy as well as grassroots approaches to socio-economic development (Eaton, 2008). In contrast to neoliberalism, neocommunitarian approaches place the highest value on equality, economic redistribution, and civic engagement through the development of

strong social capital (Eaton, 2008; Jessop, 2002). The case studies proposed here will be used to better understand how and if neoliberal and neocommunitarian processes interact, and how this reflects on changes within the food system.

Indeed, the idea of social capital mentioned above is key to this work; it stems from Robert Putnam's notion that democratic societies of any size cannot thrive without active and organized civic engagement. Engagement entails activities ranging from volunteering in local community groups to simply attending local events or markets. Strong social capital has been shown to have a clear correlation to economic development and the ability to collectively manage public resources (Pretty, 2002; Putman, 1994; Sumelius and Vesala, 2005). At the local level, the much-cited research conducted by Putnam in various regions of Italy showed the stark contrast of political effectiveness and wealth between communities with and without strong levels of social engagement (e.g. associations based on trust and social capital).

Social capital occurs through interaction among people, and the benefits this engenders. The four main characteristics of social capital include: 1) trust, gained through regular, honest and cooperative behaviour; 2) norms and rules, that create expected behaviour within communities, and thus a trend towards shared goals and aims; 3) reciprocity, which maintains relationships over time, and 4) networks. Social capital is thus understood as a network-based process meant to generate benefits for all those who participate in it, both individually and collectively (Fukuyama, 1995; Putnam, 2000).

As briefly discussed in the case of LFSs, increased interest in more localized and sustainable initiatives is due in part to the more immediate and tangible interactions engendered by community-based action (Allen, 1998: 159; Deloitte, 2013). For example, a report by the Ontario Municipal Knowledge Network shows alternative food structures' ability to generate social capital; through their research, people were found to have ten times more conversations in farmers markets than in an average supermarket due to the greater sense of community farmers markets generated in contrast to more conventional retail outlets (Deloitte, 2013: 6).

Further, Putnam (2000) delineates *bonding* and *bridging* social capital – a distinction particularly useful to SLFS internal governance and its ability to grow beyond the individual local level. While he stresses that these categories can overlap, *bonding* social capital describes the development of networks between homogenous groups (e.g. age, gender, social class, ethnicity); in contrast, *bridging* social capital seeks to create connections between heterogeneous groups (Putnam and Goss, 2002: 11). From this classification, one can further distinguish different resulting consequences from each type of social capital. Putnam emphasizes that *bonding* can strengthen pre-existing solidarity between actors, while *bridging* enables greater links to outside networks, new assets, and is particularly useful in the context of information diffusion (2000: 22). As such, de Souza Briggs defines *bonding* as the means to maintain or strengthen the status quo, while *bridging* is more forward looking and geared to development and growth (i.e. scaling out) (de Souza Briggs, 2003).

Put into the context of SLFS governance, one quickly comes to understand both the positive and negative possibilities following both types of social capital. *Bonding* is useful when a community mindset towards SLFS goals has already been established. In other words, the strength of shared purpose can allow individuals and networks to work together more closely towards a certain cause and create stronger commitment towards more collaborative governance mechanisms. In his work, Abate finds that the more unified local interests, understandings, and interpretations of food are, the easier it is to develop food system alternatives (2008: 394). However, while *bridging* capital connects “diverse social cleavages,” *bonding* capital can reinforce exclusivity, and potentially perpetuate certain dominant ways of thinking and thus (even inadvertently) increase marginalization – a phenomenon explored in the case studies (Putnam and Goss, 2002; Fukuyama, 1995; de Souza Briggs, 2003). In short, while *bonding* will be shown to be the necessary starting point to foster trust and cooperation despite its capacity to marginalize, *bridging* emphasizes the role of creative collective ownership between heterogeneous actors (and thus between actors at different scales and across space). The case studies will serve to demonstrate whether and how either type of social capital enables particular governance processes within SLFS initiatives.

In SLFSs, food and food environments are understood as much for their socio-cultural and emotional components as they are for their economic role. Shared community spaces centered around food production or nature have been identified as a means to improve community health and wellness both physically and mentally (Knezevic et al., 2016). In a study of elderly Dutch nursing home residents, Wiskerke (2009) considers the emotional

effects on quality of life of eating the standardized food served in nursing homes rather than foods from residents' local or home environments; the research determined a clear “negative impact on [residents'] psychosocial and physical wellbeing” (370), while much greater joy and comfort were derived from being presented with familiar or culturally-appropriate foods. From this type of research, one can derive the importance of developing shared positive experiences around food within a community (Kirwan, 2004). It also emphasizes the need to build spaces for “new food relationships” based on trust, cooperation, and mutuality, that are likely to frame the identities of a community's politicians, farmers, and residents (Blay-Palmer, 2008).

Lastly, and while not a main feature of this research, for producers, SLFSs also draw on the characteristics of peasant agriculture.<sup>18</sup> Peasant farming has traditionally been associated with subsistence farming in the Global South and/or with production methods of the past; however, renewed discussion on the sustainability of small-scale farming and the role of multi-functional agriculture has brought a discussion on peasantry to the fore – as an overlooked alternative to conventional agriculture (van der Ploeg, 2009; van der Ploeg, 2014). Because of a focus on peasantry in the face of globalization, farmers and farm workers who identify as peasants have often only been acknowledged as “passive victims” of modernity and as a result have not been featured in discussions on food system change (Bernstein, 2015; Shanin, 1971; van der Ploeg, 2009).

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<sup>18</sup> Though Chapter 8 explores this concept in further depth, research by van der Ploeg (2009) highlights peasant agriculture as: 1) having higher levels of intensive labour; 2) giving primacy to the environment (e.g. focus on soil and water health, use of polycultures vs. monocultures); 3) benefiting from a culture of cooperation and community (e.g. knowledge and resource sharing vs. privatization of expertise and production); and relatedly, 4) exhibiting some degree of independence from outside forces, relating also to marketing (e.g. use direct marketing channels). These features are highlighted here as they resonate particularly in some of the language and processes raised throughout the case studies.

However, a large and growing number of farmers in both the Global North and South self-identify with “peasantry” as it relates to a broader lifestyle characterized by a struggle for autonomy from dominant systems, cooperation with like partners, and environmental stewardship (van der Ploeg, 2009), as will be demonstrated in the case of Correns. This conceptualization helps inform how SLFS proponents working on the ground understand SLFS initiatives and these same actors’ role in helping in their development. In particular, understanding ones’ place as one that requires both greater autonomy from dominant actors and stronger collaboration with perceived allies point to the original question posed by this work on the types of governance mechanisms that may be successful in allowing for SLFS change.

In sum, to SLFS proponents, the future of our food system depends on the “realization that there is value in relationships among people –within families, communities, and nations. [...] The most important value arises from relationships and stewardship that cannot be purchased with dollars and cents” (Ikerd, 2008: 66). I present the elements of sustainable, local, and community food systems as the primary characteristics of SLFSs. SLFSs value decentralization, local production, interdependence, a degree of self-sufficiency, community and relationships, human harmony with nature, nutrition and health, and diversity.

In other words, SLFS proponents seek to address both the more technical aspect of food system change (e.g. encouragement of specific agricultural practices, creation of new market access), while also addressing deeper political and social inequalities. As it will

subsequently be shown, particular governance patterns enable SLFSs more so than others. As governance will be explored in Chapter 2 and through the case studies, a properly devised SLFS initiative is not a random, but a consciously and reflexively derived project meant to re-frame the *entire* food system within its own capacity.

In conclusion, our current dominant food systems are based on an industrial logic that has been over a century in the making. Only more recently have alternatives sought to challenge these systems in the form of the various AFSs presented here. It is within this environment of competing interests, inconsistencies, and power asymmetries that SLFS seek to carve out a space for alternative modes of governance that we explore in the following chapters. Indeed, SLFSs reconcile many of the goals set out by AFS proponents through their desire to re-embed sustainability and democratic participation within food systems, at a local scale.

It is perhaps worth noting here that the cases presented in the work are deliberately named SLFS *initiatives*. I defined these initiatives as community-based attempts at developing sustainable local food systems. They are referred to as community-based as all four initiatives operate within their singular municipalities. They are understood as ‘initiatives’ rather as ‘systems’ because they are not fully-integrated networks in their own right, but strategies that bring together a range of policies, projects, and activities aimed at building SLFS for their community and surrounding environment. As a whole, these municipally-based SLFSIs are also made up of smaller projects or initiatives, just as systems are made up of a variety of sub-systems.

Moving into the next chapters, three questions should be kept in mind to ultimately answer which “constellation of actors” are necessary to create more sustainable food systems and the governance processes they contribute to. These are 1) how and to what extent does civic engagement contribute to SLFS initiatives? 2) how do SLFS initiatives account for the broader context and systems around them? and finally, 3) are SLFS initiatives drawing from particular governance mechanisms in pursuit of their goals?

## Chapter 2 - Understanding Governance for SLFSs

“Despite our best intentions, collaboration is an un-natural act between non-consenting adults. We all say we want to collaborate, but what we really mean is that we want to continue doing things as have always done them while others change to fit that we are doing.” (Elders in Backers, 2003: 10)

Despite the dominance of certain actors in today’s food systems, governance processes have become significantly more polycentric (Paquet and Wilson, 2011; Meadowcroft, 2007). However, as stated above by the former U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders with some humour, collaboration is not always intuitive between actors with conflicted interests. SLFSIs provide only one of the many examples where governance mechanisms must account for these differences, especially if they are to move forward. This chapter begins with an overview of the concept of governance; drawing on existing literature on the governance of sustainable development as well as research on ‘new’ governance mechanisms. It will highlight lingering questions around the role of 1) collaboration, 2) reflexivity and adaptivity; and 3) multi-scalar mechanisms in SLFS governance later addressed through the case studies.

Acknowledging how power and interests are ultimately negotiated within any system is crucial. Reflexivity and collaboration stem from an ability to understand market, social, and political actors as part of an integrated whole rather than in competition. Engaging with issues of power, scale, and new interdependencies between forces allows us to more holistically consider the democratic and participatory possibilities of new governance schemes. Lastly, changes in the way scales and mechanisms are produced and reproduced undeniably affect the power relations between actors and discourses; in the SLFS context,

it is assumed that these actors are placed on a more horizontal scale. In brief, this chapter explores the normative understanding of governance adopted by SLFS proponents and the types of governance mechanisms these actors might draw from.

It should also be noted here that ‘new’ governance structures are not unique to SLFSIs. In fact, governance processes within alternative systems can have much in common with conventional food systems mechanisms (e.g. market-based governance). What becomes more relevant is the relative degree to which these systems are hinged on new governance mechanisms to succeed. Notably, it will be shown that the degree to which each of the four case studies were able to adopt mechanisms for collaboration, reflexivity and adaption, and multi-scalar mechanisms, heavily affected their ability to initiate and maintain their SLFSIs over time.

From a research perspective, governance can be understood in two ways. First, the concept serves as an analytical tool to explain how decisions are made; it examines the processes of social deliberation that lead to the creation of particular rules and structures. Moving beyond the state, governance literature specifically asks key questions about the role and place of non-state actors in decision-making (Minnery, 2007: 328). For example, how does the increasing role of private actors and civil society affect the state’s capacity to act? Why have non-state actors sought to move beyond existing structures to meet their needs? Do the more fluid arrangements of governance accommodate for things that more traditional structures do not? In the most basic sense, the concept of governance has been used to explain mechanisms beyond government through an examination of the results

and processes of broader political, economic, and social interactions (Jessop, 1998; Meadowcroft, 2007; Minnery, 2007).

‘New’ governance processes help us understand the role of participatory or deliberative arrangements for SLFS. The link between the state and the market or civil society is certainly nothing ‘new’, but these dynamics raise questions of how and whether new systems interact with ‘traditional’ approaches, as well as the extent to which they truly depart from older systems. As such, this chapter also briefly introduces a possible typology for SLFS governance processes found within the four case studies. Categorizing SLFSIs in this way ultimately allows us to explore the transformative power of scale-appropriate collaborative and reflexive governance considered in each of the four case studies.

Second, the concept of governance can also be understood in a more normative way. For many, the idea of ‘governance’ entails a particular set of values that are perceived as ‘better’ than government. Namely, sustainable development governance emphasizes that governance processes are “objectives” in and of themselves, with the goal of displacing existing structures for ones that will not conflict or “erode” the possibility for change (Meadowcroft, 2007). Under this logic, governance refers to ways of organizations decision-making in terms of what ‘should be’ (Newman, 2001; Meadowcroft, 2007). Certainly the very processes of ‘new’ governance processes can be understand as highly normative —assuming that collaboration, network coordination, multi-sector integration, and democracy are ‘necessary’ to the process of decision-making (Newman, 2001).

Viewing SLFS governance in this way is particularly applicable, as ‘new’ methods of governance are frequently adopted by SLFS actors with the specific purpose of allowing for some degree of food system change.

With the purpose of understanding both what SLFS initiatives have done to further their goals as well assessing the degree to which they were able to meet these goals, this chapter considers governance both as an analytical tool and as a normative approach. In other words, this research seeks to both analyze processes of governance, while also contributing to food system scholarship that recognizes “the empowering and enriching role” the state and other actors can ultimately play in developing SLFS (Marsden and Sonnino, 2008: 430).

### **What is governance? Analytical and normative perspectives**

In the context of this work, governance is understood as an analytical category of the relationships, processes, and structures through which decisions come about. Governance refers to the processes that transcend “political governance” –or “government,” while incorporating the role of private and civil actors in decision-making (Minnery, 2007; Jessop, 1998; Kooiman, 2003; Kjaer, 2009). Classic state-based governance occurs when government institutions are the primary and final arbiters of decision-making processes. In this environment, the relationship between civil society and the state is institutionalized and perpetuated by hierarchies of scale, in which higher scales dominate—and often even override— lower scales (Somerville, 2005; Somerville, 2011).

In contrast, governance is meant to capture the increasing deliberation between public and private actors in determining socio-political outcomes (Torfing, 2010; Jessop, 2000; Dedeurwaedere, 2005). Moving away from traditional forms of political governance, ‘new’ governance arrangements –both formal and informal– seek to govern outside and beyond-the-state and adapt to the new polycentric coordination of our current systems (Jessop, 1998; Hajer, 2003; Meadowcroft, 2007; Swyngedouw, 2005; Paquet and Wilson, 2011). ‘New’ models of governance are considered society- rather than state-centric (Pierre, 2000), deepening (or broadening) social governance rather than breaking away from traditional structures (Newman, 2001: 124).

Social capital serves as a prerequisite to the implementation of new governance strategies. Civic governance arrangements involve some degree of citizen empowerment through the creation of ‘networks’ on which SLFSIs will be shown to rely on. (Civic governance is placed in some contrast to ‘market’ or ‘political governance’ that are also featured in the subsequent case studies.) In practice, these governance arrangements can be implemented at the local and global levels, and implicate both public and private actors through *ad hoc* committees or participatory stakeholder-based associations.

The intention of governance scholarship is to understand the complex synergies created between networks of private and public actors operating at the local, national, and international levels (Dedeurwaedere, 2005: 2). This work focuses on the possible synergies created by ‘new’ governance structures at the local level, given the greater breadth of actors seeking to exert power over decision-making both on a horizontal scale

— through the variety of private and public regulatory agencies, state institutions, community groups, businesses, and researchers involved, and vertical scale — through occasional attempts to influence policies and structures from the bottom-up.

### **SLFS governance: Attempting collaboration and reflexivity**

‘New’ governance mechanisms are not housed solely within the domain of alternative food systems. For example, Chapter 1 discussed the changing nature of our food system, now dominated by larger corporate actors who make use of new private governance structures to set their own rules in ways often supported and encouraged by the state (Lowitt et al., 2016). Private, collaborative, and multi-scaled governance practices and processes, amongst others, exist within conventional as well as alternative structures. At the same time, many SLFSs still develop through the more traditional governance fora of public consultations or town hall meetings.

However, due to the possibility for more horizontal structures, new governance is perceived by a majority of SLFS actors as more empowering, democratic, and effective. To SLFS proponents, new governance structures can serve as opportunities for decision-making based on greater negotiations of power, mutual compromise, and co-operation. Indeed, ‘new’ and alternative governance structures are often adopted out of social dissatisfaction with how the state has dealt with certain policy areas, especially in regards to environmental governance (Wallington et al., 2008). As mentioned earlier, when actors view governance as a more normative system of learning, they can engage in greater trial and error founded in a “spirit of experimentation” (Paquet and Wilson, 2011: 6). Active

participation and continuous engagement are encouraged to maintain these process, more so than under a hierarchical decision-making model.

Especially in the context of alternative food system reforms, citizens have become both *less* likely to accept the norm of the state as the ultimate rule-maker and *more* likely to seek greater control over socio-political and economic processes. In other words, in the eyes of civil society, there has been “diminished legitimacy of top-down regulatory approaches” (Wallington *et al.*, 2008: 1). On this basis, governance is not simply understood as the means to govern, but as the means to shift decision-making *further* beyond the state. In contrast to government’s formalized structures and processes, governance is characterized by a degree of self-organization, interactive decision-making, and some autonomy from the state. In this way, new governance mechanisms are seen as offering an alternative to the unicentric system of the state, especially when this model has failed to produce desired outcomes. Instead, these processes go beyond regulatory approaches to create and encompass more social ownership over political processes, and engender a “collective pursuit of public purpose” (Wallington *et al.*, 2008: 1).

Indeed, food system scholarship most frequently delineates governance processes as either state- or society/community-led in order to understand the space for collaboration and non-hierarchical processes. Forney (2016) recently criticized agri-environmental governance research for focusing either exclusively on public policies and state-led governance on the one hand or solely on civil society and market-driven governance on the other, with few studies seeking to find the possible hybridities or exchanges between

the two. I echo the concern that a sole focus on private or community-based governance schemes runs the risk of missing key opportunities of state intervention and support, while only considering public policies and state-based initiatives ignores important market and social interactions that shape food systems.

Already, Kennedy and Liljeblad (2016) have identified the four main streams of academic inquiry on food system governance and highlight the key critiques raised against each type. While studies occasionally overlapping between these areas, they include 1) food policy, criticized for insufficient involvement of civil society in decision-making; 2) private governance, criticized for generally failing to address global social and environmental crises in a concerted way; 3) urban governance, criticized for its difficulties in reconciling its aims and processes with rural and peri-urban needs; and 4) multilevel governance, criticized for being too fragmented, with local level actors remaining unable to affect national or global processes. The result of their overview was for all food system governance processes to become better integrate, more ‘resistant’ to the current industrial capitalist logic for food and agriculture, and more reflexive and adaptive. Again, however, few have sought to create a more specific typology of governance practices within each of these areas that are or may be implement to enable the greater degrees of integration, resistance, reflexivity and adaptability so often called for in SFS research. As such, this work attempts not only to take stock of which governance mechanisms are used in four communities, but also to assess the ability for different mechanisms to enable SLFS transitions.

In their overview of governance innovations in Corporate Social Responsibility, Auld et al. (2008) outline a typology of seven governance arrangements to better define each one's ability to address environmental and social issues. Such a typology proves useful in revealing the specific opportunities and challenges of each arrangement, as well as their capacity to promote meaningful and lasting changes in private sector behaviour and practice. Inspired by such categorization, my work begins to identify a typology for SLFSI governance drawn from the analysis of my four case studies. Though by no means an extensive list, the typology of governance mechanisms used here define six distinct categories. These include more traditional governance arrangements including 1) state-led and 2) state-led initiatives with community support/participation, as well as new governance arrangements which include 3) community-led, 4) community-led with municipal support/ participation, 5) individual farmer-led<sup>19</sup>, and finally 6) collaboratively-led initiatives between community and state. Categorizing governance processes in this way allows us to understand not only how and whether collaboration and reflexivity contribute to SLFSs development, but also which of these categories best enable and maintain SLFSs.

Lastly, what must also be considered here is the ways in which SLFSIs appear particularly dependent on new forms of governance —namely collaboration and

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<sup>19</sup> While most of the categories are relatively self-explanatory and will be described in greater depth by the case studies, I deliberately identify the fifth category as farmer- rather than market-led. The initiatives pursued by farmers in each of the case studies were generally singular initiatives adopted by one or a small group of farm(s)/farmer(s). While a number of them draw on market-based governance processes (e.g. organic certification), their broader goals encompass financial, social, and environment dimensions. Because public and private governance mechanisms are often described as “constraining” and marginalizing to farmers (Forney, 2016: 8), this category is also labelled as such to highlight the degree of autonomy and self-determination sought out by farmers themselves in developing SLFSIs.

reflexivity— as well as the degree to which collective buy-in of these processes are necessary to succeed. This framing particularly addresses two of the lingering challenges within the literature on AFS governance, namely: 1) how can AFSs, which include SLFSs, meet their long-term goals, when the political processes they interact with are consistently short-term oriented? 2) How can AFS governance be coordinated at the multiple scales and sectors required, when cooperation has not historically proven successful?

**a. Collaborative governance**

As mentioned in Chapter 1, SLFSs structures generally favour governance approaches based on the community-centered values of mutual obligation and trust through social capital. In this context, the concept of “co-governance”, or “collaborative governance” (the latter term will be used subsequently for consistency), becomes particularly useful. While political governance is characterized by hierarchy and non-governmental arenas are defined by a desire for self-governance, collaborative governance offers a middle way between the two (Somerville and Haines, 2008; Kooiman, 2003).

First, given the increasing skepticism towards the state, collaborative governance allows us to acknowledge that states cannot act in isolation. Under collaborative governance, actors meet on a more level playing field, in which collective inquiry, co-operation, and deliberative dialogue are encouraged (Paquet and Wilson, 2011). While all types of governance include both state and non-state actors, only collaborative governance allows for “a deepening of democratization of state and society, bringing state and citizens closer

together” (Somerville and Haines, 2008: 63). It enables the state to create more interdependent relationships with the market and civil society, thus generating a capacity to work *beyond* the classical state rather than imposing actions ‘within’ it or attempting to work ‘without it’.

Second, because of the interactive nature of collaborative governance, leadership is shared rather than hierarchical and relies on horizontal forms of governing: communication, co-operation without a central/dominating actor, diversity, and dynamism (Kooiman, 2003). Actors involved in collaborative governance processes all feel they have an equal stake or a shared responsibility, despite different interests and goals; in these scenarios, participants are “co-producers” of governance and become more encouraged to feel greater stewardship towards the processes they are involved in (Paquet and Wilson, 2011). Collaborative governance operates more on a willingness to work cooperatively in a certain direction over having a “clear vision” (Somerville and Haines, 2008: 75; see also Torfing, 2010); its purpose is to utilize the power and influence of traditional hierarchical structures while having civil society and related groups organize themselves as a positive counterweight. Through a feeling of shared control and leadership, different sets of actors are motivated to make interests more compatible with one another to meet their mutual needs and depend on qualities including moral responsibility, trust, mutual aid, reciprocity, and co-operation (Quilligan, 2009). In short, the collaborative governance stresses the similarities between interacting actors rather than their differences; collaborative governance also goes beyond coordination, under which actors are seen as having less at stake than when taking on truly collaborative

processes (Kooiman, 2003: 96).

However, a number of limitations are raised within studies of collaborative governance, particularly around the issue of bringing together disparate actors and interests as well as the informality of collaborative processes. While collaboration is meant to better represent social diversity, case studies on collaborative governance often highlight the lingering negative opinions difference actors may have about each other; for example, in state-society governance structures, citizen participants frequently voice their frustration against public actors' inability to respond or consider their concerns even after engaging in collaborative processes together. Similarly, public actors continue to believe that institutional hierarchy proves more useful than the messiness of informal governance processes. For example, in a UK study on increasing public participation in health and local governments through collaborative governance mechanisms, a number of public officials interviewed stated the need for state officials to "educate" civil society on decision-making processes, only emphasizing the hierarchical perspective of public actors when dealing with governance issues (Newman et al., 2004).

In response to this concern, the case studies are understood based on the breakdown of levels of collaboration offered by Wanna (2008) (See Table 4 – here, the state is understood as the party making formal commitments to non-state actors). Applied to the SLFSIs presented in this work, varying from low to high levels of collaboration, these benchmarks are used in my analysis of the case studies to determine the degrees of collaboration in state, community, or farm-led governance arrangements, and their related

effects on the ability for the four cases of SLFSIs to advance their objectives.

<b>Degree of Collaboration</b>	<b>Activities involved</b>
Low level: marginal operational adjustments, with low risk	Incremental adjustments using consultative processes; organized discussions and development of feedback mechanisms; gaining information on the interests and expectation of other stakeholders
Medium-low level: operational forms of collaboration to ‘get the job done’, with some level of political risk	Some degree of obligation to direct consultative processes; some forms of co-production of strategies and initiatives; regular use of monitoring and evaluation of processes, including public reporting based on partner preferences
Medium level: Commitment to multiparty input and buy-in, with moderate levels of political risk	Formal commitments to inter-stakeholder consultation and collaboration; joined government strategies; commitment to joint strategies, initiatives and/or funding
Medium-high level: strong normative orientation, with high level of political risk	Strong interactions between stakeholders in forming policy process and implementation; relatively strong degree of decision-making capacities shared amongst stakeholders
Highest level: highly normative commitments to collaboration, often with highest political risks	Transformative interaction between network actors; significant engagement and empowerment shared between actors; attempts of high degree of stakeholder consensus and cooperation; high levels of collaboration between state and non-state actors

*Table 4 - Wanna’s degrees of collaboration (summarized from Wanna, 2008)*

However, what remains to be seen is whether governance still take place “in the shadow of hierarchy” (O’Toole and Burdess, 2005: 241; Scharpf, 1994); in other words, whether governance frameworks still ultimately operate within the auspice of the broader regulatory environment around them. Certainly, the central state—whether directly or indirectly—remains a ‘primary organizer’ of different governance mechanisms more so than devolved state authorities (Jessop, 2003), while lower or less formalized levels

authority remain vulnerable to domination by higher scales of action (Somerville, 2011: 98). The role of the state is by no means a limitation, but rather, a reality whose collaborative potential will be considered through the case studies in helping to meet particular governance objectives.

### **b. Reflexivity**

Bringing greater awareness to these strengths and weaknesses, reflexivity becomes the second key characteristic of SLFS governance. Reflexive governance “refers to the problem of shaping societal development in light of the reflexivity of steering strategies – the phenomenon that thinking and acting with respect to an object of steering also affects the subject and its ability to steer” (Voss et al., 2006). Such reflexivity includes the ability to shift policy objectives based on new knowledges or giving greater weight to particular actors to change power dynamics with a given system. Reflexive governance also allows actors to question the foundations and operating strategies of governance themselves, to consider alternative ways of being and adapting to changing environments (ibid: 4). Processes of reflexivity usually involve analysis, goal definition, assessment and strategy implementation; such a comprehensive overview of processes allows for a more targeted understanding of a governance strategies implications and the possible side effects or changes they might create (Voss et al., 2006).

Citing Beck’s concept of reflexive modernization (Beck et al., 2003), Voss et al. also suggest that as a dynamic process, governance often undermines itself by prompting changes to the environment it operates in (2006). As such, greater reflexivity within

governance allows for an awareness of change and the ability to adapt to it –often a criticism of bureaucratic processes. Reflexivity allows governance structures to remain relevant through time. Kooiman (2003) suggests that all social actors and systems eventually seek to avoid or resist dominant governance patterns (57); reflexivity allows for patterns of governance to evolve accordingly. Rather than maintaining static policies, reflexive governance adjusts responsibilities or creates new networks or bodies to facilitate specific processes (Meadowcroft, 2007).

Voss et al. (2006: 18) further stress that reflexive governance requires procedural rules for sound reflection rather than competition. In other words, reflexive processes allow actors to discuss tensions, mitigate the replication of mistakes, and deal with conflicting interests in more mindful ways. Experiences with difference governance strategies become fodder for constructive criticisms, or lessons learned, from which new procedures can be derived. In this context, governance is once again understood as a process requiring and potentially enabling of ongoing consultation and reframing. The question remains as to what reflexive processes look like in practice, how they differ from traditional policy processes, and how might these ‘alternative’ processes be appropriately integrated into long-term SLFS strategies.

As will be made evident in the case studies, applying Gibson-Graham’s challenge of dominant capitalist structures is useful here. In short, the authors argue that non-capitalist economies have always existed alongside capitalist structure; they invite both researchers and activists to explore alternatives to today’s dominant economic practices through a

“politics of the possible” (2006). The goal is not to create dichotomies between capitalist and non-capitalist alternatives but to understand the economic sphere as a discursive space where ideas can be changed and actions critically thought through. In particular, the authors propose the notion of ‘community economy’ as a “project of social construction”, meant to allow individuals to think through and engage in modes of non-capitalist behaviors (Gibson-Graham 1996: 251). Much like in SLFSIs, in developing community economies, social values are neither “peripheral nor inconsequential” to system change (2006). In the context of this research, ‘community economies’ are highlighted by initiatives based on informal economic transactions and co-operative economic practices; in these and more, communities’ changing values are primary to how economic practices are understood and pursued.

Gibson-Graham names a “process of becoming” (2006), as the reflexive way in which new discourses and ways of being are developed. Applied to SLFSI governance, an understanding of community economies allows us to consider the potential behind SLFS development in creating alternatives to the dominant systems presented in Chapter 1. Lastly, and endemic to reflexive governance, the spirit of collective experimentation necessary to Gibson-Graham’s transformative process will be also be considered in each case study.

### **New Governance Potential in SLFSIs**

The cases presented in this work consider to what extent collaboration, reflexivity, and scale play out in SLFS governance. Collaborative governance serves an opportunity for

SLFSIs because it involves a process of dynamic inquiry in a similar way to how SLFS themselves constantly revise their place and position in relation to broader food systems. Within AFS initiatives, communities with high social capital and an ability for collaboration are suggested as being those who are best able to “invest collectively” towards their goals (Flora and Flora 2005: 45). By involving a diversity of actors, collaborative governance can allow stakeholders to benefit from a range of expertise and experiences and that each of these can contribute to stronger and more comprehensive policies and practices (Newman et al., 2004); rather than assume that elected officials “know best,” this framework values both formal and informal knowledge, especially when traditional mechanisms often marginalize certain actors. In its turn, reflexivity is neither task-specific or goal-oriented in their rationality but rooted in a curiosity and innovation.

New forms of governance allow for an entirely different way of thinking through the decision-making process. In contrast to current structures, collaborative and reflexive governance engenders new mindsets, discourses, and ultimately new configurations on how to reach desired outcomes. Understanding the roles of civil society, and public and private actors, allows us to better understand that transformative potential that is gained when they act collectively and with greater self-awareness. New governance actors still undeniably operate within an established context, yet the capacity they display to allow for governance transformation—often through collaboration at lower levels of government—remains primary in the context of this research.

Questions thus remain on what collaborative and reflexive governance mechanisms look like in practice, how they interact with state and community-based processes, and whether they provide SLFS proponents with the tools to meet their goals. A further overarching question also remains on whether issues of scale provide opportunities or obstacles to more localized governance processes, which the following case studies will serve to elucidate. Certainly, to what extent does scale remain an important component on how well new governance methods play out? Scale is always a critical factor in any understanding of governance. Based on an idea of the ‘local,’ scale becomes even more relevant to SLFS governance. Academic scholarship has pointed to these debates through the language of “new localism” or “new regionalism” (Brownill and Carpenter, 2009), as the way in which networks have distanced themselves from government while remaining an inherent part of its broader structures. Somerville (2011) notes that appropriately scaled governance initiatives not only allows for trans-scalar action, but also allows for social relationships that generally occur within “different spatial reaches of interaction” to relate to one another in new ways (Somerville, 2011: 82). As such, an analysis of the case studies also considers how scale may benefit or obstruct the development of SLFS, and whether multi-scalar structures are even truly necessary to SLFS initiatives.

In particular, multi-scalar governance can be understood as a way of both describing new arrangements and prescribing effective governance (Brownill & Carpenter, 2009: 253). Using the concepts of traditional hierarchy, multi-scalar governance can occur when capacity for power and influence is strengthened at lower scales of government in relation to those on higher scales. The following case studies thus ultimately also

considers how sub-national governance arrangements (usually uncomfortably) interact with regional, national, and even international arrangements.

Gaining clarity on these questions allows us to better understand how and whether traditional actors, such as the state, can reduce their “uncomfortable” interactions with newer governance methods (Newman et al., 2004). In her own analysis, Dupuis names this as the state’s capacity to still “call the shots” (2006), by giving primacy to certain actors to shape the food system over others. Beyond allowing for SLFS initiatives to succeed, understanding these governance dynamics and how collaboration can occur also sheds light on how to avoid “governance failure”, when competition overtakes co-operation or the stresses of broader political and economic processes constrain governance alternatives (Jessop, 2000).

As mentioned by McMahon, the move towards food system alternatives is not simply driven by social movements, but one that is taking “an administrative, economic, and institutional turn, [involving] new patterns of governance, investment and biopolitics” as well (McMahon, 2014). The overview of governance literature and concepts presented here offer an examination of the existing and potential role of new governance mechanisms in supporting SLFSIs. The following chapter explains the methods used to reach these stated objectives and the rationale behind my case study selection.

### **Chapter 3 - Methods and Methodological Approaches**

This chapter explains my case study selection and how the methods employed and the data collected address questions of SLFSI governance. Before considering the logic behind my case studies, I explain the reasoning behind comparing SLFSIs in municipalities in Canada and the EU – whose similarities and differences are made evident both through the EU and North American food system scholarship as well as through citizens’ everyday interactions with food and food systems. After the overview of my methods, I will end by addressing the potential limits of this research.

#### **A Canada and the EU Comparison: Same Strokes for Different Folks?**

First, why compare SLFSIs in the EU and Canada when food system reforms are taking place around the world? In the context of power in food systems, it was recognized earlier that our dominant food system grew out of a neoliberal logic developed by the Global North; as such, the EU and Canada were recognized as existing within the dominant sphere of power and influence over food system dynamics – in other words, at “the heart of the neoliberal global food system” (Martin and Andrée, 2014: 173). In addition, it was also addressed that municipal efforts to support SLFSIs are doing so to provide some type alternatives to prevailing systems by offering new ways to collaborate and conceptualize food system processes. As such, the four municipal case studies chosen for this work were specifically selected within Canada and the European Union because they provide the unique opportunity to consider systemic struggles from within dominant structures, albeit at a much smaller scale.

Second, why compare the EU and Canada when they have been found to have such “fundamentally different approaches to food and farming” (Blay-Palmer, 2008: 61)? Is it then to be assumed that provinces across Canada and member states across the EU share values or agricultural approaches? Before a discussion of the EU and Canada’s difference, it is perhaps worth considering their similarities. Both the EU and Canada are increasingly giving way to agricultural intensification of their land to their own degree much to the detriment of more inaccessible rural areas, left to greater polarization and abandonment (Wiseman and Hopkins, 2001; Blay-Palmer, 2008). They also both undoubtedly operate within the same global food system, as well as within regional systems in which continental dynamics often trump national or sub-national rules. For example, the Canadian state has “changed significantly in the last decade,” increasingly seeking opportunities to adopt and adapt to neoliberal trade policies and arrangements (McBride and McNutt, 2007); in regards to agricultural policy, this was made evident in the dismantling of the Canadian Wheat Board in 2012 and the proposed privatization of seeds through amendments to the Canadian Seed Act in 2013. Similar analyses could be made in regards to the EU, who has been progressively liberalizing the CAP since its last series of reforms and who faces lingering uncertainty around agricultural concessions in relation to both Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with Canada and Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations.

Yet, the differences between the EU and Canada, and between France and the UK, are certainly the focus here – whether due to the disparate layers and models of democratic government between them, distinct food and agricultural cultures, or simply because of

the different priorities set by the Canadian federal government, the EU or its member states. First, the food policy contexts in Canada and the EU greatly differ, largely due to their geography and demographic differences. Part of the EU's greater interest in rural development than Canada may simply stem from the fact that while 60% of the population EU lived in rural areas in 2008 (EU Commission, 2008: 8), only 19% of the Canadian population lives in rural spaces (Statistic Canada, 2011b). Similarly, while half of EU territory is being farmed (EU Commission, 2013), only 7.3% of Canada is being farmed (Statistics Canada, 2014). It should be of no surprise then that priorities may differ and that farming remains a major preoccupation for EU policy-makers, where a much greater voice is given to farmers and agricultural workers.

Perhaps the most significant differences between EU and Canadian perspectives on SFLSs include ideology and discourse. In the EU much more so than in Canada, food has always been associated with location, culture, and traditional pre-industrial values and knowledge, as embodied by the EU labels for Protected Designation of Origin and similar traditional process-based and geographic indicators (Fonte, 2008: 202). However, differences between EU member states also begin to show here. While France has been particularly supportive of regional designations of quality based on place, tradition, and craft (Sonnino and Marsden, 2006), the UK frequently develops alternative food networks based more on "modern" or "commercial" definitions of quality (e.g. food safety) that do not always reflect regional quality dynamics (Sonnino and Marsden, 2006). In further contrast still, North American AFS research and practice often stresses the physical distance between farm and fork in the context of food miles and geographic

delimitations, and has only more recently sought to reconcile food with the European focus of quality.

In addition, within Canada, the move for greater food system sustainability has been “driven by a political agenda that opposes the organization of the industrial agri-food system and is directed at establishing an alternative food economy based on the principles of social justice and environmental sustainability” (Fonte, 2008: 201). Dupuis and Goodman (2005) further suggest that while North American scholars focus on AFS initiatives due to their normative nature and “activist rhetoric”, European scholars primarily focus on the more institutionalized discourse of rural resilience and livelihood in the context of “alternative food geographies” (Wiskerke, 2009). In other words, North American AFSs appear in more direct opposition to conventional food systems, whereas similar developments in Europe are housed in a grey area between alternative and conventional. Indeed, EU proponents do not particularly understand AFSs as radical spaces but as “more reformist in nature, aiming mainly at incorporating into economic development small rural farms and businesses and marginal agricultural economies” (Fonte, 2008: 201).

Blay-Palmer further notes: “upper level (i.e.: federal and provincial) policy and regulation that encourages multifunctional food systems are either non-existent or countervailing” in Canada (2010: 238). Certainly after his visit to Canada in the Spring of 2012, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier De Schutter, divulged that Canada’s food insecurity was “shocking”, requiring significantly higher levels of “political will to be invested in the issue” (Schmidt, 2012). It is perhaps due to a non-

conductive federal environment that in its earlier stages, Canadian proponents of food system alternatives largely drew from food system relocalization, anti-neoliberal hegemony, and anti-biotechnology movements to shape their ideological stance around AFSs. Further, alternative food system discourse in Canada started and was taken up by “marginalized voices” (Andrée et al., 2011: 139) seeking structural changes using a social economy-based approach (Connelly et al., 2011). Only more recently has sustainable food system discourse become more formalized through best practice reports offered by municipal committees, planners, or provincial ministries, amongst others. Indeed, in response to a lack of federal-level uptake, policy actions to support sustainable food systems have predominantly been handled at the provincial level (e.g. regional food labels and promotion, trade policies) or at the municipal or local level (e.g. food policy councils, land-use zoning, farmers markets) (Andrée, 2011). Yet, as will be shown through the case studies of Wolfville, NS and North Saanich, BC, policies can significantly diverge between different provinces, with some providing significantly more supportive environments than others.

In contrast, many countries within the EU (such as Italy, the UK, and the Netherlands in particular), have long sought to take up relocalisation efforts at the national- and EU-policy levels, as part of broader rural devolvement efforts. At the EU level, the second pillar of the CAP was introduced in 2000 on the premise that it would work to support local and sustainable agricultural research and practices under its rural development paradigm; this includes providing direct payment support for farms that use environmentally-friendly practices, funding research on strengthening short food supply

chains and local food systems, and allocating a portion (30%) of rural development program's budgets dedicated to agri-environmental measures (EU Commission, 2016). In addition, Sonnino notes that while the 'local trap' may be a danger in North America, where local efforts are criticized for perpetuating power disparities and privileging niche markets, devolving agri-food governance to the local level in the UK creates quite different results (Sonnino, 2013). Giving examples from both the UK and Italy, she notes instead that local food systems in the EU can convincingly address issues that have not gained sufficient traction and the national or EU level (ibid).

France in particular is considered a champion of the EU's use of multi-functionality, playing a leading role in developing the 2000 CAP reforms. Relevant to SLFSIs, "multifunctional agriculture" (MA) was first used by the European Council for Agricultural Law in 1993 to harmonize the definition of sustainable agriculture. Within the EU, MA has become the primary approach for agriculture to reconcile its economic, environmental and social roles (Marsden and Sonnino, 2008: 422). MA has been increasingly recognized in the context of the CAP's rural development policy priorities since the late 2000s<sup>20</sup> (Borec and Turk, 2009; EU Parliament, 2010). The OECD

Declaration of the Agricultural Ministers Committee defines MA as:

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<sup>20</sup> Over time, three competing views of MA have been identified by food system researchers: 1) the agro-industrial paradigm, which views multi-functionality as a means to combat harsh market conditions using a neoliberal logic of farming; 2) the post-productivist paradigm, which uses multi-functionality to emphasize agriculture as the catalyst for local environmental protection; and, 3) the rural development paradigm, most closely related to the goals of SLFSIs, which regards agricultural multi-functionality as a means to re-emphasize agriculture's role in sustainability. This third MA model further highlights that food systems are place-based and encourages the creation of local hubs of sustainability within a broader/global system (Born and Purcell, 2012; Clark, 2006; Marsden and Sonnino, 2008). Some scholars have used the third MA paradigm to call for a "more radical approach" to rural development (Marsden and Sonnino, 2008: 429). While not the topic of this work, the SLFSI case studies presented here could help shed light on how rural development policies determined at the EU-level can be successfully implemented at the local level.

"agriculture activity beyond [its] primary function of producing food and fiber; it can also shape the landscape, provide environmental benefits such as land conservation, provide sustainable management of renewable natural resources and preservation of biodiversity, and contribute to the socio-economic viability of many rural areas. Agriculture is multifunctional when it has one or several functions in addition to its primary role of producing food and fiber" (Borec and Turk 2009, 42-43).

More specifically, France supported proposed environmental resource payments for half of all EU farmland designated as agriculturally 'Less Favoured Areas'. The state's "explicitly agrarian stance" is meant to ensure the protection of traditional rural communities and livelihoods by intertwining social, economic, and environmental development in the countryside (Potter and Burney, 2009).

In contrast, the UK's focus on MA and rural development has focused more on the principle of 'decoupling'<sup>21</sup>; here, environmental management is discussed as a functional end in and of itself rather than as a means to protect traditional agricultural communities (Potter and Burney, 2002). Sonnino and Marsden (2006) have further noted that the UK government's discourse around multi-functional and alternative agriculture, including the 2002 Curry Report and ministerial announcements, has mostly taken on an entrepreneurial and free-market tone. Agricultural support in the UK is thus based more on the logic of competition than French discourse on rural livelihood. Yet as a general trend, Europe is considered as promoting more formalized means to contribute to the resilience of rural spaces than in Canada (Brownill and Carpenter, 2009: 258).

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<sup>21</sup> Decoupling refers to the process of removing direct subsidy payments on land allocated to producing specific crops or livestock; these payments are instead replaced by an equal lump-sum payment "decoupled" from the production of any specific enterprise." Decoupling was proposed in the CAP reforms of 2003 as a means to move closer towards a free market, allowing farmers to produce based on demand rather than based on direct payments from the EU.

Based on these diverging policy environments and discourses around food and agriculture, the EU and Canada would appear to have fairly significant systemic differences between them that either contribute to or constrain SLFS development. One might thus assume that SLFSIs would be more pervasive within the EU, whose model for rural development supports “a wide variety of multi-dimensional and integrated activities that fulfill a number of functions not just for the farm, but also for the region and the society as a whole” (Marsden and Sonnino, 2008: 423). However, both of the EU and Canada’s experiences with food policies and alternative food system development remain relatively recent. Both also benefit from increasingly active civil society actors and concerned business entrepreneurs whose efforts to address agri-food issues are growing from the local to the national level.

It is despite these very diverse contexts that I seek to identify similarities between four municipally-based SLFSIs. The four case studies operate within quite different socio-cultural and political contexts, with some appearing to exist within notably more supportive environments than others. However, the case studies presented in Chapters 4-7 stress the governance characteristics that these different communities have in common, despite the varied environments they operate in.

### **Methodological approach**

My research on collaborative and participatory governance frameworks stems from the epistemological understanding of social constructivism – that individuals are not only responsive but also actively engaged in forming their surroundings, especially in the

contexts of system change. It is grounded in a comparison of four case studies, based on field-work and in-depth/semi-structured interviews. The following section explains the methods used to compare and contrast the different case studies.

**a. A comparative case study approach**

I employed a comparative case study approach to conduct my analysis. Case studies involve the intensive examination of particular phenomena within their real life contexts by analyses of and comparisons between a small number of cases (Schrank, 2006; Yin, 1993). Properly selected case studies allow for fairly uniform case conditions. Analyses derived from case study comparison can be quite strong, as “the predictions tested are quite unique, [and are generally] not made by other known theories” (Van Evera, 1997: 54). Further and certainly for the growing body of research that is alternative food system scholarship, an academic field is only as rich as the number of strong case studies that help support its theories (Flyvbjerg, 2004). Particularly useful in the case of food system change, case studies are suited to understand both specific institutional or policy processes, as well as more subjective issues such as discourse and norm-generation. By examining how certain case conditions are translated into case outcomes — known as “process tracing”, case studies also provide the best format to determine *how* particular processes occur (Van Evera 1997, 54).

Case studies have an ability to give greater context to research by being able to observe details potentially overlooked by other methods (Flyvbjerg, 2004). For example, conducting case studies allows for the observation of day-to-day operations and the

functioning of a specific system. In addition, while each case study remains an undeniably unique story with its own set of actors and outcomes, comparison between cases allows an analysis of critical points of commonality. In other words, comparative case studies generate data on both the unique *and* generalizable qualities between them. Strategies to create SLFSIs have not been universal, and have not occurred in the same way nor at the same speed everywhere; ultimately, a case study comparison allows us to draw out the enabling governance actors, actions, and structures (e.g. who tends to be involved, what types of economic processes are set in place, what are the general discourses involved) in efforts to develop workable locally-based SLFSIs no matter their location.

Case studies can also provide details on situations drawn directly from those participating in the environments being studied. Through multiple sources of data, the researcher is given the ability to consider the voices of a number of actors, as well as the relationships and interactions between them. “Giving voice” is perhaps the most important characteristic justifying my adoption of this methodology and will be considered in greater depth through the use of the interview tool; more so than other research approaches, case studies can allow academic work to be grounded in the experiences of the more “powerless or voiceless” in a system, rather than perpetuate “the dominant opinions of the elite” (Feagin et al., 1991). Again, in the context of a study of SLFSIs, these tools are especially suited to trace governance dynamics and capture their more normative goals.

There are also limitations to the case study method, though these may be overcome if acknowledged properly. The first is in regards to problems raised by conflicting data sources due to variations of public and private opinions. Depending on the actors observed or particular biases from the observer themselves, different dynamics and interests within a case study may be drawn out as relevant or not. However, Yin (2003) counters that qualitative research begins with the acknowledgement that reality is socially constructed, and that its experience is always based on the understanding or projection of individual actors. As such, there will inevitably be some degree of opinion or bias to understanding reality itself, and thus to interpreting qualitative studies.

Another critique particularly relevant in single or small sample size case studies is the issue over over-generalization, especially if cases are atypical or due to selection bias. In response, attention must be paid to case study sampling – i.e. dependent and independent variables, respondent validation. Researchers should ask participants to confirm emerging trends and remain transparent regarding each stage of the research process; this latter step involves being clear about how the researcher influences data collection and interpretation (Stake, 1995; Brady and Collier, 2010). I thus acknowledge that the small number of case studies presented here do not seek to generalize data, but to point to possible trends and opportunities within SLFS governance. If anything, these cases were comparable due to similar selection criteria, but divergent due to their political and cultural differences. They are all also fairly atypical as a majority of municipalities have yet to take on strong SLFS agendas.

While adopting four cases may provide less detail than choosing to analyze fewer cases, the number of cases selected allows me to consider a broader yet manageable range of initiatives to understand the governance processes that enable SLFSIs. Given the varying localized contexts of each case, a small sample size also allows for some depth to describe and analyze community dynamics and processes, while benefiting from sufficient data for comparison.

### **b. Case study selection**

The four cases presented here were selected through a “method of agreement” – by choosing cases with similar general characteristic and values, but operating in diverging context; this method allows the researcher to ask whether values or processes correspond across cases (Van Evera, 1997: 57). With the information available at the time of selection, each of the four cases selected study appeared to offer a unique yet similar trajectory towards SLFS development. At the same time, and as other scholars have noted, in-depth case studies often ultimately challenge a researcher’s preconceived assumptions and hypotheses, compelling them to adjust their theories and ideas in response (Flyvbjerg, 2006). This experience was certainly my case; as I conducted field word and later analyzed the case studies together, more unexpected and interesting data arose than I had assumed, requiring me to deepen the analysis of my own research questions.

To analyze which governance mechanisms best support SLFS development, a preliminary screening of initiatives in Canada and Western Europe identified a number of locally-based cases demonstrating some activity towards SLFSs based on a description of these systems raised in Chapter 1 and, in particular, from indicators laid out by Connelly et al. (2011, 320). Despite their unique characteristics, the four case studies were selected due to the preliminary identification of:

1. the perception of some degree of state-society relations;
2. the strong presence of sustainability and sustainable food discourse in municipal and/or community documents;
3. a significant private/agriculture sector self-identified as “sustainable” and as contributing to the local economy;
4. a desire for structural change based on supportive community or state infrastructure facilitating more sustainable food options; and,
5. the presence of alternatives to conventional food systems and their social and environmental impacts.

As mentioned earlier, cases were selected on the basis of being small and rural. This reasoning stems from the criticism that much of the food system research in North America has become “too urban” (McMahon, 2014). This research hopes to contribute to rural scholarship over the wealth of existing literature on alternative foodscapes on urban spaces (e.g. Koc, 1999; Donald and Blay-Palmer, 2006). Rural communities are worthy of research inquiry in their own right; a focus on rural spaces helps tailor SLFS strategies to their particular agricultural capacities, and cultural and social preferences. Further, rural research contributes to de-romanticizing public perception of rural spaces, and instead allows for a more informed engagement with the very spaces where the majority of

food is actually produced (McMahon, 2014; Wittman, 2010).

Finally, the four cases presented here were also selected based on my own geographic scope of interest, and to address the realities of constraints including personal time, financial resources, and language limitations (see Figures 1 and 2 for case study locations). And as the study of food system alternatives is rapidly on the rise, little academic attention had been given to these cases at the time.



*Figure 1 - Case studies in Canada*



*Figure 2- Case studies in the EU*

By exploring these case studies, I aim to elucidate different SLFSIs and the governance processes that further them. In Chapters 4-7, they are presented in order from low to high levels of collaborative governance as defined by Wanna (2008) in Chapter 2. First, Todmorden, UK is a strong bottom-up example of SLFS development, conceived and managed almost exclusively by a community-led governance processes with little to no institutional involvement (low collaboration). Wolfville serves as a fairly traditional example of SLFSI development, characterized by a sizable amount of community and state-led initiatives, but with moderate levels of integration between them (medium-low to medium collaboration). While a strong example of SLFS engagement, North Saanich highlights the constraints of municipal party politics and shows the limits of top-down and state-led approaches to SLFSs. However, it showcases strong political leadership and a varied degree of collaborative partnerships (medium to medium-high collaboration). Finally, Correns serves as the most fully-integrated example of both bottom-up, top-

down, and farmer-led market governance approaches to SLFSs (high collaboration). From these cases, an analysis will tease out which initiatives appear to have gained greater traction, which governance methods furthered community goals, and what lessons may be learned for scaling out SLFS efforts and creating transformative change. Table 5 below provides an overview of how each case study fulfilled preliminary selection criteria at the time of selection.<sup>22</sup>

### **c. Data collection methods**

As identified in Chapter 2, part of SLFSI governance is the importance of giving voice to and understanding the perspectives of as diverse a representation of members within each system as possible. As such, the research tools used to conduct my case studies included the use of semi-structured interviews. As highlighted in the IPES-Food's first report, "the concept of *sustainability* must itself be fleshed out through collaborative efforts in order to reach a strong, collective vision of sustainable food systems to serve as the ultimate goal of reform [...]" (2015: 10). In this regard, the interview tool is useful to understand how the broader concepts of "sustainable food" and food system governance are understood by a diversity of SLFSIs' own members as accurately as possible. Interviews also allowed me to draw out the ways in which each of the four case studies proved unique by describing SLFSs through their own words and perspectives.

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<sup>22</sup> The municipality of Antigonish was selected as my initial case study in Nova Scotia. However, fieldwork and a full set of interviews in 2012 ultimately revealed that Antigonish failed to meet the breadth of criteria set up as my case study selection criteria. In brief, limited municipal capacity and willingness to engage in SLFS efforts, smaller community-led initiatives, as well as an inability to locate sufficient collaborative potential between governance actors ultimately discounted the relevance of this case study.

	<b>Todmorden, UK</b>	<b>Wolfville, NS, Canada</b>	<b>North Saanich, BC, Canada</b>	<b>Correns, France</b>
<b>Basic demographics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· population: 15,000</li> <li>· West Yorkshire county in Northern England</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· population: 4,200</li> <li>· Northwestern Nova Scotia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· population: 11,800</li> <li>· part of Capital District Region of Vancouver Island</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· population: 1,000</li> <li>· Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur region of France</li> </ul>
<b>strong presence of sustainability and/or SLFS discourse in municipal and/or community documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· strong local and sustainable food discourse fostered by Incredible Edible Todmorden (IET), the community organization that gave the town significant public attention since their creation in 2008</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· considered “the most progressive town in Atlantic Canada”</li> <li>· discourse based on rural food security and food access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· stated belief that “municipal government plays a key role that can support or hinder the potential of community agriculture” (2011) in municipal documents</li> <li>· development of Whole Community Agriculture Strategy (WCAS) (2011)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· strong mayoral leadership around sustainable and local food initiatives since the 1990s</li> <li>· development of a local Correns21 project following the UN Agenda 21 development action plan</li> </ul>
<b>desire for structural change by establishing infrastructure whether community, state, or both, facilitate more sustainable or socially just food options</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· seeks change through community development projects and business initiatives</li> <li>· IET’s focus on reframing the community by making SLFS discourse part of “common sense” (France 2, 2012)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· leadership role in NS and the Maritimes on a number of initiatives aimed at improving sustainability and community well-being (e.g. bylaws on cosmetic pesticide use in public spaces, smoking in cars with children)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· part of Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable</li> <li>· promotes participatory governance models in WCAS</li> <li>· engaged with provincial efforts for both financial and policy support to expand sustainable and local food efforts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· promotion of democratic and participatory governance measures to develop SLFS initiatives by both mayoral office and Correns21</li> <li>· first “100% organic town in France” through producer and municipal government initiative and partnership</li> </ul>

	<b>Todmorden, UK</b>	<b>Wolfville, NS, Canada</b>	<b>North Saanich, BC, Canada</b>	<b>Correns, France</b>
<b>structured with intention to generate own revenue/ private sector involved in “sustainable” agriculture/food</b>	· promotion of urban gardening, community gardening and initiatives based on informal economy by IET	· vibrant agricultural landscape in the heart of NS agricultural region	· promotion of both traditional and non-traditional agriculture (i.e. community gardens, rooftops)	· promotion of organic agriculture as niche market opportunity after period of economic decline
<b>presence of alternatives to the conventional food systems and their social and environmental impacts</b>	· (see above) · municipal and IET sustainable food initiatives in local schools and with the local college to promote education around food issues · IET’s push against reliance on large food corporations and consumer society	· home to one of Canada’s oldest farmers markets · strong local private entrepreneurship (e.g. restaurants, businesses) · growing number of CSAs	· WCAS encourages shorter food supply chains within the municipality’s local food-shed · supports bridging current agricultural practices and First Nations food traditions	· reliance on organic agriculture · number of environmental initiatives taken on by municipality (e.g. institutional procurement, eco-construction)
<b>seek some decentralization from the food system to foster increased local self-reliance</b>	· IET serves primary mediator for SLFS development in Todmorden, strengthening ties with local and county government · IET has expanded to “Incredible Movement” model to other towns around the world	· strong community discourse around local and sustainable food, with supportive municipal government operating at arm’s length · state desire for greater local and provincial financial self-sufficiency	· municipality acknowledges role of local government as being able to play leading role in supporting community and private strategies	· strong discourse of rurality and <i>paysan</i> livelihood · connection to regional initiatives as part of Provence Verte

Table 5 - Case study selection criteria

Though not the focus of this work, my research also touches on discourse analysis as a means of analyzing interview data, and interpreting meaning and language in different SLFS contexts. The words and framing used to discuss SLFS through each study help shed light on how different actors conceptualize alternative food systems and the means they employ to achieve them. Discourse can be analyzed both through spoken and written language (Brown and Yule, 1983). While interpretation and analysis of interviews are the focus here, written policy, community, and business documents were also used to give greater context to how SLFS are discussed in formalized writings and documents that are aimed to be shared with a general public and to confirm interview data in light of potential source bias. Ultimately, interviews and text were analyzed to understand particular perspectives, identities, norms, and values of SLFS actors; this further enabled me to have insight into how different communities prioritize certain structures and actions over others. Discourse analysis also allows for an understanding of how and whether the language used to discuss SLFS differs between state and community actors. One can further draw out how state and society interact and shape each other's thinking.

Thus, it becomes relevant to reiterate that given the primacy given to discourse, norms, and socialization in shaping alternative systems of food and governance, this work is informed by a constructivist understanding of social-political relations; in other words, that the world is "of our making" (Onuf, 1989). Constructivism assumes that human action and interaction shape the material world; it also emphasizes that identities and interests, rather than rational and utilitarian decisions, are pivotal to how systems and

their supporting structures are determined (Wendt, 1994). In this context, identities and views are shaped based on individual or groups relation to other actors in a community; this view stands in contrast to political theories including realism or liberalism that assume that interests and identities are created before –rather than after and during– social interaction (Reus-Smit 2005).

Our actions and relationships further rely on “dynamic, normative and epistemic interpretations” of the world (Adler, 2005: 90). Through its focus on social interactions, constructivism allows us to understand how interests, identities and power relations are negotiated rather than fixed, and how these later give way to particular institutional structures –in this context, how certain discourses gain traction and certain governance patterns are adopted over others. These dynamics particularly come to light in how interviews and individual accounts and SLFS experiences were understood and used in this research, as discussed below.

The interview tool captures the complexity of society so that researchers can understand the world as it appears to different people (Hubbel, 2003). In particular, semi-structured interviews allow for the flexibility to gather new insights and unexpected data from the feelings and stories of participants. They give depth to research by allowing interviewers to probe further into new facts or sentiments, and spend time clarifying relationships, meaning, and purpose (Galletta, 2009). They give both context and meaning, while explaining thought processes and motivations –all key factors in the discourse and implementation of SLFS. They provide a critical tool to establish how subjective factors

influence political decision-making, the role of agency and who gets involved and why.

More importantly, interviews not only provide a voice to participants, but also create a more dynamic research process through which individuals within the systems studied are not reduced to being “research subjects” but rather, are considered as active participants. In particular, semi-structured interviews that include a diversity of actors seeks to address the void left in food system discourse raised by McMahon, regarding not just which issues get discussed, but who gets to speak in conversations that frame food system development (2014); in particular, this work also seeks to rectify that farmers are too often “spoke for or spoken about” (ibid: 125) in existing research rather than being considered equal participants in conversations around food issues.

Informal and semi-structured interviews become a vital tool to allow SLFS research to reflect the ideas and discourse of those working on the ground. In her own work, Blay-Palmer stresses that the non-academic participants in food systems have a vital role to play in defining the nature of problems and solutions, and in contributing to the knowledge generation (2010, 28). To this effect, direct quotes and definitions allow the participants themselves to inform research; as such Chapters 5-8 attempt to highlight the unique stories and experiences of seeking SLFS through their own words.

Interviews were conducted with members of both formal institutions, including local/regional government officials, as well as more informal participants, including farmers, representatives from relevant civil society organizations, consumers, and non-

farm private sector businesses (e.g. retailers, distributors). Conducting a variety of interviews seeks to prioritize the different dimensions of SLFSIs, the preferences of various social groups in developing SLFS change, and the power relationships and potential disparities within these systems lie. Of note, all interviewees were either proponents of SLFSI (e.g. an active community group leader) or collaborators in SLFS development in their community that may have had varying degrees of personal support for these initiatives (e.g. a town mayor). Opponents or those more critical of SLFSIs were not actively sought out for interviews. On the one hand, critics of SLFSIs were difficult to specifically identify. On the other, and more importantly, as this work seeks to understand the enabling governance mechanisms leading to SLFS development and the collaboration between active stakeholders, I did not believe it critical to speak to those who were not in some way contributing to these initiatives. However, minor criticisms against SLFSIs are still raised throughout the case studies, primarily based on here-say from participants and informal conversations.

Key food system actors were initially identified through policy or community documents in each municipality. Upon an initial series of interviews, subsequent interview participants were identified both through these as well as informal conversations held during my fieldwork.<sup>23</sup> Asking participants to identify other contacts of potential interest – snowball sampling – not only proved a way to generate new leads but also to confirm the importance of actors already identified (and to glean the strength of relationships between them). For example, with no knowledge of who else had been selected for

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<sup>23</sup> This dissertation received ethics approval as Project #13-1055. The protocol was reviewed at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Carleton University Research Ethics board on Monday, January 21, 2013. The project was closed on May 31, 2015, after which point no additional interviews were conducted.

interviews, participants very often identified one another, allowing me to assume a level of familiarity and trust between SLFS proponents. Ultimately, mixed purposeful and snowball sampling was adopted until I reached a point of saturation and redundancy within each municipality. This point was reached when no new themes emerged from additional conversations or contacts.

Participants engaged in semi-structure interviews based around thirteen questions. The questions covered a broad range of topics relating to perceptions around sustainable food, local decision-making, community culture, relationships and interactions, and opportunities and constraints on sustainable food system developments. Participants were also asked to share more personal accounts of their interest in food (and food initiatives) – to not only understand community but also personal dynamics as they related to SLFS. The interviews were conducted either in person or over the telephone from May 2013 to August 2014. In-person interviews were preferred over telephone for their ability to garner more detailed and thoughtful responses from participants. However, when participants were identified later or were not able to schedule an in-person meeting during the duration of my fieldwork in their community, phone interviews were held instead. Conversations ranged from approximately forty-five minutes to two hours in length, with most lasting around one hour. Interviews were conducted either in informants' homes or in a public location, such as in a cafe or at key project sites. As a general rule, in-person interviews lasted longer than phone interviews due to the nature of in-person dynamics and the hospitality of the participants.

It is also worth noting that in the two Canadian case studies of Wolfville and North Saanich, both personal and participant time constraints led to a small number of interviews being conducted prior to my fieldwork. Speaking to participants before visiting a community generated preconceived notions of what to expect upon arrival based on participants' responses; perhaps more interestingly, and despite dynamics and stories shared in preliminary interviews, these expectations were not necessarily met through subsequent interactions or observations on the ground.

Relatedly, while interviews were conducted in English for three of the case studies, the set of interviews conducted in Correns, France were done in French. As a native speaker in both French and English, I translated the interviews after transcribing them and in doing so, attempted to both accurately translate not only the words but also the meaning behind participants' responses. In this case, I acknowledge that meaning undeniably gets lost in translation to a certain degree; for this reason, certain words (e.g. *terroir*, *paysan*) were left untranslated when no word in English seemed to capture their full meaning as used or described by the interviewee.

Both the issue of translation and conducting interviews prior to travel brought a number of limitations in my selected research methods to my attention. First, conversations with participants at any stage of the research process ultimately reflect the opinions and perspectives of particular individuals; second, the meaning derived by a researcher (whether translated or simply transcribed) may not have been the intended meaning of the participant; and third, that these perspectives are never wholly objective and may not

reflect the dynamics and realities within a community as may be otherwise observed by an outside observer. Last, each municipality and sometimes individual participants derived slightly different meanings and used different discourses to describe SLFS; that being said, SLFS discourse was generally shared within a single municipality, pointing to the mutually constitutive nature of common discourse and individual opinions. These differences are explored in each case study and compared in the final analysis chapter.

In total, approximately ten interviews were conducted in each community for a total of forty-one interviews.<sup>24</sup> All interviews began with a discussion to ensure that participants were comfortable with the nature of the research and their involvement in it. Upon completion, interviews were transcribed, analyzed, and coded for key themes, first within each community individually, and then comparatively across the four case studies. A majority of the themes analyzed were drawn out using an emic approach, under which theories and assumptions are set aside to allow patterns and concepts to emerge from the data or from participants themselves; an emic approach is often adopted for the attention it gives to the particularities of the contexts being studied and respect of local perspectives and environments that may uncover unique or unexpected findings (Lett, 1990). Additional themes emerged through an etic approach, which draws out themes based on theories or perspectives derived from outside of the community being observed; the etic approach was generally used to consider broader trends and themes than those

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<sup>24</sup> See individual case studies for the full list of participants. Participants whose names appear in the following chapter gave full consent to be cited in this research. Participants who are cited only through their profession or other title consented to participate in an interview, but not to be cited directly. All conversations with community members and participants held outside of formal interviews times were kept anonymous. Some quotes remained anonymous regardless of consent, either upon request of the interviewees or upon my discretion, especially in the case of contentious or controversial comments that could ethically effect the participant's place or social standing in their community.

directly discussed by interview participants, such as the economic, political, or cultural practices relating to governance that underpins a community.

#### **d. Fieldwork and additional methods**

Fieldwork in each community lasted one to three weeks.<sup>25</sup> In addition to semi-formal interviews, informal conversations also occurred by engaging with producers at markets, business owners or staff during store hours, or through conversations with community members during markets or in more casual establishments such as cafes or pubs. These methods allowed for additional data collection including participant observation and the ability to gain more candid opinions and perspectives. Conversations and observations were recorded in written notes after each interaction, detailed conversations, characteristics of the environment or setting, and occasionally more general behaviour; these notes were later used to inform or support findings from more formal interviews. Observation was primarily used to give deeper and more first-hand context to each case study, giving more life to the dynamics and environments discussed through interviews.

In an effort to engage in the day-to-day activities of each case community, the creation of informal relationships was adopted as means to generate trust; this was meant to address the divide often created between academia and community, and as an attempt to break down that community members solely serve as ‘informants’ and researchers solely as ‘academic observers’. As a means to give back to participating communities, informal activities conducted during fieldwork included volunteering during various community

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<sup>25</sup> I am grateful to the Centre for European Studies and the Faculty of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Affairs at Carleton University for two Graduate Travel-Research Fellowships on the European Union that allowed me to complete my fieldwork in Europe in the Fall of 2013 and the Summer of 2014, based on funding from the European Union. I also appreciate the Graduate Student Travel/Research Bursary awarded to me by Carleton Graduate Studies to assist in my research work in North Saanich, BC in 2013.

events or helping set up at local farmers markets. As a result, I was able to participate in additional semi-formal activities including being invited to attend community workshops or talks, tour relevant sites of local SLFS development, as well as receive invitations to observe closed organizational meetings.

Informal participation and conversation proved particularly fulfilling not only in gaining additional data, but also as a means to generate social capital as a researcher and to acknowledge the time and hospitality spent to host me. It is also worth noting that the differences in receptivity to informal engagement varied greatly within and between communities. Certain communities actively sought to remain more detached than others; some admitting it was because of wariness due to the increased media and tourist attention their communities were receiving as a result of their SLFS efforts. In many cases, these degrees of receptivity allowed me to understand that many community efforts to develop SLFS are very much insular, self-reflexive processes, that are focused on developing from 'within'. In other words, most participants remained extremely modest of their initiatives' successes, only publicize their achievements if they thought they could help other communities reach similar goals

While these particularities will be further explored in each case study chapter, as a generalization, most members in both Canadian cases seemed familiar and open to research processes. It was within these communities that I was best able to engage in informal activities and create strong relationships with participants. In contrast, it was very difficult to gain insights –whether formal or informal– from municipal and

government officials in the case of Todmorden; that being said, IET members were very keen to showcase their work to me and were particularly candid in sharing their opinions and experiences. Municipal officials in Correns and North Saanich were the most open to discussion, most likely due the fact that their policy work aligned closely with the goals of SLFS development; still, interviews conducted and experiences gained in Correns proved more formalized, perhaps due to the more formalized cultural perception of academia in France. I acknowledge that formality (or informality) was also likely caused by my standing as a ‘Canadian’ or ‘outside’ researcher, potentially creating a barrier with European participants rather than allowing for the greater familiarity I experienced in Canada. I recognize that all these factors combined ultimately affected how I came to understand and analyze each community. Like the limitations of the interview method, I also acknowledge that observation, especially when conducted only over a few weeks, provides only brief understanding of the context and opinions of a community; further, insights I gained, may be unusual or atypical to the day to day understandings or functioning of these communities.

Last, primary and secondary grey literature were considered in addition to academic research. These included municipal and provincial/regional policy documents and reports to a greater extent, and national and international documents to a lesser extent.

Community group and NGO mission statements, press releases, media articles and business plans, were also considered to give further depth into and consider alternative analyses of each case study, as well as to cross-check data provided by interview participants.

## **Limitations and Conclusion**

As mentioned earlier, I acknowledge the limitations of qualitative research for its capacity to lead to sampling or analysis bias through the subjective opinions of both the researcher and any potential interviewee. This limitation stems from a recognition that the research is framed partially by a normative position held both by the researcher and by members of the communities themselves; in this case, these assumptions include the belief that sustainable and/or localized food systems inherently provide certain economic, social, and environmental benefits better than others or that collaborative community-state partnerships are inherently “better” than either group of actors acting in isolation. However, while I come to this research with a particular ideological framework, the analyses and theorizations ultimately drawn out are driven by the data garnered through research. This research sought to apply an inductive method of theory production and research, focusing on “the actual production of meanings and concepts used by social actors in real settings” (Gephart, 2004: 457).

Scholars have adopted inductive methods as a means to account for “the daily realities (e.g. what is actually going on) of substantive areas and the interpretations of those daily realities made by those who participate in them (e.g. the ‘actors’)” and how those interpretations are turned into action (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 239). The research tools outlined above allowed my research to understand SLFSs both through their more mechanistic processes but also to give meaning to them, by understanding systems as they appear and function to those who make up the system themselves.

As mentioned in the previous section, this research acknowledges my role as an “outsider” in my attempt to access knowledge and community perspectives. Seeking to conduct community research from the outside inevitably leads to limited perspectives and access to information, based solely on what participants are willing to share and the time and access of a researcher to observe dynamics and initiatives on the ground. In certain cases more than others, heightened tensions within the community or within municipal politics created clear limitations regarding what participants were willing to share and reveal at a particular time.

Similarly, I sought to mitigate the limitations of the interview method itself through attentive listening, probing with further questions when necessary, and avoiding guiding conversations. In addition, interview-based fieldwork must acknowledge that different perceptions held by participants on the researcher (e.g. age, gender) can create biases on the depth and quality of what they choose to discuss.<sup>26</sup>

Between the formal and informal methods conducted, my research presents a fairly comprehensive understanding of the initiatives and interactions occurring in each of my four case studies. As part of the iterative process of SLFS development, my methods were adopted in an attempt not to produce research that “speaks for” or “on behalf” of

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<sup>26</sup> While beyond the scope of this research, the gender dynamics of SLFSIs were occasionally brought up throughout this research process. One example includes who chose to participate in my research upon invitation. As a general trend for example, women were more likely to seek informal rapport with me than men. Women were also more prone to discuss SLFS as a necessity for the community and future generations; in contrast, men focused more on discussing economic or rural development-oriented issues rather than social ones. For me, these observations raised whether such differences affect the ability for SLFSIs to institutionalize, whether these differences affect which SLFS project gain funding or traction within a community, and whether differences between male and female discourses affect the discussion on alternative food systems more generally.

SLFS proponents, but that instead allows for a “co-production” of the meaning and shape that SLFSs can take (McMahon, 2014: 133). More generally, these methods have allowed me to analyze and compare the opportunities allowing and barriers constraining SLFSI development. On the one hand, comparing different SLFSIs allows my work to both assess the scope of SLFS governance, as well as shed light onto power relations (and tensions between actors in a more general sense). Each case study was ultimately found to have a unique systemic driver in the form of a local champion – whether an enthusiastic community group, an inspired mayor, a group of motivated farmers, or some combination thereof. On the other, case study comparison allows me to address issues of scale, namely in the interactions and influences of SLFSIs beyond the local scale. Overall, my case study comparison acknowledges that while initiatives “require developing appropriate strategies for change within [its own] unique political, cultural and ecological domains” (Wittman et al. 2010, 5), they still present a set of common criteria on how SLFS are developed and supported.

Based on the methods selected above, my research process ultimately allows me to answer the research question and subquestions in the following ways:

- By collating major initiatives occurring across the four cases through fieldwork, interviews, and an overview of grey literature, I describe and compare the main characteristics present within each community. (in answer to subquestion 1)
- By describing the governance processes adopted in each case, and by then categorizing these processes based on Wanna’s degrees of collaboration and my

own typology of governance, I answer how various governance patterns come about and evolve within SLFSIs. (in answer to subquestion 2)

- By assessing whether initiatives were able to meet their objectives or further develop SLFSIs within their community based on the categories for collaboration and governance raised in the previous point, and through my research methods, I evaluate whether certain types of governance actors supported or hindered SLFS development (in answer to subquestion 3).

and finally,

- by addressing the three first subquestions, I weigh four main governance characteristics against each case study in Chapter 8 that, together, will be shown to enable long-term SLFS development and best allow SLFSI proponents to reach their stated goals. (answering the research question)

The next four chapters now present an overview of each individual case study (one per chapter), identifying the major initiatives and frameworks adopted in each community for subsequent comparative analysis.

## Chapter 4 - Case Study 1: Todmorden, United Kingdom

"The vital thing about Incredible Edible Todmorden, and the thing that sets it apart, is that it involves everyone in the town and it's genuinely a grassroots project. I honestly believe it's a blueprint for every [community]. What we're doing here could easily be rolled out anywhere. It's all about involving people, giving them ownership, letting them realize it can be fun and interesting and that the food is delicious, and giving them space to set up their own ideas and run with them." (Pam Warhurst, Co-founder of Incredible Edible, 2009)

At first glance, Todmorden appears the stereotype of a small Northern English town, brimming with hospitality but with its quiet rainy streets still displaying lingering evidence of the region's post-industrial decline. At second glance, one begins to notice "help yourself" vegetable beds scattered throughout the town centre, signage on healthy living and nutrition marking the footpath beside its canal, and a bustling indoor and open air market held in the town's one hundred and thirty-some year old Public Market Hall almost every day of the week. Upon closer inspection, it becomes evident that much of the town's renewed activity was enabled single-handedly by one small local organization, Incredible Edible Todmorden, whose success story in grassroots community development makes up the majority of this chapter's analysis.

Todmorden is a market town and civil parish within the Calderdale Borough of West Yorkshire County. It is located right on the historical Lancashire-Yorkshire border, where red and white roses still demarcate the town today. Like much of North England, Todmorden was heavily impacted by the Industrial Revolution. After an initial economic boom in the 19th Century, which saw the construction of both the railway and canal connecting Todmorden's bustling textile industry to the nearby cities of Manchester and

Leeds, Todmorden experienced progressive economic decline due to the closure of heavy industry and severe restructuring of the local economy after World Wars I and II. Still today, almost one-third of the town's population continues to live below the UK poverty line. Its population of 12,117 residents in 2011 dropped by slightly over 2,000 since 2001 due to persistent outmigration (Calderdale Needs Assessment, 2011; UK Census, 2011). While industrial chimneys and mills remain, Todmorden has become a commuter town to Manchester and Leeds, and is dominated by the service industry.

Todmorden sits right at the confluence of three steep valleys of the Pennines and is surrounded by moorlands and gritstone. Many of the town's food activists are quick to point out that Todmorden was originally made up of self-sustaining agricultural settlements on its hills before industry (t1-3)<sup>27</sup>. Yet, the area's climate and geography make for limited agricultural opportunities beyond the raising of livestock –with sheep, cattle, and hogs dominating Todmorden's agriculture today (t2; t9).

Despite these challenges, Todmorden has become well known due to a small but fervent group of community development advocates who have rallied their town under the name of Incredible Edible Todmorden (IET). Seeking solutions to the broader issues of climate change and sustainability that would be tangible to their local community, Pam Warhurst and Mary Clear developed the idea of promoting community resilience through actions around local food in 2008. Most infamously, the organization made a claim that it would make Todmorden food self-sufficient by 2018. In only one year, IET was named a

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<sup>27</sup> For readability, interviews are cited in-text by interview code unless a name has been directly associated to the quote for context. A list of interviewees can be found at the beginning of each case study chapter.

“Breakthrough idea of the 21st Century” by the UK’s Sustainable Development Commission in 2009 and was visited by Prince Charles later that same year. Beyond the presence of vegetable plots at the police station or beside the town’s train platform, a report published by *The Independent* in 2009 also highlighted that in under two years under the influence of IET, one third more Todmordenites were now growing their own food, seven in ten bought local produce on a regular basis, and all eight of the town’s school lunches served locally-sourced meat and vegetables to students (Moorhead, 2009).

While Todmorden has attracted significant media, activist, and research attention as a successful urban gardening site, what makes IET more interesting to research is in fact its own acknowledgement that local food production was never its true goal. Instead, IET sought to create a “new way of living and looking at life” (IET, 2016) based on strong and vibrant community relationships, with food serving as the entry point for community development to occur. Beyond its grassroots nature, the other notable facet of IET is its complete lack of reliance or real interest in collaboration with the state. Instead, IET has relied primarily on community-led governance, through civic engagement, the construction of social capital, and elements of informal and community economic structures to develop Todmorden’s SLFS.

Presented first, the case of Todmorden offers a fully community-led approach to SLFSIs. IET’s successes stress the relevance of iterative, experimental, and organic processes in creating SLFS change, particularly through the notion of “self-transformative potential” of community economies (Gibson-Graham and Roelvink, 2009: 12). After an overview

of IET's beginnings, the chapter progresses through the key strategies of IET's community development platform; using the group's own categories, they are: 1) Community inclusiveness, 2) Youth and adult Learning, and 3) Business incentives. A full list of Interview participants in Todmorden are listed below in Table 6.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title relevant to case</b>	<b>Interview Type</b>	<b>Interview Code</b>
Mary Clear	Chair - Incredible Edible of Todmorden	Face to face	t1
Nick Greene	Founder and Director - Incredible Farm	Face to face	t2
Estelle Brown	Communications and Media lead - Incredible Edible Todmorden	Face to face	t3
Anonymous	Volunteer - Incredible Edible Todmorden	Face to face	t4
Anonymous	Todmorden market vendor	Face to face	t5
Adam Entwistle	Staff - Bear Cooperative; volunteer - IET	Face to face	t6
Carl Warburton	Producer/Owner - Pextenment Cheese	Phone	t7
Anonymous	Local business owner	Face to face	t8
Anonymous	Member - Todmorden Agricultural Society	Face to face	t9
Anonymous	Staff - Calderdale Council	Face to face	t10

*Table 6 - Todmorden interview participants*

This case also serves to understand how far SLFSIs can develop with little to no involvement of the state, namely in the real limitations of pursuing SLFSIs without it. While IET began with a desire to build parallel structures to the state, the group found themselves increasingly building strong partnerships with a range of local public institutions. These relationships were progressively undertaken as IET found greater opportunity in collaborative partnerships to develop long-term systemic change than without them.

Unlike the other case studies, this chapter also understands SLFSIs through the lens of a specific local organization rather than of the community as a whole; more specifically, conversations with residents and business owners of Todmorden stressed that most—if not all— of the town’s understanding of food issues were derived from the actions of IET, and from a lack of ownership over SLFS issues by the municipal government itself. This chapter also draws on other academic studies on IET (e.g. Lee-Wolf, 2009), in particular for the interviews conducted by other researchers in cases when I was unable to speak to key participants during my own fieldwork.

### **Community = Sustainability: IET’s understand of food-based action**

To IET, SLFSIs are less about addressing food issues than they are about building community. Upon returning from a talk by Dr. Tim Lang in London on sustainability and climate change, Warhurst grew inspired to mobilize her local community around these issues. When talking it through with Clear, both recognized a community’s ability in creating change, but also realized that concepts such as peak oil or sustainability would be far too abstract a framework for local people to engage with; food, on the other hand, was something they knew everyone could understand and find relevance in (t1).

Clear and Warhurst’s initial call out to interested residents drew sixty-some Todmordenites into the town’s local café. While the energy during the meeting was described as “electric” (t1), both organizers did note the feeling of helplessness felt by individuals in seeking to deal with issues that seemed too big to change. As a result, IET took on an action-oriented approach to SLFS development. Their plan would be

threefold: 1) to engage with actions not words; 2) to emphasize that people are “not victims but do-ers”; and 3) to stop “passing the buck” (t1-2). Of course, IET’s message did not go uncriticized, but skepticism was alleviated by the initiative’s action-oriented approach. As stressed by one local business owner: “So many of these [types of initiatives] just end up being talk, but it was obvious from IET’s very first meeting that something was going to happen from it” (t8). Instead, their approach, based on a desire to reduce individual’s feelings of disempowerment and replace them with feelings of personal and community responsibility, was very well received.

IET organizers were also clear that their initiative was intended in part to put an end to the notion that people have to “wait for the government to do something about it” (t1). Despite her past as a Labour party politician, Warhurst herself noted IET’s wariness towards political action, and mentioned her own “boredom and cynicism” towards government rhetoric on sustainability (t1; Warhurst and Dobson, 2014). Indeed, Warhurst’s skepticism towards the state is shared by others who believe that national government discourse on food system sustainability in the UK rarely translated into action.<sup>28</sup>

To address this initial lack of faith in government, IET went both to town council and the

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<sup>28</sup> The 2002 Report on the Future of Farming and Food, better known as Curry Report, was intended to chart a more sustainable course for British agriculture after a series of national food safety crises. The document urges farmers in the UK to develop a strong alternative sector as “one of the greatest opportunities for farmers” (2002, 43); it further highlights the possibilities behind local and organic agriculture and on placing greater importance placed on locality and regional foods. However, further research has noted that the document translated into insufficient action in regards to promoting food system sustainability, with policy progress instead going through “suspended animation” since the report’s development (Sustainable Development Coalition, 2011; see also, Sonnino and Marsden, 2006).

Calderdale Council<sup>29</sup> early on in their development to –rather boldly– announce that they were going to take actions around town, did not want any support or funding<sup>30</sup>, but asked only not to be interfered with (t1). “Really, what we implied but didn’t say,” Estelle Brown, IET’s Communication lead, revealed, “was don’t look too closely at what we’re doing... and they didn’t! They know we’re here, but it’s easier for them to ignore us. If they didn’t, then they would actually have to do something about us! So we don’t ask anything... None of this has ‘permission’ to be here.”

Deliberate actions to ignore the state was also in reaction to IET’s more negative experiences in dealing with party politics –a choice given some credence by the institutional setbacks in local politics subsequently showcased in the case of North Saanich (shown in Chapter 6). Namely, the group stressed its non-political goals and was forced to downplay Warhurst’s previous role as a Labour council member due to the initial skepticism of various local politicians and government workers in regards to the legitimacy of IET’s work.<sup>31</sup>

Instead of committing to actions in partnership with the state, the group initially emphasized grassroots action and decision-making in the hopes of generating “an action-

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<sup>29</sup>As a Yorkshire-Lancashire border town, Todmorden has always had a complex geo-administrative history. While the town benefits from its own town council, as a parish council, it holds little power. The local government reforms of 1974 to combine smaller jurisdictions into larger ones merged the town’s primary administration into the Calderdale Council, which also serves the six towns within its borough. Calderdale Council oversees most of the functions equivalent to a Canadian municipal council.

<sup>30</sup>As will be described in more detail, IET operates with no paid staff and almost no public funding. IET receives financial support from private individuals and has been granted funding from organizations and policy platforms including the Calderdale Council, the Community Foundation for Calderdale, and the now-defunct UK Future Jobs Fund. IET has also benefited from project-based grants from organizations and businesses including the Todmorden Business Association, B&Q, Marshalls, and HBOS.

<sup>31</sup>As stated by Clear: “If it weren’t for politics we would have gone a lot further [...] We play a continual game of avoiding any connection with any political party, including the Greens. We don’t want to be with any of them because this is not about making political alliances!”

driven community-led democracy” (t3). The goal was to make IET relatable to residents through what one IET volunteer qualified as “more action and less talk” (t4). As Clear stressed “we don’t write papers or strategy documents... we just do!”

For example, as mentioned earlier, IET’s most cited goal to motivate residents has been its claim to become food self-sufficient by 2018. However, Brown stressed that the statement was never meant to be taken literally:

“We never wanted to completely feed our town. That was never really the intention, but it’s what the press wanted to hear and we probably weren’t very media savvy at the time. Our idea to make the town self-sufficient was just to get the conversation going so people could get into, find the motivation to start a little local business, or support the local economy. [That statement] was just the key to the door, really.”

At this point, consider that neither Warhurst nor Clear came to IET as novice organizers, but rather were well-versed in community development.<sup>32</sup> If anything, their past experiences and frustrations of working “within the system” (t1) led them to understand the importance of alternative and non-state-based solutions to sustainable development than those traditionally considered through state-led policy objectives. As mentioned by one of IET’s younger advocates, Adam Entwistle, IET chose not to get disheartened by focusing on what is wrong in our system, but instead on “what are you going to put in its place?” However, it is also worth noting here that many of the initiatives described below

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<sup>32</sup> Amongst other positions, Warhurst has served as the Chair of the Forestry Commission of Great Britain, a member of the Board of Natural England, was appointed as the Labour council leader on the Calderdale Council, and was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 2005 for service to the environment. Clear herself has decades of experience as a community developer in Todmorden, amongst other experiences, but jokingly mentioned she prefers to keep her previous life “as part of the system” at rest and did not discuss it.

clearly involved public institution partners; these initiatives point to the reality that while organizers did not seek to formally engage with government decision-makers, they frequently recognized the opportunities of collaborating with public institution actors more broadly as will be shown through their later initiatives.

Nevertheless, IET's first steps clearly promoted their initial non-state approach. After their kick-off meeting, IET's purpose was to make their cause more visible to residents. Rather than hosting further meetings or spreading the word orally, IET recruited Nick Green amongst other volunteers to act as their "official guerrilla gardeners" (t2), planting vegetable and herb beds on public land at night without official permission. These "propaganda gardens" (t1-4) were intended to spark conversation and show residents firsthand how easy it was to grow food locally themselves. IET did not limit planting sites to derelict municipal spaces, but included re-landscaping ornamental plant beds into vegetables ones through what Brown jokes as "a series of fortunate nighttime accidents." Each plant bed included "help yourself" signs to emphasize the communal nature of the food and to engage with the concept of greater food accessibility to residents. This foundational approach was seen by IET leaders as particularly important in a society dominated by "individualization and privatization" (t6), and allowed the group to develop a series of creative and unconventional strategies that would make up the majority of their future actions.

### **IET's "Three Spinning Plates": Community, Learning, and Business**

With no initial desire for significant collaboration with government decision-makers, IET

bases its model on the image of being able to balance three plates spinning at the same time. Each plate is attributed to a different area for action: community, learning, and business. While spinning one plate might bring real benefits to a community, IET believes that only spinning all three simultaneously can allow for sustained change (t1; t6). Through each plate, this section delves more deeply into IET's specific initiatives and outcomes.

**a. Community inclusiveness**

First, IET defines the 'community' plate as how to affect the way people choose to live their everyday lives both privately and publicly. As a fully community-run initiative, the focus on community has been to create a "shared language" (t1) based on inclusivity and participation to break down social class, age, and gender barriers. Though Clear admitted building social capital "takes years", IET has primarily relied on an informal and entirely volunteer-based structure to meet their goals. While some community organizers might seek more quantifiable ways of building success, Clear stressed that basing a grassroots initiative on more organic processes works to its advantage; rather than creating a feeling of duty or obligation to IET, the organization has sought to foster ownership of the project by local residents by creating longer-lasting, more meaningful relationships based on mutual care, respect, and trust (t1). IET's vision for community development is inherently steeped in a relationship-based approach:

"We like to say that our mission is actually kindness. Because if you have a kinder world, everything else, like the food system, will sort itself out. So we want to model that ourselves, because everyone knows what kindness feels like, they can relate to it, when it's done to them or when they do it to others."  
(t1)

In particular, Clear noted that similar movements to theirs, like the Transition Town movement, are sometimes hard to identify with because they are perceived as more upper-class phenomena oblivious to the concerns of the working class:

“There are so many middle class, male, scientific, white, fancy-pants language-type movements that don’t do anything for anyone. We wanted to do work to reach “all the other ones” in the world, those who aren’t *those* people. It made us want to respond in a different way.”

Many SLFSI efforts were also described as often relying perhaps too heavily on ‘wining and dining events’ that remain largely inaccessible to a majority of people. Certainly, creating a new local culture based on empowerment and respect for all residents was seen as a critical component of IET’s community building project (t1-3; t6).

One way of achieving a shared experience between all members of the community regardless of their background has been to reach back into Todmorden’s local history to renew both older and younger generations’ identity with a particular place. In partnership with Todmorden Pride, the town’s local heritage board, IET’s newly landmarked Green Route takes residents and visitors through Todmorden’s various sites, including its historic canal and mills, local food businesses, and also IET’s edible pathways and beds, showcasing a variety of themed gardens and activities for children. Since the presence of IET, the broader Calderdale Council has realized the positive socio-economic incentive of drawing on both new and historical community assets, such as giving residents reasons to stay to combat persistent rural outmigration (t10). As it will be shown in other cases, capitalizing on a community’s uniqueness and history serves as valuable strength to

SLFSI and community development more broadly (t3, t10).

As an effort to target marginalized groups more specifically, IET recognized the issues of lower-income groups access to healthy, local food. In response, one of IET's planting projects was run in partnership with the local community-group, the Acorn Centre, as part of a training scheme for unemployed people. While the project was run through funding from the UK government's Future Jobs Fund, the Acorn Centre itself closed in 2011 due to lack of funding and the Future Jobs Fund cancelled under Prime Minister Cameron in 2012.<sup>33</sup>

Another important connection developed early on was with Todmorden's local social housing group, Pennine Housing. Through this partnership, over one thousand seed packs and materials were donated to Pennine Housing tenants during gardening workshops. Through collaboration and discussion with IET, the social housing group also went on to change its regulations on keeping chickens to increase the capacity for residents to grow their own food. "Our project was always meant to connect to the actual experiences of the people who live here," one volunteer emphasized (t4). One volunteer noted that bridging income gaps has undeniably allowed marginalized groups to feel less isolated and more connected to the community as a whole. One incident struck her in particular:

"One night I was walking home in the dark near [a lower-income neighbourhood]. It was quite late, and I thought I noticed I was being followed

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<sup>33</sup> The Future Jobs Fund was an initiative introduced in 2009 with the aim of helping the long-term unemployed return to employment. The program was cut under Prime Minister Cameron in 2012 on the basis of expense. However, a government report published later in 2012 showed the Fund had in fact been a net gain for society, through wages, tax receipts, and reduced benefit payments (UK Department of Work and Pensions, 2012).

by these two guys. They were big guys, with big tattoos and everything. It was getting dark, so I was a little bit nervous. One of them came up behind me and tapped me on the shoulder, [...] but then he said “Hey! Are you that old granny? the ones whose planting the vegetables? ... Can I just shake your hand?” And I said, well yes! Then he shared that he and his mates had collected all the potatoes in one of our beds that we noticed had gone missing. But he said that he hadn’t taken them all for himself, but for his friends and their neighbours too. And that they all really appreciated what we were doing... Now a couple of them even come out to help!”

Lastly, the demographics of the organization itself cannot go unnoticed in explaining IET’s attempt to bridge social, gender, and age barriers. While the time and space limitations of this research does not significantly explore demographics as a central theme (e.g. social class, age, gender), the trend is undeniable. For example, IET’s original organizers come from a range of social backgrounds and are primarily older women. When asked directly about IET’s originally female dominated volunteer-base, Clear responded with a similar jest she had previously made to the media: “When men have drinks in bars, wars come about. Only good things come about when women get together”. Green was also quick to point out the number of marginalized groups often ignored in SLFSIs that IET continuously seeks to include in their activities: “there are loads of ways of engaging all types of people here. People with mental health problems, educational difficulties, younger people, older people... all sorts of other models that we haven’t used yet but that could be.” To date, strong relationships and enthusiasm for the project have primarily relied on hosting regular potluck dinners, community outreach events, and children’s activities all open to the public to create greater sense of community “togetherness” (t3).

Examples such as this point to the very real value of social trust and reciprocity created

through community-driven SLFSIs. In particular, Pennine Housing landlord, Val Morris, emphasized the importance of maintaining community ownership over initiatives, under which efforts are not “forced” by outside actors or state policy, but grown organically from within the community (Morris in Lee-Wolf, 2009). As a result, local police cited a significant drop in vandalism in the town centre, which they have attributed to IET’s gardens and the communal ownership of the town created through them (t3). By creating spaces where class barriers can be challenged and where residents can see themselves reflected in community initiatives, “people have come to realize it’s actually about community, about sharing more, connecting, making things more pretty, and being more proud. This town was a poor one, unattractive, now we receive visitors from around the world, and we can be proud to welcome them” (t1). From the onset, IET worked hard to host inclusive community activities, that value the more informal aspects of relationships, sharing, and community work.

Unlike the cases of Wolfville and North Saanich discussed in the next two chapters, understanding IET’s ‘community’ plate allows us to understand that Todmorden’s accomplishments challenge the observation found in the literature on alternative food systems that many initiatives are developed “in regions where there is a high-income and diverse population to provide a growing market” (Abate, 2008: 395). Instead, the diversity of social classes represented in IET’s volunteer base emphasize that inclusive initiatives engender creative solutions for change. IET certainly begins to show the impact of ideas and discourse, of “changing hearts and minds” (t6), in creating positive momentum that drive people’s interests and actions and give them a stronger pride in

local identity.

### **b. Youth and Adult Learning**

Public education institutions have served as critical partners in the development of Todmorden's SLFS education (t1-6; t8). IET's vision of community development is clear in their multi-generational approach, as noted by Brown:

“We understand that it takes an *entire* town to implement change. We always say “if you eat, you're in!” No one is too young or too old to help. We've had help from 2 to 4 years old, teenagers, and there's no upper age limit either!”

Though open to all ages, IET has largely been made up of an older generation base, whose genuine concern for their children and grandchildren has given them the motivation to act (t1; t3-4). However, it is also because of the limited time and energy of its older volunteers, that IET has made their 'learning' plate a central pillar in its activities. As Clear stated bluntly, “if we were dead tomorrow, who is going to do all the work? We're always looking for a way to bring in youth.”

IET has worked to set up food gardens and local food procurement schemes in every primary and secondary school in Todmorden. Their most active relationship has been with the Todmorden High School who received local council funding to develop the country's first in-school aquaponic system, run by IET staff and student volunteers since 2013. Beyond providing food for the school's cafeteria, the garden will also be part of the high school's new BTEC Diploma in Environment and Land Based Studies, offered since 2011. IET's influence, partnered with SLFS champions in the local high school, allowed

administrative staff not only to see value in building student's practical skills for employment, but also to create a capacity for long-term civic participation around food (t1; t3). As we'll see in other case studies, creating local opportunities for youths was identified as fundamental to ensure a town's long-term sustainability (t2; t4).

In addition, since 2011, IET's Farm and Learning Centre in the neighbouring town of Walsden has served as a local food business incubator and a space for agricultural internship opportunities for young farmers and entrepreneurs looking to develop food production and business skills. Green, also the founder of the IE Farm, recognized the need to provide opportunities for young agricultural workers, given the reality of the UK's aging farming population—a sentiment echoed frequently by the Department of Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (t2). While the national government has encouraged younger entrants into the farming sector, a number of new small-scale farmers around Todmorden still stressed the lack of opportunity and insufficient aid to support them (t7-8). Once again, rather than wait for government action, the goal of the IE Farm has been to take national messages and practice them locally, giving apprentices the space to think through the entire process of growing, distributing, and marketing food using alternative growing methods, including elements of organic and permaculture techniques (t2).

### **c. Businesses' monetary and non-monetary contributions**

IET's final 'business' plate refers to increasing local market opportunities, developing local supply chains relationships, and generating more jobs and support for local farmers

and food producers. IET's first business initiative was simply to give blackboards to every vendor at the Todmorden market to advertise the local food they were selling; while many vendors already sold a diversity of local produce, others did not. The blackboards served as a simple but strong visual representation of local food options in Todmorden for both market vendors and shoppers (t1; t3). IET also used the blackboard project as an opportunity to informally engage with local vendors and consumers to build awareness around the importance of local food to local economies and encouraging market vendors to think through their sourcing practices.

Indeed, Todmorden's agricultural landscape is dominated by livestock production for national—rather than local—consumption. To Green, initiatives like the market blackboards or the IE Farm, show local producers that there is a viable market for more diversified local production within Todmorden itself. These efforts have been of particular importance in an area dominated by conventional and traditionally conservative livestock farmers who appeared initially skeptical towards IET's goals in particular and towards change in general (anonymous); however, years of outreach and collaboration with local producers, including talks given to the more traditionally-minded Todmorden Agricultural Society, has convinced more local farmers to look at the diversity of solutions for food system issues more openly (t3; t9). Of note, one “very conservative” market vendor now chooses to supply her eggs locally as a result of IET (t3), while the head chef of a local cafe who “used to scoff at local, organic, or vegan [food], has now gotten quite into it” (t6).

More concretely, a local survey produced in Todmorden's 2011 Town Plan found an increased use of the local farmers market, with 91.8% of respondents stating they now attend the market on a weekly basis, and with 20.6% of those respondents using it to do their main grocery shopping<sup>34</sup>. Through IET's awareness raising efforts and with the collaboration of local food vendors, 49% of the stores using IET's blackboards have seen a notable increase in profits (t1); one local pork producer reported a 40% increase in sales since IET, while a local chicken producer noted now being able to save time and sell exclusively at his farm gate rather than at markets due to an increase in local demand (t3).

Carl Warburton, owner of Pextenment Cheese, one of Todmorden's newest and only local organic cheese producers, similarly mentioned the benefits of movements like IET to support new food-related businesses (t7). "When you've got a new product, you've got to find somewhere to sell it," he stressed, emphasizing the difficulty of penetrating a new traditionally conservative market. However, because of the influence of the local food movement in Todmorden, Warburton has seen measurable success, even choosing to brand his cheese most visibly as local—rather than organic, due to the popularity of the concept. "With that [uptake]," Green prided himself, "farmers have been looking at us a bit more seriously. I know it has been a [very long] process to get acceptance!"

Hoping to move beyond the dichotomy of alternative vs. conventional agriculture or traditional and non-traditional initiatives, Clear mentioned the need for communities to develop new ways of conceptualizing society and economy as one and the same rather than as two separate parts of a whole. IET has also stressed approaches bridging both

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<sup>34</sup> Number indicating previous market attendance were not provided in the report.

conventional and alternative market governance. One example has been IET's Every Egg Matters campaign (EEM). Based on an informal market study that identified that most Todmordenites buy eggs on a weekly basis, EEM was developed as a means to stimulate demand for a singular, easily accessible, local product. Through a mapping exercise, the campaign connects residents with others who keep laying hens, identifying who has eggs, how many are available, and how producers can be conducted; it has also endeavoured to show local producers that there is a visible local demand for eggs, thus encouraging producers to locally market their production. Eggs can be picked up at farm gates or backyards to create new relationships of sharing and exchange between residents, unfettered by the policies of the broader food system (IET, 2011). As a result, between 2008 and 2009, fifteen times more residents kept their own chickens in Todmorden, and the number of local producers identified through EEM grew from 4 to 64 (Moorhead, 2009). EEM continues to encourage residents to keep backyard chickens through educational workshops, recipe sharing, and community events. The initiative has more recently explored opportunities on chicken keeping in nursing/residential homes and in schools.

Beyond the financial gains to local producers, campaigns like EEM highlight aspects of neocommunitarianism by focusing on values of communal entrepreneurship that go beyond profit. The informal economic exchanges, proposed by IET such as surplus sharing, volunteerism, reliance on in-kind contributions, or cooperative economic projects exist within both neocommunitarian ideals and Gibson-Graham's community economies as capitalism's "excluded others" (1996). The discursive space created by

IET's initiatives contribute to an understanding of community that goes beyond our current "finite" monetary understandings of society and that redresses global issues ranging from environmental degradation to food system corporatization (t1).

The stories shared by Clear and Brown of Todmorden residents' evolving understanding of public and private ownership, sharing, and community, suggest that IET has "generate[d] new economic imaginaries and strategies" by holding space for new ways of thinking and new means to put thought into practice (Gibson-Graham, 2006); certainly, these initiatives were based on solidarity, democratization, and community values in a world where systems are becoming increasingly homogenized. In acknowledging the diversity of an economy in which capitalism only serves as one possible rationale, IET's active engagement in a "process of becoming" encourages individuals to move past current identities and understandings of the economy to imagine and create alternative realities to current systems. The group's own focus on collaborative community building and collective experimentation allow for a new and shared understanding of food foundational to IET's success.

### **Lingering Limitations: Systems "beyond the state?"**

Despite the success of IET and the relationships it has created, local SLFS proponents are sobered by the real-time impact they have on the local community: "while there are people on the same wavelength as us, the majority of people just won't ever understand it. Some people will always buy because of price and have no interest in where their food has come from" (anonymous). Similarly, while IET has approached larger supermarkets

chains located in and around Todmorden to support their efforts, “it’s like they’re shut off to us because of the massive distribution systems they have to go through.” (Brown). In the context of SLFS development, larger retailers and distributors were often identified as barriers to development rather than as allies, due to their own internal dynamics and interests (anonymous; t1; t4).

In addition, Warburton was quick to note that producers must create value-added products if they have any desire to sustain themselves solely through local market distribution –in his case, by selling organic cheese rather than fluid milk. For Warburton, certifying organic was an additional means “to survive” as a local dairy farmer, a choice he mentioned other producers in the UK have made due to the low prices of conventional milk. Yet, he also stressed the costly policies that constrain local, small-scale producers’ ability to operate:

“It’s very easy to start up a business, but once you get started there are suddenly loads and loads of government and EU departments that suddenly appear. [...] They *are* there to help you for hygiene and traceability and all that, but instantly, there are barriers that the government puts in the way for things to run smoothly.”

In addition, value-adding would seem to conflict with the broader goals of encouraging universal access to sustainably produced food, as a strategy inherently geared to getting a higher price for a product. This trend was noted in almost every case study, pointing to a systemic discrepancy between the prices farmers need to charge to earn a living and the prices consumers can afford to access sustainable, local food.

Last, both local agricultural producers and IET advocates expressed frustration towards the use of productive agricultural land for horsiculture (t1), in other words the ability for higher- and middle-income groups to purchase agricultural land for horse breeding or to build country estates with little to no intention to grow food (t3; t9). If anything, both IET and local farmers mentioned a desire for central governments to devolve authority to the local level, in the hopes that local authorities could enact bylaws and policies that better address local realities and needs. This is particularly interesting in light of a lack of engagement by Todmorden's own local government; however, many mentioned still trusting that local concerns and needs could be better met at lower levels of government through concrete action.

Though national-level institutions were identified as the least likely government actors to enable SLFS transitions, the necessity of some role for the state is made clear here. As it will be shown in the case of Agricultural Land Reserve schemes in the case of North Saannich, BC in Canada, provincial or national level policies on land use can play a positive role in offering a broader enabling environment in favour of local food production. As these national level schemes were found wanting in the case of Todmorden, it is perhaps for these reasons that IET has sought to explore options that go beyond traditional political or market avenues. Instead, they have chosen to stress opportunities for residents to become growers and producers themselves, both at the household level and as a community. However, IET have seen structural limitations to solely community-based schemes.

Do the results created by IET's community-based approach really question the assumption that state actors are a necessary component of SLFS development? As will be shown in subsequent chapters, while other cases point to clear benefits from having a strong degree of state-led involvement, the community of Todmorden would appear to have initially progressed quite well without it. In this regard, it is worth noting that at the time of my interviews, informants appeared reluctant to directly address questions relating to state collaboration, partially due to a desire to maintain a more distant though congenial relationship with state actors. All municipal government informants approached also declined to be interviewed; when a reason was given, it generally involved not believing that local council had a large enough stake in SLFSI to comment. As mentioned by one IET member, "it's not as though they are doing anything bad, this is just low down on their agenda, they have other things on their hands." (anonymous)

Yet, it is perhaps due to the limited effects of purely community-based action that IET has increasingly recognized the need for community-state partnerships. While IET stated they initially did not want to engagement with the government, they have explicitly worked with a range of public institutions with great success. For example, early on, IET looked to healthcare and private institutions to champion their cause; the first institution was Todmorden's health centre, whose doctors had expressed recent interest in healthy nutrition. Though the centre had just undergone a £6 million building renovation, IET offered to replace its inedible landscape with fruit and vegetable plants, which the health centre accepted on the stipulation that it would not cost them additional funds. Brown mentioned successful negotiations such as these were simply a matter of finding a "win-

win scenario” for everyone. A similar conversation was undertaken at the police station, whose front grounds were converted into raised beds of maize and vegetables. “What’s really interesting,” Brown noted, “is that food is really a leveller. It makes people more equal. The police really loved it because citizens of the town started talking to them more.”

In addition, IET members were all eager to mention the most unorthodox example to come from fostering strong informal relationships: the trust built between IET and a number of more “forward thinking policemen” (t1) allowed the group to receive materials from local drug raids, including a sizeable and costly amount of pots, soil, indoor lighting and irrigation equipment for their own projects. Though materials would previously have been required to be destroyed and sent to the landfill, IET appreciated the “recycling initiative” initiated by the police, whom now also distribute raid items to schools or other community groups in need. Certainly, “only informal relationships like these can create situations that don’t need rules!” (t3)

IET’s search for creative partnerships with both local businesses and public departments such as with the police station, has enabled the organization to benefit from informal in-kind contributions of both material resources and skills. Rather than completely circumventing the state, perhaps IET’s strategies could be reframed as acknowledging that politics can take many forms. IET’s community-led governance certainly shows how much can be achieved with relatively little formal government approval. However, it also highlights the need to ultimately engage with decision-makers to move further forward.

Since the development of more formal partnerships with the state, it appears clear that IET has been able to achieve even more than when their initial guerrilla gardening projects. Still, it can be noted that perhaps it is because IET sought first to engage with the community and build strong coalitions with a wide range of actors (including public institutions) that government institutions have become more willing to develop partnerships with them.

Indeed, there has appears to be an increasingly supportive relationship between local government and IET as result of the group's success. Some volunteers joked that stronger relationships with local government only ever come about when IET's projects gain national or worldwide attention:

“Once they saw we were becoming so high profile, they wanted to help us. We now have the council planning on giving us land, and apple trees and herbs, which we have to say is great.” (t3)

“Sure they had to care, the council did some research and found that people's respect for council was number 13, and we were number 3. [laughs] I'm sure they never forgave us for that!” (t1)

IET members also mention gaining much greater visibility from the town upon Prince Charles' visit in 2010, himself a longtime supporter of sustainable agriculture. The visit caused both the town and private businesses to warm up significantly to IET to prepare for the Prince's arrival. “We suddenly got all sorts of calls from [certain organizations] saying they had always been our biggest supporters,” Brown recalls, “[One company] even came and planted some fruit trees just on the day the Prince was coming” —timing she deemed that was not coincidental.

Despite their friendly jabs at the local council, IET members did note that they acknowledged the limitations of forgoing a relationship with the state when they ran out of land to plant on. By the end of 2009, IET began to see the value in formalizing a relationship with council to access greater parcels of public land (Warhurst and Dobson, 2014). As a response to IET's demands for land and after Princes Charles's visit in 2010, the Calderdale Council launched a community growing to grow food on public land. The license was developed as part of the Council's new stated desire to contribute to greater community-state partnerships, strengthen community bonds, and encourage residents to plant their own produce on public land (t10). Green spoke very positively of this move, calling it a "quantum shift in institutional mindset. Where previously the intention was to be authoritarian [...] or to abdicate responsibility totally by selling off property, this [showed] a middle way. [That] signal[ed] trust." (The Land, 2013)

Yet, IET was not always in complete agreement over how to handle council's land contributions. Some perceived them as the government's way of offloading responsibility onto the community. One member voiced: "my thought was no, we don't want [their land]! Because they want it off their books because they can't manage it... it's more that they want us to be in charge of it until they want it back" (anonymous). Indeed, the license had difficulty in its implementation stage due to concerns on both sides of the table. The parks department in particular provided notable barriers to the license's use, raising liability issues as a main concern and bogging application down with insurance policies and additional costs. Looking back, Warhurst later expressed that she understood

why the department might have felt worried at the time: the license proposal coincided with the beginning of the European economic crisis and related austerity measures, a time she fears park officials might have internalized as being one where their responsibilities were being given away. “I think,” she noted more recently, “that they feared that we were trying to take over from them” (2014: 57).

Indeed, IET has always rejected the desire to create a “parallel universe” (ibid: 58) in competition with state structures. Instead, their goal has been to create a role for community-led governance that can create a supportive framework for SLFS development and community resilience regardless of state involvement. The greater hope would be for community action to inspire the state’s willingness to create new partnerships with them. As weighed by Entwistle:

“I think it’s irresponsible to say that all the responsibility has to be on the [state] and that we don’t have to do anything. That’s not the way that society is going to progress. If anything, it should be a meeting in the middle. Government is maybe doing the best it can, so if communities can take on some of the responsibility themselves, I think that can be appropriate... It’s kind of the whole idea of ‘give them a fish or a fishing rod’.”

Certainly, eight years since IET’s inception, Warhurst has more recently mentioned seeing a “real shift in council’s mindset and willingness.” Calderdale Council’s community growing license has been altered and amended to be more agreeable to both community and state actors (Warhurst, 2014: 59). In 2013, the new Todmorden Town Plan was the first to include significant acknowledgement of the “tireless” work done by IET to regenerate the town by giving greater visibility to locally-produced food, community development initiatives and education. The plan also made its first mention of

a desire to take greater steps to support and work in partnership with groups like IET to encourage local resilience. Finally, it acknowledged that sustainability should involve “not just the town council alone but the whole community” (Todmorden Council, 2013).

Still, recent developments in Todmorden have shown the limitations of an overly loose or informalized relationship between state and community. In March 2015, a private agreement between the Calderdale council and McCarthy and Stone, the UK’s largest builder of retirement apartments, was arranged on one of IET’s most popular public sites by the Todmorden market. While both IET and the mayor of Todmorden has spoken out against the agreement, this arrangement serves to show the downfalls of non-equal partnerships between community and state structures. They also highlight that citizen-based SLFSIs still fall prey to institutionalized politics and relationships of power. Finally, they show the very real limitations of smaller local actions that are not integrated into broader regional or national decision-making processes, and have only strengthened IET’s resolve to consider “perhaps not just relying on the people *or* the government separately, but to have more of a relationship... for the solution to really be to work together” (anonymous).

At the same time, as a bottom-up initiative, IET hopes to engender a culture of sustainability within the entire community, where a role for municipal council would be all but “assumed” as a *de facto* component for success (Warhurst, 2014: 59). Ultimately, the case of Todmorden does show that governments eventually “*will* respond” if communities continuously make their priorities and interests known (t4).

### **IET Eight Years Later: Scaling out and new state partnership possibilities**

Using grassroots community-based governance structures, IET emphasizes the ability to bridge different forms of formal and informal market and community governance structures. In the case of IET, community development was strengthened through interdependence, cooperation, and diverse knowledge production. At the same time, increasing direct producer-consumer relationships as well as empowering citizens to grow their own food through individual and community gardening are driving an increasingly community-oriented economy.

Yet while public institutions were strong contributing factors to several of Todmorden's SLFSI successes, how can we make sense of a case in which the state's legislative bodies (e.g. municipal council) have only played a more passive role? The level of social capital generated and the networks developed both within and beyond the community by IET clearly demonstrates the critical role of social actors in developing SLFS. More importantly, it points to the possibility that community-based governance structures can prove a critical vehicle for SLFS change by generating community buy-in regardless of political uptake. In the town of Todmorden, IET's experimental outlook on social change has encouraged alternative economies and social structures based on volunteerism, reciprocity, and community whose benefits to the local society and economy are made increasingly evident over the years.

Scaling-out has also been a major goal of IET's work. From the outset, the initiative established an Incredible Edible Network through their website to motivate other

municipalities and community groups around the world to start their own IE projects. As IET's visibility grew, Todmorden has received an increasing number of visitors from Asia, European, North America, Australia, and New Zealand to gain insights and learn from its example (t1-3); IET has been active in spreading the message of community-based SLFS development through a series of formalized venues including TEDTalks, the EU's Gruntvig program<sup>35</sup>, or the Oxford Real Farm Conference, as well as informal venues including Poland's Cohabitat<sup>36</sup> events (t1; t2; t6).

The relationships created through the IE network as well as through global community events have not only involved sharing in skills and experiences, but have also allowed IET to tap into global social goodwill. Clear mentioned receiving planting and seed materials, as well as individual financial donations over the years by supporters of IET around the world who simply also want to spread kindness. Scaling out IET's message has also allowed the organization to weave a web of grassroots-based expertise, made up of farmers, community organizers, architects, scientists, and policy makers, amongst others, who have all provided valuable skills during many of IET's growing phases (t1).

However, IET also points to the need for some degree of collaboration with the state that goes beyond project-based initiatives with public institutions. This is particularly evident in the case of land use and the maintenance of horticulture in the Todmorden area as

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<sup>35</sup> Grundtvig was a 2007-2013 European funding programme of the EU Commission to strengthen adult education. Similar to the EU's Erasmus or Comenius programs run for youth and young adults, Grundtvig encouraged open dialogue between EU actors such as teachers, mature students, local authorities, NGOs, and charities. It is funded 75% by the EU and 25% co-financed by the participating member states

<sup>36</sup> Cohabitat is a Polish organization connecting individuals, organizations and institutions across Europe and the world to share practices and skills relating to sustainable development, and with a focus on local economic systems. They operated informally through open source information exchange, with a goal to democratize access to sustainable innovation (Cohabitat, 2015).

barriers to creating more self-sufficient communities; these limitations show the need for greater policy changes at the county and national level, and thus for greater engagement and collaboration with municipal and county officials —amongst others— to intervene on behalf of SLFSIs within formal structure. As such, it is useful to turn to three further cases of SLFSIs involving greater engagement with political decision-makers to bring greater clarity to the role of state-community collaborations.

As a final caution, the work that Incredible Edible has done around Todmorden has not gone without its share of criticism. A minority of residents and local farmers still decry IET's work on municipal spaces as messy or poorly managed; others have expressed frustration towards the increase in grants or tax dollars spent supporting IET projects when some residents believe they could be better served elsewhere (t1; anonymous). However, both town council and the larger community have not seen these criticisms as due cause to rule out IET's efforts just yet. IET themselves have acknowledged citizens' concerns by inviting greater community input and by increasing educational efforts around food issues. IET members have always been aware that breaking down deep-rooted social norms and habits takes time (t1-4; t6). For example, when many in Todmorden expressed concern that growing vegetables in public spaces would make the town look "poor" (t1), Clear was able to recognize that these criticisms were not attacking IET per se but stemmed from British society's rootedness in the class system:

“[...] In England, front gardens are only about flowers. People think only back gardens are for vegetables because you wouldn't want people to thinking you are so poor you need to grow your own vegetables... This issue is really just about classes.”

The process of cultivating new subjectivities is undeniably a difficult one, consistently contested and renegotiated by many “reluctant subjects” (Gibson-Graham 2006b: 23).

Regardless, the iterative and creative process that IET has undergone to fulfill its participatory vision for SLFS has only allowed them to demonstrate with considerable nuance the role of community-based action in SLFS development; what was once a purely “more eccentric and opportunistic” (t2) grassroots movement has evolved into a thoughtful and reflexive initiative engaged in a variety of social and economic practices (see Table 7 for key initiatives). Through constant reflection on its own processes, the movement has shown a maturity that has allowed it to become better understood and accepted by local state structures, who themselves have had to redress their own policies to accommodate citizen concerns. As stated by Clear, SLFSIs “are more about the relationships and actions between people. When [things] will invariably get worse, the real strength will be that we have the relationships to work together. That will be our trump card.”

Initiative <sup>37</sup>	Type	Details
<b>Incredible Todmorden (since 2008)</b>	community-led (with specific gardening projects in partnership with local public institutions)	initially developed as an urban gardening initiative; works to bring community together through local food initiatives, including social events and workshops, educated youth and adults in food knowledge and practice; has partnered with public institutions (e.g. police station, hospitals), social housing groups, and employment centre to grow food on-site and train local youth and adults in food growing; works with local producers to increase visibility of local food at town farmers market; has developed a range of specific initiatives listed below
<b>Green Route (2009)</b>	community-led	walking path developed by IET in partnership with local heritage board, Todmorden pride to raise awareness on town's history, local producers and community growing plots, features educational signage and activities on public health, local plants and wildlife, town history
<b>Incredible Farm and Learning Centre (2010)</b>	community-led (initially through municipal, county funding; now with national foundation funding)	originally an IET project, operates as a teaching and incubator farm to develop commercial food growing and marketing skills for young people as registered business; uses permaculture and low environmental impact product methods; supplies local pubs and cafes
<b>Incredible Aqua Garden</b>	community-led (in partnership with Todmorden High School)	originally an IET project, and working as a social enterprise company, provides access to fruits, vegetables and fish to local families, schools and community; uses hydroponic, aquaponic and permaculture techniques
<b>Every Egg Matters (2010)</b>	community-led	maps egg producers around Todmorden; encourages citizens to raise laying hens; hosts workshops on chicken raising and recipes shares

<sup>37</sup> Note: As the majority of SLFS projects in Todmorden are organized by IET, they are mentioned separately here for clarity.

<b>Initiative<sup>37</sup></b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Incredible Edible Network</b>	community-led	managed by IET, worldwide network of municipal and community groups with IE projects; hosts online message boards and forums to share tips and ask questions about food-based initiatives between members
<b>Community growing license (2010)</b>	State-led (county-level)	license to grow food on public land developed by Calderdale council; stated goal of generating greater community-state partnerships

*Table 7 - Key SLFS initiatives in Todmorden*

## Chapter 5 - Case Study 2: Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Canada

“When you come out, you see the dykes left by the Acadians 400 years ago, you see family farms, people taking pride in their products. People have grown up here with agriculture, and with a certain understanding of agri-food. There’s a sense of pride here. A vibrancy that is not just about the food. It’s a culture. [...] There are farmers markets, music, theatre... Everything is interconnected here.”  
(Barbara Anderson, Director of Acadia’s Nutrition and Dietetics Department)

Looking across the Acadian dykelands still visible along Wolfville’s waterfront today, it is easy to understand that agriculture has always played a significant role in the socio-cultural and economic history of this town. Surrounded by an agricultural greenbelt, Wolfville lies in the heart of Nova Scotia’s farmland—the Annapolis Valley of Kings County. Originally founded by the Acadians in the mid-18th century on Mi’kmaq territory, the town is situated in the northwestern portion of the Province where the Cornwallis River empties into the Bay of Fundy.

Beyond its rich past, Wolfville is very much looking to move into the future. “Guided by the principles of sustainability”, Wolfville has been recognized as one of the most progressive towns in Atlantic Canada in terms of sustainable municipal policy and town management (Wolfville, 2007). Most notably, Wolfville became Canada’s first Certified Fair Trade town in April 2007. It was also one of the first municipalities in Canada to ban smoking in vehicles carrying children, to implement a no-idling practice for municipal vehicles, and to spearhead the province-wide movement to eliminate the use of cosmetic pesticides in public spaces.

Though Wolfville has a modest permanent population of 4,269, it swells to over 7,000

during Acadia University's academic year. Unlike most rural spaces, Wolfville is one of the few towns in Nova Scotia that has seen a steady population increase of 16.7% since 2001 – compared to the more modest 1.5% provincial increase (Statistics Canada, 2011c); this trend has been attributed to a vibrant local culture, including an active music and art scene, which incentivizes Acadia's students to remain post-graduation as well as motivating both young families and retirees to move into the area. Wolfville also prides itself in having the most diverse population in Nova Scotia, with over 12% of its residents born outside of Canada, compared to a 5% provincial average (Wolfville, 2016).

The town also benefits from a wealthier and better educated community than the average rural community, with a higher percentage of residents between 25-64 with some university certificate or degree (50.5%) than both the Nova Scotian (23.4%) and Canadian (25.9%) average (Statistics Canada, 2011c). The relatively high purchasing power of residents particularly benefits local businesses, such as the province's oldest ongoing farmers market. Many locals see the sum of these factors as positive encouragement for local entrepreneurialism and for limiting the impacts of youth migration and rural poverty, both recurrent characteristics in much of the rest of rural Nova Scotia (w1; w7).

Indeed, as noted by Wolfville's Director of Economic and Community Development, Jennifer Boyd, to the people of Wolfville, discourse around SLFS and sustainable food is dominated by a "buy local" mentality. In a 2009 municipal survey on what drives residents to buy food, 72% of respondents noted that local production was the most

important factor, followed by being pesticide free (56%) and cost (55%); only freshness and nutritional value (both above 90%) bested local (Wolfville, 2009). Similarly, amongst the eleven interviews conducted in Wolfville (see Table 8 for full list of participants), all cited “local” first when asked to define the most important components of SLFS. Only after “local” was mentioned were other factors such as environmental, social, and economic health brought up (w2; w4-5; w7-9). Importantly, “community sustainability” was also often mentioned as a key factor of SLFS; more uniquely to Wolfville, community sustainability particularly takes on a social justice bent, as it was defined as adequate access to food on the demand side and fair compensation to farmers on the supply side. (w3, w5, w8-9)

Unlike the other case studies, this case presents a town peripherally involved in SLFSIs. Though Wolfville has adopted a quite holistic approach to sustainability, issues around ‘sustainable food’ have only been raised relatively recently. Sustainable development projects were initially led by community actors, they were ultimately fairly equally and actively supported by municipal government, community, and the private sector — though with moderate amounts of traction and following relatively traditional modes of governance. In brief, Wolfville presents a case of medium level collaboration, with actions geared towards sustainable development in general. Though SLFSIs appear numerous, they will be shown to lack integration and uptake, despite their benefits to the community. In contrast to the initiatives pursued in Todmorden, this chapter considers a SLFSI that displays a lack of strong coordinate leadership, vision, and cohesion, despite higher levels of state-society collaboration. Using the three pillars of state, community,

and business, this chapter also highlights the limits of local action in seeking to address SLFS issues, pointing in particular to the need to work across and beyond municipal boundaries. Whereas Todmorden showed the potential and limits of solely grassroots-based SLFSI, Wolfville demonstrates the benefits and limitations of more engaged state-led governance efforts.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title relevant to case</b>	<b>Interview Type</b>	<b>Interview Code</b>
Jeff Cantwell	Mayor - Town of Wolfville	Phone	w1
Jennifer Boyd	Director of Economic & Community Development - Town of Wolfville	Phone	w2
Patricia Bishop	Councillor - Municipality of County of Kings; Farmer - Tap Root Farms	Phone	w3
Linda Best	Co-chair - FarmWorks Investment Cooperative	Phone and Face to face	w4
Av Singh	Organic & Rural Infrastructure Specialist- Perennia; Chair - Just Us! Centre for Small Farms	Phone and Face to face	w5
Kelly-Marie Radcliffe	Market Manager - Wolfville Farmers Market Cooperative	Phone	w6
Alan Warner	Director - Mysterious Encounters Earth; Board Member - Acadia Farm	Phone	w7
Edith Callaghan	Chair Person - Nova Scotia Food Policy Council; Co-Founder - Centre for Rural Sustainability; Natural Step Associate - Natural Step Canada	Phone	w8
Barb Anderson	Co-chair - Good Food Hub Kitchen Community; Advisory Committee - Nova Scotia Food Security Research Project	Phone	w9
Jodie Noiles	Farm Director - Academia Farm	Phone	w10
Leon De Vreede	Co-founder - Centre for Rural Sustainability	Phone	w11

*Table 8 - Wolfville interview participants*

### **First Steps to Sustainability: The Municipal Story**

While a progressive spirit has always been attributed to Wolfville, its sustainability story begins around ten to fifteen years ago, in the context of mounting local residential and development pressure and increasing community interest in global environmental issues. Though a specific set of causes leading to the town's concern for sustainability is difficult to pinpoint, all participants noted what appeared to be a perfect storm of events leading Wolfville's municipal government willingness to ensure its town's long-term social and economic resilience. However, confirming Ikerd's belief that rural communities and economies thrive when they benefit from a strong intellectual population (2008: 150), it was a coming together of the town's forward-thinking academics that truly kicked off Wolfville's SLFS vision.

Nearing graduation, and based on his own entrepreneurship and desire to "give back to the community" that had seen him through his degree, Leon De Vreede, an environmental science undergraduate at Acadia University, envisioned an organization dedicated to supporting rural sustainability (w11). Though he witnessed a number of smaller individual projects dealing with sustainability issues in Wolfville, De Vreede saw an opportunity to give these efforts more weight by organizing them collaboratively (w11). In 2003-04, with the help of Acadia professors and mayoral support, De Vreede developed the Centre for Rural Sustainability (CRS), a community non-profit organization based out of Acadia University. The CRS's goal was to strategically plan and support decision-making around short- and long-term sustainability for rural Nova Scotian communities.

Because of increasing community concern and to capitalize on Wolfville's image as a "forward-thinking community" (w11), the Mayor, CAO, and a few council members championed De Vreede's efforts within the municipal government. After meetings with the CRS, the Wolfville council decided to develop an integrated sustainability strategy in time for the upcoming revision of the town's official Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and Land-Use Bylaw. This partnership engendered the Wolfville Sustainability Initiative (WSI), a two-year sustainability education mandate to help Wolfville's administration, community, and businesses think through environmental sustainability.

While conversations on how to manage the WSI initially proved hesitant and lacked strong political willingness, motivation was renewed when the Federation of Canadian Municipalities announced the creation of a Green Municipalities Fund to support sustainable municipal development planning. Within the year, the partnership between the town of Wolfville and the CRS allowed the non-profit to successfully apply for funding on behalf of Wolfville in 2004. While De Vreede believed that the town "really incubated" his idea and project, especially as he was just a recent graduate, others felt that this initial step forward was more of a reactionary result than a concerted move towards sustainability; this sentiment, shared by a few participants, hints at the reality that local action can be strengthened by provincial or national incentives, and may serve to explain Wolfville's generally more lackluster SLFSI agenda than other communities. As put by Edith Callaghan, co-founder of CRS and Natural Step associate, the town had never been particularly proactive about sustainability, but was more likely reacting to "a sort of carrot that the provincial government hung out to produce a sustainability plan".

Nevertheless, the Green Municipalities Fund grant allowed the CRS to move forward with the WSI by running sustainability training for town officials and staff using the Natural Step (TNS) Framework<sup>38</sup>. TNS training ultimately helped frame the town's MPS revision through sustainability discourse. TNS training was mentioned as "foundational" in generating "political buy-in" from municipal leaders and staff (w11; Natural Step, 2008: 2). In particular, it embedded a broader and long-lasting culture of sustainability within Wolfville's administration; the TNS culture was meant to create shared assumptions and values around sustainability, which themselves give way to certain expectations on the behaviours and outcomes pursued by its members. Elements of this culture were still very evident in speaking with stakeholders more than a decade after the fact, as many participants mentioned that Wolfville had moved towards SLFS "because that's just the way we do things here" (w1-2; w7; w9). Even the current Mayor, Jeff Cantwell, who arrived after the TNS training is clearly taken by its effects: "Sustainability is just engraved in the culture here for the most part. It doesn't have to do with food so much as a culture of sustainability."

In its early stages, the training fostered a series of small early-stage actions, including the installation of LED lighting, the permanent adoption of paperless town and council meetings, and revisions to road salting in the winter. Community and town partnership also moved Wolfville towards being the first certified Fair Trade town in Canada in 2007, as "an ongoing effort to foster and support global equity when trading imported goods,

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<sup>38</sup> TNS is a non-profit organization founded in 1989 following the publication of the UN's 1987 Brundtland Report. Grounded in a science-based framework, TNS is intended to be applicable to any organization or business model. Its five-level framework provides a comprehensive model to plan for system-based sustainable development. Planning, decision-making, and strategic action are formulated around the five levels of: System, Success, Strategic, Actions, and Tools.

and to support local production” (Wolfville, 2008: 35). De Vreede admits that food and agriculture represented only one small topic of a broader discussion. However, others emphasized that having a broader discussion is what enabled community groups, entrepreneurs, and municipal officials to consider SLFSIs in the first place (w11; w7; w8), pointing to the strength of integrated or holistic approaches to sustainability. As mentioned in 2008 by the former Deputy Mayor, Robert Wrye, thanks to sustainability education and training, “sustainability is now part of the discussion when we do things. Five years ago that wasn’t the case.” (Natural Step, 2008: 3).

By late 2005, Wolfville developed a Sustainable Community Planning (SCP) task force, a citizen’s advisory group led by the Deputy Mayor. In an effort to engage in more collaborative and cross-sectoral governance, the Task Force included representatives from town council, the department of Planning Services, Wolfville’s Heritage Advisory Group, businesses, Acadia faculty, CRS members, and community and youth representation. The SCP task force took on the responsibility of re-writing the town’s MPS using the WSI as a guide; to do so, the task force engaged in traditional state-led collaborations, organizing a series of twenty-five “community circle” discussions and youth-led activities in schools to gain insights on residents’ concerns regarding sustainability (w7, w8).

Given the diversity of community interests and perspectives, the WSI specifically sought *not* to choose a specific angle through which to understand sustainability. In their interim report, the WSI highlights initiatives and actions dealing with issues as varied as

maintaining community spirit and culture, increasing parks and trails, enhancing support for local producers, composting and waste management, amongst others. As will be seen in most of the SLFSI case studies, this breadth of focus was a deliberate attempt to adopt a more holistic approach to sustainable community development, allowing for and integrating as many community voices as possible to house a variety of goals under a common vision for Wolfville's future. Also representative of many collaborative governance partnerships, the relationships between community-groups like the CRS and municipal government were initially "very informal. Our process wasn't as clear as when we talk about it now. We just knew we wanted to shift the way things worked." (w11)

As a result, Wolfville's revised MPS was published in 2008 (later amended in 2013), making any moves towards sustainable strategies and action more formally binding. The impact of the CRS and WSI training is evident in this official municipal document—in particular through the mention that they were "instrumental" in leading to the revision of the town's MPS (Wolfville, 2008: 3). In the MPS, Council recognizes "the series of global and local threats that we face as a result of humanity's collective ecological footprint" as well as its "[moral obligation] to take a leadership role in mitigating the worst impacts of society's wasteful tendencies" (ibid). Shifting partial responsibility to market-based governance mechanism, the MPS also emphasizes "developing a strong vibrant local economy to enhance local wealth through economic self-reliance." (ibid)

Indeed, in relation to SLFS development, the MPS focuses particularly on the role of local food as the main driver for local "economic opportunity" and "food security"

(Wolfville 2008: 49). To foster local food production, the Land-Use Bylaw amended with the MPS in 2008 and again in 2013 set out to establish Agricultural Zones to preserve prime agricultural land in Wolfville, support the development of community gardens, and encourage agricultural environmental stewardship and conservation (ibid).

In practice, it would appear that the willingness demonstrated in text through Wolfville's MPS translated into day-to-day support of SLFSIs over the long term. Many spoke highly of the town's efforts. Kelly-Marie Radcliffe, the Wolfville farmers market manager, stressed that municipal officials are "absolutely supportive of [their] projects" and are "a very important partner, linking us with project funding, and the right people". As mentioned by Barbara Anderson, Director of Acadia's Nutrition and Dietetics Department and Co-chair of the Wolfville Farmers market's Good Food Hub Kitchen Community Advisory Committee: "Things are participatory here. There are *a lot* of town hall meetings around here. It's *very* participatory, especially if something is a hotbed issue."

This relative degree of openness to dialogue in Wolfville allowed growing interests from academics, public interests groups, and local agricultural entrepreneurs to put food and agricultural issues on the table. Municipal engagement was primarily discussed on the ground of municipal support and approval for community-based initiatives (w2). Mention of municipal government as it relates to community engagement took a positive tone. As noted by Anderson:

“Council does tend to be quite proactive and quite forward thinking about community engagement. They were just elected last October but they do seem to have an interest in trying new things and supporting a healthy lifestyle for people in the community, and they have been this way a long time.”

Much of the dynamic between community and state in Wolfville appears to follow the trend discussed in Chapter 2 of roll-out neoliberalism. In other words, SLFSIs have been best better supported in Wolfville when they are presented to council as only requiring peripheral municipal government involvement:

“[...] the majority of [this dynamic] is the community saying “here’s what we’re doing, and our council and our town is very supportive of anything that we can do to support them. Because by coming from the community, it means that we don’t have to be spearheading it in the first place, which I think is important because it if *was* us supporting it I think it wouldn’t be quite as organic in how it occurs and might not be as true from the community.” (w2)

Whether in the form of staff resources, event coordination to bring awareness to food issues, providing physical space for events or meeting, or direct financial contributions, municipal engagement largely occurs in the form of ‘hands-off’ (w2; w6; w8-9). For example, the municipality has maintained active sponsorship of food-related community events and culinary tourism efforts, including being a primary financial contributor to (and host of) the international Devour! Food Film Festival since 2009, considered one of the earlier public and private sector partnership successes related to food culture in Wolfville (w1; w5; w7).

### **Municipal Government’s Lackluster Leadership**

While all SLFS proponents welcome Wolfville’s generally progressive identity, some cautioned that the wealthy town’s more elitist foodie culture could lead to a disingenuous

interest in local food and greenwashing rather than outright support. A few SLFS proponents worried that the buzz around local and organic food has simply been a “schtick” (anonymous) or “marketing gimmicks” (anonymous), allowing the town to maintain their image.

This concern was re-enlivened more recently when the Wolfville town Council considered Citta Slow designation, upon the suggestion from a small group of community proponents<sup>39</sup>. In particular, Michael Howell, co-chair of Slow Food Nova Scotia and long-term resident and local food restaurateur in Wolfville, mentioned that Slow Food has already received solid community uptake in many parts of Nova Scotia, and in Wolfville in particular. However, similar to the initial municipal government reaction to undertaking the WSI, the application has been met with some “foot dragging” (w8) on the part of municipal council. In response, some residents expressed concern that Citta Slow would “just be another label” (anonymous) adopted by the town for image’s sake. After public consultation, it was voted by Town Council to move forward with their application in December 2014, and received designation in June 2016.

Indeed, suggesting lower levels of state-led or collaborative governance, others remain more critical of the town’s stance, stating that despite the “supportive atmosphere, the town has not done a huge amount other than being publicly supportive” (w7). The WSI round-table talks in 2006 themselves brought out a similar discontent from Wolfville

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<sup>39</sup> Founded by the Slow Food movement in 1999, Citta Slow’s goal’s aim to improve the overall quality of life in communities through alternative development; Citta Slow draws from Slow Food principles by enlarging and applying them to communities as whole, namely through the involvement of active municipal governments.

residents. Despite the recognition that town council generally cared about and worked for their town, residents still expressed concerns over a lack of real government leadership. One resident noted that it often feels as though “the Town desperately wants to do the right thing, but they are just not sure what it is;” the report itself mentioned a concern shared by many that the town is more worried about its “image than doing what is right” (anonymous).

Even as stated by Mayor Cantwell himself, while it is Wolfville’s “vision to be sustainable, in terms of actual policy or legislation, it's still something that we haven’t looked at specifically.” Indeed, there has also been clear indication that Wolfville still struggles with the process of accommodating divergent interests and community development goals. Mayor Cantwell reiterated the Town’s Land Use Bylaw and Wolfville’s stance that “it is a very short-sighted vision to pull farms to make them into subdivisions.” Yet, to date, residential and commercial development in and around Wolfville remains one of the areas points of contention between residents and council. As one local advocate stressed:

“[...] there is still no real unifying framework or leadership. While some towns can say “here is where we are making decisions from,” I feel Wolfville is really lacking that, that unifying framework when [Council] is being pulled in multiple directions” (anonymous).

Similarly, another SLFS proponent cautioned against getting too caught up in the written declarations made by governments. Speaking of Wolfville more specifically, they admitted that:

“While the Town has great aspirations and some values and ideologies that are consistent; actual application is where I haven’t necessarily seen a whole lot of evidence of sustainability principles. [...] So I wouldn’t give them an A, but maybe give them a C+. You know, ‘thinking hard but not necessarily following through’.” (anonymous)

In short, while the municipal government has certainly appeared more engaged in SLFSI than in Todmorden, the events and opinions described above confirm the need to measure degrees of engagement in collaboration. While some viewed the municipality’s efforts as extremely participatory and forward-looking, these in fact failed to translate beyond Wanna’s low to low-medium levels of collaborative commitment brought up in Chapter 2. Despite the TNS framework and WSI, Wolfville officials have rarely strayed from traditional state-led governance mechanisms (e.g. town hall meetings, consultations) nor have they proactively championed SLFSI as will be seen in the two remaining case studies. In other words, perhaps a lack of municipal leadership to pursue SLFSIs or to utilize more collaborative governance practices explain Wolfville’s middling levels of development to generate SLFSI change.

### **The need for SLFS: Community responses in response to high-level failures**

Given the tenuous role of the municipal government in relation to SLFSI development, the community’s engagement on sustainability issues has played a fundamental and continuous role in moving Wolfville’s initiatives forward. As was seen with the instrumental role of the CRS, many believe that without a strong community voice, most of Wolfville’s efforts would never have come to pass. Av Singh, local agricultural consultant and chair of the Just Us! Centre for Small Farms related the town’s accomplishments more simply to Nova Scotia’s cultural dynamics, believing that in

general, “the Maritimes has a lot to goodwill and support in its communities”. Others linked community engagement more directly to the unique characteristics of Wolfville as a progressive town steeped in its own history (w5; w7; w9).

However, local-level action was also described by participants’ as the result of real frustration for higher-level (e.g. provincial and federal) politics, which were often seen as failing to deliver on the necessary resources to see local projects through. For example, while Wolfville has been particularly supportive of Farm-to-School projects<sup>40</sup>, the town and its county school board have not been able to access the provincial funds necessary to appropriately finance them alone. In cases where higher-level funding is necessary, county councillor Patricia Bishop admitted that local efforts are often unfortunately pursued in vain, pointing to the need for higher levels for stronger vertical integration of SLFSI between levels of the state:

“We need to have the money do it, and as usual it’s like, okay fine, that idea is just going to have to be put on pause. After a while, you’re just beating a dead horse about how to actually access those funds to get things off the ground.”

One prominent provincial-level SLFS proponent shared a similar sentiment:

“Higher levels of government have been an incredible deterrent [...] I think at a municipal level, it can be really positive but we’re having the challenge of having the federal and provincial folks to be as supportive.” (anonymous)

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<sup>40</sup> Farm-to-School initiatives emerged in the United States as a means to supply school-aged children with fresh, local foods alongside nutritional or agricultural education, as well as to provide small- and mid-scale farmers with new markets for their crops. While these are funded by the Department of Agriculture in the USA, Canada does not provide federally funded meals or nutrition programs to its public schools. As a result, Canada benefits from very few of these programs, which fall into municipal or provincial jurisdiction. In Nova Scotia, the most formalized Farm-to-School project is through a joint initiative between the NS Department of Education and the Annapolis Valley’s Community Health Board, in which Wolfville is situated.

Indeed, there was clear understanding that it is *because* of its “strong community advocates”, and more often Wolfville’s academic community, that broader sustainability and food issues have been pushed by the town at all (w7-9). At the community level, the most-cited SLFSI success in Wolfville has been its farmers market, considered by Town Council and residents as “a strong anchor in the community” (w8). Since 1992, the Wolfville Farmers market (WFM) has progressively expand from a market of only 17 vendors operating 22 weeks of the year, into one of the largest year-round markets in the province with over 50 local vendors. A survey conducted for the WSI between 2006-2007 found that 71% of 279 respondents attended the WFM; the WFM was also ranked as one of the most important community events in Wolfville, with higher community attendance than going to the cinema or watching live entertainment (Wolfville, 2009).

In relation to SLFSI governance structures, the managers of WFM pride themselves in their use of participatory and collaborative governance schemes, through its Community Advisory Committee. Radcliffe explained:

“With each stakeholder group we come up with a bit of an action plan, a couple of stated goals for each stakeholder group... then we plug away at those things, whether it’s from the vendors themselves, the customers, the community organizations, the business community, the town, or the university, to make sure everyone has their say.”

One of the results of these advisory committee’s inputs has been the development of the WFM’s Good Food Hub Kitchen in 2014, meant to serve as both a food and cultural hub for the town. Supported by the WFM and supported by regional funding, the kitchen’s aim is to bring greater health and vibrancy to the Wolfville community, and serve as a

“social economic engine” (w6; w2; w5). As a certified production facility, it provides space both for community gatherings and for new or growing food businesses to work without having to invest in the high costs of private food preparation or processing facilities.

The Acadia University community has also been instrumental in inspiring SLFS change in the Wolfville area, inspiring initiatives and efforts between academic staff and students, such as Dr. Alan Warner’s Great Meals for Change and other student-led activism and education projects.<sup>41</sup> SLFSI engagement on campus has been attributed to inspiring “dynamic young leaders” to not only stay in the Wolfville community, but also to start SLFS projects of their own, be they businesses, local food restaurants, or lasting initiatives such as the CRS in the case of De Vreede (w7) or the Acadia Community Farm (ACF) operated by five Acadia students since 2008.<sup>42</sup>

However, what is made evident through examples such as these is the degree of isolation between projects, with more traditional project-based partnerships occurring between like-minded community groups or individuals. Certainly like any community, Wolfville is not without its own setbacks. Though many spoke easily of Wolfville’s many

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<sup>41</sup> With his students, Dr. Alan Warner developed Great Meals for Change, a meal-based educational event during which an individual hosts six friends for a dinner featuring sustainable food. Creating the space for informal focus group discussions, the dinner involves activities to promote conversations and reflections around food issues and choices.

<sup>42</sup> In 2008, five students sought to revitalize the on-campus farm that used to feed the entirety of Acadia University in the early 1900s. While the ACF is nowhere near the size of Acadia’s original farm, it now produces local organic food for both one of Acadia’s on-campus dining hall as well as the Wolfville Area Food Bank. The ACF also hosts individual plots for community members, students, and staff, as well as hosts workshops on food production and preparation skills and visits for elementary and high school students with the goal of teaching the Wolfville community “how to sustain themselves” (w10). The ACF is not intended to be a commercial enterprise, but more of an educational space based in community development and opportunities for student research (w10). The ACF’s continue hope is to be a visible means to engage students and the broader community on SLFS issues.

initiatives, they equally mentioned the community's divergent interests, with some respondents believing these are the source of a "very fractured" community (w8, anonymous). Specifically, it was stressed that SLFS efforts are not the ideals of all of Wolfville's residents, but of an active few that are simply more vocal or persistent than the others. A few community advocates were more cautious in relating Wolfville to a perfect example of SLFS development:

"Thinking through [sustainability] often happens in a very dreamy, sort of distant way that isn't really grounded. Like people talk about climate change but then race their speedboats, or drive SUVs to do groceries..." (anonymous)

or more cynically put:

"Compared to most places in Nova Scotia, Wolfville can be a kind of stellar example of things going well, but that doesn't necessarily mean much if it's stellar compared to a desert." (anonymous)

In particular, many were quick to point out that the realities of convenience, price, and "an inability to think outside the box" often trump SLFS ideals (w3).

Despite being progressive "leaders" within the province, participants noted that the majority of residents continue to "shop at large grocery stores and get their food at the cheapest price they can get" (w7, also w10). However, many were still optimistic that conversations and education amongst community members could help more people move away from "the conventional food system trap" (w3), defined as local (and national) reliance on cheap, commodified food. A concern over the current system was also used by some participants to discuss their concern over sustainable food as it relates to food access and poverty. More unique to Wolfville than other cases, many spoke directly to

the sizeable percentage of residents who live below the poverty line: despite being an affluent community, 25.2% of individuals living in private households in Wolfville had incomes below Nova Scotia's after-tax low-income measure in 2010 –well above the provincial average of 17.4% (Wolfville, 2009).<sup>43</sup>

As such, one major issue has been how to include the interests and participation of lower income or food insecure households in SLFSI conversations in Wolfville. As one participant regretted: “People who live below the poverty line... have their own set of issues, but they don't show up at town meetings to talk about what they think. They're just trying to keep their jobs and their houses together, so they don't really show up on the radar for a variety of reasons” (anonymous). Indeed, there was a strong sense that SLFSIs in Wolfville are more of a niche issue generally taken up by wealthier residents and the local intellectual crowd than as community projects (anonymous, w7-9).

Anderson pointed to the “bigger structural barriers”, such as food environments that promote cheap, unhealthy food as the only way for lower-income households to eat, as the major reasons lower-income households rarely feel implicated in discussions on sustainable or healthy food (w9, also w3).

As such, Anderson and other SLFS proponents have worked to enable greater collaboration between community groups and municipal government to address the underlying issues of poverty in rural Nova Scotia in general, and in the Wolfville area in

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<sup>43</sup> It was difficult to find whether this higher percentage is caused in part by Wolfville's higher than average university student population. However, participants who spoke on this issue generally perceived Acadia students as fairly well off in, and that low-income groups referred more directly to long-term community residents.

particular. In response to local interests, the municipality adopted a number of projects within its own departments, knowing these can be supported without the need for provincial support. For example, the Department of Economic and Community Development has pursued initiatives to provide weekly education and awareness workshops around food security issues and nutrition in partnership with the Wolfville Community Services Department and local nutritionists. It is specifically because of a lack of provincial involvement in SLFS development, or due to competing priorities, that “most people would rather just do things locally” (w1). As mentioned by county Councillor Bishop:

“In Wolfville, they’re doing some really interesting things. They keep on working at slowly rolling out programs and initiatives that are really great. [...] They are on the right track, they are on an exciting track. Where that track will take them, I don’t know, but for me, in my dream world, I would really love for all of us to figure out ways to really have some really thorough collaboration and programming around people who are more in need.”

Beyond municipal initiatives, a number of community-based solutions have also attempted to mitigate food access and improve education in Wolfville. For example, the Wolfville Area Food Bank has sought to work in partnership with local community groups like the ACF to improve access and education<sup>44</sup> (w10).

As an occasional volunteer for the Food Bank, Mayor Cantwell was particularly moved by this sense of partnership within the Wolfville community:

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<sup>44</sup> While the majority of the WAFB’s food comes from Feed Nova Scotia (the province’s charitable food organization), a partnership with local producers and the ACF has regularly brought in fresh local produce for client families (w1, w7, w10). Beyond food donations, the ACF has worked with the WAFB to organize education sessions on how to grow and preserve food, including one particularly successful initiative during which the ACF grew tomato plants for food bank users and provided them with education on how to care for them at home.

“For a small town, I look at how many [local farmers] take part in [food bank donations], how busy they are... it's a real gift what they do. They care. They give back.”

Though small-scale, partnerships such as these demonstrate the ability for collaboration to develop fruitful projects that would be impossible to take on alone. However, and pointing to a potential need for stronger government leadership, persistent underfunding and understaffing from the part of both the WAFB and partners, and the difficulty for vulnerable households to participate in organized activities due to time and job constraints, creates challenges in establishing long-term initiatives (w10, w2).

### **SLFSIs: An opportunity for private sector innovation**

Wolfville's attention to food access likely does stem in part from a 'foodie culture' promoted by and catered to the town's wealthier circles. However, located in the heartland of Nova Scotia's most fertile agricultural soil, it is no surprise that Wolfville's SLFS focus has been on local food production and consumption. In response to growing interest in local food, the food and agricultural sector in Wolfville has become a place of opportunity for many entrepreneurs who hope to capitalize on shorter value-driven supply chains (w3; w5-9). Whether it is through the town's local food restaurants, its growing wine and culinary tourism industry, or its food-related events and fairs, much of Wolfville's SLFS entrepreneurship has emerged from the community's growing priority for local food. Restaurants were mentioned as “always knowing where their food comes from, and often locally” (w7), even in establishments not generally known for prioritizing local food (such as a local pub) (w5). “Our community becomes these projects,” Anderson noted, “as we draw in local food restaurateurs, food people, young

entrepreneurs, businesses, success begets success!”

Indeed, farmers, food business, community groups and municipal government alike strive to brand Wolfville as a town with a progressive food culture. Radcliffe noted that the WFM thrives off of the local food dynamic:

“[...] Sustainable and local food is important in terms of what makes a community healthy, but so is having enough money to eat! When you marry the two concepts of [local food and community economic development], it’s like the perfect enterprise. You marry business objectives with community or social action, and they feed off each other!”

Local food has been the Wolfville community’s way of understanding SLFS. At the farm and business level, the town has long prioritized local food as a way to attach people to place, and to allow those working in agriculture to “tell their stories” through what they sell (w5). Compatible with the “food from somewhere” regime as opposed to one based on “food from nowhere” (McMichael, 2011: 810), Wolfville has championed local food as a means for local farmers to thrive and empower themselves based on their town and their communities’ own traits and uniqueness. In particular, direct marketing of local food is recognized as an opportunity to make a better living than by selling to supermarkets (w7) or simply as a means to create community (w3); for Tap Root Farms, the chance to “have conversations, share, and engage” with the local community was seen as the most invaluable, though non-monetized, priority (w3).

In an effort to support rural development and empower farmers through community-

based governance measures, the Wolfville-based FarmWorks Investment Co-operative<sup>45</sup> has been providing one of the more innovative ways of increasing the sustainability and viability of the Nova Scotia food supply since 2011. There has been clear recognition by local SLFSI proponents that while farmers used to have strong political clout in the province, they are no longer a significant enough percentage of Nova Scotia's economy. Organizations like FarmWorks step in and fill the governance void left by changing political and sectoral dynamics. Indeed, Linda Best, co-chair and founding member of FarmWorks, emphasized that the ability for Nova Scotians to invest in their own communities has been crucial for rural entrepreneurship in cases where the government does not or has not stepped up:

“There are businesses that cross all sorts of boundaries when looking for government support. They don't fit into any category so they don't have the kind of support mechanisms... Sometimes government departments try to provide them, sometimes not so successfully, because they are often squeezed for funding as well.”

Indeed, to many food activists in Wolfville, farmer entrepreneurship has been key in addressing SLFS. Again attributed to Wolfville's more progressive dynamic, the area has attracted the highest number of new farm entrants in the province, especially those engaged in small-scale organic and other forms of alternative agriculture (w1; w3; w5; w7; w9). More and more new farmers were seeking some way to contribute to SLFSs by

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<sup>45</sup> Operating under the motto of “Healthy Farms, Healthy Food,” this Wolfville-based for-profit cooperative has been a community leader in proving and promoting strategic community development and investment in food production and distribution. Practically, FarmWorks provides debt financing for farms and food-related enterprises through a Community Economic Development Investment Fund. By promoting private investment in local enterprises, FarmWorks aims to support opportunities for new and existing farmers, while offering investors the ability to purchase common shares in support of local food and rural sustainability (w4). In their first year, the co-operative was able to raise over \$200,000; it has helped fund over 35 local food producers and processors in the province, and is aiming to raise \$5M by 2016. Fundamental to the FarmWorks guiding principles are cooperation, democratic control, and a concern for community (w4).

finding a way to “get out of the industrial model and get back to human-scale farming” (w4).

One contributive factor to Wolfville’s dynamic local food scene has likely been the limited presence of large agribusinesses and retailers in the area (Warner). As in Todmorden, wariness towards a large-scale corporate presence was a particularly interesting indicator in creating spaces for alternative visions and practices around food and agriculture. A large agribusiness presence was linked to the creation of a “lack of competition, creating a more stagnant or complement rural economy” (w5). In contrast, the lack of corporate control in Wolfville was associated to the ability to “maintain the best parts of the old system while allowing new ideas to come in” (w7); the deliberate decision made by Council large commercial development in Wolfville was named as “the ability to keep the community about community, [and] attract the values of sustainability in general” (w2). In this way, participation from traditionally marginalized voices enables a more complete vision of alternatives models for food and agriculture, than one relying only on the interests of dominant players. While participation from certain groups (e.g. low-income groups) were still acknowledged as missing, conscious attempts to develop partnerships and collaborations between state, community and business groups speak to Wolfville’s desire for integrated and participatory SLFSIs.

However, some still felt that the leading voices of wealthier elites and academics in Wolfville’s SLFSI development has entrenched the notion that SLFS favour the creation of niche markets that are not accessible by all (w3; w9). While the niche marketing of

local food undeniably serves producers, Anderson sought to tease out the limits niche markets pose on local food security and access:

“We have a complication here that nobody wants to address head-on... that is that a lot of our land is moving into [value-added] products. This is really fine to support farmers, but [...] we *have* to have a conversation about how much land we are willing to give up to a crop that brings money to the area but is not necessarily geared to what people need on their tables all the time.”

While some farms have more proactively sought to enhance food access for vulnerable populations, including Tap Root Farm’s attempt at offering a more affordable CSA ‘staple box’ alongside their regular priced one, opportunities for bridging the gap between ‘sustainable’ food and affordability remain limited (w3). Indeed, it was recognized that much of Wolfville’s SLFS efforts, especially at the business level, hinge on the higher disposable income of the town’s residents. As Singh noted:

“Things definitely cater to the higher end, to those with more disposable income, those who are more interested in buying higher quality food and have the ability to. Unfortunately, if you will, that is what it takes for many of our small-scale producers to survive here.”

The farms primarily supported by FarmWorks certainly confirm this trend, as the majority of them seek to value add their production by moving into more luxury commodities, such as micro-brewed beer or wine. While food access issues have not been fully addressed, issues of poverty as they link to food and nutrition play a growing role within Wolfville’s SLFSI proponents. Mentioned both by the mayor and Dr. Anderson, the hope for some is to eventually move from a “charity to an empowerment model” (w9) of food access for the community as a whole.

## **The struggle to swim upstream: Wolfville's Uneven SFLS Development**

When asked why his municipal government was more supportive than others in Nova Scotia in regards to SLFS, Mayor Cantwell eloquently explained the rationale behind local action:

“I’m unaware of anything that the province has directed us to do, because really it’s nothing... This has all been a groundswell in our community. [...] These initiatives really come from the community. I guess if we don't look at sustainability here, well, it’s our thought that we have to take care of our own sort of business first within our little town. We have to get our house in order before we can take care of others.”

While only briefly touched on by participants, Wolfville’s homegrown efforts highlight the need for SFLSI to operate beyond municipal boundaries. Provincial funding regulations, a lack of provincial and federal support to existing and new farmers were named limitations to local initiatives. As stated by the Mayor, and as in many other case studies, developing SLFSIs in Wolfville is ultimately about community “solidarity” and capitalizing on one’s strengths (w5); however, there was also great frustration and fatigue around having to locally attempt to redress province-wide and even national concerns (w3-10).

To Gibson-Graham, allowing communities to learn and grow from their own unique experiences is central to creating subjectivities for change; rather than focusing on feelings of powerlessness to global forces, hinging goals to regional or local capacities engenders the possibility for creativity (2001). Such a focus on unique local capacities becomes not only a means to build community, but also a means to attract tourism and generate both social and financial wealth within Wolfville. As mentioned by Boyd:

“We look at opportunities. How can we support the local economy here to really grow, or provide an opportunity for local producers and products as something that can be sold as unique to here, like, “Come to Wolfville for this particular experience.” We’ve taken from our everyday experiences and how we live to figure out how we can use that as an attraction for others.”

It is also worth noting that the town of Wolfville has increasingly recognized the need to move beyond operating in isolation. As there is little agricultural land within municipal boundaries, the MPS has encouraged further co-operation with Kings County to protect and preserve agricultural land from development, and to maintain viable farms and agricultural space to provide the Wolfville community and its surroundings with a vibrant environment and rural culture. A major next step for Wolfville clearly involved developing the partnerships necessary to vertically integrate with higher-level partners and networks. Boyd noted:

“One important partnership that hasn’t really happened yet so far is our partnership with the county. Our county is where most of agricultural land and producers are. It has a bit of a different view of protection of agricultural land than maybe our town does, but we don’t have much of a say in what happens outside of our town. I think that partnership or that understanding of how we can work together could be a huge benefit... from us being an “urban” hub and the county being the “rural” hub to address these issues. It’s not very strong yet. It’s definitely still a place that needs work.”

The fact that such a municipal-county partnership does not yet exist is telling. This lack of integration once again speaks to the real limitations of local level actions, when conflict of interests and values persist between local citizens and officials seeking to develop SLFSIs and regional authorities. This dynamic is further unpacked in next case study, which highlights the case of a more supportive regional and provincial environment to SLFS change.

To circumvent the lack of higher level support, Wolfville has actively engaged as part of the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities to act as a leader for sustainable development within the province. Boyd stressed Wolfville's role as a provincial "agenda setter" (w2). In an attempt to scale up their efforts, the CRS has managed the Atlantic Canadian Sustainability Initiative since 2007, a regional program grounded in the TNS framework to derive higher-level solutions to sustainability development. The Initiative is made up of both regional organizations and is promoted by municipal governments, including Wolfville. Efforts such as these display an understanding that municipal initiatives operate within broader systems that both affect and can be affected by various scales and entry points. As mentioned by De Vreede, "community sustainability operates at multiple scales, and in the context of an increasingly globalized world [...] Communities in isolation being "sustainable" makes no sense, [it is about] about building and enriching human relations across space and time" (Biro and De Vreede, 2004).

Indeed, hoping to further tie farming in the Global North to the social and food justice issues taken up by farmers in the Global South, the latest community effort to consider local initiative includes the Centre for Small Farms developed in 2013 by the Just Us! Fair Trade Coffee Roasters Co-operative. The Centre was established as an informal space for farmers and community members to engage with local and global food justice issues, with a strong belief in the power of peer-to-peer education (w5). It purposefully connected with a number of national organizations, including Food Secure Canada, as well as international advisors, including John Ikerd and Vandana Shiva, to create greater ties between local communities and global causes. As mentioned by Singh, the Centre's

Chair, the Centre hopes to build social capital within the Wolfville community and its surrounding area around sustainable stewardship (w5). Though still in its early stages, the Centre hopes to serve as a space for knowledge co-creation for both farmers and residents, while also inviting new farmers to rent land to learn sustainable farming skills.

Yet despite the Wolfville community's best efforts, SLFS development ultimately appears disjointed. Certainly, Wolfville benefits from an impressive array of SLFS initiatives (see Table 9 below for list of key initiatives), including community-business partnerships, peer-to-peer education (e.g. Great Meals for Change, Centre for Small Farms), and local entrepreneurship with government support. However, they appear more as isolated initiatives than an integrated or joint approach to SFLS development. On the one hand, Wolfville proves a space for higher levels of collaborative governance, such as the partnership between the CRS and municipal government in implementing the TNS framework. On the other hand, the greater reliance on traditional state-led mechanisms that require minor levels on community support or participation (e.g. townhall meetings, public consultations, funding commitments) speaks to Wolfville's greater passivity on exploring more innovative SLFS change.

Participants themselves had mixed feelings on the town's SLFSI development. The malaise would appear to stem particularly from Wolfville's municipal government more classic laissez-faire attitude, where strong support in the form of financial incentives or expertise replaces a higher degree of responsibility and state-based leadership.

Alternatively, Wolfville's long-standing identity as a more progressive town has

tempered a desire to push for significant change. As will be seen in the two subsequent case studies, developing SLFSI and meeting initial objectives appears clearer when SLFSIs are integrated under a single and shared approach to food system change and when leadership in favour of these initiatives can be more clearly identified.

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Centre for Rural Sustainability (CRS) (since 2003)</b>	community-led	works in strong collaborative partnership with municipal government to develop WSI, MPS, and TNS framework, and facilitate discussion on sustainability and rural issues within municipal discussions
<b>Wolfville Sustainability Initiative (WSI) (2005-2007)</b>	collaboratively-led between community and state (municipal government)	developed as two-year sustainability education framework on environmental sustainability between CRS and municipal government using the Natural Step Framework; partially funded by grant received from Green Municipalities Fund; involved develop of a multi-stakeholder citizen advisory group, the Sustainable Community Planning (SCP) Task Force; enabled ‘environmentally-friendly’ changes within municipal organization (e.g. LED lighting, paperless meetings, road salt use)
<b>Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) (revised in 2008)</b>	state-led (municipal government) with community participation	co-developed with CRS, SCP taskforce contributed in hosting public town hall meetings, community discussions and promoting youth engagement in schools to contribute ideas to the MPS; MPS included changing land-use bylaws and the establishment of Agricultural Zones and a strong stance on supporting local agricultural as means to improve the local economy
<b>Fair Trade Town (since 2007)</b>	state-led (municipal government) with community participation	Promotes public procurement of fair trade products in municipally-run or sponsored events; promotes local production

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Wolfville Farmers Market (since 1992)</b>	community-led with municipal government support	Serves as a market space for local and regional producers and artisans; developed Good Food Hub Kitchen Community in 2014 as a space for community gatherings and as a certified food preparation and processing facility for new and growing business
<b>Citta Slow Designation (since 2016)</b>	community-led with municipal government support	Based on Slow Food's principles of improving quality of life through food, the designation would support local initiatives in favour of alternative development
<b>Acadia University projects (since 2008)</b>	university and academic staff-led	Supports awareness-raising initiatives including Great Meals for Changes; hosts the Acadia Community Farm, producing food for farm members, on-campus dining halls, and the local Food Bank
<b>FarmWorks Investment Co-operative (2011)</b>	Community-led	promotes private investment in local food and agricultural enterprises
<b>Atlantic Canadian Sustainability Initiative (since 2007)</b>	Community-led (regional level)	supports regional discussion and practices to sustainability development, through education, support to municipalities to develop sustainability plans, or full-cost accounting of local economic, environmental, and social assets
<b>Centre for Small Farms (since 2013)</b>	Community/farm-led	provides an informal space for farmers and community members to engage with local and global food justice issues through peer-to-peer learning; hosts practical workshops for new and aspiring farmers; showcases a variety of international plant breeds and farming methods through themed educational gardens

Table 9 - Key initiatives in Wolfville<sup>46</sup>

However, Wolfville's efforts should be recognized. The town continues to lead by example in its own provincial context. Indeed, a number of participants stressed that the fault may not lie as much with Wolfville itself, as with Nova Scotia as a province more

<sup>46</sup> These initiatives include results and actions contributing to sustainability more generally, which are viewed as contributive factors of a broader sustainable mindset adopted by state and community members.

generally. As Singh noted, “at the municipal [level], you definitely see a lot of ‘how can I help you?’ whereas at a provincial level, it's more like ‘you're doing this wrong and you're going to have to stop’” (w5). Indeed, one participant described the process of seeking SLFS change in Nova Scotia through a popular local saying:

“You've probably heard the comment of comparing a Maine Lobster pot to a Nova Scotian Lobster pot: in Maine you have to cover the pot because the Lobsters will try to escape but in Nova Scotia you don't have to because if one Lobster tries to escape it will be pulled down by the other ones. We do a terrible job at eating our own.” (anonymous)

While said lightly, the anecdote still speaks to the underlying frustration felt by many residents in being able to build towards sustainability at the provincial level where programs “are never really enough to truly inspire change” (w4; also w3; w5; w7).

Indeed, one of the major criteria of SLFSI is recognizing place-based solutions within a globalizing world, a characteristic that has been well exploited in Wolfville:

“Here, we take an opportunity when we see it, and that's huge. One of the biggest challenges we have as a province is that we don't really see Nova Scotia for its uniqueness, but a place like Wolfville does. It says, “yeah, we *are* special, and we're going to create a community by doing things that are different.” [Wolfville] really does become a place where you will tend to get alternative-minded people and entrepreneurs moving to ... and that's really what the whole province could be doing.” (w5)

Despite its own setbacks, there is clear evidence of a growing willingness within Wolfville's municipal government to support sustainable development —with the municipal culture of sustainability adopted through TNS playing a central role to create greater spaces of possibility. As is the goal of the TNS framework, sustainable practices are reinforced and reshaped through daily practices. Whether by attending the town's

farmers market or strolling along Main street on its wider, more pedestrian-friendly sidewalks, daily actions in favour of greater community sustainability give residents a strong idea of who they are and why they do things the way they do (Natural Step Canada 2008, 7). It is no surprise that a strong component of the Wolfville identity is based on its vibrant local food and art scene. It is rather the lack of coherence between local SLFSIs and persistent underfunding and motivation from county and provincial that make change difficult. As mentioned by Best:

“If I allow myself to get caught up in all of the rising sea levels and other aspects of global warming, I'm surprised people don't just throw up their hands[...] We have tremendous potential to be part of the solution here rather than being part of the problem.”

Indeed, SLFS proponents acknowledge that while overarching global contexts exists, local systems are “their playing field” for action (Gibson-Graham, 2002: 5). Over the years, the working partnerships and individual work done by municipal staff, community leaders, and private entrepreneurs have fostered commitment and fashioned the progressive image of Wolfville within Nova Scotia.

Wolfville is undeniably still a work in progress. This case still begs the question as to whether state-led SLFSIs, even when local officials “really have the community’s best interest at heart” (w1), are sufficient in the development of SLFS. The case study of North Saanich, BC, presents some responses to this question. It explores how distinct leadership roles, strong municipal involvement, and a supportive regional environment bring additional benefits, but also drawbacks, to a SLFSI.

## Chapter 6 – Case Study 3: North Saanich, BC, Canada

“North Saanich is sustained by a diverse, productive and vibrant agricultural economy that ensures the long-term health and vitality of our community and the neighbouring First Nation and municipal communities of the Saanich Peninsula.

We actively demonstrate our support for our agricultural heritage and economy through our involvement in and responsibility for the ownership and stewardship of our productive lands, the growing production of a diversity of high quality local foods and farm products, and by our care and support for those who do this work.

In so doing we have created a diverse and exemplary network of positive and supportive economic, social and ecological relationships and interconnections that sustain, strengthen, and define our vibrant rural community and its agricultural enterprises.” (North Saanich’s Agricultural Vision, 2010)

Located on the Saanich Peninsula of Vancouver Island, the district municipality of North Saanich is surrounded by coastline and neighbour to the Tseycum and Pauquachin First Nation reserves. The small rural community would go unnoticed were it not home to the island’s international airport and ferry terminal. Beyond its status as the area’s transportation hub, North Saanich has an even longer history as the peninsula’s agricultural centre. Only roughly 25 kilometers north of Victoria, North Saanich has served as the area’s agricultural centre since the 1800s. To this day, the majority of its residents strongly identify with their community’s rural and agricultural character, and retain “an acute awareness” of the need for environmental protection (North Saanich, 2016).

Indeed, the North Saanich community speaks frequently of its contributing role to Vancouver Island’s food security (s1-10). The North Saanich Community Social Planning Council (CSPC) noted that only fifty years ago, Vancouver Island’s agricultural

production met over 50% –some say 85% – of their local food needs; today that number stands closer to a much more modest 10% (2012). Speaking to residents of North Saanich, one also hears frequent concerns regarding the future of food in North America, and Canada more specifically, including Canada's over-reliance on increasingly unstable and precarious imports from California (s1; s5; s6). Similarly, locals are quick to cite the CSPC's estimate that Vancouver Island only has a three-day supply of fresh food to feed its population in the event of a natural disaster or should transportation to the mainland be compromised (s1; s4; s6; s8). In short, there is a strong awareness of North Saanich's role in maintaining a steady local food supply for their greater community.

North Saanich is home to just over 11,000 residents. Its demographics are homogenous<sup>47</sup>, and like Wolfville, the population is comprised of a large number of retired and working professionals, making it one of Canada's wealthier rural communities (s5; s7; s9). Like much of Vancouver Island, North Saanich benefits from a cool Mediterranean climate suitable for a particularly wide range of crops (in contrast to the rest of Canada). As a result, the district is home to 78 farms, including two of the Island's larger dairy farms, a diversity of horticultural and smaller livestock operations, and a large number of horse farms (BC Ministry of Land and Agriculture 2006). In addition, almost one-third of North Saanich's total area is part of BC's Agricultural Land Reserve<sup>48</sup> (ALR).

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<sup>47</sup> The North Saanich population is 94% white, 4.9% visible minority, 1.2% First Nations (Statistics Canada, 2006).

<sup>48</sup> Under the Agricultural Land Commission Act and the Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision and Procedure Regulations of the province of British Columbia, all ALR land must prioritize agriculture as a primary activity. While managed provincially by the BC ALC, management of ALR is further divided into six administrative regions—including the Island Panel Region to which North Saanich belongs. The ALR was established by the New Democratic Party (NDP) party in 1973 as a means to protect prime agricultural land from rapid urbanization in the 1970s. It was considered one of the most progressive legislation of its kind, meant to protect farmland as a primary and secure source of food for the province.

North Saanich's involvement in SLFS development began when protecting the municipality's rural character became a foundational component of Mayor Finall's election campaign in 2008. During her first term, and with the support of the Council, North Saanich passed its Whole Community Agricultural Strategy (WCAS) –a plan that has been recognized by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities as one of the best examples of “sustainable food system development” derived by a Canadian municipality. Beyond municipal efforts, North Saanich's SLFS efforts are supported by a number of community and non-governmental organizations including both local and regional groups. Its agricultural community remains active in promoting local and sustainable agriculture in the region. As mentioned by Rob Buchan, North Saanich's Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), “without local food production, a community's resiliency is greatly challenged.”

However, despite its laudable claims and while some of BC's best farmland can be found within the Saanich Peninsula, North Saanich still faces an increasing amount of development pressure as agricultural land continues to be converted to single-family residential housing, rural estates, and commercial real estate (Wittman, 2009; s1-3; s5; s8-10). This tension became central to North Saanich's story only a few years into Mayor Finall's term, creating a schism within district Council that stymied any state-led SLFS efforts until the following municipal election in 2014. As such, this chapter offers an understanding of the opportunities and challenges to state-led SLFS governance and

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ALR comprises just over 5% of BC's total land base (approx. 46,000 km<sup>2</sup>). ALR land is identified as those areas with the greatest agricultural potential and arable soil and it divided into 7 classes, and is thus based on biophysical criteria rather than socioeconomic conditions. It covers both private and public land. (BC Agricultural Land Commission, 2014) Development in ALR policy in 2014 and 2016 are described in more depth further in this chapter.

development through the case of North Saanich (see Table 10 for interview participants). In contrast to the example of Correns (explored in Chapter 7), North Saanich shows how fractiousness within a community –and especially within a municipal council– can significantly reduce and even stop SLFS efforts altogether, regardless of activities happening outside government institutions.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title relevant to case</b>	<b>Interview Type</b>	<b>Interview Code</b>
Alice Finall	Mayor - District of North Saanich; Founding Member - North Saanich Food for the Future	Face to face	s1
Rob Buchan	Chief Administrator Officer - District of North Stanch	Phone and face to face	s2
Linda Geggie	Coordinator - Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable	Face to face	s3
Penny Gibbs	President - North Saanich Food for the Future Society; North Saanich Farmers Market	Phone and Face to face	s4
Bernadette Greene	Market Gardener; Member - Peninsula Agricultural Commission & North Saanich Agricultural Advisory Committee	Face to face	s5
Dallas Bohl	Owner - Roost Farm Centre	Face to face	s6
Charles and Gillian Cunningham	Producers - Willow Tree Bread	Face to face	s7
Tina Fraser-Baynes	Farmer - Corner Farm	Face to face	s8
Diana Chown	Board Member - North Saanich Food for the Future; Chair - North Saanich Heritage Advisory Commission	Face to face	s9
Barbara Brennan	Chair - The District of North Saanich Agriculture Advisory Commission; Farmer - Bailiwick Farm	Face to face	s10

*Table 10 – North Saanich interview participants*

Despite its rural nature and its more recently progressive mayor and council, North Saanich’s story is one of local conflict and compromise. It also highlights the importance of broader policies (in this case, provincial) in supporting agriculture and agricultural

land, and the implicit support it brings to SLFSI development. Due to discord within municipal institutions, the case of North Saanich seems to confirm Jessop's understanding of government as governance's "necessary other" (2002), where cohesive local government support and complementary provincial policies become necessary, if not crucial, to long-term SLFS development.

### **Rural Sustainability: Perspectives from North Saanich residents and businesses**

While Wolfville's definition of sustainable agriculture focused primarily on local food and food access, North Saanich places much greater emphasis on the overall role rural landscapes play in being spaces of opportunity (s1-10). As Buchan explained:

"maintaining a rural atmosphere and supporting local food production [in North Saanich] supports everyone here and in the region." This belief was based on a varied but complementary understanding of sustainability in maintaining rural spaces. Some stressed that the sustainability's more environmental role; as mentioned by one farming couple, the Cunninghams, "you can't have 'sustainable' if it's just damaging the local." Others thought of sustainability's long-term goals in ensuring local food security (s1-5, s8-9). As best described by Buchan:

"[...] emergency preparedness [...] is something that surfaces in people's minds here, peak oil and rising energy costs, aquifer depletions around the globe. We're driving 100 miles an hour towards a brick wall, and we need to change course and approach food a little different... actually a lot differently. [We need] to produce, deliver, process, and consume food without eroding the natural capital of the world."

Due to these varied concerns from district residents, Mayor Alice Finall took up the goal of advancing SLFSIs as part of her mayoral platform in 2008. Since then, she has sought

to make concerted efforts to develop North Saanich as a sustainable rural community. Without her leadership, SLFS development would likely not have taken off to the same degree (s3; s5; s8; s9). Mayor Alice Finall has had a lengthy professional and volunteer record in support of North Saanich's agriculture, making her a key champion of sustainable agriculture and civic engagement in her district. Following a career in law, Mayor Finall served as the chair of a number of North Saanich's municipal agricultural committees such as the Environmental Advisory Commission, the Agricultural Advisory Commission<sup>49</sup> and the district's Agricultural Task Force<sup>50</sup>. As mentioned by Finall, her involvement came from "being struck when I was still in council in the 1990s, that there was a lack of any body of farmers or people here that were committed to local agriculture, [...] to better the ability for farmers to make their work productive and viable in the region". Before her tenure as mayor, she also served as a founding member of a few local community organizations, including the North Saanich Food for the Future Society, which organized the district's first farmers market. Also with an interest in

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<sup>49</sup> A number of municipal and regional districts in Canada have developed Agricultural Advisory Commissions or Committees (AACs) as advisors to local government councils on agricultural issues. The North Saanich AAC was established in 2007 to advise and provide recommendations on policy planning and activities to the District of North Saanich regarding both day-to-day and long-term agricultural activities. To promote agricultural voices and cross-sectoral policy creation, the North Saanich AAC is composed of 9 members, 7 from the agricultural community, and 1 member from the District's planning and environmental advisory committees respectively.

Unlike other provinces, BC's Ministry of Agriculture actively supports the creation of local AACs by providing advisory and planning support on how to best set them up. In an effort to promote cross-sectoral governance, the BC Ministry of Agriculture is fairly unique as a higher scale government body that emphasizes cross-appointing committee members from sectors such as agricultural, economic, environmental, or health committees. (BC Ministry of Agriculture, 2016a) While not specific to BC, the province appears to boast a higher number of AACs than other provinces in Canada. (Environmental Advisory Commissions play a similar role.) As of early 2016, North Saanich's five former advisory committees are now housed under either the Community Planning Commission and the Community Stewardship Commission.

<sup>50</sup> The North Saanich's Agricultural Task Force was conceived in 2006 to help draft the district's first Agricultural Area Plan and to provide the municipal council with advice and insights on local agricultural issues. Its mission statement was "to promote the sustainability and protection of land used for agricultural purposes in the District of North Saanich" (North Saanich, 2006). Agricultural Task Forces are generally used by municipalities and regional districts to help develop specific municipal plans and are made up of a diversity of food system stakeholders.

community development and participatory governance, Mayor Finall was a founding member of the Society for Governance Advocacy in North Saanich, a now defunct group that worked to give greater voice to community members in local governance processes.

When she first became mayor in 2008, and because the community of North Saanich has always expressed an interest in maintaining its agricultural character, Mayor Finall identified local food system development as one of the primary guiding forces to move North Saanich towards a more sustainable future (s2-5; s8-9). While she noted that there has always been two or three councillors encouraging agricultural and rural community development within council, Mayor Finall took her experiences as a councillor and community organizer as her “deep commitment” (s1) to do more. Supported by a majority of community voices, both she and her first municipal team recognized the role of rural communities like North Saanich to serve “as a food-shed supported by a diverse local food system” for their region (s2); certainly, in an area progressively urbanizing around the province's capital city, the mayor and her team acknowledged that local food and food systems were an integral element of maintaining the long-term sustainability of their community and region (North Saanich, 2011). In particular, North Saanich's Agricultural Area Plan (AAP), predating the WCAS by a year, points to local food as a means not only to create vibrant value-added agricultural and agri-tourism sectors to bolster the local economy, but also to strengthen community food security and civic engagement around food.

With the collaboration of the North Saanich farming community and residents, the newly

elected Mayor Finall and a supportive council moved forward a motion started by the previous Council to develop an Agricultural Area Plan (AAP) under BC's Local Government Act<sup>51</sup>. Similar to Wolfville's motivation, North Saanich pursued an AAP thanks to provincial encouragement and incentive (s1); however, both the Mayor and CAO stressed that rather than being reactionary, their team was extremely pro-active in its efforts, eager to explore opportunities and receive beneficial recommendations to support a SLFS for the long-term (s1; s2). Following an Agricultural Study Survey conducted for the municipality in 2009, the AAP published in 2010 sought to identify the challenges facing agriculture in North Saanich. Challenges included: 1) the difficulty for farms to remain financially viable given low profit margins, high input costs, and high property taxes; 2) barriers to entry for new farmers given high property values in the area; 3) labour availability, due in part to the limited wages and long hours that farmers can offer, as well as a lack of nearby or onsite affordable housing compounds; 4) an aging local farming population and fewer young people are replacing those farmers as they retire, given entry barriers; 5) a reduction in provincial agriculture extension services and support, beyond online support; and 6) climate change, given expected unpredictability in local weather patterns, including the possibility for inadequate water supplies in the summer (North Saanich, 2011a). At the same time, the AAP allowed the municipal team to recognize agriculture's multi-functional role in supporting sustainable development, as

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<sup>51</sup> BC's Agricultural Land Commission and Ministry of Agriculture have also been a particularly progressive Canadian provincial institution in supporting the development of Agricultural Area Plans under the province's Local Government Act (LGA). The LGA allows for municipalities and regional districts to develop plans for their jurisdictions —whether neighbourhoods, municipalities, or local areas. Similar to their assistance on setting up Agriculture Advisory Committees, through BC's Strengthening Farming Program, the provincial government offers assistance and support for local governments to develop agricultural area plans. Agricultural Area Plans have the goal of providing "policies and bylaws supportive of agriculture and communities long-term sustainability" by raising awareness and building community support for agriculture. (BC Ministry of Agriculture, 2016b)

well as acknowledge food and agriculture's non-monetary value, such as their pivotal role in creating a sense of place and supporting community (s2; s5).

The AAP further outlines a series of major avenues for municipal support and provides strategies on how to fulfill them. The following highlights key points —rather than an exhaustive list— of these possibilities: 1) supporting local agricultural economic viability by encouraging the development and growth of local farmers markets and agricultural infrastructure (e.g. local abattoir, community kitchen, shared certified food processing facilities for commercial use); 2) providing leadership and enabling greater citizen and private sector governance partnerships and participation by pursuing community-supported bylaws and policies, and influencing regional and provincial decision-making; 3) protecting farmland and promoting environmental stewardship by developing a farmland trust, assisting farmers in identifying provincial-level funding or environmental incentive programs; 4) providing education and training by celebrating agriculture through local events and encouraging schools to engage students in food and agricultural issues; and, 5) promoting community health and sustainability by encouraging community food gardens, kitchen space, and supporting local healthy food initiatives.

During the development of the AAP, under the leadership of Finall and the AAC, North Saanich also published a one-page Food Charter, to establish a strong commitment to ensuring food security (s1; s8-9). Buchan clearly explained their understanding of food security through the following statement, that itself reflects broader food discourse in BC, which focuses more on productive capacity to produce food rather than issues of income-

related food insecurity (as prioritized in the case of Wolfville):

“You have to have the food first before you can decide how to distribute it, right? So food security starts with making sure we have the infrastructure, the land, the people, and the distribution systems in place to even support local food.” (s2)

Also of note, North Saanich’s Food Charter uses the languaging of the right to food, committing to support strategies that increase the district’s ability to access and produce local nutritious food for its residents. The municipality’s understanding of the right to food particularly includes creating partnership with groups usually marginalized in agenda-setting, including farmers, neighbouring Aboriginal groups, and local businesses (North Saanich, 2010b).

Once completed, the AAP was used to develop North Saanich’s Whole Community Agricultural Strategy (WCAS) in 2011. Similar to the ideas behind multi-functional agriculture adopted in the EU, the WCAS purposefully adopts a holistic approach to planning, seeking to diminish the traditional boundaries between human and ecological environments to create a cross-sectoral and integrative approach to food system planning (s2). The WCAS also looks to mindfully integrate both traditional and non-traditional<sup>52</sup> forms of agriculture and acknowledge the place of SLFS as part of the larger systems around them into its plan (North Saanich, 2011; s2). These priorities are particularly interesting in light of the key characteristics identified in transformative food systems, namely the ability to embed SFLS into both the broader ecological and socio-cultural

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<sup>52</sup> To North Saanich, non-traditional agriculture is defined as non-profit agriculture such as backyard and rooftop gardening, community gardening, and food production done on public land.

systems around them (Levkoe, 2011). Rob Buchan, also the principle planner for the WCAS, explained his rationale for this strategy:

“I took a step back and said we need to approach this differently. I wanted to address food systems planning in terms of all the scales: the urban scale, the backyard scale, the neighbourhood scale, right up to local farms and regional farming, all in one document. The Agricultural Area Plan did that. It really focused on the conventional farming sector and to me that approach is just a function of how agriculture has evolved over the last 50 years, since WWII, where it’s been separated and disconnected from communities in rigorous policy supported regimes... So from my point of view we needed to completely rethink how communities are structured and reintegrate food systems as part of the whole system rather than something that is being disconnected and estranged.”

In a further effort to re-integrate community and agricultural stakeholders in local governance mechanisms, both the 2010 Agricultural Area Plan and the 2011 WCAS were developed with continuous input from the public and interested stakeholders —avenues included the Agricultural Advisory Committee, resident survey data and interviews, and a series of well-attended open community dialogues (s1-3). The goal of these state-led participatory governance schemes was to develop a plan not only to reflect the diversity of values and interests in the community, but also to allow citizens, businesses, and local government officials alike to take ownership over each document’s action plan. More specifically, Mayor Finall pushed collaborative governance mechanisms after noticing that other municipalities’ agricultural plans were often a result of *either* municipal initiative *or* community efforts rather than a collaboration between both:

“We moved ahead the way we did because from a practical perspective, we wanted to have specific actions that could be done both by the municipal government *and* community members, or by both in cooperation.”

While examples of these partnerships are featured in the subsequent sections, both North

Saanich's WCAS and the subsequent Agriculture Economic Development Strategy of May 2012 outline priority actions for SLFS development ranging from investment in local food system infrastructure to education; these further identify the necessary municipal, business, and community partners that need to be involved to best fulfill each objective. The Mayor and her CAO reflect that partnerships between state and society are meant to allow for efficiency and effectiveness, both through conjoined or independent actions in cases where one partner might be lagging.

Referring to farmer participation within the AAC and the number of open forums and opportunities for residents to participate in institutional processes in particular, Diane Chown, long-time resident and board member of the North Saanich Food for the Future Society, mentioned positively:

“Certainly, there have been incredible changes over the last 15 years... The interest and openness or the collaboration with small producers particularly. The support between the community and municipality that I have seen over the last 15 years on what's happening for local agriculture has really changed.”

As in both previous cases however, some participants were unsure about how to interpret municipal efforts, hinting that they believed local government might be seeking to offload some of their responsibility onto the community, rather than taking concerted action to help in their own right:

“The Council's attitude is more: okay, if *you* do things and don't ask them to put any money into it. A good example is when one of the councillors said: “I don't want to put a single tax dollar into agriculture” so... I guess it's fiscally responsible for municipal government to offload things to anybody else willing to do it, especially if they are funded by somebody else, but I'm not sure...”  
(anonymous)

Nevertheless, Mayor Finall and CAO Buchan stated their high level of awareness that municipal governments need to play a leading role in SLFS agenda setting (s1-s2). Specifically, the AAP and WCAS clearly outline the four concrete ways municipal government's aid in sustainable food system development: 1) by providing resources; 2) by facilitating and managing relevant programs and projects; 3) by advocating and encouraging change within community; and, 4) by supporting sustainable food system developments through regulation and policy (s1, s2).

Indeed, during Mayor Finall's first term (2008-2011), municipal response to the actions laid out by the WCAS and AAP were quick and efficient, focusing on "the low-hanging fruit" (s1) to make headway on SLFS development. At the time, the Mayor and North Saanich council acted swiftly within their capacity as a municipal government by furthering policies and bylaws supportive of agriculture and SLFS development. Discursively, North Saanich formalized its agricultural identity through the statements made in its municipal documents and plans, hosting community dialogues to improve an appreciation for and the importance of local agriculture, and by encouraging youth and child learning opportunities (s1-3).

More concretely, changes in local bylaws included easing standards on agricultural signage and farm gate stands for greater visibility, supporting diversified agriculture by promoting agro-tourism and farmland stewardship —such as co-organizing local food events, representing local agricultural interests at regional and provincial level meetings, and attempting to pursue more innovative agricultural economic strategies that include

municipal involvement<sup>53</sup>.

The municipality also took further steps by commissioning the development of an Economic Development Strategy for Agriculture completed in 2012, and reviewed in 2013. This document defines and identifies best practices for local government involvement in agricultural policy, including priority actions to retain and enhance agriculture in North Saanich. One important insight resulting from the strategy was the acknowledgement that rural development strategies in the area will only generate positive results if taken on by the municipality of North Saanich *in conjunction with* the greater region. Pointing to the need for higher levels of support and the role of multi-scalar governance, the district adopted an implementation and monitoring plan in 2014 that

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<sup>53</sup> Two examples of more innovative involvement proposals include the Sandown Raceway proposal and the Glen Meadows Golf Course initiatives. The Sandown proposal was the cause of particular municipal controversy during my fieldwork. In May 2011, the District received an application from the owners of the Sandown Raceway, once a horse race track, to rezone 12 acre of its 95-acre site for commercial use. The other 83 acres were proposed to be gifted to the municipality for agricultural purposes. However, the 12 acres of commercial use would have to be taken out of the ALR, but would be replaced by a further 12 acres on municipal land to allow for no net loss of ALR land in North Saanich. Despite strong community support for the proposal, the District went through a series of heated consultation between a divided municipal council, residents, developers, and local businesses, the Capital Regional District, First Nations communities and neighbouring towns, especially in regards to the purpose and use of the 12 acres of commercial space. The main restriction from the pro-SLFS council members and residents has been to limit the entry of big-box stores and casinos; pro-development advocates sought for more land and capacity for development on Sandown property. The proposal was tabled due to a 3-4 split against moving forward in late 2011. The 12/83 acre split was finally agreed upon in 2014, though remediation and construction on the property is unlikely to start before 2017. Previously, the 83 acres has been suggested to be parsed out and developed into educational agricultural spaces for youth and children, a permanent space for the North Saanich Farmers Market and a food hub, small plots of farmland for young or prospective farmers, agricultural and nature trails, amongst other options (s1-5, s7-10).

The Glen Meadows Golf Course is comprised of 130 acres of ALR land. A 2014 proposal to Council suggests that 100 acres would be converted to farmland, while 30 acres would go to the construction of a 33 single-family unit rural agricultural neighbourhood (RAN) integrated with food production spaces and activities. The goal of an RAN is to hybridize residential and agricultural spaces to improve community through local food production. Beyond private dwellings and personal gardens, the RAN proposes the development of community orchards, gardens, and spaces for small livestock, a neighbourhood market garden and farmers market for residents to share, sell, or trade their produce, a local food bistro, and space for on-site processing (e.g. a commercial kitchen). To date, the Council is still moving to advance the proposal and bring to the province's ALC (North Saanich 2014, North Saanich 2015).

hopes to include greater partnership with other municipalities, organizations, and regional agencies to deliver on its planned objectives. Overall, the Mayor and supportive councillors have created a series of plans and bylaws – sending a strong and consistent message to move SLFSIs forward in the District. While its challenges will be raised subsequently, the plans showcase municipal government’s initial willingness to act on SLFS development both on its own and in collaboration with community and private sector groups.

### **Local and regional politics: The good, the bad, and the ugly**

Of the many characteristics of rural communities, the issue of preserving land for agricultural use has long been a source of contention and debate (Dunn, 2013; Heimlich 2001); a degree of fractiousness between those seeking to maintain rural spaces and those seeking greater opportunities for residential or commercial development is not uncommon. Smaller communities can be seen as more immediate spaces for interactions, where social capital can develop more easily due to proximity, they can also be spaces for dissension; yet, this also means municipal politics can easily become personalized. When conflicts arise, local dynamics run the risk of becoming more embittered and polarized “battles of personalities and perceptions” (Ruff in Westad, 2010).

The North Saanich community has been described as a historically divided community with a “legacy of horrible tension”, pre-dating any conflicts around SLFS development by far (ibid; anonymous). Penny Gibbs, current President of North Saanich’s Food for the Future Society, neatly summed up this tensions within local politics:

“I feel as if it’s always been something of this way here. I was reading an old paper that goes 100 years back, and there has always been nothing but strife in North Saanich. So it’s not new within municipal government! Because we’re so grassroots here, our nature is much more emotional, much more immediate.”

Beyond the issue of development, local tensions were also attributed to the traditional conflict between those who embrace government as a support structure for community and local agriculture and those “that don’t want government to get in the way of private property and have their taxes spent on it” (s2). Regardless of its origins, the most major setback in North Saanich stems from this very dynamic, which has more recently trickled into the politics of SLFS development. Many called this dynamic “very divisive” (s4) or “extremely fractured” (s1, s2), others remained very cautious on how to approach the topic or, in fact, refused to discuss it at all. As clearly put forward by North Saanich Community Voices, a citizen-based community group in favour of sustainable rural development (2014):

“One vision sees North Saanich as a thoughtful balance of farms and homes, a residential-rural community that, with deliberate, inclusive planning, stays green as it carefully and consciously grows. The other vision sees North Saanich as a business opportunity, a beckoning expanse of underused territory, ripe for wholesale residential, commercial and industrial development.”

However, there was also a strong belief from those interviewed that while both visions exist, proponents of the first have always been more numerous, active, and vocal within the community (s1, s2, s4).

Division within the municipal government itself was particularly evident during Mayor Finall’s second term (2011-2014), during which the district council became evenly split

between those remaining from the mayor's initial team and newer councillors more closely aligned to a commercial development agenda. While the Mayor and her team fast-tracked a number of SLFS documents and commitments between 2008-2011, efforts were all but stymied after the 2011 election where tensions within council ran high:

“Some people have started calling us “No Saanich” because the word, well, it’s heard often now at Council!” (s4)

“The mayor is a huge support of food security, and I would almost say in a vindictive way, [the new Councillors] went after any and all of her projects to squash them.” (s3)

Others commented on how much easier it had been for community-municipal partnerships to take place under a supportive council, and regretted the lack of opportunities for residents to collaborate in and speak through traditional avenues for citizen participation under the 2011 municipal government (s8-9; anonymous). Within the divided council's three-year term, municipal council meetings quickly spiraled out of control: “They can't decide to do anything in there,” one interviewee noted, “They've even had to have mediators come in. It's a complete ‘gong show’ in there.” (anonymous) Recognizing the delicate position of agricultural debates in their community, SLFS proponents have actively sought “not to politicize [their efforts] too much” (s4) and have tried to pursue their own efforts as community- rather than politically-based.

There was also strong recognition that division around support for local agriculture and rural livelihoods more specifically stemmed from a deeper “epistemic division” (s2) of world-views:

“They have different priorities. [Those Councillors] don't accept that we won't always be able to do things the way we do now and this is a fuss about nothing.” (s1)

“I’ve had a conversation with one of the councillors who is pro-development and he did say that he doesn’t see why we can’t just import our food indefinitely. So, when I talked to him about some of the issues around water in the States, for example, and how a lot of our food comes from California and Mexico, he didn’t seem to have that on his radar at all...” (s5)

Many did not hesitate to voice their irritation over these conflicting ideologies:

“We all have causes. That’s fine. I’m not even saying they are all good or bad causes, but if we can’t feed ourselves... well, that’s a *basic* cause!”  
(anonymous)

A lack of common vision became a clear point of contention to the CAO, who quickly came to realize the value of embedding a culture of sustainability more deeply within the municipal psyche –much like the efforts pursued in Wolfville. He noted:

“It’s not just a good community or administrative environment that’s necessary, but a political one as well. And that’s hard, for North Saanich, this might mean waiting for the next election. So, it’s so important to embed these things beyond the political so that they can endure.”

A similar conflict was also identified between the district’s larger conventional farmers and its smaller alternative producers (s2; s4; s6). While smaller producers hoped to improve partnerships with larger ones, they acknowledged the limitation of these relationships due to the following reality. As mentioned by the head of the North Saanich farmers market:

“A lot of big farms don’t give us support because they just feel we are lightweights in the field. They’ve been here for 3-4 generations and aren’t so supportive of us or the farmers markets, because they don’t think they’re necessary. And that’s disappointing because we need cooperation for this to work, not competition.” (s4)

Indeed, in studies of successful co-governance schemes, tensions most commonly arise between potential collaborators in decision-making because of divergent interests or philosophies (Thrupp, 1996: 19). At the time of the research interviews, and because of an inability to resolve local conflict, the pro-SLFS community waited for the 2014 municipal election with much anticipation. To their relief, the election did vote in a new, more unified council, which Mayor Finall noted was a vindication of her and her supporters' desire for collaboration over conflict (Heywood, 2014).

### **Mitigating politics: community and business involvement**

“While the current council unfortunately does not see [alternative food system development] as a priority at all, the amount of community support is phenomenal,” Finall mentioned about the period of 2010-2014 town council. Indeed, how strong a role do community and business ultimately play when municipal support for SLFS efforts can suddenly be found wanting? What efforts have actors from civil society and business adopted in North Saanich to fill the void? Especially during the council's years of conflict over SLFS, it is the everyday actions, willingness, and “huge amount of community support” from the North Saanich community and producers that allowed the district to progress during those years (s3). That being said, it would also appear that the overall effect of civil society and private enterprise's SLFS efforts were greatly muted due to a lack of political support; many residents felt that if community and business efforts had been more consistently supported by their municipal government, North Saanich would be much further along its SLFS trajectory. As mentioned by one SLFS proponent, “I definitely have burnout. Community efforts need more support” (anonymous).

Like most rural communities, support for local food is a way of life, whether residents are consciously aware of it or not. Most interviewees assumed that all residents choose to purchase locally to some extent, simply because of the convenience and proximity to neighbouring farm gates (s3-5; s7). The Gillighams, local bread-makers for the North Saanich farmers market agreed: “people are always positive about local. They generally seem prepared to pay a little bit more for something that’s fresh and made locally” (s7). Indeed, non-profit organizations like the North and South Saanich Agricultural Society have existed since the mid-1800s to make local agricultural products more visible throughout the region. More recently, the North Saanich Food for the Future Society (NSFFS), founded in 2008, brought together a number of community members interested in supporting SLFS development in the district. Run as a non-profit group, the society’s main projects have included creation and oversight of the weekly North Saanich farmers market, speaker series, workshops, and food events on growing and preserving local food, which are believed to have had a very positive impact on the community (s4; s8-9).

In 2008, the NSFFS also developed the annual North Saanich Flavour Trail in collaboration with local and regional community groups, businesses, and municipal support. The event was initially developed to help promote agri-tourism and profile local food and agriculture in North Saanich. It proved so successful that it has grown into a regional event, the Saanich Peninsula Flavour Trail, which now incorporates other rural communities in the Victoria area. More recently, Flavour Trail has sought to showcase the role of additionally marginalized voices in SLFS —namely those of local First Nations communities. The 2013 Flavour Trail launched its first pit cook event in

partnership with a local Elder, to highlight traditional foods and traditions. As explained by Gibbs, the decision to include marginalized voices and experiences into discussions around SLFS are key:

“One of the reasons why we were so keen on the pit cook, is because if any society has been able to husband their resources and maintain a sustainable food supply it was the First Nations peoples, and they were originally part of this district. And already, when we were talking to them, the Elders were telling us that most of their traditional food supply is gone, [...] because of our over-harvesting or polluted waters, some of the animals are just gone.”

In terms of more frequent activities of the NSFFS, the now seven-year-old farmers market has also become “a Saturday morning fixture in the community” to support SLFS (s4). Many residents spoke highly of their local farmers market’s ability to generate goodwill between producers and consumers:

“There’s so much more trust in those relationships than when things come from afar! You can buy something from us and look us in the eye or come visit our farm... it’s all very transparent.” (s8)

The market has also served to create community bonds between residents themselves. As newer residents to North Saanich, the Gillinghams felt particularly welcome by the community through the farmers market. “We’ve connected with so many people through the farmers market,” they mentioned, “they were so supportive of us and of having new producers join. They were really excited to have [us] there.” (s7)

In addition, the close bonds developed through direct market interactions display aspects of alternative market governance; while a sentiment not shared by all, some felt they were able to eschew formal certification completely, such as organic certifications, which

were considered too costly for small-scale farmers and market gardeners (s4-5). Though some did note the positive role such certifications can play in reassuring local consumers (s6; s8), a number of producers also deemed complex third-party certification schemes unnecessary in a local setting. As in Todmorden, the North Saanich farmers market has helped residents recognize the importance of both monetary and non-monetary exchanges as a foundational part of SLFS and community development. In other words, producers at the local level can choose to combine the use of market-based mechanisms such as third-party certification alongside more informal mechanisms based simply on personal trust and reciprocity.

Many have also attributed the efforts pursued by the NSFFS and the early municipal council as the cause for an increase in local market gardeners and small-scale farmers. As in a number of other case studies, the presence of a strong farmers market itself has motivated not only an increase in the diversity of available local produce by local farmers and market gardeners, but also encouraged more of its residents to try to grow their own food (s3-5; s7-8). Like the collaborative business partnerships developed in Wolfville, the North Saanich farmers market has also provided an environment for food-related businesses to develop mutually-supportive opportunities for one another; in one example, one farmer selling greens and salad dressing maker supply coupons for each other's products to motivate their clients to keep money within the community (s8). Overall, Gibbs emphasized that the market's organizers have always been "very consciously and cooperatively constructive in terms of opportunities", especially in identifying new growers and artisans who can offer a greater diversity of local products.

Beyond the farmers market, the Roost Farm Centre was often cited as one of North Saanich's biggest local food success stories. The Roost has sought to be a "full circle" enterprise (s4), facilitating projects from growing their own wheat—an uncommon practice on Vancouver Island—to maintaining their own livestock to supply their bakery and cafe, as well as developing their own winery and agricultural education centre. Made famous as the local grain suppliers for Smith and MacKinnon in their book, "the 100-Mile Diet", the Roost has operated as a farm centre and served as an agri-tourism hub for North Saanich since May 2002 by Hamish Crawford. In line with the Roost's motto, "a Passionate Farm Experience," the family's entrepreneurial spirit is infectious. As is often the dynamic within SLFS, Dallas Bohl, Crawford's son-in-law, admitted that most of what they do is simply based on curiosity and innovation: "If there's something we want to try, we just do it and see how goes!"

The Roost also serves as an example of the difficulties of farming under the dynamics and regulations enforced by higher-level institutions and systems. They and many other local producers recognized the limited financial growth of living solely off the local economy, and emphasized the need to offer value-added products as a primary means to remain economically viable. Bohl emphasized:

"You can't grow traditionally out here. The properties and the equipment [are] way too expensive. It does make sense, you have to value-add. It's the only way to keep things sustainable for us. Instead of selling wheat to the wheat board or even grinding our own flour and selling it, we can't make it making a few extra cents. But if we turn it into bread and sandwiches, now we can make a plan out of that. Value-added is the only way to do it."

Also mentioned by producers in every other case study, adding value has come to mean

anything from processing on-farm produce into preserves or breads to hosting school groups for farm tours and education. For others, it has meant moving into agri-tourism by hosting corn mazes or opening bed and breakfasts. Others still, like the Brennans of Bailiwick Farm, have sought to capitalize on the peninsula's climate by growing rarer crops such as kiwis and hazelnuts (s10). Indeed, while North Saanich's has witnessed a decrease in the number of farms in the area between 2001 and 2011, the small increase in the number of farms between 2006 and 2011 were made primarily by organic farms and those engaged in value-added processing (Statistic Canada 2006 and 2011). However, value-adding and agri-tourism implies that there is a customer-base with the income to support these endeavours; the questions remains as to whether such mechanisms still allow for SLFS development to occur in more impoverished or more rural settings, where communities may not benefit from as a wealthy clientele.

Further, many producers in North Saanich have become all too familiar with the bureaucratic red tape often involved in setting up new agricultural enterprises, especially in dealing with provincial level policies. For example, when the Roost sought to develop its winery and grow as an agricultural education centre, Bohl ironically explained they were confronted with claims by the ALC that "they were doing too much farming" to apply for a non-farm use permit. Only after involving a lawyer and months of ongoing communication with the provincial government, were the Roost's plans deemed acceptable as pre-approved farm use:

"It felt wrong for them to send a message that value-added farming is not what they want. [...] There are some pretty goofy regulations out there and we had to jump through a lot of hoops for them, especially when we really just trying to increase the visibility of local farming. (s6)

For this reason, regional organizations serve a fundamental role in supporting SLFSs in their area. In particular, the Capital Regional Food and Agricultural Initiative Roundtable (CRFAIR) is a regional multi-stakeholder coalition of 30 organizations working to strengthen regional food systems by supporting SLFS initiatives since 1997. Early on, CRFAIR recognized the need to serve as the umbrella for the Victoria area's many food-related advocacy groups. "There were too many groups doing the same in the beginning," Gibbs explains, "there was too much duplication, and that just divides your based. CRFAIR was able to provide a very good central voice". Many advocates praised CRFAIR for normalizing awareness on food issues in the region by creating a critical mass of discussion (s3-5). To build this awareness, the coalition engages through a transparent and horizontal governance model (s3); Linda Geggie, CRFAIR coordinator, emphasized the power of using a variety of ways to organize, whether formal or informal, or as working groups, roundtables, or formalized commissions.

Notably, CRFAIR recognized the marginalization of local farmers from discussions and decision-making around food and agriculture, and sought to engage them early on. In particular, the coalition's annual Farmer2Farmer conference brings together almost one hundred local farmers and collaborators to meet their peers and share insights and expertise on a broad range of farming issues; these have included practical conversations on agricultural techniques, infrastructure, and the role of various levels of government to support local food and farming (s10). Brennan, chair of the Agricultural Planning Commission at the time of research (and the source of inspiration for the conference), noted that conferences such as these not only support farmers but also help North Saanich

follow through with commitments made in its Agricultural Area Plan to engage more regularly with the farming community. As highlighted in each case study to varying degrees, gatherings such as these also serve as critical means of building momentum for SLFS efforts and perpetuating conversations around SLFS issues.

### **Regulatory discontent: municipal possibility vs. provincial constraints**

Beyond local level opportunities, all participants stressed the need for municipal and regional government action when higher levels of the state fail to meet citizens' needs. The community dialogues held during the 2010 Agricultural Area Plan found that participants strongly felt that federal- and provincial-level policies and regulations support large-scale agribusiness at the expense of small-scale agriculture actors (such as those in North Saanich). Others also pointed to the larger systemic issues of rural land values (as influenced by provincial policies) as a major prohibiting factor in limiting access to land for young farmers, and the municipality's potential role in helping develop farm trusts or leasing land (s4-5; 8).

Others still criticized higher levels of government for their lack of familiarity with their own regulations; one local businessperson expressed particular frustration regarding the hoops he felt he had to jump through when trying to sustainably run a local food venture:

“Provincially, there's so much confusion over what's permitted. It's like the left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing. You know, they had a lady that was in charge of applications and she just... well, everything was no. So then [we'd] study up on regulations and then go in and then they'd still say no, but [we] would say 'well, yes, we read that we can'...” (anonymous)

Despite ALR policy being a significant component of what has allowed North Saanich to retain fertile agricultural land, a similar complaint was often lodged against the reality of ALR regulation in practice. While ALC policy trumps zoning bylaws established by North Saanich, the district may also act as an agent of the ALC in local land-use issues related to the ALR. SLFS proponents expressed frustration around ALR land-use policies; with similar sentiments being shared in Todmorden, many local food advocates emphasized that food production should take precedence over other agricultural activities:

“I could build a giant riding ring on ALR land. It wouldn’t even matter what size it was, it would be approved, even though horse riding really isn’t farming! Now try to build a farm building, and all of a sudden they’re saying “no!”, “why?”, “that’s too big”... Really? The Land Commission who is there to protect us, they should be supporting us tooth-and-nail!” (anonymous)

“Right now, horse boarding counts as agriculture. Really, it shouldn’t. It’s just rich people wanting to send their daughter to ride horses, and that just goes on here. We could be getting a lot more agricultural land for that... it’s clearly not agriculture.” (anonymous)

These frustrations were voiced to demonstrate feelings that food production was not sufficiently valued by policy makers and land developers. Indeed, beyond types of agricultural uses for ALR, more recent controversy has included removing 4.4 hectares out of the ALR for commercial development near the Vancouver Island airport located on district land. After applications submitted by the Victoria Airport Authority and its development partners, the ALC region office agreed to exclude land from the ALR on the basis of its proximity to industrial and aviation areas (Heywood, 2016). While the decision has been appealed by North Saanich residents, with the support of local

community and environmental groups, examples such as these were used by local SLFS proponents to demonstrate the inconsistent support for local agriculture and protection of agricultural land by regional and provincial commissions.

These local events mirror more recent changes proposed in provincial ALR policy by BC's current Liberal government. These amendments were enacted in September 2014 under the Bill 24 ALC Amendment Act, and were the first major changes made to land reserve, since created by an NDP government in the 1970s. Under Bill 24, ALR land is now subdivided into two zones: the first comprises roughly 10% of previous ALR land—which includes land on Vancouver Island—and is to remain strictly protected, the second includes the other 90% and policy surrounding its use will be relaxed to allow for a degree of non-agricultural development. While major criticisms of Bill 24 include the fear of agricultural land speculation causing further limits for new farmer entry, and while the NDP opposition has argued that amendments would “erode” the very purpose of ALR (Hunter, 2014a), the stated purpose of creating Zone 2 has been to allow farmers to access new options to make or supplement their income. Further criticisms have been raised against the inadequate public consultation prior to drafting the Bill (NFU, 2014).

Further amendments to ALR proposed as Bill 25 in May 2016 would allow ALR property owners the right to refuse removal of their land from the Reserve even if the land is deemed unsuitable for farming by the ALC (BC Legislative Assembly, 2016). As it stands, ALR land owners benefit from tax breaks including school and property taxes; rather than improving and protecting fertile agricultural land, NDP opposition leaders

have argued that such an amendment could easily be used by ALR landowners with poor agricultural land to defend their status (MacLeod, 2016). While not directly targeting North Saanich itself, pro-local food system proponents have argued that ALR policy changes such as these signify that provincial-level policy-makers are moving *away* from rather than *towards* long-term sustainable food thinking (Wittman and Tunnicliffe in Hunter, 2014b).

As a result, many local SLFS advocates place their hope —though perhaps partially misplaced— in municipal action over the provincial or federal arenas to address the specific needs of their communities. While provincial and federal levels were also mentioned as being able to provide monetary support for local initiatives, residents of North Saanich preferred the power of devolved authority over more centralized solutions (s1-4; s7-9). Greater municipal control was seen as a means to allow for better laws and regulations to support agricultural and SLFS efforts (s1-2; s8-9):

“Municipal politics has such a closer, more immediate effect on your life than anything provincial or federal. I think that’s something that needs to be noted. That’s where the real support for local food, protecting land, farmers market, goes to live or die.” (s4)

Indeed, North Saanich has also occasionally been able to play a strong municipal role in supporting both local and broader regional SLFS efforts. For example, North Saanich has acted as a strong proponent of regional collaboration as a means to maintain both the unique characteristics of local spaces, while overlapping complementary or shared priorities of broader scales. In particular, North Saanich launched a regional inquiry on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. In collaboration with their AAC, the district

provided research for the Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities to move forward a provincial motion to prevent foreign ownership of BC farmland. The issue was eventually taken up by the Union of BC Municipalities. While Mayor Finall acknowledged that formal government processes such as these take time, she stressed the ability for municipal governments to move progressive agendas forward to higher levels of government. To this end, she hopes for provincial and federal levels of government to keep better pace with efforts happening within municipalities rather than the other way around. Last, North Saanich's collaborative regional efforts also led to the district's leadership role in developing the greater Victoria region's Regional Growth Sustainability Strategy, which placed food security as one of the region's main priorities in 2014 (s1-3). The Tri-municipal council of North Saanich, Central Saanich, and Sidney, the Peninsula Agricultural Commission, and the Union of BC municipalities, were all equally identified as possible platforms for further regional collaboration (s1).

However, residents often made many assumptions on what is possible to affect through local or municipal policy, while ignoring the enabling role of provincial regulations. For example, North Saanich's ability to support agricultural land has undeniably been shaped by provincial ALR policy and BC's more unique provincial stance on protecting agricultural land (in contrast to the rest of Canada). However, this was rarely discussed or acknowledged by participants. In fact, while many SLFS proponents wished for greater policy support from their local government, North Saanich's policy-making powers are relatively restricted to enforcing zoning or signage bylaws rather than effecting broader change. While it is still valuable for local-level institutions to outline more creative

avenues to support SLFS initiatives, programs to strengthen wildlife protection or agricultural stewardship programs as outlined in the WCAS often fall under the broader jurisdiction of provincial environmental agencies and institutions, and cannot be moved on without higher-level support.

Indeed, the need for greater cohesion between various levels of policy-making is evident. The dichotomies presented between local and provincial governments could prove divisive if exaggerated. In contrast to the previous case study and certainly a number of provinces in Canada, the province of BC appears a champion in creating a higher-level support structure for more sustainable food and agricultural policies to come about. In many ways, the projects and policies taken on at the municipal level in North Saanich are made more possible by a supportive provincial policy environment. The legacy of ALR, the financial and advisory support given to municipal governments to pursue AACs and development agricultural development plans, speak to a provincial environment vastly more conducive to local SLFSI efforts than previous cases. It is also certainly no coincidence that the Saanich-Gulf Islands riding has gone to Green Party Leader, Elizabeth May, since 2011, the only Green Party member to win a seat in Parliament of Canada.

### **A stool needs three legs: Insights from North Saanich**

The North Saanich Agricultural Development Plan acknowledges that both in BC and across Canada, collaborative initiatives between local government, agri-food producers, and community organizations to promote sustainable food initiatives are gaining ground

(2010). However, like many narratives of collaborative governance efforts, North Saanich's SLFS initiatives are difficult to attribute to a single cause (see Table 11 for list of key initiatives). While mayoral leadership certainly played a determining role in North Saanich's SLFSIs, vocal community actors, supportive council members (on occasion), and active farming community members have been deeply integrated in SLFS processes from the onset. Yet without a doubt, the district's role as the Victoria area's agricultural hub has embedded the community with a strong awareness of its rural identity for decades.

As is also characteristic of many smaller rural communities, the distinction between 'those who are members of municipal council or staff' vs. 'those who are farmers' or 'community organizers' often overlap and blend into one another, creating unclear delineations between who fits under which pillar of state, community, and business. As mentioned earlier, the very need for SLFS proponents to depoliticize their efforts as much as possible, point to an inability to clearly distinguish these arenas. Simply put, while strong overlaps between sectors create the potential for solid community ties, they may also have led to civil society and the business community's inability to maintain sufficient momentum to move SLFSIs forward, as they were never fully distinct from the efforts of municipal government.

If IET in Todmorden believe in three spinning plates, one lesson to be drawn from North Saanich is that a stool not only always needs three legs—made up of the state, private sector, and community, but also requires level ground to stand on. In this context, 'level

ground' has been and could be provided by a supportive provincial policy environment.

What the case of North Saanich particularly highlights is the inability for SLFSIs to gain real traction when the state leg splinters. North Saanich's story emphasizes that SLFS

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Agricultural Area Plan (2006)</b>	state-led with community participation	following an Agricultural Study Survey, identifies local agricultural challenges; aids in creating strategies for the development of policies and bylaws supportive of agriculture and communities' long-term sustainability; develop with support from the North Saanich's Agricultural Task Force, made up of member from the farming community and municipal officials
<b>Whole Community Agricultural Strategy (2011)</b>	state-led with community participation	adopts a holistic and fully integrated approach to food system planning; identifies priorities for local food system reform and a related action plan for each priority area
<b>Food Charter (2006)</b>	state-led with community participation	establishes a strong municipal commitment to ensuring food security and support for local food
<b>Agricultural Advisory Committee (2007)</b>	state-driven (provincial and municipal) state-community collaboration	advises and provides recommendations on policy planning and activities to the District of North Saanich regarding both day-to-day and long-term agricultural activities; comprises members from the farming community, and district planning and environmental committees
<b>Agriculture Economic Development Strategy (2012)</b>	state-led with community participation	outlines priority actions for SLFS development ranging following WCAS, including investment in local food system infrastructure and educational strategies; related implementation and monitoring plan developed in 2014
<b>North Saanich Food for the Future Society (since 2008)</b>	community-led	supports and promotes sustainable agriculture in the municipality of North Saanich; initiatives include creation and management of North Saanich Farmers Market, hosting local speakers series, food events and workshops—including the North Saanich Flavour Trail to promote agri-tourism in the area
<b>Roost Farm Centre (since 2002)</b>	farmer-led	operating as a farm and cafe, it also acts as an educational farm centre and agri-tourism hub for the North Saanich area

<b>Capital Regional Food and Agricultural Initiative Roundtable (since 1992)</b>	community-led (regional)	provides regional multi-stakeholder platform to strengthen sustainable food systems transitions; operates as coalition of 30 organizations; supports municipal and regional SLFSIs; hosts annual farmer-to-farmer peer learning conference
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*Table 11 - Key Initiatives in North Saanich*

efforts always exist within the ‘shadow of hierarchy’; in other words, that local efforts, even when taken up actively by community groups or agricultural entrepreneurs can only go so far when the state is in disarray. It also highlights that making the state the primary organizer of SLFSIs over more collaborative structures is not always an advisable choice. However, the case also supports that under more supportive hierarchical structures (e.g. the provincial government), SLFSI may move faster and with greater credibility due to the enabling environment in which these initiatives can exist.

Indeed, Mayor Finall acknowledged both her small district’s “limited jurisdiction,” and as a result that “multi-level problems require multi-level solutions.” Surely, BC’s more supportive policy environment should be reiterated here. While many participants still expressed frustration towards a provincial government that appears ‘out of touch’ with local realities, such higher-level supports were notably absent in both previous cases, and may speak to North Saanich’s ability to have move SLFSIs forward. This is also not to say that ALR’s earliest policy objectives to preserve agricultural land should not be reconsidered and/or adapted to ongoing realities. Instead, the role of conjoined and collaborative scales of policy supportive of SLFSIs is stressed here, as is the need to work through tensions between provincial, municipal actors, and local actors.

Thus, what lessons can be learned from the North Saanich experience, whether cautionary or prescriptive? First, as is evident in Wolfville, state-led initiatives to support SLFS greatly benefit from a culture of sustainability that must be fostered both within municipal government and the community at large. In her discussion on opportunities for sustainable agricultural governance, Thrupp stresses that partnerships works best when divergent stakeholders find shared philosophies and approaches; if not, an ability to deal with differences should be acknowledged and managed from the onset (1997: 19). When a shared vision – or clear way to manage differences – is not found, municipalities run the risk of standstill, as was the case for three years of North Saanich’s sustainable development. As the CAO regretted, “the single biggest influence on the implementation of our strategy *was* this change in politics”. Without a common vision or goal, a few councillors managed not only to lower overall morale to further develop SLFSIs, but also to largely stymie municipal support for SLFS growth – both significant, negative impacts. Especially in regions of urban development and declining farmland, Abate urges that SLFS would benefit from supportive zoning laws and incentives to maintain rural landscapes for local food production (2008, 396). If anything, Mayor Finall’s first term very much sought to fulfill this supportive municipal role. Because of a sense of shared purpose between the majority of residents and council, a number of SLFSIs were able to be fast-tracked. As mentioned earlier, the Mayor and her original council made great strides to recognize the catalytic role municipal governments can play to support sustainable food efforts through concrete bylaws and initiatives, and undeniably served as champions of local SLFSI development.

Second, the smaller population size of North Saanich could once again showcase how smaller communities can be assets in their own right if tensions within them are appropriately managed. The ability for overlapping and stronger relationships between residents does allow for a unified sense of purpose to maintain or improve one's community. While some newer residents did mention that old bonds in smaller communities make for "tough cliques to get into" (s6), they also create a sense of identity and belonging that make up "one of the main reasons people want to be here" (s5). Beyond the efforts pursued by government bodies, the social capital potential of smaller communities was also emphasized in discussions with producers on the lack of necessity for complex certification schemes. Rather than relying on labels and certificates, local consumers and producers noted the positive impact of simply being able to talk to one another to create relationships based on trust and transparency (s5; s8).

As was also the case with Wolfville, both the residents and municipal government of North Saanich recognized the limitations of local action in the face of both larger systemic problems and long-term policy (e.g. ALR). Often, frustration rose out of feeling that municipal efforts only become "window dressing" in a larger, much less progressive picture (s7). To businesses, this means having to focus on value-added enterprises, which often become the only option for local producers to make money (s6). However, and once again as was the case in Wolfville, there was clear acknowledgement that having to focus solely on value-added products to make a living does not always create the SLFS envisioned to create greater community self-sufficiency.

A further limitation recognized the need for multi-scalar efforts and the necessity to include higher-level actors in SLFS initiatives. Further, public education and engagement from regional and multi-stakeholder organizations such as the CRFAIR or the NSFFS are significant contributors to building the necessary critical mass to strengthen both local and regional movement towards SLFS (North Saanich, 2012). Moving beyond the jurisdiction and capacities of municipal government, the clout that organizations such as CRFAIR are able to garner clearly shows the need for vertically integrated strategies.

Despite its difficulties, the holistic approach to food and agriculture pursued by SLFS proponents in North Saanich served to plant a seed both within its region and for municipalities across the country. In particular, the district's WCAS has been recognized as the 'gold standard' amongst planners in Canada due to its creative and multi-faceted understanding of SLFS development. Like all other initiatives, North Saanich's move towards SLFS is a path only beginning to unfold, following the messy process of finding a balance between municipal, community, and private sector leadership and collaboration.

If anything, the Mayor and her team have pushed for a more neocommunitarian approach to local governance, under which both municipal government and civil society play their necessary parts to support community development. Based on formal and informal conversations with residents during my field work, this approach has been fairly well met by the community, as the majority of stakeholders interviews mentioned one or both plans very positively without being prompted. This enthusiasm differed in particular to

some of the skepticism raised in Wolfville by those who believed that municipal action was based more on offloading responsibility than on collaborative community participation. Having been consulted during the implementation of these plans, residents felt the documents were end products they could both identify with and were proud to call their own (s4, s5, s8, s9). Even at this stage, residents deem that their district's successes have already far outweighed the obstacles that were put in its path:

“The strides we have made since I came here 15 years ago have been quite amazing. At the time, council wasn't really going anywhere... often they were no help. Now everything is being discussed. there's a much broader look at farming, other growers have been attracted, we have a market, it's really *so* different now that when I first came and tried to get some guidance from the municipality. Back then you were really on your own. Now you are not.” (s9)

## Chapter 7 – Case Study 4: Correns, France

“The role of the elected official is a lot like that of a business owner. You have to give meaning to things and why we do them. [...] I hate politicking, but real politics fascinates me because it tries to transform the world and make humanity better. Too much of politics has forgotten that we are here to give meaning and purpose to our actions, but we must do this. In the end, any community is only as rich as the men and women who make it.” (Mayor Michael Latz, 2014 interview)

To understand Correns, one can simply turn to the village's own motto, “*La sensation d'un privilège*” to appreciate the pride and the strength of local identity felt by its residents. Deep in the heart of Provence Verte<sup>54</sup>, away from the South of France's densely populated, politically conservative, and wealthy beach villages, Correns is a small rural village whose population only grows to 1,000 over the summer months. With over 90% of its population involved in agriculture in some way, most of Correns's locals still significantly identify with a *paysan* way of life<sup>55</sup> and a majority of agricultural production remains small-scale (with 80% in wine production<sup>56</sup>) (c1; c4). Correns's popularity stems not simply for housing Chateau Miraval, the wine producing estate of

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<sup>54</sup> France's administrative division includes three levels of government below the national level. These include: *regions*, *départements*, and *communes* (equivalent municipalities). All three are considered territorial collectivities. Since 2007, the *Territoire Provence Verte* is one of eight territories created by the Var *département* in response to France's national territorial cohesion policy. Each territory is made up of a grouping of municipalities. Correns's Mayor, Michaël Latz, held the presidency of Provence Verte from 2008-2014.

<sup>55</sup> In Correns, all interviewees both formal and informal used the term “*paysans*” to distinguish themselves or those who produce food and wine in the region. The term cannot be directly translate to “peasant” nor does it simply refer to the profession of “agricultural producer”; rather, it captures the broader lifestyle involved in growing food, living in rural spaces, and strongly identifying to the land. The term is also used here in deliberate contrast to “agricultural producer,” which was associated more directly to productivist agriculture rather than a lifestyle. Small agricultural producers have long-defined themselves as *paysans* in France. Socio-culturally, the life and struggle of *paysan* have featured prominently in classic popular French literature including Zola's *La Terre* or Pagnol's fictions of the *paysans* of Provence. As an example of the term's economic weight, and as mentioned previously, France's version of CSAs, the *AMAP* are specifically named as such to show support in “maintaining *peasant* agriculture”. Politically, the *Confédération Paysanne*, is France's major leftist and ecological agricultural unions. In a modern modern context, *paysans* refers to those who support small-scale, non-industrialized, ecological agricultural practices, as well as the broader concepts of food sovereignty and sustainable development.

<sup>56</sup> 70% of wine produced in Correns is through its main co-operative, *Les Vignerons de Correns*, with the remaining 30% being produced through independent vineyards (c1; c4).

then-Hollywood celebrity couple, Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, but also, for its identification as France's "first organic village". Indeed, today, 95% of Correns's production falls under organic agriculture, with the other 5% either in transition or following the principles of *Protection Biologique Intégrée*<sup>57</sup>.

Correns is an isolated village, located at the entrance of the Vallon Sourn and Bagarède gorges, and along the Argens River. As one resident joked, "no one takes the road to Correns – unless it's specifically to come here." In contrast to other areas of France, the Var has managed to maintain much of its small-scale agricultural identity, due to the *département's* mountainous and heavily forested geography, enabling only 11% of its total surface to go to agriculture<sup>58</sup> (Terres du Var, 2013). Similarly, and despite the economic dominance of agriculture in Correns, the village only has a modestly-sized agricultural landscape, taking up 1,976 acres (roughly 21% of total land in Correns).

Similar to North Saanich, Correns's move towards SLFS development grew out of an idea put forward by its Mayor, Michaël Latz, upon his election in 1995. After years of economic decline and local rural exodus, Latz encouraged the *Vignerons de Correns*, the village's wine cooperative and primary breadwinner, to transition to organic agriculture as a way to add value to their product and thus give local *paysans* a reason to stay on the land; at the time, the wine co-operative provided not only a majority of the village's income, but also, correspondingly, a good portion of its employment (c4). What started as

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<sup>57</sup> *Protection Biologique Intégrée* is a non-certified approach to agriculture similar to Integrated Pest Management adopted by a few local farmers who deem organic certification too costly or unnecessary when direct marketing their produce.

<sup>58</sup> In 2010, of that 11%, 59% of agricultural activity is dedicated to viticulture, 21% to horticulture, and only 4% to livestock (Terres du Var, 2013).

an economic revitalization project quickly spiraled into a complete rethinking of this tightly knit community's way of life, with place-based sustainable development at its core. Convinced that rural spaces could be revitalized by the opportunities offered by a more sustainably-minded lifestyle, the village of Correns takes on the notion of SLFS as one facet of a broader sustainable development framework: "We realized," the mayor recalled about the work pursued by his municipal team, "that what we wanted was to enable people to be able to stay here and make a living with dignity, to recreate opportunity and wealth. Our approach was to give dynamism back to our community."

Indeed, whether they adhere to an organic lifestyle themselves or not, the majority of locals are more than happy to discuss their knowledge of sustainable agriculture with anyone who asks. However, what is particularly relevant in the way they discuss it are the added motivations to pursue sustainable agriculture to those witnessed in the previous case studies. In Correns, conceptualizing SLFSs is intrinsically linked to the relationship between food and place, human dignity, and the ability to choose to be "powerful instead of powerless" in the face of change (c1). As we see in each of the case studies, but particularly here, SLSFIs go beyond the realm of food and agriculture to encompass broader community goals.

Indeed, in Correns, actions taken to address one issue area has often simultaneously inspired action elsewhere. In particular, in 2008, Latz has sought to connect his village to the UN Agenda 21 sustainable development action plan, leading to the creation of Correns's own form of non-institutionalized participatory democracy through a local

Correns<sup>21</sup> scheme. In an almost textbook example of collaborative governance, Correns<sup>21</sup> has developed initiatives ranging from school food improvement, to municipal waste management, eco-tourism development, and social and community development, amongst others, in equal partnership with municipal council.

Overall, food and agriculture lies at the heart of building social capital in Correns. It would also appear that a culture of sustainability has been deeply entrenched in the Corrençois since 1995, be they municipal councillors, wine producers, or simply community members<sup>59</sup>; and Correns's SLFS plans have rarely, if ever, been disputed thanks to collaborative and iterative decision-making processes adopted between state and community. The village's approach has also blended an interesting combination of neoliberal and neocommunitarian approaches to SLFS market development; on the one hand, focusing on small-scale co-operative based alternative agriculture, and on the other, using the neoliberal market schemes of adding value through certifications including organic or *Appellation d'Origine Controlée*<sup>60</sup> (AOC) labeling. Though small, this case study offers an opportunity to understand how Correns's dynamism occurred and how collaborative governance plays out *in situ* (see Table 12 for a list of interview participants). In short, Correns allows us to consider a strong example of highly participatory collaborative governance within a SLFS initiative that has managed to

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<sup>59</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 3, the particularity of my time in Correns permitted me to engage in a higher number of informal conversations with residents on SLFS than in other cases. More specifically, most residents were gathered for the village's annual *Fete du Bio et du Naturel* over a weekend in August 2014. The unique insights and stories shared during those conversations are anonymously featured throughout this chapter.

<sup>60</sup> AOC translated as "Controlled Designation of Origin" is France's geographical indication certification granted to agricultural products based on the notion of *terroir* (See footnote 31 for definition). The certification is maintained by the *Institut National de l'Origine et de la Qualité* under the Ministry of Agriculture.

house economy, agriculture, environment, social sustainability, and political willingness all under one (most likely solar-paneled) roof.

Name	Title relevant to case	Interview Type	Interview Code
Michael Latz	Mayor - Commune de Correns	Face to face	c1
Anonymous	Corren21 Member	Face to face	c2
Anonymous	Correns21 Member	Face to face	c3
Fabien Mistre	Les Vignerons de Correns	Q&A during public tour	c4
Manon [last name]	Les Vignerons de Correns	Face to face	c5
Arnaud Rocheux	Farmer - Les Paniers Davoine	Face to face	c6
Anonymous	Producer - Olive Oil	Phone	c7
Coralie Gautier	Farmer - Le Petit Potager	Face to face	c8
Léa Brunet	Farmer - La Ferme de Léa	Face to face	c9
Anonymous	Epicerie Manager - L'Oustaou Bio	Face to face	c10

*Table 12 - Correns interview participants*

### **The *Paysan* way of life at the heart of Correns's transformation**

Thus far, sustainable food and SLFSs have been primarily understood as enablers of local food consumption, food access and greater food self-sufficiency, and community development. Recognizing that only a fraction of municipal land is arable, and that a majority of it is in wine production, SLFSs have never been about food self-sufficiency to the villagers of Correns (c1; c4). Instead, SLFSs in Correns are intrinsically linked to the notions of *paysans*, *terroir*<sup>61</sup>, and quality –both of product and of life. In describing his

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<sup>61</sup> Another concept that cannot be simply translated, *terroir* approximately refers to the physical, physiological, and cultural factors that affect the quality of a crop or product. It not only refers to the specificities attribute to growing products in a certain soil, under certain weather conditions, etc. but also encapsulates more intangible qualities such as local traditions, human knowledge and skills, and connection to the land (Gade, 2004).

motivation to pursue SLFS development in Correns, Mayor Latz noted:

“What I really wanted, what I wanted to do, was give purpose back to Correns... to give purpose to the way we do things here and on this land. In politics, like in business, it’s so important to give purpose to what we do.”

Similarly, when asked to define or discuss SLFSs, two older residents mentioned:

“I don’t really necessarily pay attention to *how* [the village] is doing things, but the way people are thinking about agriculture here allows those who want to work their own land to do so pretty affordably. We’re not like you<sup>62</sup>, who needs everything to be so large-scale.”

With similar sentiments shared by many others, the commonality between these accounts lies in their focus on a certain connection to the land (c1; c3-7). Indeed, respect for rural space, its history, and its people have always been driving forces in Correns’s development. To understand these emphases, Correns’s more recent history plays a crucial role. In the 1970s and 1980s, France saw a progressive depopulation of its countryside. Once a village of over 1,500 residents, Correns population declined to below 450 for much of the 1970s and early 1980s (EHSS, 2015). For over thirty years, a majority of local businesses closed; Correns could no longer support the staples of a French village, including a *boulangerie*, a grocer, or a doctor. One olive oil producer recalls the desperation felt by many locals at the time, “everyone was leaving, our friends, everyone. Some of us even told our children not to stay, not to be *paysans* anymore, not to work the land.” (c7) Latz himself recalls a saying shared by many of the older Corrençois who lived through that period: “When crows fly over Correns, people used to say, they turn their heads to avoid seeing the misery.”

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<sup>62</sup> In this context, “you” referred to “North Americans” as the resident knew I was from Canada.

When Latz became mayor in 1995 –at the height of Correns’s economic difficulties, his previous positions as an agronomist for the EU and owner of a phytosanitary firm, and his current occupation as an agrifood-related business manager and *vigneron*, gave him new perspectives on rural livelihood and its tenuous position within the current agricultural food system. Latz noted three main drivers beyond the economy as his major calls to action:

“First, I couldn’t get over the lies about [the broad-spectrum herbicide] Round-Up. When I owned a phytosanitary company, I sold thousands of tonnes of it because we were told it was harmless. We really pushed the stuff. Then suddenly, we started seeing its catastrophic effects. It really sunk in at that point that *paysans* – and so many food processors and distributors– just didn’t have a freedom of choice anymore. They completely lacked the capacity to engage in critical inquiry because big phyto-companies had been more or less manipulating the system at their will. As a *vigneron*, I realized I was also killing myself, my job, and causing my own livelihood to become unsustainable. I knew there had to be a better way to connect myself to the land.”

Latz’s second driver was Europe’s BSE crisis, which revealed “the extent of human madness” to him —in other words, the agricultural sector’s increasing desire to create shortcuts around natural processes leading to potential food safety crises. Third, Latz’s agronomic training allowed him to realize that the current agricultural food system based on “the intensification of all things” would only lead the rural world and the *paysan* lifestyle to “catastrophe.” (c1) As such, moving away from the current food system and revalorizing small-scale and local food production through alternative agriculture became central to Latz’s ideology. Though driven by economic incentive, Correns’s move towards organic agriculture was embedded in the post-material values of re-democratizing the food system and environmental consciousness.

To set his plan in motion, the mid-1990s also saw a growth in EU subsidies for producers to convert to organic agriculture. Latz and his deputy mayor approached the local wine cooperative to discuss transitioning to organic agriculture rather than facing financial bankruptcy and a likely buy-out by a neighbouring co-operative. Through informal meetings between *vignerons*, Latz explained that his idea would allow the *paysans* of Correns to regain pride in their profession and not lose their local identity as a result of the buy-out. It would also allow them to develop a value-added product, and encourage youth to stay in the village. Convincing the *paysans* was surprisingly easy. “I was mayor but also an agronomist and expert. I could explain my reasoning scientifically,” Latz recalled of his unique positioning, “on top of that I was a local *vigneron* myself, so there was always a mutual trust between us.”

In addition, both the mayor and co-op members pointed to the co-operative’s own history as one of compromise. Previously, two co-operatives dominated the village, representing the republican-monarchist divide of the Napoleonic era, and later the local conservative-communist rift. Historically, members of each faction rarely spoke to each other and tensions between their families ran high (Dubois-Galabrun, 2014; c1; c4). Only the hardships remaining at the end of the First World War enabled social differences to be put aside to work under a single local co-operative, later renamed the *Vignerons de Correns*. Though distant, residents consider these stories part and parcel of Correns’s willingness to pursue SLFS development, emphasizing the historical trajectory that created the village’s identity today. In particular, this history of hard-earned trust between community members in times of adversity proved a useful leverage point for the mayor to

gain the support for future collaborative governance schemes in the village.

Indeed, *paysans* often stressed tradition as a primary reason for Correns's seamless transition to organic: "A lot of us really liked the idea of organic because we were able to recognize a lot of its practices as things we already did anyway, like the way my father used to do things." (c7) Similarly, one co-op member remembered, "Of course it was risky, but while it sounded new, we quickly realized it wasn't a problem at all, we had never really departed from that way of making wine here anyway!" (anonymous) In short, local producers understood organic agriculture and its practices as having always been a part of their tradition and agricultural history. By 1997, eighty local farmers had transitioned to certified organic practices.

Within five years, Correns's population was slowly beginning to increase, as sons and daughters found new reasons to stay (c1; c5). However, Fabien Mistre, now head of the *Vignerons*, stressed that the direness of Correns's economic situation at the time should not be taken for granted in early discussions about SLFS: "At the time, all of this didn't have as much to do with moral or ethical convictions... for most of us anyway. Of course, we wanted to leave the land better off for our children, but it was about making a living first." Similarly, both Latz and Mistre noted that while the willingness was there, the transition itself was not easy. While co-operative members had come to an understanding that they would give organic agriculture a try for five years before they reconsidered their strategies, they found very little pay-off by 2000:

“Even with the subsidies and our hard work, it still wasn’t working out financially. But by then, we were so morally and ecologically convinced by organic that we kept going. Up until a few years ago, it was still hard, we were always living on the edge of collapse and losing the entire identity of Correns, so we held on, tightened our belts, ate a few more potatoes, and it finally worked!” (c4)

With help from a local organic agricultural extension worker and through pure tenacity, the *paysans* continued to amend and observe organic practices on their land for another five years. Today, Mistre emphasizes with pride, “if [the co-op] works, everything in Correns flourishes. We can support all the other local business, and we’re proud. The vines are what hold us together.” Indeed, since the mid-1990s, the average co-op member’s age has dropped to between 30 and 40, dramatically lower than the national average farming age of 60, and the co-operative —no longer running at a deficit— can now easily remunerate all of its members (c4).

Between 1995 and 2001, Latz’s first term agenda also emphasized revitalizing the village through a series of new food-related employment opportunities. Like IET, improving food access and creating social capital around food was understood as central touchstones of community development. For example, due to a lack of local grocers, village council used public funds to buy a *boulangerie* in the village centre, and put out a call to local bread artisans to move in; the *boulangier* chosen to settle in the village was then heavily supported by public funds until his enterprise successfully took off (c3). Around the same time, council organized social housing on the first floor of a building meant to support a new *epicerie*, or grocer. Thanks to this municipal support, the local *epicière* was eventually able to buy out the building, and now supports the grocery store on her own. While such small opportunities might be taken for granted by many, these municipal

efforts allowed a level of local business development the village had not experienced for over a hundred years. The re-enlivening of the village's downtown core also progressively enabled the re-opening of Corren's local hotel, a hairdresser, a tourism office, and more recently an entirely locally-sourced, organic grocer. The municipality's sustainable development agenda also brought on significant renovations of public spaces under *Haute Qualité Environnemental* (HQE) standards<sup>63</sup>; since the early 2000s, these have included renovations in nineteen social housing buildings, the *mairie*, and its heritage and culture sites. Municipal council has also provided financial incentives to local homeowners to undertake similar conversions themselves. For the mayor, this significant level of municipal backing was not simply a matter of securing the village's economic future, but of "recreating a real community." (c1)

More recently, Correns's support for organic agriculture and its efforts to diversify its agriculture has continued to attract a number of entrepreneurs to reconsider farming as a viable profession. For example, the village has since attracted a goatherd—who also helps maintain public forest spaces through controlled grazing, a grain producer, a number of horticulturalists, an apiarist, and a chicken farmer. Both Leah Brunet, the local organic chicken farmer, and Arnaud Rocheux, the local apiarist, are representative of a number of young Corrençois who had left the area to pursue higher education, but returned when they realized new opportunities were being created back home. They spoke with a strong sense of pride in being able to make a living from preserving *paysan* agriculture in their hometown (c6; c9). Brunet in particular, emphasized that "following an industrial

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<sup>63</sup> HQE standards are France's green building standard, more or less equatable to North America's LEED standard. They were derived from the principles of sustainable development set out at the 1992 UN Earth Summit. The standard is overseen by the *Association pour la Haute Qualité Environnemental* in Paris.

agricultural model was absolutely of no interest to [her]”, and is contented in knowing that the agricultural practices she follows represent her way of contributing to sustaining small-scale agricultural spaces as well as her own livelihood.

Of course, not everyone in Correns believes that the village and local producers’ efforts will change the face of agriculture. Many are aware that their village still faces the same setbacks as most rural regions in France. As one resident recounted, “I’ve heard someone say that Correns is only 2 days out of 365,” or in other words, that the efforts of one small village are merely ‘a drop in the bucket’ in contrast to the broader food system changes that must occur. Another noted that the price of land in the area is often almost fifteen times higher than in the rest of France, a reality he noted could eventually motivate both local farmers or nearby producers to intensively farm the land with the goal of financially gaining as much as they can out of it. In addition, while a new grocer is seeking to make local and organic food more accessible, a number of residents and producers themselves mentioned their inability to eat organic every day—even if they wanted to—simply due to the higher prices of local organic food in France (c5; c10).

However, following Foucault’s notion of discourse as a means to engender social conformity (1991), SLFS discourse has significant traction in Correns insofar as most citizens are familiar with its values and are motivated to take them on as their own; this was partially attributed to having a very tightly knit community, which serves as a strong motivator for locals to believe they should think and act in similar ways so as not to be singled out. As mentioned by one co-operative member’s spouse, “We’re a small village,

so we all know each other. Of course, this motivates everyone to be a little more aware of what we're doing, because we're constantly watching what the others are doing.” (c5)

Criticisms of Correns's work was minimal. If anything, the solidarity of the Corrençois, especially when addressing 'outsiders', was particularly evident when conducting research here. Formal interview participants and even informal conversations clearly seemed to try to steer discussion towards the positives of Correns's efforts rather than to bring up any contention. This was particularly striking in contrast to other participants in other municipalities who used the interview process as a means to share criticisms and weaknesses they felt existed in their local systems.

Overall, and similar to the approach taken in Todmorden, producer and community ownership of SLFS processes has always been a major component of Latz's approach. Since the 1990s, a strong place-based identity remains an integral part of Correns's understanding of SLFS. Beyond the need to revive the village's economy, the mayor and his municipal team has always sought a bottom-up approach to SLFS; as mentioned by Latz, “if you do try to impose anything, people will lose interest. They have to feel that they have something of themselves at stake in this.” Indeed, relationships of trust and pride in their identity allowed the *paysans* of Correns to both “reclaim their territory” (c1) and stay on their land despite hardship, creating a more personalized perspective on SLFS development. Today, the *Vignerons de Correns* perfectly reflect the village's constant blend of modernity and tradition. Their new winery, built in accordance with HQE standards, is visible from a distance thanks to its 1,000 square meters of solar paneled

roofing. The winery complements the co-operative's storefront, located in a turn of the century heritage building —once the site of the old communist co-op. “What we've manage to continue from our parents,” Mistre emphasizes, “is something great. We've always worked hard, but being a *paysan* is more than a job, it's a way of life.”

### **Beyond Organic: Sustainability's Three Pillars as a model for SLFS Development**

While the move towards organic agriculture provided Correns with the means to move away from economic difficulty, it only proved the beginning of a deeper SLFS project that would ultimately encompass a blend of social, political, and environmental agendas together. Based on the three pillars of sustainability, this section considers the three-pronged approach espoused by the mayor and his municipal team to move forward both a state and community-led sustainable development agenda. The focus is placed here on the economic and socio-political, as work to fulfill sustainability's environmental pillar easily shines through a discussion of the two others.

To Latz, a focus on sustainability's economic pillar has always been of primordial importance:

“When we think of sustainability, we tend to think of the environment first, then society, then the economy... but for us, the economic aspect is crucial. Ecologists might resent that, but they're wrong. We won't be able to have an ecological revolution if people can't make a living off of it. After we switched to organic, we made an enormous effort to improve the quality of our wine, as well as a huge marketing effort. Now, if you look at what the co-op offers, it's structured, logical, intelligent, it can work well commercially. For me, that's fundamental. It can't all be about proselytizing... the values of sustainability only work if its successes touch on all three pillars. The economy is a critical area of engagement that allows us to be able to take on broader issues...”

For Correns, relying on both neoliberal and neocommunitarian market approaches has been a key facet to their SLFS development. First, like many other SLFSIs, value-adding and relying on neoliberal market structures have allowed Correns's producers to grow: rather than focus on local distribution, the producers have sought to gain opportunities by playing into higher-level marketing schemes. Again, in the case of the *Vignerons de Correns*, the co-operative has sought to capitalize on both the AOC and organic labels. First, AOC labeling allows them to remain strong in the French market, where quality labeling remains consumers' primary concern (c4). Second, the organic label allows the *Vignerons* to tap into the broader European market, where organic wines have greater traction than in France (ibid). In the future, and due to Correns's unique *terroir*, both the co-op and the village ultimately hope to gain their own local designation of origin, similar to those already attained by other wine areas in the region, including Cassis or Bandol AOCs (c1; c4).

However, Correns's neocommunitarian market approaches are evident in its adhesion to the co-operative model, and the values of equality and shared responsibility. Beyond its historical significance and the obvious buying power of a co-operative over smaller independent producers, this model is very much a community enterprise that allows for community building and trust between producers. Mistre insisted:

“We would never stray from the co-op model. We work together, make wine together, market together, have meetings whenever we want whether in the field, in cafes, or at the bar. It's fantastic. It makes us want to pass this down to our kids. Of course, the more people you involve in anything, the more complicated it gets, but when it works, it's the best. Co-ops are such an important model for communities that they have to stay present. I will always fight for them.”

In addition, most of Correns's producers still rely on direct marketing as their primary distribution channel. While not inherently neocommunitarian, direct marketing emphasizes the power of civic engagement and the development of social capital by developing stronger connections between local residents (c4, c6-10). Through their storefront and nation-wide events, 80% of the *Vignerons*' 7,500 hectolitres of wine were sold through direct marketing in 2014 –yet another means, the members emphasized, to connect with people face-to-face rather than through intermediaries. Examples of such short value chains once again bridge capitalist structures with embedded values of direct producer-consumer interactions and trust.

Political willingness to meet sustainability's social pillar came about after a study conducted by a team of agronomic students from the University of Montpellier in 2007. The students' research showed that Correns's organic transformation had not succeeded solely because of its producers, but also because of its residents more broadly, thanks to a local identity based on collective support. This was eye-opening for Latz: "The difference was that this was not an *agricultural* revolution, but a *rural* one. The more I thought about it, the more I realized we were not creating a new *agricultural* but a new *rural* paradigm."

Indeed, as mentioned in Chapter 1, Latz's languaging can be likened to the broader discussion on the purpose and discourse behind European agriculture and the more radical sustainable rural development paradigm (Marsden, 2003). In their discussion on territorial rural development, Horlings and Marsden (2012) point to six major domains of

analysis: 1) endogeneity, 2) novelty, 3) social capital, 4) market governance, 5) new institutional arrangements, and 6) social and ecological sustainability. Certainly, Correns presents a solid display of all six traits, as described throughout the chapter: 1) Correns's SLFS initiatives were derived for and from its residents and municipal government; 2) the village displayed a unique approach to rural development by integrating broader values of sustainability into every day community life (e.g. eco-construction requirements, organic agriculture, educational and community-building events, etc.); 3) Correns's SLFSI accomplishments were wholly dependent on its capacity to draw on the social goodwill of both its agricultural producers and residents at large to support the town's projects and vision; 4) Correns's was revitalized through a reliance on value-adding through organic and AOC production for export markets on the one hand, and creating shorter values chains within the local community on the other; 5) the collaborative arrangements between state and civil society were outlined by the Correns<sup>21</sup> agenda (more below); 6) the awareness given to all aspects of sustainability as discussed in this section drew on elements of both ecological (e.g. organic agriculture) and social (e.g. school food education, see below) sustainability.

In light of his new understanding derived from the Montpellier research, Latz also sought to make his municipal council more representative of village dynamics. Today, *vignerons*, *paysans*, artisans, business owners, school board members, as well as public and private sector retirees serve as Correns's council; its average age is 37 years, while the average age of many of the councils in surrounding villages is closer to 60 (c1; c3). The goal of a diverse council was partially to demonstrate the municipal government's

support for the *paysan* way of life and to stress that council values are not about “having large land-owners and producers bully our decisions.” (c1) Indeed, one local mentioned the complete trust felt by residents for their municipal team, in contrast to other villages in which “elected officials kind of try to become kings of their castle and often push agendas for their own motivations” (anonymous).

Though a *vigneron* himself, Latz displays the forward-thinking role public actors can champion in presenting new paradigms through traditional structures. Around 2008, the mayor wanted to develop a way for residents to think through a range of sustainability issues by use of their own independent committee, and without ever having a municipal vision imposed on them. Promoting public deliberation rather than enforcing policy was the primary reasoning behind his idea to link Correns to the UN’s Agenda 21:

“One of my growing worries has also been about the state of democracy around the world. We need to renew democracy. Even participatory democracy is often used as a trap to mean something else. We need *real* participatory democracy that can serve as a counterweight to government.” (c1)

In short, Agenda 21 is an action agenda on sustainable development developed by the UN for multilateral organizations, national, regional, and local governments, signed at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. While a global approach lies at its heart, Agenda 21 features an entire section on the role of local political authorities in promoting sustainable development.<sup>64</sup> Applied locally, the mayor explained that the goal of Correns21 was to

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<sup>64</sup> Section 28.1 and 28.3 excerpt: “Because so many of the problems and solutions being addressed by Agenda 21 have their roots in local activities, the participation and cooperation of local authorities will be a determining factor in fulfilling its objectives. Local authorities construct, operate and maintain economic, social and environmental infrastructure, oversee planning processes, establish local environmental policies and regulations, and assist in implementing national and subnational environmental policies. As the level of

allow the municipal council “to hear things about the village that we otherwise wouldn’t hear, to get perspectives that give us a better understanding of the people, and give residents a major role in creating new ideas.” (c1) Though Correns has employed the use of traditional participatory fora (including public consultations and resident surveys), Latz wanted to go beyond structures that ultimately still use a vertical democratic process. Instead, Correns21 could serve as a mechanism to motivate citizens to take further ownership over the village’s future through both individual and collective action.

To put this agenda into practice, Latz turned to a number of friends, local academics, and professionals, who he believed would have interest in leading the project. “It wasn’t hard to convince others,” a previous head of Correns21 mentioned, “we had already been so successful in our village’s transition to organic. A lot of people already felt more like citizens than consumers already. The hook was simply to ask people: because our previous initiatives have been so successful, what do you think of extending this process to other areas?” (c2). Like IET, the discourse around sustainable development and SLFSIs was geared to putting global issues into a local context (c3). As a result, a volunteer group made up of key local actors was drawn up based on inclusivity criteria derived from the Agenda 21 document: men, women, younger and older residents, the

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governance closest to the people, they play a vital role in educating, mobilizing and responding to the public to promote sustainable development. [...] Each local authority should enter into a dialogue with its citizens, local organizations and private enterprises and adopt "a local Agenda 21". Through consultation and consensus-building, local authorities would learn from citizens and from local, civic, community, business and industrial organizations and acquire the information needed for formulating the best strategies. The process of consultation would increase household awareness of sustainable development issues. Local authority programmes, policies, laws and regulations to achieve Agenda 21 objectives would be assessed and modified, based on local programmes adopted.” (UNEP, 1992)

unemployed, farmers, and business owners amongst others<sup>65</sup>. Latz assured that no more than 20% of the Correns21 committee would be made up of municipal councillors. Again, with local history in mind, many took to the idea of a local Agenda 21 easily, as it reminded them of a time when local democracy was more direct, with residents meeting to discuss the future of their village –and even of France– in the local cafe or village square (c1-3; c7). One resident explained that Correns had always been about solidarity, making efforts towards participatory democracy was only a natural outcome of local life (c7).

Correns's collaborative governance scheme sought to depart from similar municipal projects such as the Transition Town Movement or ones such as IET, which the mayor emphasized do not promote political uptake but rather community self-sufficiency. Instead, from the onset, the purpose of Correns21 was to establish stronger rapport between residents and municipal council by adopting a collaborative approach to the promotion of local sustainability (c3). More specifically, the municipal government emphasized five guarantees in their partnership with Correns21: 1) autonomy, 2) technical support (e.g. municipal staff support for the drafting of reports), 3) logistics (e.g. assuring space for meetings); 4) continuous collaboration; and finally, 5) mayoral leadership on key issues.

In 2008, Correns21 first goals included creating an action plan over ten years through the elaboration of a comprehensive, inclusive, and cross-sectoral strategy. Surveys sent to

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<sup>65</sup> Correns21 was first organized through a piloting committee of 15 members and a small monitoring committee made up of Correns21 acting president, the mayor, and the deputy mayor.

440 households, public debates, and stakeholder interviews conducted in 2009-2010 served to develop a methodological framework and strategy plan for Correns21. After these steps, the plan was defined by three main axes –responsible use of space, community living, and valuing natural resources and energy– each relating to specific priorities and actions. Between 2010 and 2014, each axis was put into action, leading to the development of a community garden, major renovations to reduce energy consumption in public buildings and lighting, the creation of “nature at school” programs in partnership with the local school as part of students’ regular curriculum, the construction of an HQE intergenerational centre and municipal cafeteria, a Correns culture and culinary cookbook for residents and tourists, an ongoing village newsletter and event promotion to support community-building, and finally the creation of an *Association pour le Maintien de l’Agriculture Paysanne* (AMAP) dedicated to sustainable forestry<sup>66</sup>.

In partnership with the *Vignerons de Correns*, the community-state collaboration also developed the annual *Fête du Bio et du Naturel* showcasing over one hundred alternative agricultural producers, artisans, and organizations from across the country. Similarly, municipal council has committed to spend at least 8% of its annual budget on socio-

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<sup>66</sup> French *AMAP* can be likened to the North American ‘Community Supported Agriculture’ scheme. Though developed by Correns21 in partnership with the village, Correns’s *AMAP Bois* was also developed as a project through the *Agence Régionale pour l’Environnement*. This project sought to apply the principles of *AMAP* usually used to support agriculture to forestry. It aims to combine the interests of local loggers and citizens towards a responsible management of Correns’s forests. Because a majority of citizen still use wood oven heating in the winter, and with the goal of mitigating the progressive over-harvesting of municipal forests by locals, Correns21 helped logging families identify sustainable forestry practices and develop a CSA-inspired wood enterprise. The *AMAP Bois* now allows residents to pre-purchase sustainably harvested wood for personal use, which can be picked up at a communal stockpile organized by the municipal government. The project was recognized by the *Observatoire Régional de la Biodiversité* in 2015.

cultural development –a particularly high figure in comparison to other municipalities (Correns21, 2013).

Perhaps most importantly, a major collaborative initiative between Correns21 and the municipal government has been to improve school food. In the mid-2000s, Correns hired a young chef to serve Correns’s school lunches in the village’s intergenerational centre – itself a municipal space seeking to bring different generations together around meals.

While school food in France is increasingly being managed through privately contracted companies, the municipal team kept with the tradition of investing public funds to support the village’s cafeteria, which serves both students and seniors with affordable 3 euro lunches.<sup>67</sup> By implementing a local procurement policy in the cafeteria, the centre now offers meals for students and elderly residents made primarily from local produce. By 2014, two meals out of five a week are 100% organic, and one meal per week is vegetarian – to bring awareness to the environmental issues around meat consumption.

A move to support school food was deliberately intended to counter food service industry culture and support community through food education: “With these companies,” Latz decried, “all possibility for short supply chains or value-added food is taken away. They just feed shit to our children, there’s no other word to use. I’m a huge militant of allowing cafeterias to become the responsibility of municipalities again, to be able to re-train chefs

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<sup>67</sup> In France, the municipality is responsible for school lunches either in a school or municipal cafeteria. While school and municipal cafeterias are generally managed by the municipality, an increasing number of meal preparation is being outsourced to large food service companies such as Sodexo or ELIOR (around 25% in 2014 –a rate much higher than in other EU states) (FNOGEC, 2014). Municipal governments are responsible for funding school meals; even when food service companies provide meals, the municipality is responsible to monitor and serve them. It is also worth noting that school meals in French average between 3 and 3.50 Euros; the meals providing through Correns’s cafeteria, while being locally sourced and occasionally organic, still fall within this price range.

to cook and make food in-house, while teaching them to act pedagogically and be able to tell the children what they're eating." Indeed, Correns's chef often uses local and traditional recipes to reconnect children to local culinary culture and frequently talks to the student about the ingredients and stories behind each dish – before or during their meals.

Another effort has been in reducing the cafeteria's food waste. With 30% of school food being thrown away nationally, Correns took on the challenge of reducing their waste to below 5% (c1). Beyond a costs savings measure, a Correns21 member shared that the effort was also about putting Correns's food philosophy into action rather than words. "We are so proud of this commitment," said the school's principal in a local memoir, "and we have only received constant municipal support. While we share the same vision for the future, there is a clear political willingness [from municipal council] to be one with the school while still allowing us to make our own choices. The efforts we are making will help make our children full-fledged citizens, participating in the village's events and culture as we teach them to think for themselves" (Dubois-Galabrun, 2014: 34).

Overall, the collaborative governance approach of Correns21 –which now boasts 40 members– and municipal council have operated by using iterative processes that constantly allow for better-refined, improved, and adaptable strategies (c3). As mentioned by Correns21's previous head:

“We work with [municipal council] and separate from them. When we need each other, we can call. When they have a project, they give it to us for advice, but we each keep our roles, while reporting to each other on a regular basis. We keep our independence and they keep theirs as democratically elected officials.” (c2)

The process mentioned can be likened to Voss et al.’s (2006) discussion of the “efficacy paradox” of reflexive governance. This paradox involves the contradictory requirements of both “opening-up” interactions for inclusive dialogue while “closing-down” conversation for the sake of timely problem solving. Though difficult to maneuver, Voss et al. stress the need to adopt both strategies in appropriate and timely ways—a process that is clearly an aim for the Correns21-municipal council partnership (ibid); together, the two groups attempt to navigate when and where each of their roles and input is required without trying to overstep each other nor drag on deliberation processes.

The work of Correns has also sought to extend both its formal and informal networks outwards. The town’s understanding of SLFS includes supporting greater community development and mitigating broader global crisis. For example, the village is now connected to the Slow Food Movement, as a local chapter. Through EU funding, Correns also took part in an exchange program between six municipalities selected as innovators in rural development to share experiences and ideas. Further, in partnership with the *Vignerons de Correns*, Correns21 and council have sought to create greater North-South rural solidarity through the regional NGO, *Méditerranée Afrique Solidarité* (MAS); since 2012 and with MAS, Correns has held annual wine auctions to support *Villages Durables*, a Congolese-based NGO that supports the development of organic agricultural education programs for marginalized groups in the Kivu, in particular to reintegrate child

soldiers. More recently, Correns has held exchanges with *Villages Durables*, inviting the Congolese volunteers to learn from their experience.

Last, it is important to note that Correns's approach was a fairly atypical case of local Agenda 21 initiatives. In most cases, local Agenda 21 schemes are implemented primarily by municipal governments, with local residents playing the role of informants rather than outright partners. Correns21 has involved the work of volunteers, and while the usual setbacks of time constraints of its members were raised (c2-3), it has allowed for a more people-centered approach to sustainable development. By mobilizing a diversity of residents with a range of expertise, Correns has used Agenda 21 to create real critical dialogue within its citizenry. It has produced a more holistic and long-term vision of sustainable development, going beyond Correns's initial focus on agriculture, by fostering greater dialogue between and amongst residents and a more mindful evaluation of public policies by the municipal government. By 2014, two-thirds of the nineteen actions originally laid out by Correns21 in 2008 had been achieved. This would appear a noted success in contrast to some of the municipal policies and statements made in other case studies that have not always been backed by concrete action. However, and as the case of North Saanich demonstrated, what remains to be seen is whether a culture of sustainability has become engrained enough in Correns for its values to survive once Latz is no longer mayor. The mayor himself remains fairly confident of such a transition:

“The success of our partnership with Correns21 has undeniably been in the strength our partnership. Beyond that, with all the work I've done to bring in young people, *vignerons*, and farmers into council, I'm quite optimistic that this will last. People are interested now, they want to be engaged, but only time will tell.”

## **Growing upwards and scaling out: The limits of SLFS development**

Though a good portion of Correns<sup>21</sup> and the council's work was enabled due to funding received from both regional and national sources, none in Correns spoke particularly favourably or deliberately about higher-level government support for SLFS development. "In the beginning," mayor Latz recalled, "we were the laughing stock of the whole *département*. We were *very* criticized. I was called in by the President of the *Chambre d'Agriculture*, who told me I was going to make my village hit a brick wall, that I was crazy..." While Correns has gone on to receive recognition from a number of high-level bodies, including the Eco-Mayors of France Association and the French Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development, the mayor's one regret is that Correns has failed to gain traction beyond its own borders.

This lack of uptake appears curious when a number of both French and EU laws have in principle sought to address issues of rural development. In particular, French Law No. 2005-157 passed on February 23, 2005 (LDTR), becoming the first legislative policy solely dedicated to rural development; its objectives include: economic development support, equality of access services, and environmental conservation and planning. Similarly, European-level policies have sought to address rural development policies under the second pillar of the CAP through improved competitiveness, land management, diversification, and its *Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale* (LEADER) program of which Provence Verte<sup>68</sup> is a local action group. Yet, like in

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<sup>68</sup> The Var, and the Provence Verte territory led by Latz in particular, have been especially proactive in adhering to the French government's 2007 *Grenelle de l'Environnement*, a round-table initiative bringing national and local government and organizations together to discuss key environmental and sustainable development issues over a five-year period.

Todmorden, most small-scale agricultural producers in Correns brushed off the EU and France's sustainable and rural development subsidies and initiatives as minuscule compare to support for large agribusinesses and the maintenance of larger-scale practices.

That being said, the PACA region ranks within the top five regions of France in terms of number of local Agenda 21 projects, with 62 ongoing local chapters. In addition, in 2009, just after Correns's own school food reform, PACA launched a program to support sustainable public procurement practices. Similarly, the Var has been one of the fastest-growing organic agricultural *départements* in France, almost reaching its objective to convert 20% of total agricultural land by 2020 this year (Agence Bio, 2014)<sup>69</sup>. However, because Latz's role was both as mayor of Correns and president of Provence Verte during those years, it is still difficult to assess whether regional activity in support of sustainable development has been a result of his leadership or due to more general regional support. Latz himself acknowledged that while the process in Correns occurred organically, the changes that happened within Provence Verte "were a bit more strained [and] not as natural a progression, because I really had to push for things to happen at that level." (c1) However, as was the case in North Saanich, regional support appears to correlate with successful local initiatives due to the enabling environments they provide for smaller-scale action.

Nevertheless, while the future of many rural villages in France remains uncertain

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<sup>69</sup> Only 4.4% of agricultural land in France is under organic agriculture. PACA's regional average stands at 15.4% (Agence Bio, 2015).

(Behagel, 2008; Sage, 2013), the example of Correns provides a welcome success story. In a news article for UK Reuters (2013), a number of rural mayors bemoaned the possible end of rural life and criticized the unequal subsidy levels earned by urban vs. rural municipalities –an amount roughly twice as great for urban communities, though rural spaces still make up 78% of the French territory. Instead, Correns is managing to handle the threat of its own disappearance rather well, through a combination of carefully thought-out market-based initiatives, municipal policies, and community-state collaborations (see Table 13 for a list of key initiatives). The village’s experiences suggest that SLFS development works best in a situation where the state can serve as the institutionalized means to enforce certain rules and paradigms. What is striking through Table 13, is that in contrast to the other case studies, Correns’s list of SLFSIs looks relatively insignificant. However, given the components of each initiative presented throughout this chapter, it highlights that when initiatives are well-integrated across sectors and between community participants, the quality of initiatives certainly outdoes the need for quantity.

Indeed, in collaborative governance with Correns<sup>21</sup>, the municipal council showed willingness for “mutually responsive development” (Keil, 2006). Each fulfilling their own specific role and respecting each other’s boundaries, the state-community partnerships developed within Correns show a real democratization of SLFS strategies. In addition, Correns stresses the necessity of giving primacy to farmers’ voices under “horizontal and equitable interaction” (Thrupp, 1997: 11). In the most successful cases, Thrupp finds that “farmers take the lead or share control in decision-making,

development and planning” (ibid) –a claim very much confirmed in Correns, where agricultural producers continue to play a pivotal socio-cultural and economic role.

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Vignerons de Correns (1935)</b>	farmer-led	wine cooperative operating as Certified Organic growers since 1998
<b>Correns21 (since 2008)</b>	community-led with strong collaboration with municipal government	volunteer council working in equal partnership with the municipal government to discuss and implement plans on local sustainable development; developed a 10-year action plan with activities including school food improvement, municipal waste management, eco-tourism development, community events e.g. the annual ( <i>Fête du Bio et du Naturel</i> ), collaborations with NGOs in the Global South, and the development of a local firewood AMAP (i.e. France’s equivalent of CSA)
<b>Municipal sustainable development platform</b>	state-led with community participation	established after the election of Mayor Latz, the platform includes a strong sustainable development agenda not limited to financial and advisory support for local food business, private and public eco-construction incentives, support for producers to transition to organic agriculture

*Table 13 - Key Initiatives in Correns*

The village also highlights the complexity of how more localized systems fit into modern, globalized food system and governance dynamics. On the one hand, Correns adheres to modern market principles and certification schemes to add value to their agriculture, on the other it constantly seeks to retain its local and small-scale rural identity in the face of development and larger agribusiness domination. In short, the case of Correns stresses that while SLFSIs remain embedded in national and global schemes, the strength of local power is in how they choose to leverage the systems around them.

Though Correns' population has nearly doubled since 1995, its size remains small by comparison to most communities today. However, the smallness of its size may have allowed for a more tightly-knit community, capable of more concerted action. Ultimately, the story of Correns is one of dignity. The goal of mayor Latz was to give back a sense of purpose to his village, which he achieved by bolstering Correns's local food system and ultimately by ensuring a long-term sustainable development plan for his community. Similar to Todmorden, Correns contradicts the assumption that SLFS thrive best in high-income spaces with diverse populations (Abate, 2008), but rather emphasizes the possibility of economic revival in lower-income communities.

The community's strong identification with the *paysan* lifestyle remains a critical characteristic of Correns's SLFS profile. This peasant identity is further analyzed by Van der Ploeg (2010) in his work on peasantry in the twenty-first century; like in Correns, Van der Ploeg finds a similar restructuring and re-enlivening of farming and agricultural spaces under a "peasant-like way of living" across the developed and developing world. As a clear response to the modern food system accelerated by the recent series of financial and food crises, "a collective memory [is] increasingly orienting farmers away from a [purely] entrepreneurial trajectory into the recreation of a peasant trajectory" (ibid: 2). This is not to say that many rural communities have not always identified as such, but that peasant livelihood has undergone a process of transformation, bridging historical tradition and experience with modernity. In an increasing number of instances, rural peasantry becomes associated with a struggle for autonomy, and a strength of identity and pride in the way food is produced (van der Ploeg, 2009).

Certainly, the term *paysan* has long held socio-cultural, economic, and even political importance in France; at times denoting extreme levels of poverty and hardship, at others highlighting a quiet strength and pride linking people to their land. The term speaks to the particular subjectivity adopted by locals. Acknowledging the shared experiences of *paysans* in their community gives increased strength, purpose, and relevance to the peasant voice. It views consumers as citizens, and understands SLFSIs as a means for a paradigm shift through which both food and land are de-commodified and re-embedded in stronger social and ecological values, where people, the economy, and natural environments are consciously intertwined.

In her work on sustainability-based governance approaches to food security, Duncan (2015) calls for reflexivity and adaptability in governance strategies that is clearly attempted in the case of Correns. She points in particular to the notions of “learning while doing” and creating “living” policy —strategies both designed to allow for adaptability of ever-changing socio-political and environmental landscapes. This type of reflexive governance allows for solutions to better reflect ongoing realities.

While a number of political schemes across North America and Europe seek to consolidate local governments under broader jurisdictions, whether in the case of Todmorden and the Calderdale Council or under France’s 2007 territorial cohesion policy, Correns demonstrates that devolving to (or keeping power at) the local scale can be a driving force for rural innovation and change. Certainly, Correns’s work serves as a strong case for the rural development paradigm proposed by Marsden discussed in

Chapter 3. Under this approach, agriculture and SLFSs become decentralized and local political structures serve as localized nodes of sustainability embedded within broader systems. Without a doubt, the municipal council played a fundamental role in allowing this type of development in Correns. As summarized by Correns's mayor:

“We’re just another way to understand rural spaces. Even though a majority of the global population now lives in urban spaces, the success of rural communities remains fundamental. We have to give a sense of identity and meaning back to the world of *paysans*. It’s critical to everyone’s future, everywhere.”

## Chapter 8 – Analysis and Conclusions

“We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community... Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own.” (Cesar Chavez)

In their understanding of SLFSs, participants in each community shared the deeper fears they held regarding the future of our food systems, the viability of their rural communities, and even the world they were leaving behind for their children and grandchildren (w3-5, w8-9, s1, s8-9, t1-4, t8, c1-2, c4-5). Many participants spoke warily of where our current systems might lead, and that this skepticism had often been the greatest contributor to their involvement in SLFS development. In their own work, Gibson-Graham (2001) explain these types of underlying fears as the means through which people come to understand the limits of a capitalist economic system: “Participants [...] on a visceral level experience untamed fears of society out of control and a tacit shared recognition of the insufficiency of the capitalist economy (no matter how developed) to the task of sustaining a community.” Applied to SLFSs, these fears can be understood as a means to reconcile the consequences of today’s industrialized food systems with the drive to allow for socio-cultural preservation, sustainable livelihoods, and environmental protection.

For over half a century, industrial agricultural and food systems have developed to the detriment of many rural communities. Alongside modernization and growth, these communities have also experienced a loss of purpose and identity (Ikerd, 2008; Feenstra 1997): rural exodus, the increased price of agricultural land, the larger and more

specialized nature of farming, a decline in the purchase of food and agricultural inputs from local markets in favour of global options have all played their part in changing the face of rural spaces. To redress this, many individuals and communities believe that an alternative paradigm based on SLFSs is needed to support sustainable and vibrant rural livelihoods.

Murdoch et al. (2000: 212) specifically call for an assessment of how new modes of thinking about food systems “can be asserted in ways which substantively challenge the conventional, industrialized chains that drive processes [...] which bring so much environmental and medical harm in their wake.” In particular, they stress that the qualities of “localness, naturalness, embeddedness” found within sustainable food systems are not ends in themselves, but leverages that can be used to negotiate “new kinds of power” within our food systems (ibid). This work has sought to provide an overview of four communities seeking these very changes, and considers the governance mechanisms that develop and sustain these alternatives.

This final chapter provides a comparative analysis of four major and interrelated SLFS governance characteristics found in each of the four case. The four traits that appear to have contributed most to SLFS development within each community are: 1) strong social capital within a community; 2) a whole community approach to socio-economic development; 3) a strong role for the state; and 4) genuine multi-actor collaboration. This chapter will measure the degree to which each of these traits appeared within the case studies, and how the relative presence or absence of a characteristic enabled or hindered a

community's SLFSI development. In doing so, not only are the similarities and differences between each case made evident, but we can also begin to glean the governance processes (e.g. state- or community-led) that are more conducive to SLFSI development than others. Ultimately, it will be shown that these traits do not operate in isolation but build on one another, best strengthening the capacity for a community to pursue SLFS development when all four characteristics are present. Lastly, this chapter offers concluding insights on SLFSIs, before acknowledging the limitations of this work and suggesting lingering research gaps, namely on scalability and whether and how SLFSIs can be supported at higher institutional scales.

#### **“It takes a village...”: the role of social capital and the ‘local’ in SLFS**

The most evident necessity for SLFS governance in each of the four case studies is in a community's ability to leverage social capital as means to work towards common goals. Tied to this, a degree of rootedness in place appears a complementary characteristic. Together, both these factors create the necessary willingness for the broadest range of community members to engage with one another; they also allow communities to use their own uniqueness as a strength to build towards a shared future. Indeed, whether they drew on their connections with the land or on a shared local history, each community displayed an ability to work co-operatively to protect and maintain their shared experiences. Each case study emphasized how together, Putnam's notion of civic engagement and social capital foster positive outcomes.

To begin an analysis of local dynamics, and as brought up in Lowitt et al. (2016) and

Allen (2010), the historic role of place and scale should be acknowledged to understand the context for SLFSs in each community. For example, the ongoing success of co-operatives in both the cases of Correns and Wolfville were mentioned as stemming from a history of co-operative management in the area. Co-operative arrangements were viewed as having long-standing local cultural value. Similarly, the idea of preserving local foodscapes, or local traditional foods and preparation methods were brought up in each case; for example, in North Saanich's decision to host a First Nations pit cook as part of their annual Flavour Trail or in IET's decision to revitalize Todmorden's town motto and post-industrial history. Similarly, strong social cohesion and discord in the cases of Correns and North Saanich were brought up as age-old traditions, going back to the communities' earliest days.

In addition, in discussing place, it must be acknowledged that communities do not always share similar perceptions of the local scale. Despite similarities in population and surface area, the two European case studies understood 'local' as existing within a much smaller radius than both Canadian examples. While participants in North Saanich and Wolfville discussed Canadian authors—notably, Smith and MacKinnon's notion of the 100-mile diet, participants in both Correns and especially Todmorden discussed local as being within a few dozen miles of their town centre. This difference in perception was made obvious by Clear: "We can get meat of all kinds very locally, but vegetables are very difficult here. Within 30 miles I think, you can get some flat lands and that's likely where they come from." While only one opinion, the notion that acquiring vegetables would be "difficult" because they came from 30 miles away was not uncommon in both European

case studies, while such a distance would still be considered very ‘local’ in Canada.

A few producers in Canada, France, and the UK attributed these differences to the varying conceptions of space held by North Americans and Europeans. As the Cunninghams explained, “There’s the 100-mile diet here, but in the UK 100 miles is already halfway across the country!” Or as Clear mentioned, “if we’re looking at distance, you can always buy British food or French food, so things can stay pretty local here, I guess certainly compared to in Canada.” However, this cultural difference should not be overstated as all participants acknowledged that produce grown closer to home was always “more local” than if grown outside one’s municipality, county, or country.

More important than physical space, the four cases stressed that understanding scale and how it is constructed is critical to how SLFS governance takes shape. Without romanticizing the notion of the ‘local’, each case exemplifies how supporting local-level policies or projects serves as a real opportunity for innovation. Support was found in the agricultural zoning laws of North Saanich, Calderdale Council’s more recent laws on community agricultural land use, IET’s partnership with the local police force, or Correns’s local school food project. Further, these innovations can be attributed to strong levels of trust and partnership between SLFS proponents, enabled by the high levels of social capital shared between them. These efforts remain intrinsically different to the call made by many researchers and practitioners to “relocalize” food systems, in that relocalization often fails to recognize the need for some communities to use non-local markets to achieve economic sustainability, as explained further in this chapter.

Indeed, both Putnam and Fukuyama have noted that developing social capital translates into economic growth and development. This link is evident in each case's description of how social capital appears to have bred a market embedded in values other than profit-making. While other studies have empirically linked the connection between social capital and economic development (Bronisz and Heijman, 2009; Fukuyama, 1995), strong social bonds played an evidently positive role in the economic successes of the four cases presented here—both locally and regionally. North Saanich's affiliation with the regional Flavour Trail initiative, Todmorden's Every Egg Matters and their farmers market black board campaigns, Correns' broader goals of developing agro- and eco-tourism as part of the larger *Provence Verte* region, or Wolfville's Centre for Small Farms as well as the Acadia Community Garden, to name a few, are all inherently economic initiatives based on some moral goal aligned to the ideals of SLFSs. Even the desires to create shorter supply chains, informal economies, or greater local opportunities within neoliberal modes of exchange (e.g. Correns's wine industry), all point to markets driven by strong social capital. Beyond the municipality, the adherence to a national or regional organic standard or designation based on locality and *terroir* points to a local economy that assumes a consumer base willing to pay the premium for food and agricultural products infused with social or environmental meaning.

In other words, the development of social capital allows for some reconsideration of neoliberal thinking through the notion of embeddedness. Considering SLFS development

in light of the “Polanyian problem”<sup>70</sup> (i.e. that a free market economy and a strong and stable society cannot co-exist) is to acknowledge that the primary issue with our current dominant food system is that it creates and perpetuates a market society (i.e. a society embodying and “enslaved” (Clark, 2014) to capitalist market thinking). In contrast, whether through Correns’s use of the organic label to penetrate European markets or TapRoot farm’s accessible CSA scheme in Wolfville, embeddedness rather allows SLFS actors to leverage modern market mechanisms in more ethically minded and constructive ways. The strength of embeddedness driven by farmers in each case study enabled communities to supersede “the capitalist principle of self-gain and its market pattern” (Clark, 2014: 65) to fulfill ethically and ecologically fulfill their material needs.

Embedded market initiatives such as these have already been qualified as belonging to the “nested markets” defined by Van der Ploeg (2010; 2012); this term refers to market segments found within broader markets for food and agricultural products. As exemplified by Correns’s wine cooperative, the local organic farmers in Todmorden and North Saanich, or the CSA and food box programs of Tap Root Farm in Wolfville, these market segments operate under different normative frameworks and modes of governance than conventional market structures. To Van der Ploeg, nested markets are rooted in specific social movements and supportive institutional frameworks (e.g. cooperative frameworks, solidarity movements, particular quality definitions) and pursue different objectives in addition to financial gain (e.g. sustainability, redistribution of value) (2012). Nested markets are also generally based on local or regional sources, though they do not

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<sup>70</sup> To recap the discussion on the Polanyian problem from Chapter 1, Polanyi’s problematization of the market is not that the market is unregulated, but that it instills society with commodified mindsets.

limit themselves to producing solely for those regions.

The ability to meet more ethical economic alternatives is particularly important given that creating a decent level of financial return is considered fundamental in ensuring the long-term viability of rural communities (Ikerd, 2008). Indeed, the role of individual entrepreneurs cannot be understated in SLFSs, and are evident in the stories and experiences of producers and local business owners throughout the case studies. In all cases, the entrepreneurial spirit has allowed for empowerment of both individuals and the community more broadly. Further, IET, and a number of community enterprises in Wolfville, Correns, and North Saanich, all also point to the role and place of non-traditional agriculture and informal market governance in SLFS development —whether through community gardening projects or informal economic exchanges based on shared skills and resources, as well as reciprocity and trust.

Murdoch et al. (2000: 117) point to the danger of overly-embedded markets, fearing that they may remain too small-scale or local, and thus become weak and marginalized in the face of changing economic conditions. However, most of SLFSIs presented here do not fall prey to this concern. For example, Correns's attention to branding itself to export its product, or all four communities' ability to harness agriculture and their rural characteristics for eco-tourism should allow them to remain more robust than inward-focused communities.

Indeed, it could also be mentioned here, that the goals of SLFSs do not have to be

directly at odds with those of market-based or globalized systems. On the contrary, the ‘nested markets’ that economically drive SLFSs allow local producers to benefit from local, national, and even global markets to ensure their economic sustainability (w3-5; s6-7; t7-8; c1-4); the ability to then export these local products regionally, nationally, or even internationally were never called into question in these communities. Instead, the export of local product and knowledge was viewed as a positive means to scale out and connect with other SLFS-minded communities and consumers around the globe, and as one of the more positive impacts of living in an increasingly globalized world (t1; t3; w3; w5; s3; c1-2).

Again, Correns’s desire to distinguish the regional uniqueness of their products (e.g. white wine instead of rosé, organic instead of conventional) is a clear adaptation of relocalizing marketing strategies in a way that still meets market demands. This goal in no way contradicted the town’s desire to support more environmentally-friendly agriculture for the health and wellbeing of their community. This case also highlights that local control of resources and collaboration neither implies a desire to end globalization nor to pursue local self-sufficiency, as is often assumed. Instead, communities like Correns take pride in both exporting their own products, as well as showcasing those of other regions in their own supermarkets and through community events. Similarly, while organic certification is a nationally and even globally recognized certification, global designations were seen as opportunities for small or traditional producers, such as Pextenement Cheese in Todmorden or the *Vignerons de Correns*, to market themselves in ways that satisfy consumer demand beyond their local market. To a community's

advantage, leveraging the values of local production methods or of the particular agricultural advantages of a specific place (e.g. through the notion of *terroir*), “local” becomes both a process and a product.

However, a more local economic focus does become important when rural communities are faced with the very real, and often insurmountable, barriers posed by certain global trends. While many communities depend on the capitalist economy to export and showcase the originality of their local fare, all mentioned the dangers of an unchecked neoliberal system —whether in the context of the decreased power of agricultural producers in the face of large agri-food chains or of the primary place given to cheap “food from nowhere” (Bové and Dufour, 2001) promoted by neoliberal food systems (t1-4; t6; t8; w3-5; w7; s5; s7-9; c1; c4). Many also expressed concern towards the modern food system’s tendency to support intensive and environmentally-harmful means of production, distribution, and consumption, which were considered at odds with the goals and values of SLFS structures. Indeed, the lack of a large corporate presence in each of the four case studies were both expressly and indirectly mentioned throughout as contributing factors to their success.

It would seem clear then that the role social capital plays in both creating strong communities and economies is fundamental to SLFS development. Through these strong community bonds, participants identified a variety of shared values centered around inclusion, social justice, shared responsibility regarding environmental stewardship, maintenance of tradition, and knowledge sharing, amongst others, that are often

deemphasized in conventional food system schemes. Whether by supporting community-led efforts as in Todmorden, creating a long-term vision of sustainability as in Wolfville, capitalizing on community and private sector entrepreneurship as in North Saanich, or joining up to international sustainability agendas as in Correns, the ingredients to SLFS change “cannot [solely] be found in the marketplace” (McMahon, 2014: 133).

Indeed, social capital in SLFS allows people to revalorize both their food and the means through which it is procured. Dichotomies like producer/consumer become less important as everyone moves beyond identification of their distinct economic roles. Farmers and consumers come to see themselves more as activists, gardeners, friends or family members, who play a bigger role in their community beyond a singular label. IET and North Saanich’s WCAS sought this by implicating their whole community in food growing and in contributing to the local food system; Correns held to the term “*paysan*” as a means of bringing their community together. In short, residents feel more deeply embedded in their community beyond their economic role.

Developing social capital can also allow for the state, society, and private sectors to each play their own part in governing SLFS. One could further extrapolate that when the role of the state is lacking—as in the case Todmorden or during North Saanich’s political discord—strong social capital between community members and groups created the willingness and motivation to maintain SLFS efforts despite state setbacks. Conversely, as the leadership of Mayor Latz in Correns and Mayor Finall in North Saanich showed, the state can also step in to organize civil society around a specific issue, especially if

groups show a lack of knowledge or timeliness on how to organize themselves (Fukuyama, 1995). Like the proverb “it takes a village to raise a child,” SLFSs require a whole community to support them —from government, to civil society, farmers and businesses alike.

One further way of comparing the success and limits of social capital in each case is through Putnam’s concepts of *bonding* (building social capital *within* a homogenous group) and *bridging* (building *between* groups) discussed in Chapter 1. In most cases, *bonding* capital is what allowed communities as a whole to find common purpose and identity to pursue SLFS development. Bonding capital in favor of SLFS was generated through social events or more commonly by extending pre-existing relationships of trust among community members to discuss new ideas and projects. In the case of Correns, bonding allowed a tightly-knit community to find the willingness and resolve to work together towards SLFS development through shared discourse around a way of life. Wolfville’s move to develop a culture of sustainability within its municipal government through The Natural Step program belied a belief in the positive effects of building both relationships and a community vision over the long-term. All cases drew on a shared history and rural identity as a means to generate sympathy and spur action towards SLFSs.

However, SLFS development in a number of cases also highlighted the potential downfalls of bonding capital within tightly-knit groups through the creation of ‘us vs. them’ mentalities. In North Saanich, a strong political and epistemic cleavage between

pro-SLFS and pro-development groups strengthened each one's resolve to stand their ground, and heightened social distrust and political standstills between them. In Todmorden, a broader community culture rooted around distrust towards change or alternative mindsets created an initial and often ongoing difficulty for IET's SLFS goals to gain traction. More broadly, many SLFS proponents are quick to define themselves as a common entity fighting "against" actors outside of their community –generally, large agri-business companies. Companies such as Monsanto, Costco, Walmart, Starbucks, and other large food retailers were frequently brought up as examples that perpetuate and uphold the types of values and structures that SLFSs seek to oppose. As mentioned by one producer in Wolfville, "I like to say Starbucks is our competition. Tim Hortons is our competition... not each other" (anonymous).

Scholars, such as McMahon (2015) and McWilliams (2009), have brought up whether it is relevant to question the accepted dichotomies of food system discourse and the inherent value of the near religious separation of organic/conventional, small/industrial, or local/global. One might assume that drawing such clear distinctions creates greater division between disparate actors, and limits the possibility for innovation, networking, and unlikely alliances towards a common goal. However, as McMahon writes, whether these dichotomies are appropriate or not is less important than the fact that many communities feel that they have been pushed to a point of extremes. The marginalization and loss felt by these communities over decades should be enough to see relevance in the strength of their claims and opposition to certain ways of structuring national and global economies and subsequently policies.

As such, it is through bridging capital that we find particular relevance for SLFSI governance. Because bridging refers to the process through which individuals and networks create bonds between socially heterogeneous groups, it can be considered a type of social capital better able to build towards knowledge sharing and representing a diversity of interests. Through information and idea sharing, Fukuyama explains that unlike bonding, bridging generates a broader “radius of trust” that allows for more inclusive and diverse arrangements (1995). Like collaborative governance schemes, bridging social capital can create networks and structures that are more democratic in nature by bringing disparate voices together. This was the case in the deliberate development of Correns<sup>21</sup> or IET’s efforts to bridge gender, age, and social class gaps.

It is also particularly important to consider the role of bridging in the context of scaling out. All four SLFS case studies stressed the critical need to engage with other municipalities and higher levels of jurisdiction, be they regional, national, or international partners. Bridging allows information diffusion and idea sharing between municipalities, as has been actively pursued through North Saanich’s involvement with CR-FAIR, Wolfville’s active involvement in the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, Correns’s participation in EU municipal exchanges and its North-South solidarity project, and finally, Todmorden’s Incredible Edible network. All municipalities have also welcomed a number of out-of-town guests and organizations to learn from them and share ideas, as well as participated in conferences and workshops across the globe. In addition, beyond the more formalized efforts pursued by municipalities themselves, individual community members, such as a number of the farmers in all four municipalities, actively engage in

bridging social capital through their own participation in multi-stakeholder conferences and events of regional and even international scope (w3; w5; s3; s5; s8; t2; t7; c1; c4).

Bonding appears the necessary starting point to foster trust and cooperation. It strengthens collective identity by reinforcing shared history and purpose within a community. Bridging plays a fundamental role in creating collective ownership between heterogeneous actors. Internally to a community, bridging is particularly important when it brings otherwise marginalized or disparate groups together; externally, bridging plays a key role in allowing a community to gain new knowledge and insights from others experiencing similar situations and pursuing similar goals in different environments.

Indeed, in his overview of rural economies, Ikerd emphasizes that “attracting people who work with their minds” and creating a place where locals will choose to stay is paramount to rural revitalization (2008: 150). All four case communities relied to some extent on leaders and visionaries to take on SLFS development and depended on creativity from their community members to begin their SLFS trajectory. Whether the motivation stems from a mayor, the municipality’s academic community, proponents from a dedicated civil society organization, or the farmers themselves, each community brought up the importance of its own members to bring forth thoughtful ideas and planning.

Unsurprisingly, all the case communities have had strong links to SLFS researchers and innovative thinkers throughout their development: Wolfville houses Acadia University and the Center for Small Farms, while North Saanich lies in close proximity to a number

of universities and colleges in the peninsula. Pam Warhurst drew inspiration from a talk by prominent food system scholar, Dr. Tim Lang, in creating IET, and Todmorden now hosts a BTEC in Land Management, and has increasingly hosted visiting scholars and researchers to share in each other's knowledge. Correns's Mayor drew from the *Institut national d'études supérieures agronomiques de Montpellier*'s research on Correns as a contributing factor of his SLFS thinking. Indeed, all four municipalities have made a point of linking up with creative scientific research on SLFSIs, recognizing that only through these opportunities can they remain on the cutting edge of SLFS development.

Table 14 presents a summary of how social capital was built in each of the four case studies. More specifically, it begins to expose the role and relevance of particular actors and processes in SLFSI development; while it shows that social capital may be developed through a number of different channels, the greater diversity of actors seeking to build social capital within and beyond the community (e.g. state, community, or farming actors), the more widespread social capital and civic engagement appear.

	<b>Todmorden, UK</b>	<b>Wolfvile, NS, Canada</b>	<b>North Saanich, BC, Canada</b>	<b>Correns, France</b>
<b>Strong social capital</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· strengthened through <b>community-led efforts</b> by IET both within and beyond the local-scale (e.g. IE network), but limited by lacking relationship building with municipal and county officials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· strengthened as result of <b>state-community collaboration</b> through TNS framework</li> <li>· strengthened through variety of <b>community group, university-led initiatives</b></li> <li>· strengthened by some <b>farmer-led initiatives</b> (e.g. Tap Room Farm, Centre for Small Farms)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· strengthened by <b>municipal government champions</b> and state-led participatory processes (e.g. WCAS), but limited by municipal political conflicts</li> <li>· strengthened by <b>local and regional community initiatives</b></li> <li>· strengthened by some <b>farmer-led support and initiatives</b> (e.g. Roost Farm Centre)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· strengthened by <b>municipal government champions</b> and state-led participatory processes</li> <li>· strengthened by <b>state, community, and farmer-led initiatives</b> within and beyond local scale (e.g. local partnership with MAS, EU municipal exchange)</li> <li>· strengthened by <b>community-led</b> Correns21 with municipal support</li> </ul>
<p>Note: For more detail on types of initiatives in each case study, refer to Tables 7, 9, 11, and 13 for key SLFSIs in each case study chapter.</p>				

*Table 14 - Case studies measured for social capital development*

### **Whole community approach: a social, economic, and environmental project**

A ‘whole community approach’ draws from the language used by North Saanich to indicate the need to develop SLFSIs that bridge sectors and stakeholder groups. The more integrated SLFSIs were shown to be, the better they were able to sustain themselves over-time and the less likely they were to fall prey to conflicting community (or political) dynamics. While inherently related to the strength of civic engagement and social capital in a community, the need for cross-sectoral and integrated strategies deserve their own mention.

The cross-sectoral integration evident in the majority of cases respond to Hinrichs and Lyson's call for a more comprehensive and unified alternative agrifood movement (2007: 53). While diversity is a clear asset, they stress that a more unified movement could have a stronger impact in challenging the foundations of the current food system if it operated under a single master frame; without unity, efforts remain disparate and small as was made evident in Wolfville. To create this master frame, they first emphasize the need to create and strengthen linkages between sectors already acting within the alternative agri-food community, efforts attempted in all four case studies to some extent.

While these also apply as governance collaborations, North Saanich's WCAS and Correns<sup>21</sup> provide the strongest examples of plans and practices seeking to blend social, economic, environmental and political actions; organizing SLFSIs under such clear structures gave clarity of insight to communities on the scope of issues to address without overwhelming them. Many of these policies also reflected the interests and expertise of a diversity of areas such as health and nutrition, planning, environment, or community and economic development around the same table; collaboration allowed for a co-production of knowledge, best identified in the naming of North Saanich's 'Whole Community' Agricultural Strategy. In contrast, the diversity of initiatives pursued in Wolfville appeared disjointed, lacking clear focus on where or how community development could be best addressed next despite SLFSI proponents' best efforts.

Whole community approaches also imply a wide range of participation. The case studies highlight that a greater diversity of players allows for SLFSIs to gain greater traction

within a community. IET's work, though lacking strong state collaborators, understood the value of drawing this need. Their SLFSI work in Todmorden appeared to affect every group within their community; employed and unemployed, young and old, men and women, low, medium, or upper class were all empowered to contribute to their community's SLFS efforts. Also mentioned throughout the Todmorden case study, IET organizers consciously drew from a range of expertise, ensuring each new project could benefit from specific knowledges and skills sets —whether in web design, engineering farming, or community organizing. Similarly, Correns<sup>21</sup> was designed to bring together as wide of variety of expertise, interests, and skills as possible.

Here, the role that farms themselves play in contributing to a community's innovation should be acknowledged once again, stressing the multi-functional role of agriculture as a strong component of integrated SLFSIs. To some respect, multifunctional agriculture can be understood as a means of implementing integrated SLFSI strategies at the individual farm level. For example, beyond their farming activity, the Centre for Small Farms in Wolfville serves as a learning and gathering space between farmers (and with the public), while Tap Root Farm has thought through options to both diversify and add value to its own production while increasing options for local food access. North Saanich's Roost Farm Centre has served as a community pillar for over a decade, going beyond its role of food producer, to support local music, art, and educational opportunities. The *Vignerons de Correns* organic practices, their eco-building construction, and maintenance of historic buildings as their sale site generate environmental and cultural benefits for the local community.

Of course, the efforts of many other producers in each of the four communities is also beneficial, whether they pursue sustainable methods of agriculture or contribute to the local economy; each play a pivotal role in serving as the economic backbone of rural communities and work to integrate a key economic piece to any SLFSI's economic strategy. In his 2012 report on Canada, De Schutter called for "a thriving small-scale sector" as an essential component to creating more sustainable and local food systems (2012: 9); indeed, any SLFSI is only as strong as its agriculture base and entrepreneurs.

In short, an integrated and participatory approach is necessary to community development, with strong social capital serving as a strong prerequisite. While Todmorden stressed the ability for a small community organization to leverage kindness and lead the vision for sustainable food in their town, Wolfville capitalized on instilling a culture of sustainability within its long-term administrative staff to push SLFS development slowly through time, while nurturing a culture of trust with the community and business sector to respond to their needs. North Saanich provided a strong example of integrated community planning relying on community members and leadership to develop new ideas and projects around SLFS, especially when political realities made adopting long-term SLFS projects less possible. Finally, the case of Correns displayed a more prominent role for the state to integrate SLFSIs, creating strong bonds between the agricultural community, municipal government, and community. Each municipality determined their own set of priorities and values around what it means to promote SLFS to serve as the necessary guideposts to meet the needs of their own communities.

The inherently integrated nature of sustainable food system development highlighted here also suggests the importance of reflexive processes in SLFSI development. Cases that were best able to leverage either community or state participants (or sometimes both) were those that were able to reflect on past behaviour, identify gaps in their practices, and improve them with new actions. This was the case for IET in their increased work with state partners or their attempt to include community participants that they had not previously engaged with; reflexivity was also evident in Correns development, when local producers recognized the practical difficulty of organic agriculture, but extended their original plans to pursue it longer than intended as new motivations beyond the original economic incentives drove them forward. Reflexivity can also occur on a smaller scale, including Dr. Warner's Great Meals for Change project, which invites students and community members to meet around a meal to push the boundaries of their thoughts about food.

A whole community approach equally shows the breadth of areas that can be affected under the umbrella of singular SLFSIs: Todmorden's IET has created a large variety of projects improving community and economic resilience, from its support of new producers, community events and festival planning, edible landscaping of public spaces, and close partnership with its town's local schools. In its embrace of Agenda 21, Correns's agricultural producers have also gone beyond organic production to take on environmental forestry initiatives, sustainable public food procurement, and cultural revitalization of Correns's local history. These types of holistic and fully-integrated initiatives further speak to calls often made by food system scholars and activists for

governments at all levels to create “joined up” or increasingly cross- and multi-sectoral policies (see IPES, 2015; Food Secure Canada, 2011; ACT for CFS, 2014). In short, SLFS development recognizes that its members create the tapestry of multi-functionality that keeps rural communities strong, or in Shakespeare’s oft-quoted words, “where every man must play a part.”

Table 15 summarizes whether a whole community approach was adopted in each of the case studies, and which actors and processes enabled the assimilation of such an approach. Throughout the table, the terms “enabled” and “advanced” indicate efforts that are deemed most conducive to meet particular criteria. The terms “supported” and “attempted” are used to indicate lower, but still present, aims to meet either of the four characteristics. This brief overview brings further proof that collaborative and more participatory governance schemes enable SLFSI development, with the cases of North Saanich and Correns displaying a stronger and better integrated adoption of a whole community approach by having involved a greater cross-section of actors in SLFSI decision-making and development.

	<b>Todmorden, UK</b>	<b>Wolfville, NS, Canada</b>	<b>North Saanich, BC, Canada</b>	<b>Correns, France</b>
<b>Whole community approach to socio-economic development</b>	· attempted by <b>community-led</b> IET projects by drawing on wide diversity of participants, but limited to community-based projects	· attempted through <b>state, community, farmer-led initiatives</b> , but initiatives not fully integrated with one another) · advanced by spaces of learning and innovation created by <b>community and farmer-led initiatives</b> , and <b>state-community collaboration</b> to create ‘culture of sustainability’	· enabled by <b>state-led processes with community participation</b> (e.g. WCAS) · advanced by spaces of learning and innovation created by <b>community and farmer-led initiatives</b>	· enabled by <b>community-led, state-supported</b> governance process (e.g. Correns21) · enabled by <b>state-led</b> integrated sustainable development platform with community participation
Note: For more detail on types of initiatives in each case study, refer to Tables 7, 9, 11, and 13 for key SLFSIs in each case study chapter.				

*Table 15 - Case studies measured for adoption of whole community approach*

### **The role of the state in multi-actor SLFS collaborations**

The development of such integrated SLFSIs undeniably requires the state to act as a key partner. This becomes particularly important to acknowledge as one of the recurrent themes in all case studies was participants’ wariness of waiting for top-down policy measures to create change; in other words, skepticism ran high that national and even regional levels of government would sufficiently address local SLFS needs. Like the “us vs. them” mentality described above, there was a clear level of discontent, frustration, and confusion expressed in each community over the way higher level governments, as well as the mainstream food system at large, can serve to motivate progressive food

system change (e.g. ALR in BC), but also stifle it if measures are poorly implemented or altogether absent.

In this regard, neoliberal vs. neocommunitarian views towards SLFSIs were particularly evident. For example, a number of farmers stated their outright rejection of government ‘hand outs’ (i.e. subsidies), stating a much greater preference for their governments to enable more conducive entrepreneurial environments. These farmers spoke directly to the perceived paternalistic role adopted by national-level governments towards the farming community (t5; t7; c4). As one farmer in North Saanich mentioned, “really, the goal of the government is to give us more opportunities, power, more fairness in the market place, not to send us cheques in the mail” (anonymous). Indeed, the role of the state was often mentioned as one that should guide and encourage rather than prescribe or pay out. Municipal government actors —rather than higher-level state actors— were identified as key allies across the four communities to help in this process, both by municipal officials themselves as well as by citizens. In particular, in Wolfville, North Saanich, and Correns, the municipal role was described as one of facilitation. This was reflected well in the Wolfville town council’s “how can we help?” mentality (w1-2; w5). As mentioned by one Wolfville resident:

“I don’t actually support the idea that things should be coming from government support, that kind of irks me. The important level of influence for government is just in having conversations with people and helping them understand their own impact. I really think it will flow from there...”  
(anonymous)

Many in Wolfville appreciated municipal government support, while others noted it

operated too much at arms' length. In this context, civil society and food-related entrepreneurs were the primary actors of SLFS change.

The role ultimately taken on by the state diverged fairly significantly between communities. Following a more neocommunitarian approach, in North Saanich and Correns, this logic solidified around the municipal council's active role in maintaining their community's rural nature by supporting and giving voice to its agricultural constituents. Correns's municipal government proactively engaged in laying down policy-based foundations for SLFS development, while also supporting the development of food and farming entrepreneurship and discourse. North Saanich also attempted a more proactive approach, releasing an innovative agricultural plan and community strategy, but once again, remained in limbo due to political discord. Last, while Todmorden's approach to SLFSIs appears wholly grassroots based, change may slowly be occurring as their 2013 Town Plan finally acknowledged the significant contribution of IET to the town's development, and stated a desire to support similar efforts in the future.

While community members tended to favour a more proactive approach taken by their municipal officials, criticisms of 'arm's length' government involvement were not particularly strong. Though some participants offhandedly likened a limited or collaborative government role to a type of government 'offloading' of responsibility, certainly, in the case of Correns, and even to some extent in Wolfville and North Saanich, sharing decision-making powers appeared to come more out of the understanding that

pooled resources make for stronger community, whether those resources come in the form of money, time, expertise, or simply good will. Many community participants were happy to take on the added work themselves, so long as officials remained involved in some way. That being said, many strong synergies were evident in cases where municipal government involvement was strong and direct, usually translating into more concrete policies and a more enabling environment for SLFS change.

Further, while higher levels of the state play a fundamental role in governing SLFS through the policies and regulations they adopt and the discourses they create, interview participants rarely brought up these actors unless directly prompted. Even though a number of funds for both municipal and community projects were directly attributed to higher-levels of government (e.g. provincial funding in Canada, EU funding in the UK and France), both municipal and community actors shied away from relating them directly to their community's success. The implication usually appeared to be that SLFS successes were due to municipal-level allocation of funding, rather than any overt action from the part of regional or national levels of government in granting the funds—even when this was not always the case. Some were expressly skeptical of national government involvement in SLFS: “I even wonder if the government *would* help,” one Todmordenite mused regarding EU or higher-level funding, “because government support or big money often just ends up killing your project” (anonymous). Similarly, participants in North Saanich were quick to criticize ALR policies for the ALC's bureaucratic inefficiencies and seemingly random application of policies (e.g. the Roost's challenges in building an additional structure on their lot). However, most failed to

recognize the legacy left behind by ALR in BC in protecting agricultural land and promoting provincial food production in way that has not been equally replicated in other provinces. While these opinions only represent the point of view of a few participants, they point to the limitations within certain sustainable local food movements to overly polarize issues, limiting their capacity to find new allies or to use a greater variety of leverage points to enable change. This lack of acknowledgement also highlights a broader trend vocalized by a larger majority of community members, who took a great degree of pride in asserting their independence from what they labeled as ‘government’ to ensure their own sustainability.

Table 16 gives of overview on how involved state actors were in supporting SLFSIs. While state involvement was not particularly necessary to SLFSI development in Todmorden, it shows the enabling role played by various levels of the state, when it proves supportive of SLFSIs through policies and platforms and when it acts as a convener for a diversity of stakeholders to deliberate and make decisions on SLFSI development.

	<b>Todmorden, UK</b>	<b>Wolfvile, NS, Canada</b>	<b>North Saanich, BC, Canada</b>	<b>Correns, France</b>
<b>Strong state role</b>	· municipal government <b>not involved</b> in SLFSI development, but has more recently recognize efforts and stated support for IET’s work	· municipal government <b>loosely involved</b> by serving as facilitator or financier of various initiatives, providing a positive stance towards SLFSI,	· municipal government <b>strongly involved</b> by championing SLFS cause, but limited by political cycles and gaining community trust and support	· municipal government <b>strongly involved</b> by championing SLFS cause and gaining community and farmer trust and support · EU institutions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· county council <b>later involved</b> through community land use laws</li> <li>· local public institutions <b>strongly involved</b> through project-based partnerships</li> <li>· EU institutions <b>involved</b> by providing some funding for SLFS initiatives and by serving as convener for EU-wide SLFS-oriented for (link understudied in this research)</li> </ul>	but lacking pro-activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· provincial level policies <b>involved</b> by providing enabling policies (e.g. ALR) and institutional support (e.g. creation of AACs) (link understudied in this research)</li> </ul>	<b>involved</b> by providing some funding for SLFS initiatives and by enabling exchanges between SLFS-oriented EU municipalities (link understudied in this research)
<p>Note: For more detail on types of initiatives in each case study, refer to Tables 7, 9, 11, and 13 for key SLFSIs in each case study chapter.</p>				

*Table 16 - Case studies measured for levels of state involvement*

### **Share and share alike: genuine multi-actor collaboration**

In seeking input or collaboration from other actors, most cases drew primarily on traditional state-led governance processes (e.g. public consultations in the development of WCAS or Wolfville taking up Fair Trade and Citta Slow designations as a result of public demand), while others sought primarily community-led initiatives to carve a path for SLFS themselves (e.g. IET). However, in no case did solely state-led or community-led processes appear to have the necessary clout to further SLFSIs own their own. Building on strong social capital, a whole community approach to SLFSI development, and the recognition of state involvement, collaborative governance efforts, whether pursued through traditional or new governance mechanisms proved the strongest enabling

factor for SLFS development.

State-led processes that solicited community participation and community-led arrangements that drew from government input (i.e. Wanna's medium to medium-high levels of collaboration) each made room for more reflexive thinking and collaborative decision-making. However, equal partnerships between the state and community that make up the 'new' governance processes described in Chapter 2 allowed for the most useful arrangement, drawing from both the strength of institutionalized structures and the participatory and informal structures of community arrangements.

Hunt's comparative study of lasting sustainable food system governance found that the most effective strategies for sustainable food system development includes creating integrative policy measures determined through collaborative, multi-actor coalitions with a focus on including small-scale and marginalized actors; these efforts were placed in contrast to single issue movements, policies, or campaigns (2015). The four case studies certainly shed further light on this claim. Coalition building within SLFSIs was more successful not only when the interests and perspectives of farmers, policy-makers from a variety of departments, farm entrepreneurs, and civil society organizations were brought together, but also when taking into account the needs of different demographic groups such as the inputs of both men and women, young and old community members, as well as residents from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. Again, these efforts were pursued particularly in Correns, where people witnessed the highest degree of SLFS development of the four cases. While attempted in the other cases, barriers to reach

similar degrees of success were evident either in North Saanich's polarized council and citizen interests, Todmorden's initial lack of significant political uptake, or Wolfville's more laissez-faire outlook on SLFS development.

Indeed, SLFS governance efforts involve a range of policy solutions that reflect the diversity of its stakeholders, and are most successfully adopted when they can be applied at various scales, across various sectors. This was particularly reflected in North Saanich's WCAS and Correns<sup>21</sup> which acknowledged roles and policy goals that could be taken on by various levels of the state, the private sector, or community respectively. These included local and regional-level state policies and regulations (e.g. zoning bylaws and identified new provincial ways of distributing ALR in North Saanich, community land-use policies in Calderdale County), longer-term administrative protocols and mission statements to be adopted by the whole community (e.g. Wolfville's "culture of sustainability", North Saanich's Food Charter), youth and adult food education and training (e.g. Correns' school food program, Todmorden's aquaponic school garden and BTEch degree, North Saanich's Roost Farm Centre, Wolfville's Centre for Small Farms), financial support for farm-based entrepreneurship or sustainable projects through investment or tax incentives (e.g. Wolfville's Community Economic Development Fund through FarmWorks, Correns's eco-building tax credit), community events (e.g. North Saanich Flavour Trail, Wolfville's Devour! Film Fest, Correns's *Fete du Bio et du Naturel*), and awareness for food access issues (e.g. community gardening through IET in Todmorden, Wolfville's Acadia Community Farm, Correns's affordable municipal canteen meals). As discussed in the strength of integrated approaches to community

development and SLFSIs, these efforts not only allowed different actors within the food system to further SLFS goals within their own strengths, but also acknowledged the mutually-reinforcing role of joined-up community action around SLFS governance.

Yet, are collaborative efforts necessary in SLFS development? Certainly, the success and influence of IET shows the possibility for informal networks to serve as a viable alternative when formalized structures are found lacking. However, the cautionary tale offered by North Saanich emphasizes the degree to which SLFS efforts are put to a halt when municipal officials neither work in collaboration with civil society nor with one another. The hands-off role of Wolfville's municipal government stresses that while change is certainly enabled by some state support, it is limited in scope. Instead, examples like those from Correns, or the amount of SLFS policies passed in North Saanich during the years of its pro-SLFS council, emphasize the much greater possibility for SLFSs garnered when a culture of sustainability is (or becomes a part of) a municipality's operating framework. The need of a shared responsibility and the need for deeper integration of values was best describe by Buchan, CAO of North Saanich:

“It's not just a good community or administrative environment that's necessary, but a political one as well. And that's hard, for North Saanich, this might mean waiting for the next election. So, it's so important to embed these things beyond the political so that they can endure.”

Collaborative governance also provides the means for synergies with SLFSs. To many in the public sector, community groups remain marginal actors to formal processes; they are perceived as useful but too informal. Some groups noted that civil society organizations are not always treated with the degree of respect they necessarily warrant (anonymous).

On their side, to many community groups, the public sector is often assumed as a staid, hierarchical, and unwilling partner. Collaborative governance allows for a certain type of internal bridging social capital, bringing different actors together within a community to create relationships that go beyond the clear divisions of the state and society. Indeed, while Meadowcroft's assessment of sustainable development governance stresses that the state can serve as both a space to shape society as well a platform for society to influence the direction of that shaping (2007: 304), SLFS governance allows for both of these dynamics, while allowing for an additional space *beyond* the state, in which community and market-based governance appear to have equal weight.

Creating opportunities for collaborative engagement can often be uncomfortable, by providing spaces that “force” (Gibson-Graham, 2001) disparate groups to move passed preconceived notions of each other to focus on their similarities and shared interests instead. Discomfort through growth is particularly evident when groups are pro-active in seeking unlikely alliances with one another, such as when alternative-minded IET and the more traditional Todmorden Agricultural Society sought to form stronger rapport with one another. More specifically, IET was invited to speak at a local Agricultural Society meeting to present their initiatives; informal conversations after the meeting appeared to have bred goodwill between groups, who recognized the value of each other's work more despite having previously treaded more carefully around one another. In the case of Correns, a pro-SLFS mindset was related to the ability to adopt a group mindset rather than an individualistic one; as mentioned by the agricultural extension partner working most closely with Correns: “success didn't occur here because of personal interest, but because group interests were stronger. People here love their land in an individualistic

way of course, but they also love it as a community.” As further mentioned by one Correns21 organizer on Correns’s collaborative dynamic:

“We all exchange our ideas with one another: winegrowers, councillors, hunters, and even just the residents. Sure, it gets heated sometimes and not every project is a success, but we are willing to build and lead. We’re not some organization that just organizes get-togethers and nature walks, we take this very seriously. We talk about improving participatory democracy, sustainable development, European markets, everything!” (c2)

As highlighted by the quote above, the ability to foster ownership of SLFS projects by municipal, civil society, and private sector actors is a crucial component for both initial project development and for long-term collaboration. Gibson-Graham explain that alternative initiatives are most often successful when they leverage or reshape existing dynamics between groups rather than create completely new ones (2006a). This was exemplified in Correns, Wolfville’s Natural Step process, and as mentioned in the previous section, both in North Saanich and Todmorden’s use of community history to bring around those initially skeptical of their projects.

The experiences from four case communities also show the need for political willingness and SLFS leadership to go beyond traditional governance structures in favour of new and often informal governance. Again, the limitations of collaborative governance are evident when one partner no longer proves willing to contribute, as in North Saanich.

Additionally, as a former politician, IET’s founder, Warhurst pointed to the very real obstacles that party politics and the political system play when long-term systemic change is required. As mentioned by many before her, including Clancy (2014), the short-term nature of political terms often sits in direct contradiction to longer-term

projects (Warhurst and Dobson, 2014: 58) when re-election and immediate political priorities are favoured over the long-term goals of SLFS. However, a culture of sustainability allows municipal officials to view their work beyond the short term. This was exemplified in Singh's description of Wofville officials' towards SLFS goals:

“Again, the Town is about “how can we help you reach your goals”? They are saying, “you identify the challenges to us, and we will see how to change those, get around those, or make an exception for you... And they've worked hard to make many things work [for many local farms and businesses].”

Collaborative governance is also a way of mitigating “activism fatigue”. Working without strong municipal collaboration, a number of IET volunteers and North Saanich community activists often informally noted that they were getting “tired” of acting alone; as one local activist admitted, “we just don't want to fight anymore” (anonymous). This theme recurred in all municipalities except Correns, perhaps due to the more supportive nature of their state-society partnership.

Instead, Shergold (2008: 19) speaks of a “centreless society” as the basis for the democratization of governance; in this context, policies are being developed interdependently between governments, markets and networks. Certainly through the case studies presented here, the state has much to contribute to SLFS transitions.

Institutional power remains both primary and critical to governance success, due to the state's resources, its regulatory and legislative power, its experience in managing interests, and its influence (Shergold, 2008). In fact, both North Saanich and Correns appeared to draw from more formal arrangements and are both understood here as the more noted successes.

Certainly, the most successful cases of SLFSIs were institutionalized to some degree, whether by enshrining values in municipal documents or by outlining expectations and goals more clearly through written plans. However, as was mentioned in most cases, governments must move beyond a traditionally paternalistic role to one of support and commitment to the long-term betterment of their communities.

Once again beyond collaboration, the case studies demonstrate that reflexive governance processes best serve SLFS development, even when considering the role of the state. The need for frequent reassessment and re-evaluation of methods and purpose is a vital component in ensuring that a community's development remains true to its constituency. Gaventa (2002) outlines the necessary processes to develop effective participatory governance; these include components of reflexivity such as the continuous re-interrogation of what constitutes 'good governance'. The spirit of experimentation and re-assessment were invaluable parts of Correns<sup>21</sup> and Correns's development as an organic town. It was their shared and accepted culture of experimentation –alongside a certain amount of idealism– that allowed Correns's producers to give their initial attempt at organic agriculture the extra five years it needed to realize success. Reflexivity of this nature was also noted in Wolfville, North Saanich, and Todmorden's town plans to lesser extents, in their traditional use of surveys, town hall meetings, and open council meetings, which allowed for a degree of citizen deliberation and input throughout the early stages of their SLFS development.

Reflexivity allows governance processes to be aware of the “societal feedback loops” that

shape them and are shaped by them (Voss et al., 2006). In doing so, practitioners of reflexive governance constantly define and redefines the strategies that are relevant and appropriate to maintain on an ongoing basis. Monitoring and evaluation tools built into the municipal agricultural strategy and plan reviews of North Saanich and Correns or recurrent community group meetings were only some of the ways communities put reflexivity into practice.

Further, reflexive governance can help to involve a greater diversity of perspectives to ensure that no one group or individual becomes too dominant in problem definition and ultimate decision-making (Voss et al., 2006: 18). This might automatically place the undeniable leadership of a group like IET, or mayors like Latz or Finall under scrutiny. However, IET, Latz, and Finall's deliberate attempts to share process-building and decision-making powers showed their awareness of how to implement collaborative and reflexive governance. This understanding allowed communities like Correns and organizations like IET to define SLFSIs as more than one group or one leader's passion project, but rather as initiatives implicating their whole community.

Of course, any change takes time. Developing alternative systems, and certainly using collaborative processes to get there, are undeniably messy. As one Correns<sup>21</sup> member mentioned more lightly (and in a way that is not quite translatable): "*Des fois, il faut un gros bordel pour arriver à son objectif!*"<sup>71</sup> The need for consistent motivation allows successes to be drawn out slowly, but smoothly. Within each case study, it must also be

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<sup>71</sup> "Sometimes, it takes a bloody mess to get to your goal!"

recognized that opportunities for SLFS development often arose because of a window of opportunity where events and people suddenly aligned, allowing for a kind of perfect storm to motivate change (w9; s1-2; t1; c1-2). However, as noted by a number of policy change activists, continuous effort is what allows pro-SLFS proponents to capitalize on these perfect storms when the time is right (Andrée et al., 2012). Again, the shared responsibility and mutual reinforcement of collaborative governance provides the necessary means to effectively manage this challenge.

Table 17 provides a final overview of how multi-actor collaboration occurred within each case study. Some degree of correlation appears between strong social capital, the ability to adopt a whole community approach to SLFS development, and involvement of the state to engender higher degrees of collaborative governance. Considered in light of the previous three criteria, this brief overview highlights that collaborative, more participatory, and reflexive governance schemes best enable SLFSI development. While the cases of North Saanich and Correns display the strongest and most integrated SLFSIs, Correns proves the most successful through the long-term and less contentious involvement of municipal actors and through its use of new and traditional governance arrangements to involve a high degree of participants in its decision-making and SLFSI development.

	<b>Todmorden, UK</b>	<b>Wolfville, NS, Canada</b>	<b>North Saanich, BC, Canada</b>	<b>Correns, France</b>
<b>Genuine multi-actor collaboration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <b>no collaboration with state</b> (municipal level)</li> <li>· <b>medium level project-based collaboration</b> IET and local public institutions</li> <li>· <b>medium-high collaboration</b> between IET and local farmers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <b>medium-level collaboration</b> through traditional governance structures (e.g. consultations for municipal plan development)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <b>medium-high level collaboration</b> through traditional governance structures (e.g. state-led community consultations, joint committees) in development of multi-stakeholder action plan (i.e. WCAS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <b>high level collaboration</b> using new governance arrangements, through Correns21 working in partnership with municipal government and farmers</li> <li>· <b>medium-high level collaboration</b> in state-led sustainable development platform requiring community input</li> </ul>
<p>Note: For more detail on types of initiatives in each case study, refer to Tables 7, 9, 11, and 13 for key SLFSIs in each case study chapter.</p>				

*Table 17 - Case studies measured for degrees of collaboration*

### **Questions of scale: SLFSIs need for growth?**

In his final report on Canada, De Schutter stressed that improving coordination across policy levels would allow the country “to more effectively meet the challenges it is facing and create synergies to ensure that efforts made at each level is supported by other levels” (2012); however, this issue is hardly limited to Canada. Both in North America and Europe, the most often-cited next step for SLFS development is for sustainable food system alternatives to gain traction beyond the municipality (e.g. Clancy, 2014; Lowitt et al. 2016).

Regardless of collaborative governance efforts, the aspects raised above stress that multi-

level governance, and gaining regional or national uptake remains a primary concern for SLFSIs. While each community has tackled the issue of scale to some extent, none appeared to have found definitive answers on how to meaningfully engage with higher-level actors. While SLFSIs generated significant benefits for their communities in the form of greater social and economic wellbeing, certain efforts were stymied by prohibitive regional or national policy environments. As such, the question remains as to whether initiatives need to gain traction at higher levels of the state or simply scale out with similar effect.

Scaling out serves a primary means for SLFSI to gain greater traction when faced with obstacles to integrate local level initiatives with higher level schemes. Marsden et al. (2014) ask whether scaling initiatives require substantive changes in current policies or whether they can exist within current models. In one answer to this question, the most recent report of IPES-Food (2016) identified that industrial systems are “locked in place” by a series of self-fulfilling feedback loops that limit the potential for alternative systems to gain traction and generate meaningful food system changes. In the case studies, Calderdale’s new community growing license motivated by IET confirmed that while the license’s implementation was a positive step, it remained an isolate policy change. In other words, this policy, which saw great difficulty in being adopted and implemented in the first place, was only a minor change in rules within a broader field of county (and national) legislations that continue to promote conventional schemes. While these initiatives *do* put more pressure on governments to consider alternative ways of understanding food systems, they often contribute little to affecting higher level policies

more broadly.

The ability for municipal efforts to gain broader recognition is often limited, and the reality that locally-based initiatives must gain traction at higher levels of government is clear. As mentioned by one SLFS proponent in Wolfville, “while the town can be about helping you reach your goals, that’s not usually the case with provincial departments, where they make you jump through hoops or just shut you down” (anonymous). More importantly, these difficulties point to the reality that while municipal engagement can be powerful, local initiatives still operate within broader systems that do not always support them. In his study of local politics, Torfing (2010) notes that local politicians “often play a marginal role” in the negotiations that lead to the policies under which they must operate. The recognition that the local only allows for a certain degree of systemic change was evident throughout the interviews. While not for lack of trying, a number of municipal officials were cited this limitation with some frustration; Mayor Latz who played a dual role as both mayor and president of the regional Provence Verte mentioned that SLFSIs at the regional level are “certainly not” occurring in his region to the degree they are in Correns. As mentioned by one Agenda 21 member: “This *has* to be a global lifestyle. We can operate at our smaller scale but things have to be taken on beyond the local for there to be a real difference.” (c3) Similarly, Mayor Cantwell noted: “most of [these efforts] really did emanate from the town. There really isn't a whole lot [happening] at the provincial level. They haven't really moved in that area yet. There's not a lot of initiative there.”

While higher levels of government uptake could increase action and advocacy in favour

of SLFSIs, Latz and others did state a belief that scaling out can also serve as a strong motivator for SLFS transformation —and certainly when the option to integrate with higher levels of government seems insurmountable. Scaling-out involves a peer-to-peer approach to engendering change; rather than seeking to grow vertically, scaling out focuses on horizontal processes. Hinrichs and Barham (2007) stress that replicating SLFS-type models in new communities can create a sense of increasing momentum for change; in a US context, they describe that replication tends to occur by information exchange and cultural diffusion. This trend would appear consistent in the four case studies presented here: scaling out SLFSIs occurred through information exchange in the case of Correns’ municipal exchanges, municipal cultural diffusion in the case of Wolfville and North Saanich’s involvement in their regional municipal unions, or in the case of Incredible Edible’s now over one hundred worldwide chapters. Whether between official municipal actors or community groups, opportunities for networking and idea sharing with actors beyond their municipalities were actively pursued in each case study.

Of course, some still proved dissatisfied with the levels of change currently occurring and wished to see *more* formalized attempts at scaling out SLFS through municipal

leadership. As mentioned by Latz:

“the Italians, for example, have created an association of organic Italian villages [...] I would really like to launch this type of association in France. In France, there’s a lot of talk, but we have a real problem in making concrete decisions. Meanwhile, our Italian neighbours have quickly and efficiently create formalized networks to tackle their challenges.”

In Quilligan’s understanding of multi-level governance (2009), local schemes need

national and international support to sustain themselves. The future of sustainable food systems lies in the ability for their proponents to gain traction beyond the local. In a recent article on Germany's transition to renewable energy, Robert Kunzig notes that what became a national shift towards alternative energy started as a series of small municipal actions (2015). The article follows Hans-Josef Fell, a Hammelburg city councillor turned Green Bundestag representative. Originally, Fell passed a municipal ordinance in Hammelburg in 1993 to guarantee that renewable energy producers be compensated for their transition by the municipal utility department. His later coalition with the SDP in the Bundestag turned his municipal ordinance into national law in 2000, which has subsequently been emulated around the world. It also encouraged the development of a German national strategy around renewable energy, which has allowed a number of rural municipalities to gain socio-economic advantages.

Kunzig's article notes that this transition was not "born out of a single fight" (2015); much like many of the efforts pursued by SLFS actors in my case studies, the author notes that many German farmers and producers who transitioned to renewable energy did so out of pure "idealism" rather than for economic remuneration. In short, municipal renewable energy policies were able to scale up in Germany through political leadership and follow through. SLFSIs could seek to increase their influence in a similar way. In particular, Fell's trajectory and Hammelburg's projects are comparable to the work pursued by Mayors Latz and Finall, who have tirelessly worked and overcome obstacles to pursue their sustainable community development visions.

Better allocation of national resources, commitments to training and coordination,

opportunities for networking and education, and aligned discourse are only some of the benefits regional or national integration would enable. As mentioned by IET's Mary Clear when discussing her invitation from the Council of Europe to speak at one of their events, "If they invited me there, it must have been to say that there is another way of doing things!" While under-discussed by participants in both Correns and Todmorden, the possibility of further engagement through EU fora seems evident. While both communities primarily sought to engage with EU processes through peer-to-peer exchanges (e.g. Gruntvig program or EU-sponsored conferences), SLFSI activities could likely contribute to the multifunctional activities and rural development possibilities under a supposedly more 'green' Pillar 2 of the CAP, especially as a large number of European NGOs and parliamentarians remain extremely underwhelmed by the concrete results this greening has entailed (e.g. European Environmental Bureau 2016; Pietikinen 2016).

In both Canada and the EU, a call for a 'national' or 'common food policy' appear to be gaining traction within policy-making circles (Food Secure Canada, 2016; IPES-Food, 2016b). Here, scaled out SLFSIs could play a large role in moving such debates forward through municipal, regional, provincial and national fora. As is shown in each of the case studies, SLFS proponents realize their communities can act as a primary site to create more meaningful actions and interactions between people, space, and their relationship to food. The next key step is in SLFSI actors' ability to affect the broader systems around them.

In short, the SLFSIs presented in the cases of North Saanich and Correns may certainly be sufficient to engender high levels of community development. However, in both the EU and Canada, multi-scalar governance could allow greater cross-sectoral policy-making between relevant ministries or Directorates-General (e.g. Agriculture, Health, Environment, Trade, etc.) as well as stronger integration between local, regional, and national level policies that could allow for even stronger and more systemic change.

### **Conclusion and Next Steps**

The global food system is currently both causing and experiencing rapid and undeniable change, including: corporate concentration of the agri-food industry, the contradictory increase of both those who are overfed and those who remain undernourished, uncertainties around climate change, the continuous decline of our rural spaces, and food and fuel price volatility (Clapp et al., 2015a; Patel, 2013). While these changes appear broad in scope, their consequences remain extremely specific in people's everyday experiences: in the inability for a parent to afford proper nutrition for their children, the struggle of third-generation farmers to retain their family's land, the difficulty of a young food entrepreneur to access capital to start their business. Further, the inadequacies of our current systems perpetuate a series of vicious cycles; these cycles are maintained by our political environments —through policies and structures, and our socio-economic environments —through the discourses we share and purchasing patterns in which we engage. These patterns also burden our natural environments in reducing the quality of our soil and water, and in decreasing biodiversity.

Amidst the current chaos of modern food, a number of those who feel that their livelihoods and communities are at stake are seeking to carve out a space for alternatives, re-imagining a role for place-based sustainable food systems (Wiskerke, 2009; Blay-Palmer, 2008; Van der Ploeg 2003 and 2009). As we have seen through four case studies, and while the paths to SLFSs diverge and their foci are many, SLFS proponents all ultimately seek to better secure interconnectedness, social justice, democracy, and environmental mindedness for all those involved in their communities. While the four cases presented are hardly exhaustive of the types of dynamics attempted to create SLFSs, they provide a solid foundation for comparison. Of course, there are limits to comparing four small municipal case studies that exist with disparate political and socio-economic systems; however, the similar characteristics and pathways they chose make their stories rich in shared insights and cross-analysis.

This work began by stressing that food is central to our everyday life, and this is what each case study has sought to bring to the fore – each in its own terms. Beyond the notion of food as nutritional sustenance, food also encompasses a kind of emotional, cultural, and even spiritual sustenance that is increasingly taken for granted at large, but is often re-enlivened by SLFSIs. Food also serves to integrate the social, economic and political sectors, as well as create a bridge between divergent policy sectors (e.g. health, food safety, environment, agriculture, urban policy). More specifically, this research and the work of a myriad of other scholars (Blay-Palmer, 2008; Ikerd, 2008; Marsden, 2012, Wittman et al., 2010; Wiskerke, 2009) show that food can motivate a variety of sectors and actors to contribute to sustainable community and rural development. By viewing

food as more than a commodity, SLFSIs seek to re-embed and reconnect communities both internally and amongst one another. In other words, and as the case studies have shown, SFLSIs and the undeniably normative goals furthered by their proponents strive to infuse rural spaces with new meaning, where the reconnection between people, land, and food are valued as opportunities for sustainability.

When asked what made Wolfville a particularly advantageous breeding ground for SLFSs in Nova Scotia, a small number of participants clearly identified the following traits: 1) a strong agricultural base; 2) a particular community mindset, which lends itself to SLFS development; 3) limited large agribusiness control or presence in the area, and the related ability for small-scale entrepreneurialism to thrive; and, 4) a higher level of financial resources and affluent residents than in other rural and neighbouring municipalities (w5-7, w9). Interestingly, all but the affluence of a community's residents appear as common strengths across all four case studies, with income ultimately playing no particular role in a community's success, given the examples of Todmorden and Correns.

The case studies presented here all stress different –though often complementary– facets of how municipalities understand 'local food' and 'local food systems'. In short, the local economy and food access were often discussed in Wolfville; food security and environmental mindedness in agriculture were primary considerations in North Saanich; community development led Todmorden's initiatives; and lastly, rural livelihood and democracy shaped the discourse of the Corrençois. While these emphases are somewhat

distinct, their broader goals remain similar. Certainly, food system localization proponents have moved far beyond being anti-globalization as was initially assessed by food system scholars (see Hinrichs, 2002). In all cases, SLFSs are generally about strengthening social and economic sustainability and maintaining community bonds, both feeding into the ultimate goal of maintaining the vibrancy of rural spaces.

To follow Gramsci, rethinking a system requires “the pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the will” (1999: 395). The four case studies presented in this work all seek to redress some ill within the conventional food system in the hopes of replacing it with more socio-culturally embedded, localized, and economically-just alternatives. By bridging sustainability, the economy, and society, SLFSs achieve a greater degree of democratic control of both the economy and political processes (Connelly et al., 2011: 311). The governance of SLFSIs is inherently aimed at some degree of system change. The case studies presented here address the need to think more creatively and reflexively on how collaboration is developed and maintained to create the necessary environment for transformative change within our food systems. As put by one community organizer in Wolfville:

“there are enough negative things in the world, so it’s good to focus on good things closer to home! [...] All of us working here and the people that we are helping, we are giving them something that they can do at home for their community.” (w4)

Municipally-based SLFSs provide a welcome alternative in an era when local governments are increasingly being consolidated under broader regional governance schemes. While these consolidations intend to eliminate duplications of services and

increase public sector efficiency, the initiatives presented here highlight the innovative role more diverse and locally-based government structures can still play. To many citizens, creative governance at the municipal level is most importantly about recapturing democracy as a primary component of decision-making within the food system that they deem cannot be implemented at other levels of decision-making. While communities come to SLFSIs for economic redevelopment, community building, and food security, there is always a degree of action attributed to re-engaging citizens within the local space. Communities have often taken on this role when they have not seen sufficient change occurring at higher levels of government (and they find themselves weary of waiting) or when they have sought to connect local action to broader global networks (i.e. Agenda 21 in Correns, Citta Slow in Wolfville).

To many scholars, a great deal of opportunity for SLFS development lies in the power of local community and local action (Abate, 2008; Blay-Palmer, 2008; Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999). Rather than focus on the more tangible effects of SLFSIs, it is clear that the goals and motivations of the four case studies offered here present a sample of systems seeking deeper discursive change. The SLFSIs presented have affected community members' subjectivities, reached beyond economic or political goals to create deeper and longer-lasting changes in people's identities, actions, and ultimately their way of understanding the world and their place in it (Guthman, 2009). They encourage residents to engage with one another to create relationships of trust and mutual care. These discursive changes also motivate individuals to organize concrete activities and processes, be they the development of direct marketing opportunities, new bylaws, or

community events.

By looking at the opportunities and challenges to develop SLFSIs in four different municipalities, this research ultimately stresses that collaboration creates deeper sensitivity to diversity and democratization. Collaboration allows for economic markets to become re-embedded in social values and for political structures to shift towards more inclusive democracy. It allows community members to both bond and bridge with one another, while motivating them to form creative partnerships with those beyond their borders. In her article on global food governance, Duncan asks: “what constellation of actors can best support the greening of food security policy?” (2015: 340) Posed in the introduction of this dissertation, this question is certainly applicable to the development of SLFSIs.

The four characteristics raised above of 1) strong social capital within a community; 2) a whole community approach to socio-economic development; 3) a strong role for the state; and 4) genuine multi-actor collaboration have brought clarification to this question. While the specifics vary from community to community, these ‘constellations’ must involve the widest range of participants, from across a variety of public and private sectors, and with varying knowledges and expertise. They must also work using high levels of collaboration, involving transformative interactions between participants, where stakes are high and decision-making operates through cooperation and consensus.

This work has emphasized the role of social capital in SLFSIs. Strong community bonds

not only allow communities to remain strong and resilient, but also to be more open to new ideas, testing and failing initiatives together as part of a process of creative experimentation in searching for alternatives. Social capital was shown to benefit economic sustainability, by allowing producers to capitalize from both local and non-local markets. Ultimately, both bonding and bridging social capital were shown to strengthen internal community dynamics, narrow divides between competing interests, or allow learning from others communities or researchers to gain new knowledge.

This dissertation has also highlighted the need for integrated approaches to community development that bridge sectors and stakeholder groups. The more integrated SLFSIs were shown to be, the better they were able to sustain themselves over-time and the less likely they were to fall prey to conflicting community (or political) dynamics. Relatedly, the state was emphasized as an indispensable partner, creating the ability for collaborations where interests and decisions are shared, and where substantive policy changes and creative community projects are mutually reinforced.

The relationships created between both formal and informal state-community governance arrangements offer creative ways forward that serve as a balance of power within the food system, with each set of actors complementing the roles and capacities of the other. As demonstrated by the strengths and setbacks of each of the four cases, when the perfect storm of committed institutional power, the transformative social domain of civil society, and the innovative ideas and capital of business entrepreneurship combine, the potential for collaborative SLFSIs is significant. This trifecta of actors creates “the seeds and

sediments that may influence future practice” (Gonzalez and Healy, 2005: 2065) and challenges prevailing modes of thinking and acting.

Drawing from a variety of governance processes, state-community collaborations undeniably contributed the most towards SLFSI development and maintenance. Reflexive governance processes also proved crucial in helping actors understand the ongoing nature of SLFS development, and challenge communities to learn and grow from their own thoughts and actions. A degree of institutionalization was also beneficial to most case studies, when supported by equally strong community-driven efforts. Finally, and though rare, provincial or regional environments played a strong role in allowing SLFSI ideals and objectives to permeate official discourse and community understanding, but also to translate into concrete actions.

In contrast to weaker food systems that focus more on the qualities inherent *in* food, Blay-Palmer notes that strong food chains are characterized by short, trust-based systems that focus on the networks and connections that perpetuate them rather than the food itself (2008, 123). SLFSIs are characteristic of these trends not just in the way food is bought and sold but also in the broader social and political networks created around them. These are characterized by the complex, hybrid, and/or collaborative schemes we have seen here. In more successful instances of SLFS development, the lines are also blurred between usual dichotomies such as alternative/conventional or local/global; rather than creating greater conflict, these distinctions are instead leveraged as different but no less valuable parts of the same whole. Indeed, these dichotomies leave little room to consider

where systems, strategies, and possibilities may intersect. This is not to downplay that SLFSIs should remain rooted in some conception of values and norms that explicitly seek to ensure that these systems remain accountable to their citizens. Nor is this to say that SLFSIs do not acknowledge and seek to move away from the more negative effects of current trends in dominant food system structures, but rather, that such hybridities create the much-needed momentum towards food system innovation.

As a study on local governance, I recognize the limited scope of this work on many different accounts. The analysis provided in this work is hardly exhaustive of the breadth and depth of each community's development. I recognize the role of local and regional history and its role in shaping SLFSI possibilities. I also acknowledge the muted ability to tease out community dynamics in their entirety, likely missing finer points on the potential relationships and tensions between actors (e.g. organic vs. conventional farmers, pro-SLFS residents vs. more skeptical or indifferent community members). More specifically, I first acknowledge that the SLFSIs have not necessarily translated into improved livelihoods for *all* farmers. While many producers appeared to have increased their business in all four cases, I confirm that the growing interest in local or alternative means of production still involve an unequal power relation between wealthy consumers and the producers who serve them (Hinrichs, 2000; Allen, 2004).

Most cases also only peripherally touched on the role and place of low income consumers in SLFSIs. This was particularly evident in the cases of Wolfville and North Saanich, and even Todmorden where shops catering to local food proponents were generally perceived

as serving an upper- and middle-class clientele. As mentioned by Warner in Wolfville, “I don’t think we are anywhere near the place where we can say that our model reaches most of our residents. A lot of people are still food insecure and rely on the cheaper, conventional supermarket system to buy their food, even though we’re seen as a more affluent community.” Certainly, most attempts at addressing food insecurity (e.g. community garden donations to food banks or more affordable CSA baskets in Wolfville, urban gardening for low-income households in Todmorden, etc.) were laudable, but remain bandage solutions to the broader and more systemic issues surrounding poverty and food access. Here, the more civically-engaged and democratically-accessible alternative governance structures could provide the much need platform for marginalized actors to voice their concerns.

McMahon worries that local food movements may be “too out-of-touch with the realities of most farmers’ lives and too lacking in strategies for changing macro-economic and institutional arrangements and too ready to confuse real food security with token bits of distributive food justice to be truly transformative” (2014: 130). If this is so, the hope here at least is to have provided some greater context for SLFS governance that allows for a diversity of perspectives to be heard. While this research has by no means presented a fully comprehensive or silver-bullet answer to fixing our food systems, it has shed light on current patterns of development that have sought to bring more help than harm to their communities and their food supply. As such, this research only serves as further encouragement to continuously work towards systems embedded in greater inclusion and long-term sustainability.

Last, this work has suggested that encouraging multi-scalar governance (e.g. regional, national) remains a struggle for most SLFSIs. The case studies presented here confirm the difficulty of creating SLFIs in environments that prove contradictory to their development. I do acknowledge that a remaining area that my research fails to address or capture appropriately is food system research's lingering question on multi-scalar governance and the necessity of strengthening multi-level partnerships. While the need for it is clear, and while touched on briefly at the sub-national level (e.g. British Columbia, Calderdale Region, Provence Verte), the way this growth is achieved remains loose and elusive. The ability to involve higher levels of government seems particularly crucial as SLFSIs are driven by a need to engender a more radial, creative, and multi-functional understanding of rural communities as spaces of opportunity. Perhaps the likely next step for SLFSIs would then be to more aggressively pursue efforts to scale out, and rely on a groundswell of SLFSIs to alter broader policy environments from the bottom-up.

I also argue that local levels (by the very nature of a municipality through its smaller population size and area) allow for the creation of certain relationships that exist less frequently in larger, more-populated spaces. The frequent interactions between people within smaller communities allow greater possibility for the adoption of iterative and multi-stakeholder strategies that are also more difficult to achieve at the national or global scales. While important, involving national or regional institutions and policies may create limitations around the possibility for creative, collaborative, and democratic engagement. Already, while he sees governance mechanisms as being more immune to

co-optation at the local level, Sommerville notes the potential domination of certain actors at higher scales and larger sizes of jurisdiction (2011: 98). Here, scaling out rather than up would thus seem a more viable (and democratic) alternative.

In their attempt to build SLFSs, the four municipalities presented have perhaps inadvertently followed the path laid out by many sustainable food system scholars to achieve sustainability goals (e.g. Blay-Palmer, 2008: 150). In their own way, each community has sought to reframe their own food system, to support their communities in recapturing their own power, while acknowledging the bigger picture around them, and to take concrete steps towards the food system and community they imagine. The local remains a powerful site of change. As mentioned by Gibson-Graham, “what is presented as the globalization experience or as a universal experience is just the magnified expression of what was once also a ‘local particularity’” (2001: 6). If anything, this quote brings hope to the notion that these small SLFS can create broader change. If the initiatives presented here would integrate into higher levels of government or scale out to gain traction beyond their local level, what was a local practice or concept might have the potential to become the new norm.

This dissertation has presented a series of local case studies from Canada and the Western EU to offer new insights into SLFSs and new municipal governance structures. The case studies presented serve as a small sample of the spectrum of SLFS governance, where the impetus for change can be compared between purely community-based SLFSI (Todmorden), a project-rich but leadership-poor SLFSI (Wolfville), a highly

collaborative but politically tenuous SLFSI (North Saanich), and finally, a more ideal case of SLFSI collaboration (Correns).

Reflexive governance requires adaptability, flexibility, and creativity. Through its iterative processes, reflexive governance tries to anticipate the direct and indirect long-term effects of its policies –often lacking in traditional decision-making (Duncan, 2015; Voss et al., 2006). As many of the trends in our current global food system lack this sense of long-term clarity and vision, applied to SLFSs, more reflexive governance strategies allow communities to critically think through their processes and their effects. As attempted in Correns, the hope would be to reframe food systems as a more democratic endeavour, with the long-term sustainability of communities and their environments in mind. Again as one Corrençois noted to put municipal SLFS development in perspective, these changes may only be “2 days out of 365,” or a “drop in the bucket”, but, as Farmworks Co-Chair in Wolfville, Linda Best also noted, “we are doing what we can to help, [...] it’s a small sliver, but it’s helping!”

It would seem cliché to end this work with Margaret Meade’s infamous words, “never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” Yet there seems little other way to conclude. The keen interest I received from community members across my case studies for me to get back to them with insights and tips from the other municipalities I was visiting gave me an acute awareness that people want change and they have interest in looking wherever they can to learn about opportunities on what *is* working.

In the spirit of reflexivity in process and research, I recognize that my own biases have likely shone throughout this research. However, in acknowledging that food is an “intimate commodity” (Winson, 1994), this is perhaps excusable in this case. The need to compel others towards action is likely why many food scholars, including myself, conduct their research in the first place – to provide a legitimate, academic voice for change. Similarly, I would have appreciated significantly more time to remain in each community to give back more for the hospitality and time they offered than I did, but also to watch their successes grow. With greater time, I would have sought to not only engage with SLFS proponents, but also to identify community actors more skeptical or opposed to SLFS change; this may have helped in gaining greater nuance over what was able to gain traction or not within each community, and better explain each of their trajectories.

Also of note, most SLFS proponents within the four case communities fulfilled the stereotype that SLFS actors tend to romanticize agriculture and rural spaces. For example, while SLFS dynamics are often labelled as “new” or innovative, most participants actively mentioned they hoped to re-adopt techniques and relationships of the past; this was usually due to some inherent belief that SLFS values have always been inherent or intrinsic to communities, or an understanding that the SLFSs of today are simply seeking to recapture what was done “100 years ago” (c7). While such thinking has often been criticized, such romanticization has served as a powerful motivator in most of the case communities to become (or return to) a more morally-based society and to draw on a shared belief in their community’s history to work towards a better future. More

negatively, an over-reliance on romantic discourse can overshadow difficult but necessary conversations over more systemic or structural issues within local food systems, especially in regards to food access as it relates to income and social inclusion discussed earlier.

However, as it already stands, popular discourse, the media, and often the area of food studies itself can easily become riddled with pessimism on the future of food and of our environment. Part of my own subjectivity was to provide, if anything, a few cases of hope. While not always implemented at their best, one aspect of my research was to show areas of opportunity and to help shed a small light on “the politics of the possible” as it relates to food systems. My supervisor’s constant feedback not to sound too much like a “cheerleader” when writing my case study analyses was a small reminder of this bias.

In 2006, Voss et al. stated that most of the world’s current problems are the unintentional results of past choices. While an obvious statement, it serves as a clear reminder that any changes in food system governance will also be the result of choices that are presently being made. Continuing along the same trajectory or choosing to change course is always a choice. In this way, it is critical that we re-examine the structures and patterns we reproduce within our food systems. Perhaps SLFSs *are* better able to “survive externally induced crises” (Van der Ploeg, 2006: 258) if or when those times should come; but more importantly, the interdependence, collaboration, and trust being fostered within SLFSIs are advantages in their own right. The democratic potential of collaborative and reflexive governance may provide some of the key opportunities to move closer towards food

system transformation. As attempted by the four communities discussed in this work, perhaps it is also time for others to take the road less traveled by.

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