Food Access and Farmer Livelihoods:
Policy Reflections from Stakeholders in Eastern Ontario

by
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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
Institute of
Political Economy

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Abstract

This study addresses how critical food organizations (CFOs) working to increase access to local foods for people living on low incomes and those working to improve economic viability for food producers can pursue mutually beneficial initiatives and how the state may support these initiatives. Drawing from focus groups and interviews with stakeholders throughout Eastern Ontario, first, I argue that organizations face substantive barriers in achieving mutually beneficial initiatives in the absence of direct state involvement. Second, I argue that the state ought to foster these initiatives by providing support for CFOs so long as CFOs remain their independents. While this approach may perpetuate neoliberalization, a process that has contributed to the marginalization of these populations, I conclude that this engagement with the state need not pioneer a post-neoliberal policy regime. Instead, by addressing the marginalizing effects of neoliberalization, it stimulates conversation on the elements of neoliberalization that might transcend into a post-neoliberal policy regime.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is a product of collaboration. Thanks to the people of the Eastern Ontario Node of the Nourishing Communities project.

To my parents Mary and Stephen Piazza: Thank you for taking an interest in this work and all other aspects of my life.

To Thomas McDowell, Don Jackson, Kelly DeLuca and Julian Hermida: Thank you for encouraging scholarly pursuits. Your unique teaching styles challenged me and inspired ambition.

To Donna Coghill, Janet Siltanen and Laura MacDonald: Thank you for fostering a welcoming and rewarding academic environment at the Institute of Political Economy.

To my colleagues at the Institute of Political Economy: Thank you for stimulating conversation, positive feedback, and friendship over the past two years.

To Peter André and Patricia Ballamingie: Thank you for guiding me throughout every stage of this process. Both the time and resources you have invested in me during my time at this institution is much appreciated. Through your leadership, I have learned as much about activism as I have about academic research and hope to continue this work throughout my life. It was truly a pleasure working with both of you.

To Jess: Thank you for listening to me, and for counselling me in times of need. Most of all, thank you for providing balance and excitement in my life.

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Food Access and Farmer livelihoods: Policy Reflections from Stakeholders in Eastern Ontario

Chapter 1: Laying the Foundations of Study

1.1 Introduction

This thesis addresses how locally produced foods can be made more accessible to people living on low-incomes, while also creating economic opportunities for the producers of this food. More specifically, this research explores how organizations in Eastern Ontario working to create equitable livelihoods for producers can work with organizations attempting to increase food access for people living on low-incomes.¹ I argue that both of these populations are continually marginalized by the process of neoliberalization, with neoliberalization understood as the restructuring of state and government institutions to increase privatization of services, corporate mobility and profitability.² Notwithstanding this shared marginalization this thesis argues that critical food organizations in Eastern Ontario can work with the state to remedy marginalizing effects of neoliberalization.

For the purpose of this research, I term organizations pursuing alternative food initiatives as critical food organizations because of their shared criticisms of mainstream practices surrounding food production, processing and distribution (hereafter used interchangeably with the term food system).³ These criticisms are understood in brief as intensifying the marginalization of both small and medium scale producers through a

¹ I refer to producers and people living on low-incomes as sub-categories of the Canadian population throughout this thesis and at times may use the terminology of targeted populations or study population for ease of conveying information. More information is provided in Chapter 4.

² The process of neoliberalization is explored in full in Chapter 2.

³ In Chapter 3, the label of critical food organization is broken down into food access organizations and farm income organizations to reflect the responses of participants.

restructuring of regulatory frameworks, and people living on low-incomes through a loss of and restructuring of social safety nets.

The research question for this thesis results from the collaboration of academics, activists, economic development professionals, health care providers and critical food organizations interested in changing practices of food production, processing and distribution in Ontario. These stakeholders form Nourishing Communities: Sustainable Local Food Systems Research Group (hereafter Nourishing Communities).⁴ Nourishing Communities seeks to build an inventory of community food initiatives in Ontario and diffuse best practices across the province. The question for this thesis research was developed in conjunction with the Eastern Ontario hub of Nourishing Communities and consists of two parts. Part one asks: How can critical food organizations that focus on improving the economic opportunities for food producers work with organizations that focus on improving food access for people living on low-incomes to pursue mutually beneficial initiatives? Part two asks: How do these organizations view the role of the state, if any, in fostering and facilitating this connection?

I take a regional approach to addressing this line of inquiry, focusing on Eastern Ontario. The definition of Eastern Ontario employed in this research is taken from Andrée et al. (2013), who define the region as, “eastward from the City of Kawartha Lakes and Prince Edward County to Ottawa, and along the border of Québec from Renfrew County to the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry that sit on the St. Lawrence Seaway” (p.1). The agricultural opportunities in Eastern Ontario are concentrated in the area below the southeastern tip of the Canadian Shield including the

⁴ Formerly known as Nourishing Ontario. For more information, see: <http://nourishingontario.ca/>.

City of Kawartha Lakes, southern halves of Peterborough as well as Hastings and Price Edward Counties as well as the area east of the Canadian Shield to the Ottawa Valley stretching to Montreal. Both agricultural areas boast considerable opportunities for the production of cash crops like corn or soy (p.2).

Despite a concentration of cash crop farming, there are considerable opportunities for small and medium scale farming operations. Methodologically, Eastern Ontario has a multiplicity of critical food organizations that fall within the parameters of the study. While a number of studies have been conducted in the region, Eastern Ontario has not reached the level of saturation of more metropolitan geographic areas like Toronto. As such, Eastern Ontario provides a favorable opportunity to conduct research in an emerging region.

As will be explored in sections 2 of this chapter, initiatives that seek alternatives to the industrial food system are sometimes criticized as isolated local events. Taking a regional approach challenges this criticism by moving beyond local engagement, so as to explore and foster regional linkages. Moving to a more regional approach is also a goal of the Nourishing Communities project.

The remainder of this chapter adds clarity to the research question. Section 2 provides further insight into the terminology of critical food organizations used in this thesis, specifies the practices of food production, processing and distribution they seek to change, and explores what these changes entail. Section 3 explores more fully part one of the research question for this thesis. Section 4 explores part two of the research question and situates this question in the literature on the role of the state in critical food organizations. Section 5 provides direction for moving forward.

Section 1.2: Locating this Work Within Broader Debates

To date, there is ever growing criticism from a number of theoretical and methodological traditions of what is known as the industrial food system.⁵ According to Winson (2013), the industrial food system is credited with transforming food from a nourishing and sustaining factor of human existence to an “edible commodity that too often subverts our wellbeing and promotes disease instead of nourishing us,” (Winson, 2013, p. 6). The products of the industrial food system, while achieving certain sensory appeal, do not have human nourishment as an objective (6-7). This food is distributed through a number of access channels and is heavily advertised, even when compared to other commodities in Western economies (Kneen 2002; Winson, 2003). The adverse effects attributed to producing this industrial food help explain the need for alternatives.

Often, the industrial food system is linked to larger global trends that displace small famers, and concentrate agricultural land into a few large firms (Winson, 1994; Connelly et al. 2011). From an environmental and sustainability perspective, the industrial food system is criticized for its reliance on petroleum-based inputs and distant, inefficient distribution methods (Murdoch and Miele, 1999; Cone and Myhre, 2000; Fraser, 2006; Weis, 2007 and Rundle et al. 2009). From a more socio-economic perspective, it is criticized for resulting in an inequality of food distribution (Allen, 2004; 2010). The externalization of environmental, social and economic concerns by the industrial food system inspires the search for alternatives forms of food production, distribution, and governance.

⁵ For the purpose of this paper, I understand food systems to include all activities related to producing, gathering processing and distributing foods under preconceived normalities.

The literature on alternatives to the industrial food system is continually being propagated and refocused. Language such as “alternative food initiatives” is used, sometimes sweepingly, to describe initiatives that seek to challenge the foundations of the industrial food system. The localization of the food system is sometimes advanced as a strategy to address their concerns of industrial food practices (Kloppenburg and Hendrickson, 1996; Ibery and Maye 2005; and Mount et al. 2013).⁶

At times, localization becomes a means of criticizing alternative food initiatives. For instance, some scholars broadly argue that a localized food system would proliferate unequal access to food and devastate the most marginalized populations (Collier, 2008; Deroche 2012). However, localization is only one element of the complex body of literature and practice that makes up our understanding of alternative food initiatives. Focusing a critique on any alternatives to the industrial food system by criticizing localization efforts is misleading and overlooks the other sound rationale for exploring alternatives to industrial food.

The literature on alternative food initiatives clearly indicates that an emphasis on the localization of the food system does not guarantee other goals of alternative food initiatives such as equity of food distribution (Cavalcanti, 2006), and nutritional value (Winter, 2003; Pelletier et al 2003) – to name but a couple. Scholars deem an overemphasis on localized food systems as a “local trap.” This term describes the misplaced determinism in believing that localization will meet all of the environmental,

⁶ Localized or local food is an exceedingly complex term to fix a definition to. Participants surveyed for this project had very convoluted understandings of local and the *Local Food Act*, analysed later on in this paper, re-addresses these concerns. For now understand the “local” in local food as a fluid concept. See Hinrichs and Kremer (2002) as well as Selfa Qazi (2005) for a starting point to build some context around the debate over what ought to be considered local.

nutritional and social justice goals of alternative food system advocates (Purcell 2006; Born and Purcell 2006). In response to such critiques, both Friedman (2007) and Clancy (2010) argue for the need to rigorously examine and re-examine localization initiatives as well as look to regional sites of engagement.

Using a single term, in this case that of ‘alternative food initiatives,’ to describe all efforts to remedy or change the adverse effects of the industrial food system is misleading. It gives the impression that these initiatives are unified in their agendas and approaches, and presents these initiatives as part of a cohesive alternative movement. As pointed out by Mount et al. (2013, p.3) in their review of community food initiatives in Ontario, “the diversity of alternative food initiatives that have emerged in recent years reflects the diversity of criticisms of contemporary food systems.” Mount and his colleagues go on to state that even if alternative food initiatives acknowledge similar goals they often prioritize different ones, thereby creating variance among initiatives (3). Similarly, Friedland et al. (2010) note that alternative food initiatives demonstrate a degree of separation, with activists and academics engaged in one type of initiative showing little interest in others (Friedland et al., 2010, p.605).⁷

Other factors, such as regional differences, make alternative food initiatives look very different despite sharing the common view of offering alternatives to the industrial food system. Ultimately, Mount et al. (2013) argue that there is potential for convergence of distinct initiatives because many of the barriers faced by these organizations may actually be similar barriers faced by other alternative food initiatives (Mount et al., 2013,

⁷ Friedland uses the terminology of alternative agri-food movements, which can be understood to mean the same thing as alternative food initiatives.

p. 20). For example, Mount and his colleagues cite municipal by-laws allowing for scale appropriate health policies, zoning regulations that foster urban food markets and increased operational funding as strategies in addressing barriers to a number of alternative food initiatives. (21). These instances of convergence demonstrate a level of compatibility among distinct alternative food initiatives.

While there are areas of convergence among alternative food initiatives, the prioritization of the different goals among these initiatives must be understood more fully. In the case of this particular project, the goals of interest are those identified in the research question and can be summarized as: 1) the goal of making locally produced food more accessible for people living on low-incomes; and 2) the goal of providing a fair livelihood to small and medium scale farmers in the region. The next sub-section (Section 1.3) discusses why these specific goals are worthy of investigation. This is followed by Section 1.4, which discusses the role of the state in achieving these goals. In essence, sections 1.3 and 1.4 locate this thesis in the debates I hope to contribute to through this work.

1.3 Narrowing the Field: Universality

This thesis research contributes to the ongoing debate of how to ensure that locally produced food is available to all, in this case emphasizing people living on low incomes. The need to establish connections between initiatives that seek to increase food access for low-income citizens and local producers is derived from concerns that access to both local conventional and local organic food are often limited to high-income earners unless

active measures are taken to ensure this is not the case.⁸ Hinrichs and Kremer (2002) argue that while many local food projects seek broad socio-economic participation, their ability to achieve these goals is often limited by factors like income and education. This point is further supported by Macais (2008) who argues that local food initiatives not only restrict access to elite classes but are also often spearheaded by upper middle class, well-educated majorities. Finally, Guthman (2011) echoes these concerns and focuses on the racial exclusivity of alternative food options being pursued and shaped by the intrinsic “whiteness” of these alternatives.

While segments of the population are marginalized from alternative food options due to the factors listed above, it is important to note the opportunities for change that these conditions present. Slocum (2006) argues that while alternative food spaces are predominantly “white”, the underlying rationales for alternative foods they provide, such as health and environmental sustainability, are much more universal (Slocum, 2006, p.8).⁹ Acknowledging the presence of race, class, gender and other social elements of alternative food initiatives allows for more pointed efforts to increase the universality of these initiatives. When reviewing the remainder of this thesis, it is important to consider both the social barriers and opportunities created by alternative community food spaces.

Questioning the universality of alternative food initiatives prioritizing food access allows for the contextualization of this research in broader debates on universality. While this thesis focuses on initiatives that seek to improve food access for

⁸ Gross (2011) notes that there is much criticism of the expense of local food by critics when there should be questions of the cheapness of food produced in the industrial food system.

⁹ Note that the author includes elements of white privilege in the definition of “whiteness”, such as high incomes, access to a vehicle etc.

people living on low-incomes, this is only one feature of improving the universality of locally produced foods. The discussion presented in this section demonstrates that other considerations in improving the universality, such as race, are externalized in the research question for this thesis. Although I ultimately believe increasing access to local foods for people living on low-incomes is an important step in improving universality, it is only one of many considerations that must be made.

1.4 Narrowing the Field: The Role of the State in Relation to Critical Food

Organizations

The first part of the research question for this thesis focuses on how two groups marginalized, in part, by the state driven policy reforms, can work together to remedy their circumstances. The second part of the question asks whether or not critical food organizations see a role of the state in fostering and facilitating the connection between those organizations seeking to improve food access and those seeking to improve producers' economic livelihoods and if so, what that role ought to be. The latter line of inquiry is informed by what many scholars see as an absence of critical engagement with the state by critical food organizations.

In the oft-cited article by Guthman (2008), it is argued that the efforts of alternative food initiatives are hindered by their lack of engagement with the state. Guthman claims that both scholars and activists developing and pursuing initiatives that claim to resist and respond to neoliberalization, actually perpetuate neoliberal spaces and governmentalities. Guthman focuses on the following four elements of alternative food scholarship: consumer choice, localism, entrepreneurialism and self-improvement. She argues that these four pillars of alternative food scholarship actually perpetuate

neoliberal normalities. In response, Guthman argues that a greater engagement with the state at large is necessary to move beyond what she sees as neoliberalized normalities and focus on more structural goals like universal access to food more broadly.

Tarasuck and Kirkpatrick (2009) advance a more normative claim, which is initiatives operating outside the state are available to only a fraction of the targeted population that they seek to aid. They argue that energy and resources must be shifted to structural issues such as income inequality, which will then lead to less food insecurity. These scholars advocate for greater participation of the state in ways that may differ from the current undertakings of critical food organizations, such as increased social safety nets through welfare benefits, and increased minimum wage.

Other scholars indicate that there is room for state involvement in the activities of critical food organizations but that this role must not centralize efforts and remove the autonomy that these organizations have developed in the absence of state involvement (Andrée, Ballamie and Sinclair-Waters, 2013; Mount and Andrée 2013 and Andrée forthcoming). These authors understand that the regression of the state in social policy under the banner of neoliberalization has created space for critical food organizations to engage with social issues, even if this engagement is often out of the necessity (Martin and Andrée, forthcoming), and thus argue that these organizations should continue in the driver's seat in those cases where the state wishes to re-engage.

Drawing from research in Eastern Ontario, Mount and Andrée (2013) argue that:

[...] the hybridity we see may also be a sign of what works... suggesting that governments need to allow engaged civil society and private sector collaborations to take the lead on achieving more sustainable and equitable

food systems, providing support when necessary without dictating direction, or what those systems should look like” (588).

The claim made here is more normative than Guthman’s criticism, but less structuralist than claims argued by Tarasuck and Kirkpatrick.

To concretize this debate, the *Local Food Act* (LFA) in Ontario provides an illustrative case study. In Ontario, the LFA had a brief but substantial impact on alternative food initiatives when it was tabled on September 18, 2012. The draft of the Act stated that the Minister of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) is able to set targets for the procurement of local food by government agencies. Also, the Act contributes to the education of citizens related to the availability of food within the province. While the Act disproportionately addresses the farm income portion of this thesis, it remains a strong instance of state support for alternative food initiatives that prioritise these issues, and thus useful as a case study in this thesis. Currently, there is no application of the Act. A version of the *LFA* was reintroduced (March 2013) under Liberal Premier Kathleen Wynne. The Act has since passes second reading and is currently (summer 2013) being examined by the standing committee on social policy. This provides a timely opportunity to analyse *if* and *how* the concerns of the stakeholders in Eastern Ontario are reflected in the most recent version of the Act.

In posing the question of the role of the state in the context of connecting two groups marginalized by state driven policy reforms, this thesis fuses two debates in the realm of alternative food initiatives. As such, this research works to validate or challenge some of the claims made about the role of the state in the literature through the experiences of actors in Eastern Ontario.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided a brief overview of my research, along with an introduction to the concepts that I use and the populations that I have studied. The next chapter frames the research question in relation to broader theoretical debates. In reviewing the theoretical framing, it is important to note that although presented as a review, theoretical literature should be thought of as a way to bring participant responses into broader discussions of society, economics and politics (or political economy). As such, the analysis portion of this work draws from the theory section and contributes to theoretical conversations rather than simply applying a theoretical viewpoint.¹⁰

The next chapter (Chapter 2) reviews the theoretical framing used to understand the research question for this thesis. Chapter 3 discusses the methods of analysis used to investigate the research question. Chapter 4 contextualizes the theoretical understanding of the research question in a historic review of policy shifts in the realm of agricultural policy and social policies. This is followed by Chapter 5, which explains the results of this research and answers part one of the research question. Chapter 6 answers the second part of the research question featuring the role of the state in alternative food initiatives. Finally, Chapter 7 identifies remaining tensions in this thesis, provides some direction for future study and concludes this research.

¹⁰ This is perhaps the most important lesson I have learned during my time in the political economy program at Carleton. I feel that the influence that this way of thinking has had on this piece warrants this paragraph—rooted in reflexivity.

Chapter 2: Exploring Theoretical Concepts

2.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces key theoretical terms in order to frame the research question in broader theoretical traditions and debates. Section 2 introduces the Polanyian concepts that will be drawn from and provides a rationale for reading these terms into the work. Section 3 creates a dialogue between the work of Polanyi and the concept of neoliberalization. Section 4 adds the role of the state to this discussion. Finally, Section 5 adds the concepts of space and scale to the discussion, in order to create a full theoretical lexicon for moving forward with an analysis of the research question. These theoretical concepts will be contextualized in the experiences of the study populations in Chapter 4, and drawn from throughout the analysis Chapters 5 and 6.

2.2 Polanyi as a launching point

I draw from the work of Polanyi as a launching point to frame this thesis.¹¹ Polanyi is predominantly celebrated for his 1944 work entitled *The Great Transformation*, where he attempts to address the transformation of European civilization from the preindustrial world into the era of industrialization (and the corresponding shift in socio-economic policies, ideas and knowledge (Stiglitz, 2011, p.7). Central to his work is the notion that the ‘self-regulating market’ is unprecedented in human existence (Polanyi, 1944, p. 42). For Polanyi, the liberal economic notion of the free market is a utopian experiment, defined by its attempt to create a separation between the economic and the political,

¹¹ This work is as much academic as a piece of my own activism and I feel that it’s only appropriate to be transparent in my analysis. I find myself transitioning from a pure structuralist to an advocate of the alternative to capitalism school of thought. That is, still looking for ways to resist and restructure neoliberalization but in ways beyond a state centric solution.

which according to Polanyi will cause the destruction of society in its entirety.¹² His views on the destructive tendencies of the free market are perhaps best summarized by Dale who states: “Laissez fair liberalism represents a utopian attempt to apply the principle of the self-regulating market to the international economy, a project that will sow the seeds of its own destruction” (Dale, 2010i, p. 207). Polanyi (1944) states laissez-fair rests on the notion of a labour market, a gold standard and a policy of free trade (141).¹³ In the next section, these three features of laissez-fair policy are deconstructed and understood to result in the subjugation of society to the volatile conditions of the free market.

2.2.1 Embeddedness

Central to Polanyi’s work is the notion of embedded and dis-embedded markets. According to Polanyi, markets were historically embedded in social relations, meaning that relations of production and distribution worked to provide the necessary conditions of society, such as basic sustenance. However, the emergence of free market liberalism, at the time in which Polanyi was writing, resulted in the subjugation of social relations to market forces. He refers to this as a dis-embedding of the market from society. This can be summarized as a separation of society from the market, as if the market has an agenda and purpose other than to serve society. The foundations of this dis-embedding lie in what Polanyi deems the fictitious commodities of land, labour and money.

¹² For a summary of this aspect of Polanyi’s work, see Gareth Dale (2010i).

¹³ I speak here in general terms for ease of conveying Polanyi’s central themes but note that for Polanyi, the development of laissez-faire as an economic principle was more of a process. In speaking of the development of laissez-faire in England’s cotton industry, Polanyi acknowledges that beliefs in reduced regulation in production predate beliefs in reduced regulation of exchange (free trade) (Polanyi, 142).

For Polanyi, a commodity is something produced to be sold, and to treat land, labour and money as such is a free market fallacy that works to dis-embed the market from society. With respect to labour, Polanyi (1944) states that its commodification is to separate it from all other forms of activities of human life. He goes on to state that the subjugation of labour to the market is to remove all non-individualistic qualities of human life such as kinship and creed, which rely on the submission of individual desires for collective gain (171). The commodification of labour results in the creation of a labour market, which means that labour finds its price on the market. A labour market governed by the liberal principles of self-regulation, would create conditions of extreme instability of earnings, absence of professional standards and complete worker dependence on the market (185). In treating labour as a commodity, the labour market sets the price of this commodity based on its productive capacity rather than on the remuneration required by labourers to live. Polanyi argues that social intervention through ventures like trade unions are required to ensure that remuneration is adequate enough to sustain and safeguard the human labourer; thus ensuring the protection of society.

Polanyi also speaks of the commodification of nature as land. He states that historically, land and labour were not separated. Land forms part of nature and labour forms part of life resulting in both being intrinsically linked. Although the commodification of land predates the existence of the market economy, its separation and isolation from the elements of nature become intensified under free market liberalism. Land as a commodity is viewed only as a factor of production, externalizing all other factors that produce social benefits.

Finally, Polanyi (1944) states that the commodification of money is also a fictitious commodity as businesses must also be sheltered from the destructive nature of the free market. The creation of the gold standard was necessary to ensure the stabilization of money for international trade while central banking was required to stabilize domestic currency, which Polanyi calls token money as it has no real value outside of exchange. The central banking model is a manifestation of political intervention in what liberals deem the market, but according to Polanyi, this intervention is necessary. A removal of this form of intervention destabilizes currencies resulting in the destruction of productive enterprise (204). As a result, even business enterprise had to be protected from free market logic.

Polanyi argues that because of the market economy's dependence on the commodification of land, labour and money, adherence to free market liberalism is ultimately destructive. Trading these fictitious commodities as commodities in the market discounts the reality of human experience. This market-oriented logic demands a level of flexibility and apathy that cannot be achieved. This is why, according to Polanyi, a true dis-embedding of the economy can never be realized. It will always be met with a reaction from society, which tends to seek protection from the negative consequences of market forces.

2.2.2 Double Movement

Polanyi argues that as the market expands, it is met by a countermovement that checks the expansion. He states:

For a century the dynamics of modern society was governed by a double movement: the market expanded continuously but this movement was met

by a countermovement checking the expansion in definite directions. Vital though such a countermovement was for the protection of society, in the last analysis it was incompatible with the self-regulation of the market, and thus with the market system itself (Polanyi, 136).

He argues that the creation of fictitious commodities, under the free market, would lead to their annihilation, if not for the countermovement, which checks the actions of the market in respect to the factors of production.¹⁴ According to this reading of Polanyi, the double movement can be personified as the action of two organizing principles in society, each of them using their own distinct social methods. The first is deemed economic liberalism, which aims to establish a self-regulating market, through laissez-faire policies. The second is one of social protection, which aims for the preservation of man, nature and productive forces that are endangered by the first principle. Social protection attempts to re-embed markets within social relations. Both elements of this double movement serve to shape the free market system. In an introduction to the 2001 edition of *The Great Transformation*, Block (2001) explains that an absolute subordination of society to the market is impossible, as it will always be met by a countermovement.¹⁵

Before advancing the applicability of Polanyian concepts today, the many criticisms of his work need mention. According to Homes (2012, 473), Polanyi insinuates that pre-capitalist economies were embedded within society. In order for this

¹⁴ In this sense, you actually cannot commodity land, labour and money, which is why they are fictitious; treated as commodities when their commodification is, according to Polanyi, impossible. However, it's important to be aware of Holmes's critique, stating that if something is used as a commodity, it fulfills the requirements to be considered a commodity. See Holmes (2012). Note that this is a review article on many works discussed in this section.

¹⁵ Here, Block makes a comparison between the double movement and an elastic band, insinuating the reaction of society against such attempts.

to be true, forces that shape the free market economy must be able to be applied to pre-market economies. Looking to Polanyi's work, this may be impossible because economic forces develop with the market system, and are unique to that system alone.¹⁶ Lie (1991) critiques Polanyi for overlooking the extent to which markets can be treated as social institutions themselves, which would render his analysis of the dis-embedded economy inadequate.¹⁷

Regarding the above criticisms, I am in agreement with Dale (2010ii;) who states that the countermovement makes sense as a heuristic concept – when the self-regulating market undermines the security of people's livelihoods, people will look to political ideas and political institutions that claim to defend them against market excess. According to this interpretation of Polanyi's work, a countermovement can manifest itself in a number of different forms that shape the development of market societies (Block, 2008, p.2).¹⁸ This viewpoint does not imply that countermovements seek broad systemic change, but rather that they seek to remedy the marginalizing effects of certain forms of marketization—a thought that will be returned to later in this thesis. In the

¹⁶ I use capitalism interchangeably with “free market” or “market economy”. The latter two are a reflection of the work of Polanyi, who did not incorporate Marxist terminology into his work. See Block (2003) for an explanation of Polanyi's strategic choice of words. For Block, Polanyi chooses to minimize his use of Marxist terminology to speak to a wider audience, even though Block sees some of his concepts may have Marxist foundations.

¹⁷ This work is also cited in Holmes (2012), which I reviewed first, leading me to the work of Lie.

¹⁸ The criticisms of Polanyi's work can be traced to arguments surrounding his theoretical tradition. Block (2003), states that Polanyi began writing the *Great Transformation* under immense influence from Marxian scholarship. In contrast to Block's argument, Dale (2008) argues that Block overstates the degree of Marxian influences on Polanyi's work, and the contradictions within *The Great transformation* are more correctly explained as imported from the works of Tonnies, who is more closely linked to Polanyi's intellectual environment. See Dale (2010ii).

section that follows, the process of neoliberalization, will be explored with considerations given to the work of Polanyi presented thus far.

2.3 Neoliberalization

The relevance of Polanyi today centres on the value of his work in understanding the process of neoliberalization (Brenner et al., 2010, Sandbrook, 2011; Cahill, 2011; Dale, 2012). This requires more than simply drawing parallels between neoliberalization and the liberal era of laissez-faire economics. Rather, the themes and concepts of Polanyi's work can be a useful resource to understand the process of neoliberalization as it manifests in a number of policy areas.

It is important to explore the methodological parameters of defining neoliberalism, before a definition is presented. The term neoliberalism is often separated in theory and application in the policy field. This epistemological separation is expressed by Harvey (2007), who explains "neoliberalization" as the practice of applying neoliberal theory. Since this thesis is rooted in pragmatic experiences, I opt to use the term neoliberalization to reflect the process that research participants spoke to rather than the theoretical foundations it rests upon. We can generally outline two broad schools of thought with regard to defining neoliberalization. Presenting this binary is limiting in its application, and borders on oversimplification. Nevertheless, it provides a sound way to convey the debates around neoliberalization.

A structuralist definition of neoliberalization, as advanced by Wacquant (2006), presents neoliberalization as something occurring in broad strokes, and encompassing a

diverse landscape of institutional reforms.¹⁹ This is achieved by looking beyond individual reforms, and connecting these reforms to the common ideology of neoliberalism. A second methodological approach to defining neoliberalization is to look at contextual and historic instances as ideological manifestations, which is cited here as the governmentality school. This methodological approach is much more decentralized than the former, with the belief that neoliberalization is occurring but not the *raison d'être* for every policy reform at present.

While objecting to the construction of methodological approaches to neoliberalization through the binary presented above, Brenner et al. (2010) advance a variegated approach to understanding neoliberalization (also referred to as “actually existing neoliberalism”).²⁰ The authors state that the analytical approach to understanding neoliberalization is something beyond a fragmented approach that attempts to integrate aspects of both schools. The variegated approach to neoliberalization accounts for local specificities without being drenched in context and calls for broad theorization within the acceptable limits of creative expression. That is to say, not every policy reform is a product of neoliberalization, but the process is more than one of fragmented, context specific reforms (Brenner et al., 2010i).

In describing the process of neoliberalization as variegated, scholars can account for scalar constructions, regional differences as well as general trends of reform. This approach accepts that a variety of reforms can occur within a period defined by broad

¹⁹ I first discovered this summary when reading Collier et al (2012).

²⁰ I have intentionally merged the variety of capitalism school and the historical materialism international political economy schools mentioned by Brenner et al. into, what I call, the structuralist school – a term borrowed from Collier. The reason for this is both adhere to some conception of a structuralist approach, which contrasts well to the governmentality school and is workable under the limits of a master’s thesis.

neoliberalization.²¹ According to Brenner et al., this approach is to understand neoliberalization “as successive rounds of distinctively patterned, market oriented regulatory restructuring, each of which is predicated upon, but also partially transformative of, inherited institutional landscapes at various special scales” (Brenner et al., 2010i, p. 29). The authors go on to explain neoliberalization as an incomplete and ever-developing layering process, responding to its own contradictions.

In choosing to use the term neoliberalization (or neoliberal restructuring), I am referring to how neoliberal theory is applied in the policy realm. According to Harvey (2007, 2010) this is the result of two contradictions: the first is the need for neoliberal policies to create “a good business climate” over the collective rights of the individual and the second is the tendency of actors within the neoliberal state to favor the financial system in the event of a crisis over considerations for the wellbeing of the nation.

Peck and Tickell (2002) state that the initial phase of neoliberal restructuring (1970s-1980s) involved the rolling back of the Keynesian welfare state. The neoliberal agenda had to then respond to the failings of the initial rolling back of the Keynesian state, and in the 1990s, called for state intervention in areas that support a neoliberalization of policy agendas, such as harsher penal policies.²² In both instances, it is important to understand that the state was at the forefront of these reforms. In “Remaking Laissez-Faire”, Peck (2008) further explains the contradictory nature of the neoliberal ideology. He states that neoliberalization did not begin as a pristine blueprint

²¹ An earlier version of this thesis spoke in terms of neoliberal versus non-neoliberal reforms. However, I’m not convinced that in this context labelling specific reforms as neoliberal and others and non-neoliberal is productive. This is why I from neoliberalization as an overarching trend, with any number of individual reforms but a very clear macro level policy trend.

²² See Wacquant (2009) for a reading of how the process of neoliberalization works to intensify the marginalization of low-income peoples through penal policies.

but rather was “a mix of prejudice, practice and principle from the outset, draped in the rhetoric of market liberalism” (Peck, 2008, p.6). In another instance, Peck and Tickell (2002) argue that the process is always incomplete and mutates to respond to its own contradictions.

My reading of neoliberalization is consistent with Peck and Tickell (2002), followed by Brenner et al. (2010). Chapter 4 locates this process in an understanding of both the Canadian food system and Canadian social policy. It demonstrates the structural shifts at the federal and provincial levels of government that can be attributed to this process. These structural shifts are understood in relation to local actors in Chapter 5. This contextualization of neoliberalization in Chapters 4 and 5 provides evidence that the process of neoliberalization is a structural process with local manifestations.

2.4 The Role of the state

To link a Polanyian framework with the contextual policy shifts being explored in this thesis an understanding of the role of the state as a driving mechanism for these shifts is essential. For the purpose of this thesis, the state is defined solely as national and provincial bodies and any delegate of their authority (including municipal governments).²³ Polanyi argues that “free markets could never have come into being merely by allowing things to take their course... laissez-faire itself was enforced by the [state]”. He goes on to assert that the road to the free market was opened, and kept opened, through state intervention.

²³ For a similar definition of the state in this setting, see Peter Andrée’s “Citizen-Farmers: The Possibilities and the Limits of Australia’s Emerging Alternative Food Networks” (Forthcoming).

The role of the state in driving laissez-faire policies is comparable to the role of the state in implementing neoliberal restructuring today. Cahill (2011) claims that the state is the driving force of neoliberalization. He notes that state regulation is not only a product of the Keynesian era, but is reformulated in the neoliberal age in a similar way described by Peck and Tickell (2002), with the rolling back and rolling out of various state policies.

Cahill (2011), also applying a Polanyian framework, argues that a strategy for a transition away from neoliberal policy influence requires “an extensive roll-back of the institutional supports within which neoliberalism is embedded. However, it would also require the roll-out of new non-neoliberal policies and their embedding in a new institutional architecture” (Cahill, 2011, p. 491). This analysis allows researchers to advocate for policies beyond a return to those of the Keynesian era but still views the role of the state at the foreground of this. In this sense, it is possible to question research participants about what role they see for the state but accept that some participants are hesitant to call for state involvement and would rather maintain some level of autonomy.

The term neoliberalization, as employed in this thesis, focuses on its tendencies of regulatory restructuring. As pointed out by Brenner et al. (2010), neoliberalization is an institutionalized reorganization of government structures and services to intensify marketization. It is here we can read in the Polanyian concepts discussed in section 2 of this Chapter, which illustrate the role of the state in perpetuating these market-based reforms of governance mechanisms. This understanding of neoliberalization as a process of state sanctioned marketization demonstrates the state’s role in the disembedding of the market from social relations. Chapter 3 demonstrates that this reconfiguration of the

state, by the state, has worked to intensify the marginalization faced by people living on low-incomes and producers.

2.5 Scaling the Project by Re-Scaling Alternatives

Spatial debates have emerged from the discipline of human geography to find their place at the forefront of research in political economy. Some conceptual ideas must be unpacked before drawing from this theoretical lexicon to inform the analysis moving forward. Spatiality is a concept that denotes a complexity of methodological considerations, including notions of scale, place and territory. All too often, spatial reasoning is collapsed into what Leitner and Sheppard (2009) deem “scale centrism,” where a discussion of scale marginalizes discussion of other spatial elements (Leitner and Sheppard, 2009, p. 233). While this thesis highlights scalar developments, it does not presuppose an appropriate scale.

The literature on critical food organizations is cautious of an over emphasis on a scalar focus – specifically, favouring of one scale over another. Born and Purcell (2006) argue that scale is a social construction and no scale should be inherently valued over the other. Rather, the authors assert that the actors and agendas within the scalar divisions be the crux of analysis. Born and Purcell are critical of organizations that claim to be environmentally and socially just because they are local rather than based on the content of the agenda they pursue –calling this assumption ‘the local trap.’ Similarly, Cambel (2004) claims that speaking in terms of a “local good global bad binary” creates unnecessary tension among a number of different policy agendas and that this approach

inherently overlooks any commonalities between the two.²⁴ While these authors are critical of assumptions that the locality is intrinsically better for social struggles, they are careful not to dismiss its effectiveness as a scale of engagement. I am in agreement with the above authors and reinforce the importance of being critical of place-based initiatives that claim environmental and social justice because of a place of origin, rather than the totality of the agenda being pursued.

The concept of ‘scaling up’ is often viewed as a strategy to overcome the isolation of locally-placed initiatives and to garner more stakeholders and resources. For example, the food certifying agency known as Local Food Plus, created in connection with the alternative food organization FoodShare Toronto, certifies food sold at the University of Toronto Campus and other public and private retail locations, based on flexible criteria to ensure sustainability and food security (Roberts, 2010). The program has recently been praised as a way to scale up, by bringing public institutions and large-scale food retailers into the conversation of alternative food initiatives. By scaling up, local actors are able to engage in wider discussion across organizations and with formal state actors to move from the margins to the crux of discussion on food governance (Roberts, 2010; Friedman, 2011).

In considering debates on scale, it is important to note that Canadian federalism arranges scales of governance in a hierarchy. Be that as it may, scaling up local initiatives to engage with this hierarchy of scales treats scale as only a vertical consideration. However, as Leitner and Sheppard (2004) point out: “Scalar thinking is

²⁴ Scholars may also speak in terms of a global good-local bad binary, which I would claim is equally flawed. See Desrochers and Shimizu (2012).

pushed to its limit in trying to incorporate relations between territories at the same scale but widely separated in space” (Leitner and Sheppard, 2004, p.234). Scaling up single, place-based initiatives forgoes any horizontal considerations of scale and treats scale as a wholly vertical orientation. A more complete application of a multi-scalar approach is to vertically integrate critical food organizations at the same scale as well as addressing the hierarchy of the Canadian state. Through surveying local actors on their experience with different levels of government, I hope to properly address the limits to scale by incorporating place and territory while also rightly taking advantage of scalar and theoretical thinking.

The scalar lexicon and Polanyian framework of this thesis harmonize well to advance the research question. It is well documented that Polanyi had a specific adherence to scale, working within the Westphalia framework while also noting the role of the international and local elements (Palacios, 2001). This understanding of scale should not be abandoned, but rather reworked to account for both horizontal and vertical scalar arrangements. Each scale has its own intrinsic importance, while also needing to be understood in relation to every other scale.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has built a lexicon of theoretical terminology and explained how adopting these terms will aid in answering the research question for this thesis. The next chapter explains the methodological considerations and the methods of analysis used to address the research question. Chapter 3 locates the role of the state in a brief historical review of Canadian farming policy and Canadian social policy. This historical review utilizes the

Polanyian framework and theoretical concepts presented above to explain how the Canadian state helped facilitate the process of neoliberalization, resulting in intensified marginalization of both food producers and people living on low incomes. Chapter 3 provides the necessary context for an analysis of how these groups can work together to remedy their marginalization under the process of neoliberalization and what these groups see as the role of the state in this remedy.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the research design of this thesis. Section 3.2 locates this thesis within the Nourishing Communities project, which I participated in as a research assistant. Section 3.3 defines community-based research and explains why and how it was used to explore the research question. Section 3.4 provides details into the methods of analysis for this research, which of the qualitative sort. Finally, section 3.5 summarizes this chapter and explains its significance in moving forward.

3.2 Locating this Work in a Larger Project

This thesis is embedded within a larger project entitled Nourishing Communities: Sustainable Local Food Systems Research Group. Nourishing Communities is constantly evolving project most recently (2011-present) seeking to develop an inventory of community food initiatives in Ontario, explore their efforts and effects in multiple ways, and diffuse best practices across the region (Nourishing Communities, paragraph 1). The project defines its goals as supporting regional food system resilience by scaling up and connecting existing community projects, strengthening connections between universities and extending the network of researchers and practitioners to connect to and disseminate findings through two international partners (Blay-Palmer et al., 2011), p.1). For the purpose of the Nourishing Communities project, the province of Ontario is divided into three sections being: Northern, Eastern and Southern. For each section, a regional advisory committee consisting of organization leaders, health professionals and academics leads the project. The committee guides the research project as a whole.

The members of the regional advisory committee in Eastern Ontario opted to research three focus areas. These include: (1) assessing initiatives that connect farm income and food access; (2) investigating connections between housing insecurity and food access; and, (3) assessing the opportunities for local farmers in Eastern Ontario. The work delineated in this thesis developed out of the Eastern Ontario portion of Nourishing Communities, with a focus on initiatives connecting farm income and food access.

The incorporation of this thesis into the larger Nourishing Communities project guided the focus area, regional approach and participant selection for this thesis. As a research assistant on the Eastern Ontario node of the Nourishing Communities project, I benefited from the expertise and guidance of the regional advisory committee when conducting this study.

My work as research assistant on the Nourishing Communities project has overlapped with the work in this thesis. As a research assistant, I explored the opportunities and barriers experienced by critical food organizations working to both increase food access for people living on low-incomes and increase farm income— part one of the research question. Part two of the research question, which focuses on the role of the state, was developed to ensure that I was adding something independent to the Nourishing Communities project through this thesis research. Adding an element to the thesis outside of the Nourishing Communities project aided in defining my independence as a graduate student from my role as a research assistant. The research instrument for this project (Appendix 1) was developed to explore both aspects of the research question,

with questions 4 through 6 probing participants on their views of the role of the state, and informing the second aspect of the research question.

3.3 Community-Based Research

Community-based research (CBR) is a useful methodology to draw from in order to foster a connection between the university and the community it resides in. Strand et al. (2003) defines CBR as “a partnership of students, faculty, and community members who collaboratively engage in research with the purpose of solving a pressing community problem or effecting social change” (Strand et al. 2003, p.3). A CBR approach benefits community partners by fostering collaboration with academic researchers resulting in increased output capacity, access to resources and unique ways to understand and overcome challenges. Academic researchers benefit through generating sound empirical evidence to ground theoretical discussions in pragmatic efforts to foster social change.²⁵ The division between academic researcher and community partners is often loosely defined, with both adding insights beyond the roles presented above. In my experience, CBR brings together a number of experts for the purpose of exploring pragmatic issues that add to and complicate theoretical understandings.²⁶

Members of the regional advisory committee include leaders of community-based organizations and representatives of community health centres. It would be inappropriate to speak of this thesis work as the result of a decision to use CBR approach in the traditional sense, since this assumes I had a choice among a number of different

²⁵ In my own experience, non-findings of CBR projects have been as useful as results that validate my hypothesis.

²⁶ For more on this topic, see Flicker (2008) who explores in some detail the benefits and burden of conducting CBR.

methodologies. Rather, in choosing my research to be located within the constraints of an existing CBR project, with a contextual and regional focus, the CBR focus of this thesis was predetermined. My choice to undertake this research, knowing the constraints it would have on my ability to choose a methodology, was influenced by my familiarity with the focus region as well as my desire to develop a piece of research that is grounded in the pragmatic experiences of organizations across the focus region. Given the background of the people guiding this research process and the participants that were ultimately selected, this thesis takes a CBR approach to research community-based organizations. The result was that the community researched the community.

3.4 Methods of Analysis

As explained in Chapter 1, part one of the research question asks how critical food organizations that focus on improving the economic opportunities for food producers can work with organizations that focus on improving food access for people living on low-incomes to pursue mutually beneficial initiatives? Part two asks: How do these organizations view the role of the state, if any, in fostering and facilitating this connection? To begin addressing these research questions, I conducted an environmental scan on alternative food initiatives that meet the criteria of the research question but lie outside the regional focus of this thesis. This environmental scan helped generate some initial insights into the specific alternative food initiatives that I was seeking in Eastern Ontario, which aided in selecting research participants.

Once the environmental scan was completed, a call for participants was conducted in collaboration with the regional advisory committee for the Nourishing

Communities project. The selection criterion for this research was very precise, as organizations had to be interested, or actively involved in some form of initiative that attempted to connect farmers with people living on low-incomes. For the purpose of this paper, low-income is defined as both people receiving social assistance, as well as the working poor whose household income falls below established low-income cut-offs by Statistics Canada.²⁷ The term farmer, used simultaneously here with the term “producer,” is understood to mean small- to medium-sized farmers, with a gross income totalling less than \$250,000 CAN.²⁸

This thesis used qualitative methods of inquiry to explore the research question and probe research participants. Using qualitative methods of inquiry allowed for the generation of rich, nuanced data needed to answer this research question. As demonstrated by the research instrument (see Appendix 1), participants were asked to reflect on personal experiences and lessons learned when pursuing community food initiatives as well as some of the challenges encountered. Question 6 of the research

²⁷ The low-income cut-off is a threshold used to define low-income citizens. According to Statistics Canada, families under this threshold are likely to devote a larger percentage of their income to food, shelter and clothing than families above this income threshold. See <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75f0002m/2012002/lico-sfr-eng.htm> for more detail. The appropriateness of grouping low-income citizens or working poor with people receiving social assistance may be disputed, but I feel both are united in the adverse effects of both groups through reforms.

²⁸ The term “farmer” encompasses a vast array of speciality fields, from poultry production to vegetables farmers to cash croppers and ploy crop farming. For the purposes of this thesis, I use the 1998 farm typology created by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC). The focus of this thesis is on full time small-scale farming. As such they would be included in the business-focused category of the typology. The sub-groups would be small-medium sized farms, totalling an income less than \$250,000 CAN. However, there is overlap into the non-business focused farms such as the subcategory of non-business focused low-income farm. Note that all of the farm types with incomes less than \$100,000 assumed that the farm relied on off-farm income. In my experience, a number of these farms look to ancillary industries like the selling of artisan value added products e.g., jams and preserves, using farmed goods. See <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/21-207-x/2011000/appendix-appendice1-eng.htm> for typology.

instrument, which asks participants to reflect on the main elements of the *Local Food Act*, provided a case study to ground their thoughts regarding the role of the state. It provided more pragmatic insights into what the optimal role of the state might look like, from the perspective of actors pursuing community food agendas.

Both focus groups and interviews were used in the research process. While both are qualitative methods of inquiry, conducting focus groups fosters conversations among participants, whereas engaging in in-depth, open-ended interviews allows for more targeted research and personal reflection. In consulting with the Eastern Ontario advisory committee of the Nourishing Communities project, we decided that both focus groups and interviews were needed to generate enough rich data to properly inform an analysis of the research questions.

In January of 2013, an initial focus group was conducted in Hastings County to take advantage of a group gathering of various stakeholders including members of the Harvest Hastings group. One of the primary reasons of this gathering was to roll out the Nourishing Communities project in the region and discuss an organizational mapping of food systems in Eastern Ontario. My role as a research assistant was to introduce the focus areas of the Nourishing Communities node for Eastern Ontario.

For the purpose of this thesis, the Hastings focus group served as an initial trial of the research instrument. After the focus group, I worked with members of the steering committee to locate contacts throughout the region to conduct supplemental in-depth, open-ended interviews. Four centres developed in Eastern Ontario, including: the Ottawa area, the Kingston area, Belleville and the surrounding area, and the Peterborough area.

While the Nourishing Communities project remains ongoing, the interviews and focus groups from these regions provide sufficient primary data to draw conclusions from for this thesis. Following the initial focus group, a total of thirteen interviews were conducted, ranging in time from twenty minutes to over an hour.

Finally, a focus group was conducted on April 25, 2013 in Peterborough in order to explore how these preliminary conclusions resonated with some of the stakeholders in the region. During this focus group, participants listened to a presentation of the environmental scan I prepared for the Nourishing Communities project and were asked to reflect on the information and share their thoughts. See Figure 5.3.1 (Chapter 5) for a complete list of the research participants in this thesis.

Along with qualitative data, this research takes advantage of organizational documents and grey literature. A number of participants in this research conducted their own studies that served help to answer the research question. A number of organizations were able to share the raw data or results of these projects. This literature was used to add further insight into that organization's viewpoint into the research questions. As such, the grey literature was never separated from the organization that conducted the study – rather, it was synthesized with the raw interview data to inform the coding process.

To organize the qualitative data and grey literature used in this project, Nvivo 10 qualitative methods software was used. Using Nvivo allowed for the creation of categories that were influenced by both qualitative interviews as well as the grey literature. Transcribing interviews in Nvivo also had the benefit of enabling quick access

to the audio file for each quote. This allowed me to ensure each quote was properly represented in this thesis. Furthermore, the software helped to keep my thesis work separate from the Nourishing Communities Ontario project.

There exists a debate over the effectiveness of the use of software in qualitative analysis. Specifically, Katie MacMillan and Thomas Koenig (2004) argue that some researchers expect the software to become the methodology, or lightly use grounded theory to justify their results (MacMillan and Koenig, 182). Conversely, Richards (1999) explains the merits of software in qualitative data analysis, citing ease of access and collaboration among researchers. Acknowledging that Nvivo is a tool rather than a method of analysis helped me to address these criticisms. Overall, Nvivo helped organize the data in one location, which was crucial when working with a diverse data set.

The data in Nvivo was coded according to grounded theory. Grounded theory was pioneered by Glaser and Strauss, who developed it to allow researchers to generate a theory grounded in empirical data (Walker and Myrick, 2006, p. 548). That is to say, rather than a method that validates a theory, the data dictates what theory and literature should be consulted. Researching through grounded theory views the data as “raw” and thus possible to reflect the participant’s point of view through analysis (Frost and Nolas, 2010, p.44). Through a constant comparison of quotes and grey literature themes begin to emerge, which are organized as codes. In general, coding involves extracting fragments of data from the data compiled and looking for corresponding themes among them (Hruschka and Schwartz, 2004, p. 310). For this research, codes were developed using both grey literature and qualitative data. The use of Nvivo made it possible to constantly compare this data as if it were from the same source. As well, it also allowed

me to organize the grey literature and qualitative data to ensure that participants that provided both were not over represented in the research.

Chapter 4: Marginalization Through a Common Lineage

4.1 Introduction

This chapter demonstrates how the process of neoliberalization has intensified the marginalization faced by small and medium size food producers as well as people living on low-incomes.²⁹ This analysis is formulated by drawing from the theoretical discussion of neoliberalization in Chapter 2 and seeks to illustrate how neoliberalization has disembedded the market from social relations. Section 4.2 argues that neoliberal policy reforms have worked to marginalize producers in Ontario, reducing their income and numbers. Section 4.3 argues that neoliberal policy reforms have worked to marginalize low-income people, exacerbating food access issues faced by people living on low-incomes in Ontario today. Presenting farmers and people living on low-incomes as undergoing two distinct struggles under the neoliberalization of state policy provides a balance between the uniqueness of these independent struggles while also showcasing their similarities.

4.2 The Story of a Farmer

This section explores the role of the state in driving the process of neoliberalization in Canadian agriculture. It is important to first present a review of Canadian federalism, which is the architecture of Canadian public policy, before the historical review is

²⁹ Admittedly, low-income peoples are always marginalized in a capitalist economy, and for this subgroup it is perhaps better expressed as intensified marginalization.

presented in the sections that follow. The division of powers in the Canadian federalist system are exceedingly complex and rarely concise, with agricultural policy comprising an area of shared jurisdiction between the provincial and federal governments. A brief exploration of the division of powers demonstrates the complexity of Canadian agricultural policy, specifically as it relates to jurisdictional authority.

Generally speaking, provinces have authority over products produced and sold within their borders, while the federal government has authority over interprovincial and international production and exchange. Often, actions by one government encroach upon constitutional jurisdiction of the other level of government, as was the case in *R. v. Dominion Stores* (1980), which questioned the *Canadian Agricultural Product Standards Act* (1970), establishing grade classes for agricultural products.³⁰ Section 3 of the Act applied to the local sale and possession of the products and was ruled unconstitutional, while the section of the act that established grade classes for interprovincial and international trade was upheld. Allowing the grade classification for products traded inter-provincially or internationally made the creation of a national marketing scheme possible.

In some instances, the federal and provincial governments work collaboratively to develop legislation that involves both federal and provincial areas of jurisdiction. In Canadian agricultural policy, one example of this is the *Agricultural Products Marketing Agency Act* (1972). This act established the Canadian Egg Marketing Agency and allowed it to establish quotas for each province. In Ontario, the Ontario Farm Products

³⁰ *R.v.Dominion Stores Ltd.* (1980) 1 S.C.R. 844/

Marketing Egg Board was delegated the authority to set individual producer quotas, based on the provincial quotas established in Ontario.

An analysis of Canadian agricultural policy must consider the many complex constitutional issues in order to be a true reflection of reality. In order to fully understand how producers are affected by the neoliberalization of public policy in Ontario, considerations have to be made to broader trends in Canadian agriculture and issues at the federal level of government. This approach is also consistent with an understanding of neoliberalization as inter-scalar, rather than a top down expression of authority.

Research in political economy understands the development of modern agriculture through a series of regimes (Friedman 1987, Friedman and McMichael 1989, McMichael 2009, Gimenez and Shattuck 2011). Cited as the first food regime (McMichael 2009, Gimenez and Shattuck 2011) Canadian agriculture from 1870-1930s was based on a system of colonial exportation in which surplus crops were exported to Europe. Moving into the post-World War II period, food production was still based on an export model, with a heavy reliance on petroleum intensive farming inputs like fertilizers and a strong social safety net ensuring that citizens had the means of access to food surplus and imports. Arguably, industrialized countries have entered into a third food regime, known as the industrial or corporate regime (Gimenez and Shattuck 2011).

Scholars may adopt the macro organizational concept of a food regime and apply a more pointed analysis of factors within each regime (Kuyek, 2007). In order to focus specifically on the role of the state in each regime as well as to create categories of agricultural policies that parallel developments in social policy presented in the next

section, this thesis modifies the categorization of food regimes. The following subsection separates Canadian agricultural policy into three periods: the Agri-Collectivist, the Keynesian and the Neoliberal. While Canadian agriculture can be categorized in a variety of ways, these three categories have been developed to reflect the direction of this thesis.³¹ Each category is explored in detail below.

4.2.1 The Agri-Collectivist Period

What is categorized as the Agri-Collectivist Period of Canadian agriculture encompasses a vast array of developments prior to the Keynesian policies of the post-1945 world. The historical review that follows is both limited and brief, but serves as important historical context and basis of comparison to the present condition of Canadian agricultural policy. It should be noted that Canadian agriculture has always been based on an export model, with variations to that model occurring throughout the country's history.

At the turn of the last century, the agricultural sector was much different than today, in terms of its active workforce as well as its collective ideology. The early 1900s saw a large rural farming population in Canada along with several attempts at mobilization in order to foster policy influence at both federal and provincial levels. Early attempts in the Canadian West to establish co-operatives in the grain business, a reaction against the largely centralized industry, achieved a level of collective will and consciousness among farmers (Winson, 1994, p. 22).³²

³¹ For other categorizations of Canadian agricultural policy see Winson (1994).

³² Another example highlighted is the *Manitoba Grain Act*. When I say protect farmers from market forces here I am mainly referring to the centralization of the processing industry, for example with grain elevators, as well as price speculations creating price volatility in the grain trade.

In Ontario, this collectivity was harnessed into political clout with the election of the United Farmers of Ontario (UFO) in 1919. This party centred on a coalition between the United Farm Organization and the Labour Party. The UFO government managed to advance a number of reforms, beyond seemingly farm issues, such as enacting minimum wage laws for women and girls, and enacting legislation to bring Ontario-Hydro under fiscal control (30). Although the UFO government was defeated in 1923, its mandate and achievements serve to demonstrate the ability of farm organizations to foster policy change that advance farm issues, as well as issues of greater social salience.

Arguably one of the greatest state protective measures achieved at this time was the establishment of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB). The CWB was established in 1935 as a government sponsored, farm controlled collective marketing agency for Canadian Wheat and Barley (Magnan, 2011). Broadly speaking a marketing board is a form of supply management and works by producers pooling their product in order to secure optimal market prices. For the purpose of this discussion, supply management is understood to consist of production management (often in the form of quotas), import controls, and prices set to (or negotiated considering) the cost of production (Pechlaner, Otero, 2010, p. 193). The CWB marketed all wheat and barley produced within its jurisdiction, covering Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northeast British Columbia, through a single desk marketing system. This monopoly purchasing power was a significant improvement to the wheat pooling system that previously existed, and represented a farm-state response to the market collapse during the Great Depression (Winson, 1994; Pugh, 2007).

More specifically in Ontario, there was an influx of producer co-operatives allowing producers to collectively purchase large volumes of capital inputs required for farming (such as fertilizer). However, while co-operatives offered producers preferential pricing for the inputs of production, they did little to foster preferred prices from the farmed goods, as producers outside the co-operative could simply price their products to undersell the respective competing co-operative (McMurchy, 1990). To aid producers in collectively selling their products, compulsory marketing boards were created in Ontario in 1938 through the Farm Products Control Act (1937). In Ontario, these boards often worked (and still do) by allowing both producers and purchasers to negotiate the price for the product rather than simply allowing producers to set prices (paragraph, 8).

The pre-Keynesian era of Canadian agricultural policy is characterized by the high level of involvement of a variety of Canadian farmers in the realm of public policy. This translated into a number of collectivist approaches to agricultural distribution and a high level of involvement of the state in protecting farmers from fluctuations in the market. It is important to note that during this period farmers or farm families made up a much higher percentage of the population than they do today, which provided them with the political clout for these reforms.³³

As will be demonstrated throughout the remainder of the chapter, these reforms were not lasting, as waves of neoliberal reform presently threaten collectivist institutions. What can be gathered from this brief exploration of this era is an understanding of the

³³ Statistics Canada indicates that the farming population in Ontario alone fell from 800 960 in 1931 to 391 713 in 2006. In Canada, the farming population overall fell from 31.7% to 2.2% across the same period. Put another way, in less than one lifetime we have seen a change from 1 in 3 Canadians living on a farm to 1 in 46, while the Canadian population has tripled during this period. Note that 1931 was the first time there was a count of the farm population in Canada.

protective policy developments created through the political mobility of the farming class and the level of engagement of the farming class in the policy field.

4.2.2 The Keynesian Period

While it would be misplaced to isolate a quintessential instance of transformation from the pre-Keynesian period to the Keynesian period, the post-1945 era is generally looked to as a period of change, largely due to the reforms that took place after World War II.³⁴ In the genealogy of Canadian agricultural policy, many of the reforms actually took place during the Great Depression and were carried through to assist with the war effort before being made more permanent in the post-war period. As noted by Fowke (1946), the post-war period should be understood as a time of a major demographic shift. This shift was a movement of large portions of the Canadian population, including Ontario from rural to urban settings (Fowke, 1946, p.47).

In an attempt to add greater price stability in the agricultural sector and transition from a wartime economy to peacetime economy, national measures were necessary. The *Agricultural Price Support Act* (1944) along with the Agricultural Price Support Board was established to bridge the gap between actual market price and what the Board deemed as an adequate price (per bushel) for western grains.³⁵ A similar development took place with the passing of the *Wheat Board Act* (1947), where the Board was granted monopoly control over western Canadian wheat. In Ontario, the provincial government sought to protect the dairy industry through supply management legislated by the *Milk*

³⁴ This statement is based on a review of scholars writing about neoliberalism and the insights they make. This further reiterates that my reading of the history of Keynesian agricultural policy is influenced by my attempt to account for neoliberal reforms.

³⁵ This Act and Board applied to all agricultural products with the exception of wheat, which of course, had its prices protected by the Canadian Wheat Board. See Martin (2010).

Act (1965) along with an influx of several other marketing boards—14 in total by 1960 (McMurch, 1990, paragraph, 8).

The post-war period also saw a restructuring of farm credit in order to continue the expansion of agricultural outputs, which demanded increasing amounts of capital to cope with the technological innovations in farming inputs such as chemical fertilizers. These expenditures became a necessity to continue the productivist model, which dictated that agricultural surplus industrialized through a heavy reliance on production technologies and crop specialization was in the best interests of the country (Kuyek, 2007; Pond, 2009).³⁶ Examples specific to the Ontario context include crop insurance funds, favourable regulatory regimes, and differential tax treatment for producers (Pond, 2009, p. 420). The growth of inputs in the farm sector to keep Canadian farms competitive and export oriented is perhaps the most fundamental difference between the Keynesian and Agri-Collectivist periods of production. This intensification of productivist practices demonstrates an active role of the state fostering increased subjection of food production to market forces.

Winson (1994) notes that the reliance on farm inputs created two conditions that are essential to understanding the loss of farm income in the neoliberal era. The first is the growth of corporations providing farm inputs and the second is the growth of related processing and distribution industries (Winson, 1994, p. 138). To continue increasing their output, producers increasingly relied on chemical fertilizers, which were often purchased through credit because of their rising costs. Furthermore, corporations demanded large volumes of farmed goods in order to achieve efficiency and profitability

³⁶ See Martin (2010) for a discussion on reforms to credit.

with value added production like processed foods. It is for these reasons that both firms providing the capital necessary for food production as well as those engaged in food process and distribution began to consolidate while farms remained relatively decentralized. These corporations often contracted out individual farm families (138).

4.2.3 The Neoliberal Period

The theoretical literature on neoliberalization commonly frames the first waves of restructuring as emerging in the 1970s and this may very well serve as a general indicator of the beginnings of neoliberalized reforms in Canadian agricultural policy.³⁷ Generally, the post-1970 era of neoliberal public policy manifests in the agricultural sector with increases in international trade met with the restructuring of state sanctioned protections for those within the agricultural industry to foster increased global competitiveness. Both instances of change work to intensify the subjection of food producers to market forces. This results in a loss of farm income and a consolidation of farmers.

The emergence of the process of neoliberalization during this period often took the form of a restructuring of Keynesian institutions. For instance, Farm Credit Canada (FCC), once a Crown corporation that developed as the lender of last resort for farms to assist with the rising costs of productivist agriculture, was restructured in 1968 to act more like a private lender. Throughout the 1970s, FCC was restructured to make loans more available. Martin (2010) highlights this as one of the causes of credit crisis within

³⁷ However, this rationale is problematized with the introduction of the *Farm Products Marketing Act* in 1972. In understanding neoliberalism as a process, we can account for such instances of overlap between the eras of policy that have been created for the purpose of this research.

the farming industry, leading to a centralization of farms not seen in the Keynesian and pre-Keynesian eras.

The subjection of Canadian farmers to free market forces intensified through the signing of the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in 1988, which later became the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), with the inclusion of Mexico in 1994. This trade agreement allowed for Canadian farmers to enter tariff free into the United States market, and those with the largest market share were able to secure the best prices for their products, further increasing the centralization of each farm sector.

The emergence of free trade regimes intensified agricultural production for export, ultimately leading to increased crop specialization and capital investments from farmers. In 1988, Ontario's agriculture and food exports totalled more than \$2.2 billion, with two-thirds of sales going to the United States (Report of the Minister of Agriculture and Food, 1988/89-1992-93, p. 7). Furthermore, from 1988-89 the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA, as it was called at the time) sponsored more than 160 trade initiatives to increase Ontario food and agriculture exports.³⁸ During this period, an OMAFRA study of the Canada-US free trade agreement (the predecessor to the North America Free Trade Agreement) estimated that Ontario would lose \$95 million CAN each year as a result of the agreement, with only livestock and red meat producers expecting a gain.

The neoliberalized restructuring of Canadian agricultural policies occurred consistently throughout the remaining decade through intensified trade (Skogstad, 1992;

³⁸ During the course of writing this thesis, OMAFRA was split into the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the Ministry of Rural Affairs.

Pechlaner and Otero, 2008) and regulatory restructuring (Hatt and Hatt, 2012).³⁹ Most recently at the federal level, we see the restructuring of collectivist institutions like the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB). In the fall of 2011, the Government of Canada passed Bill C-18, the *Marketing Freedom for Grain Farmers Act*, which transitioned the CWB from a sanctioned monopoly not-for-profit to a voluntary pooling system. The proponents of the amendments argue that the changes represent structural changes to the wheat industry in western Canada, which is now made up of significantly fewer and larger farms than when the CWB was first established.⁴⁰ Overall, the decision by the federal government as well as many western grain farmers to remove the CWB serves as a timely example of the restructuring of Keynesian institutions through the process of neoliberalization.⁴¹

The many marketing boards in Ontario are constantly under threat by free trade agreements, which view these marketing boards as non-tariff barriers to trade—essentially a barrier to trade other than a tariff. For instance, the current Doha round of World Trade Organization negotiations could require concessions in agricultural marketing boards in Canada (Gould, 2008). Other examples of challenges to marketing boards include cases before the Canadian International Trade Tribunal, such as *BalanceCo Canada vs. Canada Border Services Agency*. In this specific case, the Canadian Border Service Agency (CBSA) granted a cheese importer the ability to import foreign cheese under the label of “food preparation” to avoid tariffs placed on foreign

³⁹ It exceeds the scope of this thesis to point to every instance of neoliberalization in Canadian agriculture as scholars continue to dissect the industry for in-depth examinations of elements of the industry.

⁴⁰ See Milton Boyd (July 2007) for more on this Bill.

⁴¹ For an impact assessment of the removal of the monopoly purchasing power of the CWB see Fulton (2006). See also Boyd (2007).

cheeses, which protect the provincial milk marketing boards. A consortium of ten provincial marketing boards challenged this decision in *BalanceCo Canada vs. Canada Border Services Agency (2013)*—the appeal was dismissed. The instances above briefly demonstrate the threats to collective agricultural institutions in the form of free trade.

Overall, the neoliberal restructuring that has taken place in Canada has largely been to the disadvantage and displacement of small- and medium-sized farmers. For instance, between 1961 and 2001, the total number of farms in Canada declined from 500,000 to 250,000.⁴² While reforms in farm policy are not the only contributor to this, for instance technological innovations in any production process often decrease the need for human labour; the manner in which these reforms have manifested intensifies this centralization. This situation is further perpetuated as large scale farmers continually expand to build their market share in an attempt to increase overall income. An often-cited signifier of the dramatic shifts that took place in the neoliberal era is the level of farm income reported in 1985, which for the first time in Canadian history was zero, making locally oriented producers often reliant on off-farm income (Qualman, 2011). Since this time, the corporations providing the means for productions as well as those providing the processing and distribution have absorbed 100% of the value of farm production in Canada (20).⁴³

Growing inequalities among the size and capacity of farmers across various farm sectors also mark the neoliberal turn. That is to say, while small and medium size farms are diminishing in numbers and profitability, large factory farms are experiencing net

⁴²See <http://www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1201189157429&lang=eng>

⁴³ See Kneen (2002) for an in-depth study of Agri-Food giant Cargill.

gains.⁴⁴ In Ontario, net farm income in has been decreasing, despite relative increases in gross farm revenues. One explanation for this is the rising costs of farm inputs, as explained above, to the benefit of agri-food corporations, rather than farmers and their families.⁴⁵ Figure 4.1 illustrates the rising inputs to farming compiled with the overall loss of net farm income. This data also demonstrates the growing dependency of small scale farmers on off farm incomes including wages, government transfer payments, investment income, and in many cases retirement pensions in largely in order to pay for the rising costs of inputs and capital expenditures.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Large (gross revenues of \$250 000-\$499 000) and very large (gross revenues over \$ 500 000) accounted for 67.9% of the total gross farm receipts in Canada; up from 60.1% in 2006. According to Statistics Canada, 9,602 farms reported \$1 million or more in gross farm receipts, which was an increase of 31.2% from 2006—with cash crops making up most of this category.

⁴⁵ See http://www.nfu.ca/sites/www.nfu.ca/files/farm_ontario.pdf

⁴⁶ According to Statistics Canada, in 2011 farm operators aged 55 and over represented the largest share of total operators (48.3%) for the first time in Canadian history.

Figure 4.1: Ontario Gross Farm Revenue and Realized Net Farm Income with and without Program Payments 1926 - 2011

Source: National Farmers Union. Farms, Farmers and Agriculture in Ontario: An Overview of the Situation in 2011. NFU (2011)

The neoliberalization of Canadian agricultural policy has created vast inequalities among farmers. This is part of the reason why some farmers, usually large-scale, actually push for neoliberal restructuring of the industry, as their large market share is able to provide them the leverage needed to secure preferred prices for their product. However, as a response, many medium- and small-scale farmers now look to alternative methods of production and distribution, outside the industry intensive farming practices.

This section has briefly explored the policy shifts that have led to the neoliberalization of the Canadian agricultural sector. Specifically, the role of the state

was the focal point of this reading of Canadian agricultural policy in order to showcase its role in helping to institutionalize neoliberal restructuring through policy reforms. This section has connected these neoliberal policy shifts to the economic hardships faced by farmers today, highlighted by a loss of income for small- to medium-sized farms and a centralization of the farming industry with only a small number of farmers keeping pace.⁴⁷

4.3 The Story of a Low-Income Citizen

This section focuses on neoliberal reforms that underscore access to food issues in order to demonstrate how the process of neoliberalization has marginalized low-income citizens. Again, the review that follows is both limited and brief but serves as an overview of the neoliberalization of social policy and what this means for low-income citizens. An overview of pre-Keynesian welfare reforms, known here as the Relief Era, is provided in the first subsection, but the bulk of this section will focus on the retraction of social welfare policies and the rolling out of neoliberalization. In presenting this story as separate from the review of Canadian agriculture policy, I hope to demonstrate that both food producers and low-income citizens have undergone unique struggles but that these struggles are not isolated events. Rather, they are united through the adverse effects, in part, created and perpetuated through the neoliberalization of public policy. Exploring the marginalization of both groups informs how initiatives can work to remedy both subgroups.

⁴⁷ I am speaking here of the result. Whether this result was intentional or unintentional is a valuable discussion to have, but remains outside the scope of this thesis.

4.3.1 The Relief Era

The Canadian welfare state is made up of a series of social policies, which establish a basic standard of services and income for people living in Canada. Generally speaking, social policies in the form of social security and welfare work to protect workers from capitalist forces and increase collective rights (Myles, 1988, p. 76). Canada has historically subscribed to a “stop and go” approach to social policies, with periods of expansion followed by periods of contraction (p.76). The challenges to the welfare state mirror those of the collectivist agricultural policies in that no one government has dismantled Canadian social policies in their totality but that many governments at both the federal and provincial levels have facilitated reforms and restructuring. The shifts and transformation of Canadian social policy has been well documented, with topics ranging from funding mechanisms of transfer payments to changes to the eligibility requirements of program recipients (pp. 76-78).

A comprehensive review of changes to Canadian social policies far exceeds the scope of this thesis, but a brief review of the history and tradition of social policy in Canada is necessary to illustrate how the process of neoliberalization has worked to marginalize low-income citizens through a restructuring of welfare, manifested in Ontario.⁴⁸ As with agricultural policy, it is appropriate to speak of welfare policy in phases. The breadth of the review will consist of the post-1945 era and the neoliberal era

⁴⁸ In grouping all low-income citizens into a single category, I do not intend to marginalize the marginalized, so to speak. I am fully aware of the differences and hardships faced by people within the low-income bracket. For example, see Chunn and Gavigan (2004).

to keep this discussion within manageable limits.⁴⁹ Like agricultural policy, social policy has developed to be an area of shared responsibility between both levels of government in Canada. However, with social policy, there is a constitutional duty of the provinces to develop and implement these policies while the federal government primarily shares in the funding of such policies. This responsibility often gets downloaded on the municipalities, with compromised services for the purpose of cost saving.

In the pre-war period of Canadian welfare policy, food access programs were delivered and administered through charities, which relied heavily on the municipalities to develop, implement and fund such policies (Kwok and Tam, 2010; Hackworth, 2009).⁵⁰ The *British North American Act (1867)* did allocate powers over hospitals and asylums to the provincial governments, but social welfare was largely viewed as isolated events of local concern (Dunlop, 2009, p.196). Often taking the form of “relief aid” social programming was compiled alongside of housing and healthcare (p. 196).

In the era of pre-war social relief aid, there are some instances of provincial and federal involvement in providing this aid, but these instances are limited to reactive measures and usually manifested after a crisis grew from a local instance to a universal concern (Dunlop, 2009, p.196). For instance, with the onset of the Great Depression, the federal government instituted work camps where unemployed men were able to work in exchange for food and shelter (p.196). The early forms of social relief piloted by the

⁴⁹ The welfare system in Canada, from the period of 1867-1945, is fundamentally different from the post-World War II period, in its ideological approach and manifestation and is ultimately outside the scope of this research. While there were various types of poor relief prior to confederation I deliberately chose to state my analysis after confederation (1867) because it is this power that is explored throughout the thesis.

⁵⁰ See also Neff (2008). I should note that an initial attempt was undertaken by R. B. Bennett in 1935, with his New Deal; however, this attempt was ultimately declared ultra-vires when reviewed by the Privy Council.

state were reactive to social crisis and much less comprehensive than the regimes that followed.

In Ontario, we see a convergence of the interests of food producers with people living on low incomes with the United Farmers of Ontario (UFO) provincial government in 1919. As explained in section 4.2.2 The Agri-Collectivist Period, the UFO government pushed for social welfare reforms such as increased minimum wage. Here, we see an early convergence of the interests of producers with people living on low incomes, exercised through the political system.⁵¹

4.3.2 The Keynesian Era

It was not until the end of World War II that Canada began developing a welfare system. An initial attempt to do this occurred with the introduction of the “Green Book” at the 1945 Dominion-Provincial Conference, which offered the provinces funding mechanisms for a variety of social policies (Moscovitch, 1988). While the Green Book was not adopted, it laid the groundwork for the reforms of the 1950s, like the passage of the *Unemployment Assistance Act* and ultimately the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP), which is viewed as the capstone of Canadian welfare policy.

Passed in 1966, the CAP was a cost sharing agreement between the federal and provincial governments. Primarily, the CAP provided federal funding to the provinces, which then designed the programs, along with making their own funding contributions. Under this relationship, the municipalities were largely charged with the administration of welfare policies. Generally, social assistance under the CAP was in the form of

⁵¹ The fact that the UFO party relied on the co-operation of the independent labour party helps to explain this political convergence.

financial assistance for people who had difficulties meeting basic needs such as food and shelter.⁵²

4.3.3 The Neoliberal Period

The CAP was the foundational funding mechanism for social programs and worked to establish a social safety net in the country to weather economic downturns, which intensified in the 1980s. During this time, under the federal-provincial agreement entitled *Enhancement of Employment Agreements*, provincial experiments with welfare reform occurred (Lightman, 2006, p. 125). In Ontario, the neoliberalization of social assistance manifested with two fundamental developments in the mid-1990s: the reformulation of the CAP and the creation of Ontario Works.

With the election of the fiscally conservative Harris government in 1995, and the federal leadership of Prime Minister Jean Chretien, Ontario experienced the roll back and roll out features of neoliberalism simultaneously. The CAP was replaced by the Canadian Health and Social Transfer (CHST), which included drastic reductions in social spending met with an increased responsibility of the provinces to design social security programs (Lightman, 2006, 125). See Figure 4.2 for a summary of the reforms to the financing of welfare programs through cost sharing agreements.

⁵² Often, this was done through a “needs test,” which took into account the budgetary requirements of the applicant balanced against their financial resources. See Graefe (2006) p. 100.

Figure 4.2: Restructuring of Federal Social Transfers

Source: Finance Canada: History of Health and Social Transfers ⁵³

The roll out feature of neoliberalism manifested in part, through Ontario Works (OW)—a moment in the transformation from welfare to workfare. Workfare is delineated by supply side solutions to replace entitlement programs like welfare. OW consists of two key programs: employment assistance and financial assistance (128). The program is compulsory and encourages administrators to undertake a work-fast approach, which provides incentives to transfer recipients to the workforce with little consideration given to the quality of the job. Since its inception, OW has been criticized as limiting the eligibility of families and individuals to receive support, increasing labour flexibility and perpetuating poverty (Lightman, 2005).⁵⁴

⁵³ See <http://www.fin.gc.ca/fedprov/his-eng.asp2011> (2011).

⁵⁴ Labour market flexibility should be understood as simply one's willingness to accept undesired employment, be it because of salary or geography.

While it would be fallacious to attribute all increases in poverty and food insecurity in Ontario to welfare reform, there exists some correlation between the reforms of the 1990s and issues of increased food insecurity that followed. For instance, in their analysis of the changes in the Survey of Labour Income Dynamic (SLID) from 1996-2010, Weaver et al. (2010) argue that the effectiveness of efforts to reduce poverty fell across all provinces as a direct result of the reformulation of welfare.

A more qualitative approach to studying changes in poverty reduction taken by Lightman et al. (2005) captures individual experiences of former OW participants since leaving the program. The authors argue that OW is designed to aggressively push participants to accept low-paying work, which often leads participants to return to welfare (or feel “trapped” to accept a life of low-paying, usually physically-intensive work). Furthermore, the study revealed that 70% of participants reported food shortages with 60% accessing food banks within one year of the participating in the research.

Once considered to be an emergency food relief system, food banks have become institutionalized and many people receiving welfare and/or living on low-income in Ontario, and Canada more generally, now depend on food banks. Data collected by Food Banks Canada, the lead agency for food bank administration, reiterates the increases in poverty levels in Ontario presented in this section. In March of 2012 alone, 412, 998 people were served by food banks in Ontario, with 64.5% of those individuals described as low-income. During the same period four years earlier in 2008, 314, 258 people were served by food banks. This demonstrates an increase of food bank users in a four-year

span.⁵⁵ Notwithstanding varying economic climates, it is evident that food insecurity is a major issue in Ontario, perpetuated by the neoliberal reforms that are occurring.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has linked broad waves of neoliberal restructuring in Canadian agricultural and social policies to the marginalization of farm families and people living on low-incomes, with an emphasis on Ontario. This reading of Canadian political-economic history demonstrates the role of the state in the neoliberalization of agriculture and social policy. Although people living on low-incomes and producers have experienced neoliberalization very differently, this chapter has described how this process adversely affects both groups.

Both subgroups saw a restructuring of state supports. For producers, this neoliberalization was demonstrated with state facilitated free trade working to threaten collective marketing boards, as well as regulatory restructuring. This process resulted in a consolidation of profitable farms into large-scale operations while diminishing the opportunities for small- and medium-scale producers. For people living on low incomes, the process of neoliberalization manifested itself by restricting the welfare systems, encouraging workfare while also reducing the eligibility requirements of social programs. The changes in social policy were met with increased reliance on non-state supports such as food banks, which saw rising numbers of participants over the last decade. In both instances, it was the state driving and facilitating the structural process of

⁵⁵ Note that the economic recession of 2008-2009 occurred after the 2008 statistics no doubt increasing the amount of food bank users. Between 2008 and 2012, food bank usage in Ontario increased by 31.8%. The reason figures from 2008 and 2012 are used above is to make a more general claim about rising food bank usage, rather than simply stating that food bank usage increased as a product of the recession.

neoliberalization, although the manifestations of this process were somewhat different across the policy field. Nevertheless, the process has resulted in the intensified marginalization of both producers and people living on a low income.

The next chapter (Chapter 5) explores how critical food organizations in Canada are responding to the marginalizing effects of neoliberalization, in ways that assist producers and people living on low incomes alike. Section 5.1 looks at these initiatives across Canada while Section 5.2 analyses the responses of participants who were asked to describe how critical food organization can work on initiatives that connect the two study populations and remedy the adverse effects of neoliberalization. This is followed by an examination of the role of the state in Chapter 6, to understand how the state can be involved these initiatives.

Chapter 5: Barriers and Opportunities to Co-operation

5.1 Introduction

The first part of the research question for this project asks what opportunities and barriers exist in Eastern Ontario for initiatives that seek to increase access to local food for people living on low-incomes in ways that reward producers. The following chapter analyses the responses of critical food organizations that pursue initiatives meeting these criteria. In doing so, this analysis provides insights into how co-operation among critical food organizations can respond to the marginalizing factors of state-driven neoliberalization. Note that this chapter addresses the question separate from a discussion of whether or not there is room for state involvement in these initiatives and what that role ought to be.

Section 5.2 of this chapter briefly explores alternative food initiatives across Canada that meet the criteria of the research question in order to contextualize the responses of research participants of this thesis, which are regionally specific to Eastern Ontario. Section 5.3 organizes the data gathered through an analysis of responses by interviewees of this project. Section 5.4: Direct Connections, unpacks the responses of the research participants as they relate to creating initiatives that increase access to locally-produced foods in ways that provide equitable livelihoods for farmers in Eastern Ontario. Section 5: Indirect Connections, builds on this analysis by exploring some of the more indirect ways initiatives can be mutually beneficial for both subgroups of the population. Finally, Section 6 concludes the chapter with a discussion of the situation in Eastern Ontario as compared to the rest of Canada.

5.2 Targeted Initiatives Across Canada

This section explores initiatives from across Canada that seek to improve food access for people living on low incomes in ways that reward producers. While there are a number of examples of these initiatives across North America, the focus here is on Canadian examples so as to be consistent with the limits of the scope of this thesis, with an emphasis on Ontario. The initiatives presented in this section serve to locate the responses of interview participants from Eastern Ontario in a broader context.

Several alternative food initiatives from across Canada have developed to address both subgroups of the population explored in this thesis. One such initiative provides a subsidy for people living on low incomes to access food at farmers markets. This subsidy often takes the form of a coupon or cash value voucher program with a variety of public, private or not-for-profit organizations providing the subsidy.

For instance, the Farmers Market Nutrition Coupon Program (FMNCP) was developed to specifically target low-income families and seniors in the province of British Columbia (BC). The FMNCP is administered by the BC Association of Farmers' Markets and largely funded by the provincial government—including a one-time, 2 million dollar investment (British Columbia Association of Farmers' Market, 2007). The program supports up to fifty families and up to ten seniors per community, with the requirement that they must be enrolled in cooking and skill building classes. The

FMNCP provides families with fifteen dollars and seniors with ten dollars of coupons each week, which can be used as cash equivalence at the farmers market.⁵⁶

Another example of an initiative that fosters connections between producers and people living on low incomes involves strategically locating local food sales in areas that are known to be densely populated by people living on low incomes. These initiatives may take the form of farmers markets and mobile farm stands or carts that locate food sales in targeted areas. In the region of Waterloo, Ontario, two pilot neighborhood market projects have been developed to bring local food to low-income areas (Waterloo Public Health, 2008i).

The St. Mary's General Hospital and the Mill Courtland Community Centre were selected as pilot projects. The projects were pioneered by a collaboration of municipal organizations, public health agencies, farmer associations and the City of Kitchener. The regional public health agency acted as the lead agency and the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation made notable contributions (\$200,000), and community partners made various in-kind contributions. The partners decided to adopt a community collaboration model. Unlike a farmers' market, where farmers sell their own produce at select stands, a community collaboration model involves several community agencies taking on different roles. The pilot markets bought produce from a nearby food co-operative and sold the food that same day, since there were no storage facilities on site at the pilot markets.

A 2007 report on the pilot projects explains the numerous obstacles in setting up the markets and sites (e.g., obtaining vendor licences and re-zoning proved to be among

⁵⁶ I would suggest further research to assess possible stigma associated with the use of coupons at farmers markets.

the most difficult to overcome) (Waterloo Public Health, 2007). At Courtland Community Market, food was sold at cost, to increase access to the low-income citizens in that area (compared to the 10% markup at the St. Mary's General Hospital Market, which is considered a more affluent area). The report states that during most weeks of operation, costs were recovered. Of note is the significant amount of volunteer time required in making the markets operational and that the markets utilized coupon programs to increase sales. While the Waterloo neighborhood markets were the closest to self-sustaining or cost recovery models drawn from to inform this environmental scan, they still relied heavily on initial donations, subsidised sales, and volunteer hours (Waterloo Public Health, 2008 ii).

Food box programs serve as yet another example of initiatives that foster connections between food producers and people living on low incomes. Food box programs are organized like buying clubs, with centralized processing and administration. Often the programs rely on volunteers for the packing and delivery of boxes. Making the boxes affordable to low-income consumers is a top priority of many good food box programs. It is common for a subsidy to cover some of the cost of the program, allowing consumers to receive much more food than they pay for.

In Toronto, FoodShare's Good Food Box program chooses locally-grown Ontario produce whenever possible, and the United Way, among other donors, subsidizes some of the overhead. The program requires consumers to pay for the cost of food themselves, and they can choose from a number of box types. These box types include options for small and large boxes, organic boxes, fruit boxes and wellness boxes, which provide

chopped and washed food proportioned for convenience (Foodshare, 2008). The boxes also include recipes, especially for items with which people might be unfamiliar.

An environmental scan of 37 good food box programs in Ontario showcases that the majority of programs report an urban/rural split in populations served and in general, the programs do not have a mandated income level for participation (Community Voices Consulting Group, 2011, p.6). The environmental scan also explains that a large majority of food box programs serve less than 500 households (86%), with FoodShare's Good Food Box program serving the greatest number of households (p. 6). Finally, the study shows that programs in Ontario rely heavily on volunteer support, with 89% of participating good food box programs identifying volunteers as significant contributors (p.11).

This brief exploration of alternative food initiatives that remedy the marginalization faced by people living on low incomes and food producers alike has highlighted some possibilities and barriers faced by critical food organizations pursuing these initiatives. For instance, several evaluations of these programs showcased a heavy reliance on monetary subsidies, volunteer labour and donated facilities. The possibilities and barriers in alternative food initiatives addressing both subgroups highlighted in this research are explored in more detail by reflecting on the responses from interview participants in Section 5.4.

5.3 Organization of Results

The environmental scan provided important insights into what types of initiatives and organizations to seek out when recruiting participants for this study. The selection criteria for participants centered on their involvement in one of two focus areas: improving food access or increasing equity for food producers. Moreover, organizations that were actively pursuing initiatives designed to meet both goals, such as those reviewed in the section above, were of the greatest significance to this study. In drawing from the environmental scan and past research conducted in Eastern Ontario (see Andrée et al., 2013) potential participants were recruited according to the process described in Chapter 3.

To aid in the analysis stage, I created a typology in order to explore the diversity of the organizations pursuing these initiatives. According to Collier (2012), conceptual typologies contribute to concept formation by clarifying meanings, connecting meanings and identifying and refining hierarchical relations among concepts. Research by Mount et al. (2013) divides critical food organizations into four categories: for-profit, governmental, non-profit and co-operative. Andrée et al. (2013a) advance a more specific typology for categorizing community-based food initiatives in the region of Eastern Ontario. These authors characterized participants as falling predominantly into one of five categories: food access programs and networks, local food promotion organizations, farmer based local distribution co-operatives, regional or city-wide food justice organizations and networks, and finally, private local distribution businesses (Andrée et al., 2013a).

While the five categories advanced by Andrée et al. are useful in an overall analysis of critical food organizations working in Eastern Ontario, this categorization is too general for the stringent selection criteria and limited participants of this thesis. This thesis develops three categories: farm income organizations (FIOs), including retail organizations and initiatives that are designed around increasing farm income and food access organizations (FAO), which include charitable organizations, community health centres and any other critical food organization that prioritizes access to foods. A third category of secondary organizations, developed to include a number of stakeholders who participated in the focus groups for the purpose of the Nourishing Communities project but whose insights are not critical to the work in this thesis. These stakeholders include economic development agencies, universities and private retail businesses. Secondary organizations were omitted from the analysis because addressing the needs of one of the two subgroups explored here was not a major priority of their organization.⁵⁷ The category of secondary organizations should simply be seen as a way to contextualize this research and is not included in the analysis phase. In the diagram below (Figure 5.2) participants are organized into this typology, with the focus group participants shown in red.

⁵⁷ While food access and farm income may be two of many priorities of these organizations it is secondary to other organizational mandates.

Figure 5.3.1: Research Participants

The results of this research are separated into two categories. The first, direct connections, discusses the opportunities and challenges in creating linkages between FAO and FIO that increase food access while also directly increasing producer income (i.e. through increased sales). The second category, indirect connections, highlights initiatives that do not directly contribute to producer income but still provide an incentive for producers to partake. Figure 5.2 itemizes all of the initiatives referenced in interviews according to the two analysis categories.

Figure 5.3.2: Itemization of Initiatives

<u>Direct Connections</u>	<u>Ancillary Connections</u>
Farm-to-Institution Program	Food Reclamation
Farmers' Market Vouchers	Community Harvest
Good Food Box Programs	Food-as-Payment (for services such as rent)
FAO Purchasing from Producers	Cooking Classes and Education
	Good Food Markets
	Gleaning
	Donations to: Food Banks, Community Shelters, Community Cupboards etc.

5.4 Direct Connections in Eastern Ontario

The category of direct connections demonstrates how some FAO were able to procure from local producers within the limitations of their operating budgets. Overall, participants experienced significant struggles when trying to make these direct connections. The more successful initiatives linked the two participant categories through a third party.

In order to foster a direct connection between the two categories of participants, FAO would need to engage in purchasing farmed goods directly from producers. Of the six FAOs interviewed, four had a purchasing budget that was used to procure local food. Not surprisingly, price and limited resources were cited as main factors for not purchasing from farmers by three of the four organizations. As one of the organizers of

the Good Food Markets stated, “It's been challenging because we absolutely cannot sacrifice the affordability and low cost side of it [Good Food Markets] to bring in farmers that would be local and cost much more”. The representative from The Ottawa Mission echoed these concerns by stating: “price, the price has to be competitive. We also have to be concerned with our budget.”

Furthermore, a number of these organizations rely on donated food. Two of the organizations that have a purchasing budget also rely on donated food to supplement their limited purchasing budgets. As the participant from The Table Community Food Centre stated:

So we're structured around donated food, which comes by in large dried and canned... So we supplement that, we buy fresh and local eggs, meat and cheese when we can afford it. So we buy less local food through foodbanks but we get more donations through large market gardens or farmers when it's in season.

The participant from the Ottawa Mission stated that the organization uses its budget to purchase meat but not produce. This interviewee stated: “Produce isn't a big thing that we purchase because we do get a lot of that for nothing; most of the stuff is like meats, canned goods and stuff like that”.

The participants representing FIOs expressed similar concerns. For instance, a farmer and member of Harvest Hastings, who directly sells meat products to a food bank, reflected on the experience. This participant stated that if the animal is tough to sell because of its physical condition, then it is possible for the price to drop low enough to be able to sell it to a FAO. This interviewee stated:

It's not a good price market. Now it does work out if you happen to have an animal that's lame maybe you sell it that way but a normal animal it's

been tough to sell there for the past couple of years because cow prices have been a little better.

Some of the FIO representatives were concerned that expecting producers to be involved in initiatives that increase food access transfers the responsibility to mend social issues onto food producers. As the interviewee from Farms at Work stated: “You can't mandate that [farmer involvement]. You could say this is an option ... but you do have to understand that you are asking them to figure out a way to solve a societal problem.” The responses from participants representing both FAO and FIO indicate that pursuing mutually beneficial initiatives may not be a priority for either organizational type.

The only initiatives that participants seemed to be enthusiastic of included some level of third party funding or support from a third party actor. For instance, the Good Food Box program, in this case spearheaded by the Centretown Community Health Centre, was cited as an initiative that successfully connects local farmers to people living on low-incomes. It is important to note that this particular Good Food Box program is not limited to low-income people; rather, it is tailored to meet their needs.⁵⁸ The Centretown Community Health Centre administered program purchases food at wholesale prices and uses volunteer labour to pack the food into boxes organized by price and contents. The program offers individual or family size boxes as well as organic boxes. The volunteer labour and wholesale prices reduce the cost of this food, and essentially subsidize the initiative.

Whenever possible, the Good Food Box program procures food from local farmers who are able to meet certain conditions. The interviewee representing the

⁵⁸ For example, the project distributes food on near the end every month when many people living on social assistance have the least disposable income remaining.

Community Health Centre described these conditions as follows:

The challenge for the Good Food Box is that the farmer needs to be able to deliver the food to our warehouse just in time that it needs to be delivered. Because we are a relatively small program we just rent warehouse space for 1.5 days a month, so basically the farmer needs to be able to get the food to us.

Despite these logistical challenges, the interviewee was very enthusiastic about the success of the program. When asked about the ability of the Good Food Box to connect people living on low-incomes and local producers in a way that provided producers with an adequate/viable income, the participant stated:

I think, I really don't [want to] blow the horn but I think this is an example where the Good Food Box shows you can do both at the same time. We are, in small ways for sure, but we are buying from 8-10 local farmers, they are getting a fair price for their vegetables, and people on low-incomes are able to access local food through the Good Food Box. I think it is possible to do both at once.

This quote demonstrates the perceived success of the program to connect the two participant categories.

However, several research participants expressed concern regarding the logistics of initiatives requiring volunteer labour and subsidies, like the Good Food Box program. For instance, when discussing the possibility of providing coupons as an incentive for people living on low-incomes to shop at farmers' markets the representative from the Social Planning Council stated: "The issue comes down to... farmers are not making amazing profits, right now on their food. So the issue always comes down to: who's going to pay for the coupons?" On this note, the representative from Farms at Work stated: "You still have to have someone organize whatever program it is and so you need to have the person that gets the voucher to go to the farmers' market want to go to the farmers market to get it".

The category of direct connections explores how critical food organizations can address both sub-groups in relative isolation of any direct state involvement.⁵⁹ When the state is involved, participants mention it explicitly as an intermediary, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. As such, the barriers in establishing direct connections among FAOs and FIOs may stem from the inability of organizations to move beyond their specific mandates. This showcases tensions between organizations designed to improve farm income and organizations mandated to increase food access in ways that are viable for people living on low-incomes.

In their survey of 95 critical food organizations across Eastern Ontario, Mount et al. (2013) argue that while organizations often prioritize different objectives, many of the barriers faced in achieving these objectives are shared across organizations (Mount et al., 2013, 20). The authors go on to state that there may be complementary ways to address these barriers, which can be used to foster connections among critical food organizations prioritising different goals. Put another way, critical food organizations can identify with one another in the mutual barriers they face while pursuing different alternative food initiatives.

As demonstrated in Section 5.3, the barriers encountered by initiatives attempting to connect producers and people living on low incomes are not unique to Eastern Ontario. Initiatives such as food box programs require an abundance of volunteer labour, which work to subsidize the costs of the boxes. The findings presented here demonstrate that while direct connections between FAOs and FIOs in ways that reward producers can

⁵⁹ The use of the word “relative” is important here. In the next chapter we will see that the state is already involved in many of the critical food organizations, most often through providing competitive grant funding. However, as will be made clear, this model allows organizations in Eastern Ontario to perceive their work as being autonomous from direct state involvement.

be achieved, such connections rely on third party funding to subsidize costs rather than on producers lowering costs of their foods to make them available to FAOs, or FAOs extending their budgets to purchase local foods. This subsidy can take the form of a monetary value but can also include less tangible elements such as volunteer labour. This is not to say that these initiatives should not be pursued. Indeed, this research demonstrates the success of food box programs in Eastern Ontario. Rather, this section indicates that caution should be used in developing direct connections without third party actors to bridge the gap between costs and operating budgets. Without viable third party involvement, it may not be sustainable for critical food organizations in Eastern Ontario to prioritise these direct connections where resources do not permit.

5.5 Indirect Connections in Eastern Ontario

The theme of indirect connections emerged organically from the participant responses. While the search for initiatives that directly connect people living on low-incomes and producers was a key part of the selection criteria for participants, the indirect ways this can be done were externalized. Despite this, all participants spoke to the indirect ways that this can be achieved. In many cases, research participants prioritized building indirect connections over direct connections. Their responses are categorized and organized into the categories below.

Surplus Redistribution Activities

Participants from FAOs looked favorably upon making indirect connections with producers through administering programs that redistributed what would be food waste or unsold foods. For instance, Loving Spoonful operates a food reclamation project at a local farmers' market, as well as at restaurants and retail outlets. The surplus food that

remains unsold at the end of the market day is gathered by the organization and distributed to various social service organizations, which in turn distribute the food to their clients.

Participants from FIOs were not opposed to the redistribution of food surplus although they saw the logistics of such programs as the role of the FAOs. The interviewees from FIOs saw such activities as charitable and although willing to participate, they questioned the requirements for their participation. As the participant from Farms at work summarized:

A small, fairly new farmer often has a field full of tomatoes—massive amounts. When she asks people to come and glean, they look at it and say it's not worth it...it's not significant enough. There's no way she [the farmer] is going out there on her eighteenth or nineteenth hour of that day filling baskets and figuring out how to get them to town for somebody.

The perceived benefit for the producers is minimal (often only the assurance that their food does not go to waste). This makes the effort required to participate in the program a major constraining factor for producer participation.

Capacity Building

Capacity building initiatives also emerged as a way to establish indirect connections between FIOs and FAOs. This category includes initiatives such as community harvesting (renting a plot of land from a producer to grow and harvest their own food), organizations connecting with community garden groups, and organizing cooking and other skills building workshops. These initiatives were almost exclusively led by the FAO.

FAO participants listed several benefits for FIOs partaking in these programs. For example, the Community Harvest Program asks producers to set aside several acres of

land so that FAOs, in this instance the Ottawa Food Bank, can grow food for clients. In exchange, the farming equipment purchased by the Ottawa Food Bank is shared with the producer. Furthermore, this program generates exposure for the producer. As the organizer of the Community Harvest Program put it: “I know for a fact that a lot of people heard him [the producer] either on CBC or CTV television reports and were then talking to him to inquire about the project and whether or not they could access a community supported agriculture box from him.”⁶⁰

Other capacity building activities referenced included community garden networks and cooking and other skills building classes. While not contributing to the income of local producers, these initiatives were seen as ways to raise awareness about the availability and accessibility of locally-produced foods. As the participant from Slow Food Prince Edward County stated: “Your biggest hurdle is teaching and getting people excited about fresh local food, and breaking that pattern... so it's a behavioural thing and it's an educational thing.”⁶¹ The participants seemed to see these activities as building support for the localized food system at large, thereby connecting them to the goal of increasing local producer incomes in an indirect way.

The barriers faced in establishing direct connections among FAOs and FIOs contrasts with the moderate success of initiatives that create indirect connections. The relative success of food redistribution initiatives, like the food reclamation project indicate that it is possible for critical food organizations to work on mutually beneficial

⁶⁰ Community supported agriculture (CSA) is designed to share the risks involved in a farm growing season among the producer and consumer. A CSA allows consumers to buy shares in the farm and in return share in the harvest. CSA operations are unique and limited to the diversity and productive capacity of the region they are located

⁶¹ Not that this participant was also a board member of Food Banks Ontario and FoodShare. This participants offered insights from working in FAO as well as FIO.

initiatives. However, while what are described as indirect initiatives showcase what can be achieved in the absence of the involvement of a third party, I would argue that the research participants' enthusiasm for these programs should not be exaggerated. Indeed, this enthusiasm was largely centralized among participants representing FAO and the benefits allotted to FIOs participating in these programs were negligible. Furthermore, there are deeper considerations that caution against advocating for the indirect programs explored thus far.

All of the initiatives explored in this section redistribute surplus or unsold foods to people living on low incomes. This means that while income secure consumers are allotted choice, through venues like farmers markets, this choice is removed from segments of the population that are living on low incomes. These indirect initiatives rely on wealthy consumers purchasing locally. As Guthman (2011) argues, the notion that those who have the ability to pay ought to pay is a gross misinterpretation of universality and, in fact, is the foundation of marginalization. Removing all elements of choice and autonomy from people living on low incomes counters the perceived benefits of the indirect initiatives explored in this section.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the limitations of critical food organizations prioritizing distinct goals to create mutually beneficial initiatives through direct connections.

Limitations such as a dependence on volunteer labour and third party subsidies are not unique to the critical food organizations in Eastern Ontario. Rather, they are more universally felt by critical food organizations across Canada, pursuing initiatives that attempt to mutually benefit people living on low incomes and local food producers.

Although the category of indirect connections demonstrated that some convergence is possible among critical food organizations, the benefits to the FIOs proved negligible. With an absence of (or very limited) third party involvement, it may be more opportune for critical food organizations in Eastern Ontario to focus on initiatives that are more closely linked to their individual organizational mandate rather than overreaching and attempting to create direct connections between the two marginalized populations studied here. In Chapter 6, the role of the state becomes the focal point of the analysis, and opportunities for the state to become the third party spoken of thus far are suggested.

Chapter 6: The Role of the State

6.1 Introduction

A primary focus of this study is to examine how the state contributes to or constrains the work of critical food organizations in Eastern Ontario. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, the process of neoliberalization is produced and reproduced, in part, by the state. This process has largely worked to intensify the marginalization faced by people living on low-incomes and by small- and medium-scale food producers, creating a need for the critical food organizations to respond. As will be discussed below, participants were aware of the state's role in their own marginalization, but still sought some level of state involvement to aid in their initiatives. Interviewees expressed a desire to lead these initiatives, but were willing to involve the state on an as-needed basis, often in the form of the third party support.

This chapter focuses on what interview participants saw as the optimal role of the state in building and fostering initiatives that make local food more accessible to people living on low-incomes in ways that also adequately reward producers. To do this, Section 6.2 explores the current degree of state involvement in critical food organizations. Section 6.3 argues that critical food organizations see a role for the state and they allude to what this role ought to be. Section 6.4 presents the *Local Food Act* (LFA) as a case study to ground the discussion of the optimal role of the state in a pragmatic and timely example. Finally, Section 6.5 reflects on these insights by suggesting how critical food organizations can engage the state to respond to the marginalizing effects of neoliberalization and what this means theoretically.

6.2 Conceptions of the State

Given their reliance on state funding, several of the critical food organizations surveyed in this thesis could be classified as “pseudo state actors”. For instance, six interview participants cited receiving some level of state funding, usually through grant programs run through agencies like the Ontario Trillium Foundation.⁶² As the participant representing the Peterborough Social Planning Council stated: “I don’t think any of our not-for-profits could do without Trillium. There are a lot of us that depend on Trillium for the extra funding for special projects... Trillium is the only place to go for substantial dollars right now.” Several other participants also cited funding from the provincially-administered Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), municipal government, and other state grant funding agencies as major sources of both core and program funding.⁶³ These responses demonstrate that the state is actively funding these organizations—but in a fragmented and inefficient fashion.

Mount and Andrée (2013) explore the role that the state currently plays in critical food organizations through funding in their study of how to diagrammatically represent community-based food projects in Eastern Ontario.⁶⁴ The authors argue: “while there was value in the distinction between private and cooperatively run or publicly supported initiatives, it was apparent that there were many shades of grey” (Mount and Andrée, 586). They observe that looking too closely for the traditional divisions of

⁶² The Ontario Trillium Foundation is a grant-funding program that redistributes Ontario lottery revenues to charitable and not-for-profit organizations.

⁶³ For the purpose of this thesis, core funding means funding the general operation of an organization, whereas program funding, often secured through grants, is funding for specific initiatives.

⁶⁴ The authors define community-based food projects as a subset of alternative food networks with a focus on specific community economic, social, or environmental goals (579).

private/public/not-for-profit could obscure the complex relationships at work in these organizations and initiatives (Ibid.).

The insights of Mount and Andrée are validated through the responses from participants in this research. Despite the presence of the state in these organizations, which to a large extent represents a role that has always existed in critical food organizations, participants did not seem to view themselves as state actors. Rather, many participants saw their organization as independent, even while relying on state funding. As a result, participants were able to reflect critically on the actual role of the state, and on what that role ought to be (as is discussed in the next section).

The criticisms of existing forms of state involvement in critical food organizations centre on the many shortcomings of the grant-based funding model. However, some responses demonstrate a deeper mistrust of the state. Several participants go as far as to identify state policy reforms as a direct cause of the marginalization of their targeted support populations. This criticism reaffirms the discussion in Chapter 3. The sub-section that follows focuses on how participants view the existing form and level of state involvement in their organizational initiatives.

6.2.1 Limitations of the Grant-Based Funding Model

Despite the grant-based funding allotted to critical food organizations, there are major differences in the level of funding received by each organization. The variances in grant-based funding levels occurred across organizational type including both Farm Income Organizations and Food Access Organizations.

When speaking about initiative-based funding, the participant from the Centretown Community Health Centre states:

They're all different. We're mostly funded by the LHIN [local health integration network], and then we also get pockets of funding from other places... So the Ottawa Good Food Box is funded by the City of Ottawa, they provide the funding for the staff and the vegetables... And we get funding from the Community Foundation from time to time, the Ministry of Health provides some funding as well. We also have funding from time to time from other sources, other ministries, donations, things like that. United Way actually funds some of our smaller programs as well... So for Centretown, the bulk of our funding actually comes from the LHN. Then the second biggest funder is the Ministry of Health right now, then the City of Ottawa, then others. Other community health centres have... even more cobbled together funding— funding from different sources.⁶⁵

While the participant from the Centretown Community Health Centre indicated access to a wide variety of state sponsored grant-based funding, other participants indicated severely limited access. For instance, the interviewee from the Ottawa Food Bank indicated: “The food bank each year receives roughly 9% of its funding from municipal government, from the City of Ottawa... and that's the only government funding we receive. Last year, I was able to access a one-time, non-renewable grant from the City of Ottawa for the purchase of equipment...”⁶⁶

Participants from FIOs offered further insights into how restrictive the grant-based funding model can be. For instance, the participant from By the Bushel Food Co-operative stated: “We're not getting any grant money.... it's very, very difficult. I would like some initiatives for sure....”

Even FAOs, like the Centretown Community Health Centre, which indicated

⁶⁵ Local Health Integration Networks are not for profit corporations created by the Government of Ontario in 2006 to prioritize and assist with health services in Ontario. There are 14 Local Health Integration Networks throughout the province.

⁶⁶ Note that state funding to food banks is traditionally very limited – this is not a situation specific to Eastern Ontario.

success in accessing grant-based funding, expressed limitations of the model, which are largely tied to the administrative requirements in accessing this funding. The participant cited rising administrative requirements as a major restriction of the grant-based funding model:

...The first challenge is in this era of ever-increasing reporting requirements to our various funders – the more funding sources we have, the more reports our admin have to write. I've never realized how much effort they take back there in the administration department to track all of our money. Every time I bring in a tiny \$10,000 grant to support a community garden, it adds a week of work to them and I can't believe it does, but it does, and it took them a long time to convince me of that.

There is a well-documented body of literature on the limitations of funding critical food organizations through the grant-based funding model, which supports the insights offered by the thesis participants. A recent report prepared in conjunction with the Nourishing Communities: Sustainable Local Food Systems Research Group for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Development (as it was then called) by Andrée et al. (2013a) demonstrates these limitations. Participants in the study indicated that the lack of core funding and inconsistencies of the grant-based funding model create major operational challenges, such as the inability to retain experience staff (39). Participants in this study from Eastern Ontario, such as Just Food Ottawa, pleaded for operational funding, while preserving the ability to allocate the funds as they see fit (39).

In tracing developments in Just Food's food hub proposal, Ballamingie and Walker (2013) also cite funding levels as hindering organizational success and viability (535).⁶⁷ The authors argue that competitive grant funding often sees employees using their time to fundraise in order to pay their wage and extend their tenure. The authors

⁶⁷ For more on food hubs see Stoint, M.L. and Nelson, C.H. (2013).

conclude that employees of critical food organizations often see many more hours and much less pay than their private or public sector counterparts.

Other research in Ontario from Mount et al. (2013) suggests similar limitations with the grant-based funding model, arguing that the model limits an organization's ability to develop long-term initiatives and drains the already limited staff resources (299). Both the insights from research participants in this thesis as well as research in Eastern Ontario more generally suggest major limitations of the grant-based funding model as it relates to critical food organizations. Participant frustration towards this model was consistent among representatives of both FAOs and FIOs.

6.2.2 Organizational Independence

Beyond identifying the limitations of the grant-based funding model, participant responses alluded to a more generalized mistrust of the state's role in food policy. FIOs, whose membership is largely made up of producers, often called for fewer food policy regulations, believing that government regulations tend to only benefit larger-scale producers. As one member of the Belleville-based group, Harvest Hasting, put it, when speaking of supply management:

Simply because supply management has protected the market for a long time—for a very long period of time—close to sixty years now... They either have [the] equipment from supply management and would use it in other areas like cash cropping or beef cattle, it [both types of farming] uses the same machinery. In other cases they sold their quota and are moving to another area of agriculture. It's people who are not in that sector [those protected by supply management]...the capital requirements are much more difficult... So going forward you will see very few farms in the middle, you're [going to] see a number of people with small farms—either retired or smaller scale and then you're going to have very large farms.

Here, the participant views state intervention through supply management as the state interfering in the market.

Another producer member of the Harvest Hastings group, who participated in the Bellville focus group, expressed a similar desire for less intervention. When speaking of Ontario's role in the food system, this participant states: "[they allow] importing this stuff with no regulations when the farmers are subject to all of these regulations as you've heard here the health department is in here and everyone is being checked and everything has a stamp on it and exactly like this". Here, the participant cites health regulations as overly taxing for smaller-scale farmers.

Participants in the FAO category also cited regulatory regimes as burdensome to their organization. The interviewees listed municipal bylaws (e.g zoning), health regulations and land use planning as major factors that hinder their efforts. Administrative requirements in reporting grant funding can also be read as a deeper criticism of the nature of state involvement. This is captured by the participant from the Kingston-based FAO, Loving Spoonful, who states:

[State support] needs to be done in a way that doesn't make it more work than it's worth. So if you drowned those organizations in paperwork, then you're not really helping, and if you just are having project funding that is just for new projects and not for sustainable projects—all this talk about sustainability—there's also sustainability in projects.

In recalling Chapter 3 of this thesis, where the state's role in the marginalization of the producers and people living on low-income was demonstrated, it is not surprising that organizations that attempt to serve these populations remain critical of current forms of state engagement in their sectors. Given the limitations of the current forms of state involvement, it is important to identify instances where participants saw an optimal role for the state. The next section discusses the responses of participants on what they see as an optimal role of the state in their organizations and initiatives.

Despite demonstrating frustration towards the current forms of state involvement, participants did indicate instances where increased participation from the state is welcomed. Several participants indicated a willingness to engage with the political system as a way to advance their agendas. As the participant from By the Bushel Food Co-operative put it: “Well, we really connect with our MPP [Member of Provincial Parliament]. He really understands the economic benefits of this buying a bit of food locally.” This willingness to engage in the political process is further demonstrated by the participant from the Overbrook-Forbes Community Health Centre, who states: “And so this year we'd like to do a bit more active recruiting of MPPs and just have them come out to the sites, show support for their community. That would be another way to just, not necessarily change anything but just show that this project is worthwhile and could provide something for the community.” These statements demonstrate instances of organizations actively seeking state support despite the way state involvement has manifested in their respective areas over the past several decades.

Overwhelmingly, participants were willing to accept state involvement as long as their organization maintained a level of independence from the state. In the case of initiatives connecting producers with people living on low-incomes, participants saw a clear role for the state in addressing the shortcomings of their initiatives and facilitating this connection when it proved too challenging for their limited resources and mandates. However, as indicated by participants, while the state should not be involved in designing and co-opting these initiatives, it should be involved in providing support as deemed necessary by critical food organizations to aid in their efforts. As the participant from the Ottawa Food Bank explained:

We have 140 member agencies so.... we're not autonomous, because our work is to support our 140 agencies... I don't see us as autonomous. I'm not working directly with government, local government is supporting the work we do here in Ottawa, but we have feelers out into every sector of the economy within the city so we're... specifically with my program there's not that much connection—you would think that I would be working more closely with OMAFRA or some agricultural government bodies, but there is no real direct connection there.

As demonstrated in this quote, participants did not see their organizations as completely autonomous actors, but they did have a sense of independence from the government, despite the role of the state as a funding source for many of the initiatives pursued by these organizations.

Participants not only viewed their respective organizations as independent of government mandates, but they also valued this arrangement. For instance, the participant from the Centretown Community Health Centre expressed how valuable the independence generated from grant-based funding is by stating: “but the benefit of the multiple funding sources is that we're not dependent on any one.” The participant goes on to state: “so it's really important that we be able to say, to a tiny group that wants to start a community garden: ‘absolutely, you guys write that grant proposal and we'll be happy to sponsor you and bring the money but then give it to you to manage.’ ” The participant concludes by stating: “I actually like things coming from the bottom up—coming from the community, I'm not sure I'd want anything top down.”⁶⁸

The desire of critical food organizations to preserve a level of independence from the state is a key finding of this thesis. A similar finding was noted in the work of

⁶⁸ In this instance, bottom up versus top down in this instance represent a euphemism for state-mandated versus organically-created initiatives.

Andrée et al. (2013b). The authors are writing as a response to Guthman (2008), who criticises alternative food actors for “giving up” on the ability of the state to address their concerns (Guthman, 2008, p.31). Rather, Andrée and his colleagues note that in Eastern Ontario, activists see a clear role for the state in food policy and call for something beyond a return to Keynesian era state intervention (32). The authors conclude: “many of these activists take action to achieve their own food sovereignty, and then ask the state to back up their initiatives, or get out of the way, instead of asking the state to take over,” (i.e., through mechanisms on the scale of the welfare state) (32).

The conclusion by Andrée and his colleagues (forthcoming) is confirmed in the research for this thesis. I would argue that the interviewees’ criticisms of certain state mechanisms, and their desire to remain independent, are met with struggles that can be addressed through an involvement of the state (as discussed by Andrée et al.). As the representative from The Table Community Food Centre stated when talking about the emergence of food centres: “I want government to take a really hard look at the growing part of this food centre movement and funding that in strategic places. It just makes good sense and it's proven to be effective.”⁶⁹

The role of the state, as demonstrated here, can be used to fill the gaps left by critical food organizations attempting to assist one another. Reflecting back to the discussion in Chapter 5, organizations encountered difficulties when developing initiatives to foster direct connections between FAOs and FIOs. This limitation points to a clear role for the state, which can meet the requirements set out by participants. The

⁶⁹ In Ontario, community food centres sometimes provide people with emergency access to high-quality food and opportunities for skill building. Community food centres coordinate a number of programs, including incentives for growing ethnic food, community cooking and skill building classes and also continue to operate as food banks.

state can fill the void of third party involvement to better connect FIOs and FAOs in a way that preserves organizational independence.

One form of what this involvement of the state could look like is the state subsidizing local food distribution to people living on low-incomes. Given the strong views of participants against a centralized role for the state, this subsidy should allow space for organizations to set their own agendas. A primary example of what such a subsidy could look like would be the various farmers' market voucher programs occurring across Canada.

For instance, the Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupon Program (FMNCP) in British Columbia, which specifically targets low-income families and seniors. State-funded subsidies of locally-produced foods like the FMNCP provides an interesting blend of state-backed program support while allowing critical food organizations the ability to administer the funds. This relationship fulfils a need defined by critical food organizations rather than more formal branches of the state. Indeed, some participants spoke to such voucher schemes when discussing a possible role for the state in supporting initiatives that could connect people living on a low-income to producers. As the participant from the Peterborough Farmers' Market indicates:

I think if they had overarching municipal or provincial program that would support farmers' markets in making vouchers and things of that nature available that it would be accessed and that people maybe would be able to [access] a cost sharing program or at least something to help it along. I'm sure it would be beneficial. That being said, I do have a lot of farmers that are incredibly wary of any government intervention in thier business.

This quote reinforces the need to strike a balance between state involvement and an organization's independence.

Thus far, this chapter has argued that despite being critical of the state,

participants see space for the state to be involved in their organizations. Actors largely defined this role as remedying the shortcomings of their initiatives. I argue that this role for the state comes from the critical food organizations' desire to preserve some level of independence from the state and advanced some possible scenarios were discussed where this can be achieved. To meet these criteria, I have suggested the state becoming the third party to foster the direct connections, as discussed in Chapter 5. The next section takes this hypothetical discussion of what the role of the state ought to be and grounds it in the case study of Ontario's *Local Food Act* (LFA).

6.3 The *Local Food Act*

The writing stage of this thesis coincided with the most recent legislation to promote local food, introduced under two different Premiers in Ontario.⁷⁰ The summary document that participants were provided during the interview process differs from the most recent version of the Local Food Act, which was tabled under Liberal leader and Premier of Ontario Kathleen Wynne and who also appointed herself Minister of Agriculture and Food (OMAF). It is worth noting that what was once the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs was separated into the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the Ministry of Rural Affairs under the Wynne regime. Writing this thesis on

⁷⁰ During the time of writing this thesis, an Act dedicated to promoting local foods was introduced at the federal level. On June 17th, 2013 Bill C-539: an Act to Promote Local Foods" was introduced as a private members bill sponsored by NDP MP Anne Minth-Thu Quanch. Among other objectives, the Act asks the Minister of Agriculture to work co-operatively with their provincial counterparts on promoting local foods. It is interesting to note this Act appears at a time when the Canadian Food Inspection agency has changed the requirements of what can be labeled as local food. The old definition indicated foods produced within 50 km of an area could be labelled as local. This also included food produced in the same or adjacent municipality. The new definition extends the boundary to anywhere within the same province or within 50 kilometres of provincial borders. Due to time restrictions, it is outside the scope of this thesis to consider the federal Act in any great detail. Further research is encouraged to analyse local food promotion legislation and identify conflicts between provincial and federal counterparts.

developing issues means that the Act participants spoke to was revised during the analysis and writing stages of the present study.⁷¹ As a result, a brief comparison of the *Local Food Act* the participants spoke to (hereafter referred to as Local Food Act 2012) and the most recent version of the Act (hereafter Local food Act 2013) is necessary (See Appendix 3 and 4 for both versions of the *Local Food Act*). Thus, participant responses will be applicable to Wynne's Local Food Act, and in essence, will prove more useful than speaking of what is now obsolete legislation.

Both the 2012 and 2013 versions of the *Local Food Act* contain the same three purposes, namely: (a) to foster successful and resilient local food economies and systems throughout Ontario; (b) to increase awareness of local food in Ontario, including the diversity of local food; and, (c) to encourage the development of new markets for local food. Similarly, both Acts define local food as:

Food produced or harvested in Ontario, subject to any limitations in the regulations, food and beverages made in Ontario if they include ingredients produced or harvested in Ontario. Furthermore, both Acts indicate that the Minister may limit what constitutes local food (Local Food Act 2013)

Moreover, both versions of the *Local Food Act* contain provisions to promote the sale of local foods in the province. One example of this provision is the creation of a Local Food Week, where provincially produced foods would be celebrated throughout the province. Another example of local food promotion includes public sector procurement of provincially produced foods, with both Acts allotting the power to

⁷¹ It was my original intention for the Act to have a much more central role in this thesis. However, responses from the participants indicated speculation over how the Act will actually be applied. I am reminded of a lesson from Legal Studies: legislation means very little without any examples of implementation.

establish minimal levels of local food procurement to the Minister of Food and Rural Affairs.

Although there are several differences between the two Acts, two are of particular interest to this thesis. The first is the date of the proposed Local Food Week, which was changed from the Monday Following Victoria Day (Victoria Day in Canada falls on the Monday preceding May 25th) to the week beginning on the Monday before the Canadian Thanksgiving holiday (Thanksgiving in Canada falls on the second Monday in October). This change in the date of Local Food Week reflects the concerns of several participants who expressed discontent with celebrating local foods at a time when very little local food would actually be available. As one Belleville focus group participant lamented:

The apples are coming, the fall harvest vegetables are starting to come, there are still lots of summer vegetables available. It's really the height of produce, so why not hit people with local produce and local food? It's about losing some of that barbeque weight they put on in the summer...

Although this participant was speaking of September rather than October, the idea of celebrating the fall harvest is reflected in the 2013 *Local Food Act*.

The second difference between the two versions of the Act exists as a proposed amendment to the *Taxation Act*, but is meant to improve the LFA. Sponsored by a member of an opposition party (the Progressive Conservative Party) Bill 68, entitled *Fighting Hunger with the LFA 2013* was introduced into the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in May of 2013.⁷² This amendment would provide producers with a non-refundable tax credit

⁷² Note this is the short title of the Act. The full title reads as *An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to provide for a tax credit to farmers for donating to Ontario Food Banks certain agricultural products that they have produced*.

of 25% of the retail value of the foods donated to a food bank. Under this Act, unused tax credits may be carried forward and used in the following five years. MP Bailey, the Act's sponsor, explained that the tax credit would be set at 25%, an amount designed to create an adequate incentive to donate excess agricultural products to food banks, but not enough to spur producers to grow foods solely for the tax credit.

The category of raising awareness for local food is drawn from the second listed purpose of the *Local Food Act 2013*.⁷³ This purpose is to be achieved not only through the development of a Local Food Week, but also through the very definition of the term local within the Act. As one participant of the Belleville focus group indicated: "It might be a good way to get urban people involved and onboard with these things".

However, the general acceptance of the concept of Local Food Week is problematized by research participants' objections to a legislated definition of what constitutes local foods, something we see even now at the federal level with the changes to Canadian Food Inspection Agency labelling.⁷⁴ Often, participants referred to fluid concepts of local, or in the case of the two representatives operating food box schemes, "local whenever possible".

The participant's views on the ability of the *Local Food Act* to promote local food in Ontario support the argument made in the last section: that both FAOs and FIOs desire organizational independence from the state. Creating a contextually specific

⁷³ You will notice that only two of the three purposes are listed as categories of analysis. This is because the first purpose of the Act: "To foster successful and resilient local food economies and systems throughout Ontario," is actually the desired result of the other two purposes. Thus, I focus on the more pointed purposes to better inform my analysis.

⁷⁴ During the time of writing this thesis, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) undertook a review to modernize food labelling in Canada. During the course of this study, the term local is recognized by the CFIA as food produced in the province or territory in which it is sold, or food sold across provincial borders within 50 km of the originating province or territory.

definition of local seemed to be one-way participants exercised this independence. In this context, creating a regional definition of local may be a way to empower critical food organizations. For example, the participant from the Peterborough Farmers' Market stated:

We don't need to have a defined piece—but I don't think any of our farmers drive more than an hour-and-a-half. And if somebody was coming from quite a bit farther, the only way they would get accepted is if it's something we cannot grow here.... fruits like peaches. But vegetables and things that can be grown here.

This participant goes on to caution against state adaptation of the term local by stating:

“So if they did something like that, and all of a sudden farms have to pay a huge extra fee, each of them to have this local stamp, that would be dangerous... I don't think that means there is no opportunity for the [state] to do something like that, but I do think it would require a lot of consultation with producers.”

Again, this participant's response demonstrates a willingness to partner with the state, but cautions against centralization. These statements can be used to demonstrate the interviewees' concern over the provincial definition of local and serve to reinforce the need to create a proper balance between state intervention and organizational independence.

The discussions surrounding institutional procurement demonstrate an instance where participants would like to see more of a commitment from the state. While participants were hesitant to accept a mandated and regulated definition of local food, they did see a potential role for the state in institutional procurement. In fact, many

called on the state to set minimum procurement targets for local food.⁷⁵ As one participant stated during the Bellville focus group:

Yes, exactly. I think the Act is an enabler, and it's only then and after that, what regulations are they going to bring in on the back of the Act. The Act really doesn't say very much, as far as I'm concerned. It depends really on what the Ministry decides they want to bring in for regulations and where they want to take it.

The concerns over the vagueness of institutional procurement as outlined by the Act indicate that participants desire more of a commitment from the state in this area. However, harmonizing state-mandated regulations and organizational independence proved to be difficult. When talking about the state's role as outlined in the Local Food Act more generally, one participant cautioned against this, stating: "If it's helpful. You know if it's making a contribution and not just setting out more and more regulations."

Although Bill 68 did not exist when participants were asked for their views on the LFA, I believe that the Bill successfully captures their conceptualization of the role of the state in their initiatives. A number of participants in the FAO category criticized the LFA as doing very little to improve food access for people living on low-incomes. These views are summarized by the Good Food Market participant who argued that people living on low-incomes could be considered a new market for local food. These views are further demonstrated when the participant stated: "Well I definitely think the

⁷⁵ While all participants who spoke to the *Local Food Act* stated they would like to see more from the state in this area, this particular conversation is largely centralized in the Belleville focus group. One possible explanation is that the Belleville group was producer oriented, with the members of the FIO Harvest Hastings present. At the time, the draft of the LFA being spoken to outlined very little insofar as improving access to local foods. As such, producers may have seen the procurement piece as directly impacting their livelihoods, whereas FAOs saw very little in the Act as a whole that would aid in their efforts.

food access piece should always be considered. Like who is able to access food, so I always think that should be considered when we're looking at local food ... and that's interesting, the piece on new markets. I think even just accessible for everyone could be added in there.” In providing producers with a subsidy to provide foodbanks with food, I see Bill 68 as meeting the criteria described by this participant.

Bill 68 also meets the FIO conceptions of the role of the state. It provides an incentive for farmers to engage in connecting with people living on low-incomes, but it does not mandate this participation. It is interesting to re-draw from the statement made by the representation of the FIO Farms at Work who stated:

once again, you can't mandate that. You could say this is an option that if you wanted to say to the farmers you could put a button on your website where people could make a donation and you could explain it all to them ...but you do have to understand that you are asking them to figure out a way to solve a societal problem.

Based on the insights of research participants on the optimal role of the state, Bill 68 may be a good strategy to resolve the concerns expressed by participants.

6.4 The Role of the State in Re-embedding the Economy

The theoretical implications of the participants' conception of the optimal state role in alternative food initiatives are discussed in this section. In an attempt to allow research participants a proper voice in this thesis, I have largely saved the broader implications of their position for the conclusion. This section first discusses the implications stemming from the argument that there is a role for the state in alternative food initiatives before moving into a discussion of the implications from how this participation ought to manifest.

To begin, maintaining the balance between state action and organizational independence in the development and administration of alternative food initiatives indicates a role for the state in re-embedding the economy. As discussed in Chapter 2, and further contextualized in Chapter 3, the process of neoliberalization has worked to dis-embed the market system of production and distribution from the social relations and lived experience of people living within this system. This worked to intensify the marginalization felt by people living on low-incomes and producers—the target populations of the critical food organizations surveyed for this thesis.

Although, participants were aware of the state's role in the marginalization of their organizations targeted populations, they framed this discontent with the administration of the state in the past rather than a blanket rejection of state involvement in their initiatives. In indicating a role for the state in remedying the conditions that produce and reproduce this marginalization, I see participants as identifying the role for state in re-embedding the economy in the social relations of society, or at least the segments of society targeted by their organizations.

In arguing for a role for the state in re-embedding the economy in society, one should not misconstrue this as an instance of transition away from the process of neoliberalization. Indeed, subjecting state policy to the conditions constructed by the research participants may work to perpetuate neoliberalization rather than transition from it. For instance, in arguing that increasing access to local foods to people living on low-incomes could be framed as a way to create new markets for local foods, participants are clearly perpetuating market logic. In another instance, providing tax credits to farmers to donate to food banks, as proposed in *Bill 68*, can be understood as the province creating

a competitive advantage for small-scale producers as a way to not only increase their total market value of goods (by reducing goods not sold) but also increase the availability of local foods to people living on low-incomes. In both instances, we see a policy steeped in marketization endorsed as a way to reduce the marginalization of the two target populations for this thesis. Put another way, the logic of neoliberalization that intensified the marginalization of the target populations is being used to formulate responses aimed to remedy these conditions.

Andrée (forthcoming) attributes such attitudes of the state as a “neoliberalization of perspectives” (37). When speaking of the responses of Australian farmers surveyed in his work, Andrée notes that they do not challenge the notions of market logic that disadvantage them. Rather, he indicates that participants sought competitive advantages such as tax reliefs (37-38). The participants for this thesis constructed responses according to similar logic. As such, while participants called for a greater engagement with the state on a number of fronts, this engagement may only result in a different composition of marketization that would serve to perpetuate neoliberalization.

Although the reforms endorsed by the thesis participants may perpetuate forms of neoliberalization rather than unilaterally transitioning from it, I argue that the responses of participants can be used to inform a theorization of a policy regime beyond neoliberalization—if not presenting a blue print for doing so. For instance, by firmly arguing a need to preserve a level of independence from the state, it is clear that a return to Keynesian-style regulatory structures would not be welcomed by participants. Furthermore, in understanding the limitations of alternative food initiatives that are disconnected from any direct state involvement (as argued in Chapter 5), we see the

limitations of absolute independence from the state. Thesis participants seemed to conceptualize the state's role in creating space for critical food organizations to work independently but indicated that this space is not exclusive and welcomed state involvement that preserved their independence. To neglect the insights of participants because of a neoliberalization of perspectives would be to disconnect the theorization of neoliberalization from the lived experience of those working to remedy, if not to transcend, its marginalizing effects.

As argued by Brenner et al. (2010), there are several conceivable scenarios that may lead to a regulatory restructuring beyond neoliberalization. These authors indicate that theorizing reforms beyond neoliberalization is inherently unpredictable, but each instance of transition has with it a varying residue of neoliberalization (11). For example, one scenario mentioned by the authors involves *orchestrated counter-neoliberalization*, denoted by market restraining forms of regulatory experimentation interconnected across place and scale (Ibid). Each instance mentioned by the authors does not represent a blanket rejection of all neoliberal forms, but rather represents varying forms of transcendence; each embodying uniquely neoliberal characteristics while broadly challenging the ideology.

Gathering the insights of organizations working to remedy the tribulations produced and re-produced by the process of neoliberalization identifies considerations for the theorizing of transitions from the neoliberal ethos. As indicated by participants in this research, there may be characteristics of neoliberalization, such as organization independence, that ought to transcend into new policy regimes. Even some forms of market competitiveness, such as those securing small-scale producers a market

advantages as an incentive to provide food for people living on low incomes may be worth pursuing in the context of post-neoliberalized policy compromises. These forms may be a product of neoliberalization, but need not be confined to it or defined by it.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that there is a role for the state in engaging with critical food organizations. It has also demonstrated instances where participants perceive this support as optimal. Section 6.2 looked at the current role of the state in these organizations – largely through the grant-based funding model. This section also framed the conceptions of what the role of the state ought to be. Section 6.3 of this chapter grounded the participants' conception of the optimal role of the state in the Local Food Act, and discussed instances where the Local Food Act harmonized with participants' views. Finally, Section 6.4 discussed the theoretical implications of the role of the state presented thus far. This section argued that while participant conception of the role of the state may not reflect a challenge to the process of neoliberalization, their considerations could be utilized to inform the theorization of policy agendas after neoliberalization.

Chapter 7: Resolving Tensions and Moving Forward

7.1 Summary

This thesis primarily argues that critical food organizations emphasizing different goals, such as FAOs and FIOs, experience difficulties when working together on mutually beneficial initiatives but by working with the state, these difficulties can be overcome. I see the opportunities for the state to become involved in the mandates of critical food organizations; demonstrating that these actors do not universally reject state involvement, despite indicating a mistrust of state-driven initiatives. This mistrust works to shape perceptions of the optimal role of the state, which I define as characterized by allowing for organizational independence. Put another way, I argue that the state is welcomed to assist with initiatives that are developed and pursued by critical food organizations.

7.2 Tensions

While the argument constructed in this thesis denotes opportunities for critical food organizations to work with one another and the state to better address the marginalization resulting from neoliberalization, this should not be read as an instance of transition away from state-driven neoliberalization. As indicated in Chapter 6, state involvement in these initiatives can perpetuate neoliberalization (for example, in the case of competitive tax breaks for local producers in *Bill 68*).

The above tensions can be read through the work of Guthman (2008; 2011) who is critical of any claims that alternative food initiatives challenge neoliberalization.

Broadly speaking, Guthman argues that alternative food initiatives (and its supporting scholarship) perpetuate rather than challenge neoliberalization. In this thesis, I was not so

bold as to make the claim Guthman is so critical of, but chose instead to focus exclusively on two types of critical food organizations emphasizing different alternative food initiatives and the organizations' ability to work together and engage the state on achieving complementary goals. My argument is not that the organizations surveyed in this study challenge the process of neoliberalization, but that they can work with the state to remedy some of its marginalizing effects. In doing so, I argue that their conceptualizations of the role for the state should be taken into consideration for any theorizing of state policy processes to counter neoliberalization.

This argument seeks to ground theoretical insights on a transition away from neoliberalization in the lived experiences of participants working to remedy its effects. Noting characteristics that have been produced from the process of neoliberalization that participants saw value in persevering helps identify pieces of this policy regime that may help create alternative forms of the process—if not pioneering a transition from it. In making this argument, I am not claiming that the process of neoliberalization ought to be preserved. Rather, I hope to demonstrate that there are instances where the effects of neoliberalization on marginalized populations can be reduced and that it is worth pursuing these paths, while also looking for broader forms of transcendence.

Ultimately, this argument does little to challenge Guthman's critiques, but in working with critical food organizations, I see a need for action in the interim. If organizations are able to work with the state so as to alter the manifestation of neoliberalization to the benefit of marginalized populations, I would deem this as a worthy exercise.

7.3 Future Directions

In reflecting on the research process, several instances are worth noting for scholars conducting future community based research work on food governance. Through conducting this thesis research in collaboration with the larger Nourishing Communities project, I was able to garner several advantages including resources, contacts for research participants and a wide network of academic to collaborate with. Furthermore, in utilizing the same research instrument for the Eastern Ontario node of the Nourishing Communities project in the research for this thesis, I was able to reduce participant fatigue, as participants only had to respond to one set of questions in order to contribute to multiple projects. I often found that research participants questioned the value of participating in a graduate level research project, which made it beneficial to demonstrate that this research would be used in a larger, more comprehensive project.

Despite the above considerations, I did notice several of the participants demonstrating fatigue, resulting from their organization or initiatives being over - researched. Participants had very little time to commit to an interview for the project, as they often had several different commitments throughout a given working day.⁷⁶ A strategy I used to overcome this was to attend the working groups or the general meetings of critical food organizations as well as conferences, and approach potential participants at these venues. In some instances, interviews were conducted on the spot at these venues. Attending these events proved to be a productive way to gather interview participants.

⁷⁶ Unless participants specifically requested, I did not ask for interviewees to commit to an interview during the weekend.

In the analysis stage of this research project, further challenges arose that can be linked to the nature of the selection criteria. In this thesis, I hoped to understand critical food organizations on an organizations level, so I spoke to people who represented or could speak on behalf of their respective organization. However, many of these organizations rely heavily on volunteer staff and short term contract labour. As a result, several research participants I spoke to were actually involved with a number of critical food organizations, which proved difficult to account for when drafting my typology of participant organizations.

Finally, in choosing to focus on an emerging piece of legislation, I found it difficult to write this thesis alongside of the developments with the *Local Food Act*. At the onset of this research, the Act was to be a central focus of this research, rather than a subsection, as it became. I found that given the timeframe for this thesis, it was more manageable to have less of a focus on the *Local Food Act*, and instead concentrate more on the participants' responses on the role of the state in general.

There are several of productive areas of discussion that spawn from this thesis, which I hope will add to the dialogue between academic scholarship and activist intervention in alternative food initiatives. First, it would be a fruitful exercise to research the ability of critical food organizations working throughout the province to work together on mutually beneficial initiatives in order to explore how the conclusions of this thesis change across regional boundaries. Some of these insights may be gathered with the progression of the Nourishing Communities project, but this particular suggestion may warrant a more explicit and targeted investigation. Second, I hope that scholars will monitor the developments of the Local Food Act to fully capture how the

Act shapes alternative food initiatives in the years to come. It would be interesting to probe a similar group of participants with the same research instrument used in this thesis for their thoughts on the Act several years after its implementation. This would allow for a well-developed comparison of perceived benefits and burdens of this form of state involvement against the actual experiences generated by the Act.

Overall, I hope this thesis can be used to demonstrate the nuances in discussions on politics, economics and society. In looking to the lived experiences of stakeholders, we can inform our theoretical understandings. I feel that stimulating conversation among activists and researchers stands as a solid strategy to inform this dialogue and act as a catalyst for greater social change.

Appendix I: Research Instrument

Interview Guide for Representatives from Organizations Involved in Promoting Local Food and Agriculture

1) In your experience, what are the opportunities for farmers to produce and sell “local” food in Eastern Ontario?

Prompts: How would you define “local foods”? What initiatives have you undertaken? What evidence do you see concerning market opportunities? Barriers/challenges? Resources/skills/partnerships needed? Key lessons learned?

2) What specific initiatives, if any, have you undertaken to strengthen equitable/affordable access to locally produced foods in this region?

Prompts: What was accomplished? Barriers/Challenges? Resources/skills/partnerships needed? Do these initiatives continue? Why/why not? Key lessons learned?

3) How do you evaluate your efforts around local food (and/or access to local food)?

Prompts: What were results? Can you share these results?

4) Have any government policies acted as barriers to your efforts?

Prompts: Municipal vs. provincial vs. federal? Please explain...

5) Have you received any government support for your work?

Prompts: If yes, what kind? Municipal vs. provincial vs. federal? Is it enough? If no, do you think they should support it? How?

6) As you may be aware, the Government of Ontario recently proposed a Local Food Act in October, which now has to be reintroduced, as a result of prorogation. Here is a short list of the contents of the Act (Hand participant short list). What do you think of the proposed Act?

Prompts: What would you add/remove/change? Why? Does this Act support your work in Eastern Ontario? Why or why not?

7) Is there anything else you would like to share with us? Any reports that inform your work that we should be aware of? Anyone else we should talk with?

8) Is there anything we haven’t touched upon that you think is worth mentioning?

Appendix 2: Local Food Act (2012)
(*Adaptation from Legislative Assembly of Ontario)

An Act to enact the *Local Food Act, 2012* and to amend the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Act with respect to program creation and other matters

Note: This Act amends the *Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Act*. For the legislative history of the Act, see the Table of Consolidated Public Statutes – Detailed Legislative History at www.e-Laws.gov.on.ca.

Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

Contents of this Act

1. This Act consists of this section, sections 2 and 3 and the Schedules to this Act.
Commencement

2. (1) Subject to subsections (2) and (3), this Act comes into force on the day it receives Royal Assent.

Same

(2) The Schedules to this Act come into force as provided in each Schedule.

Same

(3) If a Schedule to this Act provides that any provisions are to come into force on a day to be named by proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor, a proclamation may apply to one or more of those provisions, and proclamations may be issued at different times with respect to any of those provisions.

Short title

3. The short title of this Act is the *Promoting Local Food Act, 2012*.

SCHEDULE 1
LOCAL FOOD ACT, 2012
CONTENTS

Preamble

1.	Purposes
2.	Definitions
3.	Local Food Week
4.	Goals and targets
5.	Information to be provided to Minister
6.	Regulations

7. Commencement
8. Short title

Preamble

Ontario has robust and resilient local food systems: a highly productive agricultural land base, a favourable climate and water supply, efficient transportation and distribution systems, and knowledgeable, innovative farmers, food processors, distributors, retailers and restaurateurs. These resources help ensure that local food systems thrive throughout the province, allowing Ontarians to know where their food comes from and connect with those who produce it.

The variety of food produced, harvested and made in Ontario reflects the diversity of its people. This variety is something to be celebrated, cherished and supported. Strong local and regional food systems deliver economic benefits and build strong communities. Maintaining and growing Ontario's local and regional food systems requires a shared vision and a collaborative approach that includes working with public sector organizations. The process of setting goals and targets to which Ontarians can aspire provides an opportunity to work with industry, the public sector and other partners to promote local food and to develop a shared understanding of what needs to be done to support local food in Ontario.

Therefore, Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

Purposes

1. The purposes of this Act are as follows:
 1. To foster successful and resilient local food economies and systems throughout Ontario.
 2. To increase awareness of the diversity of local food in Ontario.
 3. To encourage the development of new markets for local food.

Definitions

2. In this Act,
“agency of the Government of Ontario” means a public body designated in regulations made under the *Public Service of Ontario Act, 2006*; (“organisme du gouvernement de l’Ontario”)

“hospital” means,

- (a) a hospital within the meaning of the *Public Hospitals Act*,
- (b) a private hospital within the meaning of the *Private Hospitals Act* that received public funds in the previous fiscal year of the Government of Ontario, and
- (c) the University of Ottawa Heart Institute/Institut de cardiologie de l’Université d’Ottawa; (“hôpital”)

“local food” means,

- (a) food produced or harvested in Ontario, and
- (b) subject to any limitations in the regulations, food and beverages made in Ontario if they include ingredients produced or harvested in Ontario; (“aliments locaux”)

“Minister” means, unless the context requires otherwise, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs or such other member of the Executive Council as may be assigned the administration of this Act under the *Executive Council Act*; (“ministre”)
“ministry” means, unless the context requires otherwise, the ministry of the Minister; (“ministère”)

“public sector organization” means,

- (a) a ministry of the Government of Ontario,
- (b) an agency of the Government of Ontario,
- (c) a municipality within the meaning of the *Municipal Act, 2001*,
- (d) a university in Ontario and every college of applied arts and technology and post-secondary institution in Ontario whether or not affiliated with a university, the enrolments of which are counted for purposes of calculating annual operating grants and entitlements,
- (e) a board within the meaning of the *Education Act*,
- (f) a hospital,
- (g) a long-term care home within the meaning of the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007*,
- (h) a corporation described in clause (f) of the definition of “designated broader public sector organization” in subsection 1 (1) of the *Broader Public Sector Accountability Act, 2010*,
- (i) another organization prescribed by regulation. (“organisme du secteur public”)

Local Food Week

3. The week beginning with the Monday following Victoria Day in each year is proclaimed as Local Food Week.

Goals and targets

4. (1) The Minister may, to further the purposes of this Act, establish goals or targets to aspire to in respect of local food.

Consultation

(2) Before establishing or amending a goal or target, the Minister shall consult organizations that, in the Minister’s opinion, have an interest in the goal or target.

Scope

(3) A goal or target may be general or particular in its application and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, may be established in respect of,

- (a) one or more types of local food specified in the goal or target;
- (b) one or more entities specified in the goal or target, including one or more public sector organizations; or
- (c) one or more specified geographic areas.

Identification of public sector organization

- (4) If a goal or target applies to one or more public sector organizations, the goal or target shall specify the public sector organization or organizations to which it applies.

Publication of goals and targets

- (5) The Minister shall publish each goal and target established under this section on a Government of Ontario website, together with a summary of the information the Minister relied on to establish the goal or target.

Non-application of the *Legislation Act, 2006*, Part III

- (6) Part III (Regulations) of the *Legislation Act, 2006* does not apply to a goal or target established under this section.

Information to be provided to Minister

5. (1) The Minister may direct a public sector organization to provide the Minister with specified information in order to assist the Minister in,
- (a) establishing a goal or target or determining the actions required to meet a goal or target;
 - (b) understanding the steps that are being taken or have been taken to meet a goal or target; or
 - (c) assessing the progress that is being made or has been made toward meeting a goal or target.

Public sector organization to provide information

(2) If the Minister directs a public sector organization to provide information, the public sector organization shall provide the information on or before the deadline specified by the Minister in the direction.

Regulations

6. The Minister may make regulations,
- (a) limiting what constitutes local food under clause (b) of the definition of “local food” in section 2;
 - (b) prescribing organizations for the purposes of the definition of “public sector organization” in section 2.

Commencement

7. The Act set out in this Schedule comes into force on a day to be named by proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor.

Short title

8. The short title of the Act set out in this Schedule is the *Local Food Act, 2012*.

SCHEDULE 2

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS ACT

- 1. (1) Clause 4 (a) of the *Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Act* is amended by striking out “agriculture and food” and substituting “agriculture, food and rural affairs”.**

- (2) Section 4 of the Act is amended by adding the following subsection:
Contracts**

- (2) The Minister may enter into a contract in respect of any matter that is under his or her administration under this or any other Act.

- 2. Section 5 of the Act is amended by adding the following subsection:
Exception**

- (1.1) Subsection (1) does not apply to the Minister’s power to make an order under section 7.

- 3. Section 7 of the Act is repealed and the following substituted:
Establishment of programs**

7. (1) The Minister may, by order, establish programs for the betterment of agriculture, food and rural affairs in Ontario.

Same

- (2) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may, on recommendation of the Minister, establish programs for the betterment of agriculture, food and rural affairs in Ontario, and a program established by the Lieutenant Governor in Council may come into force before the date on which it is established.

Contents of order

- (3) An order establishing a program shall contain the following:
 1. The terms and conditions under which services are to be provided under the program.
 2. The terms and conditions under which grants or other payments under the program may be made and may become repayable.
 3. The circumstances under which expenses incurred in connection with the program may be reimbursed.
 4. The fees to be paid by persons engaged in the branch of agriculture, food or rural affairs to which the program applies and the circumstances under which the fees may be waived or refunded.
 5. A statement setting out any restrictions on whether the grant or other payment made under the program may be assigned, charged, attached or given as security,

and a statement setting out the legal effect of any purported transaction that contravenes the restrictions.

Amending Lieutenant Governor in Council orders

- (4) The Minister may, by order, amend, revoke or replace an order,
 - (a) made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council under subsection (2), if the order made under subsection (2) so provides; or
 - (b) made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council under a predecessor of this section.

Amending orders, retroactive effect

- (5) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may amend, revoke or replace an order made under subsection (1) or (4), and such an amendment, revocation or replacement may come into force before the date on which the amending, revoking or replacing order is made.

Publication of order

- (6) An order made under subsection (1), (2), (4) or (5) shall be published on a Government of Ontario website and, if the Minister makes an order under subsection (4) amending, revoking or replacing an order made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the original order shall also be published on the website.

Same, archive

- (7) The Minister shall maintain an archive of all orders published under this section indicating the period during which the order applies.

Delegation of program administration

- (8) The Minister or the Lieutenant Governor in Council may specify in an order made under this section that any of the following persons are authorized to administer the program specified in the order:
 - 1. A person employed under Part III of the *Public Service of Ontario Act, 2006* who works in or provides services to the Ministry.
 - 2. A person other than a person described in paragraph 1, if the Minister enters into an agreement with the person in respect of administering the program.

Limitation

- (9) Subsection (8) does not permit the delegation of any matter set out in subsection (3).

Municipal valuers

- (10) If a program requires the appointment of valuers for purposes of investigating or assessing damage to livestock or poultry caused by wild animals, the council of every municipality shall appoint one or more persons as valuers for that purpose.

Non-application of the *Legislation Act, 2006*, Part III

- (11) Part III (Regulations) of the *Legislation Act, 2006* does not apply to an order made under this section.

Commencement

4. This Schedule comes into force on a day to be named by proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bill enacts the *Local Food Act, 2012* and amends the *Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Act*.

Appendix 3: Local Food Act 2013 **(*Adaptation from Legislative Assembly of Ontario)**

An Act to enact the *Local Food Act*, 2013

Preamble

Ontario has robust and resilient local food systems: a highly productive agricultural land base, a favourable climate and water supply, efficient transportation and distribution systems, and knowledgeable, innovative farmers, food processors, distributors, retailers and restaurateurs. These resources help ensure that local food systems thrive throughout the province, allowing the people of Ontario to know where their food comes from and connect with those who produce it.

The variety of food produced, harvested and made in Ontario reflects the diversity of its people. This variety is something to be celebrated, cherished and supported. Strong local and regional food systems deliver economic benefits and build strong communities. Maintaining and growing Ontario's local and regional food systems requires a shared vision and a collaborative approach that includes working with public sector organizations. The process of setting goals and targets to which the people of Ontario can aspire provides an opportunity to work with industry, the public sector and other partners to promote local food and to develop a shared understanding of what needs to be done to support local food in Ontario.

Therefore, Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

Purposes

1. The purposes of this Act are as follows:
 1. To foster successful and resilient local food economies and systems throughout Ontario.
 2. To increase awareness of local food in Ontario, including the diversity of local food.
 3. To encourage the development of new markets for local food.

Definitions

2. In this Act,
“agency of the Government of Ontario” means a public body designated in regulations made under the *Public Service of Ontario Act, 2006*; (“organisme du gouvernement de l’Ontario”)
“hospital” means,
 - (a) a hospital within the meaning of the *Public Hospitals Act*,

- (b) a private hospital within the meaning of the *Private Hospitals Act* that received public funds in the previous fiscal year of the Government of Ontario, and
- (c) the University of Ottawa Heart Institute/Institut de cardiologie de l'Université d'Ottawa; (“hôpital”)

“local food” means,

- (a) food produced or harvested in Ontario, and
- (b) subject to any limitations in the regulations, food and beverages made in Ontario if they include ingredients produced or harvested in Ontario; (“aliments locaux”)

“Minister” means, unless the context requires otherwise, the Minister of Agriculture and Food or such other member of the Executive Council as may be assigned the administration of this Act under the *Executive Council Act*; (“ministre”)

“ministry” means, unless the context requires otherwise, the ministry of the Minister; (“ministère”)

“public sector organization” means,

- (a) a ministry of the Government of Ontario,
- (b) an agency of the Government of Ontario,
- (c) a municipality within the meaning of the *Municipal Act, 2001*,
- (d) a university in Ontario and every college of applied arts and technology and post-secondary institution in Ontario whether or not affiliated with a university, the enrolments of which are counted for purposes of calculating annual operating grants and entitlements,
- (e) a board within the meaning of the *Education Act*,
- (f) a hospital,
- (g) a long-term care home within the meaning of the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007*,
- (h) a corporation described in clause (f) of the definition of “designated broader public sector organization” in subsection 1 (1) of the *Broader Public Sector Accountability Act, 2010*,
- (i) any other organization prescribed by regulation. (“organisme du secteur public”)

Local Food Week

3. The week beginning on the Monday before Thanksgiving Day in each year is proclaimed as Local Food Week.

Goals and targets

4. (1) The Minister may, to further the purposes of this Act, establish goals or targets to aspire to in respect of local food.

Consultation

(2) Before establishing or amending a goal or target, the Minister shall consult organizations that, in the Minister's opinion, have an interest in the goal or target.

Scope

(3) A goal or target may be general or particular in its application and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, may be established in respect of,

- (a) one or more types of local food specified in the goal or target;
- (b) one or more entities specified in the goal or target, including one or more public sector organizations; or
- (c) one or more specified geographic areas.

Identification of public sector organization

(4) If a goal or target applies to one or more public sector organizations, the goal or target shall specify the public sector organization or organizations to which it applies.

Publication of goals and targets

(5) The Minister shall publish each goal and target established under this section on a Government of Ontario website, together with a summary of the information the Minister relied on to establish the goal or target.

Non-application of the *Legislation Act, 2006*, Part III

(6) Part III (Regulations) of the *Legislation Act, 2006* does not apply to a goal or target established under this section.

Information to be provided to Minister

5. (1) The Minister may direct a public sector organization to provide the Minister with specified information in order to assist the Minister in,

- (a) establishing a goal or target or determining the actions required to meet a goal or target;
- (b) understanding the steps that are being taken or have been taken to meet a goal or target;
- (c) assessing the progress that is being made or has been made toward meeting a goal or target; or
- (d) preparing a report under section 6.

Public sector organization to provide information

(2) If the Minister directs a public sector organization to provide information, the public sector organization shall provide the information on or before the deadline specified by the Minister in the direction.

Triennial reports

6. (1) At least once every three years, the Minister shall prepare a report that, in respect of the reporting period,

- (a) summarizes the government's activities in respect of local food;
- (b) describes the local food goals or targets that have been established under the Act;
- (c) summarizes the steps that have been taken and the progress that has been made by public sector organizations in respect of goals or targets; and
- (d) includes such other information as the Minister determines.

Publication

(2) The Minister shall publish the report on a Government of Ontario website.

Regulations

7. The Minister may make regulations,

- (a) limiting what constitutes local food under clause (b) of the definition of "local food" in section 2;
- (b) prescribing organizations for the purposes of the definition of "public sector organization" in section 2.

Commencement

8. This Act comes into force on a day to be named by proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor.

Short title

9. The short title of this Act is the *Local Food Act, 2013*.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The *Local Food Act, 2013* is enacted. Highlights of the Act are as follows:

1. The week beginning on the Monday before Thanksgiving Day in each year is proclaimed as Local Food Week.

2. The Minister of Agriculture and Food may establish goals or targets to aspire to in respect of local food. The Minister must engage in consultation before setting the goals or targets. The Minister may direct a public sector organization to provide information that would assist the Minister in establishing goals or targets, understanding steps that are being taken or have been taken to meet a goal or target, or assessing progress that is being made or has been made toward meeting a goal or target.

3. The Minister must prepare a report about local food activities at least once every three years.

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