

COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENTS:
IDENTIFYING VALUE FOR PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN SHORT-TERM
COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF DIAGRAMS	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	viii
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Food System Work in Saskatoon	1
1.2 Research Queries	2
1.3 Purpose of Study	3
2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW	5
2.1 Industrial Food System	5
2.2 Weaknesses of Industrial Food System	6
2.2.1 Environmental Impact	7
2.2.2 Socio-economic Impact	9
2.3 Food as a Human Right	10
2.3.1 Food Security	11
2.3.2 Community Food Security	13
2.4 Community Food Assessment	16
2.5 Food Policy Councils	20
2.6 Collaboration	22
3.0 METHODS	28
3.1 Social Constructivist Grounded Theory	28
3.2 Population and Sampling	29
3.3 Ethics and Consent	29
3.4 Data Collection	29
3.5 Data Analysis	30
3.6 Limitations	32
4.0 RESULTS	33
4.1 Building a Conceptual Model	33
4.1.1 Organization Construct	34
4.1.2 Vision Construct	41

4.1.3 Value Construct	47
4.1.4 Engagement Construct	49
5.0 CONCLUSION	53
5.1 Revisiting Research Queries	53
5.2 Summary	57
5.3 Recommendations for Future Research	59
REFERENCES	61
APPENDICES	68
Appendix A – Saskatoon Food Charter	68
Appendix B – Behavioural Review Board Exemption	70
Appendix C – Interview Frame 1	71
Appendix D – Interview Frame 2	74
Appendix E – SRFA Evaluation Document Executive Summary	76
Appendix F – Knowledge Translation	78

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted in conjunction with the Saskatoon Regional Food Assessment with the intent of identifying structures that contribute value and promote engagement among participants. Currently, the assessment process lacks theoretical grounding, its implementation is dictated by a set of best practices. A constructivist grounded theory approach was employed in an effort to establish a theoretical basis to guide the food assessment process. Steering committee members were invited to participate in a two stage interview process examining their experience and perceptions of the process.

Existing ideological deviation amongst committee members plays a significant role in perception of work in the food system. In the context of the SRFA two general ideological positions were prominent, with members harbouring either a business or community food security orientation. These ideological underpinnings played a significant role in value associated with the process and its potential role in future action. This ideological deviation also had noticeable implications on the perception of other members. While the structure employed by this assessment was not conducive to promotion of high levels of engagement amongst the membership, participants indicating higher levels of value with the assessment process and its potential to facilitate subsequent action were more inclined to advocate for increased engagement.

The food assessment process is growing in popularity and working towards a strong theoretical base is an important step. Establishing a deeper understanding of how the assessment process operates will allow it to be tailored to fit the needs of any given situation. This understanding will also facilitate an understanding of aspects required to provide the greatest level of value for participants involved in such short term collaborative efforts.

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LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>		<u>page</u>
2-1.	Four commonly explored dimensions of food security	12
2-2.	Definition of loose collaborative approaches	24

LIST OF DIAGRAMS

<u>Diagram</u>		<u>page</u>
2-1.	Continuum of food security	15
2-2.	Continuum of collaborative initiatives	23
2-3.	The Community Coalition Action Theory	27
4-1.	Conceptual model of emerging themes from SRFA process	33

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation

CCAT	Community Coalition Action Theory
CESCR	Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CFA	Community Food Assessment
CFS	Community Food Security
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FN	First Nations
FS	Food Security
FPC	Food Policy Council
GATT	Global Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GR	Green Revolution
HYVs	High Yield Varieties
LAP	Local Area Plan
SES	Socioeconomic Status
SFC	Saskatoon Food Coalition
SRFA	Saskatoon Regional Food Assessment
SFPC	Saskatoon Food Policy Council
TNCs	Transnational Corporations
UN	United Nations

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Food System Work in Saskatoon

There is a long history of individuals and organizations working towards the development of a resilient local food system in the City of Saskatoon. Formation of CHEP Good Food Inc. in the late 1980s as part of an effort to address food insecurity in Saskatoon was a key point in this process. The formation of the Saskatoon Food Coalition (SFC) and development of the Saskatoon Food Charter (Saskatoon Food Coalition, 2002) (**Appendix A**) represent concrete actions and growing momentum, that accompanies the research conducted into the Saskatoon food environment.

In the fall of 2010 the City of Saskatoon council adopted the Westmount Local Area Plan. Local Area Plans (LAPs) provide residents a means to determine the future of their neighborhoods. The city works to fulfill all recommendations arising from accepted LAPs. One specific recommendation contained in the Westmount LAP was a request for a city-wide food assessment. Further support for such action was also provided through the 2010 Saskatoon Speaks: Shape our Future community vision process (Kouri Research, 2013).

In the fall of 2011 a group of SFC members (CHEP, Saskatoon Health Region and the Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence) approached the City of Saskatoon Planning Department to discuss a community food system assessment. Over the next year funding for the process was acquired, with financial contributions being provided by: the Saskatoon Health Region Community Grants Program, the City of Saskatoon, the University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine and CHEP Good Food Inc.

During this time, CHEP was approached by the J.W McConnell Family Foundation and offered an opportunity to apply for the Foundation's Regional Value Chain Program (J.W McConnell Foundation, 2014). The program focuses on strengthening the ability of regional producers, processors, distributors, food service providers and retailers to make healthy, sustainably produced food accessible to all Canadians, by means appropriate in individual communities. The Value Chain Program provides resources and funding focused on assessment of regional food

systems, business planning and learning for projects working to structure regional food markets around values of sustainability, inclusion and health. Application to this program is by invitation only and is recognition of the impact CHEP Good Food Inc. has had on food security (FS) in Saskatoon. This funding helped move the process towards initiation.

In 2012 the core committee responsible for initiation of the assessment began reaching out to organizations and individuals operating in different facets of the food system to assemble a steering committee to guide the assessment process. The result was knowledgeable and diverse membership brought together to conduct this comprehensive examination of the Saskatoon Regional Food System. This assessment was commissioned to compile all findings in a detailed report for dissemination. Initial proposals also indicated the intent to develop a concrete action plan for future work in the Saskatoon Food System. Due to time and budgetary constraints it was not feasible to develop this action plan, instead a series of more generalized recommendations was provided. In addition to conducting a comprehensive examination of the food system the Saskatoon Regional Food Assessment (SRFA) also committed to developing tangible outcomes to promote local food retail. The most notable of these actions was the construction of an online local food map, documenting where individuals could go to purchase local product.

1.2 Research Queries

This study coincided with the SRFA, providing an opportunity to observe and interact with participants as the process began to unfold. The member organizations brought to the table operate with a very distinct and diverse set of beliefs and values. This study aims to identify the theoretical constructs that promote value for the participants and their organizations, while also examining the role of collaboration in the assessment process. In efforts to answer these questions two research queries were developed to guide this process.

1. What are the overarching constructs in the Community Food Assessment process that contribute to valuing and promoting engagement for participating organizations?
2. What role does collaboration play in the Community Food Assessment Process?

These queries are intended to establish a conceptual model that will help guide the manner under which the CFA process is conducted. This study is intended to provide insight as to how short-term collaborative efforts in the food system may be constructed to provide maximum value for participants.

1.3 Purpose of Study

There is a growing emphasis directed towards promotion of health through improved nutrition. With obesity rates continuing to rise, despite current prevention efforts, emphasis has shifted towards developing a more ecological approach to address the issue. Accompanying this philosophical shift is an increased level of attention directed towards examining built food environments. A central concept in developing healthy nutrition environments is Community Food Security (CFS). CFS is defined as, “a situation in which all community residents are able to obtain safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice” (Hamm & Bellows, 2003). Community food assessments (CFAs) analyze the state of the food environment in a community, highlighting linkages between food system activities ranging from production to consumption (Pothukuchi, Joseph, Burton, & Fisher, 2002). Additionally, these assessments look to identify how food is connected to the community and the implications of action (Pothukuchi et al., 2002). This information allows for promotion of change that is grounded in the context of the community and food system. Developed recommendations look to utilize existing strengths and assets in the community. These assessments examine food related issues and identify community assets that may be used to resolve problems. Despite the growing popularity CFAs and the frequency with which they are employed, there remains no theory guiding this process. Theory is important because it further enables the association between changes that occur and the action of the program (F. Butterfoss & Kegler, 2009).

The CFA process brings together a wide array of stakeholders, each with its own goals and desired outcomes (Pothukuchi, 2004; Pothukuchi et al., 2002). The end product of the process is an action plan, created through internal negotiation, discussion and compromise. Compromise is required and in many instances the recommendations may not mirror the desires of one particular organization. To truly address the multifaceted problems associated with

community food insecurity, stakeholders from many organizations and sectors need to be involved in the process (Pothukuchi et al., 2002; Ross & Simces, 2008). Identification of ways to engage and meet the needs of the various stakeholders required to participate in this process will aid in recruitment efforts for future CFAs in other communities across Canada and beyond. From a long-term perspective the development of a theory base is an important step for the CFA process. Establishing a theoretical understanding of the process will facilitate a deeper understanding of how the assessment process operates at a conceptual level. Operating at a higher level of abstraction allows knowledge exchange to transcend contextual variations under which assessments are conducted.

This research is being conducted in conjunction with the SRFA, serving as the evaluation component of the assessment. The SRFA was initiated when members of the SFC approached the City to discuss the potential for conducting a food assessment in the City of Saskatoon. Initiating members invited selected individuals operating throughout the food system to become part of the assessment team. The overarching goal was to integrate a diverse set of perspectives and establish a forum to work collaboratively in an effort to resolve problems in the food system. The SRFA steering committee integrated individuals from a number of sectors, including producers, community organizations, an academic researcher and private industry. Despite a concerted effort the steering committee was unable to integrate a First Nations (FN) perspective. This absence was a point of concern for a number of committee members and something that was identified as needing to be rectified moving forward. Much of the assessment research involved interaction and consultation with the general public. This consultation process was used to ensure members of the community had an opportunity to shape the recommendations generated in the action plan and written report. Community interaction and empowerment represent a central function of the CFA process.

The purpose of this research is to identify theoretical constructs that influence short-term collaborative partnerships, specifically elements that impact participant interaction in short-term collaborations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will provide an examination of the global agri-food system and the events that led to its propagation. This examination will include an exploration of commonly cited strengths and ascribed weaknesses attributed to the industrial model. The evolving perception of food and the concept of FS follow, including the evolution of community driven initiatives developed to return a level of control to the community and its members. The section concludes with an examination of the collaborative process, working to differentiate between the various structural elements and potential accompanying the various iterations. This information should orient the reader in a manner that facilitates analysis of the conceptual model and constructs developed through this study.

2.1 Industrial Food System

It is important to establish an understanding of how the current food system was established and the objectives behind its global implementation. Following World War 2 there was a growing concern surrounding increasing rates of hunger and attention was directed towards increasing food production (Clapp, 2011; Fitzgerald-Moore & Parai, 1996). These efforts contributed toward ushering in the Green Revolution (GR) of the 1960s (Clapp, 2011; Horlings & Marsden, 2011). This revolution was fueled by emphasis on the development of High Yield Varieties (HYVs) of traditional staple food crops (Fitzgerald-Moore & Parai, 1996; Prabhu L., 2012). These were a byproduct of traditional plant cross-breeding efforts targeted towards warm, humid regions, such as Mexico and India (Fitzgerald-Moore & Parai, 1996). To maximize yield the developed HYVs were partnered with additional inputs to enhance productivity. Fertilizers, pesticides and machinery became central to the farming process (Fitzgerald-Moore & Parai, 1996; Prabhu L., 2012). As a means to promote transition to this new industrial approach, farmers lacking the resources required to procure these inputs were afforded access to loans (Fitzgerald-Moore & Parai, 1996).

The impetus for this initial transition was fuelled in part by the desire to provide the food required to feed the growing global population (Prabhu L., 2012). This production emphasis was

also accompanied by the desire to provide this food at a low price point. The changes brought forward in the initial GR were able to reduce the retail price of food (Hayami & Herdt, 1977; Prabhu L., 2012; Scobie & T., 1978) while also increasing the availability of food in developing countries (Prabhu L., 2012). This success resulted in GR principles and approaches becoming established as the predominant methodology in global food production (Horlings & Marsden, 2011).

According to UN population projections, the global population is expected to climb to 9 billion people by 2050 (Horlings & Marsden, 2011; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2013). GR proponents have brought forward calls to rejuvenate the agri-industrial model as a means to satisfy growing demand. One of the central tenets for the continued propagation of this approach places emphasis on its potential to increase production markedly while minimizing the land required for food production. GR Technologies emphasize intensification of production as opposed to expansion in order to minimize the amount of additional land converted to agricultural practices, thereby theoretically reducing the environmental impact (Prabhu L., 2012).

Further propagation of the current industrial food model is accommodated by the current policy landscape, which promotes industrial farming practices (Clapp, 2011). These changes were implemented to facilitate the creation of economies of scale in order to generate a lower price point for the consumer (Desrochers & Shimizu, 2012). The system, as currently constructed, aims to meet demands for food production at affordable rates while also ensuring a safe, quality product for the end consumer (Desrochers & Shimizu, 2012).

2.2 Weaknesses of Industrial Food System

While the current agri-industrial model claims to provide safe product in quantities required to feed a rapidly growing population, it is not without cost. Continued examination has shown that there are repercussions associated with its propagation, specifically, an array of environmental and socio-economic impacts. In many instances the actual costs of this system are still being discovered.

2.2.1 Environmental Impact

The widespread increase in food production facilitated by the GR came at a cost for the natural environment (Tilman et al., 2001). Changes to agricultural practices propagated a reliance on artificial inputs, such as pesticides and fertilizers; as well as intensive usage of natural resources such as water (Clapp, 2011; A. G. Power, 2010; van der Werf & Petit, 2002). These inputs are relied upon to fulfill the role of ecosystem services, traditionally defined as conditions or processes through which natural ecosystems and living species makeup, sustain and fulfill human life (Zhang, Ricketts, Kremen, Carney, & Swinton, 2007).

There are three distinct ecosystem services that may be obtained through agricultural landscapes; these are provisioning, regulatory and cultural services. Provisioning services refers to all products obtained from an ecosystem (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). This represents the primary service of modern agricultural landscapes from which society obtains food, fuel and other goods required by the human population (Swinton, Lupi, Robertson, & Hamilton, 2007). Regulatory services are generated through regulation of ecosystem processes. This can include air quality, climate regulation, pest control and an array of other outcomes (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). The regulatory impact of the agricultural landscape is largely dependent on the type of practices employed. Cultural services refer to nonmaterial benefits people obtain from an ecosystem (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005) and include activities ranging from agro-tourism to camping. While capable of providing these services, the agricultural system is dependent on underlying supportive structures to maintain this productivity (Swinton et al., 2007). It is these structures, known as supportive ecosystem services that have been adversely impacted by industrial agricultural practices.

Water is a central component in the practices of modern agriculture with 70% of global water supplies earmarked for use in agricultural systems (A. G. Power, 2010). There are two types of water used: blue water refers to fresh water sources, such as lakes, rivers and aquifers, while green water refers to moisture that is maintained in the soil (Godfray et al., 2010). While blue water is required for irrigation in some instances, it is calculated that 80% of moisture used in agricultural systems may come from green water sources (A. G. Power, 2010). Practices such as modified tillage or mulching can reduce soil evaporation by 35-50%. This improvement can help maintain levels of production equivalent to those found in irrigated systems (A. G. Power, 2010). Another supportive approach to reduce reliance on industrial water practices involves

incorporating a variety of vegetation into the landscape. This will help regulate the flow of moisture through the system, helping to mitigate potential for flooding and reducing the rates of erosion (Zhang et al., 2007). Deep rooting plants further contribute to the ecosystem by bringing water to the surface through hydraulic lift and vertical uplifting, increasing green water concentration (A. G. Power, 2010).

Another challenge in industrial agriculture is pest related problems. This is often attributed to large-scale monocropping and habitat destruction. Maintaining non-crop based and biodiverse ecosystems provides a habitat with healthy populations of birds, bats, arthropod predators and other populations that serve as natural predators to agricultural pests (A. G. Power, 2010). These predatory populations prevent herbivorous insect populations from reaching pest levels, functioning as biological pest control (Zhang et al., 2007). It has been estimated that the value of biological pest control currently accounts for a savings of 13.6 billion dollars/year in the United States (A. G. Power, 2010). This estimate accounts for value of crop losses to insect damage and money spent on pesticides.

Heavy reliance on synthetic pesticide compounds has become a significant issue and has had counterproductive effects in recent years. Over-reliance has led certain species to evolve genetic resistance, triggering outbreaks that have become more difficult to control (Zhang et al., 2007). From a health standpoint the increasing use of persistent compounds has led to the bioaccumulation of pesticides in food chains that can adversely impact human health (Tilman et al., 2001). If current rates persist, pesticide use has been forecast to increase by 2.7 times current levels by 2050 (Tilman et al., 2001). This quantity doesn't represent a sustainable practice in the context of economic, environmental impact, or health. Change is required and natural systems provide an avenue to mitigate pest related problems in an environmentally friendly manner.

Appropriate management can help maintain support services that exist within the agricultural landscape (A. G. Power, 2010). Agriculture represents a point of transition between the natural environment and human domination and regulation can influence the extent to which natural capital is maintained (van der Werf & Petit, 2002). Given the extent of human influence on these systems, the agricultural practices employed are of great significance. Maintaining these underlying ecosystem services can provide a positive impact on agricultural production. Integrating these ecosystem services into agriculture has a number of benefits; ranging from increased biodiversity, pest control and improved soil and water quality (A. G. Power, 2010). In

many instances there exists a feasible natural system that is capable of providing similar or better results to those obtained through man-made inputs used in the industrial model (McLamb, 2011). Environmental conditions have eroded and we can no longer simply exchange production for natural capital. There is a growing acceptance that current rates of resource utilization can not be maintained. Establishing a functional understanding of natural capital and its value is required. Farmers must adjust production to best utilize these natural assets while reducing reliance on chemical inputs (McLamb, 2011).

2.2.2 Socio-economic Impact

While the agri-industrial model was designed to alleviate the constraints of poverty through large-scale production it has also been accompanied by a set of negative socio-economic consequences (Slater, 2007). One core economic threat involves the distortion of costs associated with production (Clapp, 2011). While dropping the price point benefits to the end consumer, it eliminated the market viability for many small-scale farming operations (Clapp, 2011; Fitzgerald-Moore & Parai, 1996; Horlings & Marsden, 2011; Patel, 2010). Without the ability to produce enough quantity these operations are unable to retail at prices that embody the actual cost of production (Clapp, 2011; Patel, 2010). These organizations are forced to retail at the price point established by the larger producers, forcing them to sell their product with minimal or no return. In many instances this was enough to drive small producers from the marketplace (Fitzgerald-Moore & Parai, 1996). This economic situation was further compounded when these small-scale operations were forced to obtain loans or financing in efforts to acquire inputs required as part of the GR package (Fitzgerald-Moore & Parai, 1996). Policy changes that accompanied the GR served to further promote large-scale production and the commoditization of food. This change led to the migration of large Trans National Corporations (TNCs) into the market (Clapp, 2011). These organizations effectively occupied the middle ground, regulating the movement of goods throughout the food system (Clapp, 2011; Patel, 2010); solidifying food as a global commodity, subject to fluctuations of the global marketplace (Clapp, 2011; Horlings & Marsden, 2011; Patel, 2010).

Changes ushered in during the GR failed to address underlying issues of inequality and in many instances served to exacerbate the existing divide between affluent and impoverished

regions (Prabhu L., 2012). The GR targeted locations with environmental and social conditions that were best suited for established practices, and in many instances less affluent nations did not meet criteria and were bypassed (Prabhu L., 2012). Less affluent regions became reliant on contributions from developed nations to ensure adequate access to food, giving rise to the system of food aid (Clapp, 2011; Prabhu L., 2012). While the food aid system provided a source of nutrition for these developing nations, it failed to ensure an adequate delivery of micronutrients (Prabhu L., 2012; Torlesse, Kiess, & Bloem, 2003). Increased production afforded by the industrial model was focused on increasing caloric intake through the provision of staple food products, such as wheat and rice, but it did not ensure equitable access to micronutrients (Prabhu L., 2012; Torlesse et al., 2003). While expansion of the industrial food system led to the distribution of large quantities of food, the quality of product provided was highly variable. In most instances it was impoverished populations that were forced to shoulder the burden of this inequitable access (Prabhu L., 2012). These underlying complications have led to calls for change in the food system; working towards the propagation of a food system that is sustainable and able to provide equitable access to all populations (Clapp, 2011; Prabhu L., 2012).

2.3 Food as a Human Right

The significance of food and the importance of ensuring its provision to all populations is well established. Beginning in the 1930s there was a growing global awareness on nutritional issues, culminating with the publication of the *Nutrition and Public Health* report in 1935, conducted by the Health Division of the League of Nations (Simon, 2012). This report revealed an acute food shortage in poor countries and prompted international action to rectify this deficiency (Simon, 2012). While increased food production provided a surge in available agricultural products, it also resulted in the accumulation of excess goods and significant price decline in the global market. This price drop spurred the initial implementation of government purchasing programs (Simon, 2012).

Awareness continued to expand and in 1945 the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reported that 1/3 of the global population would not get access to sufficient energy and pushed for further global production to address this shortage (Simon, 2012). This report led to

the inclusion of food as an economic right in the 1948 UN charter of universally recognized human rights (United Nations, 1948).

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care necessary for social services.

Article 25, 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This right was further supported by its inclusion in the 1966 UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). Ratification of the CESCR in 1971 meant Canada had a duty to respect, protect and fulfill the right to food (De Schutter, 2012). Despite this commitment, Canada does not currently afford constitutional or legal protection to the right to food (De Schutter, 2012). There is a growing pressure being exerted at the grassroots level to affect change and work towards ensuring the provision of this universal right.

2.3.1 Food Security

The definition and measure of what satisfies access to food has been constantly evolving. An early concept developed was FS. Developed in the late 1960's, FS was defined as the ability to meet aggregate food needs in a consistent way (Anderson & Cook, 1999). This definition gained momentum following the UN World Food Conference in 1974; where the expressed goal was to ensure that within a decade nobody would suffer from food insecurity (Simon, 2012). At this time emphasis was placed on food production, ensuring that the food supply was reliable and capable of avoiding dramatic price fluctuations (Anderson & Cook, 1999). FS was conceptualized from a global perspective, accounting for food surpluses and food aid contributions (Bellows & Hamm, 2003). This approach effectively served to reinforce the established industrial model of food production. During the early 1980s a global recession led to the establishment of charitable food assistance programs in Canada, like food banks (Tarasuk, 2005; Tarasuk, 2001). Initially intended to function as temporary relief, demand for these services did not abate in conjunction with improvements to the global economy. Increasing utilization of the charitable food system since its inception has served as an indicator of FS gaps that exist in Canada (Tarasuk, 2005; Tarasuk, 2001).

This increased focus on FS culminated in the refinement of the concept of FS during the 1996 FAO World Food Summit in Rome (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, 1996):

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, [social]and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

1996 FAO Rome Declaration

This expanded definition brought with it additional elements required to provide a state of FS, having access to food was no longer sufficient (Simon, 2012). Four commonly explored dimensions of FS include; availability, access, utilization and stability (Table 2-1) (Simon, 2012). This expanded definition of FS also brought with it a level of attention to the issue of environmental sustainability. It alluded to ensuring production of food does not exploit non-renewable resources, or compromise FS for future generations (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, 1996).

Dimension	Definition
Availability	Amount of food that is present in a country or area through all forms of domestic production, imports, food stocks and food aid.
Access	A household's ability to acquire adequate amount of food regularly through a combination of purchases, barter, borrowings, food assistance or gifts.
Food Utilization	Safe and nutritious food that meets dietary needs. Food utilization is also related to clean water, sanitation and health care.
Stability	Access at all times. May manifest as chronic food insecurity or transitory food insecurity.

Table 2-1: Four commonly explored dimensions of food security (Simon, 2012).

The definition of FS has continued to integrate additional elements as understanding grows. A level of consideration has been directed towards the psychological aspects connected to FS (Y. Hanson, 2011). A growing number of studies have been conducted in efforts to identify underlying social determinants and their roles in contributing to the manifestation of food insecurity (Che & Chen, 2001; Y. Hanson, 2011; E. M. Power, 2008).

The relationship between socioeconomic status (SES) and diet quality in Canada and other industrialized countries has been examined. Individuals of higher SES consume better quality diets; with higher quantities of fresh foods, greater consumption of vitamins and minerals and a more moderate energy density (Darmon & Drewnowski, 2008; Darmon, Ferguson, & Briand, 2003). Conversely, those individuals occupying lower SES levels report consumption of more food with a high energy density, including more fatty meats, refined grains and products with added fats (Darmon & Drewnowski, 2008). In developed countries low income populations also receive limited nutritional education, compared to other segments of the population (Darmon & Drewnowski, 2008). This research has helped build an appreciation for the larger systemic factors that contribute to FS, at both the individual and community level.

2.3.2 Community Food Security

FS is measured at various levels, ranging from individual to the larger community (Y. Hanson, 2011; E. M. Power, 2008). CFS is an expansion of FS that directs emphasis at community level variables. It is commonly defined as a situation in which individuals are able to obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice (Hamm & Bellows, 2003). This approach builds on the concepts established by FS, looking to integrate and address aspects of health and social equity in addition to food access (Hamm & Bellows, 2003). Inclusion of these additional elements requires that the CFS approach adopt a more systemic perspective, exploring long-term and comprehensive solutions to FS challenges (Slater, 2007). This broad perspective looks to reveal how hunger related problems are enmeshed in the structure of society (Bellows & Hamm, 2003). CFS approaches often look to promote community development, address economic inequities and work to ensure equitable access to food; rather than simply dealing with hunger at the household and individual levels (Lezberg, 1999; Winne, Joseph, & Fisher, 1997). The CFS process looks to elucidate the linkages in the current food system and ultimately provide communities more sustainable alternatives (Pothukuchi, 2004).

The CFS frame is constructed from an integration of anti-hunger and sustainability perspectives (Lezberg, 1999). This integrated perspective results in a wide array of approaches to address the underlying issues. At times this deviation can produce some animosity (Lezberg,

1999). Organizations may struggle to understand CFS issues broadly enough to recognize the connections between their mandate and those of the others (Hamm & Bellows, 2003). Despite this variance, there are common elements that define CFS initiatives. Most CFS approaches operate with a focus on low income populations (Pothukuchi, 2004; Winne et al., 1997). Emphasis is placed on approaches that promote self-reliance, empowerment and autonomy, rather than those that rely on charitable solutions (Pothukuchi, 2004; Winne et al., 1997). In a CFS approach working to facilitate the engagement of community members and their commitment to desired change, is also viewed as fundamental (Pothukuchi, 2004; Winne et al., 1997).

The CFS frame places emphasis on attaining meaningful and lasting change in the food system. This change is frequently perceived as occurring along a continuum (Y. Hanson, 2011) (Diagram 2-1), which begins with short-term relief and moves towards systemic changes that work to improve the economic, ecological and social sustainability of the food system (Kalina, 2001). The first stage involves initial modifications to the food system. These changes have a short-term perspective and operate within the context of the current food system, providing immediate and temporary relief to hunger and food issues (Lezberg, 1999; Maxwell & Frankenberger, 1992; Tarasuk, 2001; van der Werf & Petit, 2002). Examples of changes at this level include food banks and soup kitchens, approaches that are designed to alleviate the immediate symptoms of a larger systematic issue (Kalina, 2001; Slater, 2007). These services continue to be used with increasing frequency, despite the initial vision that they would only be used to provide temporary relief (Kalina, 2001; Slater, 2007). The second phase is defined as food systems in transition. Strategies employed during this time look to strengthen community capacity and build potential alternatives to the current agri-food system (Kalina, 2001; Slater, 2007). Examples of action taken during this phase include collective kitchens and community gardens (Slater, 2007). Establishing networks and innovative approaches that look to address more environmental concerns should be a focus at this stage. (Boyle & Holben, 2010; Kalina, 2001; McCullum, Desjardins, Kraak, Ladipo, & Costello, 2005; Slater, 2007). The third and final stage is the redesign of the food system for sustainability. This phase requires long-term commitment from representatives throughout the food system. Changes at this level are designed to address the underlying situations responsible for propagating the observed disparities. An example of action at this level would be reducing socioeconomic disparities (Slater, 2007).

Efforts to facilitate transition at this stage looks to take action through altering the existing policy environment (Boyle & Holben, 2010; Kalina, 2001; McCullum et al., 2005; Slater, 2007).

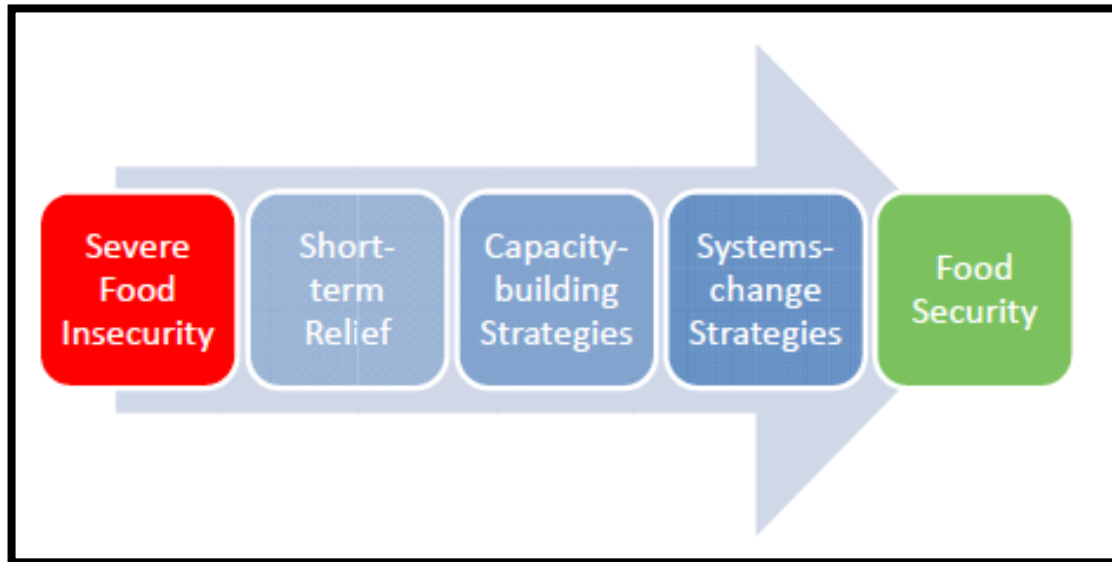


Diagram 2-1: Continuum of Food Security (Y. Hanson, 2011)

Despite growing awareness of FS issues, there is a disconnect between FS efforts and economic policy development. Efforts to address issues of FS have been shifting from an international focus to those oriented at a more local level. Signs of this transition were evident at the 1974 World Food Conference, where location and portability of food stockpiles became an issue of importance (Hamm & Bellows, 2003). During the early 1980s, the FAO formally recognized the importance of securing access to food at both the country and household levels (Hamm & Bellows, 2003). This evolution was driven by the concern that the existing approach left developing nations reliant on first world countries to provide the required food (Hamm & Bellows, 2003). FS evolved to become less defined by trade and more by access and autonomy on smaller scales (Maxwell & Frankenberger, 1992). Perspectives on FS reverted to a more decentralized perspective with emphasis on localized control.

Efforts to establish a decentralized food system have run in opposition to the policy environment established for food and agriculture, which has a long history of deregulation and promotion of trade (Hamm & Bellows, 2003). Inclusion of agricultural products in the 1963 Global Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) effectively turned food into a globalized

commodity (Bellows & Hamm, 2003). Renegotiation of the GATT in the 1994 Uruguay round further established agricultural products as free trade commodities. This commoditization provides an additional challenge for governments looking to secure food as a fundamental human right.

At a fundamental level the perception of the FS problem, and the means to its resolution, constitute a point of contention. Establishing a shared definition is important as it serves to guide a collective response (Lezberg, 1999). The concept of framing is defined as the conscious construction of shared meanings and definitions to describe social problems, such that they legitimate protest and motivate adherence toward collective action (Lezberg, 1999). While organizations may all strive to attain FS, the means through which they elect to do so can vary dramatically based on worldviews (Lezberg, 1999).

For proponents of the current agri-industrial model, issues of FS are the result of challenges to access and affordability (Howard & Edge, 2013; Lezberg, 1999). This perspective identifies with definitions of FS that emphasize production and further propagation of GR practices as the fundamental means of addressing hunger (Howard & Edge, 2013; Lezberg, 1999). Recommendations stemming from this worldview operate within the context of the current food system (Bronson, 2012). Conversely, those that favour more holistic adaptations of FS and CFS look towards solutions that look to alter the foundations of the established food system (Bronson, 2012) as the current iteration has translated to increasing rates of hunger and a rapidly growing obesity epidemic (Bronson, 2012; Food Secure Canada, 2011). This worldview looks to return control of food production to the community level, with emphasis directed towards ensuring public involvement in decisions impacting the food system (Food Secure Canada, 2011). In many instances the drive to induce change begins at the grassroots level, with public policy and initiatives operating as tools to facilitate change (Food Secure Canada, 2011; McLamb, 2011). CFAs represent a mechanism that has gained popularity in response.

2.4 Community Food Assessments

There is a growing desire to provide individuals with a venue to influence their food system. The CFA process is defined as a participatory and collaborative process that examines a broad range of food related issues and resources in order to improve CFS (Pierce-Quinonez,

2012; Pothukuchi et al., 2002; Ross & Simces, 2008). This process is becoming widely employed as a primary step towards the promotion of CFS (Pothukuchi, 2004). While each assessment is unique, tailored to explore the interests and needs of the individual community, a larger vision of equity in the food system permeates the literature and general practice. The assessment process looks to embody the complexity of the current food system, drawing connections between agricultural land-use, economic considerations, public health, CFS and environmental issues (Freedgood, Pierce-Quiñonez, & Meter, 2011). Practitioners contend that if the ultimate goal is to build health, financial sustainability and capacity in our communities, the assessment process should ultimately contribute towards those aims (Meter, 2011). Foundational literature places an emphasis on the need for larger systemic change, while also providing a set of best practices for how the process should be carried out and identifying desirable outcomes.

The CFA process is more comprehensive than a traditional needs assessments; it looks to describe conditions, identify problems and develop strategies to improve them (Pothukuchi et al., 2002; Ross & Simces, 2008). The CFA process documents challenges, but also places emphasis on identifying assets in the community which may be used to address problems, while promoting self-reliance and building community capacity (Pothukuchi et al., 2002). At the core of this process is the notion that all communities, even those with deficiencies, have the assets required to address their problems (Pothukuchi, 2004). The nature of the CFA process also places an emphasis on action, with a desire to bring about positive change in the community; although the extent to which this vision is realized is largely dependent on available financial resources (Ross & Simces, 2008).

There is a set of three recommendations that have come to represent the guiding considerations when initiating a CFA process. It is important to note that the boundaries between these elements are not static and various aspects may be occurring concurrently. The first step is clarifying the purpose, scope and budget for the assessment (Ross & Simces, 2008). Establishing these basic tenets falls to the initiating members. This information helps dictate how comprehensive the assessment will be, who should be involved and the research required to attain these ends (Ross & Simces, 2008). This primary vision provides a tool that may be used to recruit other individuals and organizations to the process.

The second step is the identification and recruitment of members to the assessment team. Who is selected helps to further shape the assessment and its outcomes. These members are

ultimately responsible for the implementation of the assessment and follow-up actions (Pothukuchi et al., 2002). Members are selected to provide representation from a variety of organizational backgrounds (public sector, private sector, non-profit, etc.) and areas throughout the food system. These members bring diverse perspectives and skill sets to the process (Ross & Simces, 2008). The amalgamation of these varying perspectives is a strength; working together to take advantage of mutually beneficial skills and knowledge facilitates systems based solutions (Freedgood et al., 2011). Structuring of the process is another consideration that factors in at this time. Creation of a steering committee, to ensure the assessment maintains a direction in accordance with the guiding vision, is common amongst most assessments (Pothukuchi et al., 2002; Ross & Simces, 2008). Some variance is observed with regards to employment of smaller working groups amongst the membership, which may be structured to oversee specific areas of inquiry associated with the assessment process, or ensure day-to-day operations are completed (Pothukuchi et al., 2002).

The third step is to determine the nature and extent of community involvement (Ross & Simces, 2008). While the definition and scale of community is delineated by each assessment attaining community involvement is a central aspect of all CFAs. Community members not only provide information, but also play a central role in shaping the direction of the process (Pothukuchi et al., 2002). Promoting engagement early helps foster relations with the community, promoting ownership of subsequent recommendations (Pothukuchi et al., 2002; Ross & Simces, 2008). This is also in accordance with the principle of promoting capacity and self-reliance within the community; providing community members a venue to communicate needs and desires to policy makers, while also affording them an opportunity to shape a food system that operates on a global scale.

The CFA process has become widely employed under a wide array of circumstances; with significant variation in the size of locations undertaking the process, the scope of their exploration and subsequent recommendations (Harrison, 2012). Approaches and tools employed to examine the food system will typically vary depending on the aspects of the food system under examination (Freedgood et al., 2011).

The food system is complex and the process employed to assess specific aspects of the system can change. Each assessment identifies aspects they intend to explore, frequently dictated by community context. Despite this variance, there remain some central processes that are

typically integrated into the CFA process. The first process involves conducting an environmental scan, in order to identify a range of information needed to establish a baseline that is required to answer the questions driving the assessment process. Information obtained from the environmental scan is used to drive an asset and gap analysis; which looks to examine the needs and identify strengths within a target community, providing the grounding required for subsequent recommendations. At this stage community members are consulted and afforded an opportunity to establish priorities moving forward. This helps engage the community and develop a sense of ownership for the process and resulting calls for action. The community perspective is integrated with the views of the assessment team to produce a list of recommendations, which constitute the basis for subsequent proposals for action. These action plans are detailed documents communicating both the desired outcome and the means by which these outcomes may be measured. Information regarding timeframes, resources and responsibilities are also important elements included within the document. Following the development of this detailed action plan, an implementation strategy is devised to maintain the momentum of the process and drive it to subsequent stages (Pothukuchi et al., 2002). Assessments operating under budgetary or time constraints typically focus on the collection of data and prioritization of needs. The developed assessment is then used to recruit organizations and resources for subsequent action planning and implementation (Hamm & Bellows, 2003).

Despite providing a high level of value for participants the assessment process is not without challenges. There is currently a lack of uniformity regarding a vision for what a healthy food system is supposed to do (provide food, work to promote health, etc.). This poses a challenge when working to bring groups together under a shared central vision (Meter, 2011). Another challenge is getting participants to unify under a vision that looks to promote long-term systemic change, as the current political climate is largely oriented around promotion of short-term fixes (Harrison, 2012; Meter, 2011). From an applied standpoint, it is important to remain conscientious that the food system is changing rapidly. What has been measured in a CFA process is changing and it is important to acknowledge that the information collected from the process has a window of potential utilization (Meter, 2011). It is important that the developed material is used in some capacity. Food Policy Councils (FPCs) represent one avenue through which these documents may be used to work towards systematic change.

2.5 Food Policy Councils

The initial concept for FPCs was developed at the University of Tennessee Graduate School of Planning in 1977. Its creation was in response to the growing awareness amongst health professionals and food system activists that the food system has important impacts on an array of concerns, from environmental concerns to issues of social and economic justice (Burgan & Winne, 2012). The intent behind these early FPCs was to provide the average citizen some means by which to influence the food system, shaping it to reflect the values of the community (Burgan & Winne, 2012). While the notion of community empowerment remains a cornerstone for FPCs today they have evolved to provide a more expansive forum in which food system issues may be addressed. FPCs create an opportunity to discuss and strategize among various interests and create a forum for studying the food system as a whole, as opposed to working on these issues in an isolated manner. This unity serves to promote the identification of innovative approaches that may be employed to improve the local system and contribute towards resolving the complex and intertwined problems associated with the food system (Harper, Shattuck, Holt-Gimenez, Alkon, & Lambrick, 2009).

The first step that must be taken by the potential council is to establish and communicate the specific goals and objectives associated with the process. (Burgan & Winne, 2012) This information will constitute the tool that will facilitate the recruitment of members to the process. Clearly identifying and communicating this information at the outset of the process will work towards providing clarity for the members and help offset future confusion. FPCs look to recruit members from throughout the food system. While these organizations and individuals harbour their own priorities and vision for the food system, they all share a desire to work towards the same broad changes (Burgan & Winne, 2012). Initial recruitment efforts typically involve the leading organization reaching out to potential stakeholders operating in the food system (Harper et al., 2009). Subsequent member recruitment is largely based on self-selection at municipal level FPCs. Councils working at higher levels of influence typically demonstrate a greater degree of structure with regards to their selection process (Harper et al., 2009). Hunger advocates and health and nutrition advocates typically constitute the most frequently represented organizations involved in this process (Dahlberg, 1994). Research has indicated that the most successful councils have a focus that is not dominated solely by hunger related issues.

A common issue of discussion for FPCs is the extent of government involvement that will be integrated into their operation. Organizations operating with separation from the municipal government face fewer bureaucratic restraints and are able to pursue diverse sources of funding. Conversely, they tend to operate with less accountability and may lack a connection with elected officials required to induce policy change (Burgan & Winne, 2012). Government coordinated FPCs are integrated into the operation of the administration and display greater penetration throughout different municipal departments, in addition to increased access to government staff. This connection to the government also provides a greater sense of legitimacy associated with the process. Adverse aspects associated with this form of organization include a susceptibility to bureaucratic inefficiency, as well as to fluctuations in governmental support. In some instances operating as a government based agency can pull the focus of the council away from the desires of the community (Burgan & Winne, 2012).

A recent examination of currently established FPCs indicates that the majority of councils operating at the local level are independent of the municipal government (Burgan & Winne, 2012; Harper et al., 2009). As councils elevate to higher levels of operation, their connection with government tends to increase. In either instance, some form of recognition from the municipal council, from officially acknowledging the council to providing in-kind contributions, is typically viewed as a required contribution (Burgan & Winne, 2012). Ultimately, FPCs tend to be dependent on at least one foster organization to support their development (Hodgson, 2011).

Once established, FPCs typically spend a period of time getting to know their local food system and building a connection with community residents. A common first step after the establishment of a FPC is to conduct a CFA (Harper et al., 2009). This assessment document is used to identify the gaps and opportunities that exist in the food system and constitutes a foundational document for the council (Harper et al., 2009). Once an understanding of the local food system is attained, the FPC may begin devising a strategic plan. This plan will establish a clear vision for the organization moving forward and direct the endeavors of the council (Burgan & Winne, 2012). In working towards the identified goals of the strategic plan, councils will typically establish subcommittees. Council members with expertise in a particular area will be positioned on these subcommittees. Much of the work on FPCs is done through subcommittees (Burgan & Winne, 2012).

Recently established councils are subject to a number of threats that have demonstrated the potential to mitigate their effectiveness. The most prominent example is a lack of resources. Many municipal councils operate with a financial reality that is constantly in flux. As a result, they are forced to direct a great deal of time and effort towards securing funding, rather than working to change food policy. An additional corollary is that the absence of funds results in the absence of permanent staffing. This reality places the burden of operating the council on the membership, increasing the time requirements associated with the process (Harper et al., 2009). Additional threats are typically encountered when the council attempts to proceed without first establishing organizational structures. Before moving forward it is important that members are aware of the vision, priorities and responsibilities associated with the council (Harper et al., 2009). Establishing the diverse membership base required for an effective council can prove arduous at times, especially during formative stages. Attaining a balanced perspective is critical if the FPC is looking to address the larger issues in the food system and induce lasting change through its policy work (Burgan & Winne, 2012). When constructing a process with this diverse membership, a level of consideration and thought is required to ensure the process is structured in a manner that provides maximum value.

2.6 Collaboration

The collaborative process brings organizations together in efforts to leverage resources, increase impact and capacity for change (Backer & Norman, 2000; Backer, 2003; Brinkerhoff, 2002; Himmelman, 2001; James Bell Associates, 2011; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006). The collaborative process became widely employed in efforts to address multi-determinant health problems in the 1980s, as prevention efforts began to shift away from individual behaviour change towards community health promotion (F. Butterfoss & Kegler, 2009). It is now common practice for funding agencies to request applicants establish diverse collaborations prior to submission; collaborations are viewed as a means to leverage resources, while cutting costs and increasing impact (Backer, 2003). This section will look to establish a central understanding of the collaborative process, its potential to induce change and considerations required moving forward.

The first step in initiating a collaborative process is to establish and communicate intent of the process. Articulation of a clear mission is essential, as it allows members to reconcile

pursuit of individual goals with a common purpose (F. D. Butterfoss, Goodman, & Wandersman, 1993). This vision is used to recruit a core group of members that will work to address the identified issue (Rabinowitz, 2014). Partners are selected based on their potential to contribute their knowledge, skills and resources to the process (Lasker & Weiss, 2003). When selecting members, the integration of diversity is heavily promoted, as it brings with it the potential to apply pressure from a greater number of sectors, increasing the potential to promote change (Hays, Hays, DeVille, & Mulhall, 2000). When looking to operate in a community-engaged manner this means looking to integrate representation that extends beyond the sectors typically involved (Hays et al., 2000). Diversity is also associated with increased levels of collaboration synergy (Lasker & Weiss, 2003; Rabinowitz, 2014); which is the mechanism that allows collaborations to attain outcomes in excess of what is feasible for a single organization operating in isolation (Nowell, 2009). It is the pursuit of this synergistic advantage that has provided the impetus for their increasing application, at the same time it is important to note that collaborations are not ubiquitous and there is a level of structural variance that exists among the various iterations (Diagram 2-2) (Backer, 2003). The potential to generate synergistic advantage deviates depending on structure (F. D. Butterfoss et al., 1993). Collaborations that operate with a higher level of formalization have greater potential to generate synergistic outcomes than those operating with looser forms of association (F. D. Butterfoss et al., 1993). Lower levels of collaboration structure may arise in the context of the CFA process and elaboration for these terms is provided (Table 2-2). More structured forms of collaboration are not likely to manifest and expansion of these terms is not included in this review.

Mutual Accountability							
Informal Organization						Joint Venture	Formal Organization
					Strategic Alliance		
				Collaboration			
			Coalition				
		Committee					
	Informal Network						
Separate Accountability							

Diagram 2-2 – Continuum of collaborative initiatives (Backer, 2003)

Classification	Definition
Informal Network	A deliberately unstructured activity jointly supported by a group of community organizations. These networks are often powerful institutions, despite their informal nature and in part because of it.
Committee	A structured but unincorporated and usually time-limited-activity, group of people representing their community organizations getting together for regular meetings to take action together on a particular issue.
Coalition	Community based groups, often focused on policy change or community development goals and more structured than a committee, but less formal than a partnership or collaboration.
Collaboration	Brings together two or more agencies, groups, or organizations at the local, state, or national level, to achieve some common purpose of systems change.

Table 2-2 – Definition of loose collaborative approaches (Backer, 2003).

The Structure imposed requires a consideration for the projected longevity of the process. Collaborative ventures established to accomplish a specified short-time goal and disband following its attainment, may function with a loose form of collaboration (Backer, 2003; Rabinowitz, 2014). Conversely, collaborations looking to attain change at a systems level require a higher level of association between participants (Backer, 2003; Rabinowitz, 2014). The level of structure employed should coincide with the vision driving the process. Various mechanisms may be employed to increase the level of structure associated with the process. Some commonly employed examples include; promoting member accountability through detailing and reporting of actions or inaction, implementing mandatory resource commitment and imposing attendance requirements on the membership (Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson, & Allen, 2001).

Involvement in collaborative processes involves establishing a balance between costs and benefits. Commonly cited costs include the loss of autonomy and unilateral control of outcomes, conflict over goals and methodology and delays in solving problems (F. Butterfoss & Kegler, 2009). These costs are offset by benefits of involvement including serving as a venue for the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and strategies, maximizing the potential of individuals and groups to induce change and providing a venue for organizations to get involved in broader issues without assuming full responsibility. If the benefits of involvement are greater than associated costs, members will remain engaged. The level of structure imposed has a distinct impact on the costs and benefits, with higher levels of formalization associated with increased cost. Synergistic

outcomes, the potential to achieve a higher level of outcomes is a commonly cited reason for involvement in a collaborative process (Backer & Norman, 2000; Brinkerhoff, 2002; F. Butterfoss & Kegler, 2009). Operating in conjunction with other organizations brings additional advantages. Collaborations provide access to resources and facilitate the establishment of new networks, generating value that continues beyond the process (Nowell, 2009). Additionally they provide an opportunity to connect and establish networks for future endeavors and an opportunity to become involved with an issue without assuming full ownership and responsibility (F. Butterfoss & Kegler, 2009). In many instances the benefits of collaborative approaches require a period of time to manifest (Nowell, 2009). A certain amount of time is required to build up levels of trust required for organizations to fully engage and the relationships become a valuable aspect of the process (Nowell, 2009).

Despite a number of distinct advantages, the collaborative process is also accompanied by a set of challenges. These challenges may be broken down into three broad, generic categories: time, trust and turf (Himmelman, 2001). Time refers to the required commitment from an organization that is required to be involved in the process. Trust, is the ability of an organization to believe other members will deliver on their commitments, facilitating success. Turf pertains to the interaction and overlap of organizations into the operational realms of the other partners (Himmelman, 2001). As the collaborative process becomes more structured the impact associated with these challenges increases. Some commonly cited examples of costs associated with involvement include the loss of autonomy and unilateral control over outcomes, conflict over goals and methods, loss of resources and competitive position and delays in solving problems (F. Butterfoss & Kegler, 2009; Rabinowitz, 2014). These costs become more pronounced as the level of structure and formalization is increased (F. D. Butterfoss et al., 1993; Nowell, 2009). Working to mitigate these costs when possible and ensuring participation provides adequate benefit to its membership is an important aspect of consideration when building a collaborative process. Connecting involvement back to a strong central vision is a fundamental means to maintain a level of association and promote ownership (F. Butterfoss & Kegler, 2009; F. D. Butterfoss et al., 1993; Rabinowitz, 2014).

Traditionally, evaluation practice for collaborative approaches looked to identify success through the measurement of internal coalition functioning (Zakocs & Edwards, 2006). Examples of internal measures include; quality of strategic plans, member participation, total number of

actions taken, member satisfaction and agency collaboration (Zakocs & Edwards, 2006). Further research has demonstrated that simple counts of objectives completed is an ineffective means for assessing structural change and that these traditional approaches may not accurately assess the potential to generate more expansive change (Miller, Reed, Francisco, & Adolescent Medical Trials Network for HIV/AIDS Interventions, 2013). In many instances collaborations struggle when attempting to transition from smaller projects to more systematic efforts or attempts to alter power structures (Himmelman, 2001). These findings have spurred exploration of intermediate steps and aspects of coalition structures that drive change at these higher levels. Acknowledging that structural and organizational features of a coalition may facilitate capacity development differently and lead to varying impacts in the community (Hays et al., 2000).

Emphasis in collaboration research is now being directed towards connecting collaborative structures with distal outcomes (F. Butterfoss & Kegler, 2009; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006). A prevalent example of this transition may be seen in the development of the Community Coalition Action Theory (CCAT) (Diagram 2-3).

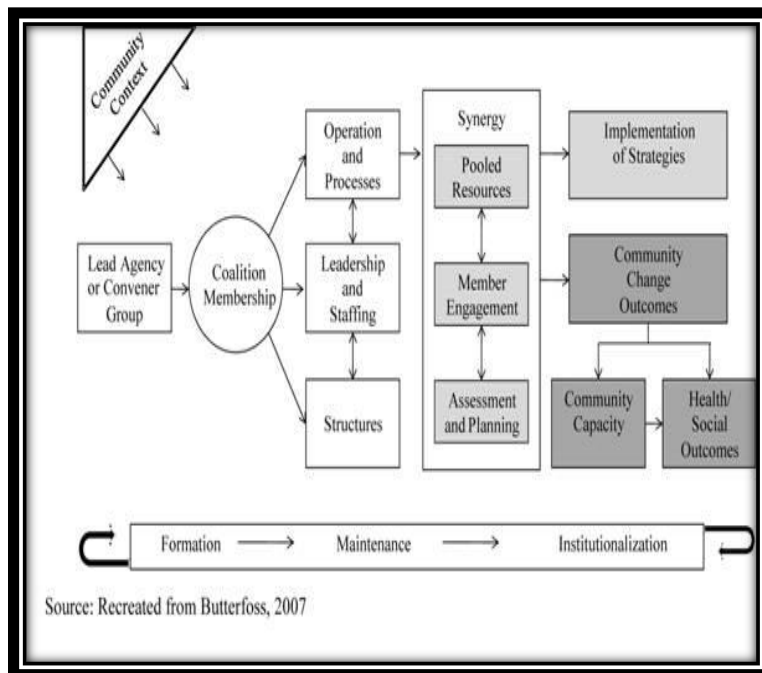


Diagram 2-3 – The Community Coalition Action Theory

In efforts directed towards attaining structural change, stakeholder relationships have been demonstrated to be a critical aspect (Nowell, 2009). This places additional emphasis on building communication and working to develop the desired synergy. Systematic change has

been associated with diversity in methods, rather than diversity in membership (Miller et al., 2013). Employing a greater number of unique strategies and approaches was conducive to attaining systematic change (Miller et al., 2013). This is another aspect that goes against the traditional notion of simply integrating a diverse membership base. Collaborations effective at attaining systems change appear to be comprised of tight membership that are oriented around attaining a common goal. Establishing the platform to facilitate survival, providing time to acquire resources and work towards change, is valuable when looking to induce systematic change, but carries less importance when operating over a more confined time frame.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Since its inception collaboration research has shifted towards the development of a strong theoretical grounding for collaborative projects. Impetus for this transition was largely associated with increased fiscal austerity and a need to clearly demonstrate the impact attributable to collaborative action. At present there is an absence of theory guiding understanding of the CFA process. While traditional collaboration research was focused on establishing association with distal outcomes, something that is not observed in a short-term collaborative venture. Working towards a more conceptual understanding of the CFA process still presents a great deal of value and affords an opportunity for understanding to transcend contextual limitations. The intent of this study was to employ a grounded theory approach in an effort to identify theoretical constructs that may be used to understand aspects that influence the interaction between participants involved in short-term collaborative ventures.

3.1 Social Constructivist Grounded Theory

“All research is interpretive, it is guided by the researcher’s set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied.”

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2008)

Grounded theory can trace its origins back to the 1960s when Glaser and Strauss conducted research into the experience of dying (Birks & Mills, 2011). At that time, the legitimacy of qualitative research was widely criticized in some academic circles. Glaser and Strauss looked to provide a degree of structure and legitimacy to the qualitative research process. This initial rendition of grounded theory was oriented around a post-positivist ontological perspective, operating with a premise of critical realism (Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006). This initial methodology employed a rigid, systematic structure to the research process in efforts to build a greater understanding of a process with the intent to develop theory (Cresswell, 2007). Over time the grounded theory approach has evolved, with the process modified to facilitate its application with other epistemological and ontological perspectives (Birks & Mills, 2011). One defining aspect of the constructivist approach to grounded theory is that it acknowledges the

importance of individual perspectives and observations by the researcher (Birks & Mills, 2011). It is assumed that these existing perspectives shape perceptions of the data (Birks & Mills, 2011; Charmaz, 2006). Rather than traditional approaches that look to mitigate or refute the presence of bias, the constructivist perspective integrates it as a critical part of the analytic process (Charmaz, 2011). While there is variation, there remains an essential set of methods that must be employed to constitute a grounded theory approach (Birks & Mills, 2011). Failure to adhere to these principles will result in the study devolving into a qualitative descriptive analysis, losing explanatory power (Birks & Mills, 2011).

3.2 Population & Sampling

In an attempt to maximize potential sample all steering committee members involved in the SRFA were invited to take part in the study. A potential conflict of interest resulted in one member being excluded from consideration. Invitations to participate were sent to the remaining eight steering committee members following initiation of the assessment process. Of these remaining members one individual declined to participate, with seven committee members accepting the invitation to participate in the initial interview process. All members that participated in the initial interview process were invited to be involved in the second interview phase following the completion of the assessment process. Prior to the second interview process, two members abdicated from their positions on the SRFA steering committee; as a result the number of individuals included in the follow-up interview process was reduced to five members.

3.3 Ethics & Consent

This study obtained ethical exemption from the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Review Board (**Appendix B**), on the grounds that it constitutes a program evaluation. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to the commencement of data collection. Participants were also afforded the opportunity to examine and modify their transcripts prior to inclusion as part of the compiled data set of this project.

3.4 Data Collection

Data for this study was obtained through the application of an intensive interview process. The intensive interview process looks to elicit an in-depth exploration of participant experiences, placing an emphasis on acquiring emergent information (Charmaz, 2006). This process looks to utilize open-ended questions to facilitate an examination of desired content while affording participants an opportunity to develop and present desired themes and content (Charmaz, 2006). Interviews were conducted during two distinct phases of the SRFA process.

The first interview was conducted between March 11th and March 27th, 2013. This interview was conducted to obtain initial perspectives of the SRFA process. For the purposes of this interview a question frame was developed (**Appendix C**). Questions included in this frame were developed based on themes identified in a preliminary examination of the literature. A second round of interviews was scheduled between October 21st and November 4th, 2013. These interviews occurred following completion of the assessment process with the intent of examining the process as a whole and perceptions of the developed SRFA report. This interview was conducted in a less structured manner. Rather than develop a set of specific questions, the interview was oriented around further exploration of themes emerging from analysis of the initial interview phase (**Appendix D**).

In grounded theory the processes of data collection and data analysis are occurring in conjunction with each other, shaping the direction of inquiry (Birks & Mills, 2011; Charmaz, 2006). This is central to facilitating theoretical sampling, a process where the researcher targets the collection of data in efforts to develop and refine emerging theoretical categories (Charmaz, 2006). This targeted data collection should occur until a state of theoretical saturation is attained. Theoretical saturation is a state in which the collection of fresh data no longer produces new information to enhance existing theoretical categories (Charmaz, 2006). At this point the emergent categories may be used to develop theoretical explanations for the phenomena under observation.

3.5 Data Analysis

All interviews were recorded using a Livescribe Echo™ smart pen. Audio files were uploaded into the NVivo 10 software application and transcribed. Transcripts were transferred to

Microsoft Word 2013 and subjected to an initial line-by-line open coding process. Coding is the process through which segments of data are labeled and constitutes the first analytical step of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). This process helps the researcher move from the descriptive level to develop a more conceptual analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Holton, 2007). In grounded theory this coding process consists of at least two main phases; an initial coding process and a subsequent focused coding phase (Charmaz, 2006). An initial open-coding process occurs over small segments and helps bring the researcher close to the data. Emphasis is placed on mitigating the imposition of pre-existing theories and bias onto the data (Charmaz, 2006). Initial phases of coding operate with the intent of allowing themes to emerge as organically as possible from the data (Holton, 2007). Line-by-line coding is commonly conducted as an initial coding process. While rigorous and time consuming, this stage helps the researcher develop codes that are closely connected to the collected data (Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz, 2011).

Following the initial coding process all documents were transferred back to the NVivo 10 software application and subjected to a second phase of coding . This second phase is known as Focused coding and provides a means of using the most significant earlier codes to analyze large amounts of data (Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz, 2011). While the initial coding process is designed to fracture the data, this intermediate coding process looks to connect developed codes conceptually (Birks & Mills, 2011). Throughout the analysis process, codes are placed into theoretical categories and subjected to comparative analysis (Birks & Mills, 2011). This analysis is referred to as the constant comparative method and is conducted throughout the grounded theory process to help establish analytic distinctions and comparisons between collected data (Birks & Mills, 2011; Charmaz, 2006). The constant comparative process is comprised of three distinct phases. First, events under examination are compared to each other in efforts to identify underlying uniformity and establish overarching concepts (Holton, 2007). These emerging concepts are then compared to each other in efforts to generate theoretical concepts and preliminary hypotheses (Holton, 2007). Finally, these emergent concepts are compared to each other in an effort to establish a best fit between concepts (Holton, 2007).

Another critical element employed in grounded theory research is the process of memo writing. Memo writing represents an intermediate step between data collection and construction of theoretical categories (Birks & Mills, 2011; Charmaz, 2006). Memos provide a conduit through which the researcher may connect with their data and begin to take analysis to higher

levels of abstraction (Charmaz, 2006). These memos preserve perspectives and thought processes documenting the logical progression throughout the analytic process, facilitating stronger analysis (Charmaz, 2006). While there are no universal guidelines dictating how memo writing should occur, it is acknowledged that the process itself represents a critical element in the analytic process of grounded theory studies (Birks & Mills, 2011). Throughout the course of this study memos were kept and consulted to facilitate the development of a preliminary conceptual model.

3.6 Limitations

This study was conducted with a limited sample population. Efforts were made to integrate all members meeting the qualification standards for this process, but ultimately only 12 interviews were conducted. In grounded theory work this number is insufficient to attain a level of theoretical saturation required to substantiate claims. This study acknowledges these limitations and makes no definitive claims with regards to findings and the developed contextual model. Additional inquiry is required to elucidate elements of these constructs and to further strengthen the findings of this process. At this point the findings reported in this study serve to provide a preliminary examination of the food assessment process and elements influencing the interaction between groups involved in short-term collaborative ventures.

This study was conducted as an exploration into the expectations and experiences of steering committee members and their involvement in the SRFA. Due to the localized nature of exploration, it is subject to contextual elements that are unique to conducting this process in the Saskatoon food system. These attributes may range from previous interaction between members, to experiences operating within the current infrastructure of the food system. In any instance, these contextual elements serve to limit the potential to transfer these findings to other regions and assessment processes. The underlying contextual elements should be taken into consideration when looking to extrapolate the findings proffered in this report.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Grounded theory development requires a process that works to transcend a particular scenario, to a more conceptual assessment. Failure to transition from a descriptive level to a more conceptual one is indicative of qualitative assessment that does not satisfy the criteria of a grounded theory study. The intent of this process was to provide the initial steps towards a more conceptual examination of the CFA process and provide a base from which future examination may occur.

4.1 Building a Conceptual Model

Over the course of this assessment, a number of themes began to emerge. In an effort to establish a level of consistency themes were distilled into four overarching constructs. The first construct is labeled as organization and integrates existing perspectives of the food system brought to the process by SRFA steering committee members. This construct also embodies the desired level of action in the food system participants would like to take, ranging from local to national. This construct is positioned below the others included in the model to indicate that these views were brought to the process prior to initiation of the SRFA. The second construct is vision and it integrates themes pertaining to the organizational lens through which the SRFA process and other steering committee members are perceived. Perceived value associated with involvement in the assessment and the developed documentation is embodied by the value construct. The final construct is that of engagement and was created to differentiate perceptions and themes presented by SRFA steering committee members regarding the role of engagement in the assessment.

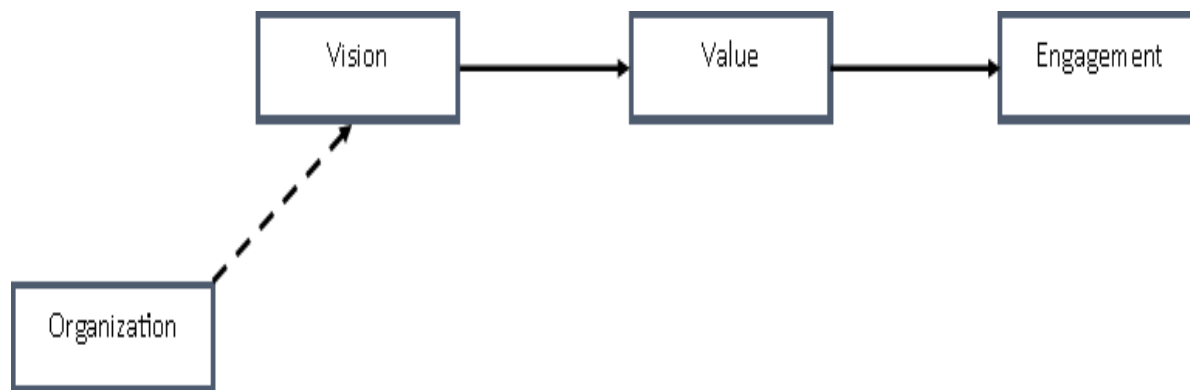


Diagram 4-1 – Conceptual model of emerging themes from SRFA process

Developed constructs were ordered in a manner that provides the greatest amount of consistency based on prevailing themes in the academic literature and responses collected from study participants. While these core constructs may provide the initial insight for understanding short-term collaborative ventures, specific aspects addressed in the context of each construct are unique to the SRFA and are not necessarily transferable. While this process attained a level of theoretical saturation for the current sample size, it is important to note that the study itself did not include enough interviews to safely assert the validity of these constructs for a more general application of this model.

4.1.1 Organization

The SRFA process brought together a number of different partner organizations, each bringing their own perspectives and experiences to the process. These views may be distilled into two general categories, operating with either a business or a CFS focus. SRFA steering committee members with a business inclination ascribed to the worldview that further production and utilization of economies of scale should be used to provide FS (Howard & Edge, 2013). Committee members categorized as CFS oriented placed emphasis on promoting viability of local production and community involvement in the process (Food Secure Canada, 2011). Examination of these existing worldviews and their impact on the assessment are a primary aspect explored in the organization construct.

The SRFA was initiated when members from the SFC approached the City of Saskatoon. These members brought with them a strong vision for the food system in the form of the

Saskatoon Food Charter. Initiation of the SRFA was a means to continue the work started by the SFC and an opportunity to work towards implementation of the Food Charter:

We would love to see something continue to shift and grow with the city, in terms of responsiveness to the Food Charter and just the conceptualization of the city's role with food.

The charter document was built around the more expansive vision of FS, with emphasis on local agriculture and elements of justice, health, and culture (Food Secure Canada, 2011). Proposed changes look to address problems associated with the agri-industrial model and facilitate a transition to a more sustainable and secure local food environment.

For the City of Saskatoon the views of the Food Charter coincide with the larger civic mandate which promotes the health, welfare and safety of all citizens:

It's our mandate to provide a city that, you know, provides for the health, welfare and safety of citizens. I think it ties into all three of those. That is kind of one of our main mandates, as an organization, making sure that our city is prosperous, is environmentally friendly, grows in a sustainable manner. I think all three of those especially.

While the city has placed emphasis on promotion of sustainable development in official community planning documentation, it currently operates with a deficiency in policy surrounding local production, a local manifestation of a larger global deficiency (Bronson, 2012). Alignment with the Food Charter and the tenets of CFS provide the City an opportunity to begin addressing this policy gap while emphasizing sustainability and community ownership, advancing the mandate of the organization:

Our mandate links directly back to the food assessment goals, make sure we are more sustainable, you know, make sure that we are environmentally friendly and providing for our citizens, or helping them have access to food and be successful.

All members at the table during the formative stages of the assessment had previously been involved with the SFC. These members were able to identify with the worldview forwarded by the food charter. While there was a level of diversity amongst these founding members they were able to reconcile their differences and unite under a well defined central vision, an imperative step for successful collaborative ventures (Rabinowitz, 2014). These individuals communicated a desire to use the process as a tool to build a sense of ownership amongst the residents of Saskatoon and work towards systems change:

What we are probably trying to accomplish and achieve through this work is that there is a greater level of food security amongst Saskatchewan residents... But that there is greater opportunity for people to have a sense of ownership over their food production and also, say for example they are not interested in producing their own food that there would be opportunities for them to have food that is produced closer to home.

The notion of working towards systems change is important as it is accompanied by a higher level of structure and associated cost for participants (Himmelman, 2001; Nowell, 2009). One element cited as necessitating this change was the environmental cost attributed to current practices. Awareness of environmental costs continues to grow, along with an acceptance that current practices are unsustainable (McLamb, 2011). Promoting agricultural production closer to home is a first step towards introducing more sustainable approach to food production:

We are very dependent on the export/import kind of agricultural system. And you know that, down the road with peak oil, with peak water, with whatever, that maybe we are looking at that being quite a problematic system and so what we are trying to do is being proactive in ensuring there is a greater level of production done closer to home... I think that will promote a greater level of food security for everybody if that happens.

The desire to emphasize local production was also accompanied by the desire to establish a policy environment that is conducive to its long-term viability. A general desire to establish support networks to facilitate and promote urban production was a desired outcome for CFS inclined committee members. There was also an expressed desire to develop a market place that is financially viable for small scale producers, echoing a core component of the expanded vision of CFS that strives to create a system where these individuals are able to receive adequate financial compensation for their product (Bellows & Hamm, 2003):

[We are] looking more towards opportunities for social enterprise and then also with our work in gardening, so far its focused on both policy, on the one hand and supporting groups in starting new gardens and supporting new gardeners.

While there is emphasis placed on transitioning away from the current agri-industrial model, potential for change is perceived as gradual. Establishing a food secure community has been presented as a continuum, with a series of sequential transitions leading to a stabilized local food environment (Kalina, 2001; Slater, 2007). There was an understanding communicated by CFS oriented committee members that current practices are ingrained and immediate transition was not a realistic outcome. Rather, the SRFA was viewed as a tool to begin the process of

building infrastructure required to begin the transition away from reliance on the current global model of food production and distribution:

I'm not dead set against export markets... how do you turn a ship on a dime? That's ridiculous... We still want to look at the local market as being one of those major markets. We want to boost the local sales.

Comments from SRFA committee members bringing a CFS orientation to the process alluded to the tenets of this ideological position. This worldview was brought over from previous work with the SFC and provided a directed focus for members to rally behind. Integration of additional ideologies began to erode the extent this vision was able to act as a unifying force.

Integration of a greater array of opinions and perspectives was spurred following procurement of funding from the McConnell foundation. The funding was supplied to facilitate an exploration of the regional value chain (J.W McConnell Foundation, 2014). The aim of the assessment was to provide the foundation for future development of projects and opportunities within the value chain. This funding represents the first phase of a larger program, with additional resources available for subsequent development of business plans. To ensure the SRFA met the requirements for this funding, potential members in the business community were approached:

It was the McConnell funder that actually specifically said that it needs to include people from the different sectors of the food system.

Integration of business perspectives is something that is promoted by current literature dictating best practices of the CFA process (Pothukuchi et al., 2002; Ross & Simces, 2008). Integration of diverse perspectives is viewed as integral to developing a rounded perspective required to make an educated decision at the systematic level (Ross & Simces, 2008). While these business representatives brought additional insight and alternative perspectives to the process they also brought an alternative ideology. Attempting to integrate divergent perspectives is not always conducive to success, and may lead to complications in the collaborative process (L. Hanson & Terstappen, 2009). It became evident that the central vision that had served to guide the formative stages of the process was no longer fulfilling that role:

The Food Charter, that's nice. Ummm, but, it really wasn't, I didn't need, don't really need a charter to really get food to the people.

For business oriented participants the Food Charter is perceived as an extraneous document. These members do not perceive it to be a focal point driving their work in the food system. Communication of this perspective runs in contrast to the views communicated by CFS oriented members and represents a verbalization of the deviation that exists between the two prevailing ideological positions involved in this assessment. The implication of this shift was that the foundation of CFS no longer provided a point of unification for participants. CFS oriented steering committee members began to sense this growing incompatibility and expressed as a concern that new members were unable to identify with CHEP as a lead organization:

I think that people see CHEP as the food security.. Almost entirely. I think that maybe the folks that are involved in the business ... I don't see ... they don't see a good segue between their organization and CHEP perhaps.

In actuality, this disconnect is attributable to business operating with a different ideological perspective on both the problem and its solutions. Business oriented committee members perceived FS to be an issue driven by limited access, most significantly resulting from economic constraints (Howard & Edge, 2013). For these individuals the solution was continued application of the industrial approach, working to provide product at a reduced price point. The perceived failure to effectively address cost manifests as a perceived limitation associated with CFS oriented approaches:

When you are a parent trying to feed your kids healthy and you have a very limited income you're not really going to care if that carrot was grown in Saskatchewan or China, you just want the best value for your dollar... We are not addressing how we are going to fix the cost portion of it. And doing rooftop gardens, all these things are great. Rooftop gardens, all the empty lots and that, but we're still not going to produce enough food for those that need to have a lower cost.

Perhaps the most detrimental aspect of the gap between the two groups represented on the steering committee is that the direction proposed by the assessment process fails to address cost, a key element from a business ideological perspective. This perceived failure begins to manifest as a point of tension and leads to a discounting of recommendations brought forward with a CFS driven focus. For business oriented committee members the potential to increase local production was feasible but synonymous with continued application of the agri-industrial approach. These partners provided evidence in the form of current local initiatives that have proven profitable and capable of competing within the constructs of the current system. A fundamental aspect of this success is leveraging economies of scale to generate a reduced price point (Desrochers &

Shimizu, 2012). This approach makes use of tools currently available in the current market system:

On the flip side of that is because we aren't doing little backyard crops and rooftop gardens... and it's effectively helped our economy because now we've got 16 producers that are growing significantly more than they ever did in the past. They're starting to invest in new equipment. They're building new sheds. They're doing all this other stuff that they would have never done or would have been years before they got to because we were able to get to that economy of scale.

Implicit in this position is a continued propagation of the current agricultural model. In the SRFA there is a manifestation of the larger debate regarding the direction for the food system. At the heart of this debate is the long-term viability of continued application of the agri-industrial model. These two ideologies are largely incongruent and represent a point of tension when looking to amalgamate the business and CFS oriented ideologies in a collaborative venture.

In conjunction with these divergent ideologies there was a noticeable difference in the scale of operation steering committee members were looking to influence. For founding members, operating with a CFS orientation, there was a concerted focus directed towards operation on a local scale. This perspective placed ownership of the process and subsequent action in the hands of the municipal government:

I come back to it time and time again that if the city wants this to happen they should fork up the money for it because ultimately it's the city that needs to be behind this.

For SRFA committee members with a business inclination there was a limited appeal to working to elicit change at the municipal level. For these members the emphasis currently placed on local production constitutes a nice sentiment, but is unable to generate the production required to generate economies of scale and compete with the current global marketplace. These individuals were interested in action in a more expansive context and perceived a process operating with a local emphasis as largely ineffectual:

Municipal has very little impact on something like that. They can encourage rooftop gardens and they can do the little lots that they have on their street and all the other things. But that's really still not addressing the whole issue of feeding with locally produced product, the masses... So then you need to take it to the next level of provincial, federal. You need that support.

Further commentary from business committee members serves to provide additional insight regarding their perceived limited value associated with the more CFS oriented focus. Once again, this latent animosity can be associated with the foundational ideologies these organizations brought with them to the assessment process. In the SRFA most of the business representatives operate within the context of the agri-industrial model. For these organizations there was no economic potential associated with small scale local production. Comments also begin to draw a distinction between industry and the CFS oriented organizations involved in the process, further substantiating the existing division between these ideologies:

Industry doesn't look at cities. Industry looks at regions... There's lots to learn here yet because I have no idea of the needs of what's going on in the city ... it could be with CHEP, where can they grow or where should they be growing or where they could be in the farmers' markets and what's the maximum they can grow to.

In the context of this process it was identified that the CFS and business ideologies operate differently within the spectrum of the food system. At the same time, this generalization does not provide ubiquitous application for classification of all members of a select ideology. In the SRFA there was one representative that operated a successful business predicated on local retail. This individual has been involved in thinking about the food system from a CFS perspective in the City of Saskatoon. Operating with a more localized perspective this business oriented participant indicated higher levels of interest in examining local issues than their counterparts looking to act in a regional capacity. For this individual the current agri-industrial model is limiting with regards to the potential viability of local retail. One fundamental issue is the current system of distribution, which is predicated on a larger marketplace and not suitable for local retail:

Something we've always told them is the distribution system we have now is not setup for local because it's very regionalized... It's not set up to deal with local individuals. It's not efficient.

From the perspective of a local producer looking to retail in the local marketplace there is an acknowledgement that the current system does not provide the infrastructure required to facilitate success. While there is a distinct economic advantage for this individual to prioritize a transition away from the current model, it represents a business oriented perspective that is able to find value with the vision provided by the food charter and the concept of CFS. Another

concern voiced by this producer was the need to ensure economic viability with local retail. Developing a system that is sustainable for producers is a key tenant of CFS (Bellows & Hamm, 2003):

Because right now the food system is set up to get food to, on the shelf for consumers at the cheapest cost possible. So that means somebody is paying. Whenever you talk price, somebody is paying. Right now it's probably the producers.

Integration of this economic perspective and ensuring economic viability for producers, is also consistent with the vision of sustainability that is promoted in CFS.

The greater connection between this business member operating with a localized emphasis and the original aims of the charter document are noticeable. At the same time there remains a level of separation, notably with regards to farming practices and the creation of efficiencies:

People also equate local with small and if you try to become efficient and try to drive down your costs so you can compete with commodity products, you are considered big... They are saying that we are too big and we can't be regional or local or whatever we call ourselves. There's that balance when you look at technology and you create efficiencies, how exactly you do that and maintaining in the consumers' eyes the image they really want.

Establishing uniformity amongst organizations with such diverse orientations is extremely challenging. At the same time, understanding potential trade-offs and synergies may help facilitate effective targeting of members for recruitment moving forward. Working to minimize the extent to which underlying views and perspectives operate in direct opposition may serve to enhance the potential for successful collaborative outcomes.

4.1.2 Vision

The vision construct embodies two core elements: perception of process and perception of the partners. Delving into the themes emerging from the interviews, a diverse set of perspectives begin to emerge. Each committee member held individual impressions of the assessment process and the manner in which it was conducted. At the same time, there was a general consensus that the generated report was overly broad. The document itself failed to provide specific, actionable recommendations that many groups were looking to obtain. In lieu of specificity, the document provided broad, relatively long-term goals that would lead to the

promotion of FS in the City of Saskatoon. As communicated by one steering committee member, this was akin to providing the destination without clear directions:

I think some of the recommendations could be a bit more actionable. Kind of have serve an end goal written into each one... Not so open ended for some of them.

This sentiment was tempered slightly by an understanding that the process was being conducted with limited resources. Feedback following completion of the process shifted towards an acceptance of the results. The final report was perceived as delivering a quality product in the face of limitations. Where difference of opinion began to manifest was surrounding perceptions of the process itself and the other committee members at the table. This division occurred between those who identified as CFS proponents and those who were oriented more towards business motives.

Feedback from members looking to promote CFS had a tendency to emphasize the strengths of the process. The perception of these steering committee members was that the document itself could still facilitate the promotion of subsequent work in the food system, driving action towards CFS. For these members the long-term vision involves change at a structural level. This is change that is attained gradually (Kalina, 2001; Slater, 2007). This assessment process provides an examination of local food production and distribution required to facilitate eventual transition to a more sustainable food secure environment:

What we're trying to accomplish in this year is just an understanding of you know, how the city perceives local food, how it perceives food insecurity, how it's made adjustments to ensure that there is food security in the wider community, or what it hasn't done and where it may need to do some more.

While the process was perceived as providing value there was also some critical feedback provided by CFS inclined members. Most notably there was a very notable concern regarding the absence of a strong FN contribution to the process. In the Canadian context FN populations are disproportionately impacted by food insecurity (Willows, Veugelers, Raine, & Kuhle, 2009). Upon initiation there was a concerted effort made to secure FN representation, which unfortunately failed to attain the desired level of involvement. The project coordinator did make a concerted effort to engage with the FN population throughout the assessment process. A core aspect presented in CFS approaches is ensuring members of the community are integrated meaningfully into actions and processes that shape their food system (Food Secure Canada,

2011). Given the current impact of food insecurity among FN populations in Saskatchewan it is important they are afforded an opportunity to help shape endeavors designed to induce modifications in the food system. Failing to engage and integrate a strong FN perspective was communicated as a critical point that needed to be addressed moving forward:

I think we are all kind of feeling the gap of not having a really strong First Nations or Aboriginal presence on the committee, especially as First Nations are thinking more about agriculture and what they can do there.

In a very similar capacity there was a belief that the assessment process could have done a better job engaging with community members in general, specifically individuals in core neighborhoods. While these members were quick to express a level of appreciation for efforts made by the project coordinator to obtain these perspectives it did not alleviate a concern that these groups were not integrated into the process in a more significant capacity:

I would have liked to see more engagement from people in the core neighborhoods or the LAP neighborhoods in general. Unfortunately that didn't work out but our plan B was to have the focus groups with inviting all of the community associations to try to send someone. I think that worked pretty well as a backup plan.

CFS oriented members of the SRFA expressed a high degree of value for community engagement throughout the assessment process. At the same time they felt that the process may not yet have been at the point where emphasizing broad community engagement would be the best course of action, stemming from the fiscal constraints faced by the assessment process. This concession was accompanied by the tacit understanding that increased community engagement would accompany subsequent work in the Saskatoon food environment:

I actually almost think that in a way we were premature in going to the community. I think ... again I'm sad ... I think we should have done the consultations along our very key stakeholder groups and then that should have been where our focus was and then involve with the larger community in phase two.

While the emphasis on establishing community engagement was transitioned to subsequent work there was a desire to foster connections amongst steering committee members. Current best practices guiding the CFA process advocate the need to involve partners from throughout the food system; a sentiment also reflected in literature guiding the creation of FPCs (Burgan & Winne, 2012; Ross & Simces, 2008). Integration of diversity is heavily promoted in collaboration literature, functioning as a conduit to increased potential generation of collaboration synergy (Lasker & Weiss, 2003). For CFS oriented steering committee members

there was a high level of value attributed to the number of high profile business partners involved in the SRFA. Previous efforts had failed to adequately connect with these individuals and their involvement was viewed as adding a level of strength to the current process:

I know from what I have seen with food secure Saskatchewan and the Saskatoon Food Coalition that production side of things just isn't there... Pretty proud that we were involved and able to include that on the steering committee.

Bringing these business oriented partners to the table under the auspices of CFS work was perceived as adding considerable rigour to the process and its findings. In the context of food assessments and FPCs, this collaborative approach is emphasized, as it is perceived as a means to offset limited resources (Himmelman, 2001).

While the business inclined members of the SRFA expressed an appreciation for the quality of the work generated under the resource restrictions, there was concern expressed with the process and its focus. These members thought the project had extended beyond the capacity of the process.

You can't encompass everything. You can encompass a certain part of it. And I think right now is they bit off too much and when they bite off too much and you don't have a lot of time is you are going to get a lot of not real things there.

For business members this is not the continuation of existing work, it constitutes a single examination of the food system from an alternative perspective. These members did not perceive the assessment as a continuation of existing work and did not come to the process with a desire to modify the underlying structures of the food system, unlike their CFS oriented counterparts. Comments provided begin to personify the ideological deviations carried over through the organization construct. The notion of 'real' is something that emerged throughout the interview process with business inclined members. Further investigation revealed that 'real' meant financial considerations. From a business perspective a successful local product should be able to compete with price points generated in international markets. For these members, provision of local products at a competitive price point equates with providing opportunity for local farmers, while providing an opportunity for all individuals to eat local food. This perspective is reflective of a production oriented approach of FS favoured by these members (Howard & Edge, 2013). Failure to examine elements of cost in favour of alternative aspects of food production was perceived as ill advised:

The people around the table had a goal in mind, but the end result did not consider the financials. I raised that at every meeting and on every response this was being at and it was never really taken into consideration.

Business oriented members acknowledged the presence of a strong vision and intent brought by the initial members to the process. This vision was brought to the process through CFS ideology and previous work with the SFC. Given these statements and the incongruity between fundamental ideologies brought to this process, there are a number of questions that arise. Most significantly is ensuring the process was adaptive following the introduction of the business oriented members and their perceptions of the system. It is important to work towards a unified vision, avoiding a situation where member organizations are brought into the process simply to provide the appearance of a collaborative front (Backer, 2003; Brinkerhoff, 2002). While CFS oriented members expressed value in integrating the business input to the process, this was not a sentiment reflected by business members. They commented that contributions from their CFS oriented counterparts failed to account for the financial realities associated with operating in the current agri-industrial model, underscoring the incompatibility of the two ideologies:

And, they are very valuable input, very valuable ideas there, but neither university nor government works in the real world and knows the dollars and cents of it. And it's a lot of theory and nothing practical comes of it.

A more specific example put forward by business partners was a level of concern regarding the pace at which decisions are made by the CFS oriented partners coming from the government and university sectors. Business stakeholders presented their sector as moving at a very fast pace, adapting to capitalize on opportunity and that this was not something exhibited by the other partners:

Things are very fast in business. ... And dealing with the non-profits and the health regions and the school boards, it's a different world eh? And It's more of a slower world, okay. The decision making takes longer.

Business oriented committee members expressed a desire that work undertaken provide a clear pathway to realistic action. From the business perspective there was nothing in the developed report or the assessment to facilitate a transition from theory to reality. For these members any proposed initiatives at a local scale would need to develop a clear financial case for

operation. Business would be willing to engage with economically viable initiatives, but would be less inclined to participate with efforts lacking this financial grounding:

Because it's got to be viable. There's no free money. It's got to be viable. Business is business. Business isn't going to sell something on a food strategy for Saskatoon if they're not making money.

The concept of community engagement was another point of contention regarding perceptions of the process. CFS oriented committee members ascribed to an ideology that community members should be empowered to voice their opinions and have a level of control over their food system. Alternatively, committee members ascribing to a business perspective indicated that industry was reactive to the spending habits of the consumer, placing an emphasis on the displayed behaviours of the consumer, rather than what they claim to be willing to support. They argued that business is willing to act, but needs to see the impetus to move into new markets as dictated by potential economic opportunity:

I give reports that are from real thing that's spending dollars and what categories are growing in Canada North America. That's telling me where consumers are focusing on.

One committee member communicated the desire to integrate this business perspective in what could be an innovative manner:

It would be great to have somebody like one of the[community business] leaders ... so that they understand the business aspect and what the benefits and how to move that forward so there is a non-partisan business orientated person in the room...How do you develop that market and how do you make that market profitable for everybody involved? That's what we would need in that room.

While integration of a business member from outside the food system would have its limitations, specifically with awareness around the issues and nuances of the system, the sentiment is very clear; integration of a business thought process is integral to generate realistic outcomes for business oriented members and those looking to promote a production oriented solution to problems of food insecurity.

4.1.3 Value

The SRFA was initiated when members from the SFC approached the City of Saskatoon. These members were interested in expanding existing coalition work, specifically the implementation of the Saskatoon Food Charter. While it was adopted in principle by Saskatoon City council in 2002, the charter document has not had the desired level of impact on expanding municipal efforts to increase FS (Engler-Stringer & Harder, 2011). Involvement with this process was viewed as a means to not only advance awareness surrounding the issues of CFS, but to advance the movement in the municipal context:

I was involved with the Saskatoon Food Coalition... And just the folks that are sitting around the food coalition table, we knew that the Saskatoon Food Charter was really a document that, it didn't have enough traction to make changes and umm. I mean it's sort of a framework, it's a skeletal bones of how things should roll out, but it's always the details that need to be worked out. And so, we wanted to pursue that work further.

For CFS oriented members this process was important, serving as an integral step in efforts to transition towards a state of CFS. For these committee members there was a strong association between this process and previous work conducted in the Saskatoon food environment. The process was perceived as a continuation of this work, building on existing momentum in efforts to establish the infrastructure required to promote the local market. For these members this progression was reflective of other municipalities as they progressed to the development of FPCs and the promotion of CFS:

It was a good first step in exposing a bit more about an idea around assessment, the idea around different food policies, so there is some buzzwords that at least we can say, "Hey remember in 2012 and 2013 when we ..." You can use that as building history, right? People may say, "Yeah, but that didn't go anywhere," but you know what, we expanded the conversation from the Saskatoon Food Charter ... and Saskatoon Food Coalition.

CFS oriented committee members associated a level of value with the tangible aspects of the CFA process, specifically the development of the local food map. This product was viewed as a strong step in the promotion of local food products, contributing to access and retail opportunities:

I guess something else that was important to our organization, just going back a step, was that there be something really concrete and useable that comes with this as well as the recommendations, so it was, we really asserted the idea of having the map as part of it so there is something really tangible as well.

CFS oriented participants also associated value with the establishment of relationships with new partners in the business sector. Having an opportunity to integrate a diverse group of business representatives was identified as a shortcoming with prior initiatives. This perspective mirrors one of the commonly touted advantages of collaborative approaches, the ability to network and establish connections with new partners (Nowell, 2009). The absence of previous interaction was something that was important for some CFS inclined members, especially in relation to other municipalities with a more pronounced infrastructure supporting CFS initiatives:

We had other food assessment pieces from other jurisdictions, but it also seemed like those alliances had been in the works for some years beforehand. Here it was fairly obvious that we didn't have those alliances.

For the business oriented committee members this process was not associated with previous work; it simply provided an additional examination of the local food system. These partners became involved in the process to gather information and not necessarily to promote modifications to current practices:

So, this is just a piece of that puzzle. So the local industry is high on our initiatives, but this is a piece of that puzzle. They are all involved, this isn't going to be significantly higher than the local. The local is the peak of this and that falls under that.

For the member quoted above, developing the local market is a very important initiative. However, unlike the members coming to the process from the SFC, this person did not think that the assessment process constitutes an important step towards the growth and development of local food retail. Rather, the finished document provides an opportunity to develop additional insight into the perspectives of individuals operating in the food system:

It was more of a look and see what's going on, okay. It's kind of a different view. Where we are, like I deal with business every day, I deal with producers every day. Umm, I don't deal with the non-profits hardly and it's more of seeing what they are doing and understanding what they are doing and where they feel they need to be.

Having an opportunity to gather information and learning about the other organizations around the SRFA table became one of the more prominent outcomes of participation. Business oriented committee members were looking for outcomes with a high degree of specificity, in excess of the capabilities of the SRFA process. Perceptions of the document and content of the finished report were tepid, with a degree of hesitation as to its potential capability to induce

change. These comments were accompanied by a tacit acknowledgement that the value of the process was correlated to subsequent action and development moving forward:

Again I want to make sure I'm not too critical on this because I don't know if that document is going to accomplish much until it takes it to the next level which is to again connect the right people.

All participants explained that establishing connections and building on the process were imperative for success moving forward. At the same time, business oriented committee members reported their perceived limited value from the assessment process. Recommendations put forward by the SRFA process were viewed as impractical in the current agri-industrial model. For these partners the concept of increasing local production was feasible if conducted in the context of the current system. Business partners at the table emphasize the strides that have been taken to position Saskatchewan grown products in the current marketplace:

On a business level we've accomplished significantly more with our home grown Saskatchewan Taste the Difference program, than that document will have created in the next several years. That was just because we did address the issues that we talked about for the most part. We have dealt with the growers. We were able to put together something that would actually move forward and it worked.

The most significant aspect of this comment was the perceived limited viability of the process. This perspective was very different from that proffered by members of the steering committee looking to promote CFS. Perceptions of the value attributed to the SRFA process were markedly different amongst the partners at the table.

4.1.4 Engagement

For CFS oriented partners the limited engagement of their business counterparts was communicated as a core weakness of the assessment process. Throughout the SRFA there were issues associated with limited engagement and abdications. While not endemic to any singular orientation these engagement issues were most concerning for members ascribing to a CFS perspective:

I said the first meeting that the steering committee as a whole there's definitely some problems with attendance, views of people, people dropping off and people changing and that sort of thing.

For the CFS oriented members this assessment process represented a step towards larger systems change, facilitating a transition away from the agri-industrial model. Initiatives designed with the express intent of accomplishing systematic change require a greater level of commitment from its participants (Nowell, 2009). For CFS inclined participants there was a prevailing expectation of commitment and significance that accompanied them throughout formation and initiation of the SRFA. Watching the regression of commitment from business oriented members, brought to the assessment to provide a source of strength, was perceived as adversely impacting the process:

Ag and business oriented people that were missing. So that was certainly a disappointment I would say... if they are fading away then I think that definitely weakens the assessment.

CFS oriented participants further emphasized there was a specified agenda that was being put forward, one that they anticipated all members to commit to and support. Once again it is important that the process remain flexible to accommodate the diversity of ideology that was brought to the table and not simply look to maintain a selected vision (Brinkerhoff, 2002). These comments really do emphasize the notion that for CFS oriented committee members intended this process to provide an integral step towards the promotion of CFS and having partners that appeared not to appreciate or contribute to this opportunity was frustrating:

It's difficult when you see yourself pushing a certain agenda and you've invited other folks to be part of that, but if they don't have commitment and are bought into that process I don't know how well it's going to succeed.

There was a genuine curiosity regarding the limited attendance exhibited by business oriented committee members. From the perspective of one CFS oriented member the process was conducted in an open nature that afforded them ample opportunity to become involved and help shape the outcomes of the process. There was open musing with regards to the potential value business members obtained from their involvement in initiative:

If they say, "Well this doesn't have any value for us," what will happen to you then and why and you did have opportunity ... they did. They were still on the distribution list. Why didn't they send their feedback? They had opportunity to either be present in meetings or provide feedback, via e-mail or whatever if they needed to and I don't know if they did.

It becomes apparent that in the context of this collaborative process there is a distinct separation between members. This divide is driven by different ideologies and perceptions of what would ultimately be generated through involvement for the assessment process. CFS inclined members identified the CFA process as an integral component in the transition towards establishing a resilient local food system. On an ideological level the principles of the assessment process did not carry the same significance for business counterparts brought to the SRFA.

Alternatively, business oriented members expressed minimal concern regarding issues of engagement. For these individuals it was personal time constraints that were commonly cited as a limiting factor in increased involvement. These members cited the fast paced nature of the business environment as something that placed a high demand on their time. While there was an expressed desire to have been more involved in the process, their limited involvement was not perceived as having a significant impact on the process or its outcomes. These organizations viewed the SRFA as being conducted in isolation, a process that could be accomplished by the project coordinator. These members perceived the assessment in a more casual manner than their CFS oriented counterparts. As business inclined participants did not associate the process with structural change or some other more significant end point, a loose form of association was viewed as sufficient collaborative structure to attain the desired end (Backer, 2003):

You've got to wait for the outcomes and let the consultant do the work and get it done. Then look at the report. I know we have reportings and that people who are on that committee are very knowledgeable and to ensure that the project is moving forward as per the contract.

Business oriented participants indicated that their time commitment to the process was contingent on perceptions of the process providing value. In the context of the SRFA, inherent ideological differences between members appear to have limited efforts to establish a shared central vision that provides the benefits required for all parties to be willing to have a high level of commitment. From a business perspective, involvement with this process was correlated with economic potential:

If they notice a lot of business people haven't been able to attend it consistently, that is because of you know, things are very fast in business. Business is growing in Saskatchewan, things are happening and so, it's not that business people can't commit, it's that they will jump in when they see something happening and that's not going to work for business.

These members stated no desire to usher in a transformation of the current agri-industrial model. As a result business oriented participants did not associate value with activities designed to facilitate a transition towards alternative methods of food production and distribution. Continued involvement in collaborative ventures involves establishing a positive balance between the costs and benefits of participation (Nowell, 2009). For the majority of business partners at the table, participation in the SRFA was a personal venture. These individuals were not actually involved at the behest of their organizations:

This is a personal [project], that's not necessarily [supported by] corporate.

Failure to obtain support at the organizational level has implications with regards to resource utilization and other aspects of commitment. While this could present issues in subsequent work, it is not necessarily a major drawback in the context of the current assessment. A more pertinent issue is the perception of CFS ideology by organizations operating in the current agri-food model. One business representative abdicated from the assessment process as association with community oriented members and their ideology was perceived as detrimental:

I was starting to get worried about the, well I just have; work in an organization that is very business oriented and don't have a lot of patience or more the softer side. And, so yeah, it just, I decided I had better leave before they told me to.

In the context of the SRFA there was a discrepancy with regards to expected levels of engagement. This discrepancy is largely attributable to the perceptions of the assessment and its potential. The more contentious point is the current ideological divide that exists among community oriented members and their business counterparts. Implications of this division may prove limiting in efforts to connect partners from these sectors in future collaborative efforts.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Food assessments are growing in popularity in efforts to promote CFS (Ross & Simces, 2008). While they are currently guided by a number of best practices and guidelines (Pothukuchi et al., 2002), there is a need to identify the theoretical attributes of this process. Developing a strong theory base will allow research to transcend contextual challenges and develop a deeper understanding of aspects that shape the assessment process and experiences of those involved. The SRFA provided the auspices under which this quest for theoretical understanding could be undertaken.

5.1 Revisiting Research Queries

1. What are the overarching constructs in the Community Food Assessment process that contribute to valuing and promoting engagement for participating organizations?

Examination of value highlights a degree of heterogeneity between members coming to the process with a community orientation and those with a business perspective. For community inclined members the process was perceived as a continuation of existing food system work. Specifically, this process was identified as a means to further the efforts of the existing Saskatoon Food Charter. From this perspective the SRFA provided an integral step in establishing the infrastructure required to develop CFS in the City of Saskatoon. Conversely, business representatives involved in the assessment did not associate a similar level of potential value with the process. Business members indicated the assessment process was simply an examination of the food system and not necessarily the impetus to fuel subsequent action.

In the literature there is a large amount of value attributed to the creation of new partnerships and building connections among diverse participants (Hays et al., 2000). From a practical standpoint this integration is communicated as a means to establish efficient and coordinated approaches; contributing to outcomes that are beyond the capability of an organization operating independently (Backer & Norman, 2000). Building new relationships is

also presented as providing an additional point of value for organizations (Himmelman, 2001). In the SRFA there was some indication of these benefits, specifically in discussion with community inclined members. The extent to which business members were integrated with the process was a specific point of value for one participant. Unfortunately, this value was not expressed in discussion with business-oriented participants. Rather, this value was mitigated due to divergent perceptions of the current food system and the action that is required to make it sustainable.

The vision for the process, was found to play a significant role in determining whether value was achieved. All steering committee members shared the perspective that the developed report on the process was lacking the specificity required to facilitate immediate action. For community-oriented members, this limitation did not have significant implications for the perceived importance of the process. The assessment was still viewed as an integral step towards the development of the infrastructure and understanding required to promote CFS. The impact of limited resources did ultimately temper expectations, but not the perceived significance of the assessment process as a whole.

Business representatives communicated a higher degree of concern with the process, feeling the SRFA agenda was largely devoid of an association with the current realities of the agri-industrial model. Their prevailing viewpoint was that the breadth of examination adversely impacted the result. Failure to account for the economic implications of food system change in the recommendations decreased the potential application of the resulting report for these members. Value (or lack thereof) attributed to the process appeared to be strongly influenced by ideological perceptions of participating organizations and the food system itself.

Engagement was influenced by the value organizations associated with the process. The SRFA steering committee members are very active in their respective fields and, as a result, time was a precious commodity. For these members commitment was contingent on the process providing value for their involvement. Addressing the early constructs of the conceptual model and creating value for organizations involved represent the primary means to promote engagement.

One challenge brought forward in the discussion of engagement was the absence of organizational commitment to the process, with some representatives bringing an organizational perspective rather than an organizational commitment to the process. These committee members found it difficult to remain involved in the process without having established organizational

support. Imposition of additional structure, in the form of increased engagement or financial commitment, without firm organizational commitment would likely exacerbate the challenges faced by these members rather than promote engagement.

It is important to consider structural attributes when promoting engagement. Increased structure provides a tool that may be employed in efforts to attain higher levels of collaboration amongst members (F. D. Butterfoss et al., 1993). At the same time this increased structure is accompanied by an elevated cost of participation (Backer, 2003; Himmelman, 2001). In the context of the SRFA the process was developed to gather information on the Saskatoon food environment.

Effective collaborative ventures require establishing a balance between the costs and benefits of involvement (Himmelman, 2001). Looking to increase cost, through imposition of structure, cannot be facilitated without also increasing value. In the SRFA there was a distinct division in value associated with the process. For community oriented members, the perceived continuation of existing work and the SRFA as a conduit towards the promotion of CFS, brought with it a great deal of value. These participants associated the process with potential systems changes and were therefore willing to incur the additional costs required to facilitate these outcomes. Conversely, business representatives did not associate value with many aspects of the processes geared towards the promotion of CFS, largely due to their differing ideology. Without this additional value there was nothing to offset the increased cost associated with a process targeted towards eventual systems change.

Careful consideration is required when assessing value and engagement in the SRFA. The loose nature of the SRFA placed low levels of cost on the participants. This loose association was sufficient for the purposes of this assessment, which channeled most of the work through the project coordinator. While members reported a high level of satisfaction with the work generated, the loose structure limited the amount of interaction that occurred between participating organizations. Coalitions require time to build and establish the trust required to develop cohesion (Nowell, 2009), something that was not facilitated by this assessment and may translate to a lost opportunity to generate residual value from the process.

2. What role does collaboration play in the Community Food Assessment Process?

Literature guiding the CFA process frequently emphasizes the benefits and the need for a collaborative approach (Ross & Simces, 2008). Guidelines call for recruitment of individuals operating throughout the food system (Ross & Simces, 2008). In the SRFA a level of consideration was directed towards ensuring the steering committee integrated this diversity. This process brought together representatives with very different perspectives. These members brought with them an array of concerns regarding the current food system; and while the literature identifies collaboration as a formidable tool, a level of consideration is required when looking towards its application in the context of food systems initiatives.

It is important to understand the implications and potential of collaboration when structuring the CFS process. As previously identified (Diagram 2-2) the collaborative process can be perceived as occurring along a continuum. Collaborations with lower levels of organization and accountability carry a lower cost of association than those requiring a greater commitment. At the same time, these lower levels of organization are not intended to last, terminating after a short time (Backer, 2003; Rabinowitz, 2014). Higher levels of organization are typically employed in efforts to take action or attain a level of systemic change (Hays et al., 2000; Himmelman, 2001) and require an adherence to a more long-term vision. When member organizations have divergent perspectives about how the process will unfold there is the potential for animosity to develop (Backer, 2003).

In the SRFA process I observed the potential for conflict, with some committee members communicating frustration. At the same time the loose association of this process allowed all committee members to participate to a degree without coming directly into conflict and therefore allowing the process to continue. This deviation, though, has the potential to manifest as conflict should higher levels of collaboration be sought in the future without first ensuring a strong central vision is established to guide the process. Looking to address systemic issues and taking a long-term approach requires a strong central vision to guide the process, in addition to having organizational commitment (Rabinowitz, 2014).

Collaborations require time to build the connections that produce the desired synergistic outcomes. Given the limited time period afforded to the SRFA process, the potential to adequately forge and develop these bonds was limited. As a result the loose structure with which the process was conducted was fitting. The integration of diversity without a strong adherence to a central vision resulted in limited ownership, highlighted by several committee members not

being involved as representatives of their organizations. Absence of organizational commitment brought with it a set of distinct limitations; specifically an inherent absence of ownership and commitment to subsequent recommendations. For the purposes of the SRFA, an information gathering process, this loose level of association was feasible. If the desired outcome of the process is to facilitate more immediate action, or systems change, strong organizational commitment would be essential.

Despite efforts to integrate diversity, this assessment was missing several key perspectives. As identified by committee members during the interview process, perhaps most notable was the absence of a FN perspective. While an invitation was extended to several potential participants the process did not have a strong FN voice. The inclusion of this perspective is important, as FN people are disproportionately impacted by food insecurity in Canada (Willows et al., 2009). Any efforts to promote CFS moving forward should place emphasis on securing FN involvement early in the process. In a similar manner, the process had a rather limited level of community ownership. The CFA process was developed to provide members of the community with a voice in the food system (Food Secure Canada, 2011). In the SRFA community engagement efforts were largely limited by resource availability. At the same time, if community ownership is a priority it must be communicated as part of the central vision and addressed early in the process.

5.2 Summary

The SRFA has provided a unique opportunity to explore the CFS process. In many instances the process employed many of the current best practices highlighted in the literature governing food assessments. Efforts were made to integrate a high level of diversity and capture the perspectives of individuals operating throughout the food system. The manner in which these individuals came to the process was significantly different. Some members had a long history working with the SFC and transitioned to the work in a rather organic manner. Others members communicated they were ‘voluntold’ to participate in the process. This variance during recruitment set the stage for a level of underlying tension that permeated throughout the process. While a level of diversity was attained, it did not necessarily contribute to the process.

While a project charter was developed to guide the direction and material generated by the process, it did not necessarily provide the vision required for the participants at the table to reconcile their differences, a fundamental aspect cited in collaboration development (Rabinowitz, 2014). In many instances a level of tension was found between the perspectives of the different members. While collaboration does not seek to only recruit from a singular worldview, there was a high level of incompatibility between some perspectives at the table. This incompatibility could be traced to the larger systemic perspectives brought with organizations to the assessment process. In the context of food system work, a level of consideration needs to be directed towards fundamental perceptions of the food system itself.

While no participants directly reported conflict, there were signs of this tension beginning to manifest throughout the duration of this assessment. Much of this tension could be connected with perceptions of what the process would provide and the required contributions of committee members to attain the specified outcomes. For members coming to the process from the SFC, there was a vision that this process would provide something significant and function as a step towards promotion of CFS in Saskatoon. This desire for more concrete outcomes was accompanied by higher expectations for commitment, as made evident in expressed concern surrounding the dwindling commitment from business inclined membership. Conversely, business representatives viewed the process as a simple assessment operating through a project coordinator; higher levels of commitment during the process were not required.

It is important to keep in mind that in many instances the representatives at the table were not acting in any capacity for their organizations. This had an impact on the provision of resources and commitment to subsequent action. Future actions that are more conducive to systems change, which were desired by the community oriented members, would require an increased level of formalization and imposition of higher structure for the process (Backer, 2003; Hays et al., 2000). Without establishing commitment from the organizations involved, it would appear unrealistic to increase the required commitment from the organizations. Ensuring that the structure coincides with the vision of the process is imperative.

The collaboration literature documents a number of advantages associated with involvement, such as the promotion of new connections and networking opportunities (F. Butterfoss & Kegler, 2009; Rabinowitz, 2014); this was not emphasized by a number of members in the SRFA. In many instances there was no expression of interest in working with

members from divergent perspectives following completion of the assessment process. At the same time, the process was not structured to facilitate interaction between members with alternative views, because much of the responsibility for the process was left to the project coordinator. While this structure was efficient and members reported satisfaction with the completed work, it had an impact on the communication between committee members.

The SRFA was unable to integrate a FN perspective in the steering committee. This was communicated as a limitation and point of concern for several members. Both the CFA process and FPCs are tools employed in CFS endeavors to provide the community a voice to influence an increasingly globalized food system (Food Secure Canada, 2011). In Canada, FN peoples are disproportionately impacted by food insecurity (Willows et al., 2009). It is important that the FN perspective is integrated in any future endeavors in the food system. Despite the need to operate within the confines of limited resources, it is important that the core tenets of these processes are upheld.

It is important to remember that the SRFA was a short-term collaborative effort, designed to accomplish a single goal and was intended to be terminated following completion of the process. Current collaboration research examines how the structure and functioning of a collaborative process are correlated to distal impact in the community (F. Butterfoss & Kegler, 2009). While there is potential value in short-term collaborations, working towards generating residual benefit for involvement and establishing lasting value for participants should still be integral. A level of consideration is required to ensure the process is developed in a manner that facilitates these benefits.

5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

“Collaboration has been defined as an unnatural act between non-consenting adults. We say we want to collaborate, but what we really mean is we want to continue doing things the way we have always done them while others change to fit what we are doing”

Jocelyn Elders – Former US Surgeon General

Collaborative approaches, in the form of CFAs, have been employed with increasing frequency as a first step to promoting change in the food system. The quote provided serves as a warning, while collaborative approaches hold great potential to elicit change they can just as easily prove limiting. To date there has been limited examination of short-term collaborations

and their potential. Developing a strong theoretical understanding of the process and its potential is an integral step moving forward.

It will be important to identify how contextual elements influence the structure of the CFA process. A loose collaboration structure was adequate for the purposes of the SRFA and proved sufficient. This process was conducted with no firm ownership of commitment to act on recommendations presented in the report. What differences would be observed if the assessment was conducted for an existing food policy council, or had obtained financial commitment to act on developed recommendations? In conjunction with this structural contemplation a level of attention needs to be directed at the composition of members integrated into the assessment process. Current best practices place a level of emphasis on the integration of a diverse membership from various sectors throughout the food system. While these members are able to provide an array of perspectives they also come to the process with divergent ideologies. Could these divergent perspectives be accommodated in a more structured process? Correlating membership composition with intent would prove beneficial for guiding subsequent assessments.

Further consideration should also be directed towards the role of community ownership and involvement in the CFA process. Is the aim of the process to promote a level of awareness in the community, or is it perceived as a tool to develop partnerships that will provide a continued and lasting connection to the community and grassroots action? Finally what level of importance should be placed on promoting community ownership in relation to reconciling differences observed amongst committee members coming to the process with divergent ideological perspectives? There remains a great deal to learn about the short-term collaborative process, moving forward there is an opportunity to shape the process into a valuable tool for the promotion of food secure communities.

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APPENDIX A

Saskatoon Food Charter

Adopted in Principle by Saskatoon City Council, 2002

Canada stands committed to the United Nations Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights specifying the right of everyone to adequate food, and endorses a food security action plan stating “the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger” and “food security exists when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (Canada’s Action Plan for Food Security, 1998)

To meet this national commitment, and to make food security work in our community, the City of Saskatoon and other local organizations support the following elements as the basis for a Saskatoon Food Charter.

Food Security and Production

- Food is an integral part of the economy of Saskatoon and the surrounding area. A commitment to building bridges between urban and rural communities on food security will strengthen the food sector’s self reliance, growth and development.
- Local agriculture is important to producers and consumers alike. Urban and rural food security initiatives will preserve local agricultural production, and build on the mutual interdependence of producers and consumers. The Farmers’ Market and the Good Food Box serve as viable models of this interaction with local farmers being able to market their products directly, and consumers being able to access nutritious, wholesome food.
- Urban agriculture can be advanced through the establishment of community gardens that contribute directly to the economic, environment and social life of city residents.
- Food must be produced in a manner that is environmentally sustainable, safe for consumption and socially just.

Food Security and Justice

- Food is more than a commodity. It is a basic right. Every Saskatoon resident should have access to an adequate supply of nutritious, affordable and safe food without social and economic barriers. In Saskatoon, we must work with those communities most affected by lack of access to nutritious, affordable and safe food.

Food Security and Health

- Food security contributes to the physical, mental, spiritual and emotional well-being of residents.
- Nutrition education and consumption of wholesome, healthy foods are important factors in determining the overall positive health of the city’s population, and this begins with the promotion of healthy eating practices — as early as birth — with breast feeding.

Food Security and Culture

- Food brings people together in the celebration of family and community, strengthening links between diverse cultures and urban and rural communities, The preparing, eating and sharing of food engages individuals and families in a social and community fellowship that balances physical and spiritual needs.
- Food is a social good that sustains and supports us and our communities.

Food Security and Globalization

- Any international agreements entered into by our governments must respect the full realization of people’s right to adequate, nutritious, accessible, affordable, safe food at home and internationally. National, provincial and local governments must guarantee the right of communities and individuals to food security through supporting viable, sustainable, agricultural production and an equitable income distribution,

The fulfillment of a Saskatoon Food Charter relies on citizens participating directly in and promoting food security measures in their homes, their work places, their community, and in this process strengthening citizen involvement and concern.

Therefore, to develop and promote food security on our city, Saskatoon City Council will:

- Champion the right of all residents to adequate amounts of nutritious, safe, accessible, culturally acceptable food.
- Advocate for income, employment, housing, and transportation policies that support secure and dignified access to food.
- Ensure the safety of food and drinking water.
- Ensure convenient access to an affordable range of nutritious foods in city facilities.
- Adopt and promote food-purchasing practices that serve as a model of health, social and environmental responsibility and that support the local rural economy
- Promote partnerships and programs that support rural-urban food links and the availability of locally grown, healthy foods through the Farmers' Market, Good Food Box and other rural-urban initiatives.
- Protect local agricultural lands.
- Encourage community gardens, urban agriculture and the recycling of organic materials that nurture soil fertility.
- Support training and income generating programs that promote food security within a community economic development model.
- Support nutrition education through promotion of skills-based programs for the community and in schools
- Promote a yearly civic report card on how Saskatoon is achieving food security.
- Foster a civic culture that inspires support for healthy food for all.

These objectives will be achieved by working in partnership with community based organizations, community associations, Aboriginal peoples, resident groups, business organizations, trade unions, educational and health institutions and other levels of government.

This proposal for a Saskatoon Food Charter was developed through the Saskatoon Food Coalition with the involvement of the following groups: Saskatoon Farmers' Market, Oxfam, CHEP, Good Food Box, Community First, Saskatoon Friendship Inn, United Way, Core Neighborhood Youth Co-op, National Farmers Union, Quint Development Corporation, Saskatchewan Child Nutrition Network, Saskatchewan Food Security Network, Saskatoon Food Bank, Inner City Ministry, Organic Farmers Network and Saskatoon District Health.

APPENDIX B
BEHAVIOURAL REVIEW BOARD EXEMPTION



► Research Ethics Office
NRC/PBI Building Box 5000 RPO University
1607 – 110 Gymnasium Place Saskatoon SK S7N 4J8 Canada
Telephone: (306) 966-2975 Facsimile: (306) 966-2069

To: Rachel Engler-Stringer, PhD
Assistant Professor
Community Health and Epidemiology

Student: Scott Mantyka

Date: February 11, 2013

Re: BEH 13-38

Thank you for submitting your Study entitled: *"The Saskatoon Region Food System Assessment: Identifying Value for Participants in a Short-term Collaborative Effort"*. The REB Chair has reviewed this and determined that it is a program evaluation and exempt as per **Article 2.5 of the Tri-Council Policy Statement [2010]** which states "Quality assurance and quality improvement studies, program evaluation activities, and performance reviews, or testing within normal educational requirements when used exclusively for assessment, management or improvement purposes, do not constitute research for the purposes of this Policy, and do not fall within the scope of REB review."

It should be noted that though your project is exempt of ethics review, your project should be conducted in an ethical manner (i.e. in accordance with the information that you submitted). It should also be noted that any deviation from the original methodology and/or research question should be brought to the attention of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board for further review.

Please revise the consent forms to reflect an exemption from the REB or delete the section regarding REB approval.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Beth Bilson".

Beth Bilson, Chair
Behavioural Research Ethics Board
University of Saskatchewan

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW FRAME 1

This is the question frame for the first set of interviews. Please note that due to the methodology employed by this study that the interviewer may deviate from the script to explore questions pertinent to this project as they emerge from the discussion. Questions may also be rephrased and reiterated later in the interview process to attain clarity or reinforce a previous response.

Initial Questions

- 1) Tell me about your organization <emphasizing its mandate as it pertains to the Saskatoon Regional Food System>
- 2) Please discuss past experiences your organization has had working in collaborative initiatives <what area's? What were your experiences? – elaborate>
- 3) Tell me about how your organization became involved in the Saskatoon Regional Food Assessment (SRFA).
- 4) Could you please tell me the thought process your organization put into deciding to join this process <What contributed to your decision to join this process?>
- 5) What would your organization like to come from its involvement in the Saskatoon Regional Food System?
- 6) Please talk about how the objectives identified by the SRFA coincide with the mandate of your organization.
 - a. Are there elements that are not beneficial to your organization?
- 7) Has the experience working with other members of the steering committee exposed your organization to new knowledge or information about the food system? Please elaborate. <problems, potential solutions, etc.>
 - a. Has this exposure had any impact on your organization and its mandate?
- 8) How will the finished SRFA report be used by your organization?
- 9) Is your organization satisfied with the direction the assessment has taken to date? What are perceived strengths and areas for improvement?

CCAT Questions

Lead agency <Omit when interviewing CHEP>

- 1) Has your organization previously had contact/worked with CHEP Good Food Inc. <please discuss those projects, experiences>

- 2) Does CHEP Good Food Inc. have a mandate that works well with your organizational mandate?
- 3) Please discuss CHEP Good Food Inc. and its efforts in organizing and coordinating the project to date? <Try to get the participant to rate as strong, weak, etc. and elaborate.>
 - a. Is it the appropriate organization to initiate and drive this process?

Coalition Membership

- 1) Has your organization worked with other members of the steering committee prior to this project? <Please elaborate on those projects and experiences>
- 2) Are there members of the steering committee your organization has never met/interacted with prior to this process?
- 3) Does the steering committee contain an appropriate membership to address the objectives outlined in the project charter?
 - a. What elements are missing/should be added to facilitate success?
- 4) Do you envision your organization working with any members of the steering committee on projects in the future?
 - a. If yes: are these connections that previous existed, or the result of involvement with this project?
- 5) Are there any members of the steering committee your organization feels should not be involved in this assessment? <mandates differ too significantly, they are wanting the process to move in another direction etc.>
- 6) Has your organization had meaningful contact with all other members of the steering committee?

Coalition Processes

- 1) Please describe the communication between your organization and other members of the steering committee.
- 2) Has your organization been involved in the decision making process?
 - a. To a level you are content with? <Do you feel your organization has had input on shaping the objectives?>
 - b. Are there objectives you are unhappy with? <describe the processes that led to their inclusion, compromise? Etc.>

- 3) Describe the process of pooling resources and expertise, is it well managed?
- 4) Have you had any conflicts/disagreements with the other participating organizations?
 - a. If yes: How were these issues resolved?

Coalition Structures

- 1) Has the role of your organization/other steering committee members in this assessment been clearly outlined?
- 2) Are the expected organizational roles appropriate? <Please elaborate>
- 3) Is your organization collaborating with other committee members to fulfill its expected contributions? <Please discuss this experience>
 - a. Are other organizations contributing meaningfully <context of both time and resources>?

Member Engagement

- 1) Is this project something that is important to your organization?
- 2) Please describe the resources allocated by your organization to this process (time and money)
- 3) Are you satisfied with the work to date and your level of involvement? <please elaborate>

Concluding Questions

- 1) For your organization, what has been the most important aspect of involvement in this Assessment? What impact has this experience had on your organizational mandate/outlook as it pertains to food in the Saskatoon region?
 - a. What are the other elements of value your organization has taken from the process to this point?
- 2) Moving forward what direction/changes would you like to see from the SRFA? <Please elaborate on why you would like to see these changes>
- 3) Is there anything else that I should know/understand about your organization and its involvement in the SRFA?
- 4) Is there anything you would like to ask me?

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW FRAME 2

Following the completion of the first interview process all materials were subjected to a grounded theory coding process. From this analysis a set of general themes began to emerge. The intent of the second interview was to facilitate further exploration of these themes from the perspective of the SRFA steering committee members. In an effort to promote generation of rich data this interview was guided by thematic inquiry, rather than specific questions. In all instances the interview was open to allow for additional examination of aspects members wanted to bring forward and discuss.

Themes for exploration

1. Experience

- Strengths of the process and benefit of involvement.
- Persistent concerns or limitations associated with the process.

2. Limitations

- Thoughts on content developed in the SRFA assessment document.
- Any aspects that proved detrimental to the assessment process or the content generated.

3. Vision

- Did this process generate something that will provide value for your organization?
- What future actions would you like to see come from the SRFA process.
- What is required to facilitate future action? Is future action feasible?
- Ownership of report and responsibility to spur action in the regional food system.

4. Local

- Examination of how the organization perceives local food production.
- What is the ideal structure of a local food system?
- Are social considerations a factor to be taken into consideration?

5. Engagement

- Was the level of engagement what you expected?
- What aspects contributed to your limited involvement with the SRFA process?
- Is the committee member representing their organization? What is the organization perspective of the process (is there support)?

6. Membership

- Thoughts on the membership composition and areas that require recruitment.

7. Collaboration

- Was the leadership in place to facilitate a successful process?

- Is there any value to the development of new relationships?
- What are potential interactions with these members moving forward?

SWOT Analysis

Strengths •	Weakness •
Opportunities •	Threats •

PESTL Analysis

Political •	Environmental •
Social •	Technological •
Legal •	

APPENDIX E

SRFA EVALUATION DOCUMENT – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document provides an evaluation of the Saskatoon Regional Food Assessment, examining the actions taken during the assessment process and the experiences of the steering committee members. Evaluation of the assessment process involved a comparative examination of the content in the developed report in relation to the proposed project deliverables outlined in the project charter. The experiences of the steering committee members were evaluated through two open-ended interviews, conducted during this assessment. These interviews examined individual experiences working as part of the assessment team. Additionally, a SWOT analysis was conducted to provide a general feeling for the process and report, while identifying changes required to keep the process moving forward in a progressive manner.

The comparative evaluation of the developed report indicated that only 14 of the 37 designated deliverables were fully satisfied, with an additional 8 being addressed in some capacity. Rather than indicating insufficient work, these findings serve to display the fluid nature of this assessment process. The focus of the assessment was consistently evolving to examine areas of interest that arising from this process. There was a great amount of additional information that was included in the report that was not initially specified in the initial project charter. This evaluation provides a means to assess initial areas of interest that still require examination.

Discussions with the steering committee members brought with them a general tone of satisfaction. Committee members expressed a high level of satisfaction with the finished document and the work of the consultant to pull everything together. Despite the optimistic nature of this feedback, there were distinct undertones of concern. Primarily, members made note of limited engagement from specific members throughout the process. Additionally, there were distinctly different visions for the role the developed document should play and a general concern that at present, there was no plan developed to guide subsequent steps.

Findings from the evaluation process were then integrated with a literature review on Food Policy Councils in an effort to produce a set of recommendations to effectively work towards the implementation of the Saskatoon Community Food Council, the primary action item from the assessment report. This process led to the creation of 6 recommendations, which are as follows:

1. Establish a Saskatoon Community Food Council. Look to structure the council in a manner that facilitates the development of small action oriented groups, while maintaining a connection with other representatives throughout the food system. The City of Saskatoon should provide some form of commitment to the council from its inception.
2. Clearly define scope of operation for the developed council. Establish specific recommendations for subsequent action, including the identification of measurable indicators. Work to situate the impact of these goals within the broad context of the regional food system.
3. Work to communicate goals and objectives of food councils to membership during recruitment phase. Integrate an educational component that runs through the process,

developing awareness and understanding of potential action. Work to foster commitment and engagement amongst the members.

4. Select a membership that provides a broad, balanced perspective of the food system. Define the level at which the SCFC will operate and look to recruit representatives operating at that level.
5. Look to connect with other regions in an effort to identify continuity in developed food system policies.
6. Building connections with the community to explore specific food system issues. Using the council as a means to provide a conduit to the needs of the community as they pertain to the food system in Saskatoon.

When considering contextual elements, the Saskatoon Regional Food Assessment serves as a strong platform for work in the Saskatoon food system. It brought together partners working at various stages throughout the food system. The process served as a forum, bringing together many different perspectives, working towards lasting and impactful change in the local food system. At the same time, it is imperative that subsequent action is taken, to ensure that momentum gained through this process is effectively utilized and developed materials are put to use in efforts to elicit positive change in the local food system.

APPENDIX F

KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION

Prior to completion of this study a set of recommendations was generated as part of the evaluation document (Appendix F). At this time the findings generated through this research venture may be applied, further refining these recommendations for subsequent action and creation of the Saskatoon Food Policy Council (SFPC).

1) Clarify the desired level of operation for the developed SFPC.

The current food system is diverse and expansive and in the SRFA much of this breadth was observed. Steering committee members came to the process from different sectors of the food system and brought with them different levels of desired action. From discussion with steering committee members there was not a significant amount of perceived value associated with actions targeting areas of the food system that did not coincide with the operational level of their organizations. A large part of building a unified membership and a strong central vision will involve regulating recruitment to those that look to act at the same level in the food system.

It is important to understand the ramifications associated with refining the operational level of the SFPC. Diversity in membership is still something that holds great value for developing a rounded perception and strengthening action in the food system. At the same time, this diversity should come from organizations operating in different capacities within the food system continuum. While recruiting in this manner may limit the number of organizations that may be brought to the table it will help ensure involved come with a greater level of interest and commitment to the issues tabled for discussion and subsequent action. Targeting a specified level of action will help develop a focused approach and continuity in efforts to elicit change in the expansive food system.

2) Specify the intent and structure that will guide the operation of the developed SFPC.

Coming out of this process it was evident the organizations involved did not share a similar vision for what would come from involvement in the assessment. While this ambiguity did not have an adverse impact on the product and quality of the assessment process it did expose potential threats to future endeavors. Specifically, there was a level of expressed concern with dwindling member engagement that was beginning to permeate through in discussion with some steering committee members. If the developed SFPC were operating with the intent to develop programs, or promote systematic change a higher degree of organization would be required (Backer, 2003). Limited engagement from the membership at this point would be more than an inconvenience or a concern; it would in fact be detrimental to the process.

Increased structure and commitment of membership is a key component to facilitating action in a collaborative venture (Backer, 2003). At the same time, increasing the level of required commitment is also placing additional cost on participants (Backer, 2003; F. Butterfoss & Kegler, 2009). Looking to integrate unwarranted levels of collaboration than required generates additional costs for participants, creating inefficiencies (F. Butterfoss & Kegler, 2009; F. D. Butterfoss, Goodman, & Wandersman, 1996). Identifying what the SFPC is looking to accomplish will provide the template for subsequent levels of collaboration, with the process being structured accordingly.

3) Recruit members of diverse orientation that are able to identify with the vision and intent of the developed SFPC.

In literature guiding food systems work, the value of collaboration is frequently emphasized (Pothukuchi et al., 2002; Ross & Simces, 2008). This process found value in diversity, but also the need for a higher degree of consideration when building diversity into the process. In this process the potential ramifications of integrating incompatible views was most evident in the form of an abdication by one business member. This resignation served to embody a level of instability that was running congruent to involvement for many individuals. In some instances the individuals were not at the process at the behest of their organizations; something that would prove limiting when looking to make use the resources of these members to facilitate action. In any capacity, communicating the central vision of the process should provide the leverage to recruit committed member organizations to the process. It is also important that recruitment brings the commitment not only of the individual member, but their organization as well. The impetus for this aspect of the recommendation is reflected in the challenge expressed by SRFA steering committee members remaining involved in the process without having the support of their organizations. These challenges were proffered by organizations of both business and community orientation. Attaining a level of commitment from higher in the organization should help promote engagement while developing a level of consistency for the fledgling SFPC.

These comments are not advocating that contact with member organizations outside of the operational vision of the SFPC should be avoided, quite the contrary. This process revealed the extent understanding and communication could be improved between members of community inclination and those operating with a business perspective. Emphasis should be directed to promoting discussion between these sectors. This dialogue should be fostered outside of the central functioning of the SFPC. Core members require a level of identification with the larger vision and intent guiding the SFPC.