What’s Stopping Us? Identifying Barriers to the Local Food Movement Using Ontario, Canada as a Case Study

by

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Abstract

The local food movement has been offered as an alternative to the conventional food system. This thesis identifies the barriers that are constraining the local food movement using the case study of Ontario, Canada, by performing qualitative analysis of informal interview responses. In addition to generating a comprehensive account of the barriers constraining local food, barriers to local food procurement in the institutional context are also identified. Findings suggest that the barriers to the local food movement can be related to a lack of access, lack of resources, poor governance structures, poor information sharing and uncooperative relationships between local food actors. I argue that these barriers are reflective of the broader challenges associated with attempting to create food systems change from within the dominant system. Daunting as they may be, they can be overcome in an incremental, pragmatic way. Nineteen recommendations are made to this end.
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List of Acronyms

AIT – (national) Agreement on Internal Trade
BPS – Broader Public Sector
BPSIF – Broader Public Sector Investment Fund
CETA – Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (refers to the Canadian-European Union CETA)
CFIA – Canadian Food Inspection Agency
CSA – Community Supported Agriculture
DM – Direct Market, Direct Marketing
FM – Farmer’s Market
FPC – Food Policy (or Security) Council (or Coalition or Committee)
GTA – Greater Toronto Area
NAFTA – North American Free Trade Agreement
OMAFRA – Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs
RFP – Request for Proposals
SFSC – Short Food Supply Chain
SSHRC – Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
WTO-AGP – World Trade Organization Agreement on Government Procurement
Chapter 1
Introduction

Food is relevant to everyone; everyone eats. Food systems research, therefore, is broadly important, as everyone has a direct interest in the system that produces his or her food. This thesis will examine the local food movement: a social movement that attempts to improve the sustainability of the systems that produce our food by decreasing the distance between food production and consumption. The purpose of this thesis in particular, is to examine the factors that are currently constraining the growth and success of the local food movement. This chapter will introduce local food systems research, outline the research objective of the thesis, outline the case study and finally outline the structure of the thesis.

Much scholarship has been focused in recent decades on understanding the food system that is currently dominant, and produces much of our food in the developed world (see for example Bowler, 1992; Friedmann & McMichael, 1989; McMichael, 1994; Roberts, 2008). This system relies on large, industrial farms and processing plants to produce food products for large restaurant chains and supermarkets where the majority of North Americans obtain their food (Metcalf Foundation, 2008). Oligopolies of large firms dominate at all stages of food production and distribution: in Canada, only four retailing giants dominate 70% of the grocery market and a single firm (Loblaw Companies Ltd.) controls 35% of the market alone (Barndt, 2008). These chains source their offerings though large suppliers from around the globe to ensure a consistent, year-round supply of a large variety of food products.

Food studies research has also revealed numerous negative impacts that the conventional food system has on the environment and social justice (Harrison, 2008; Schlosser, 2002; Weis, 2007). These negative outcomes bring to question the long-term sustainability of the conventional food system. In response to these failings of the conventional food system, a body of scholarship and practice has developed around the notion of creating an alternative food system (Kloppenburg, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996; Whatmore, Stassart, & Renting, 2003). Within this context, food system localization has been proposed as a more sustainable alternative to the conventional food system (Friedmann & McMichael, 1989; Hendrickson & Heffernan, 2002; Hinrichs, 2000; Kloppenburg, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996). Local food systems allow communities to regain control over the production and consumption of their food, support the livelihoods of local
farmers, and resist the strategies of conventional food systems that produce negative social and environmental outcomes (Allen, FitzSimmons, Goodman, & Warner, 2003; Friedmann & McMichael, 1989; Hendrickson & Heffernan, 2002; Kloppenburg, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996). The popularity of the local food solution is reflected in the Oxford American Dictionary’s choice to crown ‘locavore’ the word of the year in 2007 (Rudy, 2012).

Despite its promise, the local food movement has been unsuccessful to date in achieving a fundamental transformation of the food system. Many positive steps towards change have been borne of local food initiatives, however, the conventional food system remains dominant. There is a need to better understand the reasons for this lack of success, so that the alternative and local food movement can move past constraints and continue the project for positive food systems change. The identification of the barriers constraining local food work is both a practical exercise requisite to removing these obstacles, and a fruitful place to interrogate the efficacy of current strategies for food systems change as they are practiced at the local scale.

This thesis examines the barriers that are constraining the local food movement, using Ontario, Canada’s local food movement as an empirical case study. The province of Ontario is home to 38% of Canada’s residents (Statistics Canada, 2012a) and 7.9% of its farmland (Statistics Canada, 2008a; Statistics Canada, 2008b). It is the province with the highest number of farms, although differences between the 2006 census of agriculture from the 2001 census of agriculture show that the number of larger farms is increasing, the number of farm operators decreasing and the area of farmland is also decreasing (Statistics Canada, 2012b). Traits such as the increasing number of larger farms operated by fewer farmers mimic the concentration identified earlier in the Canadian retail sector.

A local food movement has developed in Ontario in response to the dominant conventional food system and its negative outcomes, including corporate concentration in the food system and the loss of farmers and farmland. The Metcalf Foundation (2008) describes a local food movement in Ontario that was working “behind the scenes” for many years, until the fall and summer of 2007 when local food emerged as a popular, mainstream trend in Ontario. Since then, numerous publications, reports, and research initiatives have brought attention to the growing number of people interested in consuming more local food, and the growing number of initiatives being developed to meet those demands.
Ontario is an ideal case study for the examination of the barriers to local food systems because its agri-food sector exhibits all the traits of the conventional food system, but an active local food movement exists in parallel to this system, working for change. This thesis will build on a body of research published in reports and other grey literature that has begun to identify some of the factors that are constraining the growth of the local food movement in Ontario (Carter-Whitney, 2008; Carter-Whitney & Miller, 2010; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Metcalf Foundation, 2008; Mount et al., forthcoming). While this work is important, the barriers identified in it are incomplete and scattered across different documents. In addition, while numerous studies (Baker, 2010; Carter-Whitney, 2008; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Metcalf Foundation, 2008) advocate for local food procurement in public institutions such as government offices, schools, hospitals, etc., little research has investigated the barriers to local food procurement faced by institutions.

The primary objective of this thesis is to identify a comprehensive list of barriers constraining the success of the local food movement in both the private and institutional context. I perform a qualitative analysis of two datasets derived from semi-structured interviews to achieve this end (see chapter three for a more detailed discussion of data and methods). My findings fill the gaps in the existing literature on the barriers to the local food movement by a) drawing together a comprehensive account of the barriers to the local food movement and how they interact and b) by identifying the barriers that constrain local food procurement in public institutions (hospitals, schools, childcare centres, and municipalities), and how they mirror and differ from the barriers that constrain local food initiatives outside of the broader public sector. In addition, I develop a typology for identifying the core constraints that barriers to the local food movement relate to, identifying access, resources, governance & bureaucracy and information and relations as the four banners under which the barriers to the local food movement can be categorized.

The typology I develop to organize the barriers to local food makes an important contribution to our understanding of the barriers constraining the local food movement and possibilities for moving beyond these constraints. Organizing a comprehensive list of barriers constraining the local food movement by the core challenge at the heart of each constraint (access, resources, governance & bureaucracy and information & relations) highlights the interconnectedness of the
barriers constraining the local food movement. By facilitating the identification of interactions between barriers, this typology helps explain the tenacity of barriers that still constrain the local food movement despite having been identified in previous work. Individual barriers cannot be fully overcome with solutions targeted at single barriers, because of the way that the interconnections between barriers exacerbate these constraints and limit possibilities for solutions. I argue that the interconnectedness of the barriers constraining the local food movement reflects the difficulties attendant to the project of working for food systems change from within the constraints of the system to be changed. Due to these challenges, fully overcoming the barriers identified herein as constraining the local food movement would require a complete overhaul of the current, conventional food system. While this goal is not feasible in the short to medium term, I argue that nineteen pragmatic, feasible recommendations to overcome the barriers to local food should be implemented as a part of an incremental, long-term strategy for holistic food system transformation.

The structure of the thesis is as follows. First I summarize the relevant literature on food systems studies to provide the context for the local food movement, its objectives, and the barriers that have thus far been identified as constraining its growth in chapter two. Next I discuss the data and methods I use to identify the barriers that are constraining the local food movement in the Ontario case study in chapter three. In chapter four, I present the empirical results of this analysis. I conclude the thesis in chapter five with a discussion of the interconnections between barriers made apparent by the typology described in chapter four, a summary of recommendations for overcoming these obstacles and a discussion of the broader challenges of creating food systems change from within a dominant system, that are reflected in the barriers identified as constraining the local food movement.
Chapter 2
Local Food for Global Challenges: A Literature Review

As the objective of this thesis is to gain a better understanding of the barriers that are constraining the local food movement, it is important to appreciate the aims of the local food movement and the context in which it works and faces constraints. This section provides a more detailed background on the impetus and rationale for the local food movement, the initiatives that have been employed to mobilize it, the challenges that have been identified in the existing literature, as well as the gaps in this literature that this thesis will fill.

First, I outline how the conventional food system is set up to encourage the singular pursuit of capital accumulation and how this emphasis results in an unsustainable and unjust food system. Next I visit the alternative food systems literature to draw out the vision for a good food system that would correct the failings of the conventional system. Third, I explain why the local scale has been rationalized as the most appropriate scale at which to forward the alternative food project, despite critiques that question its effectiveness. Next, I identify the local food initiatives that have been employed to forward the local food movement, most of which are market-based strategies. I then use the critical scholarship on the effectiveness of market-based alternative food initiatives to elucidate the challenges attendant to the project of food systems change. Finally, I conclude the chapter by reviewing the existing literature on the barriers to the local food movement, and identifying gaps to be filled by this thesis.

2.1 The Conventional Food System

What is alternative food? The most obvious way to answer this question is to describe that which alternative is alternative to, and so it is worth detailing in brief those characteristics of the conventional food system that many find so unpalatable (Mount (2012). The conventional food system is widely recognized as highly industrialized, increasingly corporatized, global in expanse, and operating as an advanced capitalist sector. In this system, the natural and social processes of agricultural production and consumption are subjected to the industrial logics of economic efficiency and capital accumulation, with negative implications for society and the environment.
Industrial capitalism transforms agriculture into a vehicle of capital accumulation, and actors within it rely on several strategies to maximize this outcome. That negative social and environmental outcomes are also produced by these strategies is not intended by these actors, but rather symptomatic of this system. Appropriation of natural processes by industrial processes and substitution of natural inputs with industrial inputs are twin strategies employed to “outflank nature[‘s constraints]” (Murdoch, Marsden, & Banks, 2000, p. 116). These processes accumulate capital by extracting more marketable goods from nature than she might otherwise yield, and creating additional markets for industrial goods that replace and outperform natural processes (Goodman, Sorj and Wilkinson ctd. in Friedmann & McMichael, 1989; Guthman, 2011; Murdoch, Marsden, & Banks, 2000). These goods include fossil fuel energy, farm machinery, specialized seed or livestock breeds, chemical pesticides and fertilizers.

Farm production and labor processes are specialized to gain greater efficiencies and economies of scale (Bowler, 1992). Concentration and consolidation is also pursued to gain economies of scale and eliminate competition, resulting in fewer but larger units of production (Bowler, 1992; Grey, 2000; Marsden & Whatmore, 1994; Qualman, 2011). These remaining units gain market power to set the conditions for exchange with other supply chain actors in self-advantageous ways (Grey, 2000; Guthman, 2004c; McMichael, 2006; Weis, 2007). For example, oligopolies of input suppliers upstream of producers can set high prices for inputs, and food retailers and manufacturers downstream of producers can set low prices for farm outputs. This results in a ‘price-cost squeeze’ (Bowler, 1992; Weis, 2007), which reinforces the need for producers to engage in capital accumulation strategies (namely intensified appropriation, substitution and specialization) in order to remain in business.

Finally, financialization is one of the more recent capitalist processes to affect the agrofood sector. Financialization refers to the increasing importance of finance capital, markets, and institutions in capital accumulation strategies in the agrofood sector (Burch & Lawrence, 2009). Financialization has grown in importance in recent decades; both facilitating increased concentration in the transnational agrofood sector (Marsden & Whatmore, 1994), as well as being seized by the agrofood industry as another opportunity for capital accumulation through the sale of finance capital (Burch & Lawrence, 2009).
These strategies are effective in achieving their intended end (i.e., capital accumulation). However, they also produce unintended negative consequences. The appropriation and substitution of natural with industrial processes and inputs, for example, disrupts fragile ecological systems and causes environmental degradation (Weis, 2007). Concentration and consolidation exacerbate the inequitable distribution of wealth and risk among actors in the agrofood industry. This situation is unjust as wealth is generally distributed disproportionately to large, consolidated firms and risk is generally distributed disproportionately to smaller producers (Stull, 2000). A growing alternative movement is working to overcome and eliminate these negative consequences by inserting normative values into food production and exchange. These values are the subject of the next section.

2.2 The ‘Good Food’ Ideal

Sage (2003) puts forth a definition of ‘good food’ to describe the types of foods that the alternative food movement is invested in making available for everyone. In keeping with the definition of alternative as ‘not conventional’, Sage begins his definition of good food by stating that it is the opposite of ‘bad food’, defining bad food is generic food produced with the industrial logic of economic efficiency, without much regard for the consequences to animal, ecological, or human, well-being (p. 51).

Building off of Sage’s definition, I use this notion of ‘good food’ to describe the attributes and characteristics of the food system that the alternative food movement (writ large) advocates for. Herein these attributes are referred to as good food goals, values or ideals. This ‘wish list’ brings together a normative vision of the ideal food system built upon the principles of social justice and sustainability: the good food ideal (see Table 1).

A socially just food system treats food as a fundamental human right (Hamm & Bellows, 2003; Wiebe & Wipf, 2011). It ensures that all people have dignified means to access fresh, palatable (Sage, 2003), safe, culturally appropriate food in amounts adequate to maintain health (Feenstra, 2002; Guthman, Morris, & Allen, 2006; Hamm & Bellows, 2003; Kortright & Wakefield, 2011). It also provides living wages and just working and living conditions for all farm and food system workers, including farmers and other laborers (Feenstra, 2002; Guthman, 2004c; Harrison, 2008). Finally a socially just food system is democratic and participatory (DeLind, 2011;

A sustainable food system maintains ecological integrity (Murdoch, Marsden, & Banks, 2000) as well as preserves agricultural land (Hamm & Bellows, 2003) and animal welfare (Sage, 2003). Sustainability is comprised of a “triple bottom line” of environmental, social and economic sustainability (Maxey, 2006, p. 231), so a sustainable food system is economically viable as well as being socially just and environmentally sustainable. The inclusion of economic considerations in sustainability differs from the goal of capital accumulation in that “to be sustainable something must be simultaneously economically, socially and environmentally sustainable” (Maxey, 2006, p. 231, my emphasis) whereas capital accumulation’s singular focus on profit is the very thing that creates negative outcomes for the environment and society.

Table 1 Defining Good Food

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good Food Is…</th>
<th>A Good Food System…</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Fresh and tasty</td>
<td>- Preserves ecological integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Safe</td>
<td>- Provides living wages and just living and working conditions to all food and farm workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Healthy and nutritious</td>
<td>- Is democratic and participatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Culturally appropriate</td>
<td>- Treats food as a human right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Equitably accessible in dignified ways</td>
<td>- Preserves agricultural land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Protects animal welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Maximizes community self-reliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Is economically viable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many would agree that the above section has described an ideal food system in a perfect world. In a real and imperfect world however, many of the same commentators rightly point out that it can be difficult to pursue – let alone accomplish – all of these goals simultaneously (Hassanein, 2003). Furthermore, not all actors agree with all of the goals listed in this section, and even those who broadly support all of these goals will invariably prioritize them differently, according to their own experiences, knowledge, interests and opinions. The task of creating a good food system is enormous, and one of the biggest challenges is for any one initiative to focus on all of the elements discussed above simultaneously, given that each individual and organization is constrained by limited capacity.
Organizations and initiatives prioritize these goals based on the constituents they represent and
get about achieving them in ways that are also shaped by their assets and capacities (Guthman,
Morris, & Allen, 2006). While they may care about other goals being achieved, they often do not
have the capacity to forward these goals themselves (Andrée, Ballamingie, & Sinclair-Waters,
forthcoming; Guthman, Morris, & Allen, 2006; Hassanein, 2003). The result is a pervasive
“single issue advocacy” approach where problems created by the conventional food system are
addressed by alternative organizations in isolation (Hassanein, 2003, p. 82). Consequently,
individual goals pursued simultaneously by different actors can become competitive and even
contradictory in a context of limited resources and limited space to create oppositional change
within the confines of a powerful dominant system that is unsupportive of these goals (Guthman,

2.3 Is Local Food Good Food? The Rationale for Local as
Alternative

The local food movement is one of the more recent manifestations of the alternative food project.
Hinrichs (2000, p. 295) calls the local food movement the “stepchild of sustainable agriculture”,
implying that it is one way in which the struggle for sustainable food systems change has been
fought. The rationale for the local scale as the appropriate site for food systems resistance, as
well as critiques of these arguments will be presented in this section.

Scale is not an ontological category that exists in an objective and neutral way. According to
Brenner, it is a widely accepted truism in human geography that scale is socially constructed
(2001, p. 599). Scales are “artificial division[s] of space” (Isin, 2007, p. 214) that are fluid,
malleable and subject to change and re-transformation (Swyngedouw, 1997). Importantly, scales
are also fundamentally relational, in that they cannot be fully understood without taking into
consideration how they interact, and are mutually constituted with other scales (Brenner, 2001).
Scalar arrangements refer to particular constructions of multiple, interacting scales. Once a scalar
arrangement has been produced and well established there is a tendency for it to socially
reproduce itself (Born & Purcell, 2006; Marston, 2000) resulting in a scalar fix (Brenner, 2001).
In scalar fixes, activities at some scales tend to dominate over activities at other scales, to the
point where future restructuring into new scalar arrangements is influenced heavily by the
present scalar arrangement (Brenner, 2001). The better part of the past century has been
dominated by a scalar fix in which activities at the national scale dominate over activities at other scales (Born & Purcell, 2006).

The particular ways in which scales are constructed and structured by social interactions, and the forms they take have tangible material consequences (Marston, 2000). Material consequences arise from the fact that certain social agents are empowered by different scalar arrangements to forward their agendas with relative ease compared to social agents not empowered by the scalar arrangement (Born & Purcell, 2006). Therefore, there are no inherent qualities of any given scale or scalar arrangement that produce certain outcomes, but rather the social actors who are empowered at any given scale shape the outcomes of that scalar arrangement (Born & Purcell, 2006). Social actors not empowered by a scalar arrangement can become empowered by pursuing their agendas at the scales that are not dominant in a particular scalar fix. Neil Smith calls this process ‘jumping scales’ (Born & Purcell, 2006; N. Smith, 1996; Swyngedouw, 1997).

There is nothing about the global scale that precludes the possibility of having a globalized food system that is just and sustainable (Born & Purcell, 2006). However, the current conventional food system operating at a global scale is socially unjust and unsustainable because the agenda of capital accumulation, which produces these negative outcomes, is empowered at the global scale in the present scalar arrangement. An agenda of capital accumulation is particularly successful at the global scale because the strategies employed towards this end thrive with access to larger markets and economies of scale. In addition, actors most successful in capital accumulation strategies have subverted the power of the nation state in its attempts to regulate the negative consequences of these strategies by operating at the international scale, where governance and regulation are much less coherent and more difficult to enforce (Friedmann & McMichael, 1989; McMichael, 2006; Weis, 2007).

Given that the agenda that produces negative food systems outcomes has gained increasing power by ‘jumping’ the national scale and operating at the global scale, the local scale seems to be the ideal site for resistance. This logic is implicit in arguments that advocate for the resistance of the global, conventional food system at the local scale because the strategies for capital accumulation upon which the conventional system relies are less successful there (Hendrickson & Heffernan, 2002). The alternative project can take advantage of these local spaces where
strategies for capital accumulation empowered by larger scales are less effective to re-assert control over the production and consumption of food (Friedmann & McMichael, 1989).

The local scale also offers more opportunities to embed market exchange in social, ecological and physical contexts (Hinrichs, 2000; Murdoch, Marsden, & Banks, 2000; Penker, 2006). Borrowing from the revival of Polanyi’s (1944; 1957) and Granovetter’s (1985) work on the embeddedness of markets in social processes, agrofood scholars have argued that by reining in the space between producer and consumer, local food systems increase opportunities for interpersonal interaction in the exchange of food, embedding these markets in social ties and providing incentive to elevate value-based concerns (good food ideals) over market considerations like price (Hinrichs, 2000; Penker, 2006; Sage, 2003). In addition, socially embedded exchange can build relations of regard that are meaningful to participants above and beyond market value (Kirwan, 2004; Kirwan, 2006; Sage, 2003) connect producers and consumers to each other in ways that counter the distancing forces of the conventional food system (Kloppenburg, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996; Murdoch, Marsden, & Banks, 2000), and de-fetishize food by treating food less as a commodity, and more as a “material manifestation of social relations of production and exchange” (Hinrichs & Allen, 2008, p.336).

Re-embedding food production and consumption in biological (as opposed to industrial) production processes can bring about better ecological food system outcomes (Murdoch, Marsden, & Banks, 2000). Embedding food production and consumption in a particular local places can engender more stewardship and accountability for environmental resources by those living in the locale (Buller & Morris, 2004; Penker, 2006) as well as providing as incentive for acting with integrity, one’s reputation in a ‘local’ community (Kirwan, 2004; Kirwan, 2006).

Dupuis and Goodman (2005) argue that identifying the local as the ideal site of resistance against the conventional food system risks creating a misleading binary between the local and the global. In this binary the global is identified as the “domain of capital” (DuPuis & Goodman, 2005, p. 369), ignoring that some capital accumulation strategies are pursued in specific local places, whose “local ecologies” then come to reflect “the standardized nature of industrial food production” (Murdoch, Marsden, & Banks, 2000, p. 368).

Further, valorizing the local scale can mask and reinforce existing power inequalities within that scale (DuPuis & Goodman, 2005; Dupuis, Goodman, & Harrison, 2006; Goodman, 2004). The
construction of the local scale is a process of boundary creation that necessarily includes some and excludes others (Dupuis, Goodman, & Harrison, 2006; Hinrichs, 2003; Hinrichs & Allen, 2008). That this exclusion is essentially from access to a lucrative niche market carries important social justice implications for those who are excluded. Hinrichs (2003), and Winter (2003) have argued that such drawing of boundaries can fuel – or stem from – protectionist sentiments, creating a ‘defensive’ rather than transformative localism, and this contention has been borne out with empirical findings (see Chambers, Lobb, Butler, Harvey, & Traill, 2007).

Constructions of local can not only exclude others outside the boundaries of ‘local’ but can disempower those within the boundaries of local whose needs are not included on the agendas of those social agents who are empowered by the particular construction and definition of local (DuPuis & Goodman, 2005; Dupuis, Goodman, & Harrison, 2006; Harrison, 2008; Hinrichs & Allen, 2008). Finally while locally bound production and consumption provides more opportunities for socially embedded interaction, to assume that these opportunities will be maximized “conflates spatial relations with social relations” (Hinrichs, 2000, p. 301).

### 2.4 Local Food Initiatives: How Is Local Invoked to Effect Positive Change?

Having discussed the rationale for the local food movement, I now turn to the specific tools used by the local food movement to forward the good food ideal in this section. First I outline the different categories of local food initiatives (see Table 2), many of which are market based. Second, I summarize the literature on the effectiveness of market-based alternative food initiatives as they have been used in the local food movement. This literature demonstrates the efficacy of market-based approaches but also the challenges of achieving food systems change with market-based local initiatives in the conventional food system. Finally, I conclude the literature review with a summary of the existing literature on more specific barriers constraining the local food movement, identifying the gaps in this literature that this thesis fills.

Short Food Supply Chains (SFSC) refer to initiatives that emphasize that foods reach the final consumer embedded with value-laden information about the mode of production, provenance of the product and the distinctive assets of the product that distinguish it from the standardized commodities transported through conventional (or long) food supply chains (Ilbery & Maye, 2005a; Ilbery & Maye, 2005b; Marsden, Banks, & Bristow, 2000; Renting, Marsden, & Banks,
There are three categories of SFSC; first, face-to-face SFSC, otherwise known as direct purchasing (Marsden, Banks, & Bristow, 2000; Renting, Marsden, & Banks, 2003; Sage, 2003). Second, spatially proximate SFSC, in which food is produced and retailed within a specific region and while exchange is not direct between producers and consumers, the product’s local identity is made known at the point of retail: these include local retailers of local food, local food buying clubs, and local food cooperatives (Marsden, Banks, & Bristow, 2000; Renting, Marsden, & Banks, 2003; Sage, 2003). Finally, spatially extended SFSC, including some types of fair trade, where food is traded between spatially distant local places, embedded with the knowledge of reciprocal exchange benefits, the product’s provenance and mode of production (Marsden, Banks, & Bristow, 2000; Renting, Marsden, & Banks, 2003; Sage, 2003; Watts, Ilbery, & Maye, 2005).

Face-to-face SFSCs are also known as direct marketing (DM) initiatives. DM provides opportunities for producers and consumers to socially interact and for consumers to learn the provenance and production conditions of their food through these interactions (Cone & Myhre, 2000; Fieldhouse, 1996; Kirwan, 2004; Kirwan, 2006). DM eliminates supply chain intermediaries allowing the producer to retain the full retail price of the product (Guthman, 2004c; Hardesty & Leff, 2010; Hinrichs & Allen, 2008; Kirwan, 2006). DM initiatives include ‘pick-your-own’ operations, farm gate stores, subscription programs, and direct farm-to-restaurant sales (Allen, FitzSimmons, Goodman, & Warner, 2003; Feenstra, 2002; Hardesty & Leff, 2010; Starr et al., 2003). However, the most widely discussed and theorized DM by far are community supported agriculture\(^1\) and farmers markets (FM) (Cone & Myhre, 2000; Fieldhouse, 1996; Guthman, Morris, & Allen, 2006; Hardesty & Leff, 2010; Hinrichs, 2000; Kirwan, 2004; Kirwan, 2006; Smithers, Lamarche, & Joseph, 2008).

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\(^1\) Community supported agriculture (CSA) refers to initiatives where consumers pay a farm for ‘shares’ of their harvest, traditionally in advance, and receive boxes of produce as they become available through the season. This allows the farmers to use upfront capital to plant for a specified market and share the risks of a bad harvest with consumers, who receive fresh produce and various opportunities to ‘connect’ with the producers of their food (Cone & Myhre, 2000, Fieldhouse, 1996).
Institutional procurement refers to the purchase of locally sourced ingredients for foodservice in government facilities and public institutions including schools (of all levels), government offices, healthcare facilities, childcare facilities, and other institutions with foodservice outlets, be they cafeterias, internal client meals, kiosks or otherwise (Friedmann, 2007; Macpherson, Naccarato, & Ohberg, 2012). Institutions are ubiquitous and their foodservice operations are often quite large, representing a large market for local producers as well as expanded opportunities for consumers to access local food beyond private purchasing (Friedmann, 2007; Macpherson, Naccarato, & Ohberg, 2012).

An additional category of local food initiatives emphasize the distribution of food to local citizens (particularly vulnerable citizens including those with low incomes, children, seniors, etc) over sourcing food from local producers. These initiatives include emergency access and redistribution initiatives such as food banks and community meals; school nutrition programs (including farm-to-school programs); and good food box programs (Hamm & Bellows, 2003). These programs often source from local producers when possible, but their focus is on distributing food to local consumers.

Urban local food initiatives emphasize growing and harvesting food for local citizens within urban areas and include community gardens and urban gleaning programs (Hamm & Bellows, 2003). There are also initiatives that combine several of these different functions, and are often located in urban areas or town centres, such as community food centres (Levkoe & Wakefield, 2012) or community food councils or committees (Hassanein, 2003). These latter initiatives exhibit great range in function and purpose and may also straddle the next category of initiatives.

There are also local food initiatives that engage primarily in outreach, education, research, and/or advocacy (instead of physical distribution). An important category of these types of programs is buy local initiatives. Buy local initiatives generally comprise some combination of marketing-campaigns, maps and/or branding initiatives that aim to encourage and facilitate consumers to purchase local food (Andrée, Ballamingie, & Sinclair-Waters, forthcoming; Hinrichs & Allen, 2008). These are information initiatives whose mission is to get consumers to participate in initiatives that provide opportunities to purchase locally produced food. Buy Local initiatives are often defined regionally, but are sometimes deliberately ambiguous on the definition of local employed (Andrée, Ballamingie, & Sinclair-Waters, forthcoming).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Category</strong></th>
<th><strong>Examples</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SFSC</td>
<td>Direct purchasing (face to face); local retailers of local food, local food buying clubs, local food cooperatives (short); fair trade (extended)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DM</td>
<td>FM, CSA, pick-your-own’ operations, farm gate stores, subscription programs, farm-to-restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Procurement</td>
<td>Locally sourced ingredients in hospital patient meals, school cafeteria food, childcare centre snacks, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Access Programs</td>
<td>Food banks, community meals, good food boxes, school nutrition programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Programs</td>
<td>Community gardens, gleaning initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-functional</td>
<td>Community food centres, food councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy-local</td>
<td>Marketing campaigns, buy-local maps, regional branding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A majority of these local food initiatives, including SFSCs, DM, institutional procurement and buy-local initiatives, are market-based. This means they effect change by trying to increase the supply and demand of certain types of foods and food system values in the open market. The ideology of such market-based solutions is that if something is valued by the public – such as the good food ideals – its commodification can ensure that a price is affixed to it, thereby incentivizing its retention as suppliers fill the market demand for this new ‘good’. Consumers valorize these attributes by being willing to pay premium prices when it is communicated to them (directly, or via labels, depending on the initiative) that good food values have been embedded in the food products (Guthman, 2004a; Guthman, 2004c). This process commodifies the value or the value-based outcome, ostensibly providing a way for it to be supplied by producers without driving them out of business when competing against those who do not take the extra care (and supposed cost) to supply it.

It may not always be specific value-based outcomes that are commodified by market-based approaches, but the alterity (alternativeness) of these approaches itself (Mount, 2012). Consumers have come to associate alternative market forms and local food initiatives with certain product attributes and assumptions about the product’s mode of production. For example,
consumers commonly assume that foods sold at farmers markets have superior freshness, might be produced in an ecologically benign way, and/or are produced in the area, by the farmer selling it (Chambers, Lobb, Butler, Harvey, & Traill, 2007; Smithers, Lamarche, & Joseph, 2008; Weatherell, Tregear, & Allinson, 2003; Winter, 2003). Empirical findings suggest that some consumers fail to verify that these conditions are true before valorizing food sold in the farmers market (Smithers, Lamarche, & Joseph, 2008). In these instances the image of alterity is enough to add value.

The image of alterity, however, does nothing to ensure that good food values are forwarded. Market-based initiatives are already vulnerable to appropriation as a capital accumulation strategy, as the case studies of the fair trade movement (Jaffee & Howard, 2010; Raynolds, 2009; Renard, 2005; Renard, 2003) and the American² organic movement (DeLind, 2000; Goodman, 2000; Guthman, 2004b; Guthman, 2004c; Jaffee & Howard, 2010) illustrate. The opportunities for capital accumulation present in new markets and price premiums attract to these initiatives suppliers who may be “less or differently committed” (Mount, 2012, p. 117) to the good food ideal. The values embedded in these initiatives can become “watered down” (Mount, 2012, p. 117) when suppliers prioritize capital accumulation. When alterity is valorized instead of the specific values it symbolizes, it can be appropriated for capital gain without actually having to incorporate any of the good food values at all. This is a particular challenge for local food initiatives, because despite being defined as a strategy to forward the good food goals by the alternative food movement, there is nothing about producing food locally that guarantees it will be produced in a sustainable or socially just way (Born & Purcell, 2006).

Some capital gains are required for economic viability, so irrespective of the other values embedded in market-based local food initiatives they have potential to directly support one good food goal: ensuring living wages for producers and processors. Market-based local food initiatives create new markets in which producers marginalized in conventional markets by competitors more successful in capital accumulation can earn a livelihood. Although as the preceding discussion makes apparent, these initiatives are not exclusive to producers who have

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² According to Schumilas and Scott (2012), conventionalization has not taken hold of the Ontario organic sector in the same way as it has in the United States, but organic producers do face increasing competition from other labels of alterity such as ‘natural’ and ‘local’.
been marginalized by the conventional food system and could certainly be used by actors who have been successful in the conventional system. Wal-Mart for example sells local food, capitalizing on its alterity for economic gain, but dictates the “standards, varieties, quantities, growing conditions and ultimately purchase price” to local producers (DeLind, 2011, p. 277). Uneven power relationships such as this contribute to the marginalization of producers in the conventional food system, and if it jeopardizes the producers’ ability to earn a fair wage, are inconsistent with the good food goals. Not to mention that this relationship does not guarantee the embedding of other good food ideals such as ecologically sustainable production systems or fair wages and working conditions for farm laborers.

Allen et al. (2003) have suggested because DM is “scale-limited, since larger industrial farms have… no interest in taking on the transaction costs of direct marketing” (p. 68), these types of market-based local food initiatives may be best able to ensure economic viability of producers marginalized in the conventional system and stave off appropriation. DM is able to put the full dollar of the retail price of food back in the pocket of farmers (Guthman, 2004c; Hinrichs, 2000; Morris & Buller, 2003). However, Hardesty and Leff (2010) argue that the additional (labor, transportation, marketing) costs required to participate in DM may neutralize any additional value gained through the elimination of intermediaries. In addition, while some local food initiatives such as DM initiatives may be less vulnerable to appropriation by the conventional food system, they do not necessarily preclude the necessity of interacting with the conventional food system. There are times when the interaction with some elements of conventional supply chains (much like the necessity of some capital gain) is required for survival. For example, some local food producers procure non-local inputs (e.g. rennet for cheese-making) out of necessity (Ilbery & Maye, 2005a; Ilbery & Maye, 2005b; Ilbery & Maye, 2006).

Underlying market-based local food strategies is the assumption that value-based food systems outcomes can be brought about through individual consumer choice. However, the definition of political participation as the exercise of individual choice in the market distributes power and voice disproportionately to the wealthy (DeLind, 2011; Guthman, 2011; Harrison, 2008; Hinrichs & Allen, 2008; Sassatelli & Scott, 2001). Since not all citizens have the income to practice choice in the marketplace, “those with the deepest pocketbooks, or the biggest credit lines may be best poised to pursue these desirable ends” (Hinrichs & Allen, 2008, p. 348). Any outcomes of a politics constructed this way necessarily reflect the interests of the privileged –
which may be quite different from the interests of the economically marginalized (Hinrichs & Allen, 2008). Already marginalized by the conventional food system, economically marginalized citizens (including those employed in the conventional food system with inadequate wages or unjust working conditions) are further marginalized when they are disempowered to represent their own interests in a political process existing only within the confines of the market (DeLind, 2011; Guthman, 2011; Harrison, 2008; Hinrichs & Allen, 2008). Despite this exclusivity, it has been suggested that market-based initiatives provide pathways for citizens who are able to participate to recognize the need for more structural change: “these styles of consumption may also represent a catalyst for people’s questioning big companies and government statements about food” (Sassatelli & Scott, 2001, p. 239).

Identifying the marketplace as the appropriate arena for food systems change also absolves the state of its responsibilities to regulate the negative consequences of capital accumulation and “ensure the conditions of social justice” (Harrison, 2008, p. 164; see also Dupuis, Goodman, & Harrison, 2006; Guthman, Morris, & Allen, 2006; Guthman, 2008; Guthman, 2011). Critiques of market-based local food initiatives insist that structural food systems issues cannot adequately be addressed at the local level or in the marketplace but must be regulated by the state (Guthman, 2008; Guthman, 2011; Harrison, 2008). Achieving the good food ideal requires restructuring the conventional capitalist system of food production and exchange, as it is the outcomes of this system that produce un-sustainability and social injustice. However, market based local food initiatives “seek not so much to disrupt capitalist social relations, nor do they envision radically new or transformative economics. Instead they harness familiar capitalist practices towards particular ends” (Hinrichs & Allen, 2008, p.339).

Allen et al. (2003) make the practical observation that “people seek to change the structures of their everyday lives – but they must do so from within the circumstances in which they find themselves” (p. 62). Andrée et al. (forthcoming) build upon this argument to note that when the state is sympathetic to the interests of capital accumulation or slow to enact the regulation required for systemic food systems change, the local food movement must work with the tools available to create change in the market.

In addition to the more general challenges of working with market-based strategies or an uncooperative state when pursuing food systems change within the conventional system, there
are a number of specific obstacles constraining the local food movement that have been identified in various places (primarily) in the grey literature. As discussed in section 2.1, due to concentration and consolidation ever fewer and larger actors occupy the conventional food system. The economic viability of the farmers not absorbed in consolidation is rendered increasingly precarious or unviable when competing against larger corporate actors. The loss of farmers and farmland for these reasons is a barrier to the local food movement (Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Metcalf Foundation, 2008; Miedema, 2006; Mount et al., forthcoming; Starr et al., 2003), leading to calls for policy support for farmland preservation and new farmers (Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Metcalf Foundation, 2008). Another barrier is that remaining, smaller, local farmers struggle to meet the demands of large, concentrated retailers, distributors and restaurants for large volumes of consistent quality product year round (Carter-Whitney, 2008; Christianson & Morgan, 2007; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Metcalf Foundation, 2008; Miedema, 2006; Starr et al., 2003). The process by which retailers, distributors and restaurants select bids for supplier-contracts is an additional barrier to local producers (Christianson & Morgan, 2007; Starr et al., 2003). Christianson and Morgan (2007) argue that producers could overcome this barrier by aggregating their product, possibly coordinating production geographically to facilitate this.

State regulations are generally complicit in the conventional food system, emphasizing exports, large agribusiness, and international trade (Andrée, Ballamingie, & Sinclair-Waters, forthcoming; Qualman, 2011). As a result, policy is generally inappropriate and constraining for local food initiatives (Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Mount et al., forthcoming). Land use and taxation policy along with health and safety regulations constrain local food retailing and processing (Carter-Whitney, 2008; Carter-Whitney & Miller, 2010; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009). The supply management system disadvantages alternative and local producers who do not produce enough to qualify for quota (Carter-Whitney, 2008; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et
Carter-Whitney and Millar (2010) also argue that minimum wages are a barrier to local food processing by making the cost of labor prohibitively high. They argue that governments should extend wage-support to local processors (Carter-Whitney & Miller, 2010). This literature makes a particularly strong call for governments to amend such regulations, or develop scale-appropriate exemptions for small and alternative local enterprises (Baker, 2010; Carter-Whitney, 2008; Carter-Whitney & Miller, 2010; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Metcalf Foundation, 2008; Young & Watkins, 2010).

In Canada, regulations governing country of origin labels and the labeling of ‘local’ food are both restrictive and misleading (Carter-Whitney, 2008; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009). Until December 31st 2008, “made in Canada” and “product of Canada” labels could be assigned to foods whose ingredients were not grown in Canada (Carter-Whitney, 2008). While the revised food labeling rules specify that less than 2% of a product’s ingredients must have originated outside the country for it to be labeled “product of Canada” (Carter-Whitney, 2008), these rules are only as effective as their enforcement. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) also defines “local” as originating within 50 km of the point of sale, which Carter-Whitney (2008) argues is too restrictive as well as discordant with most consumers’ understandings of local food. Carter-Whitney (2008) concludes that to address these barriers new CFIA guidelines on country of origin labeling should be enforced, and the CFIA’s current definition of ‘local’ should be eliminated.

This literature calls for institutional procurement as a solution to some of the barriers to local food (Carter-Whitney, 2008; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Metcalf Foundation, 2008). While most of the literature does not address barriers to local procurement in the institutional context, Starr et al. (2003) and Carter-Whitney (2008) identify that institutions in particular can be reluctant to implement local procurement policies because of a perception that such policies violate free trade agreements. Carter-Whitney (2008) notes that not all free trade agreements apply to municipalities and institutions, and that this information should be made more readily available to facilitate the adoption of local procurement policies.
A general lack of infrastructure for distribution and transportation, in addition to a lack of processing infrastructure is also a barrier constraining the local food movement (Carter-Whitney, 2008; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Metcalf Foundation, 2008; Mount et al., forthcoming). Closures and consolidations in the processing industry have reduced access to local processing facilities (Carter-Whitney & Miller, 2010). The food retail sector has also experienced increasing concentration and consolidation: the few major retailing companies dominating the market operate their own vertically-integrated distribution infrastructure to supply their stores, which are not designed to source locally (Carter-Whitney, 2008). A lack of supply in general is a barrier to the local food movement for various reasons including infrastructure and the lack of farmers as previously mentioned, as well as seasonality (Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Mount et al., forthcoming). This literature calls for the development of alternative regional distribution and processing infrastructure such as regional food clusters (Baker, 2010; Carter-Whitney & Miller, 2010).

A lack of demand has also been identified as a barrier to the local food movement (Mount et al., forthcoming). Consumers lack a connection to the farm, an understanding of local seasonality and an appreciation for what goes into the production of food (Christianson & Morgan, 2007; Metcalf Foundation, 2008). This latter point is exacerbated by a cheap food culture that deemphasizes the true value of food (Metcalf Foundation, 2008; Miedema, 2006). Consumers and larger purchasers such as restaurants sometimes are not aware that local food is of high quality (Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Starr et al., 2003). Education is needed to improve awareness on these points: Starr et al. (2003) argue that farmers should market the quality of their product to buyers and the Metcalf Foundation (2008) insists that hands-on food literacy skills should be imparted at a young age through school gardening programs, for example. Finally, a lack of access to local food (because of distance, price or inconvenience) prevents latent consumer demand from being expressed (Metcalf Foundation, 2008; Mount et al., forthcoming). The Metcalf foundation (2008) argues that the inability of social assistance programs and the minimum wage to keep up with the costs of living prevent many consumers from purchasing healthy food of any origin, let alone fresh local produce.

A lack of collaboration has been identified as a barrier to the local food movement (Christianson & Morgan, 2007; Miedema, 2006; Mount et al., forthcoming). This includes collaboration across
and within geographic regions (Mount et al., forthcoming), and vertically throughout the supply chain (Christianson & Morgan, 2007). It also includes horizontal collaboration (i.e. between farmers or between processors) to allow local food actors to pool scarce resources (Christianson & Morgan, 2007; Miedema, 2006). Miedema (2006) suggests that horizontal collaboration between farmers can allow them to aggregate their product, filling the demands of large retailers, distributors and restaurants for large, consistent-quality volumes.

Finally, a lack of funding opportunities and financial support for local food initiatives and businesses (particularly small and medium sized enterprises) is a barrier to the local food movement (Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009). Both Starr et al. (2003) and Christianson and Morgan (2007) emphasize that local food businesses need business planning and technical development skills to be successful. Christianson and Morgan (2007) argue that a lack of capital resources to fund marketing research, legal counsel and other business needs is also a barrier to the development of successful local food initiatives. Financial support from the government for these businesses in the form of government-backed loans or technical assistance grants is one solution to this barrier (Christianson & Morgan, 2007). More funding opportunities in general are needed for local food initiatives and businesses (Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Metcalf Foundation, 2008).

Building on this literature, the primary research objective of this thesis is to identify the barriers constraining the local food movement in relation to one larger scale case study. While some of these studies discussed above identify a range of barriers to local food, none present a complete account of the barriers to local food. While many of these prior studies call for increased institutional procurement as a solution to some of the barriers to local food (Carter-Whitney, 2008; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Metcalf Foundation, 2008), none thoroughly examine the barriers to procuring local food in the institutional context. This thesis builds upon these earlier works and fills the need for a single, comprehensive empirical account of these barriers and how they interact. In addition, by using the Ontario local food movement case study and including barriers to institutional procurement in the Ontario Broader Public Sector, this thesis fills a gap in the literature by identifying the barriers to local food in the institutional as well as
private sector context. The next chapter will detail the datasets and methods used to achieve this objective.
Chapter 3  
Data and Methods

In this chapter I explain how the data and methods I employed to identify the barriers to the local food movement helped me achieve this objective. To answer this research question, I drew upon two datasets that I will discuss in detail below. After discussing the data, I will provide an account of my methodology, and the potential limits of the data.

3.1 Food Hubs Dataset

The Developing Regional Food Hubs: Applying Knowledge to Increase Local Food Purchasing Through Local Food Linkages and Value Chains (i.e., the Food Hubs project)\(^3\) surveyed local food initiatives across Ontario. In order to conduct the survey of food initiatives, the province was divided into five main regions for data collection purposes: North, Southwestern, South, Central/Golden Horseshoe, and East. A research team for each region, generally consisting of one graduate student research assistant under the supervision of one or two faculty members at Canadian universities, undertook the data collection. The research team responsible for the Central/Golden Horseshoe region of Ontario consisted of my academic advisor and myself; for the purposes of the Food Hubs project, the Central/Golden Horseshoe region consisted of the counties of Brant, Haldimand, Halton Region and the City of Hamilton. Research assistants in each region identified key stakeholders and practitioners of local food and food hub initiatives in their region and solicited their participation in a semi-structured telephone interview on the topic of food hubs and local food initiatives in their community.

Once stakeholders began to be identified and interviewed, mixed snowball and purposeful sampling was conducted until a saturation point was reached in each region, where the

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\(^3\) The Food Hubs project leader is Dr. Karen Landman, Associate Professor in Landscape Architecture at the University of Guelph, who received funding for this initiative from OMAFRA’s Knowledge Translation and Transfer Funding Program. The Food Hubs project is one of two twin initiatives (the other funded by SSHRC), lead by Dr. Landman and Dr. Alison Blay-Palmer of Wilfred Laurier University, investigating Ontario local and community food initiatives with collaboration from faculty, student, and community researchers across the province of Ontario. These initiatives will be summarized in a models and best practices report, and a toolkit based on these best practices will be circulated to interested communities and local food practitioners. Data collection began in May 2011 and a draft toolkit was distributed at a workshop for research participants on May 24\(^{th}\), 2012; at the time of this writing, the models and best practices report is being finalized.
researchers felt that no new themes were emerging from new contacts and/or the local food and food hub initiatives in the region were well represented in the sample. Participants were engaged in a conversation with the interviewer, structured around 14 questions relating to local food hub activities in their community. Table 3 presents the subset of questions from these interviews that were drawn upon to meet the objective of this thesis. The questions addressed a range of topics relating to the development of local food hubs, networks, and initiatives, including barriers constraining the development of such initiatives. The majority of interviews took place over the telephone, although some were conducted in person. These conversations ranged from approximately 20 minutes to two hours in length, with many lasting approximately 45 minutes. In a few cases, participants who wished to participate but were not able to schedule a telephone or in-person appointment answered the interview questions in written form.

Combined with the efforts of the other regional research teams, over one hundred and fifty scoping interviews were conducted. Of seventy-two initial contacts I made, I conducted thirty-three scoping interviews in Brant and Haldimand counties, the Halton Region and the City of Hamilton.

Each research team compiled a spreadsheet with summarized responses to each of the fourteen scoping interview questions for each scoping interview respondent in the region. Respondent’s names were removed for confidentiality purposes but some data on the interviewee’s role in the local food movement or the type of organization they represented was included. Four of the regional research teams made their spreadsheets available to the research team as a whole for further analysis of particular themes and trends emergent in the data. I combined these four spreadsheets (in no particular order) into one master spreadsheet containing the summarized responses of one hundred and fifteen interviewees. References to the food hubs respondents made in the results section of this thesis are identified by the order they appear in this master spreadsheet (i.e. Food hubs respondent 33 occupies the 33rd row of data in the food hubs spreadsheet). In addition to this spreadsheet of responses summarized by researchers, I had

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4 The research team representing the northern region of Ontario declined to make this data available, as it was felt that in the relatively smaller communities of the North, any responses to the questions would have been identifying, and violated the greater expectations of confidentiality among these participants.
access to the original transcripts and interview notes of the thirty-three primary interviews I conducted with respondents in the Central Ontario/Golden Horseshoe region.

Table 3: Selected Food Hubs Interview Questions

6. Can you give me an idea of what the most important motivation was for you getting involved with the development of a local food network? To what extent have the following concerns been important motivating factors for you? First, reflect on the following list. Can you please rank these topics (you may want to add others) and then reflect on why you have chosen your first choice?
   ▶ Developing a more sustainable food system with a lower carbon footprint and impact on the resources of the planet
   ▶ Fighting for social justice around the provision of food in my community
   ▶ Giving a hand to help improve the viability of local agricultural producers
   ▶ To improve our chances of surviving the coming food crisis
   ▶ Other issues not covered by these four?

7. What factors do you feel are most important in determining the effectiveness of a food hub/clusters/centres/network in your community?

8. What do you perceive as the most important barriers constraining the development of a local food hub/clusters/centres in your region? Or the effectiveness of an existing local food hub/clusters/centres?

9. In what ways are you and/or others in your community currently working to overcome any of these barriers?

10. What work would you like to see done by others (governments, public sector, businesses, other community groups) to overcome these barriers? In particular, how do you think provincial policy could facilitate the local food hubs/clusters/centres? (What new policies would be helpful? What existing policies would need to be altered?). What policies or programs at other levels (e.g. municipal, federal, multilateral) do you think could be helpful in supporting the effective growth of Ontario’s local food movement?

3.2 Broader Public Sector Investment Fund Dataset

I was enrolled in a service-learning graduate course from September 2011 to April 2012 in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Arts degree program at the University of Toronto, Department of Geography and Planning. The course, JPG 1812 Planning For Change, paired graduate students with community organizations to work on a project or need defined by the community group based on the skills and experiences of the student. The pedagogy of service
learning emphasizes the reciprocal exchange between community and student partners in a service-learning arrangement (Furco, 2003).

I was partnered with the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, to work with them on some of their activities pertaining to promoting Ontario food through the Broader Public Sector Investment Fund (BPSIF). The Greenbelt is a 1.8 million acre protected area surrounding Ontario’s Golden Horseshoe region that was created in 2005 in an attempt to conserve prime agricultural land, sensitive ecosystems, rural communities and green space within it from development pressure stemming from the rapidly expanding GTA (Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, 2012). The Greenbelt Fund is a nonprofit sister organization to the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, created specifically to “support and enhance the viability, integrity and sustainability of agricultural and viticulture industries in Ontario and Ontario’s Greenbelt” (The Broader Public Sector Investment Fund, n.d.). It shares close ties with the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation including some overlap in staff resources and office space, but it operates independently from the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation. While the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation supports rural livelihood, conservation and agricultural activities, the Greenbelt Fund specifically supports the latter. Funded by the Government of Ontario, the Greenbelt Fund manages two programs: The Broader Public Sector Investment Fund (BPSIF) and the website Ontariofresh.ca.

A partnership between the Greenbelt Fund and OMAFRA, the BPSIF aims to support agricultural land uses in the Greenbelt by increasing the market for Ontario food in the broader public sector (BPS). To do this, the BPSIF makes grants available to Ontario broader public sector institutions, producers, and other value-chain partners connecting them that are trying to increase the amount of local food served in BPS foodservice (The Broader Public Sector Investment Fund, n.d.). As discussed in chapter two, BPS institutions include publicly funded grade schools and school boards; universities, colleges and other publicly funded post-secondary institutions; publicly funded hospitals, long-term and other healthcare institutions; publicly funded childcare services; and municipal government departments. Since 2010, the BPSIF has issued thirty-eight grants to initiatives furthering the goal of increasing the market for local food in BPS institutions across Ontario (The Broader Public Sector Investment Fund, 2012). These thirty-eight organizations include food producers and producer associations; processors and processing associations; distributors; foodservice operators; broader public sector institutions and
non-profit organizations either partnering with specific institutions or working within their communities to increase the amount of local food in BPS foodservice.

Over the course of the eight-month service learning term, I assisted two of the Broader Public Sector Investment Fund program administrators in drafting research products. The first was a report that addressed the nature of foodservice operations in broader public sector institutions (Macpherson, Naccarato, & Ohberg, 2012). The second was a list of the barriers that constrain Ontario broader public sector institutions from increasing the amount of local food in their foodservice. These reports were based on the knowledge that had been gained by the program administrators over the years that the BPSIF had been operating. Program administrators interacted directly with the grantees that received funding for projects meant to increase local food in BPS foodservice. They communicated with these grantees on a regular basis regarding their projects, and received detailed descriptions of these projects in grant applications and progress reports submitted by the grantees as a condition of the funding.

I collected data by conducting multiple informal interviews and conversations with these two program administrators over the course of the eight-month service learning term. I did not take oral recordings of these interactions. Rather, I recorded notes from our conversations and used them to write drafts of each research product. I sent these drafts back to the program administrators who made corrections and revisions through email and during subsequent informal interviews. This process repeated until the program administrators felt that the research product accurately reflected foodservice in the BPS or the barriers to increasing local food in BPS foodservice as they identified them through the experiences of the BPSIF grantees.

The final dataset produced from this process which I used to answer my research objective in this thesis, was a list of the barriers to local food procurement in Ontario’s BPS institutions, in which each barrier was named, categorized, described and illustrated using examples from the grant recipients’ projects.

### 3.3 Methods and Analysis

I performed a qualitative analysis of both datasets in order to obtain a list of obstacles faced by the local food movement in Ontario. The BPSIF dataset already consisted of a list of named and categorized barriers to local food procurement in BPS institutions generated from raw data and
analyses conducted over the course of the service-learning placement. To analyze the food hubs dataset, responses to the questions in the scoping interviews that addressed barriers were analyzed. Responses to questions six through ten were included in the analysis as these questions were most relevant to the identification of local food barriers (see Table 3). Questions six and seven did not directly address barriers faced by local food initiatives, however they were included because my experience in data collection for the Food Hubs project was that some interviewees began to discuss barriers in their conversation on motivations and factors required for effectiveness and success of local food hubs and initiatives (see Table 3).

First, I manually coded the researcher summaries of Food Hubs responses to the questions presented in Table 3 by highlighting passages that identified or discussed a barrier or how it was being addressed. I noted which barrier the highlighted passage referred to, using the list of barriers generated by the BPSIF report as an initial guide, and naming new barriers as they arose. The first coding exercise produced a list of barriers combined from both datasets. I analyzed this list to identify redundant barriers, and where they existed, assimilated them under a single moniker. I grouped the remaining barriers into seven categories derived from the main themes shared in common by each barrier in the category. Using this hierarchy of categories and barriers, I coded the food hubs dataset a second time, this time using the qualitative data analysis software NVivo 9. This software package allowed me to highlight passages and associate them with a particular barrier. It also allowed me to then generate a list of all passages associated with each barrier.

Once all passages in the dataset relating to barriers were coded, I generated output lists of all the passages associated with each barrier, and organized these lists by the overarching category each barrier fell into. I analyzed all highlighted passages associated with each barrier, in conjunction with the description of the barrier contained in the BPSIF dataset where applicable, to produce a description of what the barrier was and how it constrained the local food movement. During this stage of the analysis, the seven main categories were condensed into four major banners under which all major barriers fall: access, resources and supply, governance and bureaucracy, and information and relations.

Finally, to illustrate the description of each barrier and the way it constrained the local food movement, I extracted quotations from my original interview recordings and notes from the
thirty-three food hubs interviews I conducted over the summer of 2011. The data collection process associated with the BPSIF dataset did not produce any quotations. However, I discuss relevant examples from this dataset to illustrate barriers where applicable. The identities of all food hubs participants, BPSIF administrators and BPSIF grantees are concealed to protect the confidentiality of participants.

3.4 Limitations

Many of the limitations of the datasets arise from the fact that the data were collected for multiple purposes, with this study being a secondary purpose in both cases. The conditions of accessing the datasets involved retaining the confidentiality of participants. The need to protect confidentiality and the ways in which this protection was accomplished prevented any quantitative analysis of the representation of different local food initiatives or of geographic distribution of the sample. Due to the purposive methods used to select grant recipients in the BPSIF dataset and interviewees in the Food Hubs dataset, the data does not necessarily reflect an equal or even proportionate geographic representation of the province. The ways in which confidentiality was preserved in the data also prevented me from analyzing in any detail, the possible links between the barriers identified and attributes of those who identified them.

Further, the data from the responses of the eighty-two participants whose interviews I did not conduct myself in the Food Hubs dataset was only accessible to me in summarized form. This means that I did not have access to interview recordings or verbatim transcripts, but rather notes from different researchers on the responses to each question. Because of the natural variations in reporting style, terminology used, and possibly even biases of the individual researchers, statistical analyses of word frequency and other types of quantitative analysis were not appropriate for use on this data. This also precluded quantifying the frequency with which barriers were identified.

In addition, illustrative quotations were restricted to the responses of the 33 participants I interviewed, which are all concentrated in one geographic region of the province. However, I identified barriers by analyzing the entire dataset of summarized responses, and only once barriers had been identified sought out exemplary passages from this subset of interviews. Therefore the quotations reflect the barriers that exist across the province and the use of examples from a single geographic area does not affect the barriers that are reported.
Being limited to a subset of interviews on which to draw for textual examples also precluded the identification of quoted interviewees’ role in the local food movement (i.e. farmer, good food box organizer, farmers market manager, etc). While I had access to this information for all of the interviews I conducted myself, I deliberately chose not to include it. My concern was that linkages between particular roles in the food movement and particular perspectives might be inferred that were not borne out in the data. In the process of maintaining the confidentiality of interview respondents, summarized data on the remaining 82 interview respondents did not explicitly identify the role that respondents occupied in the local food movement. Interviewee’s roles could often be inferred from their responses, however I felt that these inferences were not rigorous enough to stand up to an analysis of the relationship between respondent role and perspectives on barriers. Also drawing on the food hubs dataset described in this chapter, Mount et al. (forthcoming) were able to identify the relationship between motivations for involvement in the local food movement and the barriers that were most acutely felt by respondents who identified with those motivations. However, question six of the interview instrument asked respondents to specifically identify their motivations (see Table 3) and so this data was available in the summarized dataset. In addition, many respondents occupied multiple roles in the local food movement and would have further complicated the task of classification. While being able to contextualize quotations with a knowledge of the perspective represented by the speaker would have added to the richness of the findings presented in chapter four, the inability to do so was not felt to detract from the barriers reported or the accomplishment of the research objective.

Finally, there is a small degree of overlap between the one hundred and fifteen participants in the Food Hub project and the thirty-eight organizations funded by the BPSIF. Specifically, the Food Hubs project obtained interviews with representatives from some of the same organizations that received funding from or were involved in the administration of the BPSIF. This is not surprising given the relatively small number of alternative food initiatives in Ontario. Such overlap might have negative implications if it resulted in some barriers being reported more frequently (giving the appearance of prominence) because data reflected the responses of single respondents twice. However, the purpose of this thesis was not the rank the prominence of different barriers to the local food movement, but to identify all of them, therefore this small degree of overlap does not significantly affect the output of the research. Overall, the data used precluded some quantitative
analysis but these limitations did not interfere significantly with the qualitative analysis that was carried out.

3.5 Conclusion

Between the Food Hubs and BPSIF datasets, the perspectives of actors working within or partnering with all major types of local food initiatives identified in section 2.4 are captured (see Table 2). The barriers identified by this analysis therefore represent a fairly comprehensive list of obstacles constraining all types of local food systems change practiced in Ontario. Analyzing data from the BPSIF project also allowed me to capture the barriers constraining local food procurement in the institutional context. The next chapter presents the results of the analysis described above, identifying the major barriers to the local food movement in the Ontario case study.
Chapter 4
Results

This chapter presents the barriers to the local food movement identified by analyzing the datasets discussed in Chapter three. The results of this analysis suggest that the development of the local food economy in Ontario is constrained by barriers that are numerous, complex and interrelated. I have developed a typology under which all the barriers to the local food movement can be categorized. The four main banners of this typology are:

1. Access
2. Resources and supply
3. Governance and bureaucracy
4. Information and relations

Each banner reflects the core of all the obstacles that fall under it. Constraints that prevent consumers from accessing local food and producers from accessing customers are discussed under the access banner. The resources and supply banner covers constraints that arise from shortages in particular material, human and information assets. The governance and bureaucracy banner addresses barriers resulting from policy as well as the internal governance of conventional supply chains. Finally, the information and relations banner addresses the ways in which a lack of particular information, incorrect information and relations between local food actors constrains the development of the local food economy.

4.1 Access

A major barrier identified in both datasets was that those who desired to purchase local food were unable to do so because it was physically inaccessible, financially inaccessible, and inconvenient. Local food is often sold through alternative sales outlets. Either because these are located on or close to the farm, or because they are less numerous and therefore sparser than conventional retail outlets, food hubs respondents recognized that local food sales outlets as well as local and community food programs could be rather remote or distant from consumers. This distance was seen as a physical accessibility barrier: “you can’t buy what you can’t get” (food hubs respondent 70). Physical distance becomes an even greater barrier when consumers do not have access to adequate transportation. Access to a vehicle can make the difference between
physical accessibility and inaccessibility, both to traverse distance and to ease the burden of carrying groceries:

“What about if I live in the city... and I don’t have a car and so I can’t go out to the farm?”

(Food hubs respondent 93)

“Part of it would be your availability for transportation... some of the clients that I work with, for example [prenatal nutrition program], it would be wonderful for them to access the good food box for example, but... to cart these things home on the bus, makes it hard”

(Food hubs respondent 77)

For consumers with access to a vehicle, the rising cost of fuel could still impact accessibility. The rising cost of fuel will impact all food distribution and transportation activities, throughout the supply chain. Respondents also identified that public transit was often unavailable, expensive and/or offered inadequate service, in addition to being a burdensome method of transporting groceries:

“The whole transportation issue is access to food...we’ve got food deserts [here], like in every other community: all the grocery stores are in high income areas and then where they need it there’s no food so that’s a whole issue too. We have poor, poor public transit, and it’s expensive. The cost of gas...[if] you think of the cost of trucking and moving food...that’s going to be a huge issue in our food movement in the future.”

(Food hubs respondent 76)

“[Some places] don’t even have a bus system, and social housing is on one side of town, the food bank is on the other side of town, one grocery store on the other side of town! And three kids, lugging groceries: really tough, in the winter. Not pretty.”

(Food hubs respondent 83)

A lack of physical accessibility to local food can be compounded by financial inaccessibility of local food, which was often seen as more expensive than non-local foods. For the budget-conscious, and particularly for consumers struggling to afford consistent, healthy food, the added cost of purchasing local food could be prohibitive.
“A lot of local food does seem to be more expensive, and again I guess that’s economies of scale and labor issues and so forth. So, it sounds all great and I do think local food is great, but quite honestly some of the people I know in lower income brackets just can’t afford to buy that kind of food, so I’m not quite sure how we deal with that. I know farmers, local farmers will say ‘well we need to start paying more for local food’ and I understand that, but there are people who are living with such tight margins with rent and utilities, and food just can’t occupy a higher proportion of their budget than it does now”

(Food hubs respondent 66)

The preceding quotation reflects the difficulties in simultaneously supporting the “twin goals” of farm and food security (Guthman, Morris, & Allen, 2006) as well as the frustration felt by local food activists with their inability to address the good food ideal in its entirety. Different good food goals such as farm security and food security become contradictory under the conditions of resource constraints. Resource constraints in turn, particularly financial resource constraints, are intricately connected to the larger political-economic context in which the current food system is situated, as will be discussed under the banner of resources and supply.

Respondents concerned with the financial accessibility of local food to consumers sympathized with the precarious economic position of producers (and vice versa), but were largely unable to reconcile the two demands. Respondents did feel that the provision of a living wage and increases to social assistance so that citizens relying on it could afford healthy, local food could help mediate this tension, and financial accessibility barriers more generally:

“That alone would be a huge policy maker or change maker, if people received a living wage”

(Food hubs respondent 76),

Respondents felt these policies would provide a double benefit: increasing equitable access to healthy, local food, and enabling more consumers to support local farmers.

Respondents working in non-profit contexts were particularly sensitive to the financial accessibility of local food, as these organizations were already trying to maximize limited funding from grants, donations, and other less-than-sustainable sources. For these respondents, supporting local farmers by purchasing local food for school nutrition programs, good food
boxes, community meals and food banks was considered desirable, but not always possible because of the higher costs of local food:

“But its cheaper, that’s another issue right, sometimes our imported food is less money than what we can provide right here, and I had that with the June [good food] box. I put fresh strawberries in and they were $3.75 a quart and you could buy them for $2.50 at the grocery store, but they’re American…buying local doesn’t always work!”

(Food hubs respondent 84)

“As [farmers] become more sustainable and stable in providing local food…to our economy and to our community, only then will we be able to see those partnerships starting to work as far as feeding the hungry”

(Food hubs respondent 97)

Financial accessibility was also identified as a barrier in the broader public sector, as many institutions have limited budgets for food. For example, the provincial government allocates only $7.44/patient/day to long-term care facilities to provide three meals and two snacks. BPSIF program administrators were adamant that the price of local food is not necessarily any higher than the price of non-local food, interpreting the concern about price as a misperception. One of the BPS institutions receiving grant funding performed a comparative price analysis of nineteen of their menu items and found that for 53% of the items, local\(^5\) options were actually less expensive than non-local counterparts; the inverse was true for 31% of the menu items, and the for the remaining 19%, there was no difference in price between local and non-local options.

These findings are corroborated by similar studies carried out in North America. Noseworthy et al. (2011), found that it was more likely for Nova Scotian grocery stores to carry local options of some food groups than others, but that ¼ of the time, these local options were cheaper than non-local options. Donaher and Lynes (2012) found that across different retail outlets (including farmers markets, online shopping and grocery stores) in Waterloo, there were no significant differences in price between local and non-local food: some items were more expensive if locally produced and some were less expensive. Pirog and McCann (2009) found that during peak

\(^{5}\) Defined as produced in Ontario.
season in Iowa, local foods were competitive in price with non-local foods sold in supermarkets, and even less expensive in some cases. The price of local food therefore is complex and changes depending on place, sales outlet, season, and supply – both local and imported.

Price alone is not the only important factor that determines cost, or financial accessibility, particularly in institutions and businesses. While it may be theoretically possible to maximize cost effective local food purchases by buying those products that are cheaper locally when they are available, the staff time this type of involved market research would require is too expensive for many institutions and buyers to afford. In addition, much local food is available only in fresh form, because local farmers struggle to access processing infrastructure (the barriers responsible for this are discussed later, under the banners of resources and supply and governance and bureaucracy). Purchasing fresh, whole local food and preparing meals from scratch could end up being less costly than the current practice in many institutions of reheating fully prepared frozen meals. However the kitchen equipment, staff hours and/or staff training required to utilize fresh ingredients is costly.

Accessing local food outlets that are physically distant and have restricted hours of operation is a barrier to ‘time-poor’ consumers. These consumers are able to afford local food and have access to a vehicle, but accessing local food is inconvenient, and this is enough of a barrier to prevent them from procuring it:

“We had a farmers market very close to us and I was walking to it on Saturdays and I think that now [that the market has closed] that is no longer going to happen...It [the farmer’s market] was in walking distance, [but] now I’d have to drive on a certain day every week [to get to another farmers market] and its probably not going to happen as often as it did when the market was close to me”

(Food hubs respondent 66)

DeLind’s (2011) perspective on inconvenience as a barrier to accessing local food is that consumers constrained by this barrier have the ability to procure local foods but do not prioritize local food procurement over competing uses for their time. The undervaluation of food that leads to this is certainly a barrier in itself, and is discussed under the banner of information and relations.
A tension exists within these access barriers, because while consumers struggle for various reasons to access local food from the outlets it is currently available in, producers struggle to access the markets that are more accessible to consumers. Many local producers struggle to get their products into conventional supply chains. As mentioned above, programs that target consumers struggling to financially access local food (such as emergency food programs, and often food boxes) cannot pay farmers the prices they need to access consumers through these venues. With all the expenses incurred in additional marketing, labor and transportation costs (see Hardesty & Leff, 2010), producers even struggle to reach consumers in alternative market forms like the farmers market. The market discussed in the preceding quote closed because “the farmers [didn’t have] enough sales at that location, and it’s just not worth their while spending their Saturdays there” (Food hubs respondent 66). The challenges associated with distributing local food in conventional supply chains are detailed further under the banner of governance and bureaucracy.

4.2 Resources and Supply

A common barrier identified across Food Hub respondents and BPSIF interviews was the lack of resources for individual supply chain actors as well as organizations operating local food programs. Resources are interpreted fairly broadly in this sense, and include human resources, skills, funding, infrastructure, land, and supply. Often access barriers are intimately linked with resource constraints, and these linkages will be noted as well.

One resource-related barrier identified was a lack of time on the part of all local food actors. Individual local food actors were kept so busy pursuing the piece of the good food ideal most relevant to them that it prevented them from engaging with each other and with other local food initiatives:

“There’s a lack of time... [We] had a networking event a couple months ago for the restaurants and the farmers and it was very evident that the chefs are too busy to contact the farmers and see what’s available and the farmers are saying they’re too busy out in the fields picking things to let the restaurants know what’s available so there’s that real divide in the middle and how do you cross that divide? ...They both see the value in developing those partnerships but they’re both reluctant to make the effort to make it happen”

(Food hubs respondent 95)
A lack of time was reported as a barrier in the BPS as well, as staff struggled to keep up with seasonal availabilities, identify and build relationships with new suppliers, and adjust menu planning to accommodate more local products on top of their other job duties. Several respondents pointed to municipalities (examples included Haldimand and Norfolk) that had dedicated staff members working on developing the local food economy as a helpful strategy to combat this chronic lack of time:

“If you look at Haldimand for example, Haldimand has a rural economic development officer...[who] has been responsible for the Harvests of Haldimand promotion...and that is really interesting because that is really similar to Norfolk because Norfolk as a municipality has lots of dollars put into that and so that’s a really big push and the value of that cannot be overlooked by any stretch of the imagination.”

(Food hubs respondent 93)

It was revealed that even these people’s time was in short supply given the breadth of their jobs. Being absorbed into an established structure’s relatively stable payroll created staff positions with more time to facilitate connections between local food actors. The link between time, staff, engagement and money is implicit in this finding. As one researcher summarized, “no one should work for free” (Food hubs respondent 15). A sustainable funding source to support all local food stakeholders and individuals working to forward the good food vision is required for their work to persist in the long term.

However, the lack of sustainable funding sources was one of the more commonly identified resource-related barriers. Food hubs respondents in particular identified that a lot of available funding is in the form of short-term grants, and much of it is targeted towards the start up of new projects rather than the operation of existing ones. Struggles related to this include lack of sustainability, having to put a lot of time and effort into constantly writing grant proposals and progress reports, and having to tailor project aims or make them sound like funding is being sought for new projects rather than just operational costs in order to access it:

“Start up funds are easy to come by but continuing funds are difficult to obtain; you almost need a paid coordinator to organize the volunteers and run the program... Seed money is easy, it’s the sustainability that’s difficult”

(Food hubs respondent 68)
“A lot of the funding that we do get [is] through grants though. Obviously granting is a one-time, usually for a start up and then you have to sustain it with funding otherwise, and I know that we do have a granter – a person who does all of our grant applications.”

(Food hubs respondent 71)

Respondents felt that a model of operation that depends on outside funding sources was unsustainable in the long term. They also felt that the effort (time, staff) required to obtain and meet the requirements of much of this funding could detract from its value, particularly if the initiative already lacks funded staff time:

"Then you come back to that whole question, how is anything sustainable if you're always looking for dollars to take the next step?"

(Food hubs respondent 93)

“"There is a fair amount of funding out there, I think sometimes it’s just difficult trying to access some of it, or sometimes it’s difficult to meet all the red tape requirements of it – by the time you’re done you think it’s not worth it... Sometimes it’s just who can access that funding in terms of all the time requirements, sometimes that becomes a huge issue for, say, a volunteer group where maybe that huge issue isn’t the same for a municipality if they access some of that money...it’s the staff versus non-staff issues”.

(Food hubs respondent 93)

Some of the more successful non profit-generating initiatives surveyed in the Food Hubs project were operated under the auspices of an established organization that already had stable funding for staff, infrastructure and other initiatives. Although obtaining donations and grant funds to provide any of the resources required by local food initiatives can be difficult, one of the biggest challenges to initiatives’ longevity is relying on unsustainable funding sources for core operational costs such as staff wages. The main advantage of operating under the auspices of an established organization is that these organizations provide the stable, salaried staff positions required to operate sustainable initiatives. Even if donations and grants are still required for physical materials (i.e. the food in a food bank) these staff members’ time is funded by the organization, reducing the burden of continually having to obtain new funding for operational costs. Successful models of this nature that were identified in the sample include initiatives
operated as part of the activities of community health centres, larger well-established charitable organizations and municipal governments.

Many respondents identified that another solution to the funding barrier to nonprofit local food initiatives would be for the government to provide funding for these initiatives. In fact there was a resounding call throughout the datasets for increased government funds and other types of financial support (e.g. government-backed loans) for all types of local food initiatives as it was identified that both nonprofit and for-profit local food initiatives were constrained by a lack of financial resources.

For initiatives funded by revenue generated from their own activities, obtaining sustainable funding is a challenge for other reasons. While these initiatives worry less about grant applications, the profits they survive on can be eroded by the costs associated with accessing alternative markets:

“It’s great for them to start these farmers markets up, but it’s hard to get enough farmers to come to them; because like I was saying it takes such a long time to get their things ready for what they can get out of it and some of these markets, it tends to be the same farmers go from one to the other on different days and there’s not that many of the farmers willing to do that kind of thing”.

(Food hubs respondent 94)

Both for profit and nonprofit initiatives constrained by financial viability sometimes relied on unpaid or under-paid labor. One food program organizer reported a personal goal for the future was being able to “make a living doing this kind of work” (food hubs respondent 80). Many organizations are run almost entirely by unpaid volunteer labor. For example, one good food box program compensated the volunteers it relied on to pack and load the good food boxes with a complimentary good food box, and the driver who donated his time and the use of his truck to deliver boxes to pick up locations received a an annual honorarium gift. Producers frequently reported self-exploitation in order to farm and access alternative markets. One producer participated in a government-funded youth summer employment program\(^6\): “some of my students make more than I do [at minimum wage], for sure on a per hour basis” explaining that

\(^6\) The government provided some of the funds required to provide this wage.
“hiring at minimum wage is our biggest expense on a fruit and vegetable farm” (food hubs respondent 87). Another producer also illustrated how having their own farm labor paid for at minimum wage would not allow them to offer their food at a competitive (or affordable) price:

“I’m processing until midnight probably again tonight you know and I start at six. It’s a labor of love and we’re just trying to question, do people have to break themselves to make this happen? ...What’s happening here is if we value our work at minimum wage then that food is going to be very expensive.”

(Food hubs respondent 98)

Farm labor was sometimes made more affordable to the farmer by internship programs. In fact, it was not uncommon for these types of positions to outnumber full-time paid positions on farms (although producers expressed the desire to be able to provide more of the latter opportunities). In these programs, volunteers or interns spend a season providing labor on a farm and instead of a wage receive room, board, a small stipend, and a ‘hands-on’ education in farming. One producer revealed that the hours in these positions could be as high as fifty hours a week, working five to seven days a week. To sum up, very few people working in the local food economy in any aspect are earning a living wage, let alone a significant income.

Respondents concluded that for a local food economy to thrive in the long term, it had to be economically viable.

“We’re just trying to build a sustainable business model so that it will go beyond the involvement of the people that started it.”

(Food hubs respondent 73)

“I think that’s what the food hubs need to be, it’s a business right, we can’t subsidize and [get] everything from the government, they have to be able to make a profit”

(Food hubs respondent 94)

“The economics of it: people are not going to do things unless they’re able to financially succeed beyond just having a house and food.”

(Food hubs respondent 98)
One of the most commonly identified strategies to support local food was institutional procurement: “if Foodland Ontario is going to say ‘okay, buy Ontario’, then why the heck aren’t our…institutions doing so as well? …Put your money where your mouth is” (Food hubs respondent 93). BPSIF administrators elaborated on the benefits of local procurement to economic viability. They identified that Ontario BPS institutions spend $745 million annually on food. This is enough spending to support a significant number of Ontario producers if they could capture this market (currently served by conventional supply chains that, as discussed under the banner of governance and bureaucracy, are not designed for local procurement). The ability of producers to capture this market however is constrained by the barriers discussed throughout this chapter, as identified by the BPSIF data.

While local procurement has the potential to support the economic viability of many local producers, one food hubs respondent expressed that an emphasis on local public procurement may not be enough to address some of the other good food goals. The researcher summarized this respondent’s sentiments as follows: “public procurement needs to take off blinders regarding sustainability and look at not just local but organic” (food hubs respondent 106). This means that procurement policies that select for locally produced foods help ensure the economic viability of local producers by creating a market for their produce, but local procurement policies do not necessarily ensure that this food is produced in sustainable or socially just ways unless other qualifiers are added to ‘local’.

At the same time, respondents also recognized that economic viability is critical to the ability to achieve other good food goals. When asked to prioritize sustainability, social justice, economic viability of producers or surviving the coming food crisis as motivations (see Table 3), many respondents identified the importance of economic viability to the other motivations listed. Take for example the following responses summarized (not directly quoted) by food hubs researchers:

“Viability is a priority, the rest of the factors are great but...only secondary because the producers have to make a living”

(Food hubs respondent 10)

“She says that sustainability and viability for producers are very important. You can’t have sustainability without supporting our farmers. They go hand in hand. It’s an arbitrary distinction.”
While other motivations and good food goals were certainly identified as important to respondents, some felt that without economically viable producers and initiatives, these other goals would be more difficult to achieve.

In order to remain economically viable, producers in particular had to master new skill sets required in alternative markets, including marketing, customer service, and business planning. The lack of these skills along with the lack of opportunities for producers to learn these skills prevented some producers from thriving in local markets:

“I think the producers are still a long way in understanding the importance of marketing what they have, especially with the switch from the commodity driven producers to now producers selling direct to the consumers. You know that’s still a relatively recent switch for many farmers and that whole concept of having to market your product...I think there’s that need to really help support the producers in understanding that they need to market themselves, not only their product but their whole operation and they need to market that operation to potential customers and [they need] help...understand[ing] how to do so”

(Food hubs respondent 95)

A lack of food literacy skills on the part of consumers and other customers (including institutional staff) in terms of identifying and knowing how to prepare fresh foods available locally was identified as a barrier:

“Part of it [the barriers constraining a local food economy] would be consumer education around nutrition and what to do with healthy food and how to use it: how to prepare it.”

(Food hubs respondents 80)

“We’re a very unskilled culture now with computers and technology and always looking for that quick fix, so yeah definitely getting back to the basic skill development”

(Food hubs respondent 97)

“Sometimes people that aren’t avid farmers markets shoppers look at the stuff and think, ‘what do I do with this?’ so helping them understand how you use the food in your own home when cooking for your family”
As discussed previously, a shortage of food skills was also a barrier in the BPS. Institutions were unable to purchase fresh, whole local food in part because their staff lacked the skills to prepare it.

Barriers related to a lack of resources including shortages of time, money and skills contributed to the challenges local producers faced in supplying the food needs of their local communities. Respondents identified that the supply of local food is already constrained and so a lack of supply of local food is a barrier in its own right. Resource shortages compounded supply shortages by making it even more difficult for local producers to distribute the food they do produce to local consumers. Lack of supply was attributed to insufficient agricultural production, which in turn was linked with a limited growing season and the challenge of operating an economically viable farm business:

“Insufficient production, I think that’s a problem too because I honestly don’t think there are enough farmers, or at least I know in [my] area even if we wanted to scale this up we’d have to get the farmers going first.”

(Food hubs respondent 66)

“It’s...a lack of availability due to seasonality and insufficient production.”

(Food hub respondent 82)

“The growing season is still limited...so there are seasonal issues when it comes to local”

(Food hub respondent 80)

“[Our community], I don’t think would be able to produce enough...It’s the lack of agriculture in [our community]...Farming doesn’t pay, so I don’t know how you would ever get people to go into fruit and vegetable farming to make a living to do enough in [our community] to be able to supply [our community] with food. Right now in agriculture we’re operating at a 1979 income level and our expenses are 2011 and it’s really hard to make a living in agriculture.”

(Food hubs respondent 71)
Lack of supply also related to the loss of farmland and farmers: “less than two percent of the population farms” (food hubs respondent 71), in many cases because it is not an economically viable profession. Respondents identified that the current generation of farmers is aging and not being replaced because of the challenge of accessing affordable land and remaining profitable in farming. The migration of youth from rural communities to urban ones was seen to exacerbate this problem, as well as jeopardizing the next generation of successful food businesses in these communities. This situation is so severe that one respondent suggested targeting immigration programs to attract entrepreneurs and new Canadians with business skills and capital, and direct their settlement to rural areas where they could take-over existing, and start up new food businesses. Respondents also stressed the need for policy aimed at preserving farmland for agricultural land uses.

Lack of supply was also linked to the final important resource related barrier to the development of the local food economy: the lack of infrastructure. While many initiatives struggled to access adequate facilities and equipment – whether this was land for community gardens, or space with conveyor belts for packing food boxes – the two biggest infrastructure constraints were a lack of processing capacity and distribution infrastructure.

Processing encompasses a range of activities from relatively basic activities such as washing, butchering, portioning, freezing and packaging, to the combination of ingredients into fully prepared meals and manufactured food products such as breaded chicken wings. Processing is critical in Ontario for several reasons. First, a limited growing season requires that harvests be preserved via processing if they are to be available locally year round. Second, even the most basic processing (such as washing and packaging) can add value to a food product that can make the difference in revenue between economic viability and economic failure for farmers operating on tight margins. Third, access to certain markets and sales to certain customers absolutely depends on the ability to process foods to meet their requirements. For example, time-strapped consumers demand pre-portioned and prepared convenience foods. Even more critically, huge markets such as the BPS are ill-equipped to purchase and prepare fresh whole foods due to a lack of equipment, staff skill and staff time. Therefore getting local food into these markets relies upon having sufficient local processing capacity to incorporate local ingredients into the prepared meals required by these customers.
However, recent decades have witnessed extensive consolidation in the processing industry, resulting in the closure of many smaller processing facilities in Ontario, and reduced access to locally accessible, proximate facilities in many communities (see Carter-Whitney & Miller, 2010). If producers are unable to transport their produce cost effectively to a processing facility, they are forced to either take land out of production, shift production to commodities, or face the challenges of selling to the fresh market, which include mastering new skills and physically accessing distant retail outlets:

“We’ve had systems set up that have disappeared... I farmed for over 50 years...we had quite a lot of pears, we sold them mostly for processing to a factory, that factory has since closed down so all the pears in the Niagara peninsula and the peaches have to go to the fresh market now, and that's part of the problem.”

(Food hubs respondent 94)

Processing capacity is difficult to re-build once it has been lost. The capital required is extraordinary: “I mean it’s always hardest to get money for sort of capital-type stuff; for a building or equipment” (Food hubs respondent 73). Government regulations relating to food safety and zoning prohibit many processing activities (such as slaughtering and butchering livestock) on the farm, and tax assessments make other sorts of processing activities prohibitively expensive to conduct on the farm. The need to preserve abattoirs was particularly emphasized, as meat can only be processed for sale by abattoirs.

The other most commonly identified infrastructural barrier across both datasets is inadequate distribution capacity. Currently, distribution infrastructure is set up for economies of scale. Respondents identified that this results in a lot of redundancies if local food is moved within this system. For example, BPSIF administrators identified that distributing local food in the present system would require it to be shipped from local communities to the distant central warehouses of the major distributors, only to be shipped right back to the local community it came from to be delivered to institutional customers. As will be discussed further under the ‘Governance and Bureaucracy’ barrier, the internal governance of the BPS supply chain prevents institutions from procuring food directly in their communities so it can avoid this unnecessary detour.

Often the volume of product to be moved prevents distribution from occurring. In the BPS this barrier is particularly salient, as many of the distributors and foodservice operators who provide
most of the sector with its foodservice are large national or even international corporations. They operate on economies of scale, and their systems are designed to handle volume. Procurement of smaller quantities of product from more small and medium sized local farmers would interrupt these efficiencies. These distributors also deliver product year-round, and so prefer suppliers who can provide product year round. Seasonality prevents Ontario suppliers from providing year-round product, which puts them at a disadvantage.

Similarly to processing infrastructure, distribution infrastructure is costly. It requires cold storage and warehouse space, refrigerated trucks, well-maintained roads and transit routes, etc. The smaller the volume of product moved, the higher the costs of distribution per unit, as these costs are spread over fewer units. Distribution into rural, and remote regions is an even greater challenge in light of this. Northern Ontario communities struggle disproportionately against supply barriers to a local food economy because they are remote, rural and are restricted by an even shorter growing season. These challenges also constrained smaller community food programs such as school nutrition and good food box programs:

“If I could have a truck and a driver, that would help [with good food box deliveries]...it would only really be needed a couple of days a month, so I’d share a truck with somebody... or have one donated from a company say every...month one Wednesday...I keep thinking if I win the lottery, I’m buying a truck!”

(Food hubs respondent 84)

“Its not always so easy as contacting a farmer and getting them to bring the produce to you because...sometimes they don’t have the means to get the produce to where you want it to be or they can’t have it there...when you need it to be there...Some schools don’t order large volumes because it could be a small school, we had some distribution companies who wanted minimum orders... that wasn’t happening with little schools...How do you make the least amount of work for...volunteers that are working really hard to bring good food into schools without asking them to run to five different places to get the locally grown produce?”

(Food hubs respondent 72)

A lack of time and economic viability further exacerbates these barriers, as producers or customers do not have the transportation infrastructure required (i.e. refrigerated trucks) for deliveries and pick-ups, or it is not worth their time to make deliveries, particularly of smaller quantities or infrequent programs.
Inadequate distribution infrastructure is a key link to physical access constraints in several ways. As one food hubs respondent (70) put it, “everybody knows they should be eating local, it’s more of how”. Since “you can’t buy what you can’t get” (food hubs respondent 70), if the distribution infrastructure fails to deliver local produce to markets where consumers can access it (be they outlets that are physically proximate to consumers’ homes, or institutional foodservice), consumers will not be able to purchase local food even if they want to.

4.3 Governance and Bureaucracy

The internal governance of major conventional supply chain systems such as the BPS creates further challenges to increasing the movement of local product within them. All actors along the supply chain have specific requirements that must be met by their suppliers. For example, some institutions that rely on reheating of fully prepared meals require meals in specific container sizes that allow the institution to maximize oven space. Similarly, distributors may require boxes or other packaging used by suppliers to have proportions that allow for the maximization of truck and warehouse space. A lack of communication between actors all across supply chains, but particularly a lack of channels for producers and processors to communicate with end customers (such as BPS institutions) was identified as a barrier. Without these communication exchanges, producers and processors were unable to anticipate the specific requirements of BPS customers and ended up excluded from these markets.

Many BPS institutions (similarly to other major conventional retail outlets like supermarkets and large restaurant chains) require suppliers to have appropriate food safety certification. Some producers felt that the time and the paperwork required to obtain certification prevents them from meeting these requirements and accessing these markets. BPSIF program administrators shared the experiences of grantees trying to obtain value-adding food safety certification. Producers attempting to obtain the certification expressed frustration that the standards and requirements for certification changed several times within a short period. Despite the value added by obtaining certification (whether food safety or organic certification) the costs associated can be prohibitive for producers, particularly smaller producers.

The process for selecting and contracting with suppliers also presents challenges for incorporating local food into more conventional supply chains. Institutions contract with foodservice operators, who contract with distributors who contract with product suppliers.
Contracts are generally designed to select for suppliers that can provide consistent volume across the corporation’s operating locations, year-round, at competitive prices, rather than to select for superior quality, taste, or local sourcing. This selection process disadvantages small and medium sized local suppliers constrained by seasonality. Contracts can be for multi-year periods. Particularly in larger companies, contracts are often struck at the level of corporate headquarters, and passed down to service locations, which are then restricted to purchasing from a list of company-approved suppliers. Bids for contracts are generally received through a request for proposals (herein RFP) process. The RFP process can be difficult to navigate – requiring specialized knowledge or even software to complete successfully. RFPs are sometimes extended by invitation only, and even when extended openly are not always advertised through the channels that reach local producers and suppliers.

As institutions rarely source food directly from suppliers, to reach BPS markets, producers may need to get their product carried by a distributor that does supply the BPS. Some distributors will feature select products at tradeshows, client product demonstrations, or on ordering catalogs in exchange for a rebate or fee from the producer. Local producers cannot always compete against larger, non-local suppliers for these advertising spots.

Finally, the way menus are planned in institutions can create barriers for incorporating local food. Menu rotations are planned infrequently and far in advance, which offers limited opportunities to redesign the entire menu. The rotations are not necessarily designed to overlap with seasonal availability cycles. Substitutions for locally available alternatives are not easily made, as they can throw off the rest of the menu cycle. For example, substituting imported broccoli with local asparagus in May – when asparagus is available locally in Ontario but broccoli is not – makes sense in theory, but could alter the nutrition balance of a meal on a healthcare institution’s menu, or throw off the curriculum schedule in a secondary or post-secondary institution’s culinary course.

Inappropriate government regulations were commonly identified as a barrier across datasets. Respondents felt that current policy favored big agribusiness, emphasized global trade and exports, disadvantaged smaller producers, and was not supportive of a local food economy. More ‘scale appropriate’ regulations for smaller producers, processors and abattoirs was called for as respondents felt that health and safety regulation was designed for larger enterprises but was
prohibitively costly to comply with for smaller ones. Another example of the need for more scale appropriate regulation was identified in the supply managed system. While supply management was praised for its ability to distribute local production regionally and provide producers with economically viability, respondents felt that quota restrictions for small producers constrained the supply available for alternative markets and called for these policies to be revisited:

“That’s the only way you’re going to make it viable for people to get into the market, is to make it supply managed. [But] then you’d find all sorts of people who would not like that idea because the little guy then... wouldn’t be able to compete.”

(Food hubs respondent 71)

Land use, zoning and tax evaluation policy constrains processing capacity, as many retail and value-added activities producers would like to engage in on the farm would be considered industrial or commercial land uses by current property tax assessment practice (Carter-Whitney, 2008; Carter-Whitney & Miller, 2010):

“I would like to see municipalities make it as easy as possible in terms of their by-laws and their zoning for farms to have [retail] markets on their property without too many difficulties associated with that, because sometimes that can be a bit of a challenge”

(Food hubs respondent 93)

“[We need to be] more flexible in what we consider on-farm income”

(Food hubs respondent 75)

“[Need to] try to provide opportunities on properties for a greater range of production options... flexible policies for value retention on the farm.”

(Food hubs respondent 86)

The tax rate for such activities is so much higher than that of agricultural property tax assessments that these penalties not only neutralize potential revenue benefits from value-added

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7 One food hubs respondent suggested that expanding the supply managed system to fruit and vegetable cultivation was the only way to make that type of agriculture economically viable.
processing but also could jeopardize a producer’s economic viability. Respondents identified that solutions lay in amending current zoning, land use and property tax assessment policy in order to support more on-farm processing as well as easing restrictions on food retailing at the farm gate and in the city.

National trade policy that emphasized exports and allowed redundant trade\(^8\) to occur was identified as a major barrier to local food:

> “I’d love to see a tariff on any incoming fruit or vegetable that we produce in Ontario or Canada, a tariff or a tax... for imported stuff that can be produced here... We’re bringing in apples from China to make apple juice in Ontario... It’s ludicrous, but it’s cheaper. And free trade probably doesn’t allow that [a tariff] anymore.”

(Food hubs respondent 87)

Free trade policies in particular were perceived as a major barrier constraining the implementation of local procurement policies in public institutions, municipal and provincial governments. There is a fear that selecting suppliers based on geographic origin or proximity would be considered a violation of free trade. However, interviews with the BPSIF administrators revealed that free trade policies do not constrain local procurement as much as perceived. None of the international trade agreements Canada is presently a signatory to (namely, The World Trade Organization Agreement on Government Procurement, WTO-AGP and the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA) apply to provincial, municipal governments or public institutions (Carter-Whitney, 2008). The national Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) (to which Ontario is a signatory) does apply to the provincial government, its municipalities and publicly funded institutions, by forbidding them from showing less favorable treatment to suppliers from other provinces than they would show suppliers from their own jurisdiction (Carter-Whitney, 2008). However, the agreement does not apply to the procurement of goods and services valued at less than one hundred thousand dollars (Carter-Whitney, 2008). BPSIF administrators revealed that many institutions’ foodservice contracts are less than this amount. Furthermore, contracts that would otherwise be worth more than one hundred thousand

\(^8\) Redundant trade refers to trade in a good that is simultaneously imported and exported from the same region (Baker, et al., 2010, Miedema, 2006).
dollars can be divided up by product group (rather than contracting out all foodservice or supply in one contract, or further subdivided if this is already the case) until they fall within this limit. In addition, the AIT currently includes an exemption for a broadly defined “legitimate exception” that can be invoked for a number of reasons (including environmental protection). The BPS dataset revealed that the City of Toronto has implemented a local food procurement policy by invoking this clause for the protection of the environment, by defining the procurement policy as part of the implementation of its Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan.

Entering into a Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) would apply to municipal governments, and much concern has been raised that this would prohibit municipalities from engaging in local procurement policies (The Council of Canadians, n.d.). According to the federal government, CETA would similarly have a threshold dollar value below which the agreement does not apply (Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, 2012), the question is how low this threshold will be and whether this will affect public procurement of local food.

Whether or not legislating local food procurement would violate free trade agreements, respondents felt that governments should be expanding and increasing efforts to promote local food to all potential purchasers, as one researcher summarized the response of a respondent: “municipalities should be making a huge deal about local food” (food hubs respondent 52). Respondents also looked to the province to market and promote local food, noting that the provincial agricultural marketing brand, Foodland Ontario, is a good start:

“Foodland Ontario needs to become bigger and bigger in their promotion of ‘good things grow in Ontario’ [Foodland Ontario’s slogan] and promoting Ontario”

(Food hubs respondent 87)

“We have brand recognition with [Foodland Ontario] already, could do a better job of promoting that and linking it back to the local system [regional buy-local branding initiatives]”

(Food hubs respondent 86)

While some respondents identified with a less expansive definition of local than Foodland Ontario’s definition of local as provincial, they recognize the power of the Foodland Ontario
brand in raising awareness of, and support for local food. As reflected in the preceding quotation (by Food hubs respondent 86), this power could potentially be harnessed to bolster similar marketing and branding initiatives at smaller local scales.

In addition to local food promotion and amendments to the policies discussed in this section, respondents also widely identified the need for new holistic food policy at all levels of government (federal, provincial and municipal):

“We don’t even have a food policy or a nutrition [policy] for all of Canada or even provincially...that would help filter down to what can happen at the local level”

(Food hubs respondent 76)

Several respondents went so far as to suggest the creation of new arm of government (department, ministry, secretariat, etc) to oversee such policy. Respondents felt that even a policy document such as a food charter, aimed more at outlining a broad set of principles or goals for the local food system, would be a helpful catalyst in the creation of more specific legislation and action.

Despite the many policy recommendations identified by respondents, there were also respondents that felt no state intervention was required to move ahead with the local food movement at the grassroots level: “there’s nothing stopping us” (food hubs respondent 70). Some appreciated the space to determine the path of the local food movement themselves, without the involvement of the state “mucking things up” (food hubs respondent 43; researcher summary).

4.4 Information and Relations

The relationships between local food actors and the availability of correct information are at the core of this final category of constraints.

As previously stated, BPS institutions do not often source food directly from suppliers. This makes it difficult to trace the origin of food items on their menus and can inhibit efforts to identify how much local produce they currently source in order to develop strategies to increase this amount. A common experience for BPS grantees embarking on the aforementioned task was to find that the inventory databases of BPS institutions and foodservice operators alike are not
designed to record and track place of origin information for fresh foods as it moves along the supply chain. Implementing systems that do record this information might require software upgrades so this product origin information could be recorded as a product attribute once it was obtained from suppliers. One distributor navigated around this issue by adding the word ‘local’ to the product title in their catalog once it was ascertained that the product was produced in Ontario. However, this method is less helpful for institutions and customers wishing to pursue more regional or proximate definitions of local. This example illustrates how the simultaneous existence of multiple definitions of ‘local’ can itself be a barrier.

Processed food origins can be even more difficult to ascertain because they are made with multiple ingredients, and processors are reluctant to divulge this information. Ingredient origin information is sometimes considered proprietary to protect brand integrity. Sometimes processors are unwilling to name ingredient origins because they fluctuate based on price and other factors. Foodland Ontario standards for defining local, processed foods were identified as a further barrier in the BPS data. BPSIF program administrators used the example of Ontario milk to illustrate the restricting impacts of Foodland Ontario definitions. Under the supply managed system, Ontario produced milk is pooled with milk produced in Quebec in Eastern districts of the province. This precludes dairy products such as cheese that are made with pooled Ontario milk from being granted the Foodland Ontario label. These standards were designed to market Ontario agricultural products under the Foodland Ontario label, but in the absence of other widespread local labels, many BPS supply chain actors use the Foodland Ontario label as a proxy for local. The result is that some processed foods that contain a large proportion of local ingredients are not recognized as such in conventional supply chains.

These examples of the difficulty identifying product origins speak to the broader opacity that plagues the conventional food system. Large, extended conventional supply chains increase the distance between producers and consumers. Distanced relationships between supply chain actors in turn create further knowledge gaps and information barriers.

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9 I.e. a distributor would know who to hold accountable in the purchase of a certain product line, but does not record product origin information in a way that could easily be incorporated to product catalogs or online ordering systems used by potential customers with an interest in purchasing local food.
The existence of a “huge disconnect between the producer and the consumer” (Food hubs respondent 85) contributes to a lack of information required to procure local food. “Consumers’ connection to the farm is now often at least one generation if not two or three generations back in their family,” identifies one producer, “so the farm has become something ideal and most consumers have no clue of how things are grown or the work it takes to grow something” (Food hubs respondent 87). This results in a lack of understanding of the seasonality of local food availability:

“People don’t even necessarily realize what we grow, they don’t realize when it is available”

(Food hubs respondent 93)

“People don’t know what the season for anything – fill in the blank – is anymore”

(Food hubs respondent 87)

“A lot of people don’t even know the growing seasons of an apple, or what Ontario has. I remember somebody saying that they were talking to a chef… who was wanting to know where they could get local oranges, and Ontario doesn’t grow oranges so there is a whole need for education”

(Food hubs respondent 95)

Consumers’ disconnect from the farm and their lack of understanding of seasonality and what goes into agricultural production results in a lack of appreciation for the true value of food, which contributes to an unwillingness to purchase local food:

“I can’t bump my corn up fifty cents because of that [dry weather causing increased irrigation costs] – people will turn their noses up to it... They won’t bat an eye at paying whatever for flowers, but you put a quart of strawberries up by 25 cents and its like ‘what!’, they’ll argue over a nickel or dime, on that...They won’t pay five dollars for a quart of strawberries, [they think] ‘I can get the clamshell at the grocery store for two bucks so why would I pay that here’. So not recognizing the value in food.”

(Food hubs respondent 87)

“[In] North America we spend about 8% of our incomes on food. We’ve been so spoiled by... this global food system that people think it’s their right or it’s their privilege to have this super cheap food and not pay for a decent wage to the
farmer for growing the food... [because of] the big business of food: the supermarkets and the distribution that [allow]s people [to] pay next to nothing for food”

(Food hubs respondent 97)

“A lot of people just weren’t willing to pay the extra money for it.”

(Food hubs respondent 66)

As mentioned under the banner of access, even consumers who are able to pay the extra money for local food when it is more expensive are unwilling to prioritize the procurement of local food over other uses of their time and money. An under-appreciation for the true value of food contributes to an unwillingness to prioritize local food procurement even when consumers are otherwise able to.

Consumers’ lack of understanding of local agriculture, production, seasonality, and the workings of alternative market forms leaves alternative markets vulnerable to appropriation:

“I think there are a lot of consumers that don’t understand that when they go to the farmer’s market there may be vendors that are just going to the food terminal and purchasing food...It [the Ontario Food Terminal] still supports a lot of stuff that is Ontario based, but there is a lot of stuff that comes in from the USA or wherever.”

(Food hub respondent 95)

“The grocery chains...want to look like the farmers market... [at] two Sobeys I’ve been in now, they’ve got beautiful painted themes of a barn and fresh produce and you know fields of grain or whatever on their walls – they want to be the farm. They’re being a barrier because people can get strawberries all year round... there isn’t a season for it any more! It’s available all the time so it becomes less valuable... there used to be excitement around those first strawberries.”

(Food hubs respondent 87)

Disconnected relationships were not only a problem between producers and consumers, but also between actors working to forward good food goals through different local food initiatives. Given the struggles for economic viability discussed in under the banner of resources and supply, some stakeholders sensed an air of competition and protectionism between initiatives working
towards similar goals. It was feared that multiple initiatives working towards similar ends would result in each initiative receiving smaller portions of fixed markets and funding opportunities:

“All the people who were shopping at six or ten [farmer’s] markets in town are now shopping at fifty without increasing the number of shoppers... [This is] reckless development.”

(Food hubs respondent 92)

“It has been challenging to build relationships with other organizations in the region doing similar work, as they seem to view [our organization] as competition.”

(Food hubs respondent 114; researcher summary)

However, when actors doing similar work engage in competition rather than collaboration, they miss important opportunities to share resources and potentially accomplish more together than they could separately:

“I would like to see an opportunity for us to integrate together and work together, I mean I see lots of duplication of service that we could probably do better and more effective if we work together.”

(Food hubs respondent 76)

“Maybe it would be worthwhile for the community to get together to coordinate their efforts and learn from each other”

(Food hubs respondent 72)

Not only is collaboration important between actors that are working towards similar goals, but across sectors as well. Food systems issues are holistic and yet, are treated separately by government departments and food system initiatives alike:

“We’re very much in silos and you hear that all the time but it’s so true... so how do we bring the sectors even more together to look at the barriers?”

(Food hubs respondent 76)

‘Bringing the sectors together’ is a challenge in its own right. The local food movement in Ontario is not a single, cohesive entity working towards a common vision. Instead, it is a mosaic of diverse initiatives and actors working to achieve individual pieces of the good food ideal, but
not always recognizing the larger puzzle to which their piece contributes. The actors involved in a local food economy are extremely diverse, and because they tend to each be focused on their own part of the food system, they normally have little opportunity for interaction and discussion:

“You’re looking at bringing people from such a variety of sectors together, everything from even land planning to waste and disposal of food to growing of food to processing, distributing and warehousing of food, why would those people normally talk to each other at either end of that spectrum?...So I think that’s one of the biggest barriers...that people don’t see themselves as being part of something larger or being connected to other people that work in the food continuum and they just don’t talk to each other...The ownership that they’re all involved in the food system is what’s going to either make or break it.”

(Food hubs respondent 78)

While the need for collaboration and communication within and across sectors is well recognized, finding the resources to facilitate it is a problem. As discussed under the banner of resources and supply, all participants in the local food system are struggling to achieve their food systems goals while remaining economically viable. No one actor in the local food movement feels they have the time to take away from their own work to facilitate the collaboration necessary to move everyone forward:

“When you talk to almost anyone of us involved in this sort of area, we’re all very overworked, very busy already just trying to keep what we’ve got going, and a lot of it has to do with keeping money flowing and organizing with hardly any people to do it... all of us are working flat out...So yes, you need new energies, new people who can basically come in and organize and facilitate putting it together and once that happens it will free up some of our time probably but at the initial start up stage none of us...has the ability at the moment that I know of to take it on. We all might have the passion, but not enough time and energy”.

(Food hubs respondent 76)

Respondents felt that the government had a role to play in facilitating the communication and coordination of local food initiatives within and across regions. Respondents did identify that in some communities, food councils were beginning to facilitate communication between food systems stakeholders and address some competition and collaboration-related barriers. These organizations had a diversity of monikers, including food council, food policy council, food security stakeholders committee, food security coalition, etc.; herein I refer to them using the shorthand “FPC”. Some were stand-alone non-profits; others were organized under the auspices
of community health centres or municipal governments. Although some were more involved in additional activities such as outreach, research, policy advocacy or even program administration, most functioned primarily to facilitate and coordinate discussion and collaboration among community food actors.

FPCs provided opportunities for diverse stakeholders to communicate their interests and challenges with each other, develop dialogue, trust and respect, identify common goals and visions for the community food system, identify and realize opportunities to share resources and knowledge and finally, identify each stakeholder as a part of the same food system. While individual stakeholders may work towards individual goals separately, the FPC provides them with opportunities to communicate and collaborate on synergistic activities:

“They [the region’s FPC] can focus on some...larger issues that we can’t focus on ourselves, to do with policy. And just having networking events or educational events where we can get together and realize that there’s a number of us working on the same project or have the same ideas, and hopefully we can collaborate on future projects”

(Food hubs respondent 73)

FPCs bring local food actors working on different pieces of the community food system with limited resources together in one place, providing the whole system connection and developing holistic thinking about the food system by reinforcing that these individual stakeholders are all working on pieces of the same larger whole: “our [FPC’s] whole model is how can we work together because we have very similar goals with regards to food” (food hubs respondent 74). These types of organizations provide the platform for a holistic approach to food systems change in local communities.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the barriers to local food initiatives and local food procurement in broader public sector institutions, as identified by the stakeholders working towards building a local food economy in Ontario. In the next chapter I will summarize these barriers and my contribution to the task of identifying and understanding the barriers to the local food movement. I will also present a list of recommendations for overcoming these barriers.
Chapter 5
Discussion and Conclusions

This thesis has used the case study of the Ontario local food movement to identify a comprehensive list of barriers to food system localization that are broadly applicable elsewhere. Chapter four presented the results of an analysis of two qualitative datasets, described in chapter three. In doing so chapter four described the barriers to the local food movement identified by local food actors in the Ontario case study. These findings largely corroborate the findings of previous studies identifying the barriers to local food and their solutions discussed in section 2.4. These findings build upon this existing literature by categorizing the identified barriers to local food under a novel typology and bringing them together in one document. While the occasional barrier identified arises from the particulars of the Canadian policy context, the identification of the barriers to local food is broadly relevant to the local food movement across North America, and indeed anywhere a conventional food system like that in North America is dominant. In addition, by including interviews with the administrators of the BPSIF in the data, this thesis examines the barriers to local food procurement in an institutional context. This contribution is important because while many have called for increased institutional procurement as a solution to some of the barriers constraining the local food movement (Baker, 2010; Carter-Whitney, 2008; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Metcalf Foundation, 2008), few have addressed the constraints that these initiatives might face.

This final section of the thesis will summarize the barriers thus identified, highlighting their interconnectedness. It will then present nineteen recommendations drawn from these findings that will help local food movements overcome these barriers. Next, I reflect on the broader challenges to food systems change introduced in chapter two, as they shape and influence the specific barriers to the local food movement this thesis has identified. Finally I conclude the chapter and the thesis with a summary of the contribution this research has made to the study of local food movements.
5.1 Summary of the Barriers to the Local Food Movement

In this next section I summarize the barriers to the local food movement as identified in the findings presented in this thesis and the existing literature on the barriers to local food introduced in section 2.4. I have identified that the barriers to the local food movement can be broadly grouped under four major banners (see Table 4) and were categorized under these banners in chapter four. This summary will emphasize how the barriers to the local food movement interact with other barriers within and across these banners, highlighting the importance of a holistic approach to addressing these barriers. This section completes the accomplishment of my main research objective: to identify the barriers to the local food movement in a comprehensive and interconnected way.

Table 4: Summary of Barriers to the Local Food Movement

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<td>Inappropriate regulations</td>
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This thesis corroborates previous findings (Metcalf Foundation, 2008; Mount et al., forthcoming) that an inability to access local food because of distance, cost or inconvenience prevents many consumers and institutions from purchasing local food – irrespective of demand. The findings also point to a lack of understanding of local seasonality and an under-appreciation for the true value of food created in part by distancing of producers and consumers in constraining demand for local food – corroborating similar assertions made by Christianson and Morgan (2007); the Metcalf Foundation (2008) and Miedema (2006).
In addition, the findings reinforce previous findings that a lack of supply of local food due to seasonality (Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009), loss of farmers and farmland (Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Metcalf Foundation, 2008; Miedema, 2006; Mount et al., forthcoming; Starr et al., 2003), and a lack of processing, distribution and other infrastructure (Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Mount et al., forthcoming), is a barrier.

The findings presented in chapter four also highlight the role of inappropriate government regulations and conventional supply chain structure in a) making agricultural production economically unviable and b) making it difficult to channel local agricultural production to local markets – factors that are responsible for some of the lack of supply. These findings corroborate previous studies in identifying current regulations regarding land use, zoning and tax assessment as constraining to local food processing and retailing endeavors (Carter-Whitney, 2008; Carter-Whitney & Miller, 2010; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009). They corroborate findings that inflexibility in the current supply management system makes it difficult for new, alternative and small local producers to access quota for supply managed commodities that would allow them to generate local supply (Baker, 2010; Carter-Whitney, 2008; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Young & Watkins, 2010). They corroborate findings that export focused agricultural policy and free trade agreements restrict efforts to promote local food and prevent institutions from engaging in local procurement for fear of violating these agreements (Carter-Whitney, 2008).

The literature identifies that country of origin labeling standards and the federal definition of local food for labeling purposes is a barrier to the local food movement (Carter-Whitney, 2008; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009). The findings presented in chapter four add that provincial standards for using the Foodland Ontario label are similarly restrictive – excluding some local producers from being identified as such in the marketplace. In addition the simultaneous existence and use of multiple constructions and definitions of ‘local’ creates confusion among consumers. Finally, this thesis identified that current practice on retaining and tracking product origin information through conventional supply chains create
further situations where local product is prevented from being identified as such in the market. These findings echo the arguments (introduced in section 2.3) of scholars who argue that the different ways of defining and identifying (or not identifying) food as locally produced can have socially unjust consequences when certain local producers are arbitrarily excluded from these constructions of local (DuPuis & Goodman, 2005; Dupuis, Goodman, & Harrison, 2006; Harrison, 2008; Hinrichs & Allen, 2008).

Existing literature (see Section 2.4) emphasizes that the structure of conventional supply chains under increasing concentration and consolidation in retailing, distribution and foodservice sectors create distribution systems designed to channel large, consistent-quality volumes year round. These systems are not designed to source food locally and local producers who cannot meet volume demands are thus excluded from conventional markets (Carter-Whitney, 2008; Christianson & Morgan, 2007; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Metcalf Foundation, 2008; Miedema, 2006; Starr et al., 2003). The process by which retailers, distributors and restaurants select bids for supplier-contracts is identified as a further barrier to local producers hoping to access these markets in the literature (Christianson & Morgan, 2007; Starr et al., 2003). This thesis identifies that local producers attempting to access BPS foodservice markets face these same challenges. A conventional supply chain consisting of large distributors and corporate caterers currently provides much of the BPS’s foodservice. Similarly to large retailers and restaurants, they demand high volumes of consistent quality product year round, and select suppliers using a bid process that prioritizes these traits and is inaccessible to many local producers.

This thesis has also identified that the BPS faces unique challenges to implementing local food procurement policies that have not yet been adequately addressed in the existing literature. The ways in which menus are planned in institutions prevents local ingredients from being easily included in institutional foodservice. In addition, the importance of obtaining food safety certification is elevated for producers wishing to supply the BPS over alternative local markets such as the CSA or the FM, for example. Despite the value added by obtaining food safety or other certifications (such as organic) and the market opportunities opened by certification (such as to the BPS), the findings presented in chapter four illustrate that obtaining certification can be
prohibitively costly, or difficult enough to navigate that producers are unable to acquire the certifications required by the BPS.

This thesis also shows how institutions face some of the same constraints as other actors in the food system, including access barriers and resources barriers such as time and skills. A lack of food literacy skills among consumers and a lack of business skills among producers and local food businesses are identified as barriers in existing literature (Christianson & Morgan, 2007; Metcalf Foundation, 2008; Starr et al., 2003). Chapter four presented findings that add that a lack of whole foods preparation skills in the BPS and marketing skills among producers making the switch from commodity agriculture to local DM are additional resource barriers constraining local food.

Existing literature identifies that the local food movement is constrained by a need for more funding for local food initiatives, and better access to capital for local food businesses (Christianson & Morgan, 2007; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Metcalf Foundation, 2008; Mount et al., forthcoming). This thesis corroborates these findings and emphasizes the importance of funding constraints and a lack of economic viability in underscoring other barriers. For example, time and labor shortages were linked to inadequate funding for the provision of salaried employment opportunities to do specific work; also, the cost of equipment, and/or the additional tax burden associated with non-agricultural land use on the farm contributed to shortages in infrastructural resources such as processing capacity. In particular the lack of financial stability and the lack of time resources went hand in hand in many of the struggles of interview respondents.

This thesis contributes to the literature on the barriers to local food an elucidation of the degree to which a lack of time constrains local food actors. As illustrated in chapter four, a lack of time was often identified as a product of funding barriers. Nonprofit organizations struggled to simultaneously carry out their operational activities with limited staff hours and write grant applications and progress reports to sustain the limited funding they had. For profit initiatives similarly struggled to carry out the tasks required to generate paltry revenues and had little time to spare for engagement with the broader local food community.
The lack of collaboration and communication between local food actors identified as a barrier to the local food movement in this thesis and in the literature (Christianson & Morgan, 2007; Miedema, 2006; Mount et al., forthcoming) was found to be a product of time constraints in addition to a residual effect of competitive relations between initiatives. The lack of collaboration prevented local food actors from realizing opportunities to coordinate their efforts and achieve greater affect than they could alone. A common example was producers pooling resources to purchase processing technology (Miedema, 2006) or otherwise aggregating their product to be able to better meet the demands for large volumes required of many conventional supply chains such as the BPS. Collaboration and communication between local food actors in a community was also identified as necessary to overcome “single issue advocacy” (Hassanein, 2003, p. 82) approach and address food systems issues holistically (Levkoe, 2011).

5.2 Overcoming Obstacles: Solutions and Policy Recommendations

The foremost reason to identify and understand the obstacles constraining the local food movement is to inform strategies to help grow the local food movement beyond these constraints. To this end, this next section will present a list of nineteen policy recommendations, summarized in Table 5. Some of these recommendations have been made before, but the need to restate them speaks to the continued importance of these issues (at least in the Ontario context) and need for continued or further action to resolve them. I have grouped my recommendations under four banners – policy, funding, internal governance of conventional supply chains and education and awareness. These recommendations are explored in more detail below.

5.2.1 Policy

Inappropriate government regulation was identified as a major barrier to the development of local food systems in this thesis, reinforcing similar findings in the existing literature (Carter-Whitney, 2008; Carter-Whitney & Miller, 2010; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Young & Watkins, 2010). As such there are some relatively straightforward policy changes that the government could make to help facilitate rather than constrain local food systems through regulations. Governments should work to add flexibility to regulation that is currently not designed for smaller scaled operations (such as health and safety regulations). They should
expand the list of activities that are considered agricultural land uses to allow for on-farm value-added processing and retailing without tax penalties. Zoning and land use policies should be similarly amended to make it easier to set up fresh markets in urban spaces. Governments should work to add flexibility to the supply management system, making quota exemptions or creating tailored quota schemes for alternative and smaller scaled markets. The conservation of farmland for agricultural use and protection from development needs to be legislated and enforced with more vigor.

Governments have the power to simultaneously address financial access and economic viability barriers to the local food movement by implementing various wage policies. It has been suggested in this thesis and in previous work (Metcalf Foundation, 2008) that the government include an additional allowance in social assistance for the purchase of food, as the current allowance is not sufficient to cover the costs of both housing and food. Increasing the social assistance allowance or providing support for the purchase of healthy and local foods to low income citizens through more directed programs (e.g. food stamps redeemable at FMs) helps citizens prevented from purchasing local food by financial access constraints overcome these barriers, as well as expands the market of consumers that are potentially able to support local farmers. In addition, government programs that subsidize the cost of paying minimum wage would make labor more affordable for local producers and processors, helping to address barriers constraining the development of these businesses relating to a lack of economic viability.

Finally, all levels of government should adopt holistic food policies or charters to help stimulate and guide the development of good food policies.

5.2.2 Funding

This thesis has identified a clear need for more and better types of funding to support the local food movement. There are important private sector funding sources that could make their funding more effective to local food endeavors by incorporating the following recommendations. There is a strong call across the literature and the empirical findings presented in chapter four for the government (at all levels) to be a critical source of financial support to local food initiatives.
Table 5 Summary of Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Increase flexibility in supply management, &amp; health and safety</td>
<td>regulations for small and alternative local producers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Expand the definition of agricultural land use to facilitate</td>
<td>on-farm value-added processing and retailing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Adjust zoning and land use by-laws to facilitate food markets</td>
<td>in urban places.</td>
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<td>4. Preserve farmland.</td>
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<td>5. Supplement income assistance to include a budget for food.</td>
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<td>6. Support agricultural employers by subsidizing minimum wage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Adopt holistic food policies or charters at all levels of</td>
<td>government.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FUNDING</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Increase funding available for local food initiatives from the</td>
<td>public and private sector.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Make more funding available for operational costs and infrastructure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Encourage established organizations (including municipalities)</td>
<td>to host local food programs, particularly FPCs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Provide more government backed loan programs to help local food</td>
<td>businesses access start up capital.</td>
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<tr>
<td>INTERNAL GOVERNANCE OF CONVENTIONAL SUPPLY CHAINS</td>
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<td>12. Design menu schedules that maximize local seasonal availability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Break supplier contracts down by product or product category to</td>
<td>contracts more accessible to local suppliers and facilitate local</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Embed criteria for local procurement in request for proposals in</td>
<td>procurement policies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Encourage collective, cooperative or other producer aggregation</td>
<td>arrangements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDUCATION AND AWARENESS</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Educate consumers on seasonal availability, food literacy skills,</td>
<td>and local food retailer locations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Educate producers on business, marketing, customer service skills,</td>
<td>RFP and certification processes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Educate institutions on how free trade agreements impact their</td>
<td>food procurement policies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Build awareness of good food goals and encourage citizens to</td>
<td>challenge their food systems to achieve these goals.</td>
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This thesis has identified that a lot of available funding is short term, and targeted at ‘start-up’ activities. While this is important there is a clear need for more funding specifically aimed at financing the day-to-day operation of programs and initiatives required for them to be sustained
in the long term. One successful model for funding these endeavors is to operate programs under the auspices of established private or public organizations that have the funds to employ the full time staff required to create sustainable initiatives. The FPC model was found to be particularly helpful in overcoming time, resource and communication barriers to the local food movement, and the growth and support of sustainable food councils in all communities is a key recommendation. One strategy to ensure the sustainability of FPCs is to operate them under the auspices of an established organization that is willing and able to support them in the long term.

Municipalities, community resource nonprofits, community health centres and other such types of established organizations should be encouraged to host more local food programs. These suggestions, however, are not meant to downplay the importance of start-up money. Indeed, this thesis also identified the importance of making capital more readily available to local producers and businesses for costly start up expenses including infrastructure and technical assistance. As such, more funding needs to be made available for infrastructure and equipment. Also, the government needs to increase the number of government-backed loans it extends to small local food businesses and producers who would otherwise struggle to access capital.

5.2.3 Internal Governance of Conventional Supply Chains

In addition to policy and funding support, there are several recommendations for shifts in practice within the supply chains that serve conventional markets such as the BPS that would help facilitate the overcoming of obstacles to the local food movement. Institutions should design menus with local seasonal availability in mind to facilitate the use and purchasing of locally produced food items even in prescheduled menu rotations. Institutions should also review their supplier contracting processes and requirements. Instead of contracting one or two suppliers to procure all of the institution’s food needs in one contract, institutions that purchase food directly should break their contracts down by food group, product category or geographic region.

Dividing supplier contracts into smaller groups has two main advantages. Firstly these smaller contracts will be more accessible for smaller and medium sized local producers to bid on (as they are more likely to have the capacity to supply a few locations in a region, a single product or a single product category – i.e. meat or vegetables – versus and entire range of products). Second they increase the likelihood that individual food supply contracts will fall within the exemption from free trade agreements that might otherwise restrict the discrimination of suppliers based on
geographic origin required for local procurement. Many institutions contract their foodservice out to corporate caterers, who are often restricted to suppliers approved for multiple locations by corporate headquarters. While these institutions will not be able to specify local procurement or supplier contracting procedure for their foodservice, they still have some power in the process by which they contract their foodservice out to competing catering corporations. When the University of Toronto finished a contract period with their foodservice suppliers and put out a request for proposals for the next foodservice contract in 2006, they included the provision of certified local food as a requirement of the successful foodservice supplier (Friedmann, 2007). Institutions could theoretically use a similar strategy to specify contracting procedure or percentage local content when selecting new or renewing contracts with foodservice operators.

As identified in chapter four, and corroborated by the existing literature in chapter two, one of the biggest barriers preventing local producers from supplying institutional and other conventional markets is the inability of often smaller local farmers to supply the volume requirements of larger buyers in these markets. As such my final recommendation in this section is to encourage and support novel ways for producers to create volume without mimicking the consolidation and concentration strategies of the conventional food system. Potentially fruitful models for aggregation without agglomeration that should be further researched and explored include producer cooperatives (or equivalent arrangements), and third party aggregators. With either model, producers’ harvests are combined into volumes large enough to meet the needs of larger customers such as institutional foodservice. The cooperative model has interesting potential for producers to combine not just their harvests but their resources in order to purchase costly equipment that may help them add additional value to their product in addition to helping them access larger markets. Miedema (2006) shares an example of a producer cooperative that pooled their resources to purchase a cooling technology that extended the shelf life of their lettuce. Other examples might include value-added processing equipment or packing lines. These types of arrangements do not have to exist in formal cooperative structures. The benefits of this type of collaboration extend beyond volume accumulation and access to infrastructure through resource pooling but also help collectives of producers gain efficiencies in marketing and distributing their product.
5.2.4 Education and Awareness

Much work has been done in the way of educating the public on some food systems issues and the benefits of buying local food: the sheer popularity of the term ‘locavore’ testifies to this. This thesis joins previously published reports (Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Nelson et al., 2009; Landman, Blay-Palmer, Kornelsen, Bundock, Davis et al., 2009; Metcalf Foundation, 2008; Miedema, 2006; Mount et al., forthcoming; Starr et al., 2003) in identifying a need to continue and expand education efforts. This thesis has identified several areas in which education and awareness building activities should continue to focus in order to overcome some of the barriers identified as constraining the local food movement.

Education efforts directed at consumers need to distribute technical knowledges that this thesis has identified as still lacking in some of the populace. First of these is the range and seasonal availability of agricultural products produced in each local region; second, food literacy skills including identifying and preparing locally produced foods from scratch; finally, where local food is available for purchase, and how to access these points of sale.

This thesis has also emphasized that education efforts need to be extended to producers as well. In order to compete and thrive in new markets created by the local food movement, producers need to obtain new skill sets. These include business planning, marketing, and customer service. Producers also require training opportunities in order to navigate various certification processes, and request for proposal processes through which supplier contracts are selected by institutions. Education and training opportunities for producers might be extended through specifically targeted government programs (such as agricultural economic development programs) or through national, provincial and regional chapters of commodity groups and industry associations that already have established communication channels set up with member producers.

This thesis has identified a need for education and awareness efforts directed at institutions, and those responsible for foodservice in institutions. One of the most important barriers identified as constraining institutional local food procurement is the perception that public institutions cannot

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adopt these policies without violating free trade agreements. However, municipal, provincial
governments and institutions are not always subject to these agreements, and when they are,
there is usually a minimum value a contract for goods or services must exceed before it is comes
under the jurisdiction of the agreement. This is the case in the current, Canadian context. Policy
in other countries may vary, and the Canadian context may change under the probable future
comprehensive economic and trade agreement with the European Union (CETA). The principles
of exceptions and minimum values before which contracts come under the jurisdiction of the
agreement are likely to remain even under CETA. Therefore building awareness among
institutions of which trade agreements extend to their activities, and how they might proceed
with local procurement initiatives without violating these agreements is necessary.

Finally, awareness needs to be spread among all participants in the food system of the specific
principles upon which the good food ideal is based. As discussed in chapter two, the local food
movement was initiated as a strategy to forward the good food ideal. While it is important to
direct some of our efforts to practical matters such as overcoming obstacles that prevent us from
circulating more local food in local communities, it is equally important to bear in mind the
broader role in food systems change that the local food movement was originally embarked upon
to fill. There is nothing about producing food locally that guarantees it will be produced in a
sustainable or socially just way (Born & Purcell, 2006). Thus there is a risk that if we become
too embroiled in the task of simply getting more local food on consumers’ plates, we neglect the
task of making sure that food produced locally is produced and distributed in a sustainable and
socially just way. Thus there is a role for public education to reinforce awareness of the good
food goals and encourages eaters to question, demand and critically engage the effectiveness of
any food system in achieving them.

5.3 Broad Challenges to Food Systems Change

The challenges discussed in this chapter connect more broadly to the struggle introduced in
chapter two of trying to change a flawed food system from within it. Within the constraints of the
current conventional system, the local food movement struggles constantly to balance the
retention and integrity of its value-based mission with more practical and efficacious concerns
including reaching enough participants to have an influence on current practices and
sustainability of the initiatives themselves.
Actors in the local food system have a tenuous relationship with capital. The capital accumulation strategies pursued in the conventional food system create negative food systems outcomes. The local food movement at its core is trying to eliminate these negative outcomes. Local food actors cannot participate in the local food system for a sustained period however unless they are economically viable. In addition, in order to gain the benefits of larger and more secure markets for their produce, as well as broader reach, local food actors must sometimes engage with conventional supply chains such as the BPS. As the literature asserts, this type of engagement can have negative consequences including “water[ing] down” (Mount, 2012, p. 117) of values and the “harness[ing of] familiar capitalist practices towards particular ends” (Hinrichs & Allen, 2008, p.339). In other words, local food actors must struggle with the tension of engaging elements of the conventional system without losing their value-based content or coming to replicate the conventional system.

These tensions are reflective of the general challenges of trying to create food systems change from within the dominant, flawed, market-based system. Some of the policy recommendations made in section 5.2 point towards creative ways in which these tensions might be effectively straddled. For example, the aggregation of producer harvests and resources to gain the volumes required to access institutional markets at once allows local food actors to engage with conventional supply chains without replicating their problematic strategies (consolidation and concentration) for success. Another creative solution to both financial and time resource constraints and a lack of holistic collaboration is the FPC. The FPC can potentially provide some of the external resources that individual local food actors lack to facilitate communication and collaboration between food systems actors. The FPC cannot provide the time resources required for local food actors to attend meetings and otherwise participate in communication opportunities, for example, but it can provide the time required to create these communication opportunities by organizing events and meetings, and inviting members to come and participate. In doing so they allow the existing network of local food initiatives to overcome collaboration barriers and superimpose an element of holism on a segmented local food movement. Hosting FPCs under the auspices of established organizations such as municipal governments can provide the resources required to sustain these critical initiatives in the long term, if the host organizations are able to maintain commitment to support these initiatives.
The recommendations made in chapter 5.2 also point to a clear need for state involvement in food systems change, echoing calls in the literature for a stronger state presence in food systems change through regulation (Dupuis, Goodman, & Harrison, 2006; Guthman, Morris, & Allen, 2006; Guthman, 2008; Guthman, 2011; Harrison, 2008). As discussed in chapter two, this literature generally emphasizes that the state’s role should be to regulate the negative outcomes of capital accumulation strategies on the food system and guarantee social justice through regulation and social assistance (Guthman, 2008; Guthman, 2011; Harrison, 2008). This thesis has identified a slightly different role for state engagement in food systems change than identified in the literature. Existing regulations are often sympathetic to capital accumulation strategies at the root of negative food systems outcomes, and these same regulations present direct barriers to the development of local alternative food systems. While a complete overhaul of these constraining regulations is an ideal long-term goal, it is reasonable to say that it is unlikely to be achieved in the short to medium term. In the short term, it may be more feasible to lobby the state to make smaller adjustments to existing polices that are currently direct barriers to local alternative initiatives, rather than asking the state to remove support for conventional systems entirely. This way the local food movement can proceed to create positive change incompletely, but incrementally. Incremental improvement is a pragmatic approach that has been advocated for in food systems change by Hassanein (2003).

5.4 Conclusion

This conventional food system emphasizes the pursuit of capital accumulation strategies that when unchecked, are detrimental to the environment, create social injustices and are therefore unsustainable in the long term. The local food movement is at its core a response to the negative outcomes created by the dominant conventional food system. The local food system has struggled to succeed in its mission to transform the food system, not least because it is trying to do so from within the constraints of the system it is trying to reform. This tension is manifest in the specific constraints that local food initiatives – and the movement in general – face.

This thesis identifies and categorizes the barriers that are constraining the local food movement, and highlights how these barriers are interconnected. This account includes the barriers constraining local food procurement in the institutional context, filling an important gap in previously published literature. I have used the Ontario local food movement as a case study to
identify these barriers, but the findings are broadly applicable to the local food movement elsewhere.

In addition, this thesis builds on the previous literature by categorizing the barriers to local food in a unique typology. This typology identifies barriers by a core element underlying all the barriers in each category. These categories are access, resources, governance & bureaucracy and information & relations. The primary purpose for identifying the barriers constraining the local food movement is to enable the development of solutions to overcome these constraints. As such, this thesis has also contributed nineteen pragmatic recommendations to overcome some of the barriers that are currently constraining the local food movement.

Some of the barriers identified in this thesis are corroborated by previous literature identifying the constraints to growth in the local food movement. That these barriers were still reported here as constraining the local food movement testifies to the fact that any attempts to overcome them have not yet been successful or widespread enough to lessen their impact. The difficulty of overcoming these barriers is reflective of the challenges that face any attempt to create food systems change from within the conventional system. However daunting this task, it is not impossible, and the recommendations made in chapter five provide a guideline for movement beyond these barriers. These recommendations offer feasible ways to make pragmatic, incremental improvements in the short to medium term to change the conditions that are currently constraining the success of the local food movement. While the ultimate goal of the local food movement is to completely replace the conventional food system, the most effective way to achieve this goal under the conditions of the dominant food system is to make such incremental improvements towards achieving this long-term end.
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