

MARKET FAILURE, GOVERNMENT FAILURE:
LEARNING FROM KINGSTON'S 'FOOD DESERT' TO PLAN FOR A JUST CITY

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Food insecurity can be defined many ways, but it typically manifests in a household when someone worries about going hungry because of lack of money, actually does go hungry because of lack of money, or cannot eat the variety of food they want because of lack of money (Dieticians of Canada, 2005). Canada has no national strategy to document food insecurity, however many trends suggests that food insecurity may be worsening. Use of emergency food services like food banks is increasing, as well as new charitable and community-based alternatives such as community kitchens, which have become fixtures in the urban landscape (ibid; Tarasuk, 2001). One community-level cause *and* effect of community food insecurity is the food desert, which has received a tremendous amount of academic interest in recent years. A food desert typically manifests as a community or neighbourhood in which residents are unable to access affordable, quality food such as fresh meats, fruits and vegetables within a given walking distance of their home, for example, 500, 800 or 1000 metres (Wrigley, 2003).

Food desert communities can also be those communities that suffer deprivations of other kinds. Urban communities with vulnerable populations such as the poor, the unemployed, people with mental illnesses, single parent families and seniors may suffer additionally when their only full-service grocery store within walking distance closes. These communities may also have a deficit of other essential services, adding to the burdens of everyday survival, especially in communities where car ownership is low and traditional city planning is based on vehicular travel.

The first objective of this paper is to review a community-based research project in Kingston, Ontario that focused on a community that was about to become a food desert with the closure of the area's only accessible, full-service grocery store. The paper will

first review the background and methodology of the project, including the collaboration between the Kingston John Howard Society and the Queen's University Department of Geography. Next, it will provide an overview of the results of our study. This includes the statistical results from the survey, as well as the qualitative information gathered through speaking candidly with residents and collecting their comments and concerns. The results suggest that food deserts like North Kingston are typically dismissed by the public and municipal leaders as market failures, while they are also a signal of 'government failure' in Canada's neoliberal policy environment.

The results of this North Kingston food desert project suggest that municipal planning and local government action on community food security (CFS) and food deserts is an important part of cities' work toward the 'Just City'. For this paper, the Just City is a creative term used to denote urban social justice. Community food security is typically framed in the following way,

A society or community enjoys food security when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious foods to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active healthy life. Food security is a right and includes at a minimum: an available, adequate, dependable, and sustainable food supply and an assured ability to acquire nutritious and culturally acceptable foods through normal food distribution channels (Riches 1999, 204).

In this second part of the paper, I will briefly review some key theorists' writings on the Just City, and suggest how these writings are helpful to theorizing about CFS in the city, and that any city-level work toward the Just City should include efforts to address community food insecurity and food deserts. Also, the question of scale suggests that CFS work has a variety of strengths and weaknesses at the local scale, and that a multi—

scale approach promising the greatest hope for change. Local governments and should look to plan creatively for urban food security.

Background to the North Kingston food desert research project

The John Howard Society (JHS) is an organization that provides employment and social support resources for prison-involved populations. Their mission is to provide “effective, just and humane responses to crime and its causes” (John Howard Society of Canada, 2007). Kingston’s John Howard Society is located on the periphery of North Kingston, also known officially as Rideau Heights. One of the employment service coordinators was aware that on December 8, 2006, the area’s only full-service, accessible grocery store, an IGA, would close. There were no plans to open a replacement store.

Although the IGA store was not ideal to serve this population, it was certainly better than nothing. The IGA is a mid-level priced grocery store that serves primarily commuting populations and travelers entering and exiting Highway 401. The next nearest grocery stores were a budget-conscious store that, for some residents, was over a kilometer away, and an independently-owned store that did not offer all the conveniences and economies of scale of other large full-service stores (See figure 1). The rest of North Kingston offers little in the way of fresh, healthy food. There are a few convenience stores, as well as an extensive strip of coffee and doughnut shops, gas stations and fast food restaurants. The North Kingston neighbourhood is one of the city’s more service-deprived and poor neighbourhoods. Housing consists of detached homes, low-rise, low rental apartment buildings, government-subsidized housing for families, individuals and people with mental illness, and a mobile trailer park. Average household income is \$33,585 compared to the Kingston average of \$66,396. Homeownership is 28.6%,

compared to the city average of 58.4%. The highest level of education for 50% of the neighbourhood's population is between grade 9 and 13. 53% of the neighbourhood population is in the labour force, with an unemployment rate of 16.9% (City of Kingston, 2001).

The Kingston JHS was concerned about the loss of the grocery store and lack of concern by the city's elected officials and residents. They contacted the Queen's University Department of Geography because of several faculty and students doing food-related research projects in Kingston. After meeting, Dr. Betsy Donald and I agreed to work together with the JHS to administer a survey of North Kingston residents, to determine their usage of the IGA and how they expect to cope with its closing. We also wanted to know information like how often people are buying fresh fruits and vegetables, what their monthly food budget is, and where they spend it. In addition to our partnership, we had support and advice from other well-known community organizers and one other non-profit organization, Home Base Housing, whose client population also includes North Kingston.

Research methodology

The Kingston JHS and we in the Department worked together to develop a one-page survey to administer in North Kingston. The survey used plain language and a variety of types of questions. We administered a pilot test to eighteen adults in a local adult literacy school, many of which were North Kingston residents, and used the feedback to make changes. We also designed a letter of information to accompany the survey, in accordance with the Queen's University General Research Ethics Board, which approved our project (See Appendix A for survey questions).

To administer the survey, both collaborating groups recruited volunteers. We organized a one-time training session for Queen's University students and other volunteers, where we organized rides and interview protocol. To attempt to reach a diversity of interviewees in North Kingston, five zones were designated.

From December 2nd to 7th, pairs of volunteers canvassed these five zones with great success. A total of 277 completed surveys were collected. The community was, for the most part, very compliant and willing to participate. This was in part due to successful media coverage prior to our circulation, in order to alert the community of our intentions and generate public awareness and discussion about the issue of the role of local government's ambivalence toward the IGA closure. As scheduled, the IGA closed a few days prior to its official date, having liquidated its inventory through discount sales.

Following the canvass, we had excellent help from undergraduate students in the analysis of the raw data. Two students conducted statistical analysis using SPSS with the help of Dr. Gerry Barber. Dr. Barber also arranged for a GIS and mapping student to provide us with maps of food store distribution in Kingston, to demonstrate the food desert visually. The results of this work will be described in the following section.

Our project and its results received excellent media coverage. Queen's Media Services were very helpful in maintaining the public interest by forwarding a letter to the editor to the Kingston Whig-Standard that I had written, which was published, while the students were conducting analysis. Once a short report of the results was ready, the JHS and the Department of Geography organized a press conference at a North Kingston church, and invited local residents, businesses and media to attend. The press conference was featured in local newspapers, television news and CBC Radio One.

Research results

Analysis of survey questions

Several interesting results suggest that the IGA was an important community retail service, and that with its closing North Kingston should be considered a food desert. Over 60% of our interviewees used the IGA regularly, with smaller percentages saying that they used it monthly, sometimes or never. This figure was higher for households that use walking as one means of travel to do their grocery shopping—with this population, over 70% used the IGA regularly—ranging from once to several times a week. This figure is especially high with respondents who told us, just days before the closing, that they did not know where they would do their grocery shopping—over 80% of this population used the IGA regularly.

Transportation was an important theme in the survey results. We asked people what types of transportation they use to do their grocery shopping. The most frequent answer was to drive, which was an option for over 50% of respondents. Respondents used a variety of other strategies as well, including carpooling with family or friends, taking the bus, taking a taxi or walking. Walking—the most time-consuming travel method—was a strategy of about 18% of our sample. Using a taxi—the most expensive travel method—was used by 23% of the sample (note that respondents would choose as many methods as apply). Transportation was also a barrier for some respondents that prevents them from using the grocery store they most prefer. For those who agreed that they faced barriers, over 40% said transportation was a problem, while 30% said convenience and 17% said cost.

Several other survey results suggest that the community may be at risk of becoming a food desert. 17% of households had not purchased fresh fruits or vegetables in the past two weeks. This number was slightly improved in households with children, while it was slightly worse in households that do not have access to a household vehicle to do their shopping. When we asked respondents what stores they will use after the IGA closes, the overwhelming responses were budget-priced stores. 28% said they would shop at Food Basics, and 37% said they would use No Frills, which is also the next nearest full-service grocery store to North Kingston. For respondents who listed walking as a means of travel, No Frills is especially important—about 40% of walkers will use the No Frills. Of the aggregate sample, 7% of respondents did not know where they would shop after the IGA closed. This number grew to 13% when we consider only those respondents who use walking as one way to buy their groceries.

A final positive note is respondents' reported household spending of the monthly household food budget. Results suggest that 79% of the average monthly food budget is spent in grocery stores, while 11% is spent in convenience stores and 6% spent at fast food restaurants. This contradicts the common perception that poor people spend all of their food budget at fast food stores, gas stations or other places that sell primarily junk food.

Comments from respondents

Our volunteers gave each respondent the chance to provide their thoughts and concerns about the closure of the IGA, revealing three important themes. The first is that respondents were concerned for their own household well-being, and understood that their own personal habits and routines would be affected by the closure. Many had

incorporated the IGA into their weekly or monthly shopping habits and were concerned about the inconvenience and uncertainty that the closure would bring.

I used the IGA for convenience. I don't know how I will do my regular shopping, since I need a ride.

We need a store—going downtown costs \$15 to \$20 each trip.

It was very convenient for me to use the Kingslake IGA. I shop there once or twice a month, usually for baby food/formula, diapers, wipes, milk, eggs and meat. It was very cost efficient for me to do so. No convenience store provides me with these needs for the same price. Now in order to get these things I must take a bus, find a babysitter (for my two children) and take a cab home because I have too much to carry. [...] I hope that a suitable alternative is available. The Kingslake IGA will be missed. Thanks you for asking residents their opinion, you are doing great work to help the north end.

There is a great need for a grocery store in the north end, not only for the [residents with] lower income but for people living north of the 401. Something a little more cost effective like a No Frills would be better.

In addition to their own personal concerns, a second theme is that North Kingston residents are very aware of the impact that the closure would have on vulnerable populations in the area. Even when respondents said the closure would not greatly affect their household, they demonstrated a sophisticated concern for their neighbours and community members. They said, for example,

It's really bad because there are so many seniors that use it.

I think there should be a store in this area for people who can't afford to get cabs or can't get rides. Without it, there will be a lot of poor nutrition due to a lot of people not buying fresh fruits and vegetables.

There are a lot of handicapped people in our building that can't afford the cost of IGA while they are on pensions. By the time they pay someone or take a cab to No Frills it takes a bite out of their grocery money. I feel very sorry for them.

A final theme became apparent, although it was not clearly articulated by the residents themselves. People clearly had strong feelings and concerns about the closure, however

they weren't sure who to talk to about it. As a neighbourhood of many disenfranchised populations, people felt like they were anonymous, nobody was listening to them to asking how they felt. They were often clear about the need for a budget-conscious grocery store in their neighbourhood, but were unclear as to who should do this,

Replace it with another grocery store.

The IGA was large and convenient. I wish it wasn't leaving.

Sadness and confusion results in part from a lack of clarity about who could address this problem: many respondents said that they could not blame a business for leaving because it was not profitable, however who can change this? Local city government? How could local government 'entice' a new store into an area, and who else could 'get us a new store'?

These quantitative and qualitative results suggest that some North Kingston residents may experience increased food insecurity with the IGA closure, and that the community became a food desert with the closure of this grocery store. North Kingston residents are keenly aware of their place in the hierarchy of businesses' and local government's priorities. With this case study in mind, the second half of this research paper will explore the interactions between community food security and academic literature on urban social justice—the Just City.

Community food security and planning for the Just City

The results of the North Kingston food desert project suggest that if grocery store closures in vulnerable communities in Canada are not isolated incidents, community food security is becoming an even greater issue for Canadian urban—and rural—areas. People are often willing to dismiss these closures as market failures, or suggest that 'there's

nothing government can do’, essentially a government failure. The objective of this section of the essay is to review academic theorization and evidence to suggest that there is ample urban social justice literature to justify cities taking on community food security, and that cities can—and must—have a role in ensuring justice and welfare for their residents.

Theorizing the Just city

Many contemporary academics have used their research to probe the question of social justice in the urban context. The objective of this section is to review some ideas about how to theoretically pursue the Just City. Furthermore, it will interpret how these theoretical approaches would suggest cities pursue community food security.

Susan Fainstein has taken up these questions in her intensive work on the Just City. The theoretical dilemma with which she is primarily concerned is how to find balance between redistribution and personal incentive, and competitiveness and cohesion, since in most literatures these two are not mutually conducive (Fainstein, 2001). She asks, for example, how much ‘social justice’ in the form of redistribution is possible without overburdening the well-off, and creating tension between the advantaged and ‘the other’ (Fainstein, 2006). To answer this question, Fainstein suggests several ideas. As most cities are functioning within capitalist economies, there is little option for a ‘no growth’ city even if this ensured genuine social justice, since a city with no growth is effectively in decline (ibid, 2001). Instead, she suggests that there can be more controlled growth, a greater role for the non-profit sector and more benevolent social policy to accompany economic development. This combines the objectives of creating an entrepreneurial spirit with at least minimal allocations for all (Fainstein 2001).

Fainstein's work on the Just City seems to be supporting the pursuit of urban social justice through current state-economy relations, but in a slightly amplified way: the state re-energizes its social welfare and redistribution functions—to become an 'enabling state' (Fainstein, 2001, 888)—and it simultaneously encourages a growth paradigm for the local economy. In terms of community food security, Fainstein's approach would seem to endorse a standard definition of CFS that suggests that local economic growth is critical to ensure food security for all. This approach would likely endorse charitable and non-profit measures, and some basic income redistribution for short-term food security, while insisting that steady growth will even out income inequalities in the long term. As a planner, she would likely endorse a strong role for urban planners in this pursuit.

David Harvey has also taken up the question of urban social justice. He suggests that there are many different criteria against which decisions of urban social justice might be made. These might include efficiency, economic growth, preservation of aesthetic and historical heritage, social and moral order, environmental sustainability, or distributive justice (Harvey, 1992). In *Social Justice and the City* (1973), he bases his understanding of urban social justice on a hierarchy of three of these decision-making criteria: need, contribution to the common good, and merit. Need, by his definition, includes food, housing, medical and other necessities. In his spatial analysis of social justice, he suggests that regional investment should meet the population's needs, and that an allocation of wealth and resources is "better" if it can fulfill needs *and* produce positive spillover effects in other territories. Harvey (1992) has also attempted to build on Iris Young's (1990) five faces of oppression, arguing that we need to confront marginalization to liberate captive groups from oppression, empower oppressed groups to

access political power and engage in self-expression, and take steps to mitigate the effects of social projects that may have future ecological consequences, impacts on future generations or impacts on distant people.

With respect to community food security, planners and activists should think strongly about community problems such as need, marginalization, oppression and powerlessness as justification for active CFS projects. Harvey's ideas suggest that the state should play a key role in redistribution and funding of social programs to facilitate community food security, but that a highly participatory and inclusive decision-making model would empower communities of people. This type of development would, ideally, provide positive spillover effects in other communities and enrich the common good. Harvey's approach also suggests that CFS promote social consciousness, taking care not to cause harm to future generations, the environment or distant people, suggesting the importance of sustainability and global fairness.

Iris Young is another political philosopher who has deconstructed urban social justice. In *Democracy and Inclusion* (2000), she defines social justice as "the institutional conditions for promoting self-development and self-determination of a society's members" (Young 2000, 33). Self-development, she says, is when a social institution provides the

conditions for all persons to learn and use satisfying, expansive skills in socially recognized settings, and enable them to play and communicate with others or express their feelings and perspectives on social life in contexts with others. (2000, 31)

In addition, self-determination means being able to participate in determining one's action and the condition of one's action (ibid.). Although this outline is clearly a call for democratic, participatory involvement of communities, Young cautions that where

structural inequalities exist, democratic processes will reproduce this inequality. To attempt to overcome this, social institutions can attempt meaningful involvement of all members of a community or city through not discriminating based on language and engaging in deliberative democracy, for example. By being inclusive, participants may become politicized and reach a greater political awareness, and this may increase social knowledge of all citizens, so that more just, wise decisions are made in the future.

The implications of Young's discussion for community food security are clear. First, a community's basic ability to access adequate food is absolutely necessary if community members are to engage in further actions for self-development and self-determination in their personal and collective lives. Second, her thoughts on social justice suggest that community food security should be a decentralized, community-level process that includes collective ownership, regulation and administration, to achieve self-determination and build skills that allow self-development. Third, there are opportunities at the local level for citizens to undergo a profound transformation through the process of collectively lobbying for, and implementing, CFS. Young's writing, then, advocates clearly for a high level of community ownership and control in the pursuit of community food security.

A final body of literature to be considered theoretically is Andrew Sayer's work on the moral economy. In his article *Moral Economy and Political Economy* (2000), Sayer explains the concept of the moral economy as embodying

norms and sentiments regarding the responsibilities and rights of individuals and institutions with respect to others. These norms and sentiments go beyond matters of justice and equality to conceptions of the good; for example, regarding needs and ends of economic activity. They might also be extended further to include the treatment of the environment . The term “moral economy” has usually been applied to societies in which there are few or no markets—hence no competition and law of value—and in which economic activity is governed by norms regarding what people’s work responsibilities are, what and how much they are allowed to consume, and who they are responsible for, beholden to and dependent on. (Sayer 2000, 79)

Sayer is arguing here that in a society that espouses economic measurements to determine worth and value, things like emotions, values and norms tend to be devalued as ‘irrational’, lying beyond the scope of economic reason. Classic economic theory as it manifests in society encourages citizens that it is appropriate to act for personal profit and self-interest, but not because something is morally right. In response to this situation, Sayer asks readers to consider: what are economies for? (2000, 94). The answer, he suggests, is so that people may live well. But to pursue this goal through the lens of moral economy, he suggests we think about: What are our responsibilities to the poor, the elderly, children and the infirm? What standards of care should we give and receive? What is an acceptable standard of living? What things should and should not be commodified in the market?

This line of thinking about the moral economy can provide a strong justification for working toward community food security. If permitted to think about their moral obligations and desires for a community without regards for competition, economic losses or profits, perhaps most people would wish the best possible living standard for everyone. They might wish care for the vulnerable and the protection of certain necessities like food from commodification. This moral economy framework provides a powerful normative guide for how social spending might best be used toward community

food security as a right of citizenship, not something to be measured for its economic value in terms of health care savings or start-up costs.

How can community food security enhance urban social justice?

Overall, the four bodies of theoretical work by Fainstein, Harvey, Young and Sayer are somewhat at odds methodologically, however they all provide a strong foundation of urban social justice theorization that promotes community food security as a policy goal. Likewise, evidence suggests that community food security is strongly tied to other ways of pursuing the Just City, and that in fact, progress toward the Just City may be limited if planners do not take CFS into consideration.

First, an understanding of CFS is critical to thinking about urban poverty and hunger issues more generally. Riches (1999) suggests that there are three highly political reasons for food insecurity, which are also barriers to re-affirming food as a human right. The first is the commodification of welfare and the limits of the system of social assistance in Canada following neoliberal restructuring in the 1980s and 1990s. The second is the commodification and corporatization of food, which exacerbates the link between social inequality and food. The third is the depoliticization of hunger by emphasizing the role of civil society, rather than the state, to provide for citizens in need. Given this highly political situation and the clear links between community food insecurity and poverty, policy progress must acknowledge the importance of community food security to overcoming poverty.

Second, there is a very clear link between public health and food security. Food security is a social determinant of health, but it is also affected by other determinants, such as income, making it a target problem for public health and population health

advocates (Dietitians of Canada, 2005). Although it can be difficult to separate the effects of food insecurity and poverty, certain health problems are clearly documented: conditions like heart disease, blood pressure problems, diabetes, malnutrition, obesity and other chronic disease are particularly high in areas with poverty and food insecurity (Dietitians of Canada, 2005; Community Nutritionists Council of BC, 2004). Any work, then, on improving health outcomes in vulnerable populations in communities should clearly include advocacy work toward ensuring adequate and accessible diet through food security.

Third, community food security issues can inform social organizing and activism in social movements like the anti-globalization movement. Control over food sources has slowly been removed from small business owners and small companies, and concentrated into increasingly powerful corporations. Most of this concentration of power over food products is by businesses like Kraft Foods/Phillips Morris, Nestle USA, ConAgra, Unilever and PepsiCo. (Community Nutritionists' Council of BC, 2004). The effects include the loss of knowledge, skills and structures for local food self-sufficiency, and the nearly complete dependency on income as a determinant of one's food access (ibid.) This corporate ownership, Riches (1999) says, is slowly eroding biodiversity, and nations' and communities' ability to feed themselves, causing greater food poverty in countries like Canada.

Finally, food systems thinking can have important implications for a wide range of municipal-level issues. Pothukuchi and Kaufman (1999) argue that food is an important urban system. Food affects the local economy, the environment, public health and the quality of neighbourhoods. The authors suggest that people—and city planners—

often do not understand this. To emphasize its importance, they cite examples such as the local food sector economy, employment in food sectors, household spending on food, preservation of urban agricultural land, disposal of food waste, city water and chemical pesticide pollution, emergency food services like food banks and urban transportation systems (needed for travel to grocery stores) (Pothukuchi & Kaufman 2000; 1999). Given the multitude of municipal government issues that involve food in some way, community food security and food systems are very important issues that should be integrated into urban planning departments.

Community food security, scale and the role of local government

It should be clear at this point that community food security is an urban social justice issue, and that CFS is tied to many other dimensions of working toward the Just City, which are highly political and directly related to human and environmental health and well-being. This final section will discuss the strengths and shortcomings of working toward social justice and food security within the scale of local governments. It will then present a case for a multi-scale approach to community food security that I hope could inspire local actors to embrace their capacities to address market failure and government failure in cases like North Kingston's food desert.

The scale of the local may be a good way to approach community food security. In Canada, activity at the nation's larger municipalities appears to be significant. Wekerle (2004) writes, for example, that "local government continues to be seen as a key actor, providing leadership, staffing for joint initiatives, funding, and policy implementation at the scale of the city and beyond" (2004, 382). Similarly, local governments in the United States are highly active in the area of food services. Agencies are responsible for nutrition

education programs, administering food stamps, food health and safety regulation, and school breakfast and lunch programs (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999). Cities may also be an interesting scale for experimentation with new local government departments to manage the urban food system. City food departments, food policy councils and new roles for city planners are all ideas that could put food higher on municipal government agendas (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999; Allen, 1999).

However, criticisms of community food security at the local scale suggest that while local achievements are impressive, they do not create profound change, and instead mask the enduring problems at the national scale. Allen (1999) argues that the local scale tends to be romanticized as terms like “community” become meaningless. Without adequate attention to difference and marginalization in the community, the local scale has the risk of subordinating cultural differences, instead creating a mythical community based on common interest and cooperation that does not necessarily exist. Allen also argues that activism at the local scale may actually be counterproductive because of engrained power imbalances,

Working only at the local level is not only insufficient to rectify power imbalances that cause material inequality, it may actually be counterproductive. The evidence is that localism is anything but liberatory for those traditionally marginalized. The disenfranchised have turned to the federal government for relief often precisely because progressive change was impossible at the local level or because local elites persisted in denying them rights (Allen 1999, 121)

Further to this, Allen suggests that many community food insecurity situations are not caused only by local level factors, and therefore they cannot be completely solved locally. Localism can also reduce peoples’ lens of care, pit communities against each other and allow local victories to bring about complacency (ibid.) Therefore, work at the

local level may be meaningful and locally productive, but again its capacities for fundamental change should not be over-exaggerated.

As an alternative, a multi-scale approach to community food insecurity is most promising. Achieving community food security requires work at many scales: individuals, the community, federal government, the private sector and more. The Ontario Public Health Association (2002) suggests that CFS requires cooperation among local/region food system actors, such as growers, producers, citizens' groups, community agencies, government organizations, business, academic researchers and environmental advocates. This way, a truly multidisciplinary approach can aim to include all actors who might be affected or interested in mobilizing. Patricia Allen (1999) is also very clear about the need for a blend of scales to work together for CFS: she suggests that some work must be local, but other work will need to be national or international. As health professionals, McCullum et al (2005) also suggest, in their detailed outline of the practical activities involved in achieve CFS, multiple scales of actors are needed. Phase one is a time of initial food system change. Here, health professionals might spend time educating the public, counseling clients and collecting data to assess community needs. Phase two is a time of food systems in transition. At this point, organizers must connect emergency food programs with agricultural projects to create networks of demand and supply. This time is also for creating other multisector partnerships and networks, as well as facilitating participatory decision-making processes and policy development. Phase three, food systems redesign for sustainability, is when policy change and other structural change occurs. This should be characterized by participatory decision-making, and it is

also a period of attracting new businesses to an urban place to ensure sustainability and market interest.

Likewise, researchers who are interested in food movements also advocate a multi-scalar approach. Wekerle (2004) suggests that a place-based movement such as Toronto's food justice movement—whose members fall outside of government—can simultaneously be locally grounded and focused on developing translocal networks between civil society, partnerships with the state. These movements can actively engage in a politics of scale from below, enacted through local organizations' work on global strategies. This politics of scale is important, because local movements may be dismissed as too place-based, however participation in the anti-globalization movement can allow a local movement to engage transnationally. Moreover, Riches (1999) argues that a national food movement (made up of place-based activists) needs provincial and federal support for the development of comprehensive and coordinated policy change within many federal and provincial departments. There is also need for action and coordination at the regional, municipal and community levels: urban and rural communities alike urgently need to build food policy networks and councils committed to achieving local food security grounded in sustainability (*ibid.*). The diversity of actors involved in such a movement would require a level of democratic debate and control to ensure that small communities are not lost in the work of higher visibility actors at larger scales. In his writing, Riches (1999) also implicitly suggests an important role for the global scale in legitimizing economic and social rights of citizens of state, to which the governments of those states can be held accountable.

Final thoughts

A food desert, as a symptom of community food insecurity in a community like North Kingston can quickly be dismissed by the public and local government as a market failure and government failure. After all, who can force a business to stay in a location that is not profitable? What can a budget-conscious local government possible do to improve the situation in this neoliberal economic and policy environment?

The objective of this research essay has been to present a variety of theoretical and practical ideas about why local government and communities should actively work toward achieving community food security, and to inspire them to think about they can make a difference. The first half of the essay explained the North Kingston food desert project as a collaboration between a community-based organization and a university department. Through the work of volunteers, this project gave North Kingston residents a voice in a time when they felt that no one cared and no one noticed the closure of an essential service in their community. The results suggested that the IGA was an important resource for respondents, and they that they feel concerned, worried by ignored by Kingston's city government and other Kingston residents. The second half of the article looked at theory and practical academic research that supports CFS as an essential component of the Just City and suggests that CFS is a part of other municipal jurisdictions such as public work and anti-poverty work. The local scale is an important location for building CFS, however a multi-scale approach offers far greater benefits and chances for long-term change.

The conclusions of this paper suggest that actors must think creatively, above all, in enhancing life for all members of a community or city. It is possible to use planning

and legal tools to prevent a market failure like a food desert by enticing business into depressed areas. It is possible for local government to prevent 'government failure' to shift policy priorities, for example, from a strong growth/sprawl paradigm to one of limited spatial expansion with enrichment of existing communities. Individuals, families and communities can play a key role by expressing their concerns and needs, if they are asked. They may also come to understand the politics of scale and food and experience politicization. In conclusion, it is in the best interest for municipalities to foster inclusive, just, democratic communities and use the tools at their disposal to guarantee a range of essential services within walking distance of community members. This can start with a serious political commitment to the Just City.

Figure 1: Food store distribution in Kingston, Ontario

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Appendix A: Survey questions

01: How often do you currently shop for large grocery purchases at the Kingslake I.G.A.?
 Regularly – At least twice per month Sometimes – Once every other month or longer
 Monthly – At least once per month Never

02: If you shop at the Kingslake I.G.A., what items do you purchase? (Do not answer this question if you have answered ‘never’ to the above question)

Meat Vegetables Fruit Bread & Pastries
 Pastas & Cereals Canned Goods Baby Food & Other Infant needs
 Cleaning supplies Dairy Products Snack Foods and Beverages
 School Lunch Supplies Paper & Hygiene Supplies - feminine needs, paper towels, etc.
 Delicatessen products – fesh meat, cheese, prepared foods, etc. Other: _____

03: How often do you shop for day to day grocery or convenience items
 Regularly (at least twice a week) Often (once or twice a week) Infrequently (once a month or less)

04: Have you bought fresh fruit or vegetables in the past two weeks? Yes No

05: If you bought fresh fruit or vegetables in the last week where did you buy it?
 I.G.A. Other Major Grocery Variety Store
 Good Food Box Other (please specify) _____

06: How many people do you shop for, including yourself? ____ Adults ____ Children

07: What is your approximate grocery budget per month?
 \$150 (or less) \$150 to 200 \$ 200 to 300 \$300 or more

08: How much of this budget do you spend in:

Grocery stores	<input type="checkbox"/> 100%	<input type="checkbox"/> 75%	<input type="checkbox"/> 50%	<input type="checkbox"/> 25%	<input type="checkbox"/> 0%	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____
Convenience stores	<input type="checkbox"/> 100%	<input type="checkbox"/> 75%	<input type="checkbox"/> 50%	<input type="checkbox"/> 25%	<input type="checkbox"/> 0%	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____
Fast food restaurants	<input type="checkbox"/> 100%	<input type="checkbox"/> 75%	<input type="checkbox"/> 50%	<input type="checkbox"/> 25%	<input type="checkbox"/> 0%	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> 100%	<input type="checkbox"/> 75%	<input type="checkbox"/> 50%	<input type="checkbox"/> 25%	<input type="checkbox"/> 0%	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____

10; Are there circumstances that prevent you from using major grocery stores? If there are, what are they?
 Convenience Transportation Cost Child Care Other: _____

11: If you do major grocery shopping at another store, which one do you visit?
 Loblaws No Frills Loeb's Food Basics A&P Other: _____

12: If you currently buy groceries and other items from the Kingslake I.G.A, where will you do this shopping when the store closes in December?

Loblaws No Frills Loeb's Food Basics A&P Don't Know Other: _____

13: How do you currently travel to and from the grocery store when you are making large purchases?

Walk Drive Get a ride (friends or family) Ride the city bus
 Take a Taxi Other: _____

14: Do you use your first choice in grocery stores, or are there things that prevent you from accessing your choice of grocery store?

I use the store that I most prefer to use
 I am unable to use the store that I prefer to use because of the following reasons (Check all that apply):

Transportation Convenience Cost
 Child care issues Other: _____

15: If there was a free service to get you from a pick-up point in Rideau Heights to another major grocery store and then back to the pick-up point once or twice a month, would you use that service?

Yes No Depends on Store

If there was a small fee (\$1.00 each way for a total of 2.00 per round trip) would you use the service?

Yes No Depends on Store

Please provide us with any information, comments or suggestions that could help us find a way to adjust to the closing of the Kingslake I.G.A. and replace any needed services by working together. - Your Comments (Feel free to write on the reverse side if you run out of room):

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