MORE THAN JUST A MEAL: COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE APPROACHES TO FOOD SECURITY IN KAMLOOPS, BRITISH COLUMBIA

By

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ABSTRACT

Kamloops, British Columbia (BC) is a rural city situated on Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc within Secwepemcúĺecw, the traditional and unceded territory of the Secwépemc peoples. For thousands of years, the Secwépemc peoples have studied and managed the fragile ecosystems within the region sustaining themselves on local and wild foods. Regional Indigenous knowledge was passed from one generation to the next until the exchange was interrupted by the arrival of colonial-settlers. Consequently, many individuals are now disconnected from the land and lack necessary food literacy and skills. This study examines how historical and contemporary inequalities reinforce food insecurity in the local Kamloops food system. Significant barriers to food security in the region, such as neoliberal economic systems and forms of institutionalized racism, are identified through volunteer work, participant observation and 25 semi-structured interviews with individuals involved in the local food community. A community-based participatory research methodology was used to guide this research. This research also explores existing opportunities to strengthen food security through grassroots activism in the community. The results of this study inform local policy to improve food security and identify the inequalities embedded in regional food systems.

Keywords: Community Food Security; Food Justice; Social Inequalities; Grassroots Food Activism; Food Security Stakeholders; Food Literacy; Racism; Neoliberalism.

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DEDICATION

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

For thousands of years, Indigenous communities all over the world have relied on local foods for medicinal, cultural, and spiritual purposes. Colonialism has resulted in disruptions to Indigenous knowledge transmission which has produced devastating impacts on the natural environment and food systems (Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2019). As a result of settler colonialism, Indigenous people now represent one of the most food insecure demographics in Canada (Skinner et. al, 2016). For food security to exist, all people, at all times, must have physical, socio-cultural, and economic access to foods that sufficiently meet their dietary needs (FAO, 2017). The interruption of land-based knowledge and traditional knowledge paired with the increasing impacts of climatic change threaten food security in many locations throughout Canada (Schuster et. al, 2011; Spring et. al., 2018).

Indigenous communities in Canada disproportionately experience food security challenges. Food security cannot be accomplished without addressing the colonial histories which perpetuate its existence. Prior to the arrival of the first European settlers, Indigenous people managed and lived on the lands of the Thompson-Okanagan region for millennia. Despite this knowledge, assimilation into a European value system was inflicted upon Indigenous ways of knowing. Colonial government policies have restricted local Indigenous peoples from engaging in cultural practices and rituals that have traditionally secured their food (Milloy, 2008; Joseph, 2018). In recent years, Kamloops has increasingly struggled to provide food security to its community members. Although there is a resilient grassroots food security community in Kamloops, the passionate efforts of these organizations and leaders are constantly challenged by underlying systemic barriers that reinforce community food insecurity. Despite Kamloops being home to Canada's longest standing Food Policy Council, a farmers' market that has been in

operation for over 30 years, and a myriad of other mentionable food security initiatives, the community's hunger needs are not being met equally.

This research project employs a mixed-method approach using primary data collected through a Participant Observation (PO) (see Appendix A, List of Acronyms) and semi-structured interviews. The project also provides secondary literature in the form of an in-depth literature review and was guided by a Community Based Participatory Research approach (CBPR). Overall, this study seeks to provide research on food security in the Kamloops region, to investigate the inequalities present in the local food system, and to identify the strengths and opportunities that can contribute to higher levels of food security and food sovereignty in the community. Despite Kamloops' reputation for its food security initiatives, there is currently no research identifying the inequalities that exist in its food system. By drawing on quotes from personal interviews, the data from this study aims to provide an in depth understanding of what achieving food security in Kamloops entails, while also contributing to the wider body of Canadian food security research.

Literature Review

Defining Food Security and Sovereignty at the Community Level

Community Food Security is said to exist when all persons within a community have non-emergency access to culturally acceptable and nutritionally adequate foods through local resources at all times (Anderson & Cook, 1999; Winne, 1997). Local foods, or foods that are grown within a short distance of where they are consumed, are particularly integral components of community food security (Zepeda & Li, 2006). Local foods have been further defined as, "food produced in the province or territory in which it is sold, or food sold across provincial borders within 50 km of the originating province or territory" (Government of Canada, 2022).

Local foods strengthen local food systems, which are socio–ecological systems that involve activities in food production, processing, packaging, distribution, retail, and consumption (Ericksen, 2008; Tendall et. al, 2015). Farmers' markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), and community gardens are examples of local foods (Zepeda & Li, 2006). Local food systems are widely relied on as the source of food and nutrition in a community (Béné et. al, 2018). In contrast, the industrial food system puts immense pressure on the environment and contributes to declining diversity and climate change that impacts the ability to grow food (Rotz & Fraser, 2015). Agroecology, or the ecology of food systems, views people as an integral part of the ecosystem and suggests humans have a responsibility to evaluate and manage their food systems (Francis et. al, 2003). Overall, food systems are social and ecological systems that play a key role in managing resources and processes that are associated with food (Ericksen, 2008).

In Western societies, food is overproduced and overwhelmingly wasted. North Americans waste approximately 40% of the food that is produced (Martin, 2019). A study conducted in 2022 by the National Zero Waste Council (2022) found that the average Canadian household throws away 140 kg, or approximately $1,300 worth of food per year. The same study also revealed that 63% of the food thrown out in households could have been eaten (National Zero Waste Council, 2022). Perhaps more troubling is that excess food is very rarely properly managed and often ends up in landfills creating harmful CO2 greenhouse gas emissions (Martin, 2019). These greenhouse gas emissions weaken the Earth's ozone layer allowing the sun's rays to permeate the atmosphere. This contributes to widespread issues like global warming and climate change which greatly impact humans' abilities to grow food (Godfray et. al., 2010; Barbeau et al, 2015).

Food insecurity is often stigmatized as an issue that only impacts the most impoverished populations. In reality, food insecurity impacts even the wealthiest and most developed nations. In BC alone, 14.9% of households have been defined as food insecure (Tarasuk et. al, 2022). As a temporary approach to solving hunger, food banks were invented in the 1980s and have been a widely recognized pillar of food security in Canada (Bazerghi et al, 2016). Despite their temporary intention, food banks are still in operation all over the country and usership continues to grow. Although this system seeks to combat the issue of hunger, it has also received scrutiny for its charity model and has been criticized for lacking dignified access to food. For example, food banks have an entirely different set of health and safety standards for food consumption than grocery stores do and often distribute foods past their expiry date (Loopstra, 2012). This implies that income determines which individuals are deserving of quality food.

Low-income areas are often food scarce and may even be classified as food deserts. Food deserts are areas that lack access to grocery stores or other means to healthy and affordable food (Wright et al, 2016). This leaves community members isolated from nutritious food options with long distances to travel for fresh foods (United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, 2009). Food security and food sovereignty both require that community members have access to adequate and nutritious foods. Food security refers to the access to food and the minimization of hunger, whereas food sovereignty focuses on the elements of an empowered, dignified, and self-reliant food system (Kneen, 2012). For example, food hampers distributed through food security channels like food banks are rooted in a framework that places feeding the hungry as the priority opposed to finding solutions to hunger (Bazerghi et. al., 2016). In comparison, community organizations grounded in food sovereignty principles, such as food policy councils, aim to support members to increase their access, but also their production of

local foods. This means asserting autonomy and independence in food production choices. Food sovereignty is defined as the right to access and grow culturally relevant and healthy foods (La Via Campensia, 2003).

Engaging in some forms of local agriculture should be an accessible and viable option for all Canadians. The knowledge surrounding food security and sovereignty has become increasingly valuable, especially in the face of climate change and global warming, where new and unpredictable weather patterns make planting, growing, and harvesting food extremely difficult (Barbeau et. al, 2015). The changing climate is one of many examples that puts the necessity of food security into perspective. During World War I the concept of victory gardens emerged, which were vegetable and fruit gardens planted and maintained locally to ensure an adequate food supply was available for both civilians and troops (Mosby, 2012). The COVID-19 pandemic is a more recent example of an event that has made society question the reliability of the dominant food system. This has resulted in a surge of gardening interests (Dooley, 2022). The empty grocery store shelves that many Canadians witnessed in the early days of the pandemic caused shock and panic, especially amongst those that depend on market foods and lack food literacy (FL) and skills.

Food Security Literacy, Skill Development, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge

With modern day conveniences such as fast-food options and meal delivery services, many individuals are more disconnected from their food sources than ever before. In many urban environments, people make food choices based on convenience. Food skills can help encourage healthy food related decisions by providing necessary knowledge to plan, purchase, and prepare foods and nutritious meals (Health Canada, 2015). Many Canadians no longer have the food skills that were common in previous generations like canning, pickling, and preserving. Most

individuals were taught very little in the mandated government education system about food. While the Canada Food Guide was predominant, it has drastically changed since its inception in 1942 (Government of Canada, 2019). Even just a few generations ago, when two working parents was uncommon, FL was higher. With the quickening pace of urbanized and industrial societies, households now require full-time/multi-incomes to sustain livelihoods. For many households, this leaves very little time to adequately prepare foods which fosters a disconnection to food and an influx of diet-related health concerns, food sensitivities, and allergies (Gerlach & Lorring, 2013).

FL has been described as, “a multidimensional concept that encompasses food-related knowledge, skills, and behaviors” (Vidgen & Gallegos, 2014). Gaining such knowledge sets individuals up with tools to access healthy and nutritious foods. Furthermore, this knowledge is directly linked to the decline of food-related health concerns such as diabetes or obesity (Mararike, 2001). Studies show that beginning food-based literacy education as early as elementary school creates a valuable understanding of the connection between food and health (Kelly & Nash, 2021). In fact, a developed understanding of the interconnected nature of FL, nutrition, and health is one that benefits individuals throughout their lives. In Canada, university students were found unlikely to engage in any food skills or FL development outside of structured food studies programs (Classens & Sytsma, 2020; Rojas et al., 2017).

Developing FL and food skills can empower individuals and households to make more conscious decisions about their diets (Vidgen & Galledos, 2014). Across Canada, many children no longer acquire food preparation skills from their parents which has traditionally been the primary mode of learning. Improved awareness, knowledge, and skills are key in equipping individuals to make informed food choices (Ellis et. al., 2013). It is also common that individuals

will continue to eat what they were given in their households as children (Unusan, 2006). Although food preferences can change into adulthood, studies confirm that food preferences develop during early childhood (De Cosmi et. al., 2017). This is why introduction at the school level can have far reaching benefits that follow into adolescence. FL has the potential to educate individuals not only about nutrition, health, and how and what to feed oneself, but it can also foster a larger understanding of food waste and the environmental impacts of industrial food production (Perry et. al, 2017).

In Indigenous communities, Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is an integral component of food education and skill development. TEK is largely transmitted through socialization within household and community contexts. It is mostly learned along gender lines and focuses on practical skill knowledge and mastery (Setalaphruk & Price, 2007). TEK has been defined as, "a cumulative body of knowledge, practice and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission about the relation of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment" (McGregor, p. 1252, 2004). TEK has been further described as a way of life rather than just knowledge about how to live by Indigenous people (Hosen et. al, 2020). An essential component of TEK is a worldview that encourages environmental ethics and one in which humans are part of an interacting set of living things (Berkes et. al, 2000).

Industrial and technological approaches to food security are being challenged by concerns about the safety and nutritional value of food, and the long-term sustainability of the environment (Huambachano, 2019). Indigenous foodways are the opposite of mechanized industrial agricultural systems in that they rely on healthy ecosystems to produce wild food plants (Huambachano, 2019; Teixidor-Toneu, 2022). TEK supports the cultivation of wild foods

through an in-depth understanding of the ecosystem and the ability to adapt to environmental changes (Phungpracha et. al, 2016). TEK is place specific and reflects local culture, society, economy, and biophysical environments (Cruikshank, 2005). The transmission of TEK can work across and within generations (Setelaphruk & Price, 2007) and has gained more attention due to its ability to address climate change at the grassroots community level (Hosen et. al, 2022).

Social Inequalities, Social Justice, and Food as a Right

One in 8 households in Canada are food insecure with Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) being disproportionately represented (Dhunna & Tarasuk, 2019). This is not a coincidence but rather a deeply systemic societal issue related to the historical displacement of Indigenous peoples in Canada and the genocide and slavery of colonized peoples worldwide. Black people in Canada are 3.5 times more likely to experience food insecurity than Euro-Canadians (Roberts, 2020). Canadian Indigenous peoples are more likely to experience food insecurity than non-Indigenous households (Skinner et. al., 2016). The Northern Indigenous communities in particular experience disproportionate levels of food insecurity with 46.1% of individuals having experienced food insecurity in the territory of Nunavut (Caron & Plunkett–Latimer, 2022).

Access to food should be a non-discriminatory human right; yet over time, it has become a highly commodified privilege playing a strategic part in a larger capitalist economy. Food Justice is a term referring to a holistic and equally accessible food system at large, conceptualizing food as a right and not as a privilege (Food Secure Canada, n.d.). Before the first European settlers landed in North America, a sharing economy was favoured amongst the various Indigenous tribes of Canada (Poucette, 2018). Paper bills and coins were only valuable through unfamiliar European traditions and did not determine people's worthiness to eat.

Through the process of colonization, European-settlers began to enforce their ways of knowing, their economies, and their value systems on Indigenous peoples all over the world. These tactics were deliberate and state designed by institutions to reinforce the assimilation of Indigenous peoples. In 1996, at the Rome Declaration on World Food Security, every country present other than the United States and Australia agreed that food is a basic human right, and yet there are still people hungry all over the world (Fleetwood, 2020). Exploitative labour and the destruction of ecosystems have become foundational pillars of the industrial food system having devastating impacts on people and natural environments.

Contemporary agriculture has been scrutinized for its colonial agenda. North American farming industries in particular have been known to exploit tens of thousands of migrant workers every season from developing countries worldwide (Hjalmarson et. al., 2015). These workers are often abused by employers who take advantage of their need for work by underpaying and providing unacceptable housing and unsafe living conditions. In Canada, there is a structural oppression set in place that exploits migrant and temporary agricultural workers (Caxaj & Cohen, 2019). The systems that reinforce the exploitation of workers are built to be extremely difficult to break free from. Using migrant workers who often lack food security themselves in order to uphold the very backbone of the Canadian food system is unequivocally unjust. The Canadian Government benefits from structural vulnerability in the food system as it allows for a power dynamic between employer and worker that produces high yields for low costs. It is the most marginalized members of society that are the most susceptible to food insecurity (Alkon & Mares, 2012). Legal segregation, apartheid, and Canadian residential schools are examples of racist and oppressive systems set in place by European colonizers to ensure their authority

remained unthreatened, perpetuating the complex relationship between race, class, and food security (Holt-Giménez, 2019; Joseph, 2018; Kendi, 2016; Shackleton & Gwendla, 2021).

Access to healthy food is determined by the economic ability to purchase it. Food Justice links food insecurity to institutional racism and aims to secure food for the most vulnerable members of society (Fleetwood, 2020; Alkon et. al, 2009) The depoliticization of food access as a human right is necessary to create a sovereign and just food system (Power, 1999). Kneen (1993) has referred to the development of the global food system as corporate control over the production and distribution of local food. As food is increasingly controlled by large corporations, ecosystems suffer and communities have less control over access to local foods (Alkon et, al, 2009). Since the 1980s, federal governments (including Canada), have neglected their duty to provide state intervention and blame victims for their own food poverty (Power, 1999). Canadians must shift to adopt a shared humanity and a fundamental ethic that rests on concerns about social justice and protecting the natural environment (Fleetwood, 2020).

Revitalizing and empowering local Indigeneity is key in decolonizing food systems (Figueroa-Helland et. al, 2018). Healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate foods are becoming less abundant in comparison to industrial foods (Bradley & Herrera, 2016). In Canada, the industrialization of food disproportionately impacts people of low income and people of colour. Grassroots community food activism places pressure and resistance on colonized food systems. Indigenous food sovereignty, farmers' markets, and shopping through local food suppliers are all examples of community initiatives that contribute to not only food security, but food sovereignty.

Other ways communities can work toward food sovereignty are through public produce models. Public produce refers to the concept of accessible, community green spaces that grow

food for people in need for nothing in exchange (Nordahl, 2014). Community gardens are another approach many cities and neighborhoods use to minimize levels of food insecurity. These open garden plots are supported by the municipal government. A fee is charged for the use of the garden space needed to grow food, and responsibilities are shared amongst community members. Seed libraries are also commonly used as a resistance to food insecurity. It is estimated that 75% of our global food plant varieties have gone extinct in the past 100 years. The resurgence of seed saving and sharing in community spaces like seed libraries helps to preserve the remaining plant varieties (Kamloops Food Policy Council, n.d.). These community food security approaches have the potential to minimize local food insecurity, build FL, and support food sovereignty.

Methodological Approach

Community Based Participatory Research

This project uses a Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) framework as the primary methodological approach. CBPR seeks to bring about social change through collaborative and systematic inquiry (Israel et al., 2005). This methodology focuses on the importance of equal partnerships between researchers and community stakeholders and a shared goal of improving practices and policies (Daley et al., 2010; Israel et al., 2005). CBPR also aims to support the establishment of respectful relationships and prioritizes a balance between research and action (Frerichs, 2016; Leung et. al., 2004). CBPR guided all aspects of this research project.

CBPR was especially useful in gathering information for this project as it ensured I was involved with the community well before any research actually took place. I began attending Kamloops Food Policy Council (KFPC) network and board meetings, visited the school garden at

Sk'elep school of Excellence as a guest on several occasions, and volunteered in the Skeetchestn Community School Garden as well. In my spare time, I also toured many spaces that supported local food security in the community such as the Kamloops Regional Farmers' Market, the Indigenous Kwestelten Farmers' market, and the Kamloops Food Bank to network with the community and observe operations. I also attended a garden planning session at the Butler Urban Farm, a community driven agriculture initiative that focuses on growing food with the community, for the community.

CBPR creates space for the researcher to partner with the research participants on an equal level in order to formulate meaningful questions with relevance to current community experiences. Through relationship development and participation in community events, culturally relevant knowledge based on lived experiences of community members was accessed and privileged. Knowledge gained from personal experiences tends to influence action compared to knowledge generated from academic theory (Huffman, 2017). Studies have shown that it is more likely that people will remain committed and interested in developing a new habit like gardening or shopping locally if they have some sort of connection to the change in behaviour (Giampiccoli & Kalis, 2012).

While involving myself with local food security initiatives, I also started my first garden and had my own personal experiences growing local food. My first garden had many victories and equally as many trials. There were several observations I made when it came to the reality of gardening; the first being the hard work involved. I was fortunate to have the experienced guidance of my mother, who has extensive gardening knowledge from her personal and professional life. On top of that, I had the help from my husband, friends and family members too. There were discounts extended to us, we received free seeds from the Kamloops Seed Library, used many

repurposed materials, and the garden was still an extremely resource intensive responsibility. Keeping a garden requires daily responsibilities, which is not easy for the average person to commit to. My experience of gardening has largely influenced my understanding of the challenges associated with growing food.

Research Methods

A mixed-methods approach was taken to conduct this research. The primary data was collected from 25 personal interviews with knowledgeable land-users, agrologists, teachers, passionate community champions, and policy makers in the Kamloops community. In addition, participant observation, a qualitative research method involving critical reflection by the researcher as a part of the research process, was adopted throughout the project (Kawulich, 2005). During this research, I kept a detailed journal with observations and impressions that I gathered during my experiences in the community. Participant Observation (PO) was used in conjunction with CBPR through participation in local food policy meetings, emergency food security volunteer work, and involvement in a variety of other local food related activities.

CBPR informed the interview process including the methods chosen and the formulation of the research questions. Before conducting interviews, a draft of potential topics of inquiry was sent to three well established community members with food security experience in Kamloops for feedback. The feedback informed the co-production of an interview guide. Any necessary changes were made to the guide before beginning the semi-structured interviews that began in October 2020. The interviews were conducted with key community members consisting of open-ended questions to facilitate a conversation type setting (see Appendix C, Interview Guide). This

approach allowed for an organic emergence of questions and concerns the community members might have that could have been missed in a structured interview setting.

The interview guide was built in consultation with local community champions and participants were recruited for interviews using a non-probability snowball sampling method. This allowed for local community champions to provide guidance on who was best-suited in the community to speak with on the identified issues. The objective of interviewing these individuals was to explore their observations and experiences surrounding food and to identify opportunities and barriers related to the inequalities in the Kamloops food system. Overall, the semi-structured interviews provided invaluable insights on the local knowledge surrounding food security, FL and food availability in the community.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Many of the participant interviews were held over Zoom due to the changing COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. The other interviews took place in respondents' homes where their comfortability and privacy were self-controlled (see Appendix B, Participant List). All interviews were voice recorded and transcribed verbatim with the permission of the research participant. When complete, each interview transcript was sent to the interviewee for review in advance of data analysis to ensure accuracy. Consent forms were distributed before any interviews were conducted and participants were given the option to sign or adhere to an oral agreement. Participants were also given the choice to remain anonymous within the research text or to own their words and perspectives in all uses of the data. None of the participants asked for anonymity. They wanted to own their words and support transparency in the data being collected and disseminated.

Data was collected through Participant observation and semi-structured interviews in the fall semester of 2020 (see Appendix C, Interview Guide). The data was then analyzed using a critical discourse analysis and coded into categories based on identified opportunities and strengths to achieve higher levels of community food security in Kamloops. The objective of the semi-structured interviews was also to explore specific barriers relating to community food security in Kamloops. Appendix B outlines the date of the interview, the participant's name, and their association or position to food security in the community within the scope of this research project. After reflection and analysis, the interviews were coded into subcategories of recurring themes. The major themes that emerged to help answer the research question of what inequalities lie in the Kamloops food system centred around class, gender, and race.

Participant Observation, Volunteer Work, and Community Activism

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, PO was also used as a complementary method. The detailed reflection required by PO allowed me to deepen my understanding of food security at the community level and engage with many individuals struggling to achieve their food security. From September 2020 — December 2020, I volunteered as a student worker at The Loop Community Resource centre located on Tranquille Road in Kamloops, BC. My expectations were to cook mass lunches for the low-income members of the neighborhood using local donations and food bank resources. I worked Mondays and Wednesdays for about 10 hours total and would come in for extra shifts when available as well. Over the course of 3 months, my experiences were impactful and I quickly realized that the Loop varied from an average soup kitchen in many ways. When community members stepped through the doors, every volunteer and/or staff was trained to treat the space like any other restaurant. Volunteers were trained to greet and seat people in a restaurant style. This was such a simple but powerful change that I noticed impacted individuals

immediately. At the Loop, unless violence or substance abuse was involved, which occurred irregularly, everyone was welcome. I felt inspired by The Loop and always looked forward to getting creative in the kitchen with whatever donations were available that day.

What I witnessed during my time at The Loop went beyond its mandate to increase food accessibility. It went a step further by creating a space that community members could go to access food in a dignified way. The kitchen at The Loop also doubled as the prep space for the COVID Meal Train. This operation is another local approach to community food security taking food beyond the confines of the Loop's building. Instead of waiting for all of the hungry people in Kamloops to find their way to a resource where they could access food, a number of volunteers would make as many individually packaged meals as they could with the donations provided, and pass them off to a volunteer driver. This driver would then go out into the community of Kamloops and drive to areas of town known for having higher homeless populations, such as Downtown and the Northshore, to meet community members where they were with food. The Loop also held a number of fundraisers, including a few car washes and a pumpkin carving contest. The establishment also accepted clothing and bedding donations which were either distributed during the COVID Meal Train deliveries or were available to take from the centre. Kamloops has harsh weather conditions including wildfires, flooding and extreme heat waves (City of Kamloops, 2023) and is not the most accessible city with its rivers, hills and poor transportation infrastructure. The Covid Meal Train was supposed to be a temporary emergency response to the pandemic, but it continues to operate in the present day with the demand for its services remaining strong.

In addition to my time at The Loop, I also observed research participants through my term as a board member for the KFPC. This experience allowed me to witness how policy is formed in the community and to get a grasp of the key stakeholders involved in Kamloops food security.

From August 2020 — November 2020 I fully committed myself to monthly network meetings, specific committee meetings, and a variety of eye-opening field trips until my sudden change in health required me to take a more casual seat at the table. During this time, I was connected with members from the Kamloops Naturalist Club, The Next Generation, and the Butler Urban Farm. The relationships I built through my community involvement supported the snowball interview method approach I took, and helped me integrate into the niche network of knowledgeable and passionate individuals in the Kamloops food system.

My experiences observing the participants of this research have been nothing short of overwhelming, emotional, and inspiring. I have had the privilege to work with people who have incredibly unique stories from diverse cultures and backgrounds. The journal I kept during the PO component of my research allowed me to deeply reflect about my experiences, and several realizations have stuck with me. Firstly, food either brings us together or divides us. It is a cause for celebration all over the world and is something that can be enjoyed and shared amongst different people and their cultures. At the same time, it can be used as a weapon for manipulation and oppression, as witnessed in Canada's Residential School System. Secondly, there is a disconnect to food as a part of our bodies and part of our health. Obesity, diabetes, and other diet related health concerns are proof of this disconnect. Lastly, I came to realize that there is a misconception that food is scarce, when in reality it is improperly managed and distributed.

Researcher Positionality

As a non-Indigenous settler researching on traditional Secwépemc territory, it is critical that I articulate my background and how my lived experiences have shaped my research interests and worldviews. I was born in the small fishing village, Ketchikan, in Southern Alaska, and am a

dual citizen of Canada and the United States of America. I am in my mid-twenties and have lived between the Vancouver Coast and Mountains and the Thompson-Okanagan regions of BC since acquiring Canadian citizenship in 1998. My father is African-American and was born and raised in the state of California. My mother is of Scottish-European heritage and was born in the province of Manitoba. As a mixed-race visible minority and dual citizen raised entirely by the European members of my family, I have gained many unique perspectives into race and equality. My passion for research derives from my desire to create an equal and sustainable world for all, where all people feel safe and supported in their communities.

Although Indigenous Canadians and Black Canadians have their own unique histories, parallels can be seen between the group's mistreatment within our country's borders. My passions as a researcher and global citizen are visible in my innate desire for racial equality. My Blackness, and my recent involvement with Black Lives Matter initiatives since the murder of George Floyd on May 25th, 2020, has helped me continue to develop intercultural perspectives and skills. These views are the lens in which I perceive food security through as well. Intergenerational trauma is a very real and devastating reality for many Indigenous and Black people across North America. What many people fail to recognize is how the trickle-down effects of trauma and abuse from previous generations impacts the youth of these socio-economic groups. Living through an era that never intended for Black and Indigenous freedom is a challenge and there are constant reminders in everyday life that European settlers never anticipated the resilience of BIPOC communities. Cole (2020) explains further with words from his book:

> ...the average white Canadian doesn't know that British and French settlers enslaved Black and Indigenous peoples on these lands for two centuries, and simply shifted legislative tactics once they had abolished 'legal' slavery" (p. 3).

Slavery and the 13th amendment have allowed for hatred and oppression to continue and thrive in the United States of America, while colonialism and the Indian Act have created very raw and current trauma in Canada. It is also important to recognize that although these histories may have unfolded in separate countries, borders are irrelevant when it comes to mistreatment and trauma. As Cole (2020) describes:

> People who refuse to acknowledge the fact that Canada has its race problems compare us a lot to America…They say, 'Canada's not like America. Why are you bringing American problems into Canada? Why are you crossing borders?' But that's the thing — Black lives have no borders. We exist everywhere regardless of the fact they may not want us to" (p. 3).

Due to systemic racism, oppression, and intergenerational trauma, I was not brought up with the influences of my African-American and West-African heritage. In many ways, my Canadian upbringing, as the only person of African descent in my family and one of very few in my childhood schools, taught me from a very young age that I was different.

White supremacy is not an easy topic of discussion for many Canadians, but for BIPOC communities, it is an unavoidable and omnipresent part of our reality. It is impossible to investigate the gaps in our food systems and not see the racism that is embedded within them. For example, Black people in the United States are twice as likely to be food insecure as Caucasian people (Gamblin, 2020) and 36.6% of Black children in Canada live in food insecure households (Foodshare, n.d.). This is an issue of access as studies show that only 8% of African-

Americans have a grocery store in their census tract, while white neighbourhoods contain an average of 4 times as many supermarkets as predominantly Black ones (Food Empowerment Project, 2022). Black communities in Toronto make up the largest group of the working poor and have the greatest representation in low-income neighborhoods (Stapleton et. al., 2019). This has further impacted access to education and food (Roberts, 2020). As a visible minority, I have gained an understanding of racial inequality through my own lived experiences and my university studies. When investigating topics such as food security, I am unable to dismiss the racial injustices ingrained within our legal systems and policies. For this reason, I have chosen a CBPR approach to guide this research and will use personal interviews to amplify community perspectives of food security in Kamloops.

Thesis Overview

This thesis is organized into four distinct chapters. In the first chapter above, I provide an in-depth review of primary literature to define food security at the community level, explain how food security literacy and skill development contribute to food security, and illustrate barriers to accomplishing a socially just food system where food is valued as a right and necessity for all human beings. In the second chapter, I argue that in order to address local food security issues, it is critical to acknowledge the colonial histories that have shaped regional food systems in the Kamloops region. In the third chapter, I highlight the pressing barriers and constraints that foster inequities and reinforce issues such as neoliberalism and racism in the Kamloops food system. In chapter four, I draw on opportunities to enhance food security through grassroots activism in the Kamloops community. Finally, I will draw conclusions and outline areas for future research in the final chapter. Overall, this research project aims to fill identified gaps including how to build community capacity and support opportunities for food security at the local level. Fostering

community driven and collaborative research outcomes will also aid in decolonizing Euro-Canadian centric decision-making processes in community research on important topics such as land use, environmental change, and food security.

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CHAPTER 2: CONTEXTUALIZING FOOD SECURITY IN THE KAMLOOPS REGION

For millennia, the Canadian city now known as Kamloops, BC, has been a sacred meeting place for Indigenous nations throughout the region. The city is situated on the traditional and unceded territories of three Interior Salish nations: the Syilx, Nlaka'pamux, and Secwépemc peoples (Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association, n.d.). It is estimated that these tribes inhabited the area for over 10,000 years before the fur trade attracted European settlers in the 19th century (Ignace, 2008.). By the mid 1800s, Kamloops experienced another influx of settlers who came to take advantage of Gold Rush opportunities (Harris, 2021). The Gold Rush industry eventually collapsed and workers were left economically vulnerable. The developing community in Kamloops was supported by provincial land incentives which persuaded many individuals to stay and settle in the Thompson Okanagan region (see Appendix D, Southern British Columbia and Regional Maps) (Harris, 2021; Mackinnon & Nelson, 2005). Soon after, the Kamloops economy shifted to focus on western agricultural practices like ranching. Many settlers optimized the new lands they had acquired by cultivating them to sustain their livelihoods. This greatly displaced Indigenous communities living semi-nomadic lifestyles from their traditional lands (Ignace, 2008.). The settler-colonial disruption of local Indigenous culture in Kamloops has shaped contemporary agriculture and the dominant food system in the community.

There has been limited research exploring the connection between the colonial history of Kamloops and its direct impacts on regional food security and food sovereignty. Through semi-structured interviews, local perspectives are used in this chapter to demonstrate how colonialism has influenced local agriculture, and how land management decisions have led to current food insecurity issues in the community. This chapter provides a brief historical and agricultural review of the region and addresses the following research questions: 1) How has the history of colonialism shaped agriculture

in the region? 2) What are the impacts of settler colonialism on Kamloops' food security? 3) How do environmental issues and climate change affect the food system in Kamloops?

Colonial Agricultural Histories of the Region

During early settlement, Kamloops was known for its regional agricultural investments. By 1914, the BC Tree Fruits Corporation had invested in Kamloops and a successful cannery business had been established in both Wallachin and Kamloops (Stewart, 1992). Bobbi Sasakamoose, former Community Wellness Coordinator at Q'wemstín Health, recalls her grandmother's memories of the lively farming and canning economies in Kamloops:

> Kamloops used to be a very farmer oriented, orchard-oriented area. When my grandmother was younger, she always talked about working in the tomato fields. There used to be a lot of Chinese farmers that had tomato fields all over Kamloops. And there was actually a tomato processing plant in Brock where they would can it all (2020)

This era of Kamloops agricultural development was brief and local land use pressures eroded the agriculture sector during the 1950s and 1960s (Mackinnon & Nelson, 2005). As new technology was released, Kamloops' small-scale fruit and vegetable industry struggled to compete with the cheaper more convenient foods available elsewhere (Harris, 2021; Mackinnon & Nelson, 2005). This is what ultimately led to the disinvestment in Kamloops agriculture that is still impacting Kamloops food security today. KFPC's Food Policy Implementation Lead, Lindsay Harris, draws an insightful comparison between a community like Kamloops, and a community like Kelowna (see Appendix D, Southern British Columbia and Regional Maps), and how agricultural investments drastically impact a community's ability to achieve food sovereignty:

> …I think another interesting shift would be the development of land on the North Shore of Kamloops. It's interesting to think about the difference between a place like Kamloops and a place like Kelowna, for example. Kelowna still has quite a bit more actual farming happening within its municipal region. And with Kamloops, the speed at which development took place in the prime agricultural lands is... I don't even really necessarily know that as a researcher myself that I've put my finger on why or how that exactly happened so quickly and in the timing that it

> did. It is really complex and some of it has to do with the environmental constraints of Kamloops, the structure of the river… that's one thing that also stands out in my mind as a real key moment, when Kamloops as a community, chose to disinvest in agriculture and to develop land and not think about how it was going to feed itself as a community (2020).

Harris's comments provide insight on the complexities of agricultural development in Kamloops. Before European colonizers populated the area, the Secwépemc peoples had been stewarding the lands for centuries. Shelaigh Garson, owner of EveryOne's Eden Regenerative Land Design, describes the relationship Indigenous peoples had with the land before modern agriculture took over in the region:

> It wasn't about agriculture. There's a weird dynamic going on right now about agriculture, because 'agriculture' was being practiced by our first peoples before settlers came to the forefront and brought *their* idea of 'agriculture'. It looked different. It was land stewardship, it was forest management, it was living in one and balanced with nature… These were really planned, organized, monitored, and managed systems that were in balance with the natural world. (2020)

Indigenous land management embodies a land ethic and sustainable practices are embedded in interactions made with the environment. The balance Garson refers to was disrupted when European Settlers colonized the land, and subsequently, its people.

Across Canada, civility did not last between settlers and Indigenous cultures and it was not long before Indigenous ways of living and managing foodways were undermined through settler colonialism (Robidoux & Mason, 2017). Bonnie Klohn, member of the KFPC leadership team, continues to describe early colonialism in the region and explains how relationships between settlers and Indigenous people have shifted over time:

> …when did colonialism begin here? In the 1800s… Initially, there was a lot more recognition and respect of Indigenous people… (2020)

She goes on to explain how Indigenous rights to land have been dismissed through colonial law:

> …a lot of the court cases now for Indigenous rights and title are based on the original documents that were drafted by England and France. Which, even the original documents stated, 'we are acknowledging Indigenous rights and title over this land'. And then a lot of that recognition of Indigenous rights and title got clawed back over the years. And now when Indigenous

> communities are fighting for these things in court, they're not arguing on the principle that ‘we were here first’, they are like, ‘you colonizers said we could’ (Klohn, 2020)

There are countless accounts of trust being broken between settler Canadians and Indigenous nations. The government is also notorious for using land as a weapon to control Indigenous Canadians. Greg Unger, manager of the Kamloops Regional Farmers’ Market and Community Gardens Coordinator in Kamloops, provides an example of how settler communities have been prioritized on unceded Indigenous territories:

> I mean, there's plenty of stories from Canada's colonial history of Indigenous farmers being given the opportunity to engage in agriculture, proving that they're really good at it, because they know this land, and then being told by the government, ‘get out of here, go on that reserve, because we want that land for our white people’. (2020)

Prior to colonial law and land treaties, Indigenous people held a polytheistic worldview and honoured the land as a non-commodified part of nature belonging to no one. When Garson was asked to comment on the history of the region, her thoughts echoed Klohn’s regarding the colonization of land and the early relationship between settlers and local Secwépemc peoples:

> They [colonial settlers] were driving cattle across this area trying to get to the coast. And they got stuck here in the winter, they were snowed in. And the Secwépemc people basically saved their lives because they had their own food camp down in the Cooney Bay Area… and then with colonization, they just basically took the land and called it their own because that's what you did back then, you settled… (2020)

Assimilating local Secwépemc people into a Western value system has disrupted regenerative land practices that are integral to the well-being of the natural environment. As European farming and ways of cultivating the lands have been adopted, the nomadic and ecological way of working with land has been mostly lost. Percy Folklard, local Kamloops area rancher and former KFPC Co-President, comments on how this shift has impacted the food system:

> …colonial stamps were put all over the place when the landscape was carved up, barbed wire fence was strung, and pre-empted land was given away to white settlers while Indigenous people were pushed off of their graves until the monarchy said, ‘no, you can't do that’. That's what shaped the food system, in my opinion, still today (2020)

As Folklard points out, colonizing the land and its people has subsequently colonized the food system that most of the Kamloops population now relies on. Emily Pletsch, former lead facilitator for the Kamloops Changing the Face of Poverty, a KFPC supported initiative focusing on emergency food security needs, expresses parallel thoughts to Folklard's and articulates how past histories continue to impact the community today:

> We are a settler community… We are built around colonization and our food system is colonized. And we live in a white — *quite* a white dominated city… and capitalism, the other thing in the room. (2020)

As Pletsch points out, Kamloops, as well as most other Canadian communities, are currently sustained by colonized food systems. If it were not for the local Indigenous food system, early settlers would not have survived. Cynthia Tavers, a Métis woman and member of the Kamloops Lived Experience Committee, describes this relationship and the injustice that lies within it:

> …that's the Hudson's Bay Company. They're the assholes that came in and decided we were savages and we didn't deserve this land. And that we didn't deserve to have this and we didn't deserve to have that. But we are the ones that taught them how to survive here. They would not know anything about hunting, fishing, gardening, growing, fucking *anything* if it hadn't been for the Indigenous people of this land. In this country and from other lands too. Other Indigenous people that were colonized, raped, plundered, and sold. (2020)

Cynthia explains the tragic treatment that Indigenous people have experienced through European colonization. Despite the aid and knowledge shared with settlers, Indigenous people were systematically abused and oppressed. Sasakamoose also comments on the impacts that colonization had on Indigenous communities:

> …Indigenous cultures have pushed to be their own independent governments. That push for independence makes a lot of people turn up their noses at them and say, 'oh, well, you asked for this, you put yourself in that position' [being impoverished]. But… they don't really look at the big picture on how colonization led to that and led to them getting diabetes and being insecure financially… a lot of our people lived on really good land prior to this and now they're living in the little elephant graveyard from The Lion King. (2020)

Abandoning colonial conservation approaches that are harmful to Indigenous People and empowering Indigenous self-led governance instead has had major impacts on the environment's natural biodiversity (Artelle et. al, 2019).

Colonial legacies continue to impact community members in Kamloops. Developing community awareness regarding the intricacies of local colonial history and its inherent connection to present socio-economic and environmental issues is critical if Canada aims to occupy a just and sovereign food system. Colonialism was, and to many remains, an uncomfortable topic representing a horrific era of Canadian history. Many generations were raised to avoid the subject resulting in the failure to recognize how past events are connected to the present. Maureen Zuts, a grade 6 elementary school teacher at Skeetchestn Community School (see Appendix D, Southern British Columbia and Regional Maps), comments on her exposure to colonialism growing up:

> …this is Secwépemc land… and no one taught me that when I was in school. I was in university before I even learned about colonialism worldwide and what happened. (2020)

Zuts is not the only individual who was not taught about Canada's legacy of Indigenous genocide and oppression. Mainstream systems like the federal education system have historically upheld a colonial narrative so that oppressive policies could be justified (Khan, 2021). In an attempt to completely eradicate the Secwépemc culture, colonizers invented the Canadian Residential School System (Joseph, 2018). The intent behind this government-initiated school program was to assimilate Indigenous children into a Euro-centric culture. The children were forbidden to speak their native language, could not associate with their families on or off school property, and were prohibited from practicing in any kind of cultural ceremonies or rituals (Gebhard, 2017). The punishments for disobeying these rules have been documented over the years and varies from physical beatings to mutilation and worse (Macdonald & Hudson, 2012).

Through the residential school system, mass assimilation was inflicted upon the Secwépemc People. The system's overall objective was to cultivate and foster shame toward Indigenous culture while enforcing a shift to European customs and lifestyle. At one point in history, the Kamloops Indian Residential School was the largest residential school in the entire country (Haig-Brown et. al., 2022.). Disease, starvation, and isolation were the living standards set for school attendees. The cultural oppression and intergenerational trauma have contributed greatly to the disconnect Indigenous people have with the land and their food (Morrison, 2020). The lasting impacts of the system have left Indigenous communities across the country extremely vulnerable to food insecurity. Klohn describes how Canada's oppressive legacy manifests in Indigenous food systems today:

> …Indigenous people are so disproportionately represented in populations that access emergency food. And it's because they were forcibly removed from their land and because we continue to poison all of the primary sources of salmon and other areas where traditional Indigenous foods come from. So, of course they're going to be not only food insecure, but there's going to be the intergenerational trauma (2020)

As Klohn points out, strengthening Indigenous food security in the Kamloops region also entails considering the residual trauma their communities continue to experience. It is not uncommon that Indigenous people are disconnected to agricultural activities and gardening due to traumatic residential school experiences. Food was often used as a weapon to control Indigenous youth. Children were starved and forced to labour in fields and orchards, but were forbidden to eat the foods they worked to cultivate. This is reiterated when discussing with Jesse Ritcey, Co-President of the KFPC, "…agriculture is kind of triggering for a certain generation that had residential school experience." (2020). Residential schools are also known for their cruel and unusual ways of punishment. Survivors have shared accounts of being forced to eat rotten foods infested with worms and their own vomit and were beaten if they refused it (The Survivor's Speak, 2015). The Federal Government of Canada supported the Residential School System until 1996 when the last school closed in Saskatchewan (Hanson et. al., 2020). As recent

as 2019, mass grave sites of Indigenous children have been found near Residential Schools all around the country. The Kamloops Residential School is no exception and has uncovered 215 (and counting) bodies to date (Dickson & Watson, 2021).

The Canadian Government is also responsible for the creation of the reserve system through the Indian Act, a legal framework of settler colonialism in Canada (Joseph, 2018; Collis, 2021). Part of the intent of the reserve system was to confine First Nations people to an area so that the superior land for fishing, hunting, and other land-based activities were open to settlers (Snow, 2005). In Canada, there are three designated groups of Indigenous people: First Nations, Inuit and Métis (Government of Canada, n.d.). In 1877, the Treaty 7 Agreement was signed legalizing the Reserve System in Canada (Mason, 2014). Reserve systems were designed to limit people's movement on the land, to restrict their access to traditional foods acquired from hunting and gathering (Collis, 2021). As a result, individuals became reliant on food rations that lacked nutritional and cultural relevance (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015).

In order to enforce the terms of The Treaty 7 Agreement, arguably the most colonial power structure in the entirety of the Canadian colonial bureaucracy, the North West Mounted Police (NWMP) were established. The NWMP now known as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) were established in 1873 to provide policing services on federal reserves (Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2022). For more than a century, the Canadian government used police to remove more than 150,000 Indigenous children from their communities to place them in government-funded Residential Schools. The intent behind this system was to strip the Indigenous youth of their culture and pride and to enforce European values (Hanson et. al, 2020). In 1933, the Indian Act legally appointed RCMP officers to enforce attendance and return truant children to residential schools (Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2022.). This legacy has had a lasting impact on the First Nations of Canada as Folklard notes:

> Here we have white institutions that will just go and push them [Indigenous people] away. We'll just get the police to go and push them back onto the reserve. (2020)

In an attempt to address the mistreatment of Indigenous Canadians, the Canadian Government created and implemented the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement in 2007 which is to date the largest class-action law-suit in Canadian history (de Bruin, 2013). This piece of legislation was intended to facilitate reconciliation among former residential school survivors, their families, and their communities while simultaneously providing Canadians with transparency around the country's colonial histories (Government of Canada, n.d.). Out of this agreement derived the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRCC). The TRCC is another government effort toward establishing more meaningful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous People and seeks to acknowledge the oppression Indigenous People have faced through the actions of the Federal Government of Canada (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015).

The Federal Government of Canada has failed to achieve reconciliation for its past crimes against Indigenous Canadians. Past atrocities continue to impact Indigenous communities today through systemic and intergenerational trauma. A collective understanding of the past is an integral step in addressing the present-day food insecurity issues that the Kamloops community faces. The mistreatment of Indigenous people is embedded within the foundation of contemporary Canada and calls for national recognition.

The Impacts of Colonialism on the Kamloops Community: Disconnected Relationships to the Land

Canada's history and the injustices facing Indigenous communities today are interconnected. Just sixty years ago the oppressive policy, the 60s scoop, allowed the Federal Government to remove Indigenous children from their families and communities to place them in the child welfare system without the consent of their parents (Johnston, 1983). After having their children and lands stolen, their

culture oppressed, and their rights minimized, legislation was put into place to create even more barriers through the infliction of the Indian Act (Milloy, 2008). This legislative document was created to support the colonial government's agenda to strip Indigenous people of their pride, power, and culture and to create barriers for any opposition.

Colonial policies also attempted to interrupt the transfer of Indigenous knowledge. This facilitated the disruption of the transfer of invaluable knowledge that has traditionally been passed verbally from one member of the community to another. Colonization has also disrupted the transfer of food knowledge and food skills in the community. As Tavers highlights, colonization now affects the entire Canadian nation:

> The colonization has not fucking stopped. They're not just colonizing Indigenous people anymore. They've colonized everybody. (2020)

Colonization and colonialism have reinforced a number of social issues in Kamloops. There is a growing need for welfare programs that address how colonialism and social issues intersect in the community. Gardengate's Program Coordinator and KFPC member, Rob Wright, provides an example of how residential school intergenerational trauma manifests in the community:

> They're [Indigenous people] institutionalized on a different stream. They go to jail. 'Oh, sorry, Billy had a really traumatic childhood because his parents attended residential school and that got taken out on him. It's not his fault. But we're going to send him to jail'. So, jail it is instead of a mental health service. It's perpetual. Residential school is no different than a jail. (2020)

As Wright points out, colonial powers have simply gone from confining Indigenous bodies from one institution to another. Breaking the cycle of colonialism through a deeper understanding of its legacy is not an approach all community members are committed to. Glenn Hilke, the manager of the Loop Community Resource Centre and longstanding KFPC community member, suggests there is an intolerance laced with assumption regarding Indigenous social issues that are present in the community:

> I had a phone call a month ago from a dentist on Victoria Street… and at a certain point he out of the blue brings up 'those fucking native people'. And this is one of the main pillars of racism: 'why aren't they looking after their own? They're getting all these millions of dollars…' But do you know why? I mean, do you understand the history of this, how we got to this place? …you have rising rents, you have the opioid crisis, you have increased poverty, you have no affordable housing.' I said to this guy, 'you're asking me why you see so many native people that are homeless?' I said, 'residential schools', and he said, 'oh, I'm tired of hearing about residential schools', and then he went on to tell me that he was homeless himself at one point, because he had a bad divorce. Lost all of his finances and his stuff. And he's one of these, 'and I pulled myself up by my bootstraps' people. So yeah, the racism is there. And mostly, it's expressed toward First Nations. (2020).

These settler impressions of Indigenous trauma offer a sobering perspective on the level of understanding the community of Kamloops holds in regard to the relationship between colonial history and Indigenous trauma. Not only are settlers carrying forward harmful stereotypes about Indigenous culture, but many Indigenous folks themselves are disconnected from their roots as well. Tavers shares her thoughts on the colonization of Indigenous Canadians and how she was raised to perceive her culture:

> It breaks us down emotionally, physically, financially, any way that you have some way of holding yourself up. They're going to kick it out from underneath you. Because you're good for nothing lazy fucking Indians. Only good Indian is a dead Indian. And that's the stuff I was raised on. (2020)

The stereotypes that have been formed around Indigenous cultures are perpetuated through unresolved trauma. Cultivating a hatred toward Indigenous culture has been an assimilation tactic supported by the Canadian Government for decades. The mistreatment of Indigenous People requires a collective national ownership and calls for recognition of the physical and cultural genocide that the country's first people have experienced through the process of colonization (Morrison, 2020). Language, traditions, customs, and TEK have not only been disrupted but in many cases, deliberately erased (LaDuke, 1994; Hosen et. al, 2020). Sasakamoose comments on the lost knowledge and the hopes she has for her community members moving forward:

> …trying to rebuild all that lost knowledge and the connection to the land and getting people to have that self-esteem again. Getting them to take ownership of it and feel confident in what they're doing. I think all of that is really important. (2020)

George Casamir, Ḱwséltkten Farmers' Market founder and local area farmer supports Sasakamoose's hope for the future with his insights regarding Secwépemc food sovereignty:

> It really seems that because of a lot of impacts, it can be residential school, it could be the 60s Scoop, it could be a lot of social issues, a lot of my people really strayed from that whole self-sustainability… And health. And how do I grow my own food, process my own food, how do I store it? (2020)

TEK is integral to the sustainability of local food systems and provides information on the health of the natural environment. This information is especially pertinent in the era of rapid climate change where oral history and place specific knowledge play a key role in understanding environmental processes (Cruikshank, 2005). Garson confirms the importance of TEK and emphasizes how integral the transfer of knowledge is between generations:

> I'm thinking specifically of Indigenous communities. There was a disruption when their families were torn apart and they were sent to residential school. Nobody taught them how to garden, can, hunt, fish, or forage for two or three generations.
>
> What I'm seeing now is the cultural knowledge, the knowledge keepers within Indigenous communities, with everything that's happened with colonization, with the residential schools, there's a whole generation or two that have been lost to a lot of that knowledge. Now, the knowledge keepers that actually have the lived experience are in their 80s. And that knowledge, it's paramount that that gets handed down to the next generation… At Q'wemtsín Health Society, one of their objectives is to bridge those gaps and offer that opportunity for exchange of cultural knowledge. (2020)

The food skills and traditional knowledge in Indigenous communities has shifted dramatically in only a few generations due to colonial interruptions. The apparent disconnection to growing and harvesting wild country foods is fairly recent in community history. Casmair recalls stories from Secwémepc Elders in his community about the health and prosperity of their gardens:

> I listen to the stories of some Elders and they tell me about gardens that used to be out on East Shuswap Road and other big gardens over at the main park. I remember there was an Elder who had his own greenhouse and beautiful tractor and I used to buy my tomato

> plants from him every year. And when he passed, it never went beyond that… people saw more and more that it's important to stand up and feed ourselves, be sustainable. Let's not be so dependent. (2020)

As Casamir's example alludes, the exchange of knowledge between generations builds resilience in food systems and in culture. Without the transfer of knowledge, activities which support individual food sovereignty become lost skills. Food sovereignty aims to minimize the injustice embedded within the food system. In order to address injustices, recognizing the disruption that colonization has caused on Indigenous food security is integral.

The modern luxuries of colonial Canada have also influenced the exchange of knowledge in settler communities. By the mid 1900s, Canadians were experiencing new convenient options like Drive-Thru restaurants and frozen TV dinners that cut meal preparation time substantially. Simultaneously, for the first time in North American history, women were pursuing education, careers, and other opportunities outside of the household (Karl, 2009). Carole Hebden, former president of the KFPC and retired post-secondary educator, recalls her early household experiences:

> …in my early life, my mother and her peers made food from scratch. They canned and they made their own pickles. And they did because their mothers did, and their grandmothers did... It was interesting. Not far from the land but they were the first generation not to be farmers. And I was also born in the 50s, the generation that got macaroni and cheese and Cheez Whiz and packaged, processed food. It was laced with sugar and everything else. And then there were parents who needed to be working. Or in my case, it was a mom who didn't need to bring in an income but had a degree. She was a graduate and wanted to be making a contribution outside the house as well as running the house. So, the food that was easy was a draw. And she didn't like to cook anyway. (2020)

Hebden's remarks provide an example of how food is influenced by women. The patriarchal values that are embedded within food systems worldwide have historically undermined the role of women in food systems (Kawarazuka et. al., 2019). The shift from women staying at home to take care of their families, to many choosing to pursue post-secondary education or bring in a second family income has drastically impacted the quality of food that families can access and consume (Karl, 2009). Zuts echoes similar

comments to Hebden's regarding the correlation between women in the household and the industrialized food system:

> Post-World War Two, everything is so industrialized. Mom's not at home looking after the family anymore. (2020)

Having insights from the 1950s, Sandra Frangiadakis, former Gleaning Abundance Coordinator and Food Action Coordinator at KFPC, shares related memories to the changes in her diet during this transitional time period:

> I was born in 1955, so when I grew up, it was ads for Kraft and recipes that used Kraft products. Convenience. Hamburger Helper. All that stuff was so cool. When I was a kid, TV dinners? Whoa! That was the coolest thing ever. We didn't care what it tasted like. They tasted like Swanson TV dinners. Oh my god. Make me throw up… That was all new and exciting and really awesome and cool… And the advertising directed at kids like breakfast cereal… We thought that was a big treat to get in the summer. We'd get those little square cereal boxes and they showed you how you could actually eat the cereal out of the cereal box when you're camping... I think it brainwashed people. It's convenience. The modern housewife, they'd show her making Rice Krispie Squares, and she'd have flour all over her face. Like, what? (Sandra)

There are several generations that grew up with highly processed and convenient foods in their diet. The fast-paced lifestyles that Canadians live has left significantly less time for food activities. Industrial foods are available in abundance and are less expensive than local, fresh foods by comparison. The industrial food system places extreme pressure on the environment through its production and distribution. Settler colonialism in Secwepemcúĺecw has resulted in negative impacts on local and wild foods, including the environments in which they grow upon, directly impacting human health.

Environmental and Land Ownership Impacts on Local Food Systems

Generations of exploited lands, depleted resources, and lost cultural knowledge has resulted in conditions that make growing food extremely difficult, even for the most experienced land users. The impacts of a changing climate will have direct and indirect effects on global and domestic food systems (Schnitter & Berry, 2019). Secwépemc peoples are the most knowledgeable land users in the region, and

yet for over a century, their voices have been silenced. Unprecedented weather patterns and climate conditions have been accelerated locally and globally due to settler colonization (Upward et. al, 2021). Thickness of lake ice, thawing of permafrost, wildfires, and the depletion of precious natural resources make it particularly difficult to grow and produce food (Schnitter & Berry, 2019). Many land practices of early European settlers were resource extractive and non-regenerative. Some of these practices have carried forward into modern food production and food practices, such as commercial fishing. Climate change is impacting the availability to grow quality food (Campbell et. al, 2016). Food system operations and activities are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, whereas traditional foods can actually act as an enabler of food security and health (Schuster et. al, 2011; Schnitter & Berry, 2019)

Indigenous people support roughly 80 percent of global biodiversity while only making up five percent of the total human population (Raygorodetsky, 2019). For Indigenous people, food sovereignty is about a connection to land, place, history, culture, and tradition (Robidoux & Mason, 2017). Mitch Ward, outreach worker at Shuswap Immigrant Services and local organic farmer, explains why understanding this connection to land and following Indigenous leadership is critical for food security in the community:

> …even if our organic certification is developed through all these academics and thinkers, inherently it's going to be less mature. Its thinking is going to be less complete than the Secwépemc theorists that come from this place. Taking their lead as we develop local food systems... recognizing the value of food and the land to produce food. And that access is important, that community production of food is important. That farming isn't something that sustains people. (2020)

In response to the environmental crisis, a counter-movement known as Land Back has emerged. Land Back calls for an Indigenous reclaiming of traditional land and the co-creation of a more just future between settlers and Indigenous communities (David Suzuki Foundation, 2021.). Several research participants point out the strengths in reconnecting with land and the importance of Indigenous leadership. Harris poses an insightful question regarding land ownership:

> How could we embody a land back ethic? How could we shift away from an individual family owning a small piece of land and encourage more collaborative partnerships? I think that a lot of the barriers to better ecological management in agriculture are connected to land ownership. Because whether it's a small family farm or whether it's a larger corporate farm, there are barriers inherent in the ways that we've decided to structure land ownership. And it's not necessarily just a matter of farmer education in being able to enact transformations to achieve better ecological outcomes on a specific farm. We actually need to rethink the model of land ownership in general. (2020)

Indigenous peoples who have been involved in food sovereignty work have been articulating an understanding of land as a sacred responsibility, and have expressed that land is at the center of what it is to be Indigenous (Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2019; Grey & Patel, 2015; Morrison, 2020). This connection to land impacts climate awareness as Garson points out:

> …we've come to a point in society where we're past the tipping point… I mean, I think there's still time. But it's going to take everyone on board. And scientists have been saying this is a climate catastrophe and the only earth we have for 20 — 30 years. But most of the people that you talk to wouldn't have a clue what you're talking about. They've vaguely heard about this global warming thing. (2020)

Ritcey supports this idea, but also adds his own perspective:

> I feel like climate change has been accelerated through globalization. International trade deals, a focus on producing as much as you can, and then exporting it… and agriculture is linked to globally collapsing biodiversity, which is something that there's a lot of awareness about. And climate change, which is definitely taking away a lot of the resiliency and hastening things. But there's not a lot of awareness about the biodiversity collapse… it used to be that if you drove a vehicle as a kid, you'd have to stop and scrape all these insects off your windshield. And now there's just no insects in the air. (2020)

Unparalleled climate conditions have not encouraged the changed behaviour necessary from the community. Instead, many individuals have simply learned to adapt ecologically and physically, and by using economics and technology as well (Adger et. al, 2009). Sustainable approaches to combating climate change are more urgent than ever and require immediate attention in order to slow the acceleration. Unpredictable and unsafe climate catastrophes often uproot people who are then in need of resources that only urban centres can provide (Adger et al., 2003). As Hebden confirms:

> …with climate change migration there's going to be more and more movement of people on the planet. And we have land, you go down into the Okanagan and they grow a lot. Because it's cultivated. It's all cultivated. Our land isn't being fully realized, it's not important enough. Let's build another apartment building. (2020)

As Hebden alludes, Kamloops is a developing and growing community. According to the 2021 census by Statistics Canada, Kamloops has experienced an overall growth rate of 8.4% over the past 5 years, which does not include the surrounding communities it caters to like Logan Lake and Sun Peaks (see Appendix D, Southern British Columbia and Regional Maps) (Statistics Canada, 2021). In fact, the greater Kamloops area is among the five fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the country (Kamloops This Week, 2022). Pletsch's climate concerns relate to the growing population in the Kamloops area:

> …climate change is definitely high on the list. And we're not growing enough food for our people. We import way too much food in Canada. God forbid the aquifer in California eventually dries out, which it basically has. Right now, we don't grow enough food for our people. We have the ability to, for sure, and the land, but the farmer population is so, so much older and not that many people are getting into farming anymore. Which is a big challenge coming up right now. No young people want to farm... it is a lot of hard work. And you don't make a ton of money doing it because there's no equity in the farming industry. (2020)

Pletsch's observations about the age of farmers in Kamloops is supported by Unger:

> Something that I worry about sometimes for the farmers' market is that a lot of the farmers are getting old and they're starting to age out. And this also goes back to the idea of making food security young and hip again… We need young people who are eager to grow and eager to share that knowledge with anyone and everyone… And the other part of that too is urbanization. All these people who want fast things also want to live in the city with all of the conveniences of the city. And that's where I think community gardens and urban agriculture can also have a lot to offer in terms of regional food security. More community gardeners, more farmers who are growing in an urban environment and bringing that to market. There's a farmer new this fall who calls himself Mighty Greens Urban Griller… he's just got a backyard garden, basically. And he's grown enough to start selling in grocery stores and start selling at the farmers' market, trying to show that low footprints, high intensity agriculture is a possibility. (2020)

Ritcey agrees that farmers are beginning to age out of the industry and points out how this is related to the associated costs:

> There's the cost of land. People say, 'there's young people who want to get into farming'... but really, to buy land, it's totally out of reach. (2020)

The reliance on market foods imported in trucks from areas like Mexico and California are common. Canadians have become so accustomed to the convenience of grocery stores and the industrial food system that they are not aware of the available options locally. Dieter Dudy, owner of Thistle Farms, provides an example from his experiences with the local food system:

> People don't pay attention to the fact that they should be eating better food than they are. They don't pay attention to the fact that the tomato that they're buying out of Mexico in September is ridiculous when you've got so much of it right here…Why are we looking to California and Mexico and all those places to feed us when we're quite capable of doing all that right here? (2020)

With the declining popularity of small-scale farming, feeding communities locally is exceptionally challenging. The rising population of Kamloops is already exceeding its housing capacity and its ability to produce local food. With the time and effort required to successfully farm, the industry will continue to struggle to attract new generations to the commitment of farming (Johr, 2012).

The continued loss of local farmers perpetuates the support of the industrial food system and encourages the use of market grocery stores. Events like the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic have proven that the Industrial food system is unsustainable and cannot withstand community crisis. Supply chains crumbled under the community's food demands and resulted in empty grocery store shelves for months (Erikssen & Stenius, 2020). Re-connecting individuals to their local food system supports local agriculture, and as a result, shifts consumers away from imported goods (Sims, 2009). Casamir comments on the importance of supporting local agriculture as he recalls the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic:

> What we see in 2020, starting late 2019, when we first heard of COVID, to the time it turned into a world pandemic, it's just slapped us in the face. I don't think anything could have woken us up more than this pandemic. It's like, if I can't go buy toilet paper or get my meats off the shelf, I better do it for myself. (2020)

Dudy extends this point on the COVID-19 pandemic:

> It's more a case of what's not being done. Not getting people to understand how important it is to be connected to their food system, and how important it is for them to be supporting that food system so that they have something in the future. You would have thought that that was made abundantly clear this last March when the pandemic first hit and you walked into a grocery store and looked at the produce side and you were hard pressed to find certain things. It was cleaned out. And that would be in a matter of days. So, getting people to understand how important it is to not just establish, but also then support, local agriculture and how important that is. The sad reality is that I've found that regardless of what we're talking about, whether it's climate action, whether it's food systems, whether it's homelessness, any sort of thing like that, only about 10% to 15% of the people really care. The rest of the people, they're too busy just trying to live their lives. (2020)

Dudy's insights draw attention to the importance of the community's support and engagement with local agriculture. He also draws an important conclusion regarding people's commitment to change in Kamloops. These insights are mirrored by Chris Torres, local designer and food security advocate, who also used to manage the Butler Urban Farm, an organic farm and food security initiative on the Northshore of Kamloops:

> I think for a lot of folks that are privileged… I think COVID totally threw a bunch of people for a loop because it was the first time in our life that we had ever gone to a grocery store and they were out of something. (2020)

Pletsch voices her concerns regarding the community's reliance on the industrialized food system:

> And with our food supply chain, more people are going to Superstore and Save On Foods and that's the only produce that they're eating, maybe year-round. And a lot of it is not from Canada, or if it is, it's from industrial food suppliers and have pesticides. Cheap production. I just think that we're not invested, that people aren't invested, in the local food system. (2020)

Addie de Candole, the Food Literacy Advisor for Farm to School, which is a program that brings local and healthy food into BC schools to provide students with hands-on learning opportunities to develop food literacy, comments on her encounters with non-local foods:

> I think the food that we get at the food store and through meal programs are easy, convenient. They come in plastic wrapping, you don't have to worry about food safety, you can just order it on the form. And it looks cheap, because it's subsidized heavily. You pay for what you want. But real food isn't like that. I worked for the farmers' market for a year and working with certified organic growers, you don't bring that ugly zucchini to market, because you know that nobody's going to buy it, even though it's fine. It's just

> kind of lumpy on one end because it rained that day. So, there's a lot of food that's going to waste (2020)

Food quality is declining and people are looking less to the land to secure their livelihoods and more to market foods to meet their needs (Spring, et al., 2018). Ritcey points out the difficulty of resisting conventional food systems and supporting the local food system in Kamloops:

> I guess, to me, the challenge is that we don't have a large local food system, really. When we think about it, there isn't a local food system… food grown locally is not being eaten by people in Kamloops. There isn't enough food grown locally… The local food system is kind of a niche, right? …if the conventional food system went down, people would be in real trouble. If the local food system went down, sadly, it's not at the point where it's needed. And that's heartbreaking. It needs to grow. And those networks need to grow and it needs to become seen as 'we depend on this'. (2020)

Khlon mirrors this desire for a stronger connection to the local food system and draws from her experiences living in France:

> French people are so connected with their food system, where their food comes from, and the traditions of how it's made. And respecting the environmental factors that go into the food systems is just so key to French culture. So, when I came back, I thought, 'that connection's missing here'. And now I don't think it's missing, I think it's oppressed Indigenous culture. (2020)

Folklard also comments on the benefits of connecting to local food systems:

> If you go to France and you want the best steak, it comes from a four-year-old bull. Whereas here, we waste all of our bull meat into hamburger and dog food. Our production-based system has taken the quality out of it. So, anything I do in agriculture, and I guess in life, is always about how to excel in quality. (2020)

Connecting to the local food system fosters a relationship with the land and a longing to protect it (Lamine, 2015). With worsening climate conditions, working with the land has become increasingly challenging. When the land was properly managed through the nomadic lifestyle of the Secwépemc People, the region was prosperous. For many, it is a privilege to engage in environmental issues or contribute to the local food system when essential needs are not being met. Colonization of the land and its people along with the colonial values of early settlers are responsible for the present-day neoliberal

food system that is dominant in the Kamloops community, as well as in the larger Canadian food system as a whole.

Conclusion

There is an increasing demand for solutions to community food insecurity. By providing a historical review of colonialism and agriculture, this chapter contextualizes the early challenges associated with food security in Kamloops. The systematic oppression of Indigenous people and their culture through colonial policies has resulted in the disruption of TEK which is a valuable component of Indigenous food sovereignty. The outcomes from disrupting Indigenous knowledge from one generation to another is apparent in the loss of food literacy and skills, food security, and food sovereignty that both Indigenous people and settler Canadians are now experiencing. Colonialism is ingrained in the foundation of the dominant Canadian food system and perpetuates social issues. Colonial values have also put disconcerting pressure on the physical environment (Morrison, 2020). Resource extraction and mass production have led to the collapse of fragile ecosystems that are needed to grow food. Globalization and import foods contribute substantially to climate change which impacts the ability to successfully grow foods locally.

Kamloops is not growing enough local food to sustain its community. This research provides insight on the connections between settler colonialism on Indigenous people and food insecurity by drawing from the perspectives of knowledgeable community members and land-users. The findings of this research can be used to contextualize how food security issues have unfolded in Kamloops. This chapter was able to provide insight into the past and current community issues associated with achieving food security. By gaining an in-depth understanding of the environmental impacts on Kamloops food systems, a gap in community research can be identified. Compounding challenges are placing stress on the local food system in Kamloops which is already extremely vulnerable to collapse.

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CHAPTER 3: IDENTIFYING DISCRIMINATION AND INEQUALITIES IN THE KAMLOOPS REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM

Privatization of public assets have reinforced barriers to securing human necessities. Through the deregulation of health care, labour rights, and environmental laws, access to essential resources like food in North America have become a privilege for those who can afford them (Nestle, 2017; Venugopal, 2015). In the Canadian economy, money and capital are required to acquire goods. Neoliberalism and economic liberalism both refer to the belief that governments should abstain from intervening in the economy. Instead, competition and individual free markets are favoured (Thorsen & Lie, 2006). Neoliberalism has been described as the dominant ideology shaping the world today (Venugopal, 2014). There are many varying definitions of neoliberalism in academia, but its foundations stem from Adam Smith's liberalism, which focuses on self-regulation in free markets (Thorsen & Lie, 2006). For the purpose of this research, neoliberalism will be defined as a set of political beliefs where individuals are considered solely responsible for the consequences of their choices and decisions and deems inequality and social injustice as morally acceptable (Thorsen & Lie, 2006; Nozick 1974; Hayek 1976). As a result, solutions to food needs are rooted in personal responsibility and hard work as the solution to hunger (Friesen, 2017). The resources required to sustain human life should be accessible to all people, yet there are certain demographics that remain overwhelmingly underprivileged.

In Kamloops, low-income and BIPOC community members struggle the most to achieve food security. Through processes of oppression, colonization, and colonialism these demographics have been historically under-resourced. Neoliberalism and racism work to reinforce social inequalities in the Kamloops food system. By exploring how race, social class, and patriarchy impact food security in Kamloops, this chapter provides a deeper understanding

of local perspectives regarding the community's social inequalities. Through the use of PO, CBPR reflections, and semi-structured interviews, the topics explored include, systemic racism, white supremacy, capitalism, and the use of migrant labour in the Okanagan Valley (see Appendix D, Southern British Columbia and Regional Maps). This chapter argues that minimizing social inequalities is a key to achieving community food security. The following key questions are addressed in this chapter: 1) What are the social inequalities present in the local food system? 2) How do these social inequalities impact community members? 3) What are the constraints to developing adaptive capacities at the community level?

Neoliberalism and Food Security in Kamloops

An individual's value in neoliberal economies can be measured by their class and associated factors like income, occupational prestige, and educational attainment (Sanders & Mahalingam, 2012). The relationship between the amount of money an individual possesses and the ability to access food exemplifies how neoliberalism structurally impacts the Canadian food system. Most of the wealth in Canada is accumulated by a small percent of citizens while the working class and working poor continue to grow in size (Easton et. al., 2022; Stapleton et. al, 2019). Klohn summarizes how the value of money is a neoliberal construct set in place to reinforce class disparities:

> …this sort of neoliberal agenda is really continuing where the richer people are getting richer, and the poor people are getting poorer. (2020)

In Canada, there is a substantial gap in wealth distribution. The top 20% of the nation's wealthiest households hold more than two-thirds of all net worth in Canada, while the bottom 40% only hold 2.8% (Statistics Canada, 2022). Tavers provides her insights regarding the class divide in Canada:

> Poor is just another fucking colonization word… I don't feel poor… I've always felt rich, but never with money. Rich is another colonization word. (2020)

Rich and poor are western and subjective concepts as Tavers points out. Community food security should not promote an ideology in which low-income people who experience difficulty meeting their food needs are viewed as less-than (Alkon & Mares, 2012).

Food insecurity is the product of poverty rather than food scarcity (Gonzalez, 2014). Food scarcity is deliberately created in order to increase market prices to generate higher profits (Holt-Giménez, 2019). Poverty is complex and can be measured in a number of ways. Generally, poverty refers to *income-poverty*, or the lack of money to cover basic needs (Chambers, 2006). Hilke and Frangiadikis concisely provide their insights on the connection between poverty and food insecurity:

> …the goal of trying to get food security from the *in*security is definitely related to poverty... (Hilke, 2020)

> …there are all these nice little community gardens, community kitchens… all these things are not addressing the food insecurity issue. The issue is poverty. (Frangiadakis, 2020)

Solutions to food insecurity begin with reducing poverty. This objective is challenging and will undoubtedly require approaches that are not rooted in neoliberal conceptions of food security (Friessen, 2017). As a result, food security assistance will likely remain essential until the access to food is no longer based on the ability to pay for it (Alkon & Mares, 2012). Klohn adds her thoughts on the issue of poverty in Kamloops:

> I also think that there's a stigma associated with poverty. People are stigmatized just because they're poor. When people live around parks, they're like, 'oh, those homeless people that are using drugs in our parks are terrible'. And then there's before COVID, when the bars were open and there were people using drugs and having sex with each other. Who are fighting, who are acting violently in the downtown alleys after the bars close… But they're not poor. The poor people who are doing that are completely villainized. But if you're doing all those same things and you have money, then it's like,

> ‘oh, well, kids will be kids’ or whatever. And these people are potentially equally as addicted to equally hard drugs. (2020)

Homelessness is a product of poverty and at a macro-level, structural conditions like welfare regimes, housing, and labour markets are critical components (Easton et. al, 2022; Johnsen & Watts, 2014). Stigma around homelessness is further reinforced through classism, which is defined as prejudice and discrimination based on social class (Kite & Whitley, 2016). Present barriers to access food in the community are the direct result of colonialism. Money should not be the determinant of an individual's worthiness to eat, yet neoliberal economic systems facilitate gross inequities. Cost and affordability both have a major influence on consumer buying habits (Stewart et. al., 2021). Another influential factor of consumer decision making is the time needed to shop for food (Kensei & Todd, 2003). Local and organic foods are typically more expensive in comparison to conventional food options in grocery stores (Aschemann-Witzel & Zielke, 2017; Hamm et al., 2007). Unfortunately, many of these same options are highly processed and lack proper nutritional value (Gopalakrishnan, 2019). Dudy provides an example of how price influences consumer food choices in the community:

> A lot of people don't access healthy food because healthy food by and large is more expensive than junk. All you have to do is go to a grocery store and take a look in the shopping carts. The people that have fresh produce are likely paying more for what they have there than the individuals that have got the Twinkie bars and all the processed food sitting in their shopping cart. (2020)

Competitive pricing greatly persuades consumers buying habits (Ali & Anwar, 2021; Pitt et. al., 2017). Particularly for those with limited resources as Frangiadakis highlights:

> It's no different in any other city, it's mostly financially. Some people don't know any better and some people have the money, but still go get whatever, cheap, no name stuff because it's on sale. But most people shop that way because they need to. That's how they're going to fill their cupboards or their fridge. (2020)

Mass produced agricultural foods have become a foundational component of the corporate food regime (Alkon & Mares, 2012). The corporate food regime refers to the relationship held between the largest corporations in the global food system (Bowness et. al., 2020). Sasaskamoose provides an example of the corporate power in the Kamloops food system:

> Large corporations can afford to sell things at a cheaper price. They can afford to bring in labourers who will work at a cheaper price and they build profit through that. Whereas any small business owner or farmer is going to have their own expenses, like their own time. They need to make it worth their while, right? And that might turn people off because, 'well, I don't make a lot of money either. And you want me to pay you $5 for a bag of apples when I could get it for $3 at a big box store.' (2020)

The ability corporations have to price products below the margin gives them an advantage over local food suppliers. McLean offers a solution toward addressing this unfavorable power dynamic:

> …the number one thing we need to tackle is corporate control. And that's also the number one challenge… we need to switch our mindset away from thinking 'that's the way that it needs to be.' (2020)

Continued engagement through food sovereignty practices has the potential to strengthen community food security and food justice (Alkon & Mares, 2012). A focus on food sovereignty can also help in improving the livelihoods of local farmers who are in direct competition with corporations. Casimir provides his perspective regarding large scale corporations as a local farmer:

> The big corporations with what they can do with chemicals in their process… they skip health for volume and there's no way anybody could compete. If I was to sell, say, a pound of my pork for what I valued it for, for what I put into it, nobody would be able to afford it. It's like broiler chickens. Again, when I do my chickens, they are more expensive than the grocery store. So, my clientele, most of them have darn good jobs, they can afford it. (2020)

Resisting corporatization is an increasing challenge. Neoliberalism and capitalism force individuals to choose the most accessible options for survival (Alkon & Mares, 2012).

The dominant food system currently operates in a way that suggests food is more of a privilege than a necessity. Frangiadakis explains this relationship further:

> I mean, most of us, myself, and most of the people I know, we can go and buy local. We can go to the farmers' market. But I mean, most people either can't afford it or don't have the resources. I don't have to go and buy big, giant no name bologna from Independent to feed my kids, right? The cheap food is not good for you. If you want to eat good quality local food, you have to pay for it. And I mean, I don't blame the farmers, I don't mind paying $10 for a giant head of cabbage. I could go to the store and get one cheaper. But it's not organic. I don't know the person who grew it. But not everyone else has that privilege. (2020)

World hunger will not be solved until social and economic equality are achieved (Gonzalez, 2014). Hilke mirrors his concern surrounding the rising costs of living in the city of Kamloops:

> …in the short time I've lived here, I could rent a one-bedroom apartment when I got here in 2012 for $650 a month. That's gone up 50% since I've lived here. The value of my house has gone up almost 50% since I've lived here. So now when I try to find somebody housing… I go to Kijiji, and I look for studios and there are three that come up. Only three. Well, I should say only three under $1,000. There's plenty above $1000. (2020)

Housing and food security are intersectional issues (Easton et. al, 2022). Housing instability has been defined as a, "continuum of experiences that include frequently relocating, being unable to consistently pay rent or mortgage, living in an overcrowded household, and/or staying in a car or abandoned building due to economic hardship" (Lee et. al., 2021). Without a place to live, it is incredibly difficult to store, cook, and prepare food. In order to secure food and shelter, an income of some sort is required:

> The links between nutrition and income inequality, the economic system, and workers' rights… it compounds. If you give people housing and they have a good wage, they're able to take care of themselves and their families… (Ritcey, 2020)

Lamontagne further confirms the intersection between income, housing, and food security with her comments below:

> Someone who has a decent wage and decent home will not even have a language about food insecurity. Won't even cross their mind. (2020)

In 2019, the Preventing and Reducing Homelessness Integrated Data Project found 23,000 people in BC experienced homelessness (Government of British Columbia, 2021). It is important to note that food insecurity is not a homogenous experience among homeless people (Lee et. al., 2021). In fact, not all populations impacted by poverty or homelessness are necessarily food insecure (Cook & Frank, 2008). Wright explains the connection between housing and food security that he has witnessed working in the Kamloops community:

> I've talked to a number of people who'd be in situations where maybe they don't have their basic needs being met. The basic need that's not being met is not always food. I find that the conversations that I've had with people are strictly dependent on what time of year it is… I talked to one guy who was like, 'I have no trouble getting food. I can get food whenever I want. I can go here'. And this is pre COVID, but still. He had a multitude of opportunities during the week to go and get food… But he said, 'I have nowhere to live. I have no means to cook my own food', things like that… So sometimes people are food insecure strictly because they don't have a facility. If I don't have a kitchen, how am I supposed to cook my own food? (2020)

Dawn Christie, the manager of the Mount Paul Canadian Food Centre in Kamloops, agrees with Wright regarding the scope of food security issues in Kamloops:

> I think people are realizing that food security isn't just necessarily about food. I always say that you can be food insecure and still have a house and still look like you have what you need to go through life (2020)

Securing adequate housing is only one of many significant components of food security. Overall, access to fresh, nutritious, and culturally relevant foods should be an accessible human right, not a privilege dictated by an individual's income. Achieving food security in Kamloops requires an acknowledgement of the power dynamics and the systemic ways that keep certain people under-resourced.

In 2017, BC was declared one of the most expensive provinces to live in, while simultaneously offering one of the lowest minimum wages (Government of British Columbia

News, 2022). Individual wages should reflect the costs of living. According to Ritcey, people in Kamloops need to make a wage that can support a basic lifestyle:

> …wages need to go up. I saw a job posting that was $14.50 an hour… and it was at the Wildlife Park. They had a degree listed as a qualification. 'Unskilled' work should start at $20. Anything below that, to me, is exploitation. (2020)

Klohn agrees with Ritcey's comments on the need for a liveable minimum wage, specifically regarding those who work to uphold the local food system:

> People need to be able to make more than minimum wage in order to farm or food process… (2020)

Unfortunately, there are many challenges associated with increasing the minimum wage. Higher minimum wages place increased pressure on the margins of small businesses (Chava et. al., 2023). Frangiadakis provides an example of this from her experiences as a small business owner:

> If you do the raising the minimum wage thing then it hurts small businesses. We used to own a restaurant and one of the things I hated about owning a restaurant was if we paid our workers what they deserved, there would be no profit at the end of the day. These people are working their asses off for you for slightly above minimum wage. And they really deserve more… I think minimum wage should be higher. But at the same time, I feel bad for small businesses. (2020)

Agricultural businesses are incredibly labour intensive and require significant capital. Conventional agriculture practices evade high costs associated with labour by exploiting temporary and foreign workers (Gerbeau & Avallone, 2016). The demand for work opportunities is so great that there is no employer incentive to treat workers properly. As a result, workers are usually paid under the minimum wage, and experience poor working and living conditions. Ward reiterates below

> Capitalism finds these places where it can make the most money off of people and it's found the temporary foreign worker program… these farms are building massive infrastructure 100% based on these workers never unionizing and continuing to pay the minimum wage. They have no mobility in their position. (2020)

The industrialized food system is controlled by corporations that have set very low standards for the treatment of food workers (Lo & Jacobson, 2011). Properly compensating workers means calculating the cost of labour into the cost of food. De Candole explains how workers' wages should be calculated into the cost of food:

> …you're paying for that real price of food. When you pay $1.50 for pumpkins, that's what it needs to cost. Because you had to pay for the farm workers to get paid a decent wage to pick it (2020)

Unfortunately, the reality is that if all food channels priced their products to reflect workers' wages, food costs would rise, becoming even more inaccessible to households that experience barriers to food security. Solutions to food insecurity reside in approaches that resist the capital food system. Questioning neoliberalism can be extremely difficult because of its embedded and omnipresent values within western society. Torres comments on why envisioning this kind of future is complicated:

> We fundamentally can't even imagine a world where money doesn't determine your ability to live. (2020)

Communities need to unite and resist food capitalism by taking new approaches to food security. Barter and trade strategies, public produce models, and sharing economies have had beneficial impacts on community food security (Taskinsoy, 2020; Davies et. al., 2017; Nordahl, 2014). Torres continues his thoughts with expressed interest for the revival of alternative economies:

> I think it's time to revisit these relationships and say… 'hey, these are some of the resources that we have, what are some of the resources you have? What are some projects we can do together? How can we get things moving?' I think that's one of the first things that needs to happen. (2020)

Sasakamoose recalls her grandmother partaking in a similar type of sharing economy:

> I remember sage picking with my grandma and canning. But she doesn't really go out to pick Saskatoons or anything. She's always been more of an, 'I'll bargain you for it. You give me berries, and I'll can it and then give you that aspect…' I've noticed a lot of talk

> about people expressing interest in going back to that kind of barter system, especially as we discuss food sovereignty more and more (2020)

Garson agrees with the need for a barter and trade system revival:

> I really think we need to start thinking on a grassroots level more about barter and trade. I would love to see more community gardens instead of everybody doing their own plot with peas and cucumbers and tomatoes. Maybe a neighbouring garden says, 'hey, I'm going to grow enough peas and beans in my plot, and you're going to grow enough tomatoes and peppers, and then we can split them'. You can get so much more out of that type of system… It's an economical system that was used for tens of thousands of years… (2020)

Barter systems lost popularity after the invention of money and credit systems (Swietach & Monterisi, 2019). The creation of a system based on the exchange of money for goods has greatly influenced food commodification:

> I mean, what capitalism has done to our food system, it's horrific. For example, at Butler Urban Farm, the fact that most people don't understand when they come and I tell them, 'you can't steal anything here. It's already your food. It's anyone's food! Take it, it's yours!' Most people genuinely can't understand that. And that's so sad to me. To me, that's the source of it all. When we look at Indigenous food systems and Indigenous practices, it was always about communal care, about compassionate, communal living. And food was thought of as a communal resource that everyone pitched in to, everyone committed in some way to making a group secure in what they needed. And you didn't need money, you could trade things. But at the end of the day, you would be taken care of because you were a part of the community. I think the extent to which colonialism and neocolonialism, which is closely related to capitalism, have destroyed our sense of community, our innate evolutionary tendency to create community has been totally sideswiped by capitalism. And I think the root of that is colonialism… As long as you have food costing money, there's going to be racism in food, that's just the way it is. (Torres, 2020)

The insights above demonstrate the difficulty in separating interconnected socio-economic and political issues in the food system. Income, wage, cost of living, and cost of labour are all interwoven factors which contribute to food insecurity. Klohn solidifies the intersectional nature of these factors with her comment:

> Generally, when people ask me, 'why do you think that these problems surrounding food security exist?' I reply, 'well, it's because of capitalism and colonialism and patriarchy.' (2020)

As Klohn highlights, patriarchy is another social inequality that intersects with food insecurity. Patriarchy is, “a form of political organization that distributes power unequally between men and women to the detriment of women” (Facio, 2013). Food insecurity is a multifaceted and complex issue. The conventional and mainstream global food system has been accused of being a broken system; however, referring to it as broken implies that the food system once operated equitably (Holt-Giménez, 2019). McLean supports both Torres and Klohn’s perspectives on the presence of intersectional food security issues in Kamloops with her insights:

> It feels like the inequalities are baked into the way colonialism works, the way patriarchy works, and the way capitalism works. And all of those things are very interwoven. I've heard some debates over which one came first but at this point, it doesn't really matter which one came first. They're all there and they're all perpetuating each other. (2020)

Neoliberalism has crippled community capacity to respond to food insecurity by degrading the public sphere (Holt-Giménez, 2019). All levels of the Canadian government have a responsibility to prioritize and meet the basic needs of its citizens, and yet 5.8 million people in the country suffer from the impacts of food insecurity (Nickel, 2022). Meanwhile, the Canadian government finds upwards of $15 billion dollars a year to fund branches such as policing (Conor et. al., 2020). The industrial food system is a colonial structure that reinforces capitalism through neoliberal principles. This creates barriers to accessing local and cultural foods and disproportionately impacts BIPOC worldwide. Through food justice and food sovereignty, embedded power structures can be challenged (McMichael, 2005). In order to address the complexities of neoliberalism in Kamloops, in-depth understanding of the interconnected social, political, and economic issues in the community is required.

Racism in Local Food Systems

Community food security cannot be properly analyzed without discussing race. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a widely recognized academic concept that seeks to address the role of race in social disparities between dominant and marginalized racial groups (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Hiraldo, 2010). Having first gained popularity in the 1970s, CRT's original objective was to draw attention to the absence of race within the law (Iverson, 2007). Over the last decade specifically, the use and influence of CRT have extended to other disciplines to expose racism within legal systems and policies (Delgado & Stefancic, 2023). CRT seeks to address racial inequalities within policies by challenging the assumption that Euro-Canadian racial experiences are, and should serve, as the normative standard for all (Iverson, 2007; Parker, 2003; Villalpando, 2003). CRT ultimately works to draw attention to inequalities and minimize privileges that work to reinforce current societal patterns of exclusion.

Corporate food systems regularly lack appropriate equity, diversity, and inclusion. In fact, they often benefit from exploiting cultural foods. Food gentrification is problematic as it increases the cost of foods that may have been previously affordable (Sbicca, 2018). For example, bone broths have historically served as a fundamental food to a number of cultures worldwide; however, it was not until it was "discovered" by European culture that it gained widespread popularity and its price increased (Lee, 2020). At the same time, stigma can also exist around some cultural foods, including the people that make and eat them (Earnshaw & Karpyn, 2020). Racial discrimination is an omnipresent threat that is structural, systemic, and embedded in Canadian policy (Bailey et. al, 2017; Nazroo, 2003; Schell et. al, 2020).

Contextualizing Racism in the Kamloops Community

Discrimination has been defined by the Canadian Human Rights Commission (2021) as, "an action or a decision that treats a person or a group badly for reasons such as their race, age or disability". People may also be discriminated against if they experience poverty, unemployment, or have been incarcerated (Morales et. al, 2021; Odoms-Young, 2018). McLean provides an example of the discrimination she has witnessed in the community:

> …it feels like there are people… who are bearing the brunt of the dysfunctions of the society, and that are being blamed… I would say, certainly, Indigenous communities, and certainly those who are homeless, or who are working poor. And there's definitely a racial component to that. (2020)

The social dysfunction McLean alludes to is the result of early colonialism in the region. Despite Canada's reputation for being a multicultural and diverse country, racism still exists and is particularly harmful to Indigenous Canadians (Fonseca, 2020). In fact, it is more common for Indigenous populations to face discrimination than any non-Indigenous and non-visible minority in the country (Cotter, 2019). Certain forms of racism are more blatant than others. Folklard provides an example of racial ignorance that he has witnessed in the regional agricultural community:

> I literally sit through some meetings, and I have to correct people and say, 'we can't call them Indians' in some of my livestock groups. And then I sit through KFPC meetings and I have to remind them about some of the ignorance that still exists that I unfortunately represent as a Cattleman (2020)

Indigenous communities continue to navigate the lasting impacts of settler genocide and disproportionately represent those who suffer from mental health issues, addictions, and are reliant on social welfare programs (De Leeuw et. al., 2010; Paradies, 2016; Piotr et. al., 2017). In urban communities like Kamloops, Indigenous peoples also face overwhelming levels of food insecurity (Skinner et. 1l, 2016). Dudy reiterates the presence of this inequality:

> …there's certain demographics within our society that are more disadvantaged than others. We look at our Indigenous community and they may not necessarily have the resources to be able to go out and buy food in the same way that white elite people do (2020)

Dudy's observations draw attention to the class separation between BIPOC and Euro-Canadians in Kamloops. As Fanon (1968) asserted, this class disparity is reinforced by certain demographics that fear to lose their status, power, or privilege from decolonization, and are therefore resistant to it. Ensuring the existence of a marginalized group of people directly secures the continuation of a class and rank system in society. Deborah Ogundimu, a Nigerian woman and former member of the KFPC leadership team provides further insights on the relationship between race and class:

> …people of colour are associated with the lower class when compared to people who are white. And immigrants leave their country to come to something better… so people who come here are not always wealthy, they are people you would consider in the lower-middle class to the low class. (2020)

People of colour are associated with a lower class because of structural racism (Odoms-Young, 2018; Williams et. al, 2019). Structural racism refers to, "the totality of ways, in which societies foster racial discrimination, via mutually reinforcing inequitable systems (e.g. housing, employment, earnings, benefits, credit, media, health care, criminal justice, etc.)" (Bailey et. al., 2017). Simply put, racism is the discrimination a person or group of people experience because of their physical and biological characteristics (Rattansi, 2020).

Racism is a systemic issue, meaning there are both institutionalized and "colour-blind" coercive mechanisms set in place to ensure that white power and privilege are reinforced structurally and experienced in everyday life (Bailey et. al., 2017). Systemic racism is extremely harmful and results in minimal diversity within organizations. Ogundimu explains further:

> I think that a big part of underrepresentation would be systemic racism… not just from the perspective of trying to employ a Black person. But also, through Black people

> thinking that they can actually get into a particular organization. Because what's happening right now is they just feel like, 'well, it looks like the organization is majority white…' I would say that is definitely one of the issues. Lack of representation. It drives a lot of Black and African people away. (2020)

Systemic racism segregates white and BIPOC from one another. Minority individuals will often avoid spaces that lack diversity or cultural representation (Anderson, 2015). Lamontagne has observed cultural deficits in areas of the local food community:

> It just shows… We have so many First Nations in our community. So many people of colour. And I've never seen any people of colour or First Nations in any community garden. Why is that? Why was it all white people in there? (2020)

Torres continues to voice the need for increased cultural representation and diversity in the Kamloops food system:

> KFPC I would include in this… I know people that I've talked with agree, but I don't know that everyone knows this… I think that organizations like KFPC really need to work to diversify their leadership. I would hope that most people at KFPC would acknowledge that it's mostly led by highly educated white people… I think KFPC needs some new voices. (2020)

After the civil rights movement, many predominantly Eurocentric spaces across North America shifted to include more diverse people (Anderson, 2015). Unfortunately, spaces that lack inclusivity continue to exist (McClintock, 2018). The comfort level of BIPOC individuals is measured by the amount of other non-European people within these spaces (Anderson, 2015). Spaces that lack diversity can form barriers for engagement for BIPOC:

> …even with KFPC we identified a gap in the network that the majority of the network is white. And there's cultural centres in Kamloops… like the Ukrainian, Japanese, and the Italian centres. And the mosque. There is a lot happening. And it feels like those groups might be more in their silos or doing their own thing. (Pletsch, 2020)

Exclusively European spaces exist because of white supremacy. White supremacy refers to the idea that white people, and their thoughts, beliefs, and actions, are superior to those of people of colour's (Conrad & Zuckerman, 2020).

Dismantling Racism in the Local Food System

Racist ideas of BIPOC are perpetuated by those who benefited from slavery, segregation, and mass incarceration throughout the North American continent (Kendi, 2016). Consequently, racism is not limited to a single person or act, but rather deeply embedded in the fabric of Canadian society (DiAngelo, 2018). Klohn reiterates this below:

> I think white supremacy is at the root of all of this. It's been the thread all the way through food insecurity issues. We don't think of protecting our salmon bearing rivers from oil spills as food security because we don't think of rivers as the source of a white food system… we need formal education on what white supremacy is and how it manifests in the food system. (2020)

As Klohn highlights, systems of racial oppression have critical effects on the environment. Dismantling the underlying forces of white supremacy is required to actualize true systemic change. Harris's personal experiences continue to draw attention to the complexity of unlearning white supremacy:

> …when you are bravely stepping out to try to dismantle white supremacy in your own life, and in your community, you will make mistakes. You will unintentionally cause harm. I'd really like to have perfectly dismantled white supremacy in my life, at the moment that I discovered it was a problem. But it's not like that. And it's more important to see it as a lifelong practice that you engage in… 'transform yourself to transform the world.' (Grace Lee Boggs) (Harris,2020)

Dismantling white supremacy is a continuous practice requiring openness and self-awareness. A developed understanding of white supremacy and how it creates the conditions for white privilege is an integral component of allyship. Garson shares her experiences as a Euro-Canadian settler working to strengthen the local food system in Kamloops:

> How do we support initiatives without coming off as white settlers? ...and these are things that I've never thought about, because as an educator, an urban farmer, and a food security activist, I've always just thought, everyone needs to learn the basics and go from there. I don't care if you're an immigrant from Slovenia or a drug addicted kid that just jumped off the train from Winnipeg. You still need the skills. The basic skills in soil, in water, in the environment. It's mimicking nature… I've never thought about it as me projecting settlers' mentalities. I just want to share what I know with people that want to

> learn and give them the tools and the skills to be empowered… And how do I help bridge that gap without… do I wait around to be asked? (2020)

Even the most well-intended support can cause harm unintentionally. A common misguided effort by Euro-Canadians can be seen in the white saviour complex as Torres explains:

> I think what you really have to avoid… and what I think has been a mistake of so many well-intentioned white people in the past is the white saviour complex (2020)

The White Saviour Industrial Complex (WSIC) that Torres mentions was officially termed by Teju Cole (2012) and refers to the "confluence of practices, processes, and institutions that reify historical inequities to ultimately validate white privilege". In this complex, white individuals feel that their role is to "save" less fortunate, racial minorities from their struggles (Aronson, 2017; Bandyopadhyay, 2019). Ritcey explains how the WSIC can be harmful in community development work:

> I feel like we should try as much as possible to develop and model the change that we want. When we talk about wanting to not have levels of racial division or income barriers, then KFPC should be actively trying to become more diverse. Reaching out to people, having them at the table to be part of things. Because if we're not doing that, and that's something that's within our control, then it's hard to advocate. People need to be able to advocate for themselves without KFPC having this… the term white saviour has been used. It's wonderful that we have the lived experience committee and that involvement, because otherwise it would really be a group of older, wealthier people that are like, 'how do we help the poor and disenfranchised.' (2020)

As Ritcey articulates above, lived experiences, representation, consultation, and collaboration are all integral elements of rejecting and resisting the white saviour narrative.

Western food security and agriculture caters to a white and privileged group of consumers (Alkon & McCullen, 2010; McIntosh, 2018). Unger shares his experiences as the Kamloops Farmers' Market manager:

> The two biggest inequalities that I see are class and race. The financial disparity, and then the whiteness of the farmers' market. It's expensive, and it's white… it's a very western way of looking at and doing agriculture in some ways. And there's definitely lots of

> gardeners who are not white, but still… The vast majority are white. So, there's still a whiteness to gardening, I think. (2020)

Lamontagne also comments on the lack of diversity at the farmers' market:

> I haven't seen many changes over the years at the farmers' market…We have our First Nation lady selling the bannock and sometimes we have a First Nation guy playing the guitar and singing. (2020)

Mitch expands on the harm that a lack of representation in community food security can have on BIPOC communities:

> I think the farmers' markets are just as to blame as anyone else and… we haven't considered race or labour in our growth of this movement. That's what needs to change… I advocate for the politicization of farmers' markets. These spaces need to recognize that they've been catering to a really privileged class. And that that needs to change if we want to be food secure… I think that is a farmers' market fault, but it's also a structural fault. Accessibility, entrenched poverty, and structural marginalization all make it less possible for people on the margins of society to access those spaces. (2020)

Ward articulately breaks down why it is critical to consider race as a barrier to achieving community food security. Garson expands on the marginalization these minorities experience:

> …there's a huge gap because of the colonial attitude and what the Canadian government did to our First Peoples. And I think that that translates across to new immigrants, too. They don't have the connection to the land that they once had with their own homeland. (2020)

Racism, unconscious bias, and stereotypes are all factors that impact BIPOC and create barriers to food, housing and job security. Sasakamoose provides an example of the harms racial stereotyping can have on community members:

> If two people are dressed exactly the same, but not well off, have the exact same parents but different colours of skin and hair, they're probably going to hire the white person over the brown person. It's just a fact, really. It's unfortunate. It's going to make it a lot harder for someone who is Indigenous to find work, meaningful work, too. Just because of those stereotypes. (2020)

Sasakamoose's comments draw attention to the possession of meaningful work. Most of the worst paying and most dangerous jobs are occupied by BIPOC (Lo & Jacobson, 2011). The

COVID-19 pandemic helped to expose the challenges that visible minorities were faced with as essential workers (Uluğ et. al., 2022). Klohn explains below:

> …in the food systems here across BC, there have been enormous amounts of COVID cases in meat processing plants. It's all BIPOC workers. And when COVID broke out white people are baking sourdough. And not *all* people of colour, but a lot of people of colour, don't have that option. They're the ones who are doing the jobs that are deemed essential work. They're the ones who are going to these meat processing plants and are getting sick. The only people that I have looked in the eye and know they know people who have died of COVID, are Black. And it's because of those reasons. They're not able to stay home and bake sourdough. (2020)

Meatpacking and processing are some of the most dangerous jobs in western society (Lo & Jacobson, 2011). Workers experience over twice the national average of injuries and ten times the national average of illness (Lo & Jacobson, 2011). In addition to unsafe working conditions, agricultural workers experience targeted racism within their jobs (Hjalmarson et. al., 2015). Ward recalls experiences working with farms throughout the Okanagan:

> I could definitely speak to the fact that these workers report being targeted for their race and the Guatemalan workers' employers will use the N word. (2020)

Racism exists in many forms. Frangiadakis recalls an experience she had with immigrants to Kamloops:

> There's this group of women that I used to have coffee with and most of them were immigrant women. It was people I met when I worked at Kamloops Immigrant Services. One day, at one of these coffee dates, they were talking about Indigenous people. How the natives are always complaining about everything. And they all were of the opinion, these were mostly women older than me in their 60s and 70s, they all said, 'everybody was racist against us, we got discriminated against. And you don't see us whining and crying'. That's their perspective. They say, 'why are the natives crying all the time? We had to go through that.' A couple of us were there rolling our eyes like, 'oh, god.' How do you even explain to these women that it's not the same thing…? But that's their opinion. That they also put up with discrimination but they carried on. (2020)

To move forward it is integral that individuals and organizations hold themselves accountable to actively practice forms of decolonization. Torres reiterates how crucial diversity is in community social development:

> …any of us who are involved in advocacy or in non-profit work, we also need to understand we can't just keep saying, ‘decolonize, blah, blah, blah.’ We also need to look at our organizations and our practices and acknowledge when everyone around is white. (2020)

Continuing to build on community is important but it must be matched with a self-awareness as Harris points out:

> I think you can't just do the inner transformation. You also have to do work that changes people's material realities. This is different than putting out a performative statement about how KFPC would support dismantling white supremacy. It’s actually thinking, ‘how is the work that we do and the advocacy that we do impacting people's lived material realities?’ …if you pair that inner transformational work with dismantling your own sense of white supremacy, and you do work that is also focused on people's material realities, then those two things are… in combination and go hand in hand. (2020)

Fanon (1968) notes that progressive societies learn from past failures and incorporate new ways of thinking to build inclusive communities. In order for communities to engage in meaningful food security, just labour must be calculated into the cost of food.

Temporary Foreign Workers

Agricultural operations in the Okanagan Valley (see Appendix D, Southern British Columbia and Regional Maps) depend on temporary and foreign workers. The region has historically focused on ranching, farming, and growing orchards, and relied predominantly on East-Asian labour to operate (Lo & Jacobson, 2011). More recently, the region has witnessed a popular rise in winery development and agritourism investments (Hessing, 2010). Food tourism is a billion-dollar industry in the Okanagan, and yet the agricultural workers who uphold the industry are largely invisible (Hjalmarson et. al., 2015). The agricultural sector in the Okanagan is also a billion-dollar industry with just tree fruits bringing in revenues of $130 million per year (BC Tree Fruits, n.d.).

Migrant agricultural (MA) farmworkers have an essential role in local food production but are undervalued and undercompensated (Caxaj & Cohen, 2019). Local farms often rely on temporary and foreign labour to function. In fact, 16,890 temporary migrant agricultural positions were approved in BC in 2018 (Caxaj & Cohen, 2019). MA workers most commonly enter the Canadian job market under one of two separate employment stream options: the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP), or the Temporary Foreign Worker Program Agricultural Stream (TFWP Ag Stream) (Caxaj & Cohen, 2019). The SAWP is the oldest temporary worker program in Canada and was originally put in place as a pilot project to address labour demands in Ontario's growing agricultural sector (Cohen & Hjalmarson 2020; Hjalmarson et. al., 2015). SAWP is currently the most popular of the four agricultural streams of the federal TFWP and has become a mainstay of Canada's agricultural economy (Hjalmarson et. al., 2015). Of the 5,000 Temporary MA workers in BC, half are sent to work in the Okanagan Valley (Caxaj & Cohen, 2019). These individuals fill the gap as the driving force addressing labour shortages in the Canadian agricultural system (Hjalmarson et. al., 2015).

Agricultural labour traces back to the enslavement of African people (Lo & Jacobson, 2011). It then shifted to the exploitation of East-Asian labour, and later found a labour pool in Mexican and Latino cultures, which is a trend that continues (Lo & Jacobson, 2011). Local food systems rely heavily on foreign labour to support food productivity, yet many undocumented immigrants farm workers suffer conditions that meet the definition of slavery under federal law (Lo & Jacobson, 2011). The reputation for slave like labour in MA worker working conditions is confirmed in Klohn's comments:

> I think a great example of racism is migrant workers who are basically paid slave wages. (2020)

Food workers are paid poverty wages, are denied health insurance, and do not get paid sick days, all while experiencing high rates of occupational illnesses and injuries (Lo & Jacobson, 2011; McLaughlin & Hennebry, 2012). Supporting local food systems requires a more critical examination of where our food comes from, who grows it, and who processes it. The racism that exists at these farms is not always based on employer to employee relations. Racism exists between various groups that make up this essential labour force:

> …in Kamloops, I can think of one farm where I've heard of racial slurs being used by employers against employees. And potentially another one, but it's hard to contact those workers. And just in general, there's a disregard for their humanity that's not explicitly said to their face.
>
> That anti-Black racism exists. There was an interesting thing that happened where employers would pit Mexican workers against Jamaican workers. And they would say, 'the Jamaicans said you weren't working very hard', or 'the Mexicans said you broke a machine' or something like that. And they'd completely fabricate rumors, but it would split the two groups in a way that they wouldn't even talk to each other. (Ward, 2020)

Euro-Canadians dominate the majority of high-wage jobs in the food sector (Lo & Jacobson, 2011). Out of every four managers in the food system three are white (Liu & Apollon, 2011). At the same time, people of colour are overrepresented in low-wage jobs in the food system (Liu & Apollon, 2011). Ward continues to describe the power and influence farm employers have over temporary workers:

> Another thing that employers do is they get one worker who has permanent residency, or has come back a number of times, and gets that worker to administer the… less clean aspects of worker management. For example, they'd say, 'oh, no, you have to keep working', or, 'you have to work on a Sunday', or, 'you don't get your break today.' And they'll dodge culpability in worker abuse… and you also see that in people snitching. So, if I were to talk to a worker, another worker might go to the employer and say, 'I took a photo of him talking to an activist'. Those racial tensions are used by employers and I think that's a form of racism as well. (2020)

Many MA workers return year after year, and yet these individuals remain permanently marginalized and vulnerable within their communities (Caxaj & Cohen, 2019). This creates further challenges for individuals that already face a number of barriers as Ritcey explains:

> I think farming, the use of migrant labour, and even temporary foreign workers. If you think about who's serving coffee at Tim Hortons, a lot of people are bringing in temporary foreign workers. And then there's a language barrier, barrier to services, barrier to any information about nutritious food, where to get it. In English, there's not necessarily that accessibility and there's not necessarily anyone really looking out for people. If you're not Canadian or you're not from Kamloops, there's not really a person that's geared towards people coming in to Kamloops… it's not seen as a responsibility. (2020)

Of the nearly 40,000 migrant agricultural workers legally employed across Canada in 2012, approximately 30,000 were contracted from Mexico and Caribbean countries through Canada's federal SAWP (Government of Canada, 2019). Ward continues to describe the challenges migrant workers must navigate under these government programs:

> ...there's currently no pathway at all for them to get permanent status. …I'm not a SAWP historian, but I think with the rise of the middle class, there were less people willing to work on these farms. The margins became too slim. The government needed to find workers who would work for minimum wage and be reliable. Quebecois migrant workforces within Canada filled a lot of that gap for some time, but especially in places like Ontario, farms became dependent on this foreign labour that is available at a really cheap cost and is quite vulnerable. (2020)

Temporary foreign workers have minimal, if any, opportunities to build social networks and engage with their communities (Caxaj & Cohen, 2019). The fact that these workers are typically also tenants of their employers only further reinforces worker vulnerabilities (Hjalmarson et. al., 2015). Torres reiterates the harm this power dynamic can cause:

> Food is being harvested by migrant laborers who are underpaid if they're paid at all. The entire agricultural scene in California and the Southwest United States is super horrific. You have situations where Mexican and Latino migrants are basically held hostage. And because they're illegal, they're allowed to be exploited by these huge corporate chains (2020)

Overcrowded housing, poor sanitation, and limited access to refrigeration have all been documented living conditions of MA workers in Canada (Caxaj & Cohen, 2019). Other accounts of the mistreatment of these workers are perhaps even more horrific. There are records of MA workers having their hands chained, being forced to live in box trucks, and being subject to beatings and knife wounds (Lo & Jacobson, 2011).

Foreign workers majorly contribute to sustaining the Canadian food system while enduring horrific abuse. Ward explains why simply abolishing programs that support temporary and foreign workers is not the solution many might think it is:

> …within local food, you don't need to abolish migrant farm workers. It's about including them in the community. I think that often gets lost. And people wonder why we don't just get rid of it. And that really isn't my opinion…
>
> …. the Radical Action with Migrants and Agriculture group exists in the Okanagan because that gap exists around how local food often excludes labor. So SAWP was born out of that gap. And as advocates working on that issue, it's not necessarily about calling out Kamloops for not doing a good enough job incorporating labour, but starting to make links between those movements for migrant justice, for farm labour justice, and for food secure communities. And recognizing that that plays an essential role in keeping farms alive in the region (2020)

Ward explains further what will be needed from Kamloops residents in order to change the treatment of temporary foreign workers in the community:

> …as a local food movement, at a very grassroots level, making programs, and thinking about how labour affects food security in Kamloops. Whether it be sick days… or how regular agricultural workers aren't even entitled to stat holidays. A lot of the benefits that other Canadians have. (2020)

Ward's comments draw attention to the sacrifice MA workers are forced to make. The health of their bodies is traded in exchange for work that only values them as long as those same bodies are healthy and intact (Caxaj & Cohen, 2019). MA workers truly embody this risk. Employers recognize the need for work and take advantage of their employees' situations by exploiting their

safety, refusing them breaks and stretching their shifts to entail 14–16-hour work days (Caxaj & Cohen, 2019) These workers are the very foundation of the Canadian food system, and yet they are food insecure themselves (Weiler et. al., 2017). The power dynamic between employee and employer is unjust, unethical, and calls for new and equitable solutions.

Conclusion

Identifying inequalities that exist within the local food system is beneficial toward community food security and food sovereignty development. This research chapter outlines local inequalities and uses the experiences of local land users and knowledge holders to support its findings. The research suggests that food accessibility for low-income individuals must increase. Money and status should not be the factors used to determine an individual's worthiness to eat. Access to food, a necessity for human existence, should be non-discriminatory and equitable. Solutions to food insecurity can partly be addressed through the use of circular, sharing economies and barter and trade systems (Swietach & Monterisi, 2019; Taskinsoy, 2020). These approaches are resistant to neoliberal policies and favour grassroots techniques to minimize social inequalities. Race is another social determinant that affects food insecurity (Bailey et. al., 2017; Morales et. al., 2021; Nazroo, 2003). BIPOC peoples are more likely to struggle with securing food because of structural and systemic racism. Racism is also apparent in the mistreatment of Migrant Agricultural farm workers (McLaughlin & Hennebry, 2012; Weiler et. al., 2017). Migrant workers provide another regional example of the intersection between class, race, and food insecurity and demonstrate the complexity of this issue, which requires further research.

In order to substantially change how the current food system operates, policy amendment and government support is required. This research chapter offers insight on the current food insecurity inequalities that exist in an urban Canadian community setting. It also amplifies community experiences and perspectives while adding to an important and widening body of literature that investigates how social inequalities intersect with food security. Dismantling systems of oppression and de-commodifying food systems is the key to a more sovereign and just future, one where the basic needs of community members are met and discrimination based on class and race are eradicated. As discussed in the next chapter, the only way in which this future might emerge is through community investment, grassroots activism, policy councils, and government support.

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CHAPTER 4: IT TAKES MORE THAN FOOD TO ADDRESS HUNGER: OPPORTUNITIES TO ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY

Food security is a growing concern for communities worldwide. Over two decades ago, community food security (CFS) was defined as, "a situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice" (Hamm & Bellows, p. 37, 2002). It is integral that communities possess the adaptive capacity to respond to food insecurity threats as they emerge (Anderson & Cook, 1999; Cramer et. al., 2016).

In this chapter, community facilitated, grassroots activism is explored as an opportunity to strengthen local food security. Local food programs, initiatives, and various streams of education are also analyzed for their potential to reinforce CFS. Developed understandings of the forms of food activism that currently exist in Kamloops is a key step to strengthen the local food system. CBPR and PO reflections will continue to be used in conjunction with quotes from participant interviews to explore how community grassroots activism impacts food insecurity in Kamloops. This chapter aims to highlight the robust local food security network and outlines the areas of opportunity as well. The key questions addressed in this chapter are: 1) How does grassroots community activism address food insecurity in Kamloops? 2) What programs and opportunities for local food security engagement exist in the community? 3) What are the existing challenges limiting food security work and how does the community respond to these?

Grassroots Activism in Kamloops

Local grassroots food activism is part of a larger food security movement. The food security movement refers to a grouping of CFS initiatives that prioritize human flourishing through community collaboration, opposed to work-dominated, materialistic lifestyles (Sage et.

al., 2021). Grassroots food security initiatives typically involve, “collective action in civil society intended to transform a community to a sustainable state” (Gernert et. al., p. 3, 2018). These initiatives ultimately help people access the necessary tools to improve the quality of their lives (Gernert et. al., 2018). The rich cultural and agricultural histories of Kamloops have attracted passionate land developers and users since early European settlement in the region. As a result, there is a mosaic of entrepreneurs, farmers, and activists that now comprise the community. As Pletsch and Torres allude to:

> …there's so much cool stuff happening in Kamloops. The historical piece is just fascinating with how long people have been dedicating their life's work to enhancing our food security and getting the city involved in this work as well. (Pletsch, 2020)

> …there is a really interesting and long reaching community here that has actually been established for quite a while… I think that's what's been exciting to me about meeting people in Kamloops, there's not only this willingness, but there's space, there's potential to do this work. There are all these gaps in Kamloops that have yet to be filled. And Kamloops is still quite young. It's still kind of figuring out what it's going to be. It's really exciting. (Torres, 2020)

The geographical setting of local food security initiatives is a considerable factor (Gernert et. al., 2018). Political, institutional, cultural, and social aspects of a physical place are also important elements when developing food security initiatives (Gernert et. al., 2018). From his experiences, Unger explains the benefits that grassroots community activism can provide to communities:

> I was raised to think globally, act locally. Grassroots activism and grassroots organizing is where it's at. I think the local food security system here is extremely robust, as I got to watch this year in action. I thought, ‘oh, wow, there are people here who are really passionate about this, who really know what they're doing.’ And the things that we pulled off this year, just to make sure that people were getting food in times of need and stress… It was grassroots organizing efforts that accomplished all of this. It's here and it's important. (2020)

Torres agrees with the strength in grassroots activism:

> My optimism lies in really small scale, tight knit community activism. Because at the end of the day, I think that's where we as humans really come into our own. Where we really succeed is when we find our community of people and when we form really close

> interpersonal bonds. We know everyone, we feel comfortable, we feel love. That's when you can really start to build your community (2020)

CFS initiatives help in developing the food system's overall resilience while building a sense of community. A food system's resilience refers to the capacity a food system has to provide sufficient, appropriate, and accessible food to members of a community in the face of various unforeseeable disturbances (Tendall et. al., 2015). Communities, and the resources that come with them, can then be used to help improve access to affordable, quality food, especially for lower income and homeless community members who are most vulnerable to food insecurity (Easton et. al., 2022; Winne, 2005).

Through activism in the community, many local food security programs have emerged. These various programs have been established by passionate community champions and leaders who have dedicated their time and energy to cultivating the food system in Kamloops. As Ritcey points out, these individuals may or may not be aware of their leadership status:

> I feel like most people aren't systems thinkers. If you told them, 'what you're doing is part of the food system.' They would be like, 'what do you mean? I'm part of this bigger movement? No, I'm just doing my own little thing here working in Gardengate, or taking care of the university garden, or the little backyard farm I have for selling food at the farmers' market.' (2020)

There is an abundance of ways to engage in the local food system. Tavers echoes Ritcey's observations:

> …who actually considers themselves to be a grassroots person? Like myself, I didn't consider myself one... never even thought of it… what we need to do is find out what a grassroots champion is. Let's make a definition and then put it out there and say, 'is this you? Are you this person?' (2020)

A unified understanding of what a leader in the grassroots movement actually entails would make identifying these individuals much easier. Lamontagne offers insights regarding the characteristics of a grassroot champion:

> I met amazing people who were at the head of the Food Policy Council… And their energy, passion, and generosity… also their ability to see the big picture and guide us with small initiatives… trying to put everything together. I sit at the roundtables with other stakeholders and see how it's all interconnected. I think the people make the difference. It's those leaders that will help us get to where we need to be… community champions… (2020)

The term grassroots champion refers to an individual who is deeply embedded in community development, is approachable, and acts as a leader within their community (Appolis & Alexander, 2013). Establishing a diverse network of food security champions supports communities in creating and implementing best practices, program initiatives, and also contributes to mobilizing continued support (Yung & Neathway, 2020). The data from this research has revealed that there are a number of community champions that work to uphold the food system in Kamloops. The original founder of the KFPC, Laura Kalina, and her admirable dedication to the local food system was mentioned several times by research participants:

> …we had a very powerful leader in Laura Kalina for 22 of the 25 years of KFPC's operations …those backbone people… community champions. They built such a platform for another era to unfold (Hebden, 2020)

> …as soon as you talk to Laura, you get plugged in. Because she's like, 'you go here, here, here, you talk to this person and this person, you show up for the potluck on this night.' (Harris, 2020)

> I was aware of KFPC… because Laura Kalina sits on our advisory board here at Gardengate. But I hadn't actually attended a meeting until my role changed in 2012 and I became the program's manager. (Wright, 2020)

> Laura Kalina has gone after all sorts of funding through both the City of Kamloops and through private funders and was really… bringing all these groups together under one roof (Garson, 2020)

Laura's passion and determination to enhance the local food system has been a fundamental part of the community's food security success.

There are many other notable community champions in Kamloops that contribute to the food system's strength and success as well. The challenge is ensuring that these valuable leaders

continue to engage in this meaningful work. However, at the same time, it is integral to ensure that the responsibilities of community food work do not default to a revolving group of community leaders. Pletsch voices concerns associated with taking on too many projects:

> …people feeling burnt out, or that they don't have the capacity. I think a lot of people are very action-oriented, which is awesome. They want to see outcomes. But until you have that trust and that relationship, how can you partner together on something? …everyone's got their different mandates and their missions, and they're so focused on that. But they do connect and interconnect, and there would be more effective work being done if people were doing it together. (2020)

Garson and Frangiadikis reiterate similar concerns from their leadership experiences in the Kamloops food system:

> …it used to be one job, overseeing community kitchens and community gardens, and it was a burnout position…
> (Garson, 2020)

> The first year, me and Shelaigh Garson did the job together. She was looking after Elm Street Garden, and I was doing the Gleaning Abundance job, but we were still kind of working together — we were supporting each other. And then in 2015, I did it all on my own. And it was just like, 'oh, God, this is too much.' (Frangiadakis, 2020)

People commonly begin their working careers full of energy and enthusiasm, and overtime, struggle to maintain the same levels of enthusiasm (Leiter et. al., 2014). Burnout refers to when an individual's occupational stress becomes chronic and results in emotional exhaustion (González-Romá et. al., 2006). In order to secure a future where food security work is sustained indefinitely, the well-being of community champions who are the leaders of this critical food security work must be a top priority. This can be achieved through increased government support, communication amongst stakeholders, and community involvement.

Social Justice Approaches to Food Security in Kamloops

The Kamloops Food Policy Council and Local Champion Food Security Organizations

The first food policy council (FPC) was established in Knoxville, Tennessee in the United States of America in 1982 (Purifoy, 2014). The council derived from the community's desire to develop sustainable food systems at local and regional levels, and to challenge corporate and industrial food production and distribution methods (Purifoy, 2014). The FPC in Kamloops was first established in 1995 and is Canada's longest-standing independent FPC (Harris, 2021; Kamloops Food Policy Council, n.d.). FPCs are composed of representatives and stakeholders from various sectors across the food system (Gupta et. al., 2018). These individuals typically work in local governments or one of the five sectors of the food system: production, consumption, processing, distribution and waste recycling. (Gupta et. al., 2018; Harper et. al., 2009). Food policy councils provide communities with space for collaboration, community forums, and policy creation (Gupta et. al., 2018; Purifoy, 2014). Lamontagne provides insight on how the food policy council in Kamloops is received by community members:

> …with the Food Policy Council, I am in awe with what they're doing… I see them as our leaders. They've done research. There is a plan out there … they know what's needed. (Lamontagne, 2020)

FPCs derive from grassroots collaboratives and strive to incorporate a broad range of community voices to contribute to policy formation and evaluation (Gupta et. al., 2018). The KFPC has its own unique origin story as Harris explains:

> I think the way the farmers' market started is very interesting. It came out of this ecumenical, interfaith, social justice group that was meeting together around food. And that's what started the farmers' market. It wasn't a group of farmers coming together and deciding that they wanted to market. It was a lot of women and their church groups, and some in the non-profit sector… I think that it has given the market a certain character that's persisted over time. And that it helped to create the conditions in which something like the Kamloops Food Policy Council could emerge with pretty significant strength. (Harris, 2020)

KFPC has a wide reputation for its grassroots approach to food security. The relatively informal nature of FPCs like KFPC create a more accessible and inviting space for community members

to engage in food policy, procedures, and activism (Gupta et. al., 2018; Purifoy, 2014). McLean describes the kind of activism she has witness in the Kamloops food movement:

> There's some talk in theory around different types of activism. One way I've heard it talked about is around the system, in the system, and against the system activism. Things like anti-pipeline, and anything that's more around protesting is against the system. Whereas work that we do through KFPC is more of a combo of in the system and around the system activism. Going around the system focuses on how we can create a new system. (McLean, 2020)

Solutions to food security challenges call for a system thinking approach (Winne, 2005). Systems thinking looks at food production and food consumption as inherently linked and recognizes solutions will likely be linked as well (Brinkley, 2013; Gupta et. al., 2018; Morgan, 2013). Folklard and Hebden comment on KFPC's local commitment and systems approach to food security:

> …part of the reason why I think the KFPC is such a leading group is because we are not heavily influenced by a lot of external sources. We are strongly local. (Folklard, 2020)

> There's this aspect to being part of food policy culture which entails an unwillingness to go the corporate route with things. It's actually unwilling to think that capitalism is a past system. (Hebden, 2020)

The food movement is a collection of individuals working within social movements including food security, food sovereignty, and food justice (Harper et. al., 2009). Food justice seeks to critique the structural oppression responsible for injustices in the food system (Sbicca, 2012). As previously noted, KFPC, and FPCs in general, have received scrutiny for their lack of cultural representation. It is critical that all FPCs prioritize social justice in their mission in order to avoid reifying race and class inequalities in their advocacy and policies (Purifoy, 2014). Social justice approaches to food insecurity typically align with one of two missions: to establish a sustainable food system and to eliminate poverty (Power, 1999).

Access to healthy food is shaped by the economic ability to purchase it, but also by the historical processes through which race has come to influence factors associated with food insecurity (Alkon & Norgaard, 2009). Antiracism in particular needs to be an ongoing priority and commitment to FPCs. Anti-racist work involves identifying intersecting forms of power and privilege and the specific ways they work in alliance (Slocum, 2006). There are many benefits to enhancing equity and inclusion efforts in FPCs (Gupta et. al., 2018). Ogundimu reiterates the importance of representation in FPCs:

> …organizations such as the KFPC are really open to giving us minorities the ability to communicate with them. And that helps us see how we ourselves can establish supermarkets, mini farms, mini markets, and restaurants to help the community become more culturally diverse. Just being open and trying to give us the stage to develop these initiatives is really great. (2020)

The friendly, down to earth nature of the KFPC has greatly contributed to its membership. Several participants comment on their initial involvement being attributed to the monthly network meeting. The meeting is highly reputable in the local food community for its delicious potluck spread of foods that members bring to share. Hilke and Pletsch both recall their initial experiences with the KFPC:

> We didn't know anybody when we moved here. I was walking along Victoria Street and this woman… was just walking by and said 'hello… who are you? I haven't seen you around.' And I said, 'I just moved here.' And she said, 'are you going to the Food Policy Council meeting next Wednesday?' So, I replied, 'I don't know what you're talking about.' To which she said, 'it's the best free potluck in town'…so, that was how I got into local food security. Somebody said hello to me on the street… (Hilke, 2020)

> I had a friend that volunteered at the market and she introduced me to some of the regulars at the market who said, 'if you're interested in food security and food work in Kamloops, go to the monthly network potluck meeting… It's tonight at 5:30.' So, I raced home and cooked something to bring so I could attend the potluck meeting. (Pletsch, 2020)

McLean continues to explain the significance the KFPC network meetings bring to the community:

> It brings us together. I love how KFPC works because we come together when we're able to meet in person —we eat food, we get to know each other as a community, and we dig into these bigger issues together. (2020)

There is no single definition for what constitutes a successful FPC (Harper et. al., 2009). However, there are many ways in which a FPC can shift its focus from food security to food sovereignty efforts. For example, FPCs have the power to create policies that support people in making their own food decisions (Harper et. al., 2009). Food security has historically focused on enhancing food access, whereas food sovereignty has worked to give people autonomy over food choices in their local food system to increase local food production (Kneen, 2012). Klohn voices her optimism regarding the work the KFPC is doing in the community:

> ...I feel better about making sure that people are going to continue on doing this work now than I ever have before. Really even in the last couple of years at our network potlucks. It used to be mainly people who were at there for work because they represented an organization or mid-career people. And I remember when we first had around 45 people at one of our network meetings and we had never had that many people before. We kept on having to add tables and chairs… we started getting more students from TRU and our network meetings just got huge (2020)

As Klohn points out, the greater KFPC network involves a multitude of stakeholders. Some of which are individuals with personal interests, while others represent organizations and local food security partners. Policy councils act as institutional mechanisms for bringing local groups and government together to build relationships (Blay-Palmer, 2009; Coplen & Cuneo, 2015; Gupta et. al., 2018). The basic objectives of food policy work include encouraging faster economic growth, a more equal distribution of the resources generated from that growth, a guaranteed nutritional floor for the families and individuals with lower levels of income, and stable prices in food markets (Timmer, 2017). The generally decentralized structure of FPCs creates an intentionally inclusive space for public engagement (Gupta et. al., 2018).

The Mount Paul Community Food Centre (MPCFC) is another noteworthy food organization working in Kamloops to address food insecurity. The MPCFC is sponsored by Interior Community Services, a non-profit multi-service agency that provides food related programming (Interior Community Services, n.d.). Christie, who manages and started the MPCFC, explains how it was originally established in the city:

> I found out about this organization called Community Food Centres Canada. And I thought, 'what is that? I want to know more about that.' So, I started researching what they were and found out about Good Food Organizations. And I wondered, 'what is that?' So, I started to dive into it a little bit more… Good Food Organizations require businesses to follow principles that ensure programs are run in a dignified manner and to make sure people are met where they're at. That they're welcomed into your programs, that there is access to whole and healthy foods. I decided it all sounded really good and I wanted us to become a Good Food Organization. So, I contacted Community Food Centres Canada and said, 'hey, we're a non-profit in Kamloops!' And they actually didn't have any BC connections at the time. (2020)

The provision of dignified food access to all Canadians is an integral element of achieving food sovereignty (Schanbacher, 2010). Dignified access to food underlines the need for political and social action in the form of policies and laws that advocate for a more just food system (Ashe, 2015). Community Food Centres (CFCs) across Canada partner with local non-profit organizations to grow, cook, share, and advocate for food (Community Food Centres Canada, n.d.). CFCs offer quality and nutritious foods and provide an alternative food aid option to food banks, which typically offer their members expired foods that have been deemed unfit for public consumption, but are safe to eat (Bazerghi et. al., 2016; Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2012). The Mount Paul CFC uses fresh ingredients to make food items like soups and smoothies that are high in nutritional value. They have also created a healthy kids meal kit at the centre that can be ordered, taken home, and cooked with family. This encourages children and families to try new recipes and foods they might not have tried otherwise. Another unique social enterprise in Kamloops is the Butler Urban Farm. This intercity, fully functioning farm, located on the North Shore of

Kamloops, is an extremely successful community food sovereignty initiative. Torres, the farm's former manager, describes the farm's mission:

> Butler Urban Farm is basically first and foremost a non-commodified, non-hierarchical urban garden for residents of the North Shore…the real function of the Butler Urban Farm is a social infrastructure, and not a farm… the advice I was given was to focus on the social infrastructure and let the farm be the secondary result. And I really think that's why it has been so successful this year. We ended up growing and harvesting 6,300 pounds of free produce this year. (2020)

The Butler Urban Farm was established in 2005 and is partnered with the KFPC (Kamloops Food Policy Council, n.d.). Its main purpose is to bring the North Shore neighborhood together to grow as much organic food as possible (Kamloops Food Policy Council, n.d.).

Another notable food security initiative in Kamloops is Gardengate, which is a community wellness program supported by The Open Door Group, the KFPC, and Interior Health. Gardengate is an organization committed to building genuine and collaborative relationships that support meaningful work for everyone (Open Door Group, n.d.). The programs at Gardengate offer a wide variety of skill development opportunities through activities in the garden. The garden is situated beside South Hills, a Psychiatric Rehabilitation Centre that is home to many participants in the program. Wright, Program Coordinator at Gardengate, explains the benefits of the program to the community:

> When people are living at South Hills, they've moved from their home communities. The geographical area of Interior Health is huge. They could have come from Cranbrook, William's Lake, or they could have come from Kamloops. But when they're at South Hills, they're all residents of Kamloops. They live here and they'll go into the community to shop just like everybody else does. So, being able to connect people to something that's outside of the hospital setting is huge and can have dramatic effects on people's wellness. (2020)

Zuts adds her perspective on the Gardengate program:

> …people that are struggling with mental health… Gardengate here in Kamloops is a shining example. A beautiful example… They're doing incredible things. (Zuts, 2020)

Garson continues with insights on Gardengate's success as an intersectional community food and wellness initiative:

> Gardengate is a perfect example. They were really supported by KFPC in the early years and now they're their own organization and they're building a community kitchen this year that they've broken ground on. KFPC was a real benchmark as far as pulling all of these groups and organizations together, giving the framework or groundwork for different organizations to be supported in those beginning years. (2020)

There is an extensive list of food security initiatives that have been supported by KFPC in the community (see Appendix E: Food Security Resources in the Kamloops Community). Currently, The KFPC supports four flagship programs: Gardengate, a horticulture program in Kamloops that uses activities in the garden to support individuals recovering from addictions or mental health conditions; the Gleaning Abundance Program, a volunteer program designed to enhance local fruit production, through education on fruit tree pruning, and minimize food waste produced by neglected tree fruits; the Kamloops Seed Library, a community seed saving initiative open to the public; and lastly, the Stir, which is the Kamloops area's food hub and commercial kitchen rental space for food entrepreneurs.

There are also many other initiatives independent of KFPC like the Permaculture Kamloops group, which connects community members with one another for discussions and events, such as Seedy Saturdays, which is a series aiming to provide local learning opportunities regarding seed saving and sharing. There are also the emergency food providers like the Mustard Seed, the PIT Stop, and The Loop Community Resource Centre, which all serve hot meals on a regular basis to low-income and homeless community members. The COVID Meal train is an extension of The Loop's services operating out of the same community kitchen. The Meal Train is a mobile service that takes meals out to meet individuals where they are in the community to provide them with food. These meals are all created through community food donations and

Food Bank membership. As Ricey points out, these programs are so heavily utilized that more support for them is needed:

> The barrier is that they're not scaled up. If anything, we need more of them. Not more separate programs, but more capacity within the programs. (2020)

CFS programs reflect the diverse needs of their communities (Hamm & Bellows, 2003). Programs vary from one community to the next and are used as strategies to minimize food insecurity while simultaneously supporting healthier diets (Seligman & Berkowitz, 2019). Community food programs aim to support the food system as a whole and address each sector of the system (Hamm & Bellows, 2003). The benefits of food programs include alleviating hunger, developing neighborhood support networks, improving nutrition, and introducing people to new food skills (Edward & Evers, 2001).

Food security programs provide a myriad of learning opportunities including experiencing new activities and making connections with local people and the environment (Tsuji et. al., 2020). The well-established grassroots network in the community offers a platform for a variety of educational experiences. Harris reiterates:

> I would say that building a grassroots network, and organizing in that way, is maybe a more important venue for education. (2020)

Unger agrees on the strength of food security education through grassroots approaches:

> …education needs to be people sharing knowledge with each other. You can't ever have a top-down hierarchical education system because that's another form of oppression. (2020)

Unger suggests a bottom-up educational approach in local food security which can occur through community-based organizations and advocacy for marginalized groups and individuals (Carey & Braunack-Mayer, 2009). This approach is centered in social justice and encourages community participation, empowerment, and equity (Carey & Braunack-Mayer, 2009). Grassroots innovations are the result of bottom-up solutions for sustainable development by activists and

organizations (Pellicer-Sifres et. al., 2018; Seyfang & Smith, 2007). Grassroots innovations support the development of food literacy and food skills. Food Literacy (FL), refers to the knowledge, skills, and behaviours used to meet day-to-day food needs (Vidgen & Gallegos, 2014). FL's broad scope has made it challenging to define (Classens & Systsma, 2020).

In the past, FL has primarily focused on food activities like cooking or nutrition related knowledge (Perry et. al., 2017; Unusan, 2006). However, FL is extremely dynamic and has more recently focused on school gardens, farm-to-school programs, and food tastings (Vidgen & Gallegos, 2014). Torres comments on the absence of FL that he has noticed at the Butler Urban Farm:

> I have people at the farm who come and the only vegetables that they want to eat are tomatoes, potatoes, zucchini. Anything other than those, people will say, 'what? No, I'd never eat that.' And I think it's because food literacy has just been beaten out of us. You buy what's in the store, which are processed, GMO fruits and vegetables that don't taste like anything. It's totally shifted the culture of food. Now our expectations of food are so low. (2020)

Christie continues with insights on food literacy in the community:

> Food security is a lot about literacy and understanding where your food is coming from. And having that healthy balance and understanding of what healthy, nutrient rich food is, and how that affects so much of your life. Not even just your physical being… but even your mental being, your emotional being. (2020)

In Kamloops, opportunities exist to enhance food literacy through both formal and experiential education. Research has demonstrated the benefit of cross-curriculum food-based activities with other learning concepts (Kelly et. al., 2021; Sumner, 2013). De Candole provides an example of how food can be used for different educational tools:

> I really like food because you can do a lot of different things with it. And students are not going to engage at every part of it. They might not like cooking, but maybe they like growing and being outside, using a hammer and a saw and building boxes… If you get to do every part of growing, eating, and celebrating food, then the students are going to become part of it… you get to have this positive relationship around food. (2020)

Schools are key settings for the early development of FL (Kelly et. al., 2021). Childhood is the period of human growth and development where food preferences are formed (De Cosmi et. al., 2017). Unger emphasizes the importance of working with younger generations to foster an early understanding of FL: “I really do feel that targeting young people is a good approach myself.” (Unger, 2020). Both Sasakamoose and Tavers comment on the effectiveness of FL and food education, particularly at the grade school age:

> I think getting into the schools and getting kids at a young age. Getting them interested in gardening and incorporating it into the education systems that we currently have. Because when I was in school, we spent like, half our time inside. And maybe we grew a sunflower in a cup. (Sasakamoose, 2020)

> We need to start our education with kindergarten children. We need this education to start with the children because the children will take it home and go, ‘Mommy, did you know there's homeless people? We can help them…’ that's where we have to start because when you go into a grocery store, a toy store, any store, who are they targeting? They're targeting the children… get education about these important topics into children's books so children understand about mental health (Tavers, 2020)

Without a proper understanding of FL, children can reach adolescence with a lack of understanding of the broader socio-ecological and political aspects that shape their food systems (Ronto et al., 2016). Harris explains the benefits of educating children on local food security:

> I think that working with children is a really effective way of doing it because that's something that they bring to their families… it sparks that love of food at an early age but it also educates up the line too. (2020)

Dudy mirrors Harris’s insights regarding the effectiveness of working with children:

> …kids are great. Kids are absolutely wonderful. They actually catch on very, very quickly. But the adults that are with them are so disconnected from the food system… I think that it's incumbent upon us, as food producers in particular, to try to get that message out as much as we possibly can. (2020)

Human beings are constantly taking in new information and learning in a number of informal ways (Sumner, 2013).

Food preferences may continue to change throughout life, but are largely influenced by children's parents and mainly develop during early childhood (De Cosmi et. al., 2017; Health Canada, 2015). Frangiadakis explains how influential early FL development is:

> I really think that the school programs are great, because that's where you can get people when they're young. That's when they're forming their habits, right? If you have a habit of eating out of a can or a box every night, they're probably not going to change …when kids cook with their families, that's great. Because somehow that was lost. Everybody used to do that. Everybody used to cook from scratch and make sausage, beer, their own bread, canned food. That's just how things were done. (2020)

FL also increases the likelihood that children and young adults will carry forward positive food habits into their futures (De Cosmi et al., 2017; Unusan, 2006). Zuts explains how developing FL can impact the habits that children carry throughout their lives:

> When these children are young adults… maybe their buying habits will be different because they haven't been brainwashed. They've been shown that, 'you know what? I'm going to go and buy local' because… they know that that's better. (2020)

Dudy also expresses the need to continue educating younger generations:

> I think that the more that we can educate our kids, the more likely it is that future generations are going to have more of a connection with their food systems…. that's what we need to do with food… get the youngsters as early as three, four, five years old, and get them to understand why local food is so much more valuable than what you find on the grocery store chain shelves. (Dudy, 2020)

Developing FL from a young age has powerful implications on community health and can encourage a greater respect and commitment to local food systems.

Grassroots Community Food Activism Challenges and Examples of Resilience

Grassroots activism in Kamloops has experienced a number of challenges over the years. Some of these issues, including the COVID-19 pandemic, were sudden and unforeseeable, and caused major disruption to community food systems. Others have been barriers for years, like securing adequate funding for food security initiatives. The food community of Kamloops has

exemplified resilience by a demonstrated response to the diverse issues that they have encountered. The following section provides insights on the unique challenges of food security activism in Kamloops and the resilience the community has modeled.

The COVID-19 Pandemic

The conventional food system has proven itself extremely fragile in recent years (Béné, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic abruptly impacted food systems through supply chain issues caused by lockdown measures and illnesses among food system workers (Clapp & Moseley, 2020). The pandemic also exposed the need for a stronger commitment to local food security initiatives:

> …the best thing that can happen to people are crisis… Because when you're faced with the crisis of not having food made available to you, all of a sudden you value it. And you value the ability to be able to get it where you are... I'm sure that if you spoke to Eastern Bloc country members, who had to go through Soviet times, who experienced lineups into food markets. If you speak to them today about looking back on that and how they feel, they'd probably say they value food very, very much at this point. You wouldn't see them wasting it. (Dudy, 2020)

The COVID-19 crisis put local and global food systems under unprecedented strain (Fleetwood, 2020). However, new opportunities can arise from challenging experiences (Langlois et. al., 2020). Unger and Christie comment on the community's resilience through the pandemic:

> I think COVID actually has accelerated things in a lot of ways. I hear more and more people talking about supporting local. The local radio station is running ads that say, 'shop local and don't buy from Amazon…' to hear more of that being talked about in Kamloops is really exciting… COVID-19 is a hugely historical moment for the local food security movement… all these little things have popped up and really stepped up into the moment and said, 'we'll do something about this.' I think we're living in a historical moment. (Unger, 2020)

> It's almost like the silver lining of the pandemic was it just brought our community knowledge up more. (Christie, 2020)

The societal disruption that the pandemic created has presented a unique opportunity for educators, practitioners, and researchers to collaborate. Reflecting on areas of improvement

while sharing new innovations, valuable lessons learned, and best practices toward anti-hunger and food sovereignty initiatives holds immeasurable power (Langlois et. al., 2020).

Organizational Silos

Another key challenge associated with food security in Kamloops is the siloed work in the community. Silos are workplace constructs and mindsets that result in communication barriers and disconnected ways of working (Fenwick et. al., 2009). Breaking down silos allows for better, smoother, and more efficient workflows (Kowalski, 2017). It also helps focus efforts and attention where they are needed most. Hilke and McLean explain further:

> I mean, we hear it over and over again that the agencies here often work in silos. And we're trying to overcome that. But it's not easy. And I don't know why… Overcoming it has to do with choosing to say, 'let's commit ourselves to this particular issue or these issues right now because they are putting a drain on our energies. They're putting a drain on the resources that we have. Stress on the community. I think a lot of it has to do with us thinking of ourselves not just as service providers, but also as advocates and activists. (Hilke, 2020)

> The biggest piece? Reducing redundancies and addressing gaps. Getting a collective, system level understanding of what's going on in the sector. Having not just one organization or one person being able to hold that understanding, but a shared understanding. And being able to decide together what needs to be done. To me, that's people not working in silos scrambling for resources and having individual programs, but actually moving together. Moving as a collective ship in the direction that needs to be moved toward. That's where change is going to happen. (McLean, 2020)

Open communication is a key component in dismantling silos in the workplace (Fenwick et. al., 2009). Ward explains further:

> One thing that I think about a lot is how there's silos. The local food movement is growing in this one place, and is kind of ignorant of this more mechanized or commercial oriented food movement that has been around for a really long time and is growing in a different direction completely. And we're not necessarily acknowledging that there's very little communication between those two groups of people. And often they are on opposite sides of the political spectrum. Often their motivation is different. So there tends to be this gap in conversations around local food… (2020)

Garson offers her experiences working in the food security silos in Kamloops:

> …when I started, I was actually really surprised at the silos in our own community... they [various local food security programs] didn't realize that across town, somebody was doing something very, very similar. And if they had just joined forces… but it was almost more competitive than cooperative, and I found that very strange. I remember thinking, 'well, that's really weird. Why are we reinventing the wheel over and over again? We really need one organization that supports all of these different projects and different programs.' (2020)

As an organizational leader, the KFPC supports many community programs (see Appendix F, Kamloops Food Policy Council Supported Initiatives and Interconnected Stakeholders**)**. However, it only has so much capacity to oversee projects as a small non-profit. With the volume of programs and initiatives that take place in Kamloops, responsibility and ownership over community projects must be clearly identified. Lamontagne reiterates the need for clear accountability over local initiatives:

> I don't like duplication. I like when people are wise enough to collaborate. And we're slowly developing those relationships… But for years it was, 'well it's your mandate, no it's my mandate. No, it's your mandate.' And they would toss the ball around like this. We have to stop that. (2020)

Some degree of silo characteristics can be found in most organizations (Fenewick et. al., 2009). Silos only become truly problematic when they impact work performance and prohibit overarching goals from being achieved (Fenewick et. al., 2009). Silos can also cause uncertainty around who is responsible for ongoing projects and the approval of new ones, especially in cross-organizational projects (Kowalski, 2017).

Access to Public Funding

Now more than ever, local government and the city council's investment in local food security is needed. Tavers comments on the local government's disconnect to the citizens it allegedly works in the interest of:

> Government, city council, bylaw, RCMP. And the other non- profits in this city… I want to take these people out and show them what it's really like to be homeless. I would absolutely love to take the city council and all these naysayers and challenge them. I said this two years ago to them, I challenge you to 10 days living homeless… (2020)

Strategically defunding government departments to refund community welfare and wellness initiatives has many strengths. The multi-billion-dollar budget that Canada invests in its policing services increased 2.3 percent from 2021 to 2022 (Jones, 2022). This funding allocation is incredibly counterproductive to public safety, as spending more on policing means fewer resources for already underfunded systems like education, medicine, and food security (Cobbina-Dungy & Jones-Brown, 2023). Food security should be just as integral to the Government of Canada as any other public health and safety priority. Instead, the Toronto Police Service alone spent 90 percent of their $1.1 billion budget on salaries, benefits, overtime, and other pay-related expenses in 2022 (Jones, 2022). Yet, this is the structural reality of poverty and classism in Canada. Unfortunately, policies and reform that improve food security can often involve long and complicated processes. Harris offers insights on the KFPC's history working with the City of Kamloops' Municipal government as an example:

> In the years that I've been working with KFPC… there hasn't always been really great resourcing from the city to actually implement actions. I've noticed a bit of a shift in network and board members about finding ways that we can push forward… policy as opposed to relying on the city to do it… the policy itself is only valuable if it actually gets implemented. (2020)

Effective policies act as a governance tool outlining expectations, providing a basis for consistent decision-making, and discussing resource allocation in respect to a specific issue (Government of Canada, 2021). Unfortunately, policies specific to food security have not always been a top priority. Garson offers further comments regarding the City of Kamloops' municipal government and its commitment to food security:

> …it took 20 years to get the recognition and the attention from the City of Kamloops. (2020)

Lamontagne also provides an example of challenges associated with working with the City of Kamloops:

> I like that there's more community gardens that are well looked after… It's city land. But it's Community Interior Services who oversees the community garden projects. And then there are coordinators. And there are site managers... But it's already as if the city says, 'well, we don't want to hear about it' …if there's an irrigation problem, the city fixes it. If we need topsoil, the city delivers it. And if you need compost pickup, the city does it. So, the city has a role. And when projects are on city land, the city probably says, 'that's the extent of what we want to be involved with. After that, we'll ask Community Interior Services to look after it.' But how do they get remunerated for that? So maybe let's review how this model really works. Because I remember the site manager, she always said to me, 'oh, there's no money, there's no money'. Well, there should be money. (2020)

Government funding contributes substantially to community food security. Other forms of support like engaging in local FPC meetings and events, collaborating on public policies, spreading awareness regarding government resources that are available, and helping to develop FPCs in communities that do not have them, are also beneficial (Gupta et. al., 2018). Casamir provides examples below:

> …it's up to us right now. That's why we have to keep at the government. We need funding… we know what we need, we need a commercial kitchen. We need a processor, an arborist, we need land to acquire, we need irrigation systems, we need capital for infrastructure. When will they see enough proposals where they say, 'boy, you know what? These people from Kamloops? They work together as a team. There are clubs, schools, the City of Kamloops, Tk'emlups te Secwépemc, Community Futures. All of these groups are saying the same things. We should look at their proposals again and their long-term goals. (2020)

Recognizing the siloed work that exists in the Kamloops food system is integral in achieving community food security goals.

The Future of Grassroots Food Activism at the Community Level

In order for transformative change to take place in the food system, a radical shift is required. Ideally, a balance between government support and actionable grassroots approaches would be favourable (Anderson & Cook, 1999). Klohn offers her vision on how this might look on the ground:

> …make this sort of alternative option of what our food system could look like. More appealing than the current option. Make it more inclusive, make it more accessible, make it more delicious, make it more social… it's about envisioning a future that's irresistible not to switch to… it's building something that's so amazing and lovely that who wouldn't want to be part of it? (2020)

The community and human connection piece of food sovereignty is incredibly powerful. Hebden reiterates how important developed relationships are in this line of work:

> …it's an experiment on being self-sufficient in a radical environment and supporting each other in the doing of that. (2020)

An inspiring and promising aspect of food security in Kamloops is the commitment to activism across so many grassroots organizations and champions. Hilke suggests harnessing the food security support to mobilize a more radical approach to food sovereignty:

> I feel that we're at a point right now where if we don't do something radical to shake up the existing power structure and how it functions, that we're just telling them, ‘go right ahead and continue’ (2020)

McLean continues with her insights on opportunities to strengthen local food security:

> …right now, it feels like a key moment. I don't know if that's just because I'm involved, I don't think it is. I feel like there's a moment between COVID and all the other stuff happening. I see more and more the narrative of, ‘this shit needs to change and here's how it needs to change’ because that used to be missing… I only have a vague sense of what that looks like. And I fear that we're not going to get there unless a significant crisis happens. (2020)

Torres and Garson agree that a drastic change is needed, going as far as to suggest a total reinvention of the current food system:

> …we basically have to unpack and burn it to the ground in order to rebuild something that looks even remotely just (Torres, 2020)

> Burn down the existing system… And planned obsolescence. Food insecurity was planned by the original Canadian governments by sending rancid meat and smallpox infested blankets to First Peoples that were torn from their own land and put on to reserve systems… genocide was planned. And it was planned by disrupting their connection to the earth. So that's not about agriculture, that's about life. It's about removing people from something that they have been familiar with and have known intimately for thousands and thousands of years to make them so disrupted and uprooted that you then have the upper hand. It's definitely a huge power move. It started with our original founding fathers… It's the same face, just a different mask. (Garson, 2020)

Structural inequalities are the root cause of food insecurity and have been reinforced by neoliberal, capitalist governments (Herrington & Mix, 2021). Food security can act as a platform to counter inequalities through social justice and social change (Coombs, 2019).

There are many opportunities for human connection through food activities. Social change and community wellness can be bolstered through the use of food activities like gardening, cooking, and harvesting food. From his experiences as the program coordinator at Gardengate, Wright reiterates how community food security work is a platform to address even wider community wellness challenges: "It's the medium of work. That's really what it is" (Wright, 2020). Procuring, processing, preparing, and consuming food are all activities that bring people together. It does not matter what colour you are, what language you speak, or what country you are from — food is essential for all human life. De Candole provides examples of how food can be used to connect people:

> I feel like food is where everybody comes together. It is kind of a leveling space. And it's also where you can base a lot of environmental issues out of. You can talk about air, pollution, soil, and water, and it all comes back to food. But then you can also talk about growing it, eating it, and celebrating it and everybody can find something about food that they can connect to… (2020)

Food can also be used to approach wider and more complex social issues. Harris explains further:

> I think that we need to collectively imagine better futures. And food is the path that I've chosen to do that, but it's so much bigger than food. It is actually about creative imagination of the world that bubbles up in the cracks of capitalism as it eats itself. (2020)

Engaging with grassroots food security activism provides opportunities to participate in local food systems (Carey & Braunack-Mayer, 2009). Through social justice approaches, food can be used as a tool to advocate for more sovereign and just communities. As Starr (2010) indicates, whether it is with family, friends, fellow activists, or colleagues, food has the power to bring a diverse array of people together to enjoy each other's company and collaborate on the future.

Conclusion

Grassroots activism has powerful impacts on local food systems. Passionate community leaders, or community champions, are a key element of the success of ongoing programs and opportunities to engage in community food activism. Through local programming, workshops, and other opportunities to engage in local food security, food literacy is strengthened. In Kamloops, there is a plethora of food initiatives and opportunities to engage in local food work. Research has proven that working with young children is most affective as their food preferences are still developing and they are especially impressionable. Building food skills and an understanding of the local food system is particularly integral in the continuation of this local food work in generations to come. There is a group of dedicated community members that make up the Kamloops food security activists. These individuals are part of intersecting community groups that are connected to the local food system. Through disruptions like COVID, and other ongoing food policy challenges, the local food system in Kamloops has continued to overcome obstacles and demonstrate community resilience. By using food as a tool to strengthen

community connection, community food work has immense opportunity to provide a platform for social change.

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CHAPTER 5: THE FUTURE OF LOCAL FOOD SECURITY IN THE KAMLOOPS COMMUNITY

Food insecurity is an urgent and intersectional issue that affects individuals all over the world. Both long-term policy reform and immediate transformation are needed to address the embedded inequalities within the conventional food system (Holt-Giminez, 2011). Food insecurity can drastically vary from one community to the next. This makes achieving food security extremely complex. The data from this CBPR project has made it apparent that human capital is a significant asset to community food security. Food is an integral element of human survival and is interwoven with other pressing social issues. The influence of corporate greed, profit, and the globalized food system have resulted in a disinvestment in community-based solutions to food insecurity. The implications of this research go beyond the scope of Kamloops and the surrounding area. Research findings can be used to further examine and challenge the social inequalities that impact food security.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimates at least 828 million people were affected by hunger in 2021 (FAO, 2022). With increasing rates of food insecurity being experienced, households in the interior of BC are no exception to this statistic. It is estimated that the number of individuals unable to afford a healthy diet rose from 112 million, before the COVID-19 pandemic, to almost 3.1 billion present day (FAO, 2022). Food insecurity has been exacerbated through colonialism (Robidoux & Mason, 2017), rapid population growth, and the severe impacts of climate change (Godfray et. al., 2010). This research project has identified a number of opportunities to strengthen food security at the local level, beginning with the decolonization of local food systems, land use management practices, and peoples. Food security work will continue to be necessary in the Kamloops community until all members of the

community's food needs are met and reflect the KFPC's mission which is to establish a local food system which is regenerative, sovereign, and just.

Key Challenges Impacting Local Food Security

Global neoliberalist and capitalist economics present key challenges to local food systems and make achieving community level food security difficult. The rising costs associated with living, paired with a low minimum wage, has created difficult living conditions especially for marginalized community members. Foods that are highly processed and low in nutrients are usually most affordable (Aschemann-Witzel & Zielke, 2017; Hamm et al., 2007; Gopalakrishnan, 2019). BIPOC Canadians struggle disproportionately to achieve food security in comparison to Euro-Canadians due to legacies of colonialism and oppression that have altered all of our relationships with food and the lands that produce it (Bailey et. al., 2017; Caron & Plunkett–Latimer, 2022; Morales et. al., 2021; Nazroo, 2003).

In Kamloops specifically, barriers to CFS exist in siloed food security work. This disconnect has created system wide communication barriers which have led to a diminishing capacity for effective, transformational work that is urgently needed in the local food system. Another key point of concern for food security in Kamloops is the future of food security and sovereignty work. Although Kamloops has many integral community champions who largely contribute to the community's overall food security success, it is critical to recognize that these leaders cannot be solely relied on to uphold local food systems work. If food security responsibilities are not appropriately divided in the community, these important initiatives can be threatened (Leiter et. al., 2014; González-Romá et. al., 2006).

The changing climate is also a pressing issue associated with growing food locally. As climate change worsens and presents erratic regional weather conditions, such as increasing

wildfires and floods, food production will be difficult even for the most knowledgeable land users (Campbell et. al, 2016; City of Kamloops, 2023). Due to unprecedented levels of climate change and rapid human population growth that put extreme pressure on the natural environment, reconnecting to the land and building food literacy must be priorities for all community members (McBride, 2021).

Lastly, in order to ensure that food security and food sovereignty work continue to develop in the community, organizations and initiatives must prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion within their networks. Increased cultural representation and opportunities for intercultural learning are critical component of sustainable community development. An in-depth understanding of the colonial histories of oppression and the racism that has existed, and continues to exist, in the local food system is integral for community growth. This can be partially achieved through increased cultural representation in community food security initiatives and organizations. A recognition of how Euro-centric spaces are connected to systemic oppression and white supremacy is required for the deep understandings that are necessary to decolonize local food systems.

Recommendations to Strengthen Food Sovereignty and Food Systems in the Kamloops Region

Continued community efforts to strengthen the commitment to the local food system is also highly recommended. The Kamloops community needs to grow more of its food locally and rely less on the conventional retail grocery market to satisfy food needs. This can be achieved by buying, growing, and sharing local food in the community. Relying less on the globalized food system that contributes to climate change and investing in food from local communities are more regenerative and sovereign food practices.

Improved communication amongst local food stakeholders is also needed to strengthen and focus efforts in the Kamloops food system. Additionally, there is great potential for advancements in food sovereignty if adequate funding is available to support initiatives. Defunding over-resourced community services and reallocating some of these funds to enhance food literacy and food sovereignty at the community level is a potential solution. Educating youth about the benefits of nutritious, local foods to individual and community health will be a key component to secure more food sovereignty for future generations.

Research on the inequalities that reinforce local food insecurity and are barriers to food sovereignty in the community is crucial. Participants strongly identified class and race as themes that are deeply embedded societal issues perpetuating food insecurity. Further research that focuses on local and practical responses to neoliberal and oppressive policies in the Canadian food system would serve as an immense asset for food security practitioners. Studies to determine what tangible actions could increase inclusivity and improve communication to broaden Euro-centric methods and siloed work environments, are deeply needed to facilitate wider scale change.

Conclusion

Reflecting upon my Master of Science in Environmental Sciences experiences at TRU, I feel incredibly privileged, humbled, and fortunate to have engaged in such meaningful and important research. I began my education in the fall semester of 2019, eager to participate in Northern food security research with Dene peoples in Fort Providence, Northwest Territories. I travelled to the community with my supervisor, Dr. Courtney Mason, and his former student (Paulina Ross), who was there disseminating her final research findings to the community. I joined this trip to introduce myself to the community members and familiarize myself with the

location. Upon arrival to the community, I was immediately impacted by the realities that face Northern Indigenous communities in Canada. Conventional market foods in the north are incredibly expensive in comparison to the rest of Canada, and climate change has made local food procurement increasingly difficult to rely on. Unfortunately, the pandemic lockdown in March, 2020 disrupted my work in the Northwest Territories indefinitely as there was no access to the territory granted to researchers. Although I was deeply saddened that I was not able to pursue my original research project, I knew that seizing the opportunity to pivot my research and study in the community I have called home for 18 years would be rewarding and fulfilling. My graduate studies experience was full of unforeseeable circumstances, many of which I am grateful for and believe have contributed to my overall education.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted communities all over the world. For myself, and many other BIPOC members, the murder of George Floyd was a triggering and life-altering historical moment impacting our wider communities as well. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) protest that took place in downtown Kamloops on June 4th, 2020 to address the ongoing systemic racism toward BIPOC, was a pivotal moment in my personal growth and development. As a visible minority who grew up in predominantly Euro-Canadian communities, this was one of the first times in my adult life I felt understood and seen by my community. Experiencing racism and witnessing my family and friends experience it through the BLM movement, was a painful and sobering experience for me.

These personal reflections are what led me to explore literature regarding Indigenous Canadian histories, Black and African histories, Canadian racism, Canadian policing, and Canadian histories of oppression. As I was studying these topics, I began transitioning my thesis project to focus on food security in Kamloops and started to engage in community volunteer

work as well. In the fall of 2020, I accepted a role as a KFPC Board Director and began volunteering at The Loop Community Resource Centre. Shortly after, I commenced primary data collection through interviews to further inform my knowledge. These experiences have deeply influenced my thinking, learning, and development as a researcher, a learner, and as a global citizen. I strongly believe that the investigation of the intersections between food security, race, and class are critical areas of research for the community of Kamloops. Further research regarding the existing network silos in the food community would also provide invaluable resources to the individuals who work within the local food system.

Overall, this research project contains important findings that will help local food security stakeholders identify areas of opportunity while continuing to strengthen areas that are already operating efficiently in the community. This research on the inequalities in the local Kamloops food system addresses a critical gap in scholarship and has ultimately added to a wider understanding of the relationships between social issues and food insecurity in contemporary urban Canada. This project is about community food security, but it is more specifically about *why* food insecurity exists in communities and the intersection between food and systemic oppression. There is an extremely resilient community of food growers, entrepreneurs, learners, educators, and professionals in the Kamloops region. The opportunities to engage with the local food system are substantial and the growing community involvement is promising for the continued dedication to local and regional food security and sovereignty. The implications of this research benefit local policy makers by providing insight into how community activism, that is grounded in decolonizing and anti-racist frameworks, can support local food security in Kamloops.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: List of Acronyms

BC — British Columbia

BIPOC — Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour

BLM - Black Lives Matter

CBPR — Community Based Participatory Research

CFC — Community Food Centre

CFS — Community Food Security

CRT — Critical Race Theory

COVID-19/COVID — Coronavirus Disease of 2019

CSA — Community Supported Agriculture

FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FL — Food Literacy

FPC — Food Policy Council

KFPC — Kamloops Food Policy Council

MA — Migrant Agricultural

MPCFC — Mount Paul Community Food Centre

NWMP — North West Mounted Police

PO — Participant Observation

RCMP — Royal Canadian Mounted Police

SAWP — Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program

TEK — Traditional Ecological Knowledge

TRCC — Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

TRU — Thompson Rivers University

TFWP — Temporary Foreign Worker Program

WSIC — White Savior Industrial Complex

Appendix B: Participant List

Participant's Name	**Interview Date**	**Title/Association**
1. Laura Kalina	October 7th, 2020	Founder of the KFPC
2. Shelaigh Garson	October 23rd, 2020	Owner of Everyone's Eden Regenerative Land Design
3. George Casamir	October 29th, 2020	Local farmer & founder of the K'wese'ltken Farners' Market
4. Glenn Hilke	November 2nd, 2020	Founder of the Loop Community Resource Centre
5. Emily Pletsch	November 3rd, 2020	Former lead facilitator for the Kamloops Changing Face of Poverty group & KFPC team member
6. Percy Folklard	November 3rd, 2020	Local rancher & former KFPC Vice-President
7. Addie de Candole	November 5th, 2020	Food Literacy Advisor at Farm to School
8. Lindsay Harris	November 5th, 2020	KFPC's Implementation Lead
9. Mitch Ward	November 9th, 2020	Former Radical Action with Migrant Agriculture (RAMA) outreach worker & organic farmer
10. Bonnie Klohn	November 9th, 2020	KFPC team member
11. Chris Torres	November 10th, 2020	Designer and Food Security advocate & former manager of Butler Urban Farm
12. Cynthia Tavers	November 11th, 2020	Former manager of The Loop Community Resource Centre & KFPC member
13. Jesse Ritcey	November 13th, 2020	KFPC co-president
14. Bobbi Sasakamoose	November 17th, 2020	Former Community Wellness Coordinator for Q'wemstín Health Society
15. Carole Hebden	November 17th, 2020	Former KFPC president & post-secondary educator
16. Maureen Zuts	November 17th, 2020	Teacher at Skeetchestn Community School
17. Dawn Christie	November 19th, 2020	Mount Paul Food Centre Manager

18. France Lamontagne	November 19th, 2020	Executive Director at Kamloops Immigrant Services
19. Deborah Ogundimu	November 20th, 2020	Former TRU Master of Business Administration International student & KFPC leadership team
20. Rob Wright	November 20th, 2020	Gardengate program coordinator
21. Robyn McLean	November 23rd, 2020	Owner member, Tapestry Collective Co-op
22. Sandra Frangiadakis	November 25th, 2020	Former Food Action Coordinator for KFPC
23. Corra Gassner & Wes Graham	November 26th, 2020	Kamloops Food Bank (Director of Resource Development and Operations Manager)
24. Dieter Dudy	November 27th, 2020	Owner of Thistle Farms
25. Greg Unger	December 15th, 2020	Kamloops Community Gardens and Farmers' Market Coordinator

Overview of research participants

Appendix C: Interview Guide

THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY

Located on the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc territory within the unceded traditional lands of Secwepmecul'ecw (Secwepemc Nation)

"More Than Just a Meal: Food Security in Kamloops, BC"

Dear Participant,

My name is Fauve Garson and I am a graduate student researcher at Thompson Rivers University in the Faculty of Science. My study is titled, "More Than Just a Meal: Food Security in Kamloops, BC". In doing this research, I seek to support community food resilience by investigating the history and evolution of food security in Kamloops and identifying the opportunities to reduce inequalities related to food in Kamloops. The results of this study will highlight the constraints to food security in Kamloops and help inform best practices in community food initiatives.

The interview should take no more than one hour and will provide you with the opportunity to convey your personal perspective on topics related to food security in Kamloops. You are given the option of anonymity and may withdraw from the study at any point during the research process.

The interview consists of a range questions focused on food at a personal level, community food security, food programs, potential inequalities and the future of food security in Kamloops. The questions are open ended in order to get at your unique perspectives and insights.

I greatly appreciate your participation in this study. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, the primary researcher, Fauve Garson, at 250-682-0880 or at garsonstewartf12@mytru.ca

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

(to be approved by community food security leaders prior to use)

Interview Group: Food Activists, Educators and Community Food Security Leaders

Introductory Demographics:

1. Please tell me your name, age and the number of years that you have been involved in regional Food Security?

2. Where are you from and how long have you lived in Kamloops?

Personal food security:

3. How did you get involved in Kamloops food movements?

4. What is, or has been, your experience in Kamloops food movements?

5. Based on your time in Kamloops, do you feel that food security has changed?

6. Are there any key historical moments that have shaped the regional food system?

Food security programs:

7. Could you tell me about some of the food security programs operating in the region?

8. Can you provide an example(s) of food programs that are working in the region?

9. What are some of the main barriers for local food security programs?
    - What are some of the ways to address these barriers?

Food Security education:

10. Do you know of any educational programs going on in Kamloops that relate to food security? And if so, can you tell me about them?

11. How do these contribute to food security? And who do you think benefits from these programs? What local educational food opportunities benefit regional food security?
    - Who benefits from them?

12. Are you aware of any gaps in food security education in Kamloops?

13. What are the ways to minimize these gaps?

Social Inequalities & food security:

14. Do you think there are, or can you identify, any inequalities in the Kamloops regional food system? Where do you feel that inequalities lie in the regional food system?
    - Why do you think these inequalities exist?

15. Do you believe inequalities related to class and race are factors that impact who may be food insecure in our communities?

16. How have the histories of colonial governments produced inequalities in regional food system?
    - Is there a power dynamic that needs to be addressed? For example, when you think about new immigrant communities or Indigenous communities?
    - Do you have any ideas about how this could be achieved?

17. How might Kamloops food security initiatives work to minimize these inequalities?

Corporate food systems:

18. There is clearly a lot of food security initiatives going on in the region. What are some of the most significant challenges local food systems face?

19. How do you think the corporatization of food has affected regional food systems?
    - Do you have any ideas about how to address the role that corporations play in our local food systems?

Food Activism:

20. How do you think grassroots food security activism strengthens regional food systems?

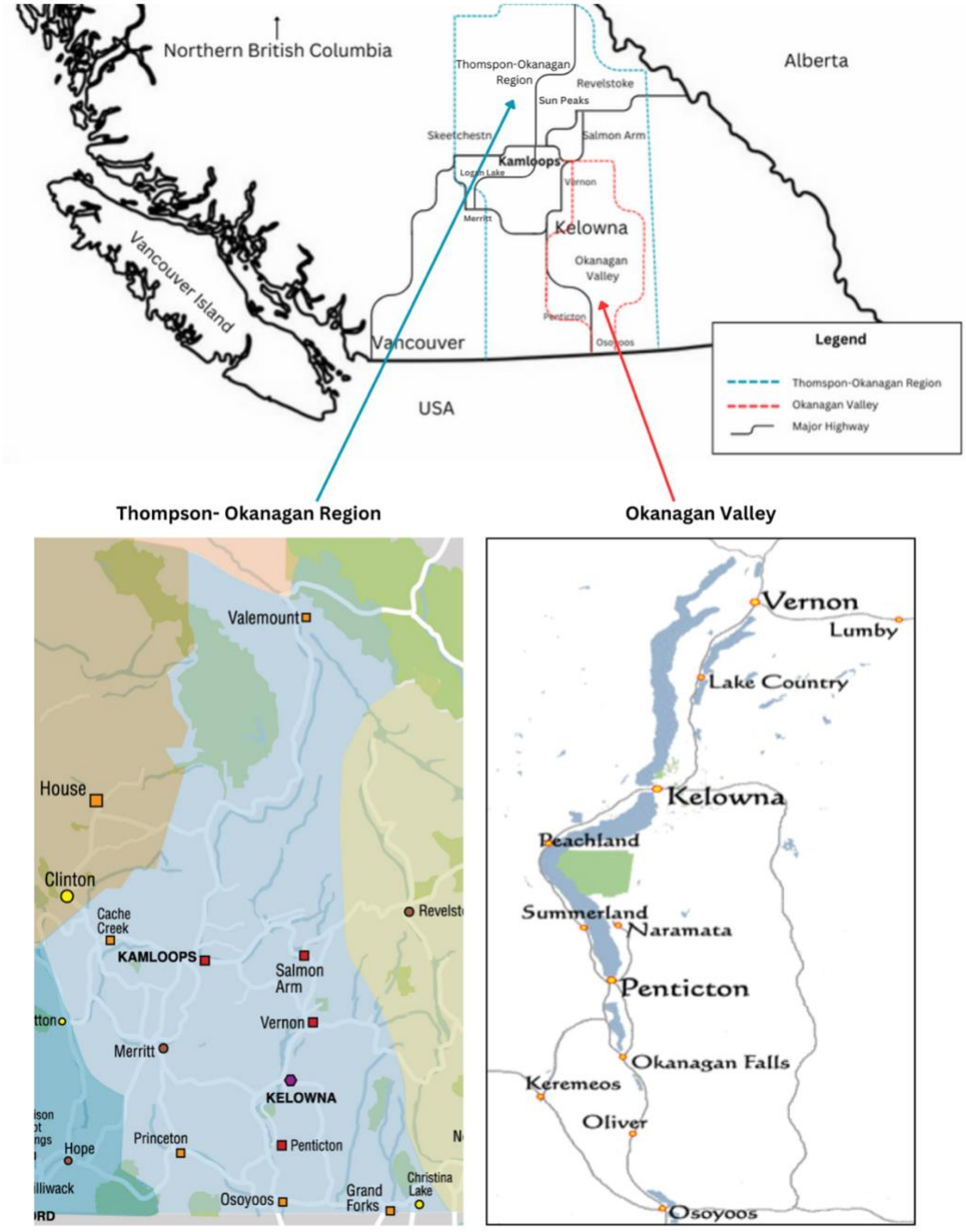
21. How do we continue to engage food activists in our communities?

Future & Closing:

22. What vision do you have for the future of regional food security?

23. Do you have any other comments or remarks regarding food security in the region?

Appendix D: Southern British Columbia and Regional Maps



Map credits:
Thompson-Okanagan retrieved from https://www.travel-british-columbia.com/thompson-okanagan/
Okanagan Valley retrieved from https://www.ehcanadatravel.com/british-columbia/okanagan/communities.html

Appendix E: Food Security Resources in the Kamloops Community

Local Food Security Resource	Contact/Location Information	Brief Description
Butler Urban Farm	188 Wilson St, Kamloops, BC butlerurbanfarm@kamloopsfoodpolicycouncil.com https://kamloopsfoodpolicycouncil.com/butler-urban-farm/	An intercity, organic farm that provides garden foods to community members of the North Shore
Community Gardens	Varying locations in Kamloops 250-554-3134 https://cydi.ca/interior-community-services-kamloops-community-gardens/	Neighborhood gardening plots available for a rental fee. Ideal for those that do not have access to their own land or want to share the community responsibilities of gardening
The COVID Meal Train	405 Tranquille Rd Kamloops, BC https://www.facebook.com/groups/2629304904024530/	Emergency mobile meal provider. Meals are created in the Loop's kitchen and bagged individually for distribution around the greater Kamloops community
Farm to School	(Headquarters Address) 550-2950 Douglas Street Victoria, BC (250) 595-8422 https://farmtoschoolbc.ca/	A BC provincial program that encourages healthy food choices in the public school districts
Gardengate	915 Southhill Street Kamloops, BC (250) 554-9453 https://www.opendoorgroup.org/programs/gardengate/	A horticultural garden initiative that offers recovery programming for addicts and those that suffer from mental health conditions

Gleaning Abundance Program	Varying locations **in** Kamloops gleaning@kamloopsfoodpolicycouncil.com https://kamloopsfoodpolicycouncil.com/gleaningabundance/	A volunteer based pruning program that minimizes food waste and divides the harvested fruit between the volunteers/community food organizations and the tree owners
Kamloops Food Bank	171 Wilson St Kamloops, BC (250) 376-2252 https://www.kamloopsfoodbank.org/clients/	Emergency food service offering food distribution programs and food hampers to low-income community members
Kamloops Food Policy Council	185 Royal Ave Kamloops, BC (250) 851-6111 https://kamloopsfoodpolicycouncil.com/	Kamloops' Food Policy Council, an overarching council that facilitates a community network of local food stakeholders and supports food security initiatives in the community
The Kamloops Permaculture Group	https://www.facebook.com/groups/PermacultureKamloops/	An online forum and discussion group for Kamloops growers
Kamloops Regional Farmers' Market	200 block of St Paul St. 400 block of Victoria St. Kamloops, BC info@kamloopsfarmersmarket.com https://www.kamloopsfarmersmarket.com/	Kamloops' regional Farmers' Market located downtown. A showcase of local products from farmers and artisans
Ḱwséltkten Farmers' Market	345 Chief Alex Thomas Way Kamloops, BC tina@cfdcofcifn.com https://bcfarmersmarkettrail.c	Indigenous led Farmers' Market located at the Powwow grounds. A showcasing of primarily local Indigenous farmers and artisans and their products

	om/market/kweseltken-farmers-and-art/	
The Loop (Community Resource Centre)	405 A Tranquille Rd Kamloops, BC https://www.facebook.com/groups/2629304904024530	A community kitchen that offers a dignified means to emergency food access for low-income and homeless community members
Mount Paul Community Food Centre	140 Laburnum St Kamloops, BC (236) 421-1011 https://www.mountpaulcommunityfoodcentre.com	Community food centre offering programming and dignified, healthy food options
The Mustard Seed	181 Victoria St W Kamloops, BC InfoKamloops@theseed.ca https://theseed.ca/	An emergency food provider located on the South Shore of Kamloops that offers hot meals to low-income community members
The PIT Stop	421 St Paul St Kamloops, BC pitstop@kamloopsunited.ca https://kamloopsunited.ca/pit-stop/	Kamloops United Church serves hot meals to the community on Sundays
Seedy Saturdays	Varying locations in Kamloops (the last one was hosted at the MPFC) info@kamloopsfarmersmarket.com https://www.kamloopsfarmersmarket.com/events#:~:text=The%202023%20Seedy%20Saturday%20is,10%20AM%20to%203%20PM.	A networking event that brings the community together to share seeds and discuss gardening, growing, and harvesting techniques and best practices

Appendix F: Kamloops Food Policy Council Supported Initiatives and Interconnected Stakeholders

KFPC NETWORK	Kamloops Food Security Initiative	Stakeholders
Emergency Food Security	The COVID Meal Train	Grassroots
	The Loop	Grassroots
	The Mustard Seed	Independent Non-Profit
	The PIT Stop	Grassroots
Household Food Security	Food Bank	Independent Non-Profit
	Mount Paul Food Centre	Interior Community Services
	Seed Library	KFPC flagship program
	Seedy Saturdays	Grassroots
Community Food Security	Butler Urban Farm	KFPC flagship program
	Community Gardens	Interior Community Services
	Farmers' Markets	Independent Non-Profit
	Farm 2 School	Provincial government program
	Gardengate	The Open Door Group, KFPC, Interior Health
	Gleaning Abundance Program	KFPC flagship program

	Mount Paul Food Centre	Interior Community Services
	Permaculture Kamloops	Grassroots
	The Stir	KFPC flagship program

Many individuals possess roles or work within more than one of the local food security initiatives and organizations mentioned above. The Kamloops food system is an interconnected web of actors and stakeholders.