

**Food Sovereignty Praxis beyond the Peasant and Small Farmer Movement:  
Community Food Initiatives in London**

by

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CDA	Cooperative Development Agency
CFE	Community Food Enterprise
CFI	Community Food Initiative
CFSC	Community Food Security Coalition
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
DEFRA	Department of Environment, Farming, and Rural Affairs
DIY	Do-It-Yourself
ELFA	East London Food Access
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
G8	Group of Eight
GCFC	Greenwich Community Food Coop
GCFI	Greenwich Community Food Initiative
GIS	Geographic Information System
GM	Genetically Modified
HM	Her Majesty's
IAASTD	International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development

IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
ISAAA	International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Technologies
LA21	Local Agenda 21
LDA	London Development Agency
LSOA	Lower Layer Super Output Area
LVC	La Via Campesina
MLFW	Making Local Food Work
MNC	Multinational Corporation
NDC	New Deal for Communities
NHS	National Health Service
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PEP	Priority Estates Project
PSFPI	Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WHO	World Health Organization

## **CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION**

Food systems have long been the subject of much scrutiny from the macro level to the grassroots level due to the health, environmental, social, and economic impacts associated with the journey of food from its source to its fate as consumption or waste. Yet recently food security has gained renewed attention at the global level. The food crisis of 2007-2008 resulting from a volatile mix of speculation in commodities, rising energy and meat consumption, and associated conversion of food crops to biofuels and animal feed - and more generally from an era of trade liberalization that eroded safety nets in agricultural markets - caused social unrest in many parts of the world (Bello, 2008). More recently, the circumstances of corruption, high food prices, and unemployment leading to the self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi in Tunisia triggered widespread demonstrations that spread across North Africa and the Middle East. Researchers had issued a report four days before this initial trigger warning that food prices are likely to contribute to political instability and social unrest, and have since then identified a specific price index threshold associated with unrest (Lagi, Bertrand, & Bar-Yam, 2011). Moreover, in a departure from the last century, when food security was an issue associated with the global South, it has now become an issue of national security for nations in the global North (Keeley, 2008; Wray & Wearden, 2010).

At the grassroots level, citizens around the world have long been involved in movements pertaining to land and food. Food sovereignty is one such movement initiated by peasants largely from the global South, but in the past few years it has begun

to make inroads into the global North. Food sovereignty is a broad concept that encompasses ideas of democratic processes, ecologically sustainable production, and human rights. This dissertation investigates the extent to which food sovereignty principles are evident among community food initiatives (CFIs) that sell fresh produce in London. As a global city, London is the site of social and health inequalities, tremendous ethnic diversity, a vast ecological footprint<sup>1</sup>, a large, mostly low-paid, immigrant workforce, and like all cities, a site of intense consumption (Rees & Wackernagel, 2008; Sassen, 1998). In sum, the study seeks to understand how values stemming from environmental, cultural, health, and economic concerns are articulated and practiced among CFIs in London via the lens of the food sovereignty paradigm.

In the remainder of this introduction I review literature that helps to situate the subject of this study amidst relevant trends and debates. First, I provide a brief overview of aspects of industrial food systems and then trace the development of food movements attempting to forge more sustainable and fair means of food production and supply. Next, I discuss criticisms of some of these movements, which led to a new set of movements, including the food sovereignty movement-whose principles are central to this study. Third, I discuss how the food sovereignty concept is evident in historical movements in England, the national context for this study. I conclude by linking this dissertation research to the literature and presenting an outline of the dissertation chapters.

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<sup>1</sup> Ecological footprint is a measures the land/water area required for the flows of energy and matter to and from a defined economy (Wackernagel & Rees, 1996, p. 3).

## **FOOD SYSTEM PROBLEMS**

This section specifically focuses on aspects of food systems that link to sustainability; such issues have played a large part in triggering the development of alternative food initiatives that are discussed later. For the sake of organization, I have categorized information across the categories of health, environment, and economy, but there is some overlap between them.

### Health

In terms of health, greater consumption of high calorie, low nutrition foods combined with lower physical activity has caused elevated rates of associated chronic disease such as hypertension, type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, asthma, and arthritis and what the World Health Organization (WHO) has called a global obesity epidemic. An estimated 1.6 billion adults were overweight (having a body mass index greater than 25) and 400 million adults were obese (having a body mass index greater than 30) in 2005 (WHO, 2011). Thus, illnesses related to overweight and obesity are taking a toll on healthcare systems and economic productivity. In the United States (US), a study using regression analysis of national medical expenditure surveys estimated that medical costs for illnesses related to obesity amounted to \$147 billion for 2008, a substantial increase over the authors' estimate of \$78.5 billion for 1998 (Finkelstein, Trogon, Cohen, & Dietz, 2009). Similarly, the Department of Health in the United Kingdom<sup>2</sup> (UK) estimated the direct cost of medical costs for overweight and obesity as £4.2 billion per year, and this is expected to double by 2050 if current rates continue (Department of Health, 2010). Reduced productivity from weight problems is costing the economy £16 billion per year, and this is expected to increase to £50 billion

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<sup>2</sup> Some official government documents refer to the UK Government as Her Majesty's (HM) Government.

per year by 2050 if current rates of overweight and obesity continue (Department of Health, 2010).

Disparity in access to nutritious food, or disproportionate access to unhealthy food, is another concern within Northern countries. In the past decade, studies have revealed that different factors can make accessing nutritious food difficult, for low-income, urban residents; these include transportation options and distance to food stores and cost of food. In the US, where city-wide as well as large-scale, cross sectional studies have been conducted, evidence suggests low income and predominantly African-American neighborhoods may have particularly poor access to healthy foods (Mari Gallagher Research and Consulting Group, 2006; Morland, Wing, Diez Roux, & Poole, 2002; Zenk et al., 2005). Urban areas lacking grocers have been referred to as food deserts or grocery gaps (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010). One of the studies found that predominantly African-American communities had the lowest access to chain grocery stores, independent and smaller grocery stores, and all grocery stores, but approximately equal access to fast food restaurants as other communities (Mari Gallagher Research and Consulting Group, 2006). In other Northern countries, there is not a systematic pattern of inadequate access by race or class (for a review, see Beaulac, Kristjansson, & Cummins, 2009); however, some studies have shown such an association (East London and City Health Authority, 1999) and others have shown that accessing nutritious food is more difficult for people who lack cars, often lower-income residents (White et al., 2004). Research on the costs of healthy diets have also yielded mixed findings; studies in the UK, France, and Denmark have found that energy-dense diets cost less than healthier diets, but two US studies have found that healthier diets did not cost more (Cade,

Upmeyer, Calvert, & Greenwood, 1999; French, 2003; D. C. Mitchell et al., 2000; Nelson, Suleiman, & Gu, 2008; Stender et al., 1993).

### Environment

Genetic modification of foods involving biotechnology has also been associated with adverse health effects. For example, the American Academy of Environmental Medicine (2009) notes that animal studies reveal risks of genetically modified (GM) food consumption such as “infertility, immune dysregulation, accelerated aging, dysregulation of genes associated with cholesterol synthesis, insulin regulation, cell signalling, and protein formation, and changes in the liver, kidney, spleen and gastrointestinal system”. According to the Academy, “There is more than a casual association between GM foods and adverse health effects”, and it advises that physicians “educate their patients, the medical community, and the public to avoid GM foods when possible and provide educational materials concerning GM foods and health risks.” The Academy - not a radical organization - has called for a moratorium on GM foods and for more epidemiological research on the effects of GM foods in humans (American Academy of Environmental Medicine, 2009). In addition, genetic modification of crops has ecological impacts such as contamination of other plants, and social impacts in terms of trapping farmers into poverty through privatization of seeds- making any potential benefits a subject of contestation (Mohanty, 2005; J. Pretty, 2001).

Energy and resources used in production, packaging and transport of food and chemical inputs used in intensive agriculture take a toll on the water, soil, and air. Globally, 70 percent of the water withdrawn from rivers is for agricultural use, and total water withdrawals from rivers has doubled since 1960 (Millennium Ecosystem



Assessment, 2005, p. 2). In England and Wales, the damage from freshwater eutrophication- a process in which excessive plant growth decreases oxygen in the water - cost an estimated \$105-160 million/year during the 1990s, with an estimated \$77 million/year being spent on damages in terms of water treatment costs, reduced recreational value of water bodies, ecological effects, and economic losses related to tourism (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005, p. 57; J. N. Pretty et al., 2003). Nitrogen and phosphorous used in agricultural fertilizers are among the main contributors to nutrient loading of waters that causes freshwater eutrophication (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005, p. 69). Food production and consumption contributes about 18 percent of UK carbon emissions, and activities associated with agriculture alone contribute to an estimated 30 percent of global emissions (IAASTD, 2009b; The Strategy Unit, 2008). In the UK, one study on the costs of an individual's weekly food basket after inclusion of externalities and subsidies revealed an estimated hidden cost of £2.91 per person per week, which was 11.8 percent more than the price paid (J. N. Pretty, Ball, Lang, & Morison, 2005). The hidden cost accounted for the costs of declining ecological services and clean up associated with farm externalities, road transport to retail stores, and domestic transportation for food shopping and subsidies promoting intensive agriculture. A US study found that food production accounted for 83 percent of life-cycle CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of an average US household's 8.1 tons CO<sub>2</sub>/year footprint for food consumption, with transportation contributing only 11 percent of the footprint (Weber & Matthews, 2008).

## Economy

In terms of retail, the opening of supermarkets and other large stores such as Wal-Mart have been found to erode the social fabric, resulting in negative social and economic impacts to the surrounding community. In the UK, a study following the opening of 93 such supermarkets by the National Retail Planning Forum found a net loss of 276 jobs within a 10-mile radius of each store over a four year period, due to job losses among small food retailers and other small retailers (Rubin & Taylor, 2007). A study of the impact of an urban renewal project that involved new development dominated by a Tesco supermarket revealed a decline in local retail; the new development nearly entirely consisted of chain stores, with no existing retailers getting space that had been promised in the new development (Carley, Kirk, & McIntosh, 2001). Furthermore, the grocery sector in the UK is dominated by five supermarkets – ASDA, Sainsbury, Tesco, Safeway, and Morrisons – and in 2000 the UK government’s Competition Commission found that 27 business practices employed by these large supermarkets disadvantaged smaller retailers and worked against the public interest, but the Commission could not recommend anything other than that they develop a voluntary code to guide relations with suppliers (Competition Commission, 2000). Similar findings were discovered elsewhere in Europe; a study of the abuse of supermarket buyer power across the EU found that the market share of top five supermarkets was over 50 percent in 25 nations in 2005 (Stichele & Young, 2009, p. 14). Suppliers become dependent on supermarkets because of their control over most distribution channels, and –with the exception of large brand manufacturers - this weakens their position in terms of negotiating over prices or delivery conditions. Some of the specific practices that squeeze suppliers include listing

fees for shelf space; delisting of suppliers when reduced prices or other supermarket demands are not heeded; imposing low prices for suppliers; demanding extra or unexpected payments from suppliers for supermarket promotions; and below cost selling (Stichele & Young, 2009, pp. 16-18). In addition, supermarkets have established retail operations using similar unfair practices in other countries; Tesco, for example entered the US market using small stores, and with statements about entering food deserts which helped it gain approval from politicians; yet only a few of its 199 stores in California, Nevada, were located in grocery gaps (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010, p. 50; Miskowski, 2011). In addition, it has drawn criticism over its predominantly nonunion, part-time, low-pay workforce; employees have claimed difficulty in earning a living wage or have affordable health insurance (Logan, 2009).

In the US, studies have found that the construction of new Wal-Mart stores has been associated with diminishing sales at existing local retail grocery stores (Artz & Stone, 2006); lower social capital, voter turnout, and nonprofit organizations at a county level (Goetz & Rupasingha, 2006; Goetz & Swaminathan, 2006); the collapse of surrounding businesses (Davis et al., 2009); and reduction of the tax base and burdening of other taxpayers through the employment of a largely low-wages workforce (Angotti, Paul, Gray, & Williams, 2010, p. 10). Thus, although Wal-Mart has become the largest purveyor of organic and fair-trade foods, it has done so with significant costs to surrounding communities. Wal-Mart provides cheap nutritious food, among other items, but can do so through practices such as an aggressive anti-union policy and labor law violations (Human Rights Watch, 2007). Further, while Wal-Mart depicts itself as supporting family farms, it obtains 80 percent of its food from China where lax food

safety standards apply, and it opposes Country of Origin Labeling that would help consumers make informed decisions about the food purchases (Wal-Mart Watch, 2007). Although there are fewer studies on the Wal-Mart-owned ASDA supermarket in the UK, the company has been found to use similar strategies as Wal-Mart; for example, ASDA has offered financial incentives to workers to give up their collective bargaining rights (International Trade Union Confederation, 2007).

In terms of agriculture and trade policies, subsidies supporting agriculture in the European Union (EU) and US harm the global South by encouraging overproduction that is often dumped in poor nations, leaving producers in the South unable to compete with cheap prices. Even within countries, inequitable subsidization occurs; a 2003 study revealed that six counties in East Britain – grain country - received over 540 million of the more than 2 billion in UK annual subsidies (Nuffield College Oxford, 2003). In sum, the political construction of prices harm farmers across the world through overproduction and prices unrelated to production costs (McMichael, 2005).

#### **EMERGENCE OF ALTERNATIVES**

Concerns about adverse effects of the industrial food system highlighted above have led to the emergence of a different set of practices, varying in emphases across regions and time (Feagan, 2007). Collectively, these are often subsumed in the term ‘alternative’ food initiatives, while some scholars have referred to the diversity of social activity as the alternative food, sustainable agriculture, or agro-food movement (Buttel, 1997; Hassanein, 2003). According to social movement theorists, a social movement requires a shared set of beliefs or feelings that create a collective identity, and for sustainable agriculture or agro-food movements, the collective identity centered around

opposition to the industrial food system (Diani, 1992). Characteristics of alternative food initiatives comprising the movement include one or more of the following criteria:

- An emphasis on reducing distances between consumers and producers of food
- Non-conventional supply/distribution channels
- Encouraging the principles of trust and community
- A focus on 'quality', often preserving traditions or heritage

(Venn et al., 2006)

The term has tended to apply to practices in the North, but the motivation for these practices has differed between Europe and North America. In Europe, there has been an emphasis on rural development and cultural traditions of product and place, and later fears of genetically modified and diseased food sparked interest; in North America, there has been an emphasis on process and place and alternative food practices viewed as social and oppositional movements rather than just about rural development (P. Allen, M. FitzSimmons, M. Goodman, & K. Warner, 2003; Goodman, 2003; Goodman & Goodman, 2007; Ilbery & Kneafsey, 1998; Ilbery & Maye, 2005; Ilbery, Morris, Buller, Maye, & Kneafsey, 2005). For example, US based studies of food cooperatives – democratic, membership based food-buying clubs or stores often situated in urban settings - have examined motivation for volunteering and membership, finding an anti-supermarket ethos and desire for small-scale community projects often drive involvement (Goldman & Clancy, 1991; Hibbert, Piacentini, & Al Dajani, 2003; Wilkins, 1996; Wilkins & Hillers, 1994).

## **From Organic to Local**

Various trajectories have marked the development of alternative agri-food movements. The beginnings of an organic movement in the 1960s and 70s corresponded to counterculture movements of the time; these farmers believed in farming without chemicals and in mixed crop operations, and sold directly or through cooperatives (Miller, 2009, p. 79). Advocates of organic production claim that it yields several benefits—the replenishment of the soil with organic material; avoidance of synthetic chemicals which could harm the ecosystem and adversely impact the health of farm workers and consumers of affected produce; and greater employment compared to conventional agriculture. In Britain, the Soil Association began an organic certification scheme in 1973, and in the US 40 certification schemes were operating at the state or regional level by the late 1990s (Jaffee & Howard, 2010; Soil Association, n.d.).

According to the bifurcation thesis, the advent of organic certification split organic production into an industrial sector and a local sector, the latter which retained some of the ethos of the early organic movement (Goodman & Goodman, 2007). Others have referred to this as conventionalization, defined as, “the dynamics by which the organic sector reproduces the most salient features of conventional agriculture...being subjected, for example, to modernization and intensification – in which economies of scale are becoming increasingly important and farms are increasingly relying on purchased off-farm inputs such as feed, fertilizer and machinery” (De Wit & Verhoog, 2007). Guthman (2008c) claims that the organic movement’s shift away from the state and toward the market to solve problems pertaining to food and agriculture paved the way for consumer choice as a central organizing mechanism in contemporary food

activism. In particular, the development of certification schemes which confer a steep price for the use of labels has translated to higher prices for consumers compared to products that are not labeled (Guthman, 2007). Moreover, certification standards came to be driven by the demands of markets, and in the US, this resulted in any scale of production to potentially gain organic certification (Jaffee & Howard, 2010). The development of a national United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) organic certification undermined the early movement's ethos further by prohibiting certifiers from enforcing stricter standards than the USDA, even if the certifiers had applied stricter standards previously (Jaffee & Howard, 2010).

As organic food gained popularity, the takeover of small businesses by multinational corporations resulted in the ownership of much of the organic industry by multinational corporations (MNCs) such as Cargill, Heinz, General Mills, and Coca Cola (Jaffee & Howard, 2010; Johnston, Biro, & MacKendrick, 2009). The resulting arrangements continue to use of narratives about family farms and the branding of the small producers to sell products through spatially vast distribution networks (Jaffee & Howard, 2010; Johnston, et al., 2009). Agro-food scholars posit that the local food and other related movements developed out of dissatisfaction with the trajectory of the organic and sustainable agriculture movement (Goodman & Goodman, 2007). Local food activism, in an attempt to bypass industrial actors, focused on efforts to build local food systems with more direct links between farmers and consumers through shortened supply chains and direct marketing (Hendrickson & Heffernan, 2002; C. Hinrichs, 2000; Kirwan, 2006; Sefyang, 2009).

## Limits of Localization Practices

Several scholars warn that food system localization may not always result in positive sum gains to society, the economy or the environment- rather, localization serves as a scalar strategy that can result in different outcomes depending on the agenda of those advancing the strategy (A.C. Bellows & Hamm, 2001; Born & Purcell, 2006). With regard to environmental costs, the energy inputs associated with food vary by food type, agricultural practices, storage and distribution, and means of collection by consumers; thus, imported food may have less overall environmental costs than food grown more locally (Hess, 2009, p. 105). Some research has in fact shown that support of buying from local farms does not necessarily link to concern about food quality or ecological sustainability (DuPuis & Goodman, 2005; C. Hinrichs, 2003; Winter, 2003). Such defensive localism only puts up cultural boundaries between a place-based community<sup>3</sup> and the wider world (DuPuis & Goodman, 2005; C. Hinrichs, 2003; Winter, 2003).

In terms of social justice, one study has pointed to divergence of contemporary ‘buy local’ campaigns in the US from previous political consumerism efforts such as Buy Black campaigns and Buy Union campaigns which highlighted racism during the Jim Crow era and anti-union businesses, respectively (C. Hinrichs & Allen, 2008). The authors argue that, in contrast, buy local campaigns deflect attention away from social inequalities resulting from agro-food policy. Other studies have examined producers profiting on the basis of ‘local’ credentials and have uncovered social inequalities. Among producers supplying ‘locally’, aspects of agricultural practices deemed sustainable can involve exploitation of migrant labor, even in producer cooperatives (Trauger, 2007). Moreover, in small-scale operations that may not use migrant labor,

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<sup>3</sup> I use the term place-based community to refer to a community defined by a physical boundary.



those producing food through sustainable methods often cannot afford the food themselves (Jarosz, 2008; Trauger, 2007).

The emphasis on local food also overlooks the impact of trade on people in the global South whose livelihoods depend on export of produce. Oxfam and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) have coined the term “fair miles” to encourage reflection on the implications of a local-only approach to food consumption (Chi, MacGregor, & King, 2009). They note that production of green beans has roughly the same energy inputs in the UK and Kenya because most African smallholders rely on more manual labor and use less chemical inputs per hectare than farmers in the global North. Airfreight of produce from Kenya to the UK, often using the belly of passenger planes, adds 0.1 percent to UK’s total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, but, according to the authors, the amount of produce transported supports 1 – 1.5 million livelihoods in Kenya. Combined with the fact that many African nations suffer from the effects of climate change but contribute relatively little to global greenhouse gas emissions, and that trade agreements and structural adjustment policies have led many Southern nations to produce food for export at the expense of domestic food security, this situation complicates the notion of ethics and justice regarding food issues (Gimenez & Shattuck, 2011; Goita, 2010).

### **Race, Class, and Alternative Food Spaces**

Another criticism is that alternative food initiatives have tended to frame issues in a way that resonates more with white, middle class people, and according to Slocum (2007), have become associated with whiteness. Two agro-food scholars contend that alternative food practices are coded as white not only through the predominantly white

bodies inhabiting them, but also through the discourse circulating through them (Guthman, 2008b; R Slocum, 2006; R. Slocum, 2007). Slocum (2006), found that the leadership of US-based community food organizations that serve food-insecure communities was predominantly white, despite the subjects of their work being predominantly African American, Latina, and Native American African (Guthman, 2008b; R Slocum, 2006; R. Slocum, 2007). She contends that these organizations “extol the virtues of community and self sufficiency in a manner that obscures the racist, classist, and gendered features of the food system, past and present.” According to Slocum (2007), “While the ideals of healthy food, people and land are not intrinsically white, the objectives, tendencies, strategies, the emphases and absences and the things overlooked in community food make them so.” Regarding farmers markets and CSA, Guthman (2008c) asserts although some people of color do shop at such spaces in urban settings, they have to overcome the whiteness of such spaces to do so.

The only comprehensive study of farmers markets that surveyed ethnic constitution of farmers market customers in the US found that 74 percent of customers were white; 14 percent were African American; five percent were Asian; and six percent were Other according to farmers market managers; these quantities were disproportionate to ethnic constitution nationally (Payne, 2002, p. 7). Regional studies of CSA have found similar results; for example a study of CSA members in the central coast region of California found that members were 90 percent European-American; 81 percent had a college degree, and 66 percent had a household income of 60,000 or more-these were disproportionately high in relation to the demographics in the region (C. Hinrichs & Kremer, 2002; Perez, Allen, & Brown, 2003). In Europe, there have been no

comparable national studies of farmers markets or CSA, but one study of organic box scheme members found that over 75 percent of users in England and nearly one third of box scheme users in France had professional occupations compared to 31.3 percent and 6.0 percent professionals in the regional populations, respectively (E. Brown, Dury, & Holdsworth, 2009).

In an empirical study of CSA and farmers markets managers, Guthman (2008c) discovered that racialized representations and structural inequities reinforce one another and argues that alternative food discourse manifests “color-blind mentalities and universalizing impulses often associated with whiteness”, which then codes alternative food practice and space as white. Responses to survey and interview questions about the participation of people of color revealed pervasive rhetoric of “if they only knew” and color-blindness. Some respondents felt that questions about the ethnicity of customers were themselves racist; others felt that trying to get a diversity of customers was a good goal but simultaneously felt that it pressure about being politically correct; and some felt that attention to difference was wrong and explicitly stated an attempt to be color-blind (Guthman, 2008b).

In response to the question “What do you think are some of the reasons that it is primarily European-American people who seem to participate in CSAs?”, comments largely invoked lifestyle choices or personal characteristics such as greater concern about quality, greater health consciousness, more time, and better education. Farmers markets managers had similar responses but also noted factors related to neighborhood demographics, location, and cost as barriers for people of color. Yet even managers who cited cost as an obstacle also cited difference in values, stating that food is affordable to

everyone and the difference lies in priorities; these respondents felt that the solution is through education. According to Guthman, “paying the full cost” – a reference to the cost of food produced in a way that avoids producing the environmental and social externalities characteristic of the industrial food system – disregards the historical inequalities in US agricultural development in terms of land and labor, and thus overlooks the implications for people with historical or contemporary connections to inequalities that have subsidized cheap food (Guthman, 2008b). Guthman does not report the racial background of respondents, so it is unclear whether any of the respondents were racial minorities or whether there was a difference in responses by race.

In a different article, Guthman (2008a), who has regularly taught an experiential course “Agriculture, Food and Social Justice” at the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems at University of California Santa Cruz, presents similar patterns among her students. She drew from students’ first day questionnaires, field study observations and her own observations of them to show that activism around food tends to indulge white desires rather than those of the communities they perceive to be helping. Most students started the class and their required projects with the desire to “bring good food to others”, then went on to encounter resistance or disinterest during fieldwork. One student observed an employment program for homeless people and recovering drug addicts; the program taught farming skills, but according to the student, the trainees did not take home as much produce as they could carry, despite encouragements to do so. Another student working at a garden project in New Orleans after Katrina wrote of a local black activist who she had invited to stop by and pick

produce, but when she stopped by, she stated that she not know how to cook those types of produce and did not take anything (Guthman, 2008a).

In another example, a student working at an organic garden encouraged youth to work in the garden and pick fruit, but noted that the facial expressions of the African American chaperone, as well as the youth, seemed less than enthusiastic. This same student later learned from speaking to the youth that they resented working for free and for white farmers. In a telling example, one student's exchange with an African-American neighbor revealed that her neighbor did not appreciate a truck that sold organic food at below market prices, stating "who are they to tell me how to eat?" Such experiences led some students came to conclude that 'alternatives' may reinforce feelings of exclusion (Guthman, 2008a). According to Guthman (2008a), several students felt that "alternatives reflect the desires of the creators of these projects more than those of the communities they putatively serve."

Admittedly, Guthman's article is based on the self-reported experiences of a group of students, not a sample that can be generalized from; nonetheless, the experiences point to some complications of efforts to 'bring good food to others'. Residents of areas with poor food retail may feel isolated by not having conventional food stores and perceive alternative food initiatives that they did not ask for - like truck selling cheap organic produce - as a poor substitute for commercial stores that others take for granted. They may also harbor resentment if such initiatives are delivered by well-intentioned white people. If the food provided by the initiatives does not resonate with the people it is meant to serve, it may turn people away rather than attract them, despite material benefits of free or cheap food.

However, some initiatives have used framing that resonates with people of color, as is evident in the names of organizations like The Peoples' Grocery, Mo' Betta Foods, Food from the Hood, Mandela's Farmers' Market, and Black to our Roots (Guthman 2008a, 2008b). Others have explicitly sought minority farmers as suppliers, and many initiatives use suppliers who use little or no chemicals but are not certified organic producers (see for example Bed-Stuy Farm Share, 2011; The Fort Green CSA, 2011). Such tactics manifest frame bridging, "the linkage of two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular issue" (D. A. Snow, Rochford Jr., Worden, & Benford, 1986, p. 467). In these cases, the sustainability frame was linked to a social justice or empowerment frame through the support of minority farmers and minority-led community enterprises. Nonetheless, many of the staff and leaders of these organizations struggle with sustaining an African American presence, and have mentioned that this sometimes entails keeping out white people who want to help (Guthman 2008b). One such organization based in Detroit explicitly states:

We observed that many of the key players in the local urban agriculture movement were young whites, who while well-intentioned, never-the-less, exerted a degree of control inordinate to their numbers in Detroit's population. Many of those individuals moved to Detroit from other places specifically to engage in agricultural or other food security work. It was and is our view that the most effective movements grow organically from the people whom they are designed to serve (Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, 2010).

Both Guthman (2008a, 2008b) and Slocum (2006) have observed an awareness of these kinds problems among movement activists, and Slocum has noted that some organizations conduct antiracism training workshops in an attempt to raise consciousness about exclusion in community food practices. In addition to minority-led community

food initiatives efforts to engage minority communities, mainstream farmers' markets have become more accessible to lower income people through acceptance of food stamps. According to the USDA, food stamp redemptions at farmers markets and farm stands increased from over \$2 million in 2008 to over \$4 million in 2009 (USDA, 2010). However, this amounts to .01 percent of total food stamp redemptions, with the vast majority occurring at retail stores (USDA, 2010).

The literature reviewed above highlights some contradictions and tensions between different values surrounding food initiatives concerned with environmental sustainability. Research done thus far has just begun to explore these issues and has raised boundaries of class and culture that can potentially exclude poor, minority and low income constituents of communities, but further study is necessary both with the US and in other nations. In the following section, I discuss food movements whose goals are broader than provision of local or organic foods.

## **Beyond Organic and Local**

### Community Food Security

In the US, efforts such as urban community gardens had been around since the 1890s, and many contemporary gardens are on land owned by city Parks and Recreation departments (Hess, 2009, pp. 150-159; Lawson, 2005). These types of activities could be considered as contributing to community food security - defined as "a condition 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, 2001). This definition incorporates the concepts of physical and economic access to healthy food, the optimal use of opportunities to produce food within the community, availability of foods appropriate to diverse groups, the use of

ecologically sound methods of production, and trading that supports the livelihoods of those involved in food production and distribution. Both community food security and food sovereignty-which is discussed in the next section- marked a shift from the prevailing idea of food security emerging from the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) 1996 World Food Summit - a condition that "at the individual, household, national, regional and global levels is achieved when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (FAO 1996 cited in FAO Commodity Policy and Projections Service, 2003, p. 28). In theory, food security could occur under an autocracy or other regimes where people lack other human rights, and it could occur through food aid and imports; food security focuses on the end and not the process through which that is achieved.

The community food security movement evolved from anti-hunger advocacy to tackling the food system problems generally, and it gained momentum in the successful lobbying effort for legislation attached to the 1995 US Farm Bill that would support and fund community food security initiatives (A.C. Bellows & Hamm, 2003). Although activity pertaining to community food security was not new, after the intense mobilization around the US Farm Bill, actors involved in the lobbying effort coalesced with establishment of the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC). The coalition's broad membership of nearly 400 spans Canada and the US and includes the USDA, state health departments, city planning departments, hospitals, food cooperatives, community food growing projects, farmers markets, university centers, and food banks (CFSC, 2010). Currently, USDA funds about 20 projects annually at approximately a couple of



undred thousand dollars each (A.C. Bellows & Hamm, 2003; Pothukuchi, 2007).

Typically the projects funded have been those that link producers to lower-income urban communities, support urban agriculture, or involve assessment of community food security and planning improvements (USDA, n.d.-a, n.d.-b). Because a large part of community food security activity has come to involve entrepreneurship and linking farming and gardening to social improvement, Guthman contends that the movement “depoliticizes hunger” and reflects neoliberal mentalities<sup>4</sup> in the mechanisms used to solve social and ecological problems (Guthman, 2008c).

Research on community food security is largely based on North American practices, covering projects such as farm-to-school or farm-to-hospital programs, urban agriculture, community food assessments, food policy councils, and projects funded by the Community Food Grant (Harper, Shattuck, Holt-Giminez, Alkon, & Lambrick, 2009; Joshi & Beery, 2007; Pothukuchi, 2007; Wekerle, 2004). Presumably, disparate efforts to enhance community food security may exist in Europe, but the term community food security is not associated with them. In the UK, for example, the most comparable entity to CFSC is Sustain, the Alliance for Better Food and Farming, which does not have as large or as diverse a membership as CFSC (Sustain, 2010a). However, similar to CFSC, Sustain advocates for changes to policies pertaining to food and farming that increase sustainable food in schools and hospitals, increase opportunities for urban food growing, and encourage stores to provide healthy and sustainable foods (Sustain, 2010a).

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<sup>4</sup> Neoliberalism has been defined as “a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey, 2005, p. 2). Neoliberalization describes the process through which neoliberalism emerges as governmentality “that produces subjects, forms of citizenship and behavior, and a new organization of the social” (W. Brown, 2006 p. 37).

## Food Sovereignty

A growing movement calls for food sovereignty, a concept that at its core is about democracy and the ability for people to make decisions affecting and shaping their lives. The first call for food sovereignty came at the World Food Summit in 1996, when La Via Campesina (LVC) - the international peasant movement organization, proposed the concept in relation to prevailing ideas of food security-

Food sovereignty is the right of each nation to maintain and develop its own capacity to produce its basic foods respecting cultural and productive diversity. We have the right to produce our own food in our own territory. Food sovereignty is a precondition to genuine food security.  
(La Via Campesina, 1996)

This perspective problematized the idea of food security by proposing that self-determination is a process necessary for achieving food security. The 1996 statement enumerated several principles of food sovereignty that are presented in Table 1.1 (p. 25) (La Via Campesina, 1996).

Early in the movement's history, the focus was on peasants and small farmers, and LVC became one of the most effective transnational movements; its mobilization against trade liberalization in particular helped lead to the collapse of WTO Ministerial talks in 2003 (Martinez-Torres & Rosset, 2010). Although LVC had been developing alliances with other movements on trade issues, in 2007, LVC held a major conference in Nyelini, Mali to forge a movement for food sovereignty with links to other movements working on woman's rights, land, and the environment, and proposed the following concept of food sovereignty:

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs

of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers and users. Food sovereignty prioritises local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal - fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just incomes to all peoples as well as the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition. It ensures that the rights to use and manage lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food. Food sovereignty implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social and economic classes and generations. (Nyelini, 2007)

This concept was a product of the integration of different movements and thus incorporates the interests of constituents broader than peasants and small farmers. In its ambition to include a broad spectrum of people, it also contains a contradiction in mentioning that the rights to “use and manage” natural resources are held by food producers; food producers and food distributors include corporations that the movement targets as antithetical to food sovereignty. Nonetheless, the Nyelini Declaration elaborates what food sovereignty struggles for and against; these are listed in Table 1.2 (p. 28) (Nyelini, 2007). Although the Nyelini conference succeeded in forging links with other movements in the global South, the food sovereignty movement has not developed as extensively with peasant and small farmer communities in Europe and North America.

**Table 1.1: 1996 Food Sovereignty Principles**

Principle	Issue	Actions called for
Food- Human right	Individual access to “safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food in sufficient quantity and quality to sustain a healthy life with full human dignity.”	Nations “declare that access to food is a constitutional right and guarantee the development of the primary sector to ensure the concrete realization of this fundamental right.”
Agrarian reform	“Reform which gives landless and farming people – especially women— ownership and control of the land they work and returns territories to Indigenous peoples.”	“Governments must establish and support decentralized rural credit systems that prioritize the production of food for domestic consumption to ensure food sovereignty.  Governments must make long-term investments of public resources in the development of socially and ecologically appropriate rural infrastructure.”
Protecting natural resources	Farming communities “must have the right to practice sustainable management of natural resources and to preserve biological diversity.”	No specific, but call World Trade Organization’s Intellectual Property Rights Agreement “unacceptable”, implying reform.
Reorganizing food trade	“Food is first and foremost a source of nutrition and only secondarily an item of trade.”	National agriculture policies prioritize production for domestic consumption.  End to export dumping and subsidized exports.  Food prices in domestic and international markets regulated to reflect actual costs of food production  Forgiveness of trade-related debts that burden rural peoples.
Ending globalization of hunger	Policies of multilateral organizations increasingly controlled by multinational corporations	Regulation and taxation of speculative capital and a strictly enforced code of conduct for multinational corporations.
Social peace	Right to be free from violence. Increasing poverty and marginalization in rural areas, and oppression of ethnic minorities and indigenous people is unacceptable.	No specific, but denounce “increasing incidence of racism in countryside”.
Democratic control	Right to “honest, accurate information and open and democratic decision-making... Rural women, in particular, must be granted direct and active decision-making on food and rural issues.”	Democratization of United Nations and related organizations to allow peasants and small farmers direct input into formulating agricultural policies.

It also has had limited collaboration with other groups-

We work with a lot of youth during protests (Cancun, G8...) but we do not have an organized collaboration outside of these events. Among immigrant organizations, La Via Campesina has key contacts (for example in Spain) but there a more distinguished collaboration does not exist. The same is true with the marginalized urban movements, urban agriculture movements and consumers.... (La Via Campesina, 2008, pp. 109-113)

Although originally founded largely by peasants in Latin America and some parts of Europe, in recent years, the food sovereignty movement has gained momentum in the United States (US) - considered a key site of activity because of its power in trade negotiations - and is linked to some actors within the community food security movement. As such, its presence in the US employs non-confrontational methods and institutionalization into organizations associated with the community food security movement. In the midst of activity around food issues at the 2010 US Social Forum in Detroit, a broad coalition of groups organized around food sovereignty and officially launched the U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance - which had its roots in the US Working Group on the Food Crisis - at CFSC's annual conference in October 2010 (Holt-Giminez, 2010). Food sovereignty activity in US includes food sovereignty ordinances that grant small farmers exemption from licensing and inspection requirements in selling food at community venues (Reinhardt, 2011). The food sovereignty concept also resonates with poor urban communities, and community food initiatives in such areas have drawn on the food sovereignty approach in framing their work; these include urban, minority-led initiatives. For example, Detroit Black Community Food Security Network started in 2006 to exert greater control over the food system and develop self reliance through food production and distribution and by educating the community about food and health. The

organization succeeded in developing a food security policy that outlines specific actions required to create an economically just food system and address structural racism, and getting the city council to pass it (Detroit Food Policy Council, 2008; Holt-Gimenez, Wang, & Shattuck, 2011). In addition, community gardening organizations in New York City have hosted exchanges with farmers from LVC, finding common ground in their struggles to grow food appropriate for their communities (Schiavoni, 2009). For some of these urban gardeners, the concept of food sovereignty resonates more than food security because of the idea of having “sovereign control over their own, culturally appropriate food” and “valuing ancestry and land” (Yonette Fleming quoted in Schiavoni, 2009, p. 687).

The influence of the food sovereignty concept is evident in the types of community food initiatives that exist in New York; in 2011, at least five markets regularly sold produce from community food growing projects in low-income communities during the growing season (Active Living Network, n.d.; Added Value, 2009; East New York Farms, 2010; La Familia Verde, n.d.). These projects developed food production in vacant properties and then started produce sales with the objective of improving access to sustainably produced, healthy foods for the residents of the neighborhoods they operated in (McMillan, 2008). People of color grow food in community spaces and contribute to the produce sales at some of these markets. In addition, at least 16 CSA groups located in poorer neighborhoods were applying a sliding scale where higher income shareholders paid a larger amount that subsidized low income members, or a limited number of discounted shares for low income people

through support from a nonprofit organization (see for example Central Brooklyn CSA, 2011; Clinton Hill CSA, 2011; East New York Farms, 2011; Flatbush Farm Share, 2011; Harlem Community Farm Share, n.d.; Just Food, n.d.; Redhook CSA, n.d.; The Kitchen Table NYC, 2011). Some of these groups were also sourcing their produce from farmers of color who use sustainable methods of production, which resonated with the identity of people of color communities in the city.

**Table 1.2: Food Sovereignty Principles Articulated in the Nyelini Declaration**

Issue	For	Against
Democratic Process	All people, nations, and states able to determine own food producing systems and policies that provide everyone with good quality, adequate, affordable, healthy and culturally appropriate food Food sovereignty considered a human right recognized and implemented by communities, states, and international bodies	Privatization and commodification of food, land, water, seeds, livestock, and basic services Oppression, inequality, or unfairness in social relations between gender, peoples, racial groups, classes
Rights of Women and Indigenous Peoples	Recognition and respect of women's roles and rights in food production and representation of women in all decision making bodies	Globalization of paternalistic and patriarchal values that marginalize women and diverse agricultural, indigenous, pastoral and fisher communities
Agrarian Reform	Guarantees peasants rights to land and seeds; ensures fishing communities control over fishing areas; grants pastoral communities control over pastoral lands; respects local autonomy and governance and self-determination	Criminalization of people who struggle to protect these rights
Trade/Markets	Removal of food and agriculture from World Trade Organization purview Access to local markets for small farmers and peasants; Protection of domestic markets Fair prices that cover costs of production	MNC domination of international trade and trade negotiations End to subsidies of agribusiness
Labour	Just compensation/incomes and decent working conditions	Exploitation of workers
Post-Disaster	Local organization for self-help	Post disaster programs that destroy the environment Food aid that introduces GM organisms into the environment and food systems
Farming methods	Agroecology, labor-intensive; Valuing and applying local knowledge	Industrial monoculture, transgenic crops and animals, terminator technology, industrial aquaculture Patenting of life
Diversity	Valuing diversity of knowledge; food; language and culture; and ways of organizing	

In contrast, although food sovereignty has support among small-scale farmers in parts of Europe and among some advocacy groups, urban community food initiatives are not members of the food sovereignty coalition there, and have not hosted the kind of exchanges and coalition building activities that have occurred in the US. It is important to note, however, that food sovereignty principles have underpinned food-related movements in Europe such as the anti-GM foods movement which had widespread support and contributed to the six-year moratorium of GM food production in Europe, and the subsequent requirement of GM-foods to be labeled (BBC News, 2006; P. Mitchell, 2003)<sup>5</sup>. In European rural activism explicitly oriented around food sovereignty, there is variation between countries; Spain, a nation whose peasants contributed to the development of La Via Campesina, has been a site of food sovereignty discourse for several years. In contrast, the first organized articulation of food sovereignty in Britain occurred in May 2011, when the UK Food Group- a network of nongovernmental organizations working on food and agriculture issues- held a workshop on food sovereignty in advance of the Nyelini Europe forum held in Austria in August 2011. The Nyelini Europe forum emulated the Nyelini 2007 conference in bringing together different groups to dialogue about food sovereignty using consensus based processes (Iles, 2011).

Until this event, the major activity related to food sovereignty in Europe was the articulation of changes sought in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) developed by the European Platform for Food Sovereignty. This organization consisted of farmer

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<sup>5</sup> In contrast, according to the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Technologies (ISAAA) GM crop production in the US is the highest in the world and there is no mandatory labeling (ISAAA, 2010).



unions, workers' unions, development organizations, public health organizations, and environmental organizations seeking to promote ecologically, socially and economically sustainable systems of production that produce healthy food and respect animal welfare (European Platform for Food Sovereignty, 2007). The CAP was created in the 1960s to facilitate adequate incomes for farmers and adequate food supplies for member states in Europe by guaranteeing a fixed price every year for certain products and applying tariffs and quotas to defend these prices against cheaper imports. It also supported intensive agriculture, which often resulted in surpluses that amounted to greater expenditure by governments on purchasing this than they received in return and had the effect of providing relatively little support to small farmers. Surpluses, because of CAP subsidies, also undercut the prices of domestic produce in the global South.

Food sovereignty advocates developed the European Food Declaration which calls for specific reforms to CAP that address public health, commerce/trade, environmental, and small-scale producers' concerns. Below are some of the changes sought:

- 1) consider food as a universal human right, not merely a commodity.
- 2) give priority to growing food and feed for Europe and change international trade in agricultural products according to principles of equity, social justice and ecological sustainability. The CAP should not harm other countries' food and agriculture systems.
- 3) promote healthy eating patterns, moving towards plant-based diets and towards a reduced consumption of meat, energy-dense and highly processed foods, and saturated fats, while respecting the regional cultural dietary habits and traditions.

- 4) give priority to maintaining an agriculture all over Europe that involves numerous farmers producing food and caring for the countryside. That is not achievable without fair and secure farm prices, which should allow a fair income for farmers and agricultural workers, and fair prices for consumers.
- 5) ensure fair, non-discriminatory conditions for farmers and agricultural workers in Central and Eastern Europe, and promote fair and equitable access to land.
- 6) respect the local and global environment, protect the finite resources of soil and water, increase biodiversity and respect animal welfare.
- 7) guarantee that agriculture and food production remain free from GMOs and foster farmers' seeds and the diversity of domestic livestock species, building on local knowledge.
- 8) stop promoting the production and use of industrial agrofuels and give priority to the reduction of transport in general.
- 9) ensure transparency along the food chain so that citizens know how their food is produced [and by whom], where it comes from, what it contains and what is included in the price paid by consumers.
- 10) reduce the concentration of power in the agricultural, food processing and retail sectors and their influence on what is produced and consumed, and promote food systems that shorten the distance between farmers and consumers.
- 11) encourage the production and consumption of local, seasonal, high quality products reconnecting citizens with their food and food producers.
- 12) devote resources to teaching children the skills and knowledge required to produce, prepare, and enjoy healthy, nutritious food.

(European Food Declaration, 2011)

Recommended strategies to meet these objectives include:

- management of agricultural imports to avoid imports at prices below the European average cost of production
- a combination of public support for the agroecological methods of production and practices and progressive taxes for non-agroecological models
- Public procurement rules that ensure the gradual acquisition of socially and ecologically sustainable produced food by public institutions

(European Food Declaration, 2011)

and the elimination of:

- Withdrawals of fruits and vegetables from the market, aimed at keeping prices high and costing €117 million Euros/year (60 percent of withdrawals are destroyed)
- Promotion of wine consumption and aid for distillation of surplus that costs €650 million/year
- Subsidization of tobacco production, costing €650 million/year

(Elinder, Joosens, Raw, Andreasson, & Lang, 2003, pp. 9-12)

#### Support for Food Sovereignty Principles from International Bodies

It is important to note that aside from the food sovereignty movement, calls for a different approach to the food system have also come from the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD), a three-year project sponsored by United Nations, the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility, and involving five UN agencies and 400 scientists (IAASTD

2009). Biotech companies Monsanto and Syngenta, and the plant science trade association CropLife also participated in the project but withdrew shortly before completion, “because of its failure to recognise the role modern plant sciences, including plant biotechnology and crop protection, can play in increasing agricultural crop productivity” (Adam, 2008; CropLife, 2008). The assessment was a significant global scientific undertaking akin to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and was conducted to provide information to guide decision makers on agricultural research and development; however, it differed from other international assessments in its attempt to include traditional and local practitioners’ knowledge (IAASTD, 2009a, p. 51).

Noting the detrimental impacts of high-input agriculture, the assessment has called for policies to encourage low-input technologies, such as agroforestry, organic agriculture, permaculture, and integrated pest management that are based on an understanding of agroecology and soil science. It also advocated a multifunctional approach to agricultural policies, one that recognizes that the role of agriculture extends beyond commodities to environmental services, landscape amenities, and cultural heritage (IAASTD 2009). Significantly, the report recommends mechanisms to internalize environmental and social externalities and reward sustainable practices that provide ecological services and minimize damaging public health impacts (IAASTD, 2009a, p. 442). Although the IAASTD report is a nonbinding document, its executive summary was signed by over 50 nations, including the UK (IAASTD, 2008). The US, Canada, and Australia approved a short statement by governments that cited the importance of the report, but did not sign the executive summary which recommends policy directions mentioned above. The US rejection of the policy recommendations

points to the significance of the food sovereignty activity in the US given that the assessment, sponsored by international bodies, reinforced many of the aims and rationale of the food sovereignty movement (IAASTD, 2008).

#### England- Historical Movement Related to Food Sovereignty

Food sovereignty principles have had a place in England's history long before the movement conceived by LVC in the 1990s. Although the movement's specific positions about the international trade system and modern technologies were not applicable, the core idea that land and other natural resources should not be commodities was just as relevant then as it is today. The Diggers was a movement that opposed the treatment of land as private property and believed that landless poor had the right to cultivate and live on common land and drew upon Christian texts to justify their ideas (Hessayon, 2009). To this end, the Diggers prepared two manifestos expressing their beliefs, and developed communities of squatters, although most were short-lived due to violence and other forms of opposition from landowners and their tenants (Hessayon, 2009). However, the ideology and approach of peaceful occupation of land was taken up by the group known as Dongas that was part of the anti-roads movement in the 1990s, and by the current climate camp movement (Howkins, 2002).

#### **OUTLINE OF DISSERTATION**

In this chapter, I have presented various strands of research that this dissertation draws upon or intersects with. The major gap that this dissertation begins to address is the application of food sovereignty principles in urban community food initiatives in Europe; it does so by examining the case of community food initiatives in London that

sell fresh produce. More specifically, it explores the different ways that CFIs oriented around civic engagement have emerged in London, both in terms of motivations and organizational structure, and the innovative practices that some CFIs have adopted in the pursuit of specific objectives. The CFIs demonstrate different dynamics – initiation by local-level government to address health inequalities; grassroots initiation in response to perceived market and government failure in terms of food access; and grassroots initiation to address perceived failure of the government in regulation of agricultural production. The study finds that although the ultimate goal of many of the initiatives aligns with the food sovereignty paradigm, application of the principles outside the context of rural areas or Southern nations has meant the pursuit of some principles sometimes contradicts other principles. In relation to the core idea of citizens having greater control over the food system, such contradictions fit within the paradigm if citizens are involved in deciding the approach to take, but the extent to which democratic process was actualized varied widely among the initiatives in this study.

In the next chapter, I explain theoretical concepts underpinning the study and which are also used in the analysis. Chapter Three presents the research design and methods used for the study. This chapter also presents information about case study selection and characteristics of the case study sites. Chapter Four introduces 20 CFIs found to be operating across London, drawing out themes underpinning the initiatives' work; these themes are then applied to the case studies in subsequent chapters. Chapters Five and Six present four case studies, organized by conventional or organic food sourcing criteria; the case studies use thick data to trace the organizational development and ideologies motivating each CFI and explore participation by customers. Chapter

Seven synthesizes the main findings of the case studies, and Chapter Eight is the conclusion, where I discuss practical implications and limitations of the study.

## **CHAPTER 2 - THEORETICAL APPROACH**

### **INTRODUCTION**

According to Diani (2003, p. 304), social movements are “non-hierarchical network forms of organization with boundaries defined by collective identity- that is, by actors’ mutual recognition as members of the movement linked by a distinctive culture and solidarity”. He adds that social movement organizations “are all those groups who identify themselves, and are identified by others, as part of the same movement, and exchange on that basis” (M. Diani, 2003, p. 305). The emphasis in this concept of social movements is on shared identity; since the coops in this study seek to address failings in the food system through consumer and/or civic action- action involving civil-society led organizations, they may be considered as falling within social movements for sustainable and just food mentioned in the previous chapter.

With regard to consumer action, activists have coined ethical shopping activity as ‘boycotting’ in reference to the opposite act of boycotting that has long been used by social movements, and one scholar contends that this kind of consumer activity represents “individualized collective action” (Micheletti, 2003, p. 25). Community food initiatives can be considered as encouraging this type of consumer activity, and thus differ from the type of social movements empirically studied by sociologists. Nonetheless, the concepts from social movement theory are relevant, and in the remainder of the chapter, I will explain more specific theoretical perspectives relevant to exploring food sovereignty praxis among community food initiatives in London.



## **SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY**

Within social movement theory, three main aspects are thought to contribute to the development of collective action – grievance or strain, resources, and political opportunities. Although early social movement theories tended to focus on one aspect as integral, while relegating others, more recent theory has integrated the concepts. I will review the main ideas of each individual strand below, and will address the related issue of participation in social movements in a subsequent section.

### **Grievance/Strain**

Grievances, or claims, are complaints about a condition deemed wrong or unjust, while deprivation refers to disadvantage. Social movement theory explains how movements for social change develop from collective action generated around a grievance or deprivation. Classical theorists perceived such collective behavior to be irrational, spontaneous, short-lived aberrations triggered by some breakdown or strain, usually following an increase in discontent relatively quickly. Moreover, they viewed crowd behavior as the only form of collective behavior (Buechler, 2004). Further study led to the realization that collective action could occur in times of general prosperity and that it could occur over longer period of time (Morris, 1999; Shorter & Tilly, 1974). In sum, grievances or deprivation, while important- and perhaps common among poor people's movements-were not found to be a precondition for the emergence of all social movements (Piven & Cloward, 1977). In addition, not all social movements are centered on a grievance; identity, self-help, and religious movements do not necessarily have a grievance component.

### **Resource mobilization**

Resource mobilization focuses on resources such as money, facilities, labor, and legitimacy that social movement organizations must have in order to work toward a goal (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). It emphasizes institutional and structural factors can facilitate or impede development of social movements. According to McCarthy and Zald, who developed the theory, elites generally contribute resources in order to control or constrain the movement or use it for its own benefit, although some elites may engage because of genuine resonance with the movement. Other theorists have argued that resources can be generated internally; Morris's study of the black sit-in movement showed that movement developed and grew without resources from whites (Morris, 1981, 1984). The main idea- that resources can shape a movement's trajectory- is generally accepted, but the relative importance of resources among other factors that contribute to social movements is an area of theoretical variation.

### **Political Process**

Extending the idea of resource mobilization, which emphasizes institutional resources, the political process model incorporates broader dynamics in political systems that affect individual consciousness about ability to change the system, and thus the trajectory of social movement activity. According to McAdam (1982), broad social processes occurring over long periods of time can produce shifts in political opportunities that then affect the likelihood of social protest through a restructuring of power relations. Because political arrangements change over time due to new administrations, wars, demographic changes, and other such events, the opportunities for a challenger to seek change through collective action also shift. Using the example of the civil rights movement, McAdam asserts that the collapse of the cotton economy, migration of blacks

to the North; and increased demand for labor in the North altered the configuration of power relations that enabled blacks to strengthen their resources (McAdam, 1982).

Greater political leverage also raises the cost of repressing protesters, thereby diminishing the risks of movement participation and encouraging collective action. According to this theory, resources still constitute an important condition for the development of a social movement; without resources protesters lack the ability to exploit political opportunities. Thus, the aggrieved group must have resources in order to translate a conducive political opportunity into a collective action campaign. McAdam cites Oberschall's idea that an aggrieved population must have an established associational network in order to link to enough people to organize a campaign of collective action (McAdam, 1982). Links to the network form the basis for recruitment of active participants in the movement; the role of networks in movement participation is explored further in the next section.

### **Theories of Mobilization**

Social movements depend on the mobilization and recruitment of people, and much of social movement theory concerns this aspect of movements. In this section, I review key concepts and terms pertaining to mobilization.

Mobilization potential refers to the part of the population that holds a positive view of a social movement and thus can be mobilized by that social movement (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987). Empirical evidence suggests that without mobilization attempts that target movement sympathizers, the sympathizers are unlikely to participate. Further, even those targeted and intending to participate may not participate. Besides mobilization or recruitment attempts, other aspects to participation

are costs and benefits to participation – the belief an individual holds about the effect of participation in terms of the movement’s goal; social costs- having ties to people who are participating can result in negative reactions if one does not participate; and nonsocial costs- inconveniences in time, money, or security that participation may cause (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987). Finally, another reason for both nonparticipation and participation in collective action has to do with free-riding – a situation where people who believe in and would benefit from the movement’s goals do not participate due to the anticipated success of collective action of others (Olson, 1965, pp. 14-16; Walsh & Warland, 1983). The expectation that people will free-ride has also been shown to motivate people to participate in collective action (Oliver, 1984). In the following section, I will elaborate on the concept of social ties.

### Identity and Networks

An important tenet in theories of collective action is the structural role of existing organizations or networks through which mobilization around an issue of contention can occur depending on political opportunities present. According to McAdam (2003, p. 289) collective action cannot occur without a ‘mobilizing structure’ that is often provided by existing organizations. However, initial mobilization can require cultural work in cultivating a shared identity rather than the simple use of existing resources and political opportunities (McAdam, 2003). McAdam (2003) illustrates the role of interpretive or cultural analysis with the example of the black church in the civil rights movement. It is well known that black churches served as a vehicle for collective action in the civil rights movement, but according to McAdam, this only occurred after much work was done to redefine the conservative collective identity of the conservative black church in a way that aligned with the progressive goals of the struggle. More specifically, black church

ideology viewed individuals as God's creation, and thus, not evil; civil rights leaders promoted the idea that segregation was evil in order to mobilize people around the bus boycott, which itself was framed as noncooperation with evil rather than a boycott (Morris, 2000).

Other scholars have found empirical evidence supporting the role of formal and informal networks in mobilizing people. McAdam and Paulsen (1993) propose that networks of ties often provide the conduit to participation in social movement organizations. Ties through friends, family, or membership in organizations are channels based on some element of identity, and the networks themselves exert an influence on identity formation. People who mobilize are often recruited through social networks, because they know someone or because they are members of organizations, and attain access to mobilization opportunities through those structural channels, which are a function of their identities (McAdam & Paulsen, 1993). In effect, individuals do not determine their individual and collective identities in a vacuum; instead, identities develop through an individual's embeddings in different social networks. The salience of a particular identity is a function of the degree to which the individual's relationships depend upon that identity (McAdam & Paulsen, 1993).

According to social movement theorists, a movement's success in motivating participation depends on its success in bringing movement activity into alignment with the individual's identity (D. A. Snow, et al., 1986). Individual identities are intimately tied to collective identities of groups in a dialectic relationship. Identities are largely a product of social location and an important signifier of status, and as such, are often race, class, and gender specific (McAdam & Paulsen, 1993). Both individuals and groups of

people decide to mobilize based on the extent to which the framing of the issues resonates with the identities that are most salient to them. This is why framing the movement in terms that adherents can relate to based on existing salient identities is important in actualizing the potential to participate (Friedman and McAdam 1992). Returning again to the civil rights movement as a referent, black churches provided a mobilizing network, as well as a culture that “produced cohesion and enabled participants to act under the spell of singing, preaching, and praying” (Morris, 2000, p. 448).

### Framing

Framing refers to the production of interpretive packages that provide guidance in how to make sense of the world, and social movements use framing processes to identify a problem; agree on who or what is responsible for it; and to motivate action to change the situation (d'Anjou, 1996, p. 55). The products of such framing activity are referred to as collective action frames, and differences the latter two aspects often result in conflicts within and between social movement organizations comprising a social movement (Benford & Snow, 2000).

Snow, Rochford Jr., Worden, and Benford (1986) further elaborated framing using the concept of frame alignment to link social psychological and resource mobilization aspects of movement participation. Frame alignment refers to “the conjunction of individual and social movement organization interpretive frameworks” (D. A. Snow, et al., 1986, p. 467). Snow et al. denote the communicative processes that affect frame alignment as micromobilization, which can occur through four types of processes (D.A. Snow, E.B. Rochford, Worden, & Benford, 1986):

- Frame bridging refers to the linkage of ideologically related but structurally unconnected frames. At the individual level, organizational outreach,

interpersonal networks, mass media, and direct mail can serve as the vehicle for frame-bridging.

- Frame amplification refers to “the clarification and reinvigoration of an interpretive frame” (D.A. Snow, et al., 1986:469). Value amplification refers to the elevation of a basic value that has not inspired collective action. The authors cite examples of family, ethnicity, property, and neighborhood integrity as values highlighted by social movement organizations to appeal to potential constituents in various campaigns. Belief amplification refers to elements that “cognitively support or impede action in pursuit of desired values”. The most visible ones in social movement literature are: pre-existing beliefs about the seriousness of the problem; beliefs about causality of the problem; stereotypic beliefs about antagonists; beliefs about prospect of change; and beliefs about the significance of taking a stand.
- Frame extension refers to the extension of the original frame’s boundaries in a way incidental to the movement but appealing to potential adherents with the goal of enlarging the adherent pool.
- Frame transformation refers to changing old understandings and meanings or generating new ones to replace them.

Taylor (2000, p. 516) has expanded on the aforementioned framing processes by describing submerged frames, “underlying ideological packages that are not made explicit by movement activists”. Submerged frames can result from incomplete frame bridging; for example, this is evident in the case of some organizations working on

environmental inequality issues but applying a community service frame rather than an environmental inequality or environmental justice frame (D. Taylor, 2000).

Another important concept is the idea of master frames, collective action frames that are characterized by broad interpretive scope, flexibility, inclusivity, and cultural resonance in terms of the mobilizing potential; master frames can be employed by more than one social movement (Benford & Snow, 2000) . In contrast, movement-specific frames are more restricted. Examples of master frames include rights frames, injustice frames, moral frames, and democracy frames; feminism is an example of a movement-specific frame. With regard to food movement frames, the food sovereignty movement incorporates the rights master frame in a few ways – the right to food; the right of indigenous peoples; the rights of women; the rights of consumers- and it uses the master frame of democracy or self-determination. In contrast, localization or sustainability movements use more restrictive frames. Even though the food sovereignty movement incorporates the ideas of supporting local food and sustainable agriculture, its use of master frames lends it more inclusivity and a broader mobilization potential.

### **PLACE, IDENTITY, AND FOOD**

Place identity has been defined as “a process by which, through interaction with places, people describe themselves in terms of belonging to a specific place” (Hernandez, Hidalgo, E., & Hess, 2007, p. 310). It is closely linked to the concept of place attachment – and sometimes used synonymously- but the latter refers to an affective bond with an area people prefer to remain for comfort and/or safety (Hernandez, et al., 2007). A study that empirically examined these two constructs found that for both natives and immigrants, the highest score for attachment was for the largest



spatial unit- island- followed by city, and lastly neighborhood. It also found that natives had higher scores for both place attachment and place identity compared to immigrants, and immigrants scored higher for place attachment than for place identity at all three spatial levels (Hernandez, et al., 2007).

I contend that food often serves as a manifestation of place identity by being the conduit for interaction with a place. According to anthropologist Claude Fischler,

The way any given human group eats helps it assert its diversity, hierarchy, and organization, and at the same time, both its oneness and the otherness of whoever eats differently. Food is also central to individual identity, in that any given individual is constructed, biologically, psychologically, and socially by the food he/she chooses to incorporate.

(Fischler, 1988, p. 275)

Food offers a way for immigrants and their descendants to maintain a bond to distant places. As such, it relates to the diversity element of the food sovereignty paradigm, which values difference in foods and traditions in addition to ways of organizing.

In the next chapter, I will relate these concepts to the survey of food initiatives across London, which will provide a foundation for the case studies in subsequent chapters.

## CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH DESIGN

This study examines the development of CFIs or coops<sup>6</sup> in London to better understand the values and ethics motivating their work and the reasons driving participation by customers. The point of departure for this study is how CFIs apply the core idea of food sovereignty, even in the absence of established food sovereignty movement activity within Britain. As mentioned previously, the principles of the food sovereignty movement were reflected in the Diggers movement in 17<sup>th</sup> century England; thus the objective was to explore if food sovereignty principles were being applied to existing food movement activity in London. Within this overarching objective, I examined:

- How do the practices of CFIs in terms of objectives and reflected, adapted, or diverged from the food sovereignty model?
- How do community food initiatives frame their work, and to what extent does the framing reflect food sovereignty concepts?
- To what extent are principles of food sovereignty reflected in customers' motivation to participate in community food initiatives?

Because there has been very little research on the types of CFIs in this study, I did

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<sup>6</sup> Because many of the CFIs refer to themselves as 'coops', I use the terms CFI and coop interchangeably. Except where explicitly stated, the CFIs are not cooperatives in the sense of membership-based organizations in which each member has a voice in decision-making or other forms of cooperative enterprises.

not embark with a set of hypotheses and I chose to use predominantly qualitative methods in order to generate data that was embedded in context. I also conducted a survey of CFIs across London, which although small in number and thus not appropriate for quantitative analysis, provides further context within which to situate the thicker qualitative data. This approach was intended to yield insights and identify themes that could guide further research on food sovereignty in urban contexts of the global North.

### **Case Studies**

To facilitate in-depth investigation, including the spatial and historical context the coops developed in and participation by customers, I used the case study method. The case study approach is useful for studying a phenomenon within its real life context, and for exploring “how” and “why” questions-in this case how and why coops that sell fresh produce in culturally diverse urban settings develop and evolve (Yin, 2003, p. 1). I chose to study four CFIs or coops, distinguishing between two types. One type of CFI had an explicit initial objective involving sustainably produced food-with characteristics such as organic and some kind of limitation on distance or transportation involved in obtaining the food. The other type of CFI had an initial explicit objective pertaining to providing affordable produce, with no additional conditions about organic production or distance and transportation involved in obtaining the food. I use the term organic to refer to CFIs that at start-up focused on sourcing food that was produced and obtained through certain processes considered better for the environment than conventional methods. I use the term conventional to refer to those that started up with a focus on providing healthy food at low prices, without qualifications about the processes by which the food was produced or transported. However, the usage of the terms organic and

conventional is not meant to suggest that these qualities of the food were the most salient to the CFIs.

For the case studies, I observed and spoke to people engaged with each CFI, and part of this entailed seeing the material space in terms of the immediate space within which it operated, and the neighborhood within 500 meters of the coop site. With each case study, I studied the food environment around the CFI, and I interviewed customers to better understand their reasons for shopping at the CFI, and where possible, I interviewed residents from the area, focusing on how they felt about options for obtaining food, their reasons for using the coop, and any shortcomings they felt the coop could improve upon. In addition, I employed direct and, sometimes, participant observation of the CFIs; with direct observation, I simply stood aside and observed people at the coops and with participant observation, I helped volunteers or did some shopping. Interview guides are provided in Appendix A (p. 241).

## **Survey**

For one part of the study, I conducted a survey of CFIs operating across London to provide greater context to situate the case studies in. Although I intended to interview staff from all the CFIs I discovered, I refer to this as a survey because it is possible that I did not discover the entire population of CFIs. I used both interviews and analysis of websites, business strategies, reports, and publicity materials to conduct the survey of coops. The survey was comprised of a semi-structured questionnaire and was intended to collect information on how the coop started, financial and other resources used, structure, and operations, as well as challenges faced. I did not use an extensive survey instrument because this was an exploratory study, and informal talks with coop staff prior

to the study indicated that they were largely run by volunteers stretched for time and a lengthy survey was unlikely to result in adequate participation and thorough responses. Thus, I collected basic information from all the CFIs through interviews. I also conducted an aggregate content analysis of promotional texts to assess how the coops framed their work and claims they expressed about benefits of participating in the coop. Content analysis allows one to make “inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of messages” (Holsti, 1968, p. 601).

## **RESEARCH SITES**

London has a population of over 7.5 million and consists of 32 boroughs, each with its own local government that is responsible for services such as council housing, schools, hospitals, and social services, and a directly elected mayor develops strategies and sets the budgets for city-wide services, subject to review and amendment by 25 elected members of the London Assembly (Greater London Authority, n.d.-a; Office for National Statistics, 2007). In addition to the 32 boroughs, the City of London is a separate entity containing the financial center of London; it has a local authority like the other boroughs, but also holds additional responsibilities for facilities beyond its boundaries such as bridges, open spaces, and wholesale food markets (Whatley, 2009). London is both a city and a region<sup>7</sup> (see Figure 3.1, p. 65), and is one of 14 cities surrounded by a Green Belt to limit urban sprawl (see Figure 3.2, p. 66) (Department for Education, 2011; Natural England & Campaign to Protect Rural England, 2010). The national guidance on Green Belts lists the following objectives that Green Belt land can contribute to:

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<sup>7</sup> Each English region has a regional development agency charged with working on economic development through the growth of businesses (England's Regional Development Agencies, 2011).

- to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas;
- to retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes, near to where people live;
- to improve damaged and derelict land around towns;
- to secure nature conservation interest; and
- to retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses.

(Department for Communities and Local Government, 1995 para 1.6)

Approximately 15 percent of London's land is characterized as farmland – about 24,000 hectares, but an estimated 10 percent of this is farmed, only 500 hectares of which is used for fruit and vegetable cultivation (London Assembly Planning and Housing Committee, 2010, pp. 13-14). In addition to Green Belt land, London has designated Metropolitan Open Land which is provided the same level of protection from inappropriate development as the Green Belt (Greater London Authority, 2008b, Section 3D.10).

Confining the study to London to some extent controlled for differences in agricultural activity across different regions, while providing a multicultural context in which to query issues surrounding class and ethnic diversity. I specifically wanted to study nonprofit organizations or social enterprises that sold fresh produce in London on a regular basis throughout the year with some level of volunteer labor. To find organizations meeting these criteria, I searched through listings on the website of Sustain-the Alliance for Better Food and Farming, which lists regular food stalls and coops in London, and through general internet searches (Sustain, 2010a). I conducted these searches in May - June 2009 and only included CFIs that had already started running as of June 2009. Although I discovered 73 individual CFI sites operating across London as

of June 2009, only 20 organizational entities operated them, with a few individual organizations running coops at multiple sites (see Appendix B, p. 245). These 20 organizations comprised the survey of CFIs then operating in London; I use the term survey because it is possible that all the CFIs comprising the population of CFIs in London may not have been discovered through the search methods used.

It is worth noting other food initiatives that also operate throughout London that were excluded for not meeting the criteria for this study. The excluded initiatives fell into the following categories:

- a)-small scale community gardens/allotments<sup>8</sup> where volunteers can take small amounts of produce home
- b)-school gardens- where students grow food to learn about ecology and sustainability
- c)-farmers markets- where multiple farmers and artisanal food producers directly sell to consumers
- d)- informal buying clubs- where a group of people may informally buy produce together
- e)-store front coops selling only whole foods and no fresh produce

The first two types were excluded because they have an irregular supply of produce as they are small-scale; farmers markets and other direct market food initiatives are venues that primarily exist to support the social reproduction of small-scale farming, although other motivations may also underpin these efforts (Goodman & Goodman, 2007). In some cases, there were exceptions, such as where a community garden is large enough to produce particular types of produce regularly for sale in combination with other types of produce supplied by farmers; I included these where a CFI produced

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<sup>8</sup> Allotments are plots of council-owned (municipal) land available for horticultural use by local residents at a subsidized rent. Except for Inner London boroughs, all local authorities in England are required to provide allotment land if there is demand.

enough produce on public land to contribute to the overall food sales, the rest of which was sourced through farmers. I distinguished this type of sale from farmers markets, where individual producers sell their own products at their stalls, and the produce is grown on private land. Informal buying clubs were not included because they were not formal organizations selling produce publicly. Coops that only sold bulk, dry foods were excluded because they did not sell fresh produce.

I examined selected socioeconomic indicators at the most local level available for the sites across London including: percent residents living in council housing, percent residents on benefits, percent non-white residents, percent Black, and percent Asian; and the rank in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). The Index of Multiple Deprivation combines 37 indicators covering income, employment, health and disability, education, skills and training, barriers to housing and services, and living environment and crime, and the smallest unit it is available for, a lower layer super output area (LSOA), contains an average of 1500 people (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2008). It is important to note that a LSOA that does not fall within the nation's most deprived areas may also have deprivation, and an area that is amongst the most deprived may have wealthy residents-and this is especially true of London. Of the total number of CFI sites, all but six fell within England's top 20 percent most deprived LSOAs (see Figure 3.3, p. 67) (Government Office for London, 2007). There was more variation in levels of residents renting council housing - 6.27-74.49 percent. Only seven of the areas where CFI sites were located had a non-white population less than 20 percent.

When exploring the coops in a pilot stage, I discovered that six that had been listed on a website were no longer operating at the time of the study, and so I initially



sought to do six case studies: two on sustainable CFIs, two on health CFIs, and two that had stopped running-one of each type. However, I was unable to get a response to my inquiries to the ones that had stopped running. Thus, I chose four CFIs based on orientation and place; I selected one based on a housing estate<sup>9</sup>, and one based elsewhere for both organic coops and conventional coops (see Table 3.1, p. 55).

All of the coops for the case studies are characterized by locations with relatively high proportions of social housing residents and three have roughly the same proportion of people aged 16 and over unemployed, in the lowest-grade work, or on benefits (a census category), though the neighborhoods differ in the details of their demographics (Table 3.2, p. 57) (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2007; Office for National Statistics, 2001). Each case study CFI was located in a different borough of London (see Figure 3.4, p. 68) (London Councils, 2010). Three were located in Inner London boroughs, and one was located in an Outer London borough<sup>10</sup>. An unexpected occurrence toward the end of my data collection was the closure of one of the CFIs, intended to be temporary, but this presented an opportunity to gain insight on the factors that cause a CFI to stop running prematurely (some are intended to run for a certain time frame). In addition, another case study CFI stopped running at the time of writing this dissertation at the end of 2011.

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<sup>9</sup> The term housing estate refers to subsidized housing that is either own by the local government/council or by housing associations-also known as social landlords.

<sup>10</sup> As mentioned previously, Inner London boroughs are exempt from the requirement of municipalities to allocate land for allotment gardening for residents under the Allotments Act. The list of Inner and Outer boroughs is in Appendix C (p. 250).

**Table 3.1: Case Study Characteristics**

CFI	Started	Food	Location
Fareshares	1988	Organic	Radical social center in Southwark
Tottenham Food Coop	2008	Organic	Community center located on a housing estate in Haringey
Greenwich Community Food Coop-Ferrier Estate	2002	Conventional	Outdoor stall at housing estate in Greenwich
St. Hilda's East	2005	Conventional	Community center in Tower Hamlets

Source: Author's interviews with CFI staff, 2009 and CFI texts

These CFIs operated from a stall on a housing estate with many African residents, from a community center in a heavily Bangladeshi area, from a storefront in a residential area near many African food stores, and from a community center on a housing estate with many African, Portuguese, and Turkish residents. Thus, the contrast in environments was useful in gaining insights on how CFI issues vary according to external and internal factors, and what issues may remain the same in spite of these contrasts.

#### **DATA COLLECTION**

The bulk of data collection for this study took place over a one year period (2009-2010), though some preliminary work occurred in 2008. Most of the case study interviews happened from June – September 2009, with a few follow-up interviews in March - May 2010 and in December 2010, when one of the case study coops re-opened after a temporary closure. Interviews for the survey of CFIs across London took place from June –December 2009. The sampling technique included a combination of

maximum variation and convenience sampling; maximum variation sampling was intended to cover a range of possibilities, while convenience sampling occurred because time, money, and amount of effort served as limiting factors (Patton, 2002, p. 243).

Where possible I tried to achieve variation to get a range of perspectives for each case study. A total of 57 interviews were conducted for the four case studies. I developed a guide for the interviews based on observations and interviews conducted during a free-form pilot stage. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to allow for open-ended questions that may arise, and to allow some space for respondents to converse without the constraints of a structured instrument.

For the case studies, interviews with customers and staff occurred at the CFI venues and interviews with residents occurred at the CFI venues or at neighborhood spots such as bus stops, churches, and community centers (see Tables 3.3-3.4, p. 58). I took extensive notes during every interview and recorded many, but not all, interviews of customers and residents; all of the staff interviews for the case studies were recorded. After I noticed that some more conservative Muslim women chose not to be recorded, I used my judgment in asking such participants about recording. Interviews for the wider survey of CFIs were also semi-structured, and were conducted in-person at the CFI venue and by telephone. At the end of each interview, I used member-checking to ensure that I interpreted the respondent as they had intended. Interviews lasted from 10 minutes to sometimes over an hour, depending on the individual and circumstances; staff interviews tended to be longer. I collected data until I felt theoretical saturation was achieved, which is when respondents resonated similar perspectives to the extent that nothing new emerged from the interviews.

**Table 3.2: Selected socioeconomic characteristics of case study CFI locations, London, and England**

CFI	IMD position among most deprived LSOAs in England <sup>11</sup>	% Residents in social rented housing - council	% Residents in social rented housing - non-council	% Non-white residents	% Residents age 16 and over in approximated social grade E*
Tottenham Food Coop-LSOA	Top 12%	45.08	33.09	57.27	21.52
Fareshares-LSOA	Top 15%	72.75	4.43	38.63	23.50
Ferrier Estate-LSOA	Top 10%	74.49	2.03	39.34	23.55
St. Hilda's East-LSOA	Top 10%	61.12	4.89	79.64	11.95
London	n/a	9.09	17.12	28.84	15.23
England	n/a	6.05	13.21	9.07	16.00

\* According to the Office for National Statistics (2001), information from the 2001 census is used to approximate the lowest social grade category, comprised of people on state benefit, unemployed, and lowest grade workers.

Source: Office for National Statistics. (2001). Census. In Office for National Statistics (Ed.). Newport Department of Communities and Local Government. (2007). Topics Retrieved 3 April, 2009, from <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/Download1.do>

<sup>11</sup> The higher the IMD rank, the more deprived the area, e.g. top one percent consists of the most deprived LSOAs in England

**Table 3.3: Interviews conducted by gender for CFI shoppers/residents of CFI area (A) and organization staff/volunteers (B)**

Gender	Tottenham		Fairshares		Ferrier		Saint Hilda's East		Total	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Men	0	3	2	2	2	3	1	1	5	7
Women	8	1	11	2	7	1	12	1	38	5
Total	8	4	13	4	9	4	13	2	43	114

**Table 3.4: Interviews conducted by race for CFI shoppers/residents of CFI area (A) and organization staff/volunteers (B)**

Race	Tottenham		Fairshares		Ferrier		Saint Hilda's East		Total	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Ethnic Minority	2	2	4	0	7	1	13	1	26	4
White	6	2	9	4	2	3	0	1	17	8
Total	8	4	13	4	9	4	13	2	43	14

Other methods of data collection included participant and direct observation, and analysis of any texts and literature produced by the case study CFIs or coverage of these CFIs in the news media, and analysis of London and borough-level food strategies and spatial plans. Observational work occurred as I observed the staff, shoppers, and the CFI setting, including the surrounding neighborhoods. In particular, I observed the foods customers selected, how much they spent, and communication between staff and other shoppers and between staff members. I also observed other food stores in the neighborhood. Initially, such observations helped to inform the interview guide; later, they also informed data analysis. Texts from websites and reports were also examined to triangulate other data, or in some cases, to fill in gaps as staff sometimes did not know details about the history of an initiative. Participant observation occurred occasionally, as I sometimes assisted with small tasks around the CFI, such as setting up produce, and

on one occasion was asked to help administer questionnaires for a market research survey that one of the CFIs was doing.

In addition, I walked through the study areas and conducted a census of commercial food stores within 500 meters of each case study CFI on the road network. The distance of 500 meters has been used in food access studies as a reasonable distance within which a resident should be able to walk to find healthy food (Donkin, Dowler, Stevenson, & Turner, 1999). During this phase, I noted the variety, quantity, and quality of the produce at each store and mapped the stores using a Geographic Information System (GIS). The Index of Multiple Deprivation levels were also mapped using GIS. Where relevant, I did price comparisons of the food sold at each case study CFI and at nearby stores.

Apart from the case studies, I conducted a survey of CFIs in London to collect information about characteristics such as objectives, start-up, organizational structure, funding, food sourcing, number and type of customers. Although all of the CFIs meeting the criteria were included, the data was collected through the CFI literature in the form of reports, websites, and promotional materials, and through interviews with staff. Throughout the study, I use pseudonyms instead of actual names of individuals I interviewed for the case studies and the survey<sup>12</sup>.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

For the case studies, I analyzed qualitative data using two methods: coding interviews and textual data for emergent themes and mapping of food stores using GIS. I

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<sup>12</sup> Some of the references used, such as websites, may reveal the identities of certain participants because of their leadership roles, but the pseudonyms protect the identity of the majority of individuals who contributed to this study.

used the survey of CFIs across London as a supplement to the in-depth case studies to provide greater context for the organizational and structural characteristics of the CFIs. I also used content analysis to compare the language of organic and conventional CFIs. Content analysis was performed on the aggregate CFI literature to assess what they claimed as benefits of buying produce through them, and involved examining words or phrases in text and collapsing them into theme categories. The text I examined included parts of website content, fliers and other promotional literature, and reports that communicated coops' current work and their objectives. Framing analysis examined the discourse of individual CFIs, allowing an exploration of micromobilization processes.

Finally, another strand of the study involved policy analysis of food strategies and spatial plans. The 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act has required local authorities to develop spatial strategies integrating land use planning and delivery mechanisms for meeting development objectives (Morphet, 2009). In London, the statutory plans governing land use planning are the London Plan, a statutory spatial plan for the region of London that local authorities<sup>13</sup> have to comply with in developing plans for their boroughs, and the boroughs' own spatial development plans (Greater London Authority, n.d.-b; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005). I examined the London Plan and the borough spatial development plans for the language pertaining to food growing activity and language pertaining to agricultural land. The London Food Strategy is not a statutory document, but provides guidance on food system issues throughout London, and some boroughs have developed food strategies for their boroughs, but food strategies are not required of boroughs. I examined the London Food Strategy and the

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<sup>13</sup> In London, the local authorities are the borough councils.

food strategies of boroughs with CFIs at the time of this study for language concerning food growing and community food projects.

### **DATA QUALITY**

The quality of data collection and analysis was supported by several procedures. Strategies included seeking feedback on interpretations of thoughts and ideas expressed through member checking, in which I checked my interpretation with respondent, and writing about these interpretations throughout the study. In addition, observation from different vantage points (as a shopper, volunteer, and researcher) and triangulation of different sources of evidence through documents, interviews, and observations helped in validating the findings. During the research process, I also shared information and engaged people involved in CFIs in discussions about my analysis and findings.

### **DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS**

This study provides a detailed, holistic examination of CFIs in the context of a global city characterized by problems and conflicts around sustainability that are found in other global cities and large cities generally. Because the study examined a small number of CFIs of a particular kind, and only in one region, however, it does not allow one to extrapolate the findings to defined populations in the way that probability sampling does. It is also possible that the people who agreed to participate in the interviews represent a certain type or types of shoppers and not the range of types of shoppers. A similar caution applies to interviews of residents. In addition, this study lacks empirical work on less resilient CFIs that had prematurely stopped running prior to the study, which would have provided useful insights and richer knowledge about challenges CFIs face and



strategies to overcome them. However, the temporary closure and subsequent re-launch of one coop mitigated this problem to some extent, particularly as most of the CFIs that had closed were in the same area as this one and subject to similar constraints. Further, another case study CFI stopped in December 2010. Finally, although the study examines issues surrounding the application of different values in community food work, it does not go as far as examining the practices of the producers that the CFIs source from, nor does it examine dietary changes or health outcomes for those that focus on healthy eating. A more extensive examination would benefit from interrogating, for instance, the labor practices of organic producers that the organic CFIs acquired the bulk of their produce from.

#### **REFLEXIVITY AND POSITIONALITY**

Qualitative methodology places great import on transparency regarding the multiple positions one inhabits as a researcher and actively reflecting on how this shapes the research and thus, the production of knowledge (Rose, 1997). While it is probably not possible for a researcher to be aware of all the factors influencing one's work, the expectation is to share enough so that the reader can better understand the research. Because I use qualitative methodology in this dissertation, here I briefly state my background and experiences that I am conscious of as affecting my lens of the world, and thus bear on how I performed and interpreted the research.

My interest in this dissertation project can more directly be traced to volunteering at a whole foods project based at an unemployed families center at the city I live in. This project bought organic whole foods<sup>14</sup> in bulk and passed on the discount to customers, but it was not a formal cooperative with membership and voting rights. It was a very

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<sup>14</sup> Whole foods are foods that have undergone minimal or no processing (Trum, 2006, p. ii)

small operation- a small counter with bins of bulk food behind, that only opened for two hours each weekday. During my time volunteering, I would see the same individuals using the coop. I never saw someone of color use the coop, or volunteer there, even though it was situated in a space that had a day-care center, welfare advice, a computer area, classes and workshops, and a cafe-all of which a variety of people did use. This sparked an interest in investigating community food initiatives further, particularly from an experience of seeing certain community food initiatives as predominantly frequented, and run by, whites and seeing other initiatives engaged with more diversity.

I was also conscious of my multiple identities-researcher, woman, South Asian, Muslim, American, activist, and someone who has been involved in a food coop. As a researcher, I was much more privileged in many ways than the people I observed or interviewed. However, conducting interviews in a public space most people seemed to enjoy may have diminished the power differential. Moreover, as many of the customers at the affordable food oriented coops were people of color, this may have helped them feel comfortable with me. For example, at one site, many of the customers were Bangladeshi women, and assumed that I was Bangladeshi and familiar with their culture and cuisine. At another site, an African resident spoke to me about English people's cuisine, diet, and lifestyle being bad for one's health. Such narratives probably would not have emerged had I been white. Many of the white respondents were either volunteers or customers at the sustainable CFIs, so I often had the common experience of having been involved in a food coop, which helped establish rapport. My American-ness seemed to draw some curiosity and questioning about what I was doing in London, and occasionally some comments on American policies.

Lastly, I embarked on this study seeking to conduct performative academic work to shed light on diverse economic practices in the food domain; the objective of which was to “bring marginalized, hidden and alternative economic activities to light in order to make them more real and more credible as objects of policy and activism” (Gibson-Graham, 2008). These types of projects have not received attention in the fields of alternative food scholarship and food access, and typically do not have the capacity to undertake research themselves. As authors of a study of alternative food networks in California have stated,

Committed people are working in many different areas in the food system to effect change, yet community-based organizations rarely have the opportunity to perform in-depth studies of their institutional efforts, much less to conduct comparative analysis of like organizations. This kind of analysis is crucial for helping groups to accomplish their goals and to minimize potentially contradictory outcomes.

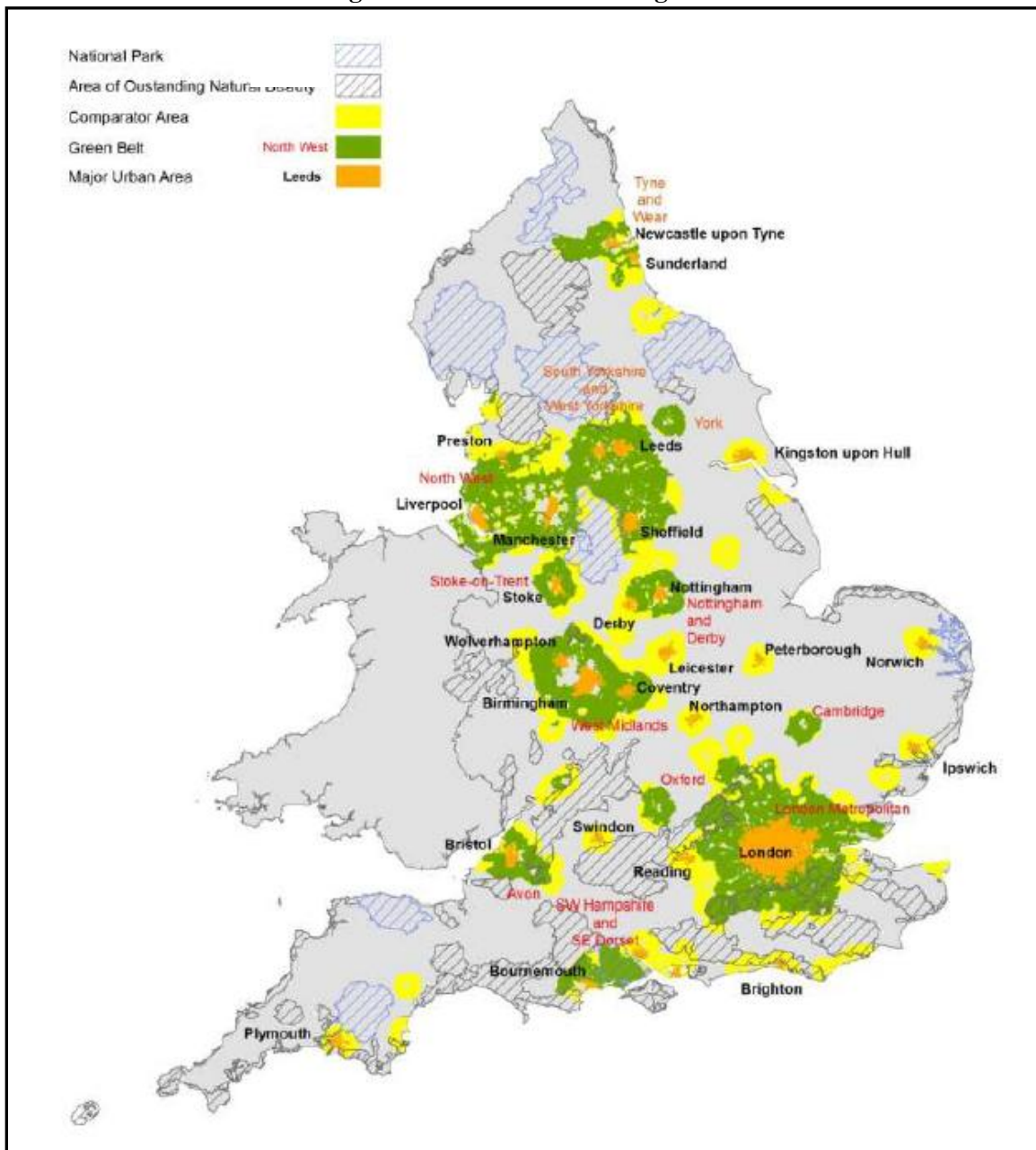
(P. Allen, M. FitzSimmons, M. Goodman, & K. D. Warner, 2003, p. 10)

**Figure 3.1: Regions in England**



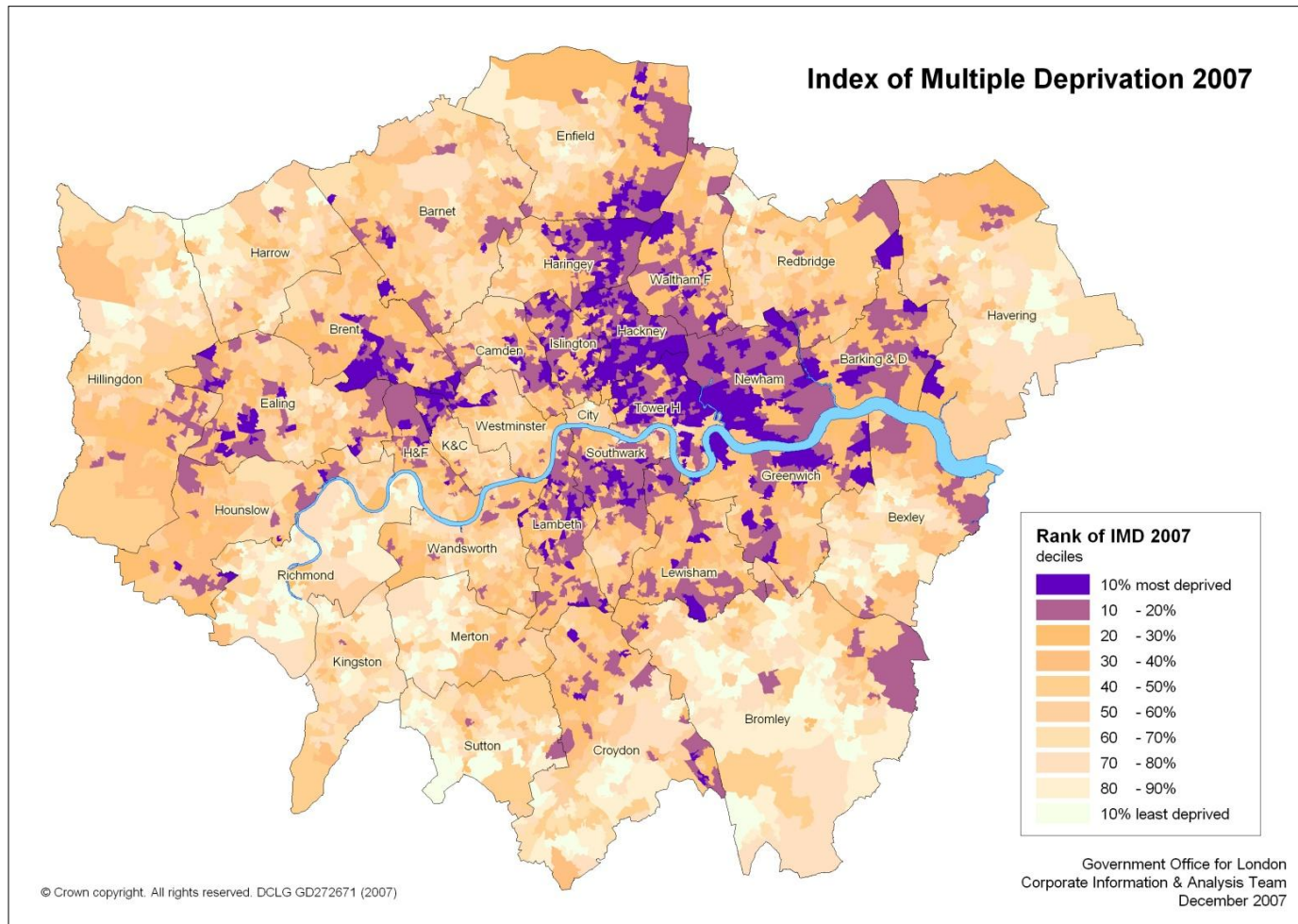
Source: Department for Education. (2011). Government Office Regions and LEAs Retrieved 10 February, 2011, from <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/leas.shtml>

Figure 3.2: Green Belts in England



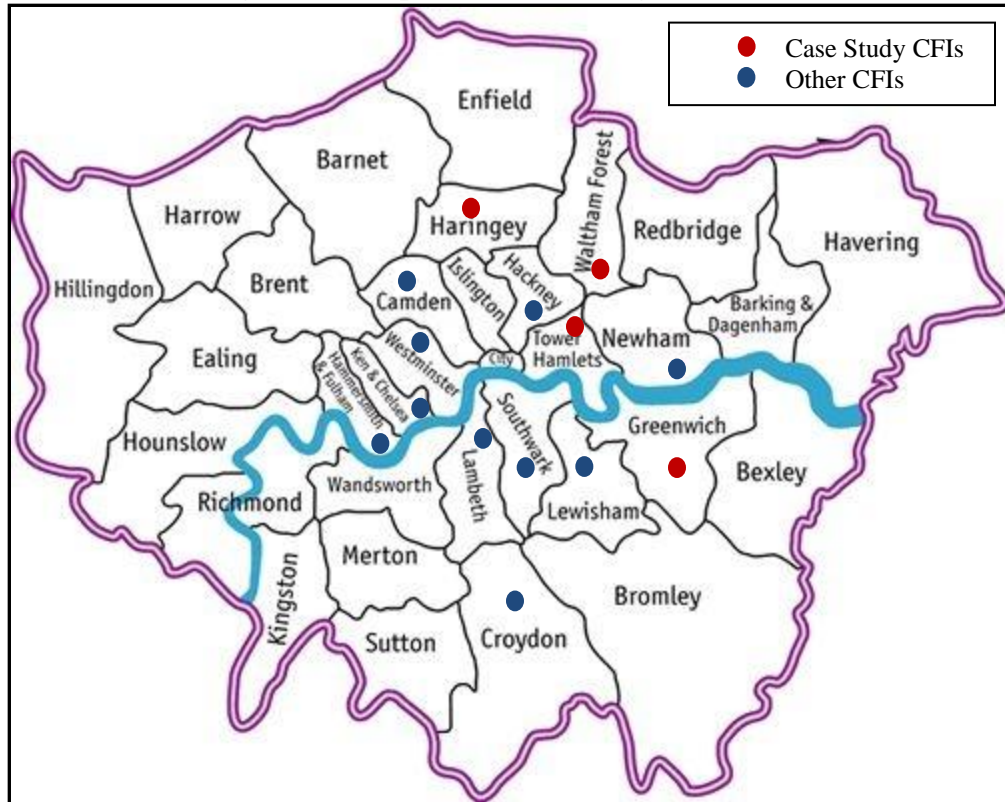
Source: Natural England, & Campaign to Protect Rural England. (2010). Greenbelts: A Greener Future. London.

Figure 3.3: Index of Multiple Deprivation by LSOAs for London Boroughs



Source: Government Office for London (Cartographer). (2007). Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007.

Figure 3.4: Map of London boroughs with CFIs



Source: London Councils. (2010). London Borough Maps and Profiles Retrieved 10 December, 2010, from <http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/londonfacts/londonlocalgovernment/londonmapandlinks/>

## **CHAPTER 4 - ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND DISCOURSE OF CFIS ACROSS LONDON**

In this chapter, I report on the part of the study examining the range of coops operating in London that address various food system problems. The purpose of this part of the study was to gain insights on values motivating their initiation, organizational development, and partnerships, and to develop a better understanding of the contribution these groups are making to communities in terms of food sovereignty. The first part of the chapter describes the pathways that 20 CFIs have taken in their organizational development and relates them to social movement theory and food sovereignty principles. Later in the chapter I explore discursive practices through aggregated content analysis of texts about their work and an examination of the ideologies and beliefs evident in the framing specific initiatives used. The themes identified in the discourse are applied to the case studies presented in the next chapters. The information in this chapter is based on interviews with CFI staff except where other sources are noted.

### **HISTORY OF LONDON CFIS**

The longest running food coops operating in London at the time of this study, Fareshares, began as an informal effort by residents to obtain sustainably produced food. It started in 1988 when a group of residents in a neighborhood in South London began buying foods produced without the use of synthetic chemicals from some vendors at Borough Market, which has been running in some form since the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and selling out of a squatted space in their neighborhood (Borough Market, 2010). The food coop,



which is discussed further in Chapter Five, was just one of the activities occurring in this space that became a ‘radical social center’; other activities included a free bicycle repair workshop and a small library of literature covering topics such as squatting, anarchism, and a range of specific social justice struggles. The other longstanding coop at the time of this study, Growing Communities, had its origins in a community supported agriculture project that a woman started in 1993 with some friends in London and producers in Buckinghamshire. She had worked as a campaigner for the large environmental organization, Friends of the Earth, but wanted to turn her efforts toward cultivating what she has referred to as social ecology, the idea that social and ecological problems are linked and result from flawed political and economic systems (Willis, 2009). The CSA, which ran during the growing season, later evolved into a box scheme through which paid members could receive prepared boxes of organic produce throughout the year.

In the late 1990s, some of the initiatives focused on addressing food access and healthy eating began in parts of East London. One of the East London boroughs, Tower Hamlets, has the highest number of Bangladeshi residents in the UK, and many of the poorer Bangladeshi households adhere to traditional, conservative roles for women. According to the Tower Hamlets Cooperative Development Agency (CDA), Bangladeshi women in housing estates were largely confined to the home, and the CDA initially started projects to get them out of isolation in ways that husbands would approve of. Thus, early projects involved sewing and cooking skills, and food coops evolved from such projects. Around the same time, coops to started in food deserts – areas lacking stores selling basic food - in two other boroughs in East London, Greenwich and

Newham. East London has had the longest running conventional coops; these were pioneers in the use of community resources to address health inequalities and inadequate provision of fresh produce. In 2003, the government published its Choosing Health White Paper, which advocated the establishment of food coops as a way of mobilizing community resources to promote better health (Department of Health, 2004). Since then, several other coops were launched to address health inequalities in other areas of London.

### **Political Processes**

The encouragement of food coops in the Choosing Health White Paper mentioned above was just one manifestation of increasing national government emphasis on social enterprise as a means of tackling social and environmental challenges. Because this relates to political processes underway within which most of the CFIs in this study emerged, I will discuss the evolution of this and other governmental strategies pertinent to food initiatives below.

### **Social Economy**

Nations in the European Union (EU), and the EU itself, have been working to develop policies supporting third sector organizations in recognition of their role in delivering services, job creation, and community development (Chaves & Monzon, 2007). Several western European countries have some high-level government body devoted to the social economy, but the UK has the most institutionalization of the concept, with the Labor government's creation of the Office of the Third Sector in the Cabinet Office, the Office for Charity and Third Sector Finance in HM Treasury, and a national strategy for social enterprise (Avila & Campos, 2005). Under the Blair administration, social exclusion – the ongoing process of marginalization often through exclusion from formal labor - was considered a local problem and social economy – also

situated at the local scale – was regarded as key to the solution. One of the flagship policies was the New Deal for Communities (NDC) that funneled into the regeneration<sup>15</sup> of the most deprived areas in the UK, where an area was expected to no more than 4000 households so that localized solutions could develop; the program was presented as a divergence from previous area-based regeneration projects due to its emphasis on local control (Wallace, 2007).

Although the social economy was initially heralded as a site of tackling social exclusion, which was largely associated with unemployment, the shift toward sustainable communities discourse extended expectations of the social economy to tackle a range of social and environmental problems. To this end, the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) developed its own strategy for the Third Sector and established a task force comprised of the Office of the Third Sector and three other departments to report on ways of mainstreaming action on climate change, the environment, and sustainable development throughout the Third Sector (DEFRA, 2008; HM Government, 2010).

### Sustainable Food

In the area of food and farming, the outbreak of food and mouth disease in 2001 that resulted in an estimated of £250 in lost trade, spurred the government to develop strategies for better supply chains and the integration of sustainable agriculture, rural development, and public health (BBC News, 2002; Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food, 2002). In 2002, DEFRA published a strategy on food and farming which emphasized the reconnection of farmers with their markets and meeting demand

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<sup>15</sup> Regeneration refers to the reinvigoration of economically and socially disadvantaged urban areas; in the US this is referred to as urban renewal.

for local, sustainable food. Recommendations included piloting programs to support ecological stewardship by farmers; development of targets for increased organic production; greater funding for food safety monitoring; the development of a non-food crops center to drive innovation; the development of bio-energy fuel supply infrastructure; an investigation into the use of public procurement to support British farming and sustainable food; and strengthening of links between producers and low income communities to improve public health (DEFRA, 2002b). As a result of this strategy, the four countries in the UK developed organic action plans to increase organic production in their territories; the UK government launched the Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI) to increase the proportion of sustainably and domestically produced food used in government departments, hospitals, and prisons; and it launched consultations into actions that could improve diet and nutrition which fed into the Department of Health's White Paper<sup>16</sup> in 2004 (DEFRA, 2002a; 2002b, pp. 38-39; 2010; Department of Health, 2004; Organic Action Plan, 2008).

However, public bodies have had problems implementing PSFPI due to conflicts between the government's efficiency and sustainability goals and confusion about EU public procurement regulations (Morgan and Sonnino 2006). So for example, although EU rules prohibit discrimination in the award of public procurement contracts- eg through stipulating local sourcing in the tenders, the regulations do allow the use of criteria such as seasonal, organic, or food not older than a certain timeframe (Morgan & Sonnino, 2008, p. 41). In addition, in the UK public sector contracting milieu, efficiency- interpreted as cutting costs - has outweighed sustainability considerations associated with

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<sup>16</sup> National departments periodically publish white papers that outline the direction and strategies for a particular sector over a five-year or longer period. Following the Choosing Health White Paper, the next white paper for health was published in 2010.

greater 'value for money' (Morgan & Sonnino, 2008, p. 30). According to research by Deloitte, this was largely due to errors in perceived costs - actual implementation in many instances did not cost more than the alternative; difficulty for small producers to understand the tenders and break into public sector catering; and lack of widespread political support (Deloitte, 2009). While other European countries have established targets for levels of sustainable food in public sector procurement, the UK is in the process of developing targets that are comparatively weaker (Stein, 2011).

### Climate Change

In 2005, the government published a strategy for sustainable development which emphasized the magnitude of the climate change issue and committed to reducing British contributions to greenhouse gas emissions, and explicitly sought to tackle environmental inequalities domestically and globally (HM Government, 2005). It also called for a more integrated approach, stating

The goal of sustainable development is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations. For the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations, that goal will be pursued in an integrated way through a sustainable, innovative and productive economy that delivers high levels of employment; and a just society that promotes social inclusion, sustainable communities and personal wellbeing. This will be done in ways that protect and enhance the physical and natural environment, and use resources and energy as efficiently as possible. Government must promote a clear understanding of, and commitment to, sustainable development so that all people can contribute to the overall goal through their individual decisions. Similar objectives will inform all our international endeavours, with the UK actively promoting multilateral and sustainable solutions to today's most pressing environmental, economic and social problems. There is a clear obligation on more prosperous nations both to put their own house in order, and to support other countries in the transition towards a more equitable and sustainable world. (HM Government, 2005, p. 16)

This strategy also marked the transfer of monitoring responsibilities from the government to the independent Sustainable Development Commission and the reinvigoration of

action at the local level - a reference to Local Agenda 21 (HM Government, 2005, p. 4). To promote sustainable production and consumption, the strategy continued with the ecological modernization approach of using taxes, incentives and informational approaches to encourage technological innovation by businesses and more sustainable choices by consumers (HM Government, 2005).

One of the most noteworthy policies is the UK Climate Change Act passed by Parliament in 2008, marking it as the first national legislation with targets for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (Department of Energy & Climate Change, n.d.). This act committed to an 80 percent reduction in net UK carbon from 1990 levels by the year 2050, with a reduction of at least 34 percent by 2020 (Department of Energy & Climate Change, n.d.). The legislation called for the development of five-year carbon budgets, and has resulted in the creation of an independent advisory body, the Committee on Climate Change, to advise on budgeting and progress toward targets (Department of Energy & Climate Change, n.d.). It also required the Secretary of State to introduce regulation mandating reporting of greenhouse gas emissions by businesses, or a report explaining why this has not happened, by April 2012 (HM Government, n.d.). In addition, the Act requires the inclusion of emissions from the aviation and shipping sectors, or an explanation for their omission, by the end of 2012 (Department of Energy & Climate Change, n.d.). To guide delivery of the Climate Act, the government published the Low Carbon Transition Plan in 2009, which outlines strategies across five broad areas – power and heavy industry; transport; homes and communities; workplaces; and farming, land and waste (HM Government, 2009).

## London Policies

In 2003, then mayor Ken Livingston established the London Food Board to develop a food strategy for London, which was published in 2006; this document covers a vast array of food issues including food access inequalities, health inequalities, significance of global foods to various ethnic minorities and the food economy, public procurement, and environmental impacts (London Development Agency, 2006). Since then, the London Food Board has worked to implement London's Food Strategy, and consists of individuals from the academic community, business community, community food initiatives, and environmental organizations. Because of the interest in food growing and insufficient allotment space to meet demand, one of the London Food Board's projects is called Capital Growth, a campaign to turn 2012 pieces of land into food growing spaces before the 2012 Olympics (Capital Growth, n.d.-b). It is funded by the Big Lottery's Local Food Programme and the London Development Agency, and serves as a forum for private individuals, businesses, charities, and government entities to offer land to groups interested in community food growing (Capital Growth, 2011).

In addition, the London Development Agency has proposed changes to the London Plan, the spatial plan for the region of London, that encourage greater food growing activity throughout London, although the references are brief and the Plan refers to the London Food Strategy for greater detail (Greater London Authority, 2009, n.d.-b) (see Appendix D, p. 251 for language in current and proposed London Plan and Appendix G, p. 268 for London Food Strategy language). The London Plan that was approved in 2008 calls for diversification of farms into non-agriculture activities and supports the agricultural sector in London, but does not mention increased production of food in urban communities (Greater London Authority, 2008b).

In terms of policies pertaining to land use for commercial horticulture among the boroughs, only one borough – Camden – specifically mentioned urban farms as a potential use of open space in its statutory development plan (London Borough of Camden, 2006, p. 83). Two boroughs' spatial plans (Hackney and Merton) included language on planting in vacant lots, and three others (Hammersmith and Fulham, Lambeth, and Westminster) included language on planting around or on buildings (DEFRA, 2002a; London Borough of Hackney, 1995; London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, 2003; London Borough of Lambeth, 2007; London Borough of Merton, 2003; Westminster City Council, 2007) (see Appendix E, p. 253 for specific language). Newham's plan mentioned using vacant lots to increase provision of allotments (London Borough of Newham, 2001, p. 275).

Ten boroughs included policies on agricultural land in their spatial plans, but the language emphasized protection of such land from inappropriate development to preserve biodiversity and open space with some support for diversification beyond agricultural activities (Harrow Council, 2004; London Borough of Barnet, 2006, pp. 69-70; London Borough of Bexley, 1999; London Borough of Brent, 2004; London Borough of Bromley, 2006; London Borough of Croydon, 2006, pp. 74-75; London Borough of Hillingdon, 2007, pp. 57-58; London Borough of Hounslow, 2003, p. 74; London Borough of Sutton, 2003, p. 59; The Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames, 2005, pp. 113-114). None of these policies linked food production on such land to urban markets (see Appendix F, p. 258 for specific language). This has implications for the boroughs containing Green Belt land that could be used for greater amounts of food growing, which could then supply CFIs and food businesses in London. According to a



study on farming in London, one third of the farmers sought better tendering opportunities to supply food for public sector catering (National Farmers Union, 2002 cited in London Development Agency, 2006, p. 40).

Food strategies were not required of boroughs at the time of this study, but 14 boroughs had a food-related policy prior to the London Food Strategy, although many focused on health and nutrition only and were out of date when this study began in 2009 (Sustain, 2011). Of the boroughs that had adopted food strategies and had food coops when this study began, the only reference encouraging food coops – among boroughs for which the strategies were accessible - was in Croydon’s strategy, and this was adopted after CFIs had started in the borough (City and Hackney Primary Care Trust, 2007; Greenwich Council, 2003; Newham Food Access Partnership, 2006; NHS Croydon, 2004; Nolan, McCormick, Potier, & Jones, 2006) (see Table 4.1, p. 79). The Newham strategy was not adopted by the council but it profiled CFE as a type of project encouraged. Two of the boroughs promoted food growing activities in their food strategies (see Table 4.1 and Appendix H, p. 270 for specific language).

These developments demonstrate political processes encouraging the development of community-based initiatives and supporting actions fostering greater sustainability of the food system in order to meet climate change targets. This political milieu facilitated the provision of resources to such projects by governmental and other institutions as discussed below. However, as the variation in borough food strategies in relation to CFI development indicates, in some cases, initiatives may have contributed to changes in political processes that could facilitate development of community initiatives.

**Table 4.1: Food strategies for boroughs with CFIs as of June 2009**

Borough	CFI	Food Strategy		Strategy references
		Preceded CFI Start-up	Followed CFI Start-up	
Croydon	Croydon		●	Food coops and food growing
Greenwich	GCFC		●	No specific reference
Hammersmith and Fulham	St. Andrew's Church	●		Reference not available
Lewisham	New Cross Gate	●		Food growing
Newham (but not adopted by council)	CFE		●	Projects like CFE; food growing; local food; food chain sustainability
Tower Hamlets	Burdett; Hind Grove; St. Hilda's East; Whitechapel	●		Reference not available

Sources: City and Hackney Primary Care Trust. (2007). *City & Hackney Food and Nutrition Strategy*. Retrieved from [www.chpct.nhs.uk/trust\\_documents/Strategies/CHfoodstrategywithPSAtargets.pdf](http://www.chpct.nhs.uk/trust_documents/Strategies/CHfoodstrategywithPSAtargets.pdf); Greenwich Council. (2003). *Greenwich Food Strategy*. Retrieved from [www.greenwich.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/CB3EA85E-B320-4D21-A340-5CEAADDE5212/0/foodpolicy.pdf](http://www.greenwich.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/CB3EA85E-B320-4D21-A340-5CEAADDE5212/0/foodpolicy.pdf); Newham Food Access Partnership. (2006). *Newham Food and Nutrition Strategy* Retrieved from [mgov.newham.gov.uk/Published/C00000422/M00005172/AI00014626/NewhamFoodStrategy.pdf](http://mgov.newham.gov.uk/Published/C00000422/M00005172/AI00014626/NewhamFoodStrategy.pdf); NHS Croydon. (2004). *Croydon Food Strategy*. Retrieved from <http://www.croydon.nhs.uk/reports/publichealthinf/food04.pdf>; Nolan, C., McCormick, K., Potier, T., & Jones, D. C. (2006). *Lewisham Food Strategy*. Retrieved from <http://www.foodvision.gov.uk/pages/lewisham-food-strategy>.

### Means of Initiation

In this section, I describe the institutional arrangements that CFIs have used to operate. Before proceeding, it is useful to explain some terminology relevant to the following discussion. Incorporation means the creation of a legal entity that is distinct from its members; in an unincorporated entity, the organization is simply a collection of members with no legal distinction between the organization and the members (Co-

operatives UK, 2009). Incorporation confers advantages in terms of limited liability that the organization has agreed to pay as a guarantee, or limited to paying out unpaid share capital, in the event the organization ends and has outstanding debt; in an unincorporated entity, the members are personally liable to pay off the debt (Co-operatives UK, 2009).

### **Projects of Existing Organizations**

Sixteen of the 20 CFIs in London emerged as projects of existing non-profit organizations, usually community centers that provided services ranging from youth activities to education in language and computer skills (see Table 4.2, p. 82). Only one of the CFIs that started as projects, Greenwich Community Food Coop (GCFC), set up a separate, new legal identity to deliver the food initiative. The existing organizations served as mobilizing structures by serving as hubs of activities relevant and used by different groups of residents. In addition to community centers, some of the existing organizations delivering food initiatives were organizations delivering services for the government, such as the local Primary Care Trusts<sup>17</sup> (PCTs) of the National Health Service (NHS).

Of the 16 CFIs that started as projects of existing organizations, 13 were conventional CFIs, of which eight started because a government agency or government-funded program essentially recruited a community organization to deliver a CFI as a means of encouraging healthy eating or improving food access. Specifically, such funding came from the NHS, Well London, the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), and New Deal for Communities (NDC), the latter two being programs to improve health, employment, and housing in areas of the nation with the poorest socioeconomic

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<sup>17</sup> Primary Care Trusts are components of the NHS that administer primary care and public health services. Other trusts administer hospitals and mental health care.

indicators. Well London, a four-year program specific to London and involving seven organizations has 14 different projects to improve health in the most deprived areas of London; one project supports greater provision of fresh produce by helping existing food coops, facilitating the development of new ones, and assisting convenience stores in selling fresh produce (Sustain, 2010c). Well London also targets funding to areas of deprivation in several boroughs; only boroughs with at least four super output areas in the top 11 percent of the most deprived IMD rankings were granted funding. Thus, the only recipients of these types of funding were conventional CFIs; selling organic food purchased from regional farms would be expensive in low-income areas, even if sold at cost. Most CFIs receiving funding targeting socioeconomically disadvantaged areas were located on housing estates<sup>18</sup>, community centers, or schools. These CFIs tended to have some sort of criteria for whether and where to start a food coop; for example, Beethoven Center's CFI targeted schools where at least 50 percent of children received free school meals, an indicator of neighborhood poverty. Others conducted needs assessments of food retail in an area or surveys of local residents.

Unlike other conventional coops, Aardvark's food coop began as a project of a social enterprise specializing in waste management rather than from a community center; the enterprise itself was started with funding from the government. Several London boroughs, as well as many commercial businesses, were using Aardvark to collect food waste to divert from the landfill. Although the waste collection work was quite extensive in terms of households using the service across London, Aardvark's CFI only reached about 20 households in South London through a box scheme that delivered to

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<sup>18</sup> In the UK, housing estates are the equivalent of housing projects in the US. They provide homes at below-market rates and are either owned by local government or housing associations that are non-profit institutions.

homes, and about another 20 through a new food stall started in 2009 with Well London funding. It differed from the other conventional CFIs in that it operated a box scheme in addition to selling at a stall or having members pick up pre-ordered produce.

**Table 4.2: Developmental paths of CFIs**

Started by	Developmental path	No. CFIs	
		Conventional (n=15)	Organic (n=5)
Organization(s)	Food initiative incorporates as a distinct legal entity	1	0
	Food initiative remains a project	12	3
Resident(s)	Food initiative incorporates as a distinct legal entity	2	1
	Food initiative remains a project	0	1

Source: Author's interviews with CFI staff, 2009 – 2010

The remaining three CFIs that started as projects of existing community organizations were organic ones that started in recent years. The first of these, Organiclea, started as a project of a workers cooperative specializing in food growing. The cooperative itself had started out as a group of volunteers who were working on the council's derelict land, conducting training courses in food growing, and organizing social events celebrating food; later, they began to think more about the potential for developing a local food economy. Initial work on this took the form of a weekly stall at a community center where Organiclea sold organic produce from producers east of London and donations from local gardeners. Gradually, this evolved into a larger endeavor to develop a local food economy.

Calthorpe Project's coop was the project of a community organization called the Calthorpe Project, which was created in 1984 after residents fought a plan to designate a piece of land for office development. Since then, it has become a community-run park, with activities like food growing space for different groups, cooking and herbalism sessions, play groups, and yoga and tai chi classes. One of the growing groups was for Bangladeshi women over 50, and members of the group grew Bangladeshi vegetables in their small, individual plots. Calthorpe Project's CFI, a box scheme through an organic box scheme supplier, was started in 2008 through a grant from Big Lottery to promote local food.

Tottenham Food Coop started as a partnership between a local environmental regeneration charity commissioned by the local council to run community activities at a council housing estate; a community center located on a council housing estate; and a local sustainability organization-an informal network of volunteers from the borough of Haringey. One of the more active volunteers in the sustainability organization had the idea of starting a food cooperative, and a small environmental charity that was based at a housing estate's community center interested in developing food projects took the idea up. Tottenham Food Coop was the only organic CFI that tried to do a market survey before starting to find out if people would buy from an organic food stall, what produce they would like, etc, but it was unable to get responses from more than a few people. Because organic coops tended to emerge from peoples' perception of a general need for a different type of food supply and distribution network, rather than as a response to a more targeted need for food provision, they did not have criteria for where to locate.

## **Projects Started Informally**

Only four CFIs were started by residents informally, two organic and two conventional CFIs. Fareshares was started informally when residents began to sell produce obtained from Borough Market out of a squatted space they used as a social center. Among organic initiatives, Fareshares was one of the projects running from a social center, which itself was the most informal of organizations in that was unincorporated; it had written up a brief document about being a community group that was sufficient for getting a bank account, but otherwise did not have the legal status of a charity or company. Growing Communities started out when a resident started a community-supported agriculture initiative, but it incorporated as a company limited by guarantee five years later.

Among conventional initiatives, CFE began informally in 1998, when the founder, of West Indian descent, moved into an area lacking retailers selling fresh produce. At the time, he was researching food poverty for his theology degree and was interested in tackling health inequalities related to food to the extent that he quit his day job to work full-time on developing the coops (and did not finish his dissertation) (Guardian, 2006). He felt that regeneration programs had channeled a lot of money into the borough of Newham, but the people guiding the programs were outsiders, and he wanted to develop a grassroots approach. After the council turned down his request for some funding, he started buying produce on his own from a large wholesale market in East London and selling in the neighborhood at cost, but would sell out the produce each time. He gained support from a local charity and over time, several other organizations funded him, including the council (Guardian, 2006). For the first few years, however, he

was a full-time volunteer, only earning an income beginning in 2001. Family support, his possession of an MBA and experience in the banking sector, and his deep conviction stemming from his faith, helped him turn the project into an enterprise which incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in 2003, and gained charity status in 2006 (CFE, 2009). Similarly, ELFA was started in 2003 by a resident in an area lacking fresh produce outlets, but the resident knew of CFE and sought the guidance of that organization in setting up the food initiative at the outset. It incorporated as a company limited by guarantee soon after starting, benefitting from the knowledge and experience of CFE. Both CFE and ELFA target their food coops to socioeconomically disadvantaged areas that lack stores selling fresh produce.

These initiatives, which started informally, could be viewed as initially actors in a wider social movement. Each began with grievances pertaining to the industrial food system, but evolved into institutions that attempted to address their grievances- diet-related health inequalities in the case of conventional CFIs, and food-related environmental and social externalities in the case of organic CFIs. As will be shown later, the CFIs gradually transcended the focus on food to promote greater consciousness about health or sustainability, create jobs, and develop skills. Within the urban contexts these initiatives were situated in, they reflect the core idea of food sovereignty- citizens' control over their food system. In the following section, I will discuss further the development of the CFIs, noting parallels or divergences from the food sovereignty paradigm where relevant.



## **RESOURCE MOBILIZATION**

### **Space**

Many of the CFIs benefited from the use of free space, either in the form of council-owned property, such as housing estates or schools, or other places not owned by the government, such as churches and cafes (see Images 4.1, p. 90 and 4.3, p. 105) (Royal Borough of Kingston, 2006). Fareshares originally benefited from free space by squatting council property, but later started paying rent to gain security. In addition, Growing Communities and Organiclea have benefited from free or subsidized council-owned land for use as market gardens, which provide regular supplies of produce (see Image 4.2, p. 90) (Growing Communities, n.d.-e). Tottenham Food Coop, GCFC, and Organiclea benefited from the donations of produce grown on council-owned allotments; these are plots of land designated for food-growing and rented by residents at subsidized rates. Community Food Enterprise, which supplied its own network of stalls selling produce as well as other CFIs, was based at a warehouse provided by a local regeneration charity. The granting of free space has its disadvantage as the space may not be the most visible. In the case of Tottenham Food Coop, the food initiative was set up at a community center located on a housing estate with a tumultuous history of racial tensions. This history, discussed more extensively in Chapter Six, has resulted in underutilization of the community center, which the council is attempting to remedy by encouraging food projects such as the coop and a community café. The presence of an organic coop on a low-income housing estate, however, meant that most of the customers came from outside the housing estate.

## **Volunteer Labor**

Another commonality across nearly all of the CFIs was the reliance on volunteer labor. Volunteers comprised an integral part of delivering the food initiatives in all but two of the coops. One of these, Calthorpe - the smallest one in terms of having about 12 regular customers, was a community center's arrangement with an organic box scheme to provide produce at a cheaper price. An employee of the community center coordinated this project; because it involved prepaid orders by a small number of people, there was less labor involved compared to food initiatives that sell produce to the general public without requiring prepayment. The other, Aardvark, was an organization with two paid-staff who cover the delivery of the box scheme; however, Aardvark later started a volunteer-staffed food stall. Although volunteer labor was important to keeping costs down, all but one CFI also relied on paid staff to varying extents. Fareshares was the only one that relied entirely on volunteers, while Growing Communities had the most paid staff with 21 part-time workers and the most volunteers- over 160.

## **Funding**

In terms of formal funding<sup>19</sup>, several CFIs applied for grants to start up or for support after starting up (see Table 4.4, p. 93). As mentioned earlier, the NHS was involved in setting up or supporting several conventional CFIs as these existed to increase the availability of healthy food in areas of deprivation or to encourage healthy eating among populations with rates of high chronic disease. In addition, more of the conventional coops have received multiple sources of funding, and a smaller proportion

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<sup>19</sup> I use the term formal funding to refer to funds from organizations that routinely provide grants through a process entailing application for funds and/or accounting for expenditures with the funds. Thus, formal funding is usually from government bodies or grant-making bodies such as the Big Lottery, or from the recipients of grants from such bodies.

has received no formal funding compared to organic CFIs. Although most of the CFIs' funding came from local government sources or other nonprofit organizations, CFE also received support from an MNC whose headquarters are in the area. The business, Tate and Lyle, specialized in corn wet milling, a process that yields gluten used in animal feed and corn starch, which can be further processed into corn syrup (Tate and Lyle, 2010). Tate and Lyle had provided CFE with a 2500 square-foot warehouse, a delivery truck, 800 square feet of office space, in addition to donating £17,000 (Hilton, Moussaid, & Sloan, 2006).

Another source of grants, Making Local Food Work (MLFW), was a consortium of seven organizations<sup>20</sup> working on a five-year, Big Lottery-funded national project that started in 2007 to support the development of community food enterprises (Making Local Food Work, 2008). One of the specific projects helped development of food coops and buying clubs and another involved developing sustainable food hubs for supply and distribution. Four of the organic CFIs received funding from MLFW or from the Big Lottery itself. Fareshares was the only organic CFI that did not apply for any formal funding. Other sources of funding for the CFIs included the local council and charities specific to local areas, UnLtd, a charity that provided grants for social enterprise development, and Capital Growth-a campaign to support 2012 food growing spaces in London by the end of 2012. These funding institutions arose in the political milieu discussed earlier, one which promoted the development of community-based enterprises and projects to address social and environmental challenges.

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<sup>20</sup> MLFW is comprised of Campaign to Protect Rural England; Co-operatives UK; Country Markets Ltd; National Farmers' Retail & Markets Association; Plunkett Foundation; Sustain; and Soil Association.

Two initiatives did not receive any formal funding, and four benefited indirectly from formal funding (see Table 4.5, p. 95). Fareshares received financial support from a farm that supplied its produce; this was specifically given to fix the flooring in the space the food initiative operated out of. St. Hilda's East, Burdett, Whitechapel, and Hind Grove all operate out of independent community centers, and only one received direct funding from Well London to support the food initiative. However, all of these CFIs<sup>21</sup> operated in partnership with the CDA, which delivered the produce to their centers for a cost, and the CDA had received funding from the PCT for this work, some of which was used to obtain a van for the produce delivery. Prior to the acquisition of the van, CDA staff were obtaining produce from the suppliers and delivering using their own private vehicles. Of all the CFIs in this study, only one, Growing Communities, was generating profits of over £300,000 without relying on funding to operate-though it has received small grants for specific things in earlier stages of development, like tools for food growing.

### **CFI-CFI Support**

Two of the CFIs went beyond their own network of food initiatives to assist in the establishment of other CFIs. As mentioned earlier, CFE provided guidance to ELFA in setting up a food initiative, and since then it has continued to supply the food for ELFA, which expanded to sell at six different sites and also delivers to elderly residents. Greenwich Community Food Coop helped set up the New Cross Gate food coop, which subsequently ran independently.

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<sup>21</sup> I include St. Hilda's East in this statement, although St Hilda's East decided to bypass the CDA and work directly with the supplier in 2010.

**Image 4.1: World End housing estate in Chelsea and site of Chelsea Theatre's food coop**



Source: Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. (2006). World's End estate from Cremorne Gardens Retrieved 2 December, 2010, from <http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/vmgallery/general/>

**Image 4.2: One of Growing Communities' market gardens**



Source: Growing Communities. (2010a). Our Market Gardens Retrieved 10 December, 2010, from <http://www.growingcommunities.org/food-growing/market-gardens/>

**Table 4.3: Characteristics of CFIs**

CFI	Year Started	Link to food growing	Sale/pickup at multiple sites	Home delivery	Public procurement contract	Percent mark-up on price	Ave customer spending/week (£)	Ave no. customers/week
CFE	1999		•		•	18-20%	3	700
Croydon	2000		•	•		0	8	50
GCFC	2002	•	•		•	33%	4	115
ELFA	2003		•			5%	3	200
Westbourne Park	2003		•			0	2.5	40
St. Hilda's East	2004					0	5	50
Beethoven Centre	2006					0	3	35
Hind Grove	2006					0	4	30
New Cross Gate	2006					<5%	6	25
Aardvark	2007	•	•	•		<5%	4	20
Chelsea Theatre	2007			•		some items, <5	3	25
St. Andrew's Church	2008					0	3	40
Burdett	2009					0		25
White City	2009					0	2	15
Whitechapel	2009					0	5	20

	CFI	Year Started	Link to food growing <sup>x</sup>	Sale/pickup at multiple sites	Home delivery	Public procurement contract	Percent mark-up on price	Ave. customer spending/week (£)	Ave no. customers/week
Organic	Fareshares	1988					10-15%	16	120
	Growing Communities	1993	•	•			79%	8.4	476
	Organiclea	2006	•				40%	10	65
	Calthorpe Project*	2008					0%	5	12
	Tottenham Food Coop*	2008					10%	8	25

Source: Author's Interviews with CFI Staff, 2009 -2010

\* This refers to food growing that directly contributed to produce sold at the CFI.

\* Calthorpe Project's coop ran biweekly and Tottenham Food Coop ran on the last Friday and Saturday of the month rather than weekly.





	CFI	NDC	NHS/ PCT	SRB	Big Lottery	Well London	MLFW	UnLtd	Other	None
Organic	Fareshares									•
	Growing Communities						•	•		
	Organiclea						•			
	Calthorpe				•					
	Tottenham Food Coop									•

Source: Author's Interviews with CFI Staff, 2009 - 2010

**Table 4.5: CFIs benefiting from informal funding or indirect, formal funding**

	CFI	Informal Funding	Indirect Funding
Conventional	CFE		
	Croydon		
	GCFC		
	ELFA		
	Westbourne Park		
	St. Hilda's East		•
	Beethoven Centre		
	Hind Grove		•
	New Cross Gate		
	Aardvark		
	Chelsea Theatre		
	St. Andrew's Church		
	Burdett		•
	White City		
Whitechapel		•	
Organic	Fareshares	•	
	Growing Communities		
	Organiclea		
	Calthorpe		
	Tottenham Food Coop		

Source: Author's interviews with CFI staff, 2009 - 2010

The food sovereignty model does not explicitly address how people should mobilize resources, but it does encourage of different groups and actors coming together to exert greater control over the food system. Viewed from this perspective, the mobilization of community spaces- such as schools, community centers, and council-owned land- and of volunteers demonstrates this process.

### **STRUCTURES AND DECISION-MAKING**

The spectrum of decision-making forms among the CFIs ranged from non-hierarchical, collective approaches to more hierarchical approaches where decisions were made by a person or group of people holding positions of leadership. Of the 20 CFIs, the few situated on the collective side of the decision-making spectrum were organic initiatives. With the exception of Calthorpe Project, according to their websites and fliers, organic CFIs had an ethos that challenges what they perceived as a state of disillusionment and disconnectedness in society. They sought to draw in and engage citizens in the process of creating something positive, and opening up decision-making was often part of this ethos. This was expressed in a statement by Organiclea- “We want to see a world based on equality and co-operation, where people can take control over all aspects of their lives. Taking collective control over our own work is a starting point... we aim to reduce reliance on exploitative structures and build a secure base from which to challenge injustice and encourage others to do so” (Organiclea, 2011a).

Tottenham Food Coop, Organiclea, and Fareshares attempted to operate as a collective of those involved in running the coop, and running the coop was open to anyone interested and committed to volunteering. In practice, some of these coops did not quite reach the ideal of consistent consensus-based decision making as sometimes

actions have been taken without consultation with the collective and in the case of Fareshares, sometimes volunteers went ahead and implemented some stock changes without discussing at the collective's meetings. For example, with Tottenham Food Coop, the director of the organization that the food initiative was a project of occasionally circumvented the consensus-based decisions of the collective which largely consisted of volunteers, deciding to order produce from different producers than had been agreed. This was controversial because Tottenham Food Coop's stance limited food to that sourced from the borough and farms near London, and the different producers sourced citrus fruit from Europe. Generally, however, issues considered contentious were discussed at meetings. Organiclea was by definition a workers cooperative in which workers (voluntary or paid) were members that owned and managed the organization collectively (Organiclea, 2010b).

Growing Communities had a voluntary management committee and allowed members of the organic box scheme to have a voice in major decisions about the initiative. Box scheme members could stand for positions in the committee and vote at the annual general meeting. Calthorpe Project's food coop differed from the others in that it was a small project, more akin to an informal buying club, but was coordinated through a community organization which was managed by members of the local community.

Conventional CFIs were situated on the hierarchical side of the decision-making spectrum. Greenwich Community Food Coop had a steering committee that always includes a few local residents, but it also had three directors that served in a voluntary capacity to provide oversight. Community Food Enterprise had paid management

positions and a board of trustees that included at least two to three local residents. East London Food Access had a voluntary management committee with a director who was responsible for developing and overseeing the business strategy, and a separate volunteers committee that discussed issues associated with more routine matters. With regard to the remaining initiatives, staff of the organizations that the food initiatives were based in made decisions about the initiatives.

All of the CFIs in this study were community organizations that relied on volunteer labor and each had a committee or group with decision-making capacity that included residents from the surrounding geographic area. However, aside from Calthorpe, the organic coops were open for anyone to be involved in decision making about the project either through membership or volunteering, even if they were from a different borough. In contrast, conventional coops tended to have a limited number of representatives from the communities served.

The food sovereignty paradigm does not specify how decision-making should be conducted; rather, one principle is about valuing the diversity of ways of organizing. The model, however, does draw attention to gender parity in decision-making, an important issue in the global South where the food sovereignty movement originated. While none of the CFIs had any policy about gender mix among the decision-making structures, women seemed to be involved in all of the CFIs' management. In addition, with the organic CFIs, those involved in decision-making did not include ethnic minorities, although ethnic minorities were a significant part of the neighborhoods they were located in. Racial and ethnic constitution of decision-making processes were not as explicitly addressed in the food sovereignty paradigm as gender, but because the model was

developed to bring excluded voices to the global table, it seems that this ideal would extend to local contexts as well; it is also a significant issue in multicultural Northern cities. Findings suggest that this is a particular challenge for organic initiatives located in mixed income, multicultural neighborhoods; this issue will be explored further in the case studies.

### **FOOD – SUSTAINABILITY, AFFORDABILITY AND RANGE OF PRODUCE**

Because the CFIs in this study had different ways of operating, it is difficult to compare prices of produce. Factors such as whether the initiatives had food growing space of their own, whether they were only selling seasonal, British produce or providing exotic produce, extent of funding and perspective regarding the purpose of the work are among the factors that may affect price. In addition, the coops that were selling without a pre-pay system based their prices on the costs of the produce, which fluctuate. Most of the conventional coops did not mark up the produce or marked it up by a small percentage (see Table 4.3, pp. 91-92). The prices of the initiatives that used a pre-pay system, had a standard price throughout the year, but the price was based on number of items rather than weight, making price comparisons difficult (see Table 4.6, p. 101) (Growing Communities, n.d.-f; Organiclea, 2010a; St. Andrew's Fulham Fields, 2007). The benefits of a pre-pay system are less wastage of food and an expected amount of cash on hand with which to pay off expenses. Most of the conventional coops, several of which had conducted surveys of local residents before starting a food initiative, were running a stall where customers could select the produce because of many customers' preference to select produce themselves.

Although it is difficult to compare prices of produce between conventional coops and organic coops for the reasons mentioned above, it is clear that conventional coops had a wider range of food sourcing characteristics than organic coops (see Table 4.7, p. 102). Nearly all of the conventional coops acquired some exotic produce<sup>22</sup> even if they also sourced produce from producers within the city or from nearby counties. To encourage healthy eating among diverse populations, they supplied exotic produce that constituted the staples of different diets at prices comparable or cheaper than supermarket prices. Pointing to the significance of exotic foods, the founder of CFE had stated, “Goodness me if you want to see some of the best fights ever they’ll be at the coop over yams. You always get the best stories out of yams...” (Guardian, 2006). The practice of providing exotic produce relates to the place identity of residents who have emigrated from Africa, Bangladesh, and the Caribbean; having some staples of their native diets is integral to their identities.

Organiclea had a scheme that enabled private gardeners to donate produce to the coops or to generate income by selling produce through the coops. Tottenham Food Coop also attempted to replicate this scheme but only received donations occasionally. In contrast, Organiclea developed a program called ‘Cropshare’ through which private gardeners could go through a process of certification through the Wholesome Foods Association. The Wholesome Food Organization provides a low-cost means of certifying that food is grown sustainably and ethically, and encourages distribution of certified food near where it is produced (Wholesome Food Association, n.d.-b).

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<sup>22</sup> Based on usage by CFI staff, I use the term exotic to refer to imported produce that are not items in the standard English food basket e.g. plantains and yams.

**Table 4.6: Prices of produce in CFIs that use a pre-order, pre-pay system**

CFI	Produce	Price
St. Andrew's	Vegetable bag (7-8 varieties)	£3
	Fruit bag (7-8 varieties)	£3
Aardvark	Large seasonal vegetable box	£7
	Medium seasonal vegetable box	£5.50
	Medium seasonal fruit box	£5
	Small seasonal fruit box	£3.50
Calthorpe Project	Small organic vegetable bag (6 varieties)	£6.80
	Small organic fruit bag (5 varieties)	£5
Growing Communities	Std organic vegetable bag (8-9 varieties)	£10.15
	Small organic vegetable bag (6 varieties)	£6
	Std organic fruit bag (5-7 varieties)	£8.07
	Small organic fruit bag (3-4 varieties)	£4.38
Organiclea	Std organic vegetable bag (8-9 varieties)	£9.46
	Small organic vegetable bag (5-6 varieties)	£5.80
	Std organic fruit bag (5+ varieties)	£7.15
	Small organic fruit bag (4 varieties)	£3.92

Sources: Author's Interview with Calthorpe staff, 2009; Growing Communities. (2010). Our Organic Box Scheme Retrieved 10 December, 2010, from <http://www.growingcommunities.org/organic-box-scheme/>; Organiclea. (2010). Bag Sizes and Prices Retrieved 10 December, 2010, from <http://www.organiclea.org.uk/2010/01/bag-sizes-and-prices/>; St. Andrews Fulham Fields. (2010). Food Co-op Retrieved 10 December, 2010, from <http://www.standrewsfulham.com/coop.html>



**Table 4.7: Comparison of Food Sourcing Between Organic Coops and Conventional Coops**

Food Sourcing	Number of Organic Coops (n = 5)	Number of Conventional Coops (n = 15)
Only direct from producers in nearby counties or within London	3	0
Mostly direct from producers in nearby counties; Limited amounts from further away; Some Fairtrade <sup>23</sup> imports of citrus fruits	2	0
UK produce and non-fairtrade imports of non-exotic produce from wholesalers	0	2
From wholesalers; No distance criteria; Some exotic produce	0	6
Mostly direct from nearby producers; Some exotic produce from wholesalers	0	1
Mostly direct from nearby producers; Some exotic produce from wholesalers; Some direct trading with foreign producer coops for exotic produce	0	6

Source: Author's Interviews with CFI Staff, 2009 - 2010

Rather than having enforceable standards, it stipulates principles that producers pledge to apply in food production. The principles cover not only several ecological aspects of production, such as prohibiting the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, but also include social aspects. Below are some of these:

- food crops and growing methods should take account of local growing conditions, local culture and local needs

<sup>23</sup> Fairtrade refers to items certified as Fairtrade by the Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International for being sourced from producers meeting standards across social development, economic development, and environmental development criteria (Fairtrade Association, 2011)

- everyone involved in food production and processing should be able to attain a quality of life which meets their basic needs and allows an adequate return and satisfaction from their work
  - production, processing and distribution of food should be socially just and ecologically responsible
- (Wholesome Food Association, n.d.-a)

By relying more on trust and bypassing formal inspections, the organization keeps the cost of joining this scheme low, and cultivated personal relationships based on trust. Organiclea was a member of the scheme and required any individuals from the community wishing to sell their produce to Organiclea to also sign the pledge. Organiclea paid for the produce provided through Cropshare at the rate of one of the produce suppliers for the box scheme, Hughes Organics, or allowed the contributor to exchange for an equal value of other produce it sold.

Growing Communities had the most nuanced food policy of the CFIs in this study, a ‘food zone’ approach that articulates initial goals of where to source food from and in what amounts, and tracked progress toward these goals (see Table 4.8, p. 104) (Growing Communities, n.d.-c). At the time of this study, it sourced food from 17 producers, its three certified organic market gardens on 0.5 acres of council land, and a network of certified organic microsites called the patchwork farm (Growing Communities, n.d.-e; Soil Association, n.d.). The patchwork farm, started in 2008, consisted of small plots of land in private gardens, churches, and housing estates, and was aimed at creating opportunities for income generation from food production; people who have produced salad greens at the microsites would sell the produce to Growing Communities for use in the box scheme. Members of the box scheme joined one of nine pick-up locations, but three were oversubscribed and had waiting lists. The market gardens also produced salad greens for the box scheme, but these were produced by volunteers and apprentice growers. Although it did not obtain

produce from domestic gardens, Growing Communities stated that it is “open to the idea of certification from the Wholesome Food Association” for urban food growing outside of its own sites (Growing Communities, n.d.-b). Besides the sustainable food production, Growing Communities had ponds and wildlife areas at each market garden site to encourage biodiversity (Growing Communities, n.d.-e).

**Table 4.8: Growing Communities' food zone targets and progress**

Sourced From	2008-2009	2009-2010	Target
Urban domestic	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%
Urban traded	3.6%	3.7%	5.0%
Peri-urban	0.0%	0.0%	17.5%
Rural hinterland (within 100 miles)	54.2%	57.0%	35.0%
Rest of UK	2.8%	9.2%	20.0%
Rest of Europe	31.8%	23.8%	15%
Rest of World	7.5%	6.0%	5.0%
Total “local” (within 100 miles)	57.8%	60.7%	60.0%
Total UK	60.6%	69.7%	80.0%

Source: Growing Communities. (n.d.-b). Explore the Food Zones Retrieved 15 December, 2010, from <http://www.growingcommunities.org/start-ups/what-is-gc/manifesto-feeding-cities/explore-food-zones/>

Among conventional coops, CFE received a MLFW grant that it used to work on developing a sustainable food distribution center. It aimed to source 70 percent of its non-exotic produce from regional producers by 2012, and was developing links to producers in the global South to source exotic food directly and to ensure fair prices for Southern producers. Greenwich Community Food Coop had started to sell produce donated from a network of small-scale food growing projects across the borough of Greenwich, similar to the Growing Community’s patchwork farm.

Unlike the organic coops, GCFC and CFE did not use criteria of certified organic, but both were working with relatively-small scale producers to source food more locally, and the community food growing projects contributing to GCFC did not use synthetic fertilizers or pesticides.

**Image 4.3: Pre-pay produce sales at coop at St. Andrew's Church**



Source: Author, 2009

In terms of food sovereignty principles, the two types of CFIs focused on different aspects of the model; organic CFIs focused on supporting local producers using ecological farming methods and conventional CFIs focused on making fruits and vegetables physically, culturally, and economically accessible to ethnically diverse low-income communities. For the latter, consultation with community members generally led to the decision to include imported exotic foods. However, even some organic initiatives imported Fairtrade tropical fruits and dried foods as well as non-Fairtrade foods. Importing foods fits within the food sovereignty model which allows for variation in food production and thus the need for trade, but it also might be at odds in the sense that items for export are often produced in monoculture plantations. In addition, the variety of ways of organizing- partly manifested in the

different ways of sourcing food - reflects the principles of diversity and democratic processes.

### **SCALING UP**

Some of the coops expanded from humble beginnings in scope of activities and number of sites. By the time of the study, five of the conventional CFIs had expanded to sell at more than one site, but two of these, GCFC and CFE had developed extensive activities to work toward becoming financially self-sufficient. GCFC expanded from a stall at one housing estate to 11 such sites, and later began to sell food with higher mark-ups to workplaces and schools to help subsidize the lower-markup sales at housing estates, but it also relies on NHS funding to support the latter. Similarly, CFE expanded from an informal sale at one housing estate to incorporating and selling at several housing estates, and then greatly increased its activities beyond food stalls to become the largest community food initiative in London. Community Food Enterprise also supplied the food for the three CFIs in East London that were operating in partnership with the CDA (Hind Grove, Burdett, and Whitechapel) as well as to St. Hilda's East, which had stopped its relationship with the CDA and was directly obtaining its food from CFE. Its activities ranged from mobile produce sales to helping students develop a juicing microenterprise.

In 2006, an independent evaluation of CFE's work revealed that annually, it supplied approximately 25,000 customers through social food outlets, 100,000 pieces of fruit to workplaces, and 200,000 pieces of fruit to primary school children (Hilton, et al., 2006). Although it was still dependent on funding to subsidize its sales in lower-income areas at the time of this study, its activities-which include delivery to cafes and workplaces- placed it on a path toward eventually becoming self-sufficient, as several of the other activities were self-sustaining and some generate profits.

Although CFE was not yet providing food for public sector catering, it was already engaged in public sector contracts in providing schools with fruit. Given that the UK launched the Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI) to encourage the incorporation of sustainability considerations into public sector food procurement, CFE's development of a sustainable food distribution center in East London could contribute toward meeting the goals of the PSFPI. Nonetheless, this study demonstrates that CFIs can contribute to public sector food procurement-both CFE and GCFC supplied produce to schools.

Growing Communities followed a similar trajectory as CFE, starting out as a community supported agriculture project between 12 residents in East London and producers near London. This then evolved into an organic box scheme, initially serving 30 families, and the organization negotiated with the council to lease some council property to develop a market garden for food growing. The provision of land allowed Growing Communities to develop an urban growing apprenticeship program that trains people in food growing skills, while developing certified organic production of salad greens for their box scheme. However, one of the sites it had used for a market garden was sold for housing development and everything was then relocated to another site nearby. Since the loss of the site to development, it had taken on a peppercorn lease with the council - in which it paid nothing- for the site it relocated to and two more council-owned parks to develop as market gardens, and also started a 'patchwork' farm program in which local organizations could donate small plots of land for food growing that would also feed into the box scheme.

Profits from the box scheme were then channeled into developing a weekly organic farmers market where producers could sell produce directly, and others could sell products such as cakes and chutneys using organic ingredients bought from the

market. In addition to providing stalls at the market to sell from, Growing Communities' staff also provided assistance to local people in production and marketing. This strategy has increased the diversity of products at the market with the inclusion of Caribbean, Turkish, and Indian foods produced by local residents, providing a means of participation in sustainable food activity for ethnic minority residents. The box scheme also enabled a new project, funded by Making Local Food Work, which trained other groups interested in developing a community food initiative based on Growing Communities' model. Both Growing Communities and CFE emphasized the jobs and training opportunities created through their day-to-day work. Growing Communities relied on 22 paid workers who had received training in food growing skills, and CFE employed about 12 people as supervisors, drivers, and project managers.

At the time of this study, Growing Communities' box scheme served 520 households, approximately 480 of which ordered weekly, with the rest ordering biweekly. The boxes of produce could be picked up from nine locations which included cafes and a church, and the organization relied on an electric milk float for transporting produce to the pickup sites. It provided a 20 percent discount for people on state pension (though only two people were using this in 2010), and according to its annual report for 2010, 42 percent of people on the box scheme and 31 percent of people who visited the farmers' market considered themselves to be of a low income. Unfortunately, because the survey did not ask for a figure, it is not clear what self-reported low income constitutes.

Organiclea, the project of a workers' coop, began as a weekly stall selling organic produce from nearby producers and contributions from their own food-growing spaces, but then added a weekly box scheme and café with funding from

Making Local Food Work. In 2009, further funding from Making Local Food Work allowed them to lease 12 acres of land, which included four acres in glasshouses of a plant nursery that the council was closing down. The ten-year lease was at a subsidized rate of £1000/year for the first three years, after which it would assume the regular rate of £7000/year. This enabled the coop to increase production under glasshouses and provide more of their own produce to the box scheme. In addition, it started a ‘scrumping’ project, in which teams of volunteers went to residents in the borough who needed help harvesting fruit or those who could not use up all the fruit from private gardens. The residents received 25 percent of the harvest, and the remainder went to Organiclea for making and selling juice.

Two of the smaller organic CFIs branched out in different ways. Aardvark offered the compost produced from its food waste collection to community food growing groups in exchange for surplus produce to include in its box scheme. At the time of this study, these small-scale food growing spaces did not produce enough to supply surplus produce regularly, but production could potentially increase in the future, particularly if groups gained the capacity to work on more donated land, as Growing Communities did. Calthorpe Project always had some food growing activity, and in 2011 it began to supply herbs weekly to the People’s Supermarket, a new cooperative supermarket that ran daily through member (volunteer) labor. In addition, the Calthorpe Project started employing three young men on a placement from another organization’s program to train young people under 25 in entrepreneurial skills. Their work entailed organizing the growing area to develop it into a social enterprise.

In some cases, individuals that were involved with CFEs informed policy development. The founder of CFE, the founder of Growing Communities, and a



director of GCFC, all sat on the London Food Board at the time of this study. In addition, CFE's founder played an instrumental role in developing the Newham Food Access Partnership, a group of organizations working on strategies to make healthy food more affordable and accessible in the borough of Newham. The Newham Food Access Partnership also developed a food strategy for Newham. Organiclea developed Cropshare, a strategy to nurture a local food economy in the borough, after researching the national Allotments Act, which had generally been interpreted as prohibiting trade in allotment produce (Organiclea, 2007). It published a discussion paper presenting the legalities surrounding the issue, highlighting the possibilities to sell surplus produce that exceeded the amount any individual gardener, or even community garden, could use.

In the process of scaling up, some of the initiatives moved toward greater application of principles comprising the food sovereignty model. The acquisition of council land and privately owned land and use for food growing; development of networks of private gardeners harvests for sale; and training in sustainable food growing methods reflect the ideas of supporting small scale local producers, using ecological methods, and cultivating land for common use. The training in entrepreneurial skills and community food work skills by some of the initiatives indirectly relates to the principle of fair labor and decent working conditions by equipping people with skills to have meaningful work and developing opportunities to earn a decent living. Finally, the policy work and training to start up other food initiatives has facilitated the creation of more opportunities to develop and support these types of projects.

## **CFI PERSPECTIVES**

Based on the findings presented thus far, three main types of ethos were evident among CFIs in London. One stemmed from a health inequality focus, where the mandate was to deliver good quality, culturally appropriate food affordable to residents of the areas with higher than average levels of diet related health problems or inadequate provision of fresh produce. Generally, this entailed little or no mark-up on the price of produce. These initiatives generally did not aspire to become financially self-sufficient or expand their scope of work or physical presence-although GCFC and CFE were exceptions to this; most conventional CFIs and Calthorpe Project were in this group. Providing food affordable and appropriate to the local residents meant that these CFIs sold conventionally produced food rather than organically produced food, in most cases sold some exotic items, and relied on funding. Exceptions were Calthorpe Project and St. Andrews Church, both of which used a pre-pay, preorder system and thus always recouped costs and only received funding at initiation. Calthorpe Project also sold organic produce, but relied on a special reduced rate by the produce supplier and had received a start-up grant.

A different motivation was to provide good quality sustainably produced food at relatively affordable prices with modest mark-up to recover some costs, and thus not be dependent on funding. This category included Tottenham Food Coop and Fareshares, both of which marked up the prices by about 10 percent. Finally, a third motivation was to provide good quality sustainably produced food, cultivate local production and develop livelihoods, and to expand this model that promotes social bonds within places and forges a sense of connection to rural producers. This entailed larger mark-ups and dependency on funding at some stages of development. Growing Communities and Organiclea, and to a lesser extent GCFC and CFE, fit in

this category. Growing Communities, Organiclea, and two initiatives addressing health inequalities – GCFC and CFE, were the only ones that significantly marked up the price of produce; the mark-up ranged from 18-20 percent by CFE to 79 percent by Growing Communities (see Table 4.2, p. 86-87).

Among the fewer organic CFIs, the range of perspectives could be seen, whereas most of the conventional coops fell into the first category because of their emphasis on selling food at a price affordable for largely low income local residents. Initiatives in the third group may be considered social enterprises because at least a quarter of their activity involved trade. In some cases, the term social enterprise was applied by the coop itself, by the organization it is a project of, or by others recognizing the CFI as a social enterprise as a way to capture the nature of its work. CFE referred to itself as a social enterprise, and besides running food initiatives that sell fresh produce in deprived areas, it sold and distributed produce to workplaces and restaurants, ran a food worker training program and a consultancy program, and started a food distribution hub in London. Growing Communities described itself as a community-led organization rather than as a social enterprise, but was clearly pursuing strategies to generate profits and run independently of funding. The leaders of both CFE and Growing Communities had received awards and recognition for their work in the social economy (Guardian, 2006; Howarth, n.d.)

### **CFI DISCOURSE**

The previous sections presented initiatives' practices and ways of operating. In the remainder of the chapter, I discuss the discourse initiatives used to articulate their work and ethos, and conclude by relating both discourse and practices to the food sovereignty paradigm. This section presents analysis of the texts through which

CFIs communicated about their work using content analysis, which involves examining words or phrases in text and collapsing them into fewer content categories. The text I examined included parts of website content, fliers and other promotional literature that expressed their reasons for working such as “we believe that everyone in the community has the right not just to food, but to the right food” and specifics about their work such as “a place to buy and sell or share fruit and veg from your garden or allotment” (Community Food Enterprise, 2010; Sustainable Haringey, 2010). Five themes emerged from examination of the texts: these were affordability, health, community, environment, justice/rights, and economy/skills. Table 4.9 (p. 115) presents the themes, the claims associated with them, and examples of the rationale for the claims. When looking at the claims across the various food initiatives, it is clear that the ideas motivating the work were much broader than simply access to fresh produce or access to sustainably produced food. These CFIs linked the concept of access to the environment, to social justice, and to the political economy of food production.

The content analysis also shows that although fewer in number, organic coops communicated much more about benefits than conventional coops, although this is because Growing Communities, and to a lesser extent Organiclea, put much more information on their websites than other CFIs- organic or conventional. Conventional CFIs generally existed to promote the consumption of fruits and vegetables, not to promote or discourage the acquisition of fresh produce through certain means; they would not, for example, discourage people from shopping at supermarkets. Consequently, their discourse was generally limited to a statement about providing healthy, affordable produce. Over half of all organic initiatives’ themes pertained to the environment; whereas conventional initiatives, as a group, tended not to

concentrate as heavily on one particular theme (see Table 4.10, p. 116). All of the organic CFIs and four of the 15 conventional CFIs (27%) made claims about the environment ( $p=.008$ , Fisher's Exact Test for difference between organic and conventional CFIs). Among conventional food coops, health constituted most of the theme references (31%), followed by justice (26%).

The other significant difference between the two groups was found with the economy theme. Three of the five organic CFIs (60%) and one of the 15 conventional CFIs (20%) made claims about the economy ( $p=.032$ , Fisher's Exact Test for difference between organic and conventional CFIs). Economy was mentioned only by one conventional initiative, CFE, in reference to the ideals motivating the development of a food distribution center in London. As previously mentioned, CFE was attempting to make food obtained directly from nearby producers and from producers overseas accessible to community food projects and food retailers in the area through the distribution center.

Organic coops also used different rationale to make claims about benefits to the environment eg.- no use of heated greenhouses, no chemical inputs into soil and water; in contrast, conventional coops only mentioned that local sourcing can reduce pollution caused from transport over long distances (see Table 4.9, p. 115). Among organic coops, justice generally referred to fair deals for producers from the global South and England, whereas it tended to refer to accessibility of basic, healthy food for local consumers among conventional food coops. In only one organic initiative, Fareshares, did justice refer to a similar concept- "decent food is a basic necessity for health, regardless of means" (Fareshares, 2010). In one conventional initiative, CFE, justice referred to fairer prices for producers in addition to accessibility of healthy food for local consumers.

**Table 4.9: Themes with associated claims about benefits of community food initiatives**

Theme	Claim	Examples
Affordability	Reasonably priced food	-Sold with little markup on prices -Volunteer-run -Produce bought in bulk, savings passed on
Health	Encourage healthy eating	-Fruit/vegetables consumption contributes to better health outcomes -Direct from wholesaler -Direct from farm or community garden -Demonstrations/recipes for healthy cooking -People learn what is in season and how to prepare seasonal foods -Increase awareness of what constitutes a healthy diet and its benefits
Community	-Encourages greater interactions between people and groups in the community	-Private gardeners or community food growing projects can share produce -People can help run coop -Meet other people in community spaces/venues
Environment	-Reducing pollution -Increase knowledge about food chain -Increase knowledge about impacts of consumer actions	-No use of heated greenhouses -Local sourcing cuts food miles -Less food transport and consumer transport to commercial retailers -Use of electric vehicle and bicycles to distribute food -Less use of plastic packaging -Less intensive agricultural practices -No chemical inputs into soil and water -Less production of greenhouse gases -Sustainable agriculture promotes biodiversity
Justice/Rights	-Eliminating barriers to “right food” -Alleviating food poverty -Fair trade	-Making healthy food more accessible physically and/or economically -Fair prices for domestic producers and producers in global South
Economy/Skills	-Help local economies -Train and employ local residents -Train people in food growing skills to contribute to “local food economy”	-Small scale operations more labor-intensive, employing more people rather than using machinery -Linking with other community enterprises -Train people in community health work -Train people in community food work -Start-up programs to help other communities develop CFIs

Source: Author’s survey of websites and promotional texts produced by CFIs 2009 – 2010

**Table 4.10: Percentage of references across themes**

Theme	Percentage of Total Coded References	
	Organic Initiatives' References (n=117)	Conventional Initiatives' References (n=70)
Affordability	7%	11%
Health	6%	31%
Community	16%	10%
Environment	55%	10%
Justice	6%	26%
Economy	15%	11%

### **FRAMING**

In the previous section, I presented an aggregate content analysis of CFI texts communicating about their work. Here, I present selected texts from individual CFIs that have generated more extensive communication about their initiatives<sup>24</sup> to illustrate the framing processes and possibilities of frame bridging or frame extension. Although the previous section examined all text pertaining to their work, here I only examine the texts specifically communicating the mission and guiding principles.

### **CFE**

CFE expressed its mission as-

At CFE, we believe that everyone in the community has **the right not just to food, but to the right food**. At the heart of our belief is the principle that **access to food is a right, not a privilege**. The food and drink we consume should be safe, nutritious, affordable, accessible and culturally acceptable (emphasis in the original).  
(Community Food Enterprise, 2010)

It is clear that CFE invoked a human rights frame above, but immediately after the mission statement, it listed values emanating from it:

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<sup>24</sup> This section includes the CFIs that did not serve as case studies; analysis of other CFIs with greater communication is presented in the case study chapters. The majority of CFIs used limited language on their fliers such as 'fresh fruit and veg at affordable prices', and from this limited text, it was difficult to assess a dominant frame. From the survey, it was clearer that the motivation behind such initiatives was health promotion through provision of good quality, affordable food.

- the right to the right food must be balanced by individual and community responsibility, both to our food supply and to our eating habits
- awareness, education and social engagement are the keys to responsible behaviour: enablement and empowerment reduce the risks of exclusion and of dependency
- “reconnection” – knowing and safeguarding where food comes from, how it is produced and the role it plays in our diverse diets and cultures – is the foundation of a sustainable community, supports regeneration and reduces waste
- Improved dietary understanding and nutritional practices are the foundation stones for achieving better health for all.
- Understanding the role that food plays in our lives and access to it are the two main aspects of the challenge that we face as an enterprise. We are committed to creating a resource that complements and enables market-based food access solutions. In consequence, we have developed a “community enterprise” business model, which we believe can be taught and replicated outside East London.

(Community Food Enterprise, 2010)

In communicating its values, CFE used language often applied by food localization and organic food advocates but linked this to sustainable community characterized by a better quality of life – regeneration and better health for all allude to economic and health improvements. Taken together, the mission and values indicated a bridging of the human rights frame with the sustainable community frame. It also explicitly mentioned diversity in a way that reflects the principle in the food sovereignty paradigm. It did not, however, explicitly use the rhetoric of injustice that is characteristic of collective action framing.

### **Growing Communities**

Growing Communities applied a localization frame that incorporated ecological values and social and economic values that placed a premium on small-scale food production. The language it used explicitly situated its work in opposition to the extant food system, which was described as detrimental:



Growing Communities is a community-led organisation based in Hackney, North London, which is providing a real alternative to the current damaging food system. Over the past 10 years or so, we have created two main community-led trading outlets - an organic fruit and vegetable box scheme and the Stoke Newington Farmers' Market. These harness the collective buying power of our community and direct it towards those farmers who are producing food in a sustainable way - allowing those small-scale farmers and producers whom we believe are the basis of a sustainable agriculture system to thrive. Growing Communities believes that if we are to create the sustainable re-localised food systems that will see us through the challenges ahead, we need to work together with communities and farmers to take our food system back from the supermarkets and agribusiness. All our projects are steps towards Growing Communities' aim of creating a more sustainable, re-localised food system - changing what we eat, how we eat and how it's farmed.

(Growing Communities, n.d.-a)

Its principles elaborated on the values underpinning the initiative:

the food traded should be:

- \* Farmed and produced ecologically
- \* As local as practicable
- \* Seasonal
- \* Mainly plant based
- \* Mainly fresh and minimally processed
- \* From appropriately scaled operations (which gravitate to the small rather than to the large scale)

and the system as a whole needs to:

- \* Support fair trade
- \* Involve environmentally friendly and low-carbon resource use
- \* Promote knowledge
- \* Strive to be economically viable and independent

- \* Foster community
- \* Be transparent and promote trust throughout the food chain

(Growing Communities, n.d.-d)

An important aspect of Growing Communities ethos was the explicit goal of working against supermarkets and agribusiness, and a related goal of economic independence. As such, it clearly articulated collective action against supermarkets. Although human rights may be considered a submerged frame feeding into the use of fair trade - which offers some assurance of rights pertaining to occupational health, collective bargaining rights, and adequate wages, localization was the dominant framing applied. The use of the collective term 'we' in taking back the food system from supermarkets and agribusiness reflects collective action framing.

### **Organiclea**

Like Growing Communities, Organiclea applied a localization frame, but localization served as a vehicle for challenging injustice; localization was also linked to a cooperative/anti-hierarchy frame. Organiclea articulated collective action against unjust structures through the creation of constructive alternatives, and more closely used the food sovereignty language of control and self-determination. In addition, Organiclea conveyed an intention to engage with as much of the community as possible and sensitivity to marginalized people:

We want to see a world based on equality and co-operation, where people can take control over all aspects of their lives. Taking collective control over our own work is a starting point... we aim to reduce reliance on exploitative structures and build a secure base from which to challenge injustice and encourage others to do so...Our aim is to create livelihoods for co-operative

members through local food growing, distribution and community work

(Organiclea, 2011a).

Our work is guided by the following core principles:

- **People care:** A core ethics of permaculture, we apply this in the way we organise as well as in the way we interact with others. We know that people act positively when they feel valued and when they are given a chance to make a contribution. We believe in cooperation and mutual responsibilities rather than hierarchies. We also think that for fertile, self-reliant, productive communities to thrive, all members of the community must be taken into account – our activities therefore strive to build bridges among individuals and groups.
- **Building community by bringing people together:** We aim to reinforce the experience of community through activities that draw people together around growing, promoting and enjoying local food. We believe that safe, easy connecting points are essential to the experience of community and we trust that our activities, such as our market stall in the heart of Walthamstow, act as extra connecting points.
- **Encouraging self-reliance & productivity:** By sharing and spreading the skills needed for people to produce their own food, we try to encourage self-reliance in both individuals and community. In turn, the more local people are involved, the more sustainable a local project like ours! And by providing pathways for produce made or grown by members of the community to be distributed to others in the community, we seek to increase the self-reliance, cohesion and productivity of the community as a whole.
- **Building bridges:** Because we believe a community cannot thrive when people are left out, we want to reach out to all. Through supported volunteering opportunities, we aim to offer a safe space for more vulnerable people to make a valued contribution as well as learn new skills. And by supporting community groups in their own space, we try to make growing food more accessible for everyone.

(Organiclea, 2011b)

Organiclea drew on ethics and principles outlined in permaculture, a design philosophy that seeks to guide the development of sustainable communities. The three ethics are people-care – taking personal responsibility and working collaboratively ; fair share – taking only what is needed and sharing the rest; and earth care – caring for the soil and all life-forms (Organiclea, 2011c; Permacultureprinciples.com, n.d.). Following from this set of ethics, Organiclea

attempted to distance itself from being associated solely with food; as such localization was not a dominant frame:

As passionate and committed we are to producing and distributing local food, Organiclea is about much more than that! We strive for fertile, self-reliant, productive communities as much as we strive for fertile, self-reliant, productive landscapes. We believe we cannot have one without the other. When exploring a new project, people and community considerations are just as important to us as soil and production are. In fact, we find that we often apply the same principles in our interactions with others as when we are tending the land. In people as in plants, we know everything has value and we celebrate diversity. And just as no element of an ecosystem exists on its own, we believe that in the community, as on the land, the web of connections and relationships between all elements is what keeps the system healthy and balanced.  
(Organiclea, 2011b)

Like CFE, Organiclea's discourse also reflected the food sovereignty principle of valuing diversity, and went further than other initiatives in cultivating the idea of self-reliance, another concept underpinning the food sovereignty paradigm. Diversity was particularly reflected in its efforts engage with marginalized community members.

#### **CFIs AND THE FOOD SOVEREIGNTY PARADIGM**

Based on the discourse and practices demonstrated among London's CFIs, it is clear that the initiatives have applied food sovereignty principles in their local contexts. In particular, the initiatives reflected principles of the model in the areas of ecological production, living wages, accessibility of healthy food, and support for local producers, although not all CFIs addressed each principle (see Table 4.11, p. 123). In terms of practices that the food sovereignty model opposes, only one issue was relevant for the CFIs- the opposition to industrial monoculture. Initiatives such as Growing Communities, Organiclea, and Tottenham Food Coop explicitly supported small-scale ecological farming as a superior alternative to industrial farming. Fairshares did so as well, but also grappled with the complexities of having

a variety of nonperishable foods, such as teas, which may be products of industrial farming, albeit using organic methods. Community Food Enterprise received funding from an MNC that specializes in sweeteners and corn-based products; although the company's products did not fit with CFE's health promotion message, CFE took whatever resources were available to address the problem of grocery gaps.

## **CONCLUSION**

Examination of CFIs operating across London has revealed a range of ways in which the food sovereignty model has been applied. The majority of the conventional CFIs were focused on providing fresh produce at a small scale to meet the needs of residents of particular public housing estates. These provided valuable social and public health services, often through the support of the local NHS branch, and tended to sell a wide range of produce to meet the preferences of diverse populations. Conversely, organic CFIs started without any and without financial support from local government health or regeneration funds. Nearly all CFIs benefited from the provision of free or subsidized space to operate out of, and in some cases, free or subsidized land for food growing. What was common across all of the CFIs is a social imaginary that valued face-to-face connection and volunteerism, although the theme of community formed a smaller proportion of all claims among both conventional CFIs and organic CFIs. Four of the CFIs also integrated training in skills related to food production or in running a community food enterprise as part of their work.

**Table 4.11: Parallels between Nyelini Food Sovereignty Concept and CFIs' work**

Food Sovereignty Model		Parallels in CFIs Work by Theme
Democratic Process/Human Rights	All people, nations, and states able to determine own food producing systems and policies that provide everyone with good quality, adequate, affordable, healthy and culturally appropriate food;  Food sovereignty considered a human right recognized and implemented by communities, states, and international bodies	<u>Health, Justice</u> Making healthy food more accessible physically and/or economically at local level through bulk purchases and volunteer labor; Provision of culturally appropriate foods; Cooperative models
Rights of Women and Indigenous Peoples	Recognition and respect of women's roles and rights in food production and representation of women in all decision making bodies	
Agrarian Reform	Guarantees peasants rights to land and seeds; ensures fishing communities control over fishing areas; grants pastoral communities control over pastoral lands; respects local autonomy and governance and self-determination	<u>Environment, Community</u> Gaining use of public land
Trade/Markets	Access to local markets for small farmers and peasants;  Fair prices that cover costs of production	<u>Community, Environment</u> Direct from local/regional farm or community garden  <u>Justice, Economy</u> Fair prices for domestic producers and producers in global South
Labour	Fair compensation and decent working conditions	<u>Justice, Economy</u> Cooperative work structures
Farming methods	Agroecology, labor-intensive;  Valuing and applying local knowledge	<u>Environment</u> Sustainable agriculture that promotes biodiversity;  <u>Economy</u> Small scale operations that are more labor-intensive, employing more people rather than using machinery
Diversity	Valuing diversity of knowledge; food; language and culture; and ways of organizing	<u>Health; Community</u> Different models of organizing; valuing different foods; engaging with diversity in community including marginalized groups

In terms of food, by virtue of their stringent food sourcing criteria, organic food initiatives were not selling the types of fresh produce specific to African, Caribbean or South Asian diets. This is understandable given the goals of these projects. In contrast, lack of strict distance criteria allowed conventional initiatives a greater capacity to bridge the environmental considerations with cultural and price preferences, although doing so has thus far meant applying less rigid environmental criteria. Demonstrating progress toward bridging social justice and environmental sustainability, CFE was developing links with producers in counties near London to increase its local sourcing of non-exotic food, while also working to forge links with cooperatives overseas to source its exotic food more ethically.

Some of the CFIs developed creative ways to achieve greater control over local food systems. One process involved entering into food procurement contracts with the public sector and private sector, thereby selling food at a higher rate relative to the coops, which then subsidized the food coops. Another was via food growing activity either through creation of a food growing network that then donates or sells the produce for sale at the coops or through lease of council-owned property to develop market gardens. This helped create livelihood opportunities for urban residents while also helping to achieve the CFIs to source produce increasingly locally. A third and perhaps more controversial way was to work with an MNC based locally, as CFE has done. Given that CFE had not yet received national funding- despite numerous awards and national publicity, the support of a big business helped it increase its services in areas lacking healthy food options, while contributing to the business's corporate social responsibility credentials. CFE's founder has stated,

I do get aggrieved that we are doing preventative work but we don't get funded by any statutory body. It shouldn't be up to us to do it. The

government should be doing it but they don't so we do it. A lot of people think we do get central government funding but we don't, even though we're now running a national programme. The BBC was following up a White Paper on health and did their story down here (using the vans as a backdrop) so again the government looks good because they are seen to be close to us, but they don't give us any money. The sponsors were pleased though – their names were all over the telly. Locally as well there's no money or assistance from the primary health care trust or the council but if you go there they'll be forever taking credit for the work that we're doing and implying it's their project (Guardian, 2006).

In the debate surrounding food, justice, and ethics, one perspective would view collaborating with a multinational corporation, particularly one whose core business involves unhealthy food products, as contradicting the organization's goal of promoting healthy eating and out of line with the concept of food sovereignty. As others have noted, in an era of neoliberalism, there are no ideal fixes to uneven development, and efforts to redress the inequalities produced by neoliberalization can reproduce neoliberal rationalities; the encouragement of community-led initiatives and governmental partnerships with them is itself a feature of neoliberalization (Fyfe, 2005; Guthman, 2008c). However, given that the food sovereignty paradigm emphasizes democratic process, and CFE was a community response to the problem of grocery gaps- it demonstrates the principle of citizens taking control. As such, application of aspects of the model can result in some contradictions.

Overall, lacking the more inclusive overarching framework of food sovereignty, the initiatives demonstrated the application of some of the model's principles, but the work tended to fall within restricted frames of localization, sustainability, or health. However, some initiatives used the frames of rights and self reliance that are more inclusive. The following chapters will explore the dynamics between practices, framing, spatial context, and participation by customers to further



elucidate existing application of food sovereignty principles and the potential development of this movement in the context of urban settings.

## **CHAPTER 5 - CONVENTIONAL COOPS: TWO CASE STUDIES**

In this chapter, I present the historical and spatial context within which two conventional coops started, trace their organizational development, and explore participation. These two coops emerged in different spatial contexts; one developed to provide food in an area lacking stores selling fresh produce, and the other started as a project deemed potentially beneficial for promoting healthy eating among communities with high levels of chronic disease. Although both CFIs developed in conjunction with a local CDA, they have different spatial contexts, with the extent of other food stores a significant factor in who shopped at the coops. I will show that for the customers of these two CFIs, culturally appropriate food was important, and thus important to the organization running the initiatives, even for the coop that was increasing its sourcing of food from within the borough and from nearby producers. Customers also emphasized the appeal of social aspects of the coop experience. Aspects of both initiatives, and their customers' reasons for participating, reflect ideas from the food sovereignty paradigm. The information presented here is based on interviews with CFI staff, the relevant CDAs, customers, non-customers, observations, and where noted, organizations' documents.

### **GCFC'S FERRIER COOP – PROVIDING FOOD IN A GROCERY GAP**

The Ferrier Estate is located in the Outer London borough of Greenwich, in one of the ten most deprived LSOAs in England. It was built in 1974 and consisted of over 1900 units, of which only a few hundred were occupied at the beginning of this study. The estate has only two points of entry into the surrounding community

and consists of several blocks of concrete structures, making it very isolated (see Image 5.1, p. 131). I visited other estates where GCFC operated a food coop and saw similar characteristics. Seventy-five percent of the residents in the LSOA where Ferrier Estate is located live in rented social housing, and the estate itself was reported to have a 75 percent unemployment rate (see Table 5.1, p. 130) (Bloomfield, 2009; Office for National Statistics, 2001). Figure 5.1 (p. 132) shows deprivation levels according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2008). As the estate had been planned to undergo regeneration following ‘decant’, or removal of existing residents, the few small businesses on the estate shut down years ago. The local council has been removing residents since 2006, with demolishing of the original buildings beginning in 2009. Because Ferrier Estate is in the midst of a regeneration project that includes construction of a supermarket and the elimination of the square at which the stall was based, the Ferrier Coop was scheduled to stop operating in 2011. At the time of this study, the estate included much open space, but no food retailers, except for one store that sold liquor, other drinks, and snacks (see Figures 5.1 and 5.2, pp. 132-133).

The plight of Ferrier Estate, and of some of the other estates that were sites of food coops of Croydon, CFE, and ELFA, are illustrative of a process that can be traced back to social phenomena and government policies in the previous century. An exodus of the middle class from inner city areas in resulted in areas characterized by concentrated poverty, unemployment, and a dearth of services and amenities. The British government then encouraged clearance of slums and development of estates on the periphery to decongest inner cities in the early 1900s, which severed thriving social networks and services that characterized poorer inner city communities (Power & Mumford, 1999). Council estates also had no management structure or

regulations, resulting in low standards and, efforts to decongest cities encouraged movement of people and jobs to the suburbs, where owner occupation was more affordable. The exodus of the middle class resulted in many single class council estates having high rates of vacancies and unemployed residents. Perceived as sites of blight, supermarkets tended not to invest in many of these areas.

In an attempt to rectify this situation, the new development at Ferrier was planned to contain 4000 units, 1900 of which were to be designated as social housing, and would also include more transportation links. Although Ferrier residents had priority in the new development, Greenwich Council stated that 70 percent of residents expressed a preference for permanently leaving the area (Buksh, 2007). This process was also happening at other housing estates in the wider area, but Ferrier received much attention because of the extent of social and material decay it had experienced, the scale of the project-one of the largest land developments in Britain, and because of ongoing controversies involving the decantment of residents (Buksh, 2007). Some residents were sent eviction notices threatening court action in the event of not vacating the property, even though the council had not provided the two offers of alternative housing required of it; other residents had complained about the alternate housing being inadequate; (Inside Housing, 2011; Twinch, 2010). The council would lose £21.5 million allocated by the Homes and Communities Agency if the next phase of the development project did not begin by March 2011 (Twinch, 2010). As of February 11<sup>th</sup> 2011, 190 council tenants and 22 homeowners remained in the estate (Inside Housing, 2011).

**Table 5.1: Demographic indicators for GCFC CFI sites operating June 2009**

CFI Site	IMD position among most deprived LSOAs in England	% Residents in social rented housing - council	% Residents in social rented housing - non-council	% Non-white residents	% Residents age 16 and over in approximated social grade E
Abbey Wood LSOA	Top 10%	64.91	1.84	18.52	28.47
Age Concern LSOA	Top 15%	44.91	1.13	7.11	19.79
oldharbour LSOA	Top 12%	54.93	1.97	5.34	33.01
Eynsham LSOA	Top 10%	57.17	1.85	20.46	27.01
<b>Ferrier Estate LSOA</b>	<b>Top 10%</b>	<b>74.49</b>	<b>2.03</b>	<b>39.34</b>	<b>23.55</b>
Glyndon LSOA	Top 5%	71.52	6.89	32.66	20.66
Horn Park LSOA	Top 15%	50.69	0.52	10.86	21.24
Middle Park Vista Fields LSOA	Top 10%	59.75	6.3	7.05	24.77
Storkway LSOA	Top 20%	38.46	4.37	9.47	19.82
Thamesmead LSOA	Top 10%	8.54	63.98	35.61	19.66
Toy Library LSOA	Top 12%	60.45	4.06	33.24	21.98
London	n/a	9.09	17.12	28.84	15.23
England	n/a	6.05	13.21	9.07	16.00

Source: Office for National Statistics. (2001). Census. In Office for National Statistics (Ed.). Newport Department of Communities and Local Government. (2007). Topics Retrieved 3 April, 2009, from <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/Download1.do>

**Image 5.1: Block architecture of Ferrier Estate**



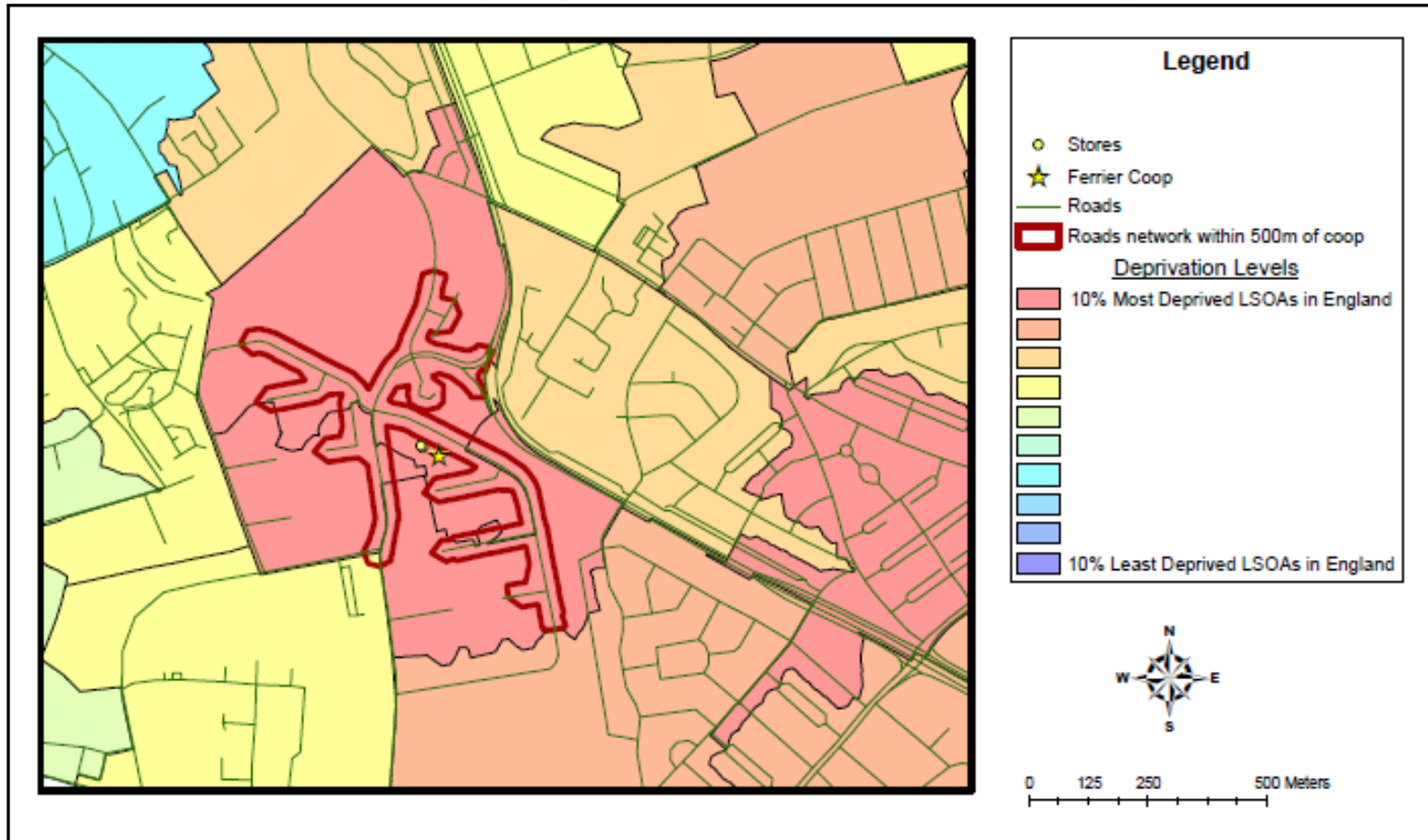
Source: Author, 2009

### **PCT and CDA Collaborate to Improve Access to Healthy Food**

Greenwich Community Food Coop emerged out of the South Greenwich Food Project delivered by the area's PCT from 1999-2002. The project focused on increasing consumption of fruit and vegetables and was funded by the Single Regeneration Budget, a national fund that existed at the time, which targeted poor neighborhoods. Community researchers conducted a needs assessment on Ferrier Estate, a housing estate that had severely deteriorated since its development in the 1970s.

The Ferrier Food Project group, comprised of residents and community food workers, was established in 2001 to consider options for a community food project. The needs assessment also recruited three directors for the project, who continue to serve as the management committee. The PCT approached the local CDA for technical

Figure 5.1: Map of deprivation levels and food stores near Ferrier Coop



Source: Author, 2011 based on census of stores conducted July 2009; Map Data © Open Street Map contributors, CC-BY-SA (<http://www.openstreetmap.org/>, <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>); and 2007 IMD data from Department of Communities and Local Government retrieved April 2009 from <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/>

Figure 5.2: Arial view of Ferrier Estate



Source: Author, 2011 using Google Map



assistance in starting a social enterprise, launching a long-term partnership, with the CDA being the closest partner and support to GCFC. The local CDA itself had started as a social enterprise in 1982 to support employment projects for the disadvantaged, but later evolved to help develop a range of cooperatives and social enterprises relevant for the communities in its borough. Its emphasis was on helping to develop projects that use some model of social enterprise that allows community members to creatively address challenges. Examples of the kinds of projects it had helped develop are a Bengali community association, an arts organization to train young people for employment in the arts, an African cultural organization, a volunteer music production group that records and markets British South Asian performers, a catering cooperative, and a sustainable food café .

The Ferrier Food Project group organized consultations with the community revealed a preference for a market stall rather than a membership coop or box delivery initiative, and the group piloted one in February 2002. The stall on a square in Ferrier Estate continues to this day, and serves as a case study for this research. At that point, the project was called Ferrier Food Coop. The success of the first stall triggered interest in other areas of South London, leading the local CDA and PCT to seek and receive funding from the Healthy South London Network to set up the Greenwich Community Food Initiative (GCFI). The Greenwich Community Food Initiative was created with the mandate to work in areas of the borough characterized by high levels of health inequalities to establish initiatives aimed at improving access to healthy, affordable food.

Additional funding supported the employment of a part-time coordinator and the establishment of another stall in 2003. Around the same time, GCFC was established as an umbrella organization for all coops established under the GCFI.

Originally, GCFI planned to create separate social enterprises throughout the area. However, after the first annual review, the directors felt that this would entail the logistics of separate accounts, committees, and require more volunteers to handle the acquisition, pricing, and stocking of produce. The organization believed an umbrella approach would also provide the advantages of greater consistency in price, service, and quality across all coops, financial benefits of joint purchasing, and less waste as produce leftover at one stall could be used at another stall.

Over the years, several other coops were started, each of which began after a community needs assessment/feasibility study that gauged demand and the prevalence of green produce suppliers, find potential partners, and recruit volunteers. All of the food coops were set up outside, with a canopy available for inclement weather. A large publicity campaign occurred in 2005, with the establishment of four new coops; it involved the circulation of postcards to residences in postcodes around the coops and the circulation of posters and leaflets to doctors' surgeries, community centers, libraries, and housing offices. In addition, the delivery van had the logo and information about GCFC, serving as another means of publicity. One year after the establishment of a coop, a community food worker would conduct a customer survey. At the time of this study, GCFC was delivering 11 stalls which were set up outside schools, community centers, and one church; in addition to these coops, it delivered produce to over 25 other points such as schools and council workplaces (see Table 5.1, p. 130 for demographic information for locations). Beyond the satellite stalls in its own network, GCFC helped to set up a separate food coop (not part of GCFC's network) at New Cross Gate by raising funds and training people in how to run it. As of 2010, GCFC was about 65-70 percent self-financing, but received £40,000 a year in funding from the local branch of the NHS to support the stalls. According to the

volunteer directors, the way to achieve financial viability was to increase sales, which in 2009 amounted to about £80,000. The Greenwich Community Food Coop was also seeking to coordinate with CFE on distributing more locally and ethically sourced produce in the area as part of their enterprise.

The Greenwich CDA, which was integral in establishing GCFC, more recently started a food growing project that trains local groups at schools, housing estates, urban farms, and community centers in food growing skills; some of the projects have also received small grants from Capital Growth, an initiative to increase food growing spaces in London. In addition, the CDA was planning to develop a site devoted to food production for the coop; at the time of this study, a small amount of surplus was sold to GCFC for sale at coops.

### **An Independent, Centralized Organization**

As mentioned previously, GCFC was a company limited by guarantee, a British legal structure used by many non-profit organizations that require corporate status, and it was registered as a cooperative with Cooperatives UK, a national organization that provides training and other support to cooperatives. The type of cooperative it was registered as is a community enterprise, and differed from workers coops and customer coops in which workers and customers, respectively, are members. Three people, all residents in the broader area served by GCFC, served as the directors/management committee since the inception of the project, and were responsible for all financial, legal, decision-making, and human resource issues. The operation thus had a centralized structure. The remaining employed staff included four part-time positions: two drivers- one who also stocked produce; a coordinator; and an administrator. The drivers also set up and took down each stall, including taking the five cash registers and scales around to the various coops that ran at

different times throughout the week. Usually two volunteers staffed each coop. Only three of GCFC's 21 volunteers staffing the various food coops were men, and most of them were white; of the eight nonwhite volunteers, six were black of African or Caribbean decent. These demographics correspond to the fact that as an Outer London borough, the areas GCFC's coops were located in did not all have high proportions of ethnic minority residents.

The project also had a constitution and a comprehensive volunteer handbook, which included a 'good practice agreement' that each volunteer is required to sign<sup>25</sup>. The agreement covered reimbursement procedures, attendance policies, and mentioned types of support provided by GCFC such as training. The handbook also covered:

- recruitment procedures,
- health and safety policies,
- supervision details (this includes on-the-job and formal supervision every 4-6 weeks),
- volunteer communication,
- a complaints policy and procedure,
- a disciplinary rules and grievance procedure,
- a equal opportunities policy, and
- a confidentiality policy.

The documents indicated the presence of procedures to prevent problems and handle them should any arise, a level of formalization seen only among the registered cooperatives in this study- GCFC and Organiclea.

### **New Spitalfields and Local Food-Growing Network**

Food was obtained from New Spitalfields Market, which was situated on 31 acres in East London and served as a base for nearly one hundred wholesalers specializing in fresh produce and horticulture. A driver would collect the produce from the market and deliver it to a storage area provided by the council at Ferrier

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<sup>25</sup> This is based on information in GCFC's volunteer handbook.

Estate; deliveries to the various stalls were arranged from here (see Image 5.3, p. 154). From the market, GCFC attempted to obtain seasonal, regional produce that was reasonably priced while also obtaining foreign produce to meet the needs of ethnically diverse communities. The range of food reflected the diversity of people it served; on a typical day the stall had yams, plantains, cassava, garden eggs (a type of eggplant), okra, as well as standard fruits and vegetables. One of the drivers had previously worked as a quality manager at a major supermarket, and sometimes obtained produce at the wholesale market from small farmers in the region who he knew from his past work.

The amount of mark-up on the food price varied, but was 33 percent on average. No comparison could be made with prices at other retailers in the area surrounding Ferrier Coop, which was the coop studied in detail, as no other retailers existed within 500 meters that sell green produce. Visits to sites of other coops in the network showed similar environments devoid of food retailers.

The organization was working on increasing the proportion of seasonal, “low-impact” produce; they aspired to acquire 70-80 percent of the standard, non-exotic produce from nearby producers within the next five years. In terms of the non-exotic produce, at the time of this study, about 60 percent of the green vegetables were from the counties of Kent, Essex, Surrey, and Lincolnshire; most of the onions, peppers, eggplants, and zucchini were from Holland, and most of the fruit was from Spain (see Figure 5.3, p. 140). In addition, sometimes staff or volunteers would donate some of their own home-grown produce to the coop for sale at below-market prices. As of 2010, Greenwich Community Food Coop was in the process of applying for a local food grant to expand office delivery service as a way of generating more profit.

Thus, GCFC bridged two frames, localization and food access, as evident in the following language:

Greenwich Community Food Co-op (GCFC) was established in 2002 as a co-operative run by the community for the community. GCFC was established to provide areas of Greenwich, with high levels of deprivation, improved access to affordable fruit and vegetables.

GCFC is very committed to promoting the sales of regionally grown produce. During the Spring & Summer of 2010, GCFC will be increasing the range of regional produce available on their stalls and continuing to attempt to develop direct links with producers.

Although in small quantities, there are times when our own Greenwich produce can be found on stalls grown through the Growing Greenwich project. (GCFC, 2011)

### **Volunteers**

Ferrier Coop was unusual among CFIs in general and among the coops in GCFC's network in that all three of the volunteers were retired men, although one of them mostly worked part-time as a driver, delivering produce and setting up other stalls for GCFC. In GCFC, the role of volunteers involved assessing the produce delivered to the coop, removing and documenting spoiled or damaged produce, weighing produce that customers select, and handling cash transactions. The two main volunteers at Ferrier both lived outside of the estate and travelled to the coop by public transport, one travelling 20 minutes, the other 30-45 minutes.

Elias was African and had worked there since the beginning. He found out about it when one of the directors came to his area to recruit volunteers. When asked about benefits he received from the coop, Elias said

The benefit I get is that I get to know people more and of other races and ethnicity, and then know their culture, learn more about people than I used to in all jobs. See and then I gain a lot of experience from them also. See, so, from them you know how to mix with people. And then, you learn a lot from them. You see. If you have difficult customers, you could handle them if you have experience with them, if you don't got experience, you can't handle difficult customers.

**Figure 5.3: Map of England counties showing location of GCFC in relation to the counties supplying 60 percent of its green vegetables**



Source: Author, 2011 using map from Pictures of England. (2011). County Map of England Retrieved 11 February, 2011, from <http://www.picturesofengland.com/mapofengland/counties-map.html>

He also mentioned that volunteers can take a certain amount of produce, and if they worked more than four hours, were entitled to a free lunch-but it was clear that this was not his motivation for working. After visiting the coop for a few sessions, my impression was that Elias took great pride in his knowledge of the customers, both in terms of cultures and knowledge of what individual customers tended to buy, and his

knowledge about the produce. He seemed to enjoy interacting with the customers, even the “difficult” ones who challenged him.

The driver/volunteer, Sam, was white and had worked at the coop for five years. John, a volunteer, was also white and has worked at the coop for a few months. He had passed a coop in his neighborhood and learned about the project then. After reading more about it in one of the local newspapers, he talked to the women volunteering at the stall near him, and then decided to volunteer. He said that while he enjoyed retirement, he liked doing some community work.

When asked about challenges, Elias explained, “Well one of the things I get in this thing is that uh before ever I joined coop, I didn’t know even the name of all these produce, let alone where they come from. You see, but since I’ve joined the coop, I just used to note all the fruit, what they are, what they do, the benefit gained from them, and then able to identify anything.” Elias pointed to cherries and said at first he was unfamiliar with them. He learned this from his own personal interest, not from any training.

He went on to cite customer relations as the biggest challenge in running the stall. He noted the importance of understanding cultural differences and being knowledgeable about the produce, stating, “Some customers do come who are very, very selective, you see-they might say “Oh no I don’t want anything from Australia. Oh! I don’t want anything from America”. So they try to ask you [about the origins of the produce], so you must know your products.” He continued, “People won’t buy products when it comes from a certain part of the world. Ethical reasons...you see, it’s a cultural thing...[pointing to produce] certain people wouldn’t buy them if they come from Israel”. John strongly concurred with this and stated about facing challenges, stating



um, sometimes you do, sometimes you do yeah because sometimes you get all the people who've come at once, and now I don't know people don't seem to be as patient as they used to be, they want serving at once you know. Once when I was younger, people would wait, until someone in front of them was served, and they don't do that. So you've got to sort of make sure people don't walk off, you know because you want to keep the business. But yeah, that's a bit of a change. I suppose you could get difficult customers, but, touch wood, I haven't at the moment, not yet, no.

Elias again emphasized cultural differences and the importance of understanding

these:

You got to do everything to satisfy your customers. So your temperament should be very, very tolerant, you should be tolerant when dealing in customers otherwise if you put the customer to... that customer won't come back again. cuz customers are always right.

There are so many things you got to try and bring them what the customer wants. Because they come here, they don't understand English, and they want to buy something, and you got to say then the right thing. Say there's Chinese people, they do speak another language, they don't understand English, they come here, even they don't unders-, even our money, they find it difficult. You see you can only try to use some sort of eh, body language, or sound, or these thing, to interpret what they want.

You see, either by touching or these thing (pointing). You see so you meet some sort of difficult customers, through religion and everything. You know, you, there are so many things, you have to (laughs) So you should be able to- [attends to a customer]

So once you are used to this, you know what the customer wants, you're used to them because you always... if you don't satisfy them, they won't come. So the cultural thing again, got to be very very careful.

You see, some of these who are fanatics with the religion, especially with these Asian countries, they don't want them as a man to touch their hands when they're taking money.

[SK] Muslim women?

Yeah, yeah, you see. But you are a lady, she's a lady (another customer), no problem. But when it comes to cross um sex in a secularized section, you got to be very very careful. So you got to read the sign, because they will always give you a sign, whether they will give you money, hand to hand, some of them, just, just, all you need to do is set out your (puts his hand out). If she wants you to touch her hand, she will drop it in there (shows his hand); [if] she won't drop it, she just take like this (shows putting the money on a surface where she would pick it up from). But if she doesn't want you to touch her hand, she will drop it in here, and then when you actually giving her change if she needs change (attends to customer).

At this point, John mentioned that he thought the Muslim women would not touch the hands of non-Muslims, and Elias explained that it was actually related to male-female interactions and they would touch the hands of a woman, but not a man. This exchange demonstrates the volunteers' understanding of the importance of cultural understanding, an understanding that extended beyond knowledge of food preferences. It touches upon the principle of diversity in the food sovereignty model, although Elias's perception of such cultural issues as difficult or extremist did not quite actualize the principle, which calls for the valuing of different cultures. Nonetheless, his comments demonstrate an understanding of different cultures and ways of communicating.

On a few occasions, I observed interactions validating the volunteers' comments about the challenge of customer relations. One time, an employee at the clinic came to the coop on her lunch break and complained about the price of avocados. Elias explained to her that avocado season was ending, and then she understood. He also told me that he voluntarily surveyed prices at the supermarkets in Lewisham every two weeks; if a customer challenged him about price, he would know the general range of prices at the time. This was not part of his responsibility as a volunteer, but he felt it was important and helped him respond to such questions knowledgably. On another day, I saw an East Asian customer communicate to Elias in broken English that he had not given her enough change back, and he reviewed the transaction with her again, after which she understood that he had given her the correct amount and left seemingly content.

On my visits, I did not observe anyone inquire about where the produce was from; however, even John, who had only been volunteering for a few months, had witnessed this. It may be that the mostly foreign-born customers' concerns about the

provenance of produce are triggered by events unfolding in areas of the world that resonate with them. For example, Muslims around the world sympathize with Palestinians living under ongoing Israeli occupation, but their consumer boycotts of Israeli products may increase at times of acute crisis. Two such events, the Israeli attack against the Gaza strip during the winter of 2008-2009 and the attack on the flotilla ship carrying aid to Gaza in May 2010, respectively happened before and after the time I was collecting data. Given Elias's comment about customers not wanting to buy Israeli produce, it is possible that some of the Somalian customers may have expressed this sentiment at times of international coverage of these attacks and corresponding elevation in protests and boycotts against Israeli products.

**Image 5.2: Somalian customer with coop staff person at Ferrier Estate, in front of GCFC warehouse**



Source: Author, 2009

## Themes and Food Sovereignty Principles

In relation to the themes discovered among food initiatives across London, GCFC's work covered all themes except economy/skills (see Table 5.2 below). These in turn link to the following food sovereignty principles: the right to healthy, culturally appropriate food through democratic means; diversity; ecological production; and just trade. In addition, GCFC's structure involved representation from the areas it serves in its management structure, an element related to the principle of democratic process.

**Table 5.2: Themes and examples in GCFC**

Theme	Examples
Affordability	✓ Targeting low income areas; low mark-up; use of volunteers
Health	✓ Facilitating healthy diet
Community	✓ Volunteering and social interactions; development of community food growing projects; use of community spaces
Environment	✓ Development of food growing project with no synthetic inputs; use of regional produce reduces food miles
Justice	✓ Making healthy food more accessible physically and economically; fairness in trade/prices for producers
Economy/Skills	✓ Using regional suppliers-contributing to local economy

## Customers

The Ferrier stall operated from 8AM to 2PM on Tuesdays and 8AM to noon on Wednesdays, though the staff members have the discretion to close earlier if customer turnout was low. I conducted interviews with nine customers after they had purchased produce from Ferrier Coop (see Image 5.2, p. 144). I also interviewed three residents while they were waiting at a nearby bus stop. All of the customers I interviewed had learned about the coop by walking past it on the estate and had used

the coop since its launch. All but two of the respondents were women, and all but two were ethnic minorities. The two white women were the only non-residents of the estate, and used it because they worked at the health clinic on the estate.

The customers expressed much enthusiasm for the coop and for the volunteers running it. One East Asian woman interviewed at the coop stall stated, “I use because I can pick something I want; in the store sometime the food is in a pack.” A retired African man who was also interviewed at the stall said, “It’s cheaper than Lewisham, and over here I come and buy, I don’t need transport to go...and the people are friendly.” Lewisham is the site of a big shopping center, and is about 20 minutes away by bus. The African man bought all of his fresh produce at the coop, sometimes buying for a friend as well and felt that options for buying food locally were “ok”.

According to a retired African woman, “They have fresh vegetables, and the people are very friendly. The staff, you know it’s easy to communicate with them, they give good advice when you ask anything about the foods here, they know about it”. Three other customers shopping with their young children made similar statements. One African pensioner bought the ‘organic’ pumpkin and onions donated by one of the staff from her allotment as well as some other items. She stated, “They have organic food, yesterday I went to Lewisham, I saw spinach for one pound, but here it’s cheaper and it’s organic as well. I didn’t buy it then, but they haven’t got it here. See, I bought this anyway (pointing to several items).” To this woman, organic was something she valued, but her comments suggest that she could not afford organic food at prices sold at the stores. The organic food she was referring to at the coop was produce donated by staff that was produced on a private allotment without

the use of synthetic chemicals. These items were sold significantly cheaper than the conventional produce obtained from New Spitalfields market.

One of the residents interviewed when the coop was not operating was working as a security guard at a Tesco supermarket. Despite the fact that Tesco is a national chain and he worked there, he preferred to buy his produce at the coop. He stated, “I use it- very nice, very, very nice...every week and I use it because it’s very cheap. And not only that, because it’s fresh, direct from the, you know direct from the wholesalers”. Another person interviewed outside of coop hours was a Nigerian woman sitting at the bus stop with her young children. She said she used the coop occasionally, because her husband likes a particular national chain, but she noted that if the coop was open more often, she would use it more. This woman was content with her local food environment except for transport; she wanted to see more frequent buses. A Somalian woman at the bus stop had mobility problems, so her son, who had a car and lives nearby, helped her with shopping, and she usually went to East London where there are many Muslim markets selling halal meats. She used the coop occasionally. She felt that there was “nothing” on the estate or nearby, and wanted to see “nice houses, shops, post office. The people that lived here are gone-Chinese, Somalians-because the housing broken down. This area is bad.” When I asked her about the regeneration, she said, “Nearly seven years they say we’re building-they built nothing. Last week they sent a letter saying we’re building.” Because of the stigma associated with Ferrier, many residents were happy with the opportunity to be re-housed until the new development was completed. Like this Somalian woman, however, residents had complained about the process, particularly about getting eviction notices without the provision of suitable alternate housing (BBC News London, 2010).

Among regular coop users, when asked if there was any way the coop could improve, six felt it was ideal; one man commented on the hours, saying that it would be better if one of the times could be after work-hours. The man who worked at Tesco wanted more varieties of produce and in greater quantities, stating, “The quantity is not enough. By the time you get there, most of the foods are gone, like yams, African food...[they should] increase the quantity of African, Afro-Caribbean food”. He went on to ask, “you want me to be interested in English food? What you talking about, you want me to drop dead? [walks around hunched over] and I’ll be walking like that?” His comment reinforces the symbolic aspect of food pertaining to identity, but it also denotes a material or corporeal element in that people will choose to eat what they prefer. Given that this coop only sold fresh produce – all of which could be considered healthy, his conflation of English food with poor health is telling. Food seemed to be a manifestation of place identity and attachment of many immigrant residents of Ferrier Estate to their native lands. Not all the customers had such strong views about the variety of food at the coop, however. Several of the mothers and pensioners felt it was “perfect” and could not suggest any changes they would like to see. In fact, several people stated that they were happy with their food environment in terms of options for getting food, which given the reality depicted in Figure 5.1, was an affirmation of what one what customer stated-the coop was the only option for obtaining food within the neighborhood.

The customers’ comments reveal the unique niche food initiatives like GCFC occupy. They strive to meet the need to provide fresh produce in areas underserved by conventional food outlets, and exist to meet a specific social need. Because of the gap in food stores in the area, many residents of Ferrier Estate used the coop at least sometimes, and several used it weekly. Retired residents heavily relied on it to get

their fresh produce. Due to the timings, the customers were primarily women and pensioners. According to a volunteer, about 40 people were using the coop in the ten hours it was open each week, spending an average of £6. Given that 100-200 people still lived on the estate at the time I was interviewing, the amount of customers seems small. Because the stall only sells fruits and vegetables, however, most residents made trips to supermarkets and other markets to buy food, and traveled out for other reasons as well because there were no stores, restaurants, or cafes within 500 meters. In addition, the hours made it accessible to those who were on the estate during the day. The value of the coop was that it was the only place to buy food locally, but it was also appreciated for being a site of warmth and friendly banter with the staff and other patrons.

Social embeddedness, or the role of social aspects such as familiarity and trust, constitutes any type of market transaction (Granovetter, 1985), but in the context of a poor housing estate, one might expect price to be an important reason for people to shop at the coop. While one customer did mention cheap prices as the first in a string of reasons for shopping at the coop, most people cited other reasons, some of which related to convenience, but mostly, they cited the friendliness and helpfulness of the volunteers. Food sovereignty principles were not explicitly reflected in the customers' comments, but the right to healthy, culturally appropriate food clearly underpinned their support and interest in the coop. Further, the concern about the origins of food reflects the principles of just trade and opposition to inequality or oppression.

#### **ST. HILDA'S EAST COMMUNITY CENTER – COOP IN THE HEART OF BANGLATOWN**

Similar to GCFC, St. Hilda's East's food coop, developed with assistance from the local CDA in an East London area, but the coop operated under the auspices



of a community organization. It began in 2004, when a volunteer at St. Hilda's East suggested the idea of starting a food stall selling fresh produce. At the time, the local CDA had already been involved in setting up several food coops in partnership with community organizations near housing estates in some of the most deprived areas of country, most with large concentrations of Bangladeshi residents. According to the chief executive of the CDA, initially the CDA had worked on activities to draw the Bangladeshi women out of their homes, such cooking, knitting and sewing projects, because these were the activities that their husbands would approve of. Food coops evolved from these early activities with support from the PCT for a few years. The CDA chose not to embark on a social enterprise approach as GCFC had done. A CDA staff person elaborated:

I mean I'm uncomfortable about that but the majority of volunteers will have never worked, may not have very good English language oral or written skills, um, and they they're learning a lot by volunteer and staffing the stall. I think I think we felt nervous about the idea of giving them a company to run themselves, and wasn't sure what the purpose was because a coop is never going to make money, a food coop it's a subsidized stall. There are some other projects around a London that are set up as companies and try and make them profitable to cover costs, but our view is being very focused on this is to sell very cheap, high-quality foods, and if it is very cheap it's not gonna make a profit. So we haven't I mean we've done them on the basis they don't they cost money to run, they don't make money, they're a social service, and we've chosen not to incorporate them.

The CDA would typically approach a community center in and ask them if they would be willing to host a food coop and provide some staff time for it, and if there was interest, then the CDA would conduct or commission a needs assessments of residents on housing estates near the housing centers, usually in areas where 80-90 percent of residents would be of Bangladeshi descent. The needs assessments would usually entail knocking on residents' doors to ask whether they would shop at a food coop, what they would buy, and whether they would consider volunteering.

In the case of St. Hilda's East, the community center itself approached the CDA about starting a food coop, without having conducted any kind of needs assessment. Saint Hilda's East was not located in the midst of a 'food desert'-an urban area lacking stores selling basic food- as was characteristic of most of the ones the CDA had worked, but it was near a housing estate occupied by lower-income residents (see Table 5.3, p. 152). The borough as a whole had higher levels of childhood obesity compared to national levels - third highest in the country for children in kindergarten and fifth highest for 10-11 year olds, and had significantly fewer children reporting that they eat at least three portions of fruit and vegetables daily or that they participate in sports at least three days a week compared to the national average (London Borough of Tower Hamlets, 2010). Such information for adults in the borough was not available, but an estimate predicted that approximately 20 percent of adults in Tower Hamlets were obese (London Borough of Tower Hamlets, 2010). Because South Asians in the UK are more than six times more likely to develop diabetes than the white population, encouraging healthy eating has been a major concern for the NHS and community organizations working in areas with large Bangladeshi populations (Kunti, Kumar, & Brodie, 2009). St. Hilda's East initially used very simple publicity with fliers stating "bringing healthy food to the local community-buy fresh fruit and vegetables at affordable prices".

### **Gentrifying Neighborhood**

In contrast to Ferrier Coop, and GCFC's food coops generally, St. Hilda's East was situated a few blocks away from the bustling, trendy neighborhood of Bethnal Green in Tower Hamlets, in an Inner London borough. The Bangladeshi presence was visible everywhere - just a block away was a small Islamic center for men, and many of the street signs were in English and Bengali script. The LSOA containing St.

Hilda's East had a 72 percent Asian population, predominantly of Bangladeshi descent (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2007). The LSOA also included Boundary Estate, the first council-owned social housing development in Britain, which was built in 1900 after the clearance of a notorious slum (London Borough of Tower Hamlets, 2007, pp. 4-5; Saini, 2006). Due to its historical status, the estate and the surrounding area was designated as a conservation area in 1985 to preserve its character (see Figure 5.5, p. 157) (London Borough of Tower Hamlets, 2007).

**Table 5.3: Selected demographic indicators for St. Hilda's East LSOA**

Demographic Indicator	St. Hilda's East LSOA	London	England
IMD position among most deprived LSOAs in England	Top 10%	n/a	n/a
% Residents in social rented housing – council	61.12	9.09	6.05
% Residents in social rented housing - non-council	4.89	17.12	13.21
% Non-white residents	79.64	28.84	9.07
% Residents age 16 and over in approximated social grade E	11.95	15.23	16.00

Source: Office for National Statistics. (2001). Census. In Office for National Statistics (Ed.). Newport Department of Communities and Local Government. (2007). Topics Retrieved 3 April, 2009, from <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/Download1.do>

Bethnal Green had many food retailers, several of which sell fresh produce, but many retailers sell fast food, often kebabs; however, two of the ethnic markets sold over 50 types of fresh produce each (see Table 5.4, p. 154). The area was one of the most deprived areas in England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation, but it was also near London's City - an area where several major banks and advertising firms are located; this proximity is leading to gentrification in the area around Bethnal Green (see Image 5.3, p. 154). The gradient is visible when looking

at the IMD levels; the City, located west of St. Hilda's East, had lower deprivation levels (see Figure 5.4, p. 156). Among the stores around the community center, one can find markers of the process of "food gentrification" (Bryant, Goodman, & Redclift, 2008). Leila's Shop, located on a street parallel to St. Hilda's East, was selling some fresh produce in a rustic space, and a few blocks away a larger, upscale restaurant/café/hotel also sold fresh produce and artisanal foods. The neighborhood even garnered a mention in a recent travel article in the New York Times on East London -

There's certainly no reason to go elsewhere to eat. In 2005, a shed behind a former school that now contains an artists' studio, where Rochelle Street meets the leafy traffic circle Arnold Circus, became Rochelle Canteen, a restaurant open only for lunch. The food is bright, direct and unapologetically English: fare includes dishes like a salad of fresh peas, favas and pea shoots, and a whole sole sautéed in butter and served with cucumber and fennel. The spot has a casual elegance, and it's easy to linger over a midweek lunch, with dogs napping in the restaurant's walled garden and neighbors catching up with one another.

On the other side of Arnold Circus is Leila's Shop, a small specialty store with raw wood shelves, drying sausages and nougat imported from Isfahan, Iran. On a recent visit, I was browsing the shelves of house-made jams with the cookbook author Anissa Helou, who sometimes holds cooking classes in her nearby loft, and after we stepped outside, a perfectly silent electric car whipped around the corner. The driver and Ms. Helou knew each other, and as they said their hellos under a bank of trees four stories tall, I felt that I was looking into the future, to a time when cities are gentle and everybody is friendly. (Strand, 2010, September 1).

**Table 5.4: Types of commercial food retailers within 500 meters of St. Hilda's East**

Store Type	Examples	Quantity
Independent stores selling green produce*	Ethnic grocery stores, convenience stores	9
National supermarket chains	Tesco, Morrisons, Marks and Spencer	1
Independent specialty stores that do not sell green produce	Health food stores, bakeries	3
Eat-in and takeaway	Cafes, restaurants, pubs, fast-food outlets	42
Liquor stores*	Food and wine, off-license	8
Total		63

\*three of these sell both liquor and green produce and are thus in two categories

Source: Author, 2009

**Image 5.3: High-rise buildings of London's main financial district, the City, seen from a few blocks away from St. Hilda's East**



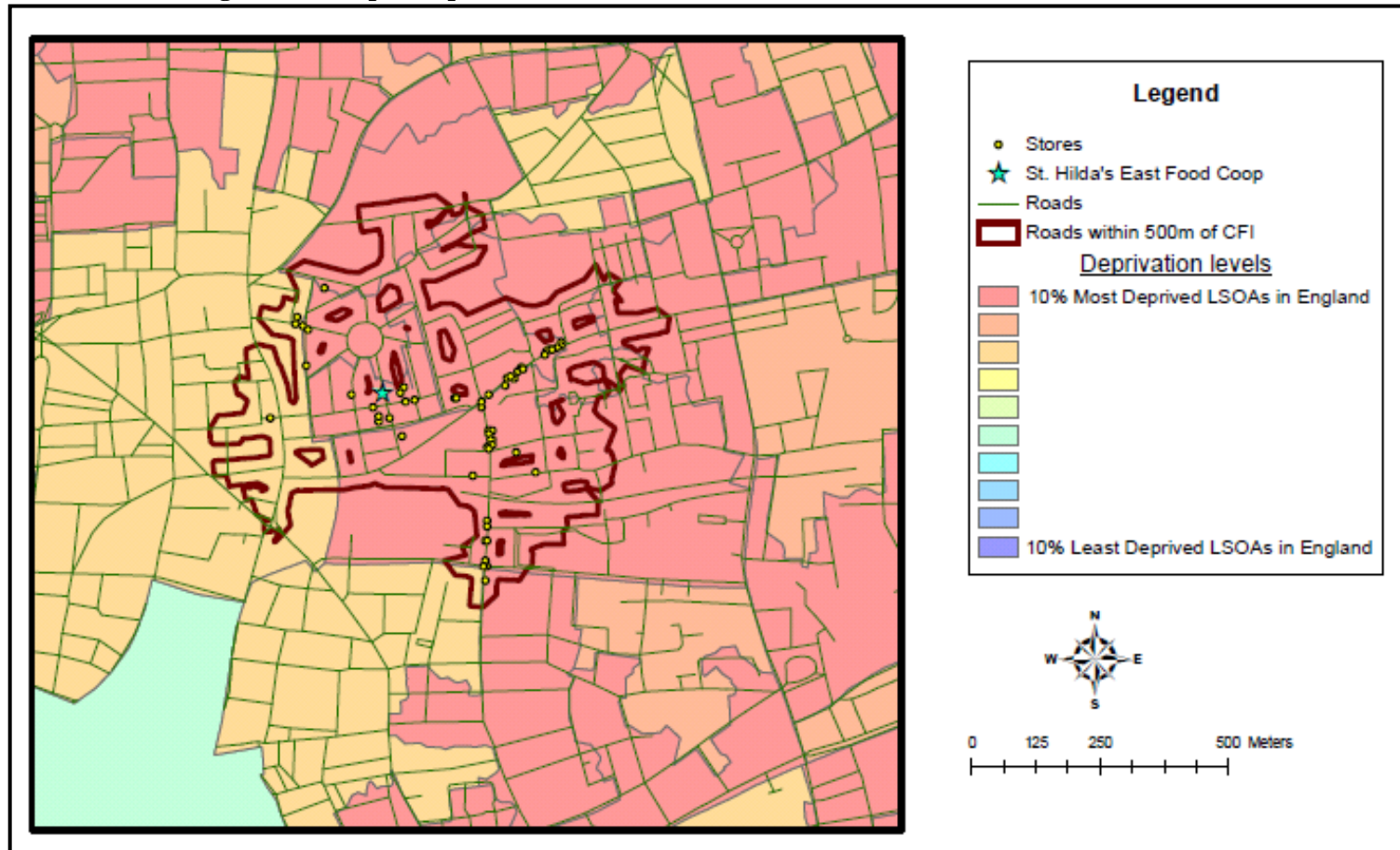
Source: Author, 2010

Image 5.4: St. Hilda's East Community Center – provides services to largely Bangladeshi community



Source: Author, 2010

Figure 5.4: Map of deprivation levels and commercial food retailers near St. Hilda's East



Source: Author, 2011 based on census of stores conducted July 2009; Map Data © Open Street Map contributors, CC-BY-SA (<http://www.openstreetmap>, <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>); and 2007 IMD data from Department of Communities and Local Government retrieved April 2009 from <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/>

Figure 5.5: Aerial view of Boundary Estate Conservation Area



Source: Author, 2011 using Google Map



## **Project of an Established Community Organization**

The food coop at St. Hilda's East was run out of a community organization, St. Hilda's East Community Center that was itself a company limited by guarantee, and a registered charity. St. Hilda's East was established in 1889 by a women's college association as a 'charitable settlement' for privileged women to live in and work with poor residents in London's East End. In 1987, it changed from a settlement to a community center. At that time, the neighborhood was predominantly white, but Bangladeshi families began moving in and in 1994, the center signed an agreement with the borough's council to deliver a Bengali day center for the elderly. It had another site in the borough about two miles away.

Registration as a charity gave the center automatic rates relief-rates being the amount that trading organizations pay to the government; this opens up more opportunities for grants as many foundations only give funding to registered charities, and gives a certain credibility when seeking donations from the public (Cooperatives UK 2010). St. Hilda's East received many grants, including from the borough's council, and provided a range of social services including pre-school childcare; youth projects; women's projects; welfare advice, job, and volunteer placement services; healthcare projects for Bangladeshi elders; services for people over the age of 50 generally; and culturally appropriate homecare assistance for South Asian elderly across the borough (see Image 5.4, p. 155). Its legal advice service, in partnership with two law firms, and a center for Bangladeshi residents run in partnership with the local council and two other organizations have both received national awards. The importance of St. Hilda's East to residents of the borough and to the borough's council was apparent at its 120<sup>th</sup>

anniversary celebration, a daytime event that had a huge turnout of African, Caribbean, and Bangladeshi residents-many from beyond the immediate vicinity, as well as representatives from the borough's council.

At the site where the food coop ran from 2004-2009, one staff member devoted some time to oversee volunteers and liaise with the CDA, which arranged for ordering the produce, picking up from CFE's warehouse, and delivering to St. Hilda's East (and other food initiatives in the borough). Decisions about the food initiative were made entirely by the administration of St. Hilda's East. Volunteers set up the tables with the produce, weighed it for customers, and did the sales. From the CDA's perspective, St. Hilda's East was part of its food coops project, a project which the CDA chose not to incorporate. St. Hilda's East's food coop started around 2004, and it stopped running in the summer of 2009. The coop routinely closed for summer holidays sometime in June, and also would close in Ramadan because past experience showed that the predominantly Muslim users shopped less during that time of fasting. It was scheduled to reopen in the fall of 2009, but the staff person responsible for coordinating it went on medical leave for a period of time, and then St. Hilda's East took further time to re-evaluate how to continue because the coop did not recover costs through sales and did not have funding to subsidize it. St. Hilda's East restarted the coop at the end of 2010 with some changes made to cut costs of food delivery.

### **New Spitalfields Market, CDA, and CFE**

Food provision at St. Hilda's East's food coop involved a few more links in the food supply chain compared to Ferrier Coop, though the produce also came from New Spitalfields Market. St. Hilda's East placed the order with the CDA, which obtained it

from CFE's warehouse. The CDA charged St. Hilda's East an administration fee of £2 per order plus another charge of 15 percent per order; for St. Hilda's the order amounted to £150-200 per week before the additional fees, but St. Hilda's East did not mark up the price of produce beyond the cost to the center. Like the Ferrier Coop, St. Hilda's East sold several types of exotic produce such as mangos, papayas, and bitter melons. The items at the coop that I was able to compare prices for at nearby stores were of the same price as the stores or cheaper, and of good quality.

To reduce wastage, about 15 minutes before closing, the coop would reduce prices and members of the Pensioners Club would come in to buy up what was left. Things that were not sold and could keep were stored for the following week, to be sold at reduced prices. On my visits, about ten pensioners would always come toward the end of the coop to buy the cheaper produce left, although a few pensioners would come earlier when the selection was greater.

When it re-launched the coop in December 2010, St. Hilda's East started getting its produce directly from CFE, which charged £15 to cover the delivery of the food. This saved a small amount compared to the arrangement with the CDA, but the coop was still struggling to consistently cover the costs of running.

### **Volunteers**

The coop was usually staffed by two to three volunteers and one staff person from the community center, who oversaw setup. One of the regular volunteers was a Pakistani woman, Salma, who found out about it in the local community newspaper and from a friend. She first came as a customer and then decided to volunteer. She lived a 10-minute walk away but usually drove because of the amount of produce she took back.

The other volunteers varied; sometimes they were youth involved in activities at the center, and sometimes other residents from the wider area-not the immediate neighborhood.

Salma said she volunteered because she enjoyed it, explaining: “I have three kids and it gives me an opportunity to do something aside from that. I like the community spirit about the place.” When asked about challenges, she said that “when you enjoy something, you don’t really consider anything a challenge or difficult.” However, she too, faced the same types of issues that Elias had mentioned at Ferrier in terms of customer relations. While I did not observe people inquiring about the country produce was from, on occasion, I did observe a customer bargaining about the price. At the end of the sessions, Salma distributed produce to the volunteers; so free produce was another benefit, though, as with volunteers at GCFC, it did not seem to be the main reason for volunteering.

As with staff members donating produce from their own allotments to GCFC, staff at St. Hilda’s also contributed resources to serve the coop when the opportunity arose. Though the coop used plastic carrier bags, I also noticed that they were using small Ikea carrier bags, and when I asked Salma about them, she explained that her relative worked at Ikea and was giving them away, so she thought they would be good for the coop, and encouraged people to reuse them for their weekly shopping there. This type of act-staff donation of goods that promote environmental consciousness based on opportunities that arose- illustrated the sporadic practices pertaining to the theme of environment which was not captured in the discourse of the coop at the time.

## Themes and Food Sovereignty Principles

Like GCFC, St. Hilda’s East Food Coop had aspects of all of the themes (See Table 5.5 below). Initially, the environment and economy themes were peripheral and not very apparent; although it was obtaining its food from CFE, which sources much of the produce from regional farms, St. Hilda’s East did not draw attention to this. Rather, the emphasis was on health and affordability. Later, it more explicitly framed itself as a community initiative promoting local and sustainable food. Over the entire length of time it operated, aspects of its work related to the food sovereignty principles of improving access to markets for local producers; provision of healthy, culturally appropriate food; and diversity. In terms of democratic process, it did not operate with any formalized representation from neighborhood residents. The community center it started from was run largely by Bangladeshi and some African staff, but the center did not initially consult with the local community about if or how the coop should operate. However, it planned to do a consultation toward the end of this study, acknowledging the low participation from residents of the nearby housing estate.

**Table 5.5: Themes and examples in St. Hilda’s East Food Coop**

Theme	Examples
Affordability	✓ Zero mark-up; use of volunteers
Health	✓ Promoting healthy eating
Community	✓ Volunteering and social interactions; use of community space
Environment	✓ Obtaining regional produce (via CFE); re-usable bags; later encouraging people to get involved in sustainable food
Justice	✓ Making healthy food more accessible physically and economically
Economy/Skills	✓ Using regional farmers as suppliers of nonexotic produce; working with another cooperative (upon relaunching coop)

## **Customers**

St. Hilda's East ran its food coop from 10 AM – noon on Thursdays. I interviewed six customers after they had purchased from the coop and seven other people who were at the community center when the coop had stopped running. Although the LSOA where the community organization is located has 60 percent Asian and five percent black residents, St. Hilda's East served a wider community, and many people of other ethnic backgrounds used it. According to the center staff person who oversaw the project, 50 customers on average used the coop per week and missed it when it had stopped running from around July 2009 – November 2010. As was the case at Ferrier Coop, many of the customers were Muslim women who wear hijab, or the religious head scarf.

Of the six customers I interviewed, five were women-four were black and one was Pakistani, and one was a Bangladeshi man. Two of the customers found out about the coop by virtue of working at the community center; three learned of it by coming to the center regularly for other activities; one found out about it through the local newspaper.

One of the women, a Jamaican pensioner, used the center for its activities for pensioners, and so had started using the coop since it started. She lived a 5-minute walk away, and liked that it was close and she did not have to carry the produce far. She also liked the “community spirit”, but when asked if there was anything she would like to see improve, she responded, “well not so far, you know, the only change I probably would like to see- a mixture of culture-you know what I mean? A mixture of culture, mixing together, not just passing one another by, and looking at one another, you know what I

mean?” Her comments capture what I also had observed, customers of an ethnic background interacted with other customers of that background, and there was less mingling between individuals of different ethnic backgrounds.

She also took the bus to shop for food at supermarkets, and grew vegetables at an allotment, which she referred to as her farm, even though the average allotment size in London is 250 square meters (Greater London Authority, 2008a). The allotment, which she had been using for 20 years and visited a few times a week, provided much food in the summer, and she stored or froze other things to use over the winter. Though it provided nearly all the vegetables for her use and some surplus that she gave away, she tried to shop at the coop regularly, usually spending about £5-8. That she chose to purchase food from the coop even though she produced enough for herself indicates the attachment to the coop for reasons other than material needs, and her desire to support the “community spirit” imbued in the place.

An older Bangladeshi man who used the coop regularly lived in a different borough, but came to the organization daily because he held a senior position in its administration. He spent about £5-10 and used it because

It’s a sort of support to the local community and it’s opportunity that you meet all the people to the exact local community, that’s one thing. Second thing- sometimes it helps other people or we can encourage other people to buy stuff and come here, also it’s a sort of publicity because I know a lot of local people, I’ve been working here for the last 20 years....and I mean lot of the local people know me, and yeah, this is an opportunity that reach local people and encourage people to come use food coop....Yeah the food coop usually provides fresh fruits and vegetables and they’re only being brought in the morning in the time when it is still fresh. One thing, second thing-uh it’s relatively cheaper than the local shops and wholesalers as well.

He had no need to shop at the coop because the area where he lived had many food retailers, and thus he was quite content with the options for buying food where he lived, saying “yeah, varieties of fruit, it’s better than back home even, sometimes throughout the whole year you can buy mangoes, I mean where else can you buy (laughing).” He also grew food at home, though this only yielded a small amount of produce. Again, his comment about mangoes raises the salience of produce from home countries, produce that forms an important part of identity and culture for ethnic minorities in London, and in other multicultural cities in the global North. However, he himself noted that mangos are not available in Bangladesh outside of the mango season. Thus, seasonal food was part of many immigrants’ cultures in the countries they migrated from, and that experience can be drawn upon to encourage the consumption of seasonal produce in the places they migrated to. His comments and those of other customers suggest that provision of certain items that are staples of ethnic diets alongside of seasonal foods, may be a better way of encouraging this type of consumption. Alternatively, to work within the ethos of a localization orientation, sourcing or cultivating foods that can be grown within the local climate but that are sought out by ethnic minority residents-such as cilantro, sweet potatoes, and various squashes, may also help to achieve greater resonance for these communities.

On the topic of any changes he would like to see, he said:

The most changing when the people look for the prices, there is arrangement directed to buy from the wholesalers and could be priced down, that’ll encourage local people to come here. Also varieties of food and fruits or vegetable for all the community, like we mostly bring the English food, fruits and vegetables yeah? If the Bangladeshi food is we can collect or produce it here, then probably it will attract more Bangladeshi people. Same with the Afro-Caribbean food and you can attract other community as well.



His comments suggested changes that would make the coop more competitive with the local markets that had greater variety and low prices.

Another staff person, an African woman who lived in another borough, shopped weekly at the coop, spending £5-12. She liked the coop, stating, “It’s easy for me, it’s just right in the building I work in, and at times, some of their food is more cheaper than in the market. For instance their plantain, their yam, those things they are cheaper.”

Asked if she wanted the coop to change in any way, she said, “The fruits, at times it’s- for instance the grapes and those things, you’ll get them cheaper at the market when you compare, you’ll get them cheaper at the market than here cuz they are grapes, oranges, and uh pineapple, bananas.” Her suggestion that the coop could be cheaper echoes what the Bangladeshi man had mentioned, but none of the customers who were not staff at the

A West Indian pensioner raised the issue of food variety, expressing both satisfaction and a desire for more West Indian food. Like the Jamaican woman, she had been using the center for its social activities when the coop started. She spent £20-25 if the things she liked were there, stating “Most of the things I like they have it. They carry yam, potatoes, cucumber, fruits, papaya I love papaya. They have apples, everything.”

As she had mobility problems, transportation was the major reason that she used it, noting “it is convenient- I can’t go shopping, I can’t go to the market. It is convenient for me when I do the shopping here. They help me here, everybody help, so they when you want to go home, they take you on the bus, when they drop you they drop it off in the house, so it’s easier for me I don’t have to... All of the shopping is in the bus and they drop you off. So it’s very convenient.” She did most of her shopping here, and only occasionally used other markets, which she would get to by cab or a relative would take

her. When asked about any changes she would like to see in the coop, she said, “If they get more of the West Indian stuff we like it...we like fresh green bananas, we like yam, you know all the West Indian stuff mixed with English and Indian food they have, so we like it we’ll buy it.” Another pensioner of Caribbean decent also came from further away and used the center’s bus. She too, had used it since it started, and found out about it at the organization when attending activities for pensioners. This woman spent about 5£ at the coop, but also shopped at a supermarket, which she would go to with a care worker. Like others, the change that she wanted to see was more West Indian food. This woman and three other women I interviewed also grew food in their home gardens. These customers’ experiences highlight the elderly and people with mobility problems as a group that conventional coops in London reach out to. This is something that Croydon’s coop also did by providing a delivery to seniors’ homes, and CFE did through its mobile units.

Among younger customers, Salma’s sister also shopped at the coop, but was not a volunteer. She lived further away and usually drove to the coop. She learned about it in the local newspaper and had been using it since it started, usually coming twice a month. She explained to me, “I started using it because it’s easier to shop here with kids because they have a crèche usually, so the kids have something to do, and you can socialize a bit and meet people you know. Also the price is reasonable and the quality is good. Though some of the local shops at the market have very cheap produce, the quality can be bad.”

Interestingly, some people who used St. Hilda’s East did not know about the food coop. One of them was a Nigerian woman who came to the center with her child for activities such as a cook and eat club. She lived a 10-minute bus ride away and shopped

in bulk at a market. Another Kazakh woman also came with her child for activities; she lived a five-minute walk away but also did not know about the coop. Others were older Bangladeshi residents, who came to use the center for social activities catering to the Bangladeshi community. Some center users did know about the coop, but they were satisfied with the local markets and shopped there, and most of them grew food at home as well. Food growing activity was confirmed by my own observations of the blocks in the vicinity of St. Hilda's East, where I saw many food-growing spaces in school yards and balconies of residential buildings.

The customers' comments indicate the value of the coop for multiple reasons. It provided a unique shopping experience that is convenient for both the elderly and mothers, providing special services such as transportation to and from home for pensioners and a crèche where children can play during coop hours. Customers generally liked the price for the quality and variety of produce available, which includes some types of vegetables of African, Caribbean, and Bangladeshi cuisines. Two individuals' comments suggested that the fact that it was community-run was more of a motivating factor in shopping at the coop than other considerations. As with Ferrier Coop, by constituting a means of regular interaction with a place, food seemed to contribute to place identity that customers had with the places they migrated from.

Despite general satisfaction with the coop, some customers, as well as a staff-person, felt that the coop could improve by increasing the variety of produce relevant to the different ethnic communities. St. Hilda's East food coop had quite high patronage at times, but because it had only once broke even in recovering the costs of one session in its several years of existence, the short-term medical leave of the staff person overseeing

the coop triggered a suspension of activity. The center's staff felt that the CDA did not provide support in how to become financially viable, and without funding, the cost of running the coop with zero mark-up was too high. Center staff noted that some of the other community centers in the borough that had run coops with the CDA closed down, and my own research confirmed this; four such coops in the same borough had collapsed.

Even though the community center was located in an area with several shops selling fresh produce, and many residents grow food at home or at allotments, there was a significant demand for the coop during its suspension, and the organization had always intended to restart it in a way that put it on a course to financial viability. The center re-launched the coop in December 2010, this time with CFE supplying directly. While this resulted in some savings compared to the previous arrangement, the staff acknowledged that the coop needed to increase sales to become viable. One of the problems was its location in proximity to several stores selling affordable, fresh produce. Because the center was not located in a grocery gap, the coop was not as successful in drawing residents from the nearby housing estate as Ferrier Coop was. Coop volunteers were planning to do a door-to-door survey at the estate to assess interest and needs after the coop's re-launch. The change in direction was also apparent in the recruitment for new areas it is seeking help with - developing links with local businesses for sponsorship; sourcing local, seasonal produce; and raising awareness about sustainability among local people (see Image 5.5, p. 170) (Sustain, 2010b).

Essentially, the center was shifting its attention beyond low-income residents to attempt to leverage the gentrification underway. Staff stated interest in developing links to the food stores gentrifying the area through artisanal and local foods and trying to draw

the residents frequenting such places who may support a food coop. This shift in toward recruiting people who seek out independent stores and alternative food initiatives – a different group of people from the original target of low income housing estate residents, denotes frame extension; the original frame of healthy eating promotion was extended to capture those drawn to compatible frames of localization and supporting community initiatives. The coop also began to refer to itself as a social enterprise, which it had not done previously, and applied for Lottery funding to train people in enterprise skills, using the food coop as a practical element to through which they could apply their skills. If the funding application proved successful, St. Hilda's East would most likely consult with CFE for advice on delivering the training, but the community center it was based from would deliver the training itself.

**Image 5.5: Shift in framing evident in new publicity for St. Hilda's East Food Coop**



Source: Author, 2010

Applying social movement theory, at the time of this study St. Hilda's East had not employed extra effort in recruiting the residents of the low income housing estate that it hoped to recruit. The extent to which this group comprised the mobilization potential- meaning they agreed with the coop's ideas on improving diet via food (and later, improving sustainability) - was not known. Based on interviews with some individuals in the neighborhood – but not necessarily from the estate - local residents appeared to be quite satisfied with food buying options. As mentioned earlier, initial mobilization of people into social movement activity can require cultural work in cultivating a shared identity rather than the simple use of existing resources and political opportunities; St. Hilda's East did not do so (McAdam, 2003). Nonetheless, its general recruitment did draw enough interest and regular customers to create demand for it to reopen when it had closed for a year. These customers seemed to already have incentives to participate- resonance of the coop's ethos with their values; convenience; or material benefits of good quality, reasonably priced food- which outweighed any barriers to participating and did not require cultural work on the part of St. Hilda's East.

However, after its relaunch, the coop planned to target residents of the estate, and was moving into provision of more sustainably produced food, seeking help with engaging the local community around sustainability issues via food. In sum, its location in an area with stores selling affordable relevant to low-income ethnic minority groups and stores selling local and organic produce affordable to middle class residents placed it in a difficult situation. It was not a resident-launched coop centered on encouraging a local food economy, such as Growing Communities or Organiclea; nor was it a coop filling a vacuum in reasonably priced fresh produce provision.

## CONCLUSION

The two CFIs explored emerged through different processes which in turn influenced their subsequent development. Greenwich Community Food Coop located food coops in areas lacking stores selling fresh produce, after having conducted needs assessments, and thus was able to draw a consistent volume of local residents who regularly shop at the coops. In terms of social movement theory, GCFC targeted recruitment efforts based on needs assessments, and was generally successful in drawing participation from the targeted population. In addition, it used a variety of strategies to increase the viability of low-cost food coops; these included a 33 percent mark-up, support from the NHS, supplying produce to workplaces at higher prices that help subsidize the coops, and use of community food growing projects to supply produce for the coops. In contrast, St. Hilda's East started a coop in an area with several shops selling cheap, fresh produce, in an attempt to encourage healthy eating among residents of a nearby housing estate, but without having gauged need and interest among those residents. While it did apply general recruitment efforts, it had not tailored any efforts to the population it specifically wanted to engage- the residents of a low-income housing estate nearby. Whether or not this population actually comprised the mobilization potential- being sympathetic to the ethos of the coop- was also not known. St. Hilda's East then was not addressing a critical social need expressed by the community or filling a vacuum in fresh produce provision, but was valued by some customers for its community feel and for facilities for the elderly and young children that make the shopping more convenient. Customers of both CFIs placed a premium on the availability of exotic produce relevant to Bengali, African, and Caribbean cuisines.

Customers also expressed involvement in growing food, in organic food, and-according to the volunteers at Ferrier – in choosing produce based on political considerations.

Food initiatives such as these, which rely on volunteers, have little or low overhead costs, and that sell with affordability to local residents in mind, have the potential to make sustainably produced food more accessible to these social groups. The Greenwich CDA, which was integral in the development of GCFC, was helping GCFC do so by supporting food growing spaces around the borough, with some of the produce going to the coops for sale. It is notable, however, that although the Ferrier Estate itself had substantial space that could be used for community gardening or even market gardens, such activity did not take root. In London, this may be due to the lack of a community gardening movement and a broader community food security movement that in the US has facilitated integration of environmental sustainability and food access. Like CFE, which was described in the previous chapter, GCFC tried to compromise between meeting environmental objectives – stocking solely locally-grown, organic food, and meeting cultural needs through the importation of foods from other countries.

Also seeking to address environmental issues through the coop, St. Hilda's East recruited volunteers to help develop awareness about sustainability in the community and to help with sourcing local food. However, because it operated one coop in an area with several stores selling affordable food, and a growing number selling local and organic produce, its viability seemed tenuous. Given the amount of food growing activity in the area, there may be interest in developing plots for commercial food growing, as Growing Communities did. The area already had a city farm with a Bangladeshi women's food growing group, the Coriander Club, and food growing projects on housing estates run by



the registered social landlord, Tower Hamlets Community Housing (Spitalfields City Farm, 2010; Women's Environmental Network & Sustain, 2008). Tower Hamlets Council also committed to facilitating the development of 60 food growing spaces as part of the Capital Growth program (Capital Growth, n.d.-a).

## **CHAPTER 6 - ORGANIC CFIS: TWO CASE STUDIES**

In this chapter, I present two case studies of organic CFIs. One of the CFIs recently stopped operating, and the other has been operating for over 20 years. An examination of the spatial and historical context sheds light on the difference in resilience between the two CFIs, which shared similarities in ethos. In both cases, the coops tended to draw most of their customers from beyond the neighboring housing estates. Despite both of the coops applying very low mark-ups on the price of produce, findings suggest that few customers from these low income housing estates shopped at the coop. The communities that these community food initiatives served seemed to comprise communities of interest- those organized around values or ideology, rather than communities of location. Unless stated otherwise, the information in this chapter is based on data obtained through methods of direct observation, key informant interviews, document studies, and a census and mapping of food stores.

### **FARESHARES – SOUTH LONDON FOOD COOPERATIVE**

The history of Fareshares is tied to the history of the Pullens Estate, a Victorian era group of buildings that used to house people working in crafts trades (Pullens Arts Business Association, 2010). The Pullens Estate was developed by builder James Pullen in the 1870s and consisted of over 600 flats, six yards intended as workspaces for craftwork, and some units for small shops (see Images 6.1 - 6.2, pp. 177-178) (Pullens Arts Business Association, 2010; Regeneration Department, 2006). In 1977, Southwark Council bought the buildings that had survived the bombing raids of World War II, but

by that time, the buildings had deteriorated and the council demolished some of the buildings (Regeneration Department, 2006). At the time, squatters<sup>26</sup> were becoming organized in South London and many had squatted in the estate to preserve its working class heritage; when the council conducted a mass eviction in 1986 to demolish more buildings, they immediately re-squatted in the estate and many of them went on to gain tenancy at discounted rates (see Image 6.3, p. 178) (Amelia Street Competition, 2011).

In the space that Fareshares occupied, there used to be a small grocery that had closed down; subsequently, squatters used it as a craft workspace. When a nearby coop was evicted from its location, some of the people living in Pullman Estate set up Fareshares in 1988. 56A Infoshop started in the space behind Fareshares a few years later, inspired by the infoshop movement for autonomous, do-it-yourself (DIY), spaces characterized by a library or reading room for radical literature, self-funding, and volunteer labor (Atton, 1999). It was one of 22 such spaces in the UK, ten of which are in London (UK Social Centres Network, 2010). Fareshares and 56A Infoshop constitute a collective that makes decisions about the space and that squatted in the space until 2003, when the council forced tenancy negotiations under the threat of eviction. Since 2004, the collective has been paying rent at reduced rates for a nonprofit organization.

Although 56A Infoshop was associated with activists, particularly those with anarchist leanings, it was meant to be a space open to everyone:

We try to get people to see that it is as much their space as ‘ours’ and thus we are open to new ideas and projects. However we also want the Infoshop to active without being a purely activist hang-out or a place that’s dominated by liberals, middle-class academics or pseudo-radicals. In this sense, we are less excited about abstract and possibly alienated activism and more into doing stuff that’s inherently community focused. For example, in 2005 we had a choice to go to the

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<sup>26</sup> The term squatter refers to an occupier of property-usually vacant, abandoned property- without having legal ownership or tenancy

G8 protests in Gleneagles and close the shop for a week. We stayed home and kept the Infoshop open. It seemed better for us to do what we like to do here. Support the anti-G8 struggles locally by just keeping an alternative London space going. Act local, think global, as they used to say. Nowadays they probably just say Be Glocal! Exactly!  
(UK Social Centres Network, 2010)

This passage indicates the collective action intent of the Infoshop space; the writer explicitly links the act of running an autonomous space to the more confrontational G8 protests. Yet the presence of a food coop and bicycle repair workshop on the premises contributed to its being not purely an activist space by drawing some people with the free repair service and the relatively cheap organic food. The infoshop also periodically organized activities such as a ‘free school’, which consisted of instructive workshops in a variety of areas such as bookbinding, music, and foreign languages. However, as I will show later, the food coop that was initially set up by local people squatting in Pullens Estate came to serve people across London.

**Image 6.1: ‘Yards’ for craft work near the Pullens Estate**



Source: Regeneration Department. (2006). Pullens Estate Conservation Area Appraisal Retrieved 15 January, 2011, from [www.southwark.gov.uk/download/1073/pullens\\_estate](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/download/1073/pullens_estate)

**Image 6.2: Pullens Estate**



Source: Author, 2009

**Image 6.3: Coverage of council evictions of Pullens Estate squatters**



Source: Amelia Street Competition. (2011). History Retrieved 10 February, 2011, from [http://ameliastreet.com/Amelia\\_Street/Amelia\\_Street\\_-\\_Competition\\_-\\_London\\_-\\_History.html](http://ameliastreet.com/Amelia_Street/Amelia_Street_-_Competition_-_London_-_History.html)

## **Spatial Context**

Pullens Estate was located in an area undergoing gentrification and was itself one marker of this process; at the time of this study the estate was a mixture of privately owned flats and council-owned flats. Other markers included the construction of a luxury apartment building, called the Strata, on one side of the Elephant and Castle shopping center, and the demolition of the nearby council-owned Heygate housing estate – once home to 1200 residents. Southwark Council decided to destroy the estate and develop new housing as part of its regeneration plans rather than repair and the existing structures; tenants have complained about inadequate payments to them for the forced evictions, inadequate rehousing options, and destruction of the community (Lend Lease, n.d.; Tran, 2011). Demolishment started in 2011 and the new development is set to have 3300 units, of which only 25 percent will be allocated as ‘affordable’ housing (Moss, 2011). The 56A Infoshop was raising awareness about gentrification, but there was less evidence of ‘food gentrification’ marked by upscale, artisanal stores than was evident in the neighborhood of St. Hilda’s East Food Coop. Fareshares was located in the top 12 percent most deprived LSOAs in England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation, and 77 percent of the residents in this LSOA lived in social rented housing (see Table 6.1, p. 180) (Office for National Statistics, 2001). Heygate Estate was located in a more deprived LSOA northeast of Pullens Estate but within 500 meters, and the area was well served by food stores, including several that sell fresh green produce (see Image 6.4, p. 180, Table 6.2, p. 181, and Figure 6.1, p. 182). A stark contrast existed between the Pullens Yard area and other streets and housing estates nearby. While the Pullens Estate area was used to provide a Victorian backdrop in the film ‘The

King’s Speech’, Heygate Estate was used by the film industry to portray contemporary grim urban areas in numerous films and television shows (Jury, 2011; Walker, 2010).

**Image 6.4: Heygate Estate buildings**



Source: Photo by Alamy in Moss, S. (2011). The death of a housing ideal. *Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/mar/04/death-housing-ideal>

**Table 6.1: Selected demographic indicators for Fareshares LSOA**

Demographic Indicator	Fareshares LSOA	London	England
IMD position among most deprived LSOAs in England	Top 15%	n/a	n/a
% Residents in social rented housing – council	72.75	9.09	6.05
% Residents in social rented housing - non-council	4.43	17.12	13.21
% Non-white residents	38.63	28.84	9.07
% Residents age 16 and over in approximated social grade E	23.50	15.23	16.00

Source: Office for National Statistics. (2001). Census. In Office for National Statistics (Ed.). Newport Department of Communities and Local Government. (2007). Topics Retrieved 3 April, 2009, from <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/Download1.do>

**Table 6.2: Commercial food stores with 500 meters of Fareshares**

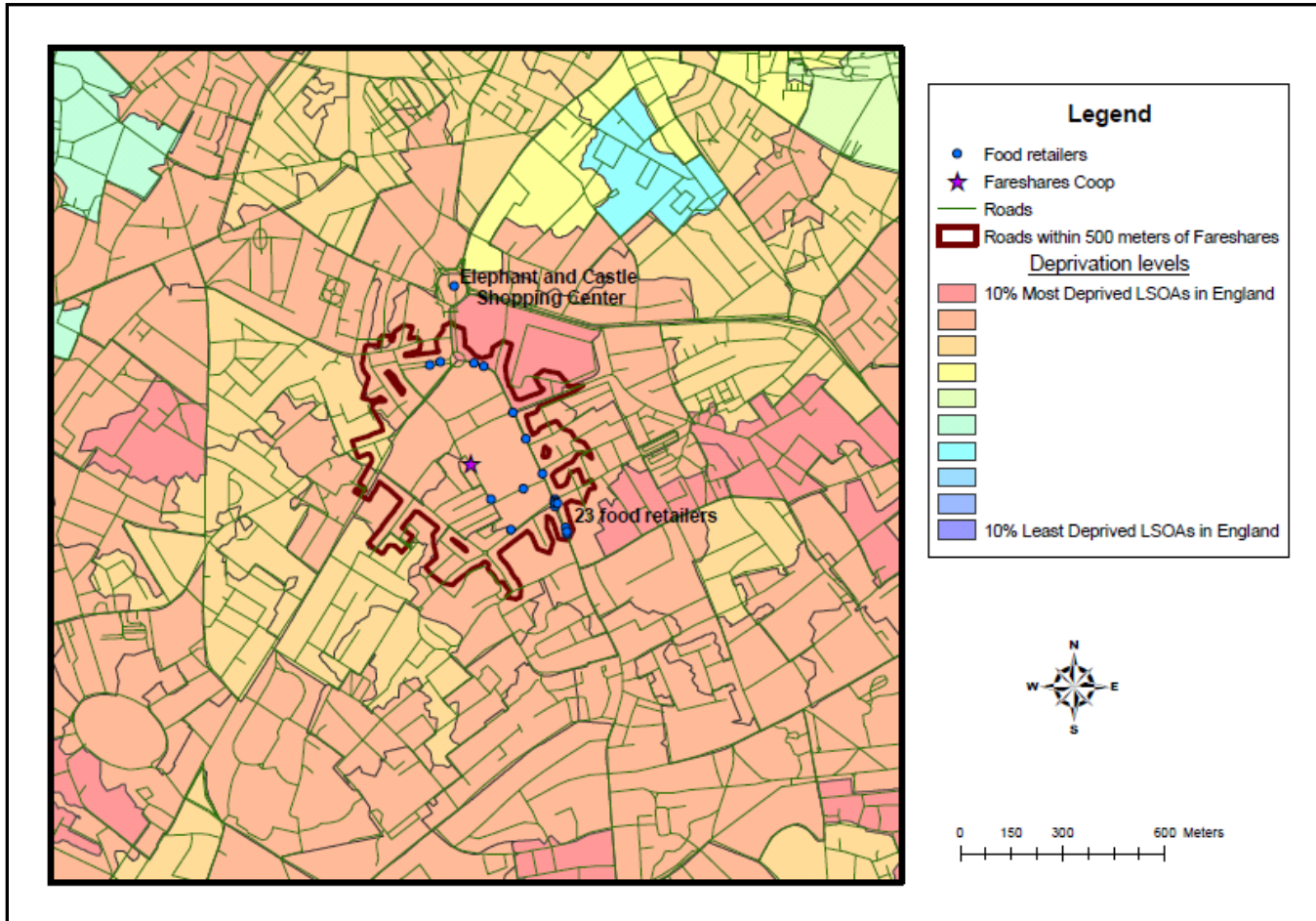
Store type	Examples	Quantity
Independent store selling green produce	Ethnic grocery stores, convenience stores	5
National supermarket	Tesco, Morrisons, Marks and Spencer	1
Independent specialty store not selling green produce	Health food stores, bakeries	2
Eat-in and takeaway	Cafes, restaurants, pubs, fast-food outlets	23
Liquor store	Food and wine, off-license	2

Source: Author, 2009

In recognition of the history of the area, Southwark Council granted the area conservation status in 2005 and in 2008, the Pullens Tenants and Residents Association and Southwark Council held a competition for an architectural design that would “transform the area in such a way that it becomes a greater asset to residents and visitors, allowing greater use and enjoyment of the public realm” (The Architecture Foundation, n.d.) (see Figure 6.2, p. 183).

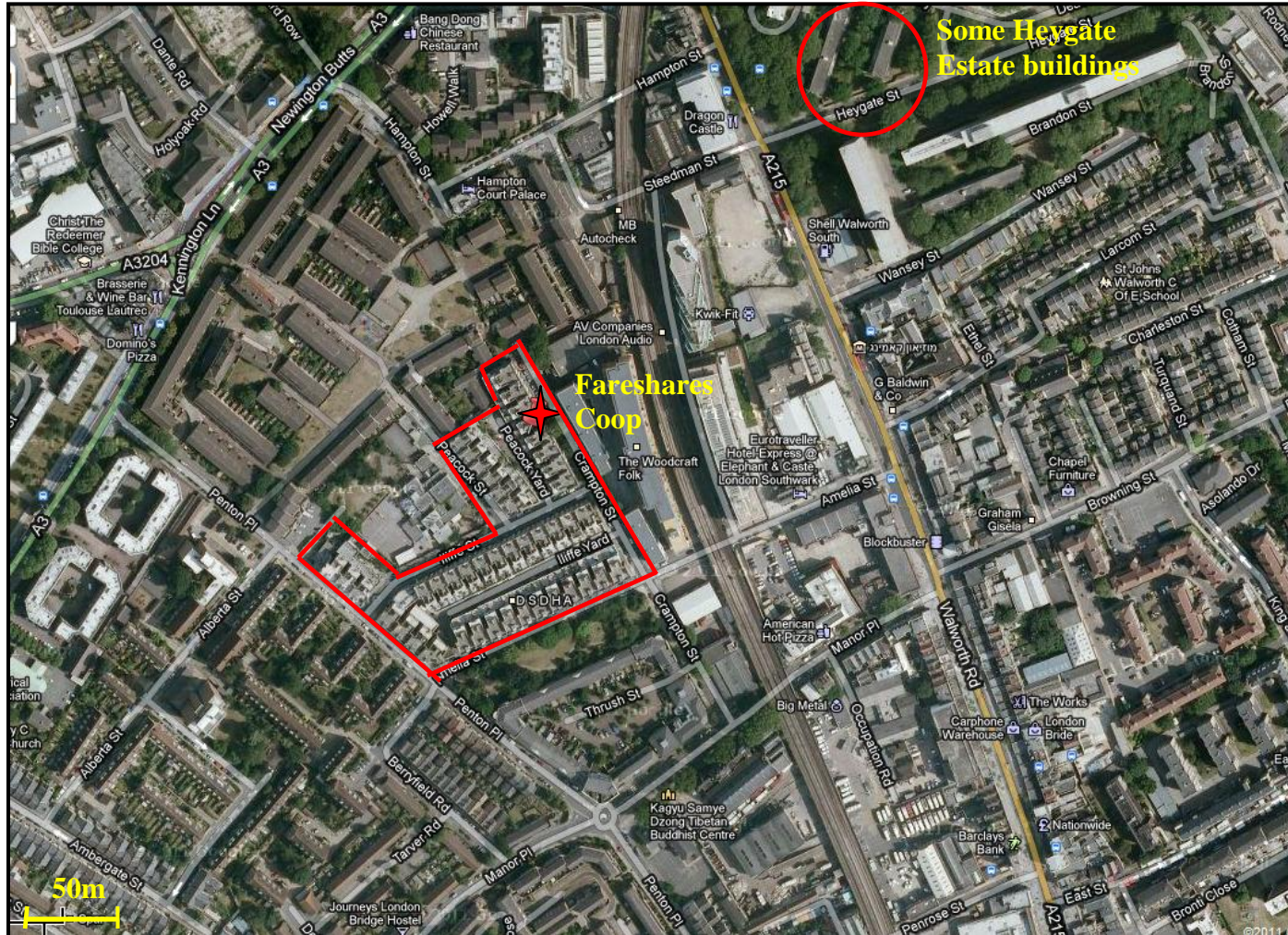


**Figure 6.1: Deprivation levels according to IMD and commercial food retail presence around Fareshares Coop**



Source: Author, 2011 based on census of stores conducted July 2009; Map Data © Open Street Map contributors, CC-BY-SA (<http://www.openstreetmap.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>); and 2007 IMD data from Department of Communities and Local Government retrieved April 2009 from <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/>

Figure 6.2: Arial view of Amelia Street Conservation Area and part of Heygate Estate



Source: Author, 2011 using Google Map

## **Organizational Structure**

The food coop constituted one part of a collectively-managed space that included a DIY bicycle repair workshop and a one-room library containing literature on a broad range of topics such as squatters rights, racism, indigenous peoples' struggles, and anarchism. As a store-front coop, it differed from many coops in that it operated out of a more permanent space, though it did not operate daily (see Image 6.5, p. 185). The entire collective had a strong ethos of autonomy, and prided itself on running entirely by volunteers, without funding from sources that many coops relied upon. In adherence with its ideology of autonomy, the coop never applied for formal funding, although its organic green produce supplier once made a contribution to fund the refurbishment of the floors several years ago. The coop's leaflet, as well as a sign on its premises, asked for donations to help cover rent and bills; however, one volunteer noted:

What we did try doing was having the donations box system, and the idea of that was so that we could keep our prices on the shelf as low as possible and people would donate money every time they shopped if they felt they weren't lowest income customers. And those donations that we got in at least cover our utility bills, like the electricity, water, and things like that we have to pay for, the rent and whatever, then we could actually bring the shelf prices lower, but I think a lot of customers haven't really understood that, and a lot of people really don't think of themselves as well-off even if actually in terms of benefits they are-so it's something-we're still working on it, I think we'd like it to be better....we're thinking of having a Friends of Fareshares scheme or something like that.

During my visits to the coop, I observed that some customers did leave some amount in the donation box- in a few instances triggering a comment by the volunteer about the generous amount, and others asked for a portion of the change due to them.

Due to conducting observations of customers shopping and conducting interviews, I was

not able to keep track of how many customers used the donation box, but the ‘Friends of Fareshares’ idea had not been taken up during the timeframe of this study.

**Image 6.5: Fareshares and 56A Infoshop**



Source: Fareshares. (2010). Fareshares Food Co-op Retrieved 12 December, 2010, from <http://www.fareshares.org.uk/>

Overall, the collective had an informal structure compared to others; it did not have a legal structure, a business strategy or other documents, but it had a bank account. The collective met weekly to discuss matters across all aspects of the center, and was open to anyone who wanted to get involved. In terms of what consensus-based decision making meant in a group that is open to anyone, Mary explained what she thought would ensue if a newer person or one who was less active came to a meeting where a decision was being made:

I mean I think to be honest though, if they were sitting in a meeting and as a group we were trying to make a decision and their opinion is different to ours, we would actually ignore what they had to say, we would reach our consensus. You know I think in the meeting it would become quite obvious that actually we know what we're talking about we've been involved in the project, we all think this, and we wouldn't let that one person who's never been involved before block the consensus. But if they had an opinion, they could offer it, and if it was a good idea and we all liked it, and we all agreed, then it would be fine, the same as for

any of us I suppose....-like we wouldn't let them make a bad decision I don't think.

However, perceptions on the structure varied. One volunteer felt that there was a hierarchy:

In this coop, there is a hierarchy, a boss. Some people feel there's a hierarchy, and there's quite a few strong personalities, and some people have been here a long time and feel like they have to do a lot. And because they take on a lot, it keeps other people from doing, even though they want to do more. A lot of people want to volunteer, and I'm hoping there will be space for them. There's internal politics as with everywhere, but there's enough passion within us to thrash it through. What predominately concerns me is things are said at a meeting, for example, that there should only be two people at a shift, but then someone might call a third. It does seem to be certain personalities, tends to be longer running people.

In terms of food sovereignty principles, the issue of gender parity did not seem to be a problem. However, lack of representation from the African and Caribbean residents, and local residents more generally, did not align with the food sovereignty model of democratic process of control at all scales of the food system. In this case, most of the people running the coop were not from the immediate locality. However, the coop's attempt to forge a nonhierarchical structure open to anyone did demonstrate a commitment to democratic processes.

## **Volunteers**

Volunteers ran all aspects of the coop, however, unlike at other coops, they did not calculate the total cost of items for customers. Usually two volunteers were present when the store was open: Thursday 2-8 PM, Friday 3-7 PM, and Saturday 3-5 PM, and volunteers came in on Wednesday to receive deliveries and set up for sales on Thursday.

Like other coops, Fareshares provided a discount to its volunteers; here it was 10 percent, except on Palestinian fair trade items. Most of the volunteers on my visits were white women who traveled to the coop from areas over five kilometers away using public transport or cycling. The volunteers had found out about the coop by word of mouth, though one, an Australian immigrant, found it through a search on the internet. All four of the volunteers interviewed cited the appeal of participating in a project that operated completely voluntarily and enabled the cost of healthy, organic food to be low compared to for-profit enterprises. There was more variety in the team of volunteers working than at stall-based food coops, where typically the same team of volunteers staff each session. Many of the volunteers running shifts of the coop had only worked there for a year or less, although Mary, a volunteer more active in the overall collective, had been involved in running the coop for ten years. She learned of it when squatting in Brixton and visiting social centers there, shopping at Fareshares for about four years before becoming an active volunteer. She was also one of the few volunteers that lived more locally in South London.

According to Mary, overall, the biggest challenge with the coop had to do with “functioning well as a collective”. As mentioned previously, other volunteers more specifically observed the difficulty of consensus-based decision-making, when some people carried more authority because of their length of involvement with the collective. Two volunteers stopped going to the collective’s meetings, feeling that they were often acrimonious, and bypassed the process when they decided to start stocking organic herbs in the store. This action did not result in any problems, and they subsequently started a free weekly herb course at the coop. Another volunteer mentioned that more

contentious issues such as whether to stock items from certain places were discussed in the collective's meetings before ordering. If a volunteer placing an order felt an item requested by customers or staff was not so controversial, he or she might order it for a trial run and then bring it up at the meeting to discuss. Of the four volunteers I spoke to, only one, Mary, attended the meetings regularly.

Aside from the challenge of working as a collective, Mary noted another challenge the coop faced in 2009:

Rates is like the local tax that you pay, it's what businesses pay instead of council tax, basically. For the last two years, we've been locked into a dispute with the council about whether we should pay 25 percent of the rates or 50 percent of the rates. Cuz they have this thing called rates which is discretionary, they normally award to charities and nonprofit groups where you only pay a small share of what a commercial business would pay. We've paid this 25 percent rate in the past, and then for the last 2 years, we've kind of been arguing about it because they haven't run our application through properly, they've never given us an answer about it, they haven't got back to us one way or the other, but we're assuming they actually want to stop us from getting this. So yeah, that's the biggest struggle this year definitely.

However, at the end of 2010, the council had still not decided about the rates the coop should pay, and Mary said that because the difference amounted to only £600 a year, the coop decided not to put as much effort into getting the lower rate. That the coop was able to manage its expenses for over twenty years without recourse to funding, while also applying relatively low markup on prices, demonstrated its resilience.

### **Food and Other Items**

The Fareshares website and promotional flier indicated a few distinct frames that overlap to some extent, and the ideology was also apparent in how the coop operated. I begin with the framing, using Fareshares' text from its website.

It was set up in 1988 by local people to provide good food for the community at affordable prices in the belief that decent food is a basic necessity for health, regardless of means.  
(Fareshares, 2010)

At the beginning of its website, Fareshares invoked a human rights frame, similar to what CFE had done. Next, it elaborated on what constitutes ‘good food’, linking it to sustainably and ethically sourced food that is local, organic, and GMO-free; this was a localization/environmental sustainability frame. But it also emphasized how it kept prices as cheap as possible while covering costs – a social justice frame.

The co-op stocks grains, beans and pulses, fresh bread, fruit and veg, dried fruit and nuts and other food and household products. Most stock is organic and everything is bought in bulk and sold as cheaply as possible. In addition the shiftworkers and any others who help fareshares take no wages and we add only a small margin to help cover running costs.

For need not greed

Fareshares supports patterns of consumption that promote social justice and sustainable agriculture and fosters an awareness of the political and ecological effects of consumer actions. To do this as much stock as possible is organic, local and ethically sourced. All of it is animal, sugar and GMO-free. Wherever possible we support other co-operatives and collectives that work for the same aims. Finally, it uses a cooperative/nonhierarchical work frame in its support of other cooperatives.  
(Fareshares, 2010)

Beyond the framing apparent in its publicity, its ethos was also apparent in how it operated. People from the area set up the Fareshares to provide affordable whole foods, and in its early days a volunteer would go to Borough Market in London to obtain fresh green produce and dried foods from one of the commercial stalls there to sell at the coop. At the time of this study, it continued to stock dried foods obtained in bulk to sell cheaply, and used a regional organic supplier, Hughes Organics, to obtain fresh green produce, which limited the green produce to what was in season (see Figure 6.3, p. 191)



(Pictures of England, 2011). It only sold food that was animal, sugar, and GM-free, and sourced its whole foods from other workers cooperatives and collectives with similar aims (Fareshares, 2010). For example, it ordered much of its dried foods from Community Foods and Infinity Foods both of which were workers cooperatives, and it stocked Palestinian olive oil and a few other items from company called, Zaytoun—all three suppliers were cooperatives themselves and only supply to other cooperatives, independent shops, or community organizations (Zaytoun, 2010). Fareshares allowed customers to order whole foods and other nonperishable items from these suppliers' catalogues if the coop did not sell them, provided that the customer paid for the order when it was placed.

The markup on food varied; fresh green produce and fresh bread had a markup of 15 percent to cover some that was unsold and wasted items, and snack items considered “not a basic foodstuff that you need to live on” such as halwa and fruit bars were also marked up 15 percent. All other items, including nonfood items such as soaps, were marked up 10 percent with two exceptions: these were Palestinian fair trade products and Moon Cups<sup>27</sup>. Mary explained, “The Palestinian olive oil we just sell at the price we get for it because it’s a solidarity thing, and we want as much money for the Palestinians as possible, we don’t need to make a profit on that, and the mooncups, we want to encourage them to be as cheap as possible for women to afford to use them—they’re 13 quid, I think that’s cheaper than anywhere else.”

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<sup>27</sup> Moon Cup® is a re-usable alternative to conventional sanitary products and usually sells for £15 or more.

**Figure 6.3: Map of England counties showing locations of Fareshares and Hughes Organics, its fresh produce supplier**



Source: Author, 2011 using map from Pictures of England. (2011). County Map of England Retrieved 11 February, 2011, from <http://www.picturesofengland.com/mapofengland/counties-map.html>

### Fareshares' Ethics

What items to stock has been the subject of debates in many food coops, and Fareshares was no exception. As Mary observed, when the coop started in 1988, the organizers' concerns were about not having products high in stimulants-such as coffee, or

sugar- because these were deemed a) not good for health; b) associated with exploitation; and c) relatively expensive items and less likely to sell quickly. In the exchange below,

Mary described some of the food-related debates and decisions of the past and present:

[M] I know that, you know, that politics in the world have definitely changed, and a lot of people come and get involved with Fareshares now go well why don't you sell fair-trade this and that, and like the sugar thing, I know some customers really appreciate the fact that we don't have sugar, and they come and tell us well it's really good, I can bring my kids here and they can't think of any spot to find sugar in, so they can't eat it, that's great, but other people are like you know well why don't you just get fair-trade sugar? And there's still a critique of fair-trade-it's like not very effective-there's loads of reasons why trade is never going to be fair, and like there's no way you could produce sugar that's not gonna ? you know like sugar cane is hard work however you do it.

[SK] So for that instance, like with the sugar, is it not sold because of the health or the fair trade, or both?

[M] Look, I think tradition, cuz at the moment if anyone comes along and says shouldn't we sell this-it's got sugar in it, everyone's like no, we're not going to sell sugar and I think everyone's got all personal reasons about what's biggest for them, but people are quite happy with leaving it like that. But then there's other concerns that have come up recently, there's like palm oil is our current concern, that we're all thinking about and talking about...well, the problem is that there are loads of products in our shop which have always have palm oil-derived things in them so like soap, shampoo, oatcakes, I think, and Post Office Bakery breads, and all the people that we get stuff from that use palm oil say oh, but ours is ethical, sustainable palm oil and we're signed up with the ethical and sustainable roundtable on palm oil production or whatever, but then at the end of the day, that's like a palm oil industry-sponsored roundtable, but then I also know that around the world people have used palm oil for centuries, and there's going to be some sustainable way of doing that and those people used to make money from selling palm oil and that actually the biggest problem with palm oil right now is that there's people out there trying to get as much oil as possible for biofuels or for feeding cattle, not for feeding humans, yeah and like the oils that we use to feed humans is not the problem, it's people trying to use them to drive cars around and stuff, that's the problem, and so yeah and with palm oil, there's different issues, I know that for some people it's like a fluffy animal issue about orangutans in Indonesia, and for other people it's just a basically ecological, this biosphere, whether it's Indonesia or Columbia, or wherever, it doesn't deserve to be f---ed up by monocultural biofuel plantations you know with palm oil trees, and in Colombia, there's loads of issues about people grabbing land or set up palm oil farms and other kinds of oil as well cuz of this massive demand for vegetable oil

production around the world to make biofuels. So yeah, we've had a lot of interesting debate on the subject. And at the moment, you know we've already replaced some products and actively looking for alternatives for others I think the Post Office Bakery bread, at the moment, it's best just to leave it, even though it has palm oil in it, and we have had big discussions with Post Office Bakery, but we actually really support the Post Office Bakery and want to keep using them, and we want to keep getting the bread.

Yeah, I think every few years, there's new issues that come up, you know this, and I know that in the past we were at one stage when people weren't ordering things from China because they thought the Chinese government was like a particularly repressive government and we shouldn't be supporting them, whereas nowadays we order stuff from America, and I know that I and other people that think well actually the American government's pretty repressive and you know most governments around the world are pretty repressive.

[SK] You order American products?

[M] Well, sometimes, we have to, we try not to order stuff from that far away but sometimes when you're looking through a catalogue and want to get a certain thing, that's the only option, and I found out recently that Dove's flour a lot of it is actually Canadian flour.

[SK] Oh, ok

[M] And they don't really tell people that, so all the addresses on the packaging says Britain, you just assume...

Negotiating between different values and ethics was an ongoing process that occurred through deliberations of the collective. Food sovereignty principles are reflected in the different concerns the coop grappled since its inception; these included obtaining sustainably produced food; prioritizing local producers; opposing the use of food crops for biofuel production; and opposition to oppressive governments. However, her comments also illustrate the contradictions inherent to the food sovereignty model. Suppliers of the most sustainably produced product may still entail the use of ingredients from various distant locations; sometimes such suppliers may be located in countries

whose policies incur inequality or oppression; and sometimes it is impossible to assess the sustainability criteria of products purported to be produced sustainably.

### **Themes and Food Sovereignty Principles**

Fareshares work cut across same themes as the other case study coops, but with some differences – such as the conception of healthy food to include organic status (See Table 6.3 below). It demonstrated the food sovereignty principles of right to healthy food; citizens taking control; and just trade. In addition, its encouragement of other types of collective action across various issues reflects the principles of self-determination and citizen’s control over other issues such as land use as exemplified in anti-gentrification activity. In terms of democratic process, while applied consensus-based decision-making and was open to all, it did not actively attempt to gain representation from the diversity of residents around the coop, both in terms of class and ethnicity although its mission of making good food available to all covered the diverse groups in the area.

**Table 6.3: Themes and examples in Fareshares**

Theme	Examples
Affordability	✓ Low mark-up; use of volunteers
Health	✓ Selling healthy foods-including no items with sugar
Community	✓ Volunteering and social interactions
Environment	✓ Regional and local suppliers to reduce food miles
Justice	✓ Making healthy food more accessible physically and economically; just trade-sourcing products from worker cooperatives, using Fairtrade and local producers; publicizing events pertaining to other issues eg- gentrification
Economy/Skills	✓ Using cooperatives and regional farmers as suppliers; free schools for skills-sharing

## Customers

Customers at Fareshares had additional responsibilities compared to customers at other CFIs. The DIY basis of Fareshares extended to the customers in that customers use scales, papers, pens, and calculators provided to calculate the bill before paying. The level of trust imbued in these transactions thus, was much higher than other AFNs such as farmers markets or most other storefront food coops, where the farmer or cashier weighs the produce. Although the coop risked dishonesty and financial loss by using this system, it seemed to work.

Eleven customers were interviewed during or after their shopping activities at the coop. Most of the customers lived at least five kilometers away and came by train, bus, or bike. Four were of African or Caribbean descent – although all four were either born in the UK or had lived in Britain for 20 or more years- and the rest were white. All of the customers interviewed learned of the coop by word of mouth. Exceptions included a Canadian couple that lived within 500 meters of the coop for two years and had recently discovered 56A when looking up the history of the Pullens Estate. Another woman who also lived in the area found it because her friend lived on the same street as the coop. The location of the coop at the end of a residential street, combined with the limited open hours, may have contributed to the large number of people coming from other parts of London. As Mary noted,

A lot of people find it really hard to find this place first time they come here. I remember when I first came, the first couple of times I came here, I remember like never quite-always taking ages to find it...Once you know it you're fine...and I know that people quite often come here and say yeah it's taken me ages to find this place, and I can still empathize with them.....I'd say people that live on the actual, who have lived on the Pullens Estate for a while or on this

estate here for a while, will know that we exist. A lot of them come in because it's convenient and done it for years, so that's one definite group of people. But then there's other people that live just as geographically close, like that new block of flats down the road, and a lot of them don't even know, probably don't know that we exist because they come out of their flat and they all go out to, they don't come this way, and they never walk past. And there's people I know that have lived around here that walked past the shop and it's taken them years to make it inside. So it's not that everyone who lives right around here comes here, but I think the ones who do come back pretty regularly, like every week at least. There's lots of people that have lived around this area and moved a bit further away and still live in London and come back here to shop.

Tom, a retired man, was one of those unable to find it the first time he tried to visit the coop. His wife learned out about the coop from a classmate in an herb course. After finding it on a subsequent visit, Tom became a regular customer, shopping about once a month. He lived in Canary Wharf, about six kilometers east of Fareshares and 30 minutes away by train, and he usually brought a carryon with him to fill with his groceries. Tom used the coop because of a lack of affordable organic produce in his area, claiming "There's nothing like this-there's Holland & Barrett but that's expensive. Nothing with good quality organic and reasonable prices." The store he referred to, Holland & Barrett, was a national health store chain that carries some whole foods, and for Tom, quality and affordability at the coop were worth coming all the way from Canary Wharf.

Based on observations of the coop and interviews with customers, Fareshares seemed to draw people highly conscious about health or ecological considerations. One woman, an immigrant of European descent who worked in an environmental organization, cycled to the coop monthly even though she had organic shops and two farmers markets near her neighborhood. She tried to avoid supermarkets and quickly listed the reasons that she shopped at the coop - "it's really fairly priced, it makes a

contribution to the local economy rather than to supermarkets, it's organic, and the shopping experience is quite interesting.” Another customer learned about the coop from someone who worked at a health food store he shopped at, and he found the coop to be cheaper than health food stores. This customer became interested in the link between food and health after being diagnosed with osteoarthritis in 2004, and seeking to avoid conventional treatment, he opted for acupuncture and dietary change. He said, “There's lots of misleading information about the food chain...it's about money-billions and trillions of profit. Just because something is bad, won't take it off the market. The general public is not aware of food causing health problems”.

Three of the customers interviewed worked in professions that entail awareness of health or environmental issues - aromatherapy, environmental education, and food-skills training. For example, one of the African customers worked as a part-time chef at the community center where Organiclea runs its organic food stall and vegetable box pickup and she conducted training in healthy eating at other community centers. Originally from Ghana, she had a career in investment banking in New York, but left the corporate sector to explore alternative modalities to health, eventually settling on a career centered around raw and vegan cooking. A Trinidadian woman who worked in the health care field, had been shopping at the coop for 20 years and discovered it because her friend was friends with one of the people involved in starting it. Although she had adequate food stores in her area, there was a lack of organic produce, which is why she came to the coop. She also grew food at her allotment, the only customer interviewed who was involved in food-growing activities. She liked shopping at the coop because of the



friendliness of staff, the ability to choose how much produce to get, and because she felt that it was “relaxed”.

All of the customers interviewed were satisfied and could not suggest ways that the coop could improve. In addition to the experiences of the customers interviewed, a comment book and bulletin board of customers’ thoughts on Fareshares – developed in the midst of the clash with the council over rates –highlighted the sense of community, friendliness, and trust-based approach as the coop’s appeal, interspersed with a few comments about affordable prices. Judging from observations and the log book of sales, the coop did well in terms of having a consistent volume of sales. According to sales records for one month, the average spending per week amounted to £16 and about 135 customers used the coop per week. Customers who wanted to buy fresh green produce tended to shop on Thursday, the first day the coop opened and the day with the longest hours of operation. Because of the longer hours and the freshness of the green produce, sales were several times greater on Thursday and Friday than on Saturday.

In informal chats at a local church, two women stated that many people in the neighborhood shopped at a supermarket just beyond 500 meters of the coop and did not know of the coop. Observation of people walking around in a nearby park with plastic bags of the supermarket or the African stores seemed to support their claims, and many of these people were African, dressed in traditional clothing. As one white resident from a council-owned housing estate down the street from the coop informed me, she might pop in to get something if she had run out and the coop happened to be open, but generally people from her estate did not use it and shopped at other stores with regular hours. This

woman also commented that “artsy” people from Pullens Estate were more likely to use it.

In general, Fareshares’ customers were a mix of working class and middle class people – but predominantly the latter - living beyond the immediate neighborhood who discovered the coop through word-of-mouth, indicating networks linked to interest in organic food and cooperatives. For some customers, the price was the main draw, and for many, price was one factor among several that appealed to them; these included the less frenzied shopping experience, the ability to choose how much produce to get, and the trust-based operation of the coop. Because Fareshares recorded its sales in a logbook, I was able to calculate average expenditure and customer volume over a period of a few months in 2010; average expenditure was £16, and 120 customers shopped at the coop per week. Compared to other CFIs in London selling fresh produce, Fareshares had extensive open hours, yet relatively few people from the neighborhood shopped at the coop. As Mary had observed, this was in part due to its peculiar location at the end of a residential street, and the coop also did not publicize itself through fliers posted at other community spaces or events.

The concepts of opposition toward supermarkets and agribusiness and support for local producers that comprise the food sovereignty model were the main reasons customers shopped at Fareshares. One black customer who cycled from the borough of Hackney expressed a common sentiment - “Since I started coming here, I don’t go to the supermarket for groceries. Try to get stuff here or farmer’s market. Go to the supermarket in an emergency, or for things like toilet paper. Although she and the other black customers interviewed shopped at the coop regularly, they all seemed to be

assimilated into Britain; they did not reflect the African and West Indian people I had seen and heard in the surrounding streets in their clothing or accents. Nor for that matter did the white customers reflect the working class estate next to the coop. The ethnic minority customers did not seem to have the outward manifestation of identification with African or Caribbean places they or their parents had migrated from that was evident among the customers of the two conventional coops studied. Based on research about place attachment and identity, this may be due to their longer residence in Britain compared to more recent immigrants; however, I did not ask questions specifically around the construct of place identity or place attachment to assess this empirically.

In sum, because Fareshares did not publicize the coop at all beyond the website- which was a more recent development in its history- it did not target its mobilization potential adequately. However, through social ties of founding members and networks based around sustainability interest and antagonism toward MNCs, Fareshares recruited an adequate volume of dedicated customers. The incentives for participating such as resonance of ethos and savings outweighed any barriers posed by distance or limited hours.

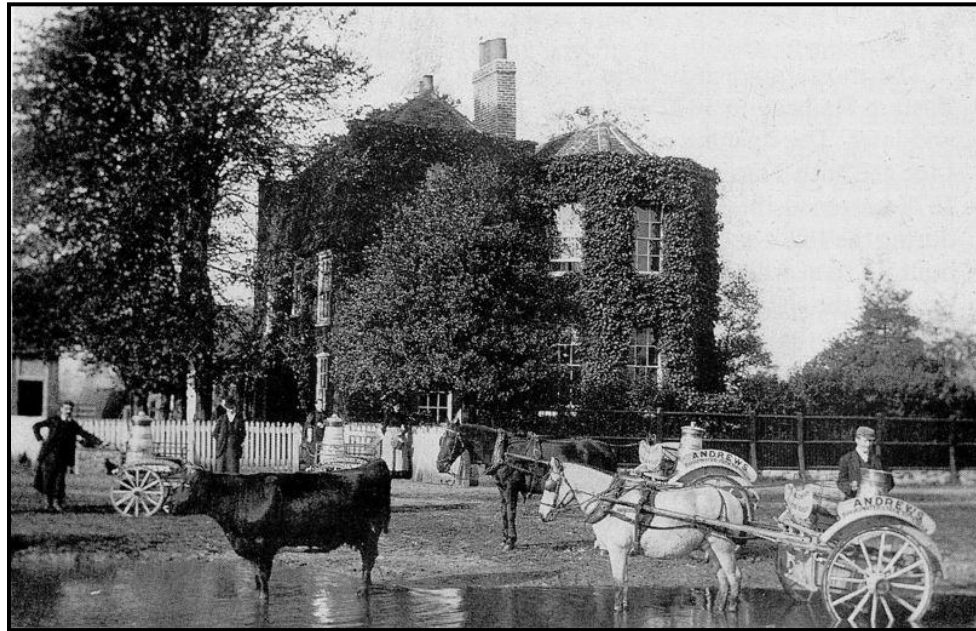
## **TOTTENHAM FOOD COOP**

### **History of Broadwater Farm Estate**

Tottenham Food Coop was a CFI that started in 2008 at a community center located on Broadwater Farm Estate, a council-owned housing estate in the borough of Haringey (see Table 6.4, p. 205 for demographic information). Because the estate has had a turbulent history that has shaped the community center, it is worth recounting some of the history first. The estate was created at a time of pressure from the central

government to construct large-scale housing estates as part of an inner-city slum clearance program (Power, 1997a, p. 56). It was constructed in 1967 on poorly drained allotment land at the edge of Lordship Recreation Ground; due to fear of flooding, the estate was built on stilts and had walkways four levels above the ground (see Image 6.6, below) (Power, 1997b; Wikimedia Commons, 2006). But even before construction was complete, problems were discovered in the plans for the estate (Haringey Council, 2011). By mistake, specifications for the estate omitted enclosure of underground parking garages and service pipes to the buildings, but because the contract with the builder had already been signed when the council realized the problems, construction proceeded according to the faulty plans.

**Image 6.6: Flooding on Broadwater Farm land in 1892**



Source: Wikimedia Commons. (2006). Broadwater Farm House looking south from Lordship Lane 1892 Retrieved 1 May 2011, 2011, from [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Broadwater\\_Farm\\_House\\_looking\\_South\\_from\\_Lordship\\_Lane\\_1892.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Broadwater_Farm_House_looking_South_from_Lordship_Lane_1892.jpg)

Although constructed to house slum clearance families, the slum clearance program was waning, and half the units became occupied by single mothers and other single, often poor, people. With the underground lots and interconnected walkways, it became a favored spot for criminals (Willis, 2005). Very quickly, it had developed a reputation for crime and poor services, and by 1976, it had two times the turnover of the entire council estate turnover for the borough and had a 55 percent refusal rate (Regenerate & The Housing Corporation, 2003). After years of inadequate funding and attention to the estate, creating physical and social deterioration on the estate, in 1983, the council began funding improvements including the establishment of a neighborhood office on the estate, increased management and administrative staff, and the establishment of a full-time repairs team on the estate. Perhaps most importantly, it set up a panel of councilors, residents, and neighborhood staff to turn around conditions on the estate. By 1984, the crime rate was lower than in the surrounding area and units were no longer difficult to rent out (Power, 1997b).

Despite all these gains, other problems continued-the main one being poor police relations; the police felt that the Youth Association-which worked to draw the mostly black youth away from crime through constructive activities - sheltered criminals and thus frisked young black men five times as often as young white men (Power, 1997b; Regenerate & The Housing Corporation, 2003). In this context, the Youth Association went to Jamaica in 1985 on an exchange program, leaving a vacuum that resulted in an increase in drug activity on the estate. The council and community leaders had called the police in, but the police proved ineffective and the Youth Association returned to an out of control estate at the end of the summer. At around the same time, race riots were

occurring in other cities and in Brixton- in South London, a police officer shot a black woman in her home, increasing the tensions on Broadwater Farm Estate. Fearing riots on the estate, the police began a stop and search effort on all vehicles entering and exiting the estate, which infuriated residents who knew which cars and individuals to report; the police called off the action under pressure from residents (Power, 1997b).

In early October, 1985, the police raided a home on the estate, searching for a young black man for a minor traffic violation; in the process, the man's mother died of a heart attack. Young, mostly black male residents, prepared to go to the police station to get an explanation about the death, but found the exits blocked by police vans. This led to attacks on unarmed police in riot gear, shops and cars being set on fire, and the stabbing of a young police officer who was protecting firemen. Much of the seven-hour confrontation was televised and resulted in anger across the nation, and calls for its demolition. The council funded a survey of all Broadwater Estate residents to assess their perceptions of the estate and its future which revealed that residents generally felt positive about estate and race relations on the estate. Various grants and government funding were channeled into improvements, including beautification projects, removal of elevated walkways and construction of a large community center that cost £2.5 million (see Image 6.7, p. 205) (Power, 1997b).

However, by the time the community center was completed in 1992, there was no funding allocated for building maintenance much less for activities. Consequently, the centre was largely vacant until the Youth Association began to run the center on an interim basis. Haringey Council paid basic running costs and a Steering Committee was set up in 1994 as an interim management structure (Broadwater Centre Steering

Committee, 1999). Although the community center has developed services for the community since then, it continued to be under-used by estate residents, although its youth sports activities were quite popular and brought in people from beyond the estate. I interviewed a man who had lived there for nearly 30 years and now worked in youth programs at the community center. He stated that the buildings smelled, entrances were used as latrines, but people turned it around-

People power- the original drive came from us, change had to come from the people. At the time I got death threats, was called a police informer, had guns in the face-now they respect me because I did not bend to intimidation. Thirty years working in local politics- it's all shit-not designed to help people.....Now everyone takes praise-especially the council.

Among residents who lived through the turmoil, there was resentment toward Haringey Council, and the community center was a symbol of things that went wrong. Perhaps the biggest community center in the country, it was vastly underused, which did not augur well for the food projects discussed next.

#### Back To Earth and Tottenham Food Coop

As part of ongoing regeneration activities, Haringey Council commissioned a small organization called Back to Earth to develop food projects. Back to Earth started in 2005 as a project to develop an environmental improvement center with training targeting the unemployed, young people and refugees at Hackney City Farm in the borough of Hackney in East London (Back to Earth, 2011). Broadwater Farm Estate was near several food retailers including two large greengrocers that sold over 30 types of produce (see Figure 6.4, p. 206 and Table 6.5, p. 208).

**Image 6.7: Broadwater Farm Estate in 2009**



Source: Author, 2009

**Table 6.4: Selected demographic indicators for Tottenham Food Coop LSOA**

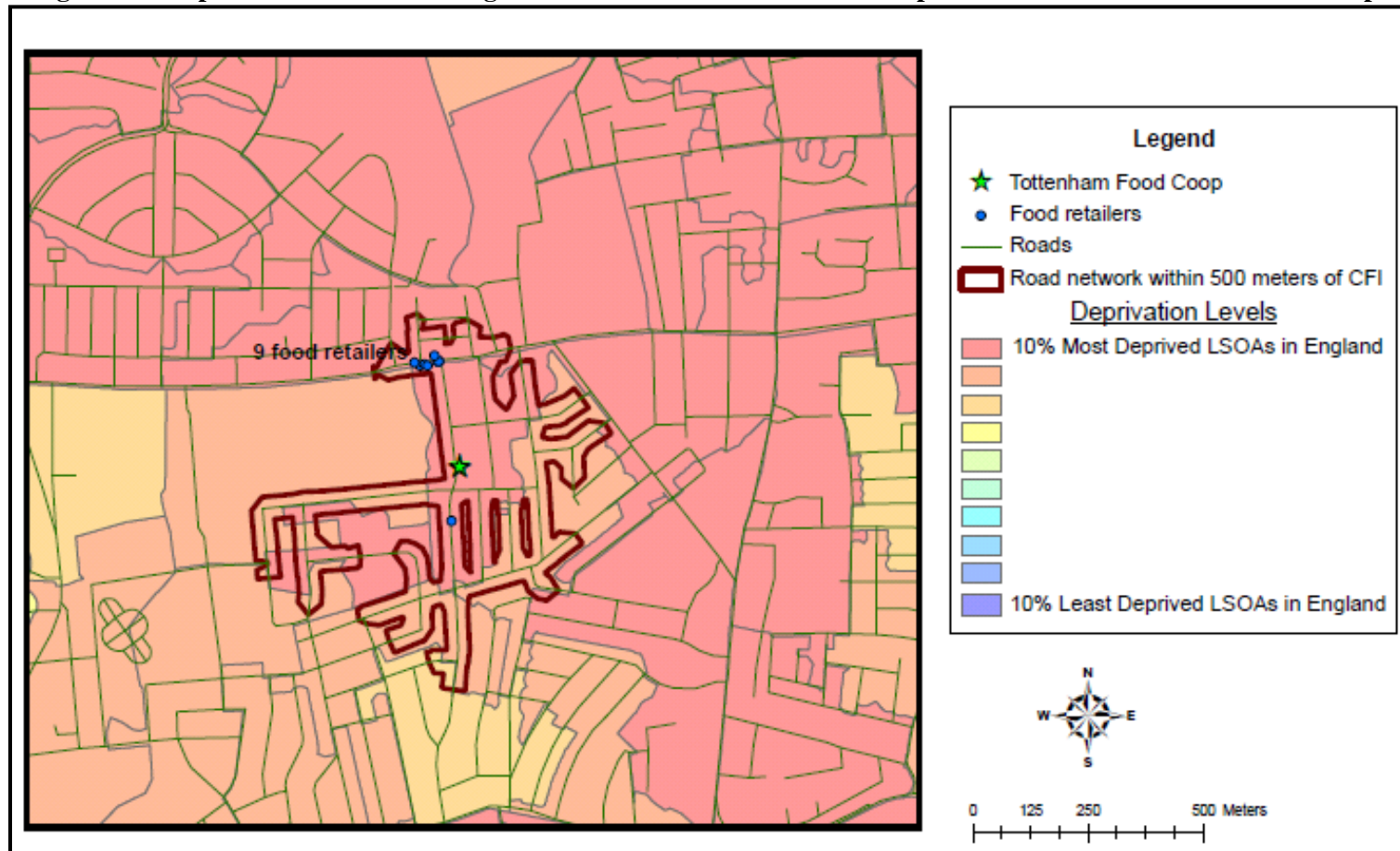
Demographic Indicator	Tottenham Food Coop LSOA	London	England
IMD position among most deprived LSOAs in England	Top 12%	n/a	n/a
% Residents in social rented housing – council	45.08	9.09	6.05
% Residents in social rented housing - non-council	33.09	17.12	13.21
% Non-white residents*	57.27	28.84	9.07
% Residents age 16 and over in approximated social grade E	21.52	15.23	16.00

\*16.78% of the white population in this LSOA are not of British or Irish background; in this area, there is a large Turkish population which falls within the ‘Other-White’ census classification, so it is likely that ethnic minorities constitute 75 percent of the population.

Source: Office for National Statistics. (2001). Census. In Office for National Statistics (Ed.). Newport Department of Communities and Local Government. (2007). Topics Retrieved 3 April, 2009, from <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/Download1.do>



**Figure 6.4: Deprivation levels according to IMD and commercial food retail presence around Tottenham Food Coop**



Source: Author, 2011 based on author's census of stores conducted August 2009, Map Data © Open Street Map contributors, CC-BY-SA (<http://www.openstreetmap>, <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>), and 2007 IMD data from Department of Communities and Local Government retrieved April 2009 from <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/>

Figure 6.5: Aerial view of Broadwater Farm Estate and Lordship Recreation Ground, with inset of gardening plots



Source: Author, 2010 (inset photo); Author, 2011 using Google Map

**Table 6.5: Commercial food stores within 500 meters of Tottenham Food Coop**

Store type	Examples	Quantity
Independent store selling green produce	Ethnic grocery stores, convenience stores	4
National supermarket	Tesco, Morrisons, Marks and Spencer	0
Independent specialty store not selling green produce	Health food stores, bakeries	0
Eat-in and takeaway	Cafes, restaurants, pubs, fast-food outlets	4
Liquor store	Food and wine, off-license	2

Source: Author, 2009

It is within this context that the estate became a site for an organic food coop that was spearheaded by a volunteer in a local sustainability network called Sustainable Haringey. According to the group's website, Sustainable Haringey arose from the dissolution of the Local Agenda 21 (LA21) group, which for 15 years had worked on spreading awareness about sustainability issues and lobbied the council to adopt more sustainable practices (Sustainable Haringey, 2011b). In 2006, members of two organizations, the Haringey Federation of Residents Associations and the Haringey Allotments Forum went to an LA21 meeting intending to join, but found that the group was proposing to dissolve. Instead, those present decided to suspend LA21 activities and convene a conference to explore the possibility of starting a new network. A few organizations organized a public conference held in March 2007, which over 100 residents from nearly 50 local organizations agreed to form Sustainable Haringey network, "an independent informal network for everybody wanting to make Haringey more sustainable" (Sustainable Haringey, 2011c). At the group's founding, the following statement was agreed upon as the group's mandate:

We support the development of a Sustainable Haringey network. The network will promote and encourage:

- sustainable energy policies in all areas of society (including reduced general usage, and maximum use of renewable, non-fossil fuels and self-generated sources)
- reduced consumption and waste, and the maximum re-usage and recycling
- sustainable travel (including more walking and cycling, better public transport and less motorised traffic)
- local production of food and other necessary goods and services and appropriate allocation and sharing of limited resources
- protection and improvements to green spaces and natural habitats
- strong local communities, community spirit and mutual aid
- decision-making based on the maximum involvement of people, and on the long term needs of our communities and the environment

(Sustainable Haringey, 2011a)

Sustainable Haringey consisted of several working groups covering areas such as food, energy, and ‘re-skilling’ or skills-sharing, each of which operated autonomously, making decisions independently of the overall Sustainable Haringey group.

Hannah was involved with the Sustainable Haringey Food Group and proposed the idea of starting a food cooperative; Back to Earth, another organization that was part of the Sustainable Haringey network, offered a way of pursuing this. Hannah elaborated on the process:

[H] I suppose the coop was basically my idea, mainly my idea, and um what I had in mind was you know it was a way of using opportunities, which developed out of the Back to Earth project, to pursue some of the aims of the Sustainable Haringey Food Group...So basically I was keen to um start something that did that and uh I sort of cast around through other people in the Sustainable Haringey Food Group initial volunteers, and um, I didn't realize when I started just how much responsibility I was taking on. I thought that we would evolve quite rapidly into being a cooperative coop, um in which you know people shared responsibility perhaps somewhat more than they actually do at the moment. And I think one of the issues that's come up about how that worked was-because it came out of the sort of aims and ambitions of Sustainable Haringey on the one hand and Back to Earth on the other, it was to some, well to very much an extent really a top-down thing, and you know it wasn't like some places where a coop emerged spontaneously from a residents association saying basically there's no reasonably priced food around here.

I mean we were trying to do something different from the beginning, we were really trying to um inject a new dimension into food retailing in the local area, namely, local sourcing from British and preferably from farmers nearer to London. And secondly, trying to incorporate the produce of local community gardens and allotments into that circuit. And thirdly trying to introduce a basically low income community to organic food at prices which we hoped they could afford, and so, really we were putting forward an ideal that wasn't present in the heads of a lot of the would-be customers. And so I think, you know that's why, it hasn't been sort of local resident based from the estate and the nearby areas that one might have got elsewhere.

[SK] You were saying that the idea was to bring sustainable food to a lower income area- was it always in your mind to do it on a housing estate, or is that because-

[H] No, the thing was that Back to Earth emerged as the organization with commissioned by the council to develop various ecological projects in the adjoining park, and in due course, to revive the community centre by having food-related activities. So I mean the community centre has this vast space including a functioning kitchen, which was very little used because they never had enough revenue funding to employ staff to use it.

Ian, one of two employees at Back to Earth, explained the decision of setting up the coop at the community center from the perspective of Back to Earth:

Back to Earth is based at the Broadwater Farm Community Centre, um and from our base there, we've got access to the cold store, and the jazz café. Which, they're not Back to Earth property, they belong to the Community Center, but we have use of them, and it's I think it's was thought that that was a good base for the coop because you could store the food in the store, and the actual coop itself could be held in the jazz café. And also because the Community Centre's a kind of neutral location for the community, it means that it means that it's the kind of centre to work from and it can develop there, it's not someone's house.

The coop, then, emerged as a way of furthering the goals of two organizations oriented around environmental sustainability through the use of existing resources. The presence of a storage area and community café, which could buy some produce from the coop,

offered advantages to basing the coop at the community center. From Hannah's comments, it is evident that part of the reasoning has traces of what Guthman (2008a) refers to as "bringing good food to others". Notably, the two staff members comprising Back to Earth were white men, and Hannah was a retired white academic researcher.

### **Organizational Structure**

Tottenham Food Coop was a project of Back to Earth, and closely linked to another project at the Broadwater Farm Community Centre, a community café. In addition to individual members of Sustainable Haringey Food Group, Back to Earth staff helped with the running of the coop. Initially, people could join the coop for £3 a year, which also conferred a 10 percent discount on purchases. However, after one year, the coop decided not to ask for renewal of membership fees due to fear of turning people off. Meetings about the coop were attended by volunteers staffing the coop and the two employees of Back to Earth, with decisions meant to be agreed upon collectively. There was one occasion where the director of Back to Earth decided to order produce from a different supplier who obtained some citrus fruits from Europe; this resulted in some tension due to the collective decision from the outset to source from within the region, but the issue was resolved at another meeting.

In addition, Back to Earth was developing community food growing spaces elsewhere in the borough, and was commissioned by the council to develop urban agriculture on the Lordship Recreation Ground that was located next to the community center. In the interview excerpt below, Ian describes the vision of food activities as a means of revitalizing the under-used community center:

The other project that we've got is the community café, which is run from the café the kitchen at the community centre, and every Friday of the month, sorry, every

Friday every week, we have people who cook from all the different communities around Tottenham, so we've had lots of different styles of cookery, and we normally get about 30 to 40 people in to eat, and the idea is that we give them a big, healthy lunch, 3.50 for two courses, and there's usually about 6 dishes cooked, so there's quite a varied menu on, and also, when we get this food grant, we're hoping that the café and the coop will be run in much closer harmony, so that the café will be buying most of its ingredients like onions, potatoes, and kind of core vegetables from the coop, to give the coop a source of income and the person who would be in charge of the café would also help in buying the produce from the coop, cuz we think this would reduce wastage...

The other big Back to Earth remit is that we are, I think Back to Earth is called an environmental regeneration strategy or agency, and a lot of our work revolves around community gardening or building cuz again we're just in the process of setting it up. We've got two, no three allotments at the Crighton Rd allotment site, just up the road from White Heart Lane...and they've been massively overgrown, and we've just about managed all the overgrowth and we're just at the stage where we're getting raised beds built. But they are really big if you garden, anyone from the local area will be encouraged and supported to come and garden and learn how to plant things and grow their own fruit and vegetables and hopefully to take the knowledge that they've learned and use it at other places around Tottenham or London. And also we've got a remit, as part of the regeneration of Lordship Rec, which is just off the community center, we've got a remit to kind of garden and transform the green space which is around the community center, which at the minute are really just grass and nobody does anything there and they're kind of not functioning and not very well used, but that and that's where my role comes in really because as Volunteer Coordinator, I need to go out to the community and stress the benefits of growing your own food and getting involved with gardening and kind of horticulture and green issues and try and encourage them to kind of come and help transform the garden. Cuz the idea is it's done for and by the local community and there'll be food growing spaces as well. So we hope to actually have this well, next year, next couple of years, produce being produced at Broadwater Farm Community Centre for the use of the estate and local community really.

Although Back to Earth was not successful in getting a grant that would fund some of these activities, the community café had taken off and was quite successful. In addition, plots for food growing had started in the land adjacent to the community center in 2010 (see Figure 6.5, p. 207).

## **Volunteers**

Tottenham Food Coop was intended to be completely run by volunteers, and for the most part, this was the case. Ian would sometimes have to help volunteers with setting up the stalls, but volunteers almost always placed the orders for produce and staffed the stall. About three or four volunteers would be on hand to weigh the items, calculate the bills, and handle the money, but Hannah tended to oversee the operation and voiced frustration at being one of a few volunteers with organizational experience:

It's also fallen very much to people who are otherwise, what shall I say, um political and community activists to take the thing forward, with the help of a number of people who have come to volunteering because basically they have other problems in their life, either they can't find work or they're on disability benefits or whatever. And you know some of those people actually have significant issues about participatory activity. And others of them, well I suppose the bulk of the people in that category have very little organizational experience of any kind. So, that then sort of places a considerable burden on the activists if you like, which is why I suppose I've found myself still after a year and a bit in a position of rather more responsibility than I actually wanted.

Indeed, one of the regular volunteers was an elderly woman with a physical handicap. Her role was to recruit people to join the coop through membership. During my visits to the coop, I noticed that she frequently passed up opportunities to tell customers and potential customers about the membership. One of the few men and ethnic minorities involved was originally from the West Indies and had started volunteering at various food-related projects in the borough during a period of unemployment. However, I did not see him regularly; Hannah and a few other women formed the core group staffing the coop from a group of about 15 active volunteers, and some help from Back to Earth staff



(see Image 6.8, p. 216). In contrast to Fareshares, the volunteers at Tottenham Food Coop came from within the borough of Haringey.

From my observations, I could see that the volunteers were overwhelmed and often not adequately organized; often pricing was not arranged when customers started coming. Hannah seemed to carry most of the responsibility, but she was involved in several activities- she was active in the local Green Party; was an officer in the local Allotment Association; and was involved in several progressive movements. Ultimately, the challenge of having committed volunteers led to the closure of the coop in December 2010, with the possibility of restarting if Back to Earth was able to fund staff that could work on the coop. Inadequate volunteer labor contributed to monthly sales-a frequency that resulted in inconsistent patronage; this combined with the history of the community center resulted in inconsistent patronage. Regarding the context in which the coop closed, Hannah asserted, “the Council cuts have given loads of extra work to voluntary sector staff and political activists, so nobody has even as much time as they had before, we are running to stand still with loads of additional protesting, lobbying and fund-searching to do.” Her comment speaks to the broader context of changes in the political process that impacted the resources volunteers could give to the coop in terms of their time and energy.

### **Food Sourcing**

As Hannah explained above, Tottenham Food Coop framed its work around localization and organic food and a cooperative work ethic; this was also reflected in its publicity material-

A non-profit food market based on volunteer labour and sustainable food:-  
- organic dry goods like beans, rice, couscous, flour and dried fruit, at wholesale

prices

- a place to buy and sell or share fruit and veg from your garden or allotment
- good value fresh organic fruit and veg; some from organic farms, some from local gardens and allotments (cut those food miles !)

(Sustainable Haringey, 2010)

The staff elaborated on where the food was sourced and aspirations to source more of the produce from within the borough:

What happens is that there's two and possibly three organic farms where we source the majority of the fruit and vegetables and they deliver it once a week if you put in an order, and I think that they're brought in a large lorry I think they bring a van absolutely loaded with vegetables to people all over London. But we're part of that delivery. We see that that's kind of reducing food miles, because the van would be coming into London anyway, and thus we add what three, four crates to each delivery. We're also hoping in the future, hasn't really happened this year, I think from next year we're going to make a real effort to reach out to all of the local allotments, and local food growers around Tottenham, and hope to pay them a good rate for locally grown stuff, which will kind of supply our order. In theory, we'd like that as much as possible to go on. That seems like a- it seems better than bringing in from Tottenham, sorry not Tottenham, bringing in from Essex and outside of London.

[SK] I noticed that there were some produce donations there at the last one, but there was only a small amount so it was designated for members only.

[J] Yeah, and I think I think Tom has grown rocket seedlings, and he actually gave them out to all the people who were there at the last one. There's a certain amount of swapping and kind of unofficial trade, but that's probably off the record mainly for the members most often, but after that probably isn't official enough to go down in how the coop is run.

These ideas reflect the food sovereignty principles of supporting local producers and ecological production.

**Image 6.8: Volunteers at the Tottenham Food Coop stall**



Source: Author, 2010

Figure 6.6 (p. 218) shows the areas where the farms that provided the bulk of the produce were located. The donations from the private and community gardeners were not consistent or in large enough quantities to supply much of the produce for sales and so were first given to dues-paying members of the coop. Like Fareshares, Tottenham Food Coop also sold dried foods obtained from other cooperative suppliers and Fairtrade items from Zaytoun further demonstrating the food sovereignty principles of fair compensation.

### **Food Sovereignty Principles**

Tottenham Food Coop's work covered all of the themes, which related to aspects of the following food sovereignty principles: right to healthy, affordable food; supporting small-scale, local producers; fair compensation; and democratic process (see Table 6.6, p. 217). However, it did not address diversity both in terms of food and representation from local residents in the running of the coop, the latter of which limited the democratic process.

**Table 6.6: Themes and examples in Tottenham Food Coop**

Theme	Examples
Affordability	✓ Low mark-up; use of volunteers
Health	✓ Facilitating healthy diet
Community	✓ Volunteering and social interactions; development of community food growing projects; use of community spaces
Environment	✓ Development of food growing project with no synthetic inputs; local/regional food, so less food miles
Justice	✓ Making organic food more accessible economically; just trade-local produce and Fairtrade items
Economy/Skills	✓ Using only regional farmers and other cooperatives as suppliers

## Customers

Based on interviews with customers and coop staff, it was clear that few residents at Broadwater Farm Estate shopped at the coop. Of the eight coop customers I interviewed, only one was from Broadwater Farm Estate, and coop staff confirmed that most of the customers were not from the estate. Three of these customers were black- one from Africa and two were British-born, and the rest were white. However, in my observations of the coop over about 12 hours on different days, I rarely saw non-white customers; and one of the two black customers I interviewed I saw on three separate occasions. Unlike Fareshares, customers came from relatively nearby- not from across the city. As with Fareshares, the customers found out about the coop through networking around sustainability concerns, although in this case, the networking occurred through publicity efforts of the coop rather than loosely by word-of-mouth. Two of the customers found out about the coop through subscription in the Sustainable Haringey email list; one was on the email list of Freecycle- an online group where members can

post items that they want to give away or items they are seeking; the remainder found out about it at fairs in the borough. Only two of the customers held jobs – one woman worked as a corporate trainer and one woman was self-employed as a graphic designer; three were pensioners; two were unemployed; and two were stay-at-home mothers. Average customer spending was £8, with an average of 25 customers per week, but according to volunteers, more customers came on Fridays than Saturdays.

**Figure 6.6: Map of England counties showing locations of Tottenham Food Coop and its fresh produce suppliers**



Source: Author, 2011 using map from Pictures of England. (2011). County Map of England Retrieved 11 February, 2011, from <http://www.picturesofengland.com/mapofengland/counties-map.html>

Most of the customers claimed to live within a 15 minute walking distance, but two had taken a bus to the coop, and one had come by car. Four customers explicitly mentioned dissatisfaction with the food stores in the area because no stores sold local, organic produce, and an anti-supermarket sentiment was evident. As an elderly woman stated, “The fruit and things you buy at the supermarkets, you don’t really know how long they’ve been there. You know, they’ve traveled halfway around the world before you get them sometimes. Things like apples.” Another customer stated about shopping there, “The most important thing is the access to fresh, UK-produced organic vegetables, that’s the sort of top thing...I’ll come and buy my stuff here rather than in local supermarkets, and yeah, I’d rather buy UK sourced food than Spain or even the US, which they have in the big supermarkets.” A young black woman with mobility problems appreciated the accessibility:

cuz I’ve got mobility problems, something like this is great. It’s local. Cuz to get stuff like this, I’d have to order it online and spend a fortune on delivery charges. And we can come and choose come and choose and actually get involved with what you’re buying- she said it came an hour ago, and it’s brilliant. I can’t just walk to a fashionable part of town and get this stuff as easily as anyone else.

She had learned of the coop through a post on Freecycle, which she was a member of.

Two of the customers mentioned social aspects in addition to the desire for fresh, local food as the reason for shopping there:

I think it agrees with my philosophy of life... but also I want to have some fresh food. The sense of community here, people try to do stuff together, and just meeting people with the same kind of outlook and..that’s what it is.

- an Eastern European customer, who sometimes volunteered

The thing I like about is that it’s being done by local people, and it is an encouragement to me to see that local people can come together, and organize

things like growing food, and selling them, and these are food which I always find are organic, have no pesticides in them, I think it's a good idea.  
- an African customer and member of Sustainable Haringey

Three customers grew their own food; one had an allotment that yielded enough to supply her family during the summer. Another customer also obtained food from Abel and Cole, a national organic box scheme that provided home delivery. Because of the infrequency of the coop sales, only a couple who lived on the estate shopped there regularly. The frequency of coop sales was the issue that three people wanted to see change; although one of these customers noted, "but with just volunteers, it's brilliant." One customer, a Sustainable Haringey member who was also involved in cooking at the community café, wanted to see more of the coops throughout the borough. She was an African woman who lived further away and drove, and she found the location inconvenient for her.

The food coop only operated on the last Friday and Saturday of each month, but Back to Earth also provided space for a community café that operated every Friday. The café drew a more diverse group of people; people of different ethnicities cooked the food each week usually there was a mixture of Turkish, African, and Caribbean dishes. Café customers also seemed to be people who worked at the community center, and young mothers and pensioners who lived off the estate. Ian felt there was a lack of awareness among estate residents, which he attributed to a language barrier:

Well we've put up fliers and posters around the estate and the community center in the days preceding the coop, but they're only in English, so we're conscious of the fact that we need to translate, having publicity translated into different languages and going on more emailing lists and more of an internet presence, people thought that was key to getting it to work.

Unlike Hannah, who felt that the top-down process of starting a sustainable food project on a housing estate explained the low participation of estate residents, Ian felt that better publicity on the estate was a key factor.

Among the customers, there was also evidence of ideals central to the food sovereignty paradigm. These included the opposition toward supermarkets; commitment to sustainable agriculture; and support of small-scale and local producers. As with Fareshares, the customers discovered the coop through networks centered around sustainability and the vast majority of customers came from beyond the immediate environs of the housing estate. Although the coop's work demonstrated some of the principles of food sovereignty, its limited connection to networks beyond those pertaining to sustainability restricted recruitment of people as regular customers.

## **CONCLUSION**

The case studies suggest that organic coops tended to serve people who actively searched for community food projects, learned of them through informal social networks based on other related interests such as health, or learned of them through participation in formal social networks involving environment or food related activities. Customers traveled from other areas, drawn to the unique shopping experience and the low cost of organic produce, and through networks of people. However, Tottenham Food Coop proved less resilient than Fareshares; different factors may have contributed to its difficulty in this regard. Tottenham Food Coop was not started by residents of the estate, and it started during the financial crisis in 2008 on a monthly, rather than weekly, basis. Conversely, Fareshares was started by residents of an estate for their own use on a



weekly basis, and had incorporated both demand and the labor needed to sustain it in the years before it became more widely-known. By the time it was forced to pay rent, Fareshares had established a strong foundation. When the founders moved outside of the area, Fareshares had come to serve a community based on ideology that had developed through informal social networks.

The people from Back to Earth and Sustainable Haringey involved in starting Tottenham Food Coop did so anticipating a) estate residents would increasingly use it, and b) more people from Sustainable Haringey would become active in its management. When both recruitment of estate residents and mobilization of volunteers—a key resource—failed to meet expectations, maintaining it became difficult and the collective decided to end the project. The monthly coop sales - reflecting the volunteer labor available - contributed to lack of consistent customers and sales volume. While a Fareshares volunteer felt that there was more demand for volunteering opportunities than could be fulfilled – because of over involvement by some individuals – Tottenham Food Coop had the opposite problem. A few individuals felt burdened with work that they expected to become distributed among more volunteers. Because the community center remained underused by adult residents of the estate, the coop was unlikely to draw people from the estate as customers or volunteers; whether the situation would be different if the coop included ethnically relevant produce or had more involvement from estate residents in its management is difficult to ascertain.

In relation to the food sovereignty paradigm, both initiatives applied principles of the model such as ecological and small-scale production; just trade; and democratic process. However, both stood to benefit from applying food sovereignty as an

overarching concept, which would entail greater consciousness about the role of different voices in democratic processes. This is particularly evident, in the case of Tottenham Food Coop, which sought to bring good food to a low income estate and acknowledged its failure in not having any involvement from estate residents in the planning stage or afterward. With the application of the food sovereignty model – and thus, involvement of estate residents, the concept of food sovereignty is likely to have increased the mobilization potential of the coop even if using the same food sourcing criteria. Moreover, the involvement of estate residents would have been likely to draw people in their networks. In a similar manner, given that the low income communities in the vicinity of Fareshares were not using it, the food sovereignty model may have helped Fareshares in its objective of bringing “good food for the community at affordable prices in the belief that decent food is a basic necessity for health, regardless of means” (Fareshares, 2010).

## **CHAPTER 7 – SYNTHESIS OF CASE STUDIES**

In this chapter, I summarize the findings from the four case studies according to structural characteristics and networks and the micromobilization processes linking them. As stated previously, McAdam (2003) emphasizes that structural resources and political opportunities alone cannot mobilize participation; he asserts that cultural or interpretive work is required in order to bring movement activity in accord with an individual's identity. Networks of formal or informal social ties often serve as vehicles for individual participation, but the success of this depends on framing processes. In addition to these aspects, I discuss the spatial context that influences networks and social ties and how these various concepts relate to the application of food sovereignty principles.

### **STRUCTURAL**

#### **Organizational Structures**

All four coops emerged from existing organizations that served as mobilizing structures, however the extent to which they were able to draw participation varied. The two coops that started as an idea of an individual not from the immediate community that was then taken up by a community organization proved less resilient than the two coops that incorporated local residents' ideas from the beginning (see Table 7.1, p. 233). Fareshares was entirely started by local residents acting collectively, while GCFC's Ferrier Coop involved a community needs assessment and local residents always participated in the management committee. Both of these structures had residents of the immediate neighborhood as part of the initiation, but GCFC emerged through the

facilitation of formal organizations whereas Fareshares was organized by an informal group of residents. Although Tottenham Food Coop started as a project of an organization based at Broadwater Farm Estate, and used a collective decision-making structure after starting up, it nonetheless started with no input from the residents of Broadwater Farm Estate, and did not get such input after initiation. St. Hilda's East Community Centre started a food coop at the suggestion of an American volunteer, again not obtaining input from residents from the immediate neighborhood.

According to social movement theory, mobilizing structures can draw people to participate in movements through their position as nodes linked to networks of people, and mobilization potential refers to the population who hold a positive view of the social movement's goals (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987; McAdam, 2003; McAdam & Paulsen, 1993). Some portion of the population outside of the mobilization potential can become part of the mobilization potential through various means including cultural, interpretive work, and people in the mobilization potential are more likely to participate in movement activity if the object of targeting by the movement (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987). Applying this to the CFIs, only GCFC seemed to have a clearly identified mobilization potential, and largely succeeded in drawing adequate participation from this group. As the Ferrier Coop illustrated, although all the residents did not shop at the coop every week, many residents used it periodically, and a sufficient number used it regularly. In contrast in the remaining three CFIs, there was some discrepancy between stated objectives about who they were targeting, and who they actually recruited. St. Hilda's East sought to draw residents of a nearby housing estate, but instead drew center users who were not from that estate. Similarly, Tottenham Food Coop sought to draw

the residents of the estate the coop operated from as well as people more generally, but also did not employ any cultural, interpretive work to cultivate alignment between itself and different groups in the mobilization potential.

### **Funding and Labor**

Mobilizing structures, mentioned above, comprise one type of resource through which social movement activity develops. Other types of resources, which may be drawn upon through mobilizing structures- include labor, material things e.g.- facilities or funding, and legitimacy also play a part (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Aside from Fareshares, which emerged in a space linked to an ideology of autonomy, the other three coops received funding in some form. Tottenham Food Coop was funded through the resources of Back to Earth, St. Hilda's East Community Center funds its coop, and GCFC started with funding from the NHS and other sources and continued to get funding from the NHS. In addition, GCFC branched out both into other locations and into new projects, such as wholesale distribution to schools and workplaces which help to generate greater revenue. Fareshares also received donations from its customers to help cover running costs; therefore Fareshares was the only coop that generated its resources internally. All of these coops relied heavily on volunteer labor, although only Fareshares used solely volunteer labor. However, Tottenham Food Coop is the only initiative that had a problem with volunteer labor; the expectation that more people would become involved in running the coop did not materialize which partially contributed to the collapse of the coop. Tottenham Food Coop may have lacked legitimacy in the context it was situated in –as suggested by the lack of participation from even people who were using the community café in the same space.

## **Spatial Context**

In terms of spatial context, two of the CFIs were located on low income housing estates with large numbers of ethnic minority residents, but GCFC specifically sited coops in areas lacking stores selling fresh produce, whereas Tottenham Food Coop started the coop on the estate to take advantage of opportunities presented by another organization in terms of operating and storage space (See Table 7.1, p. 233). The location of Ferrier Coop and Tottenham Food Coop on low income housing estates corresponded to the ranking of these areas among the most deprived in the UK. As such, the setup of Ferrier Coop matched the needs and preferences of the local residents – largely because they were involved in starting it.

Tottenham Food Coop and St. Hilda's East Food Coops-the two less resilient ones, were based inside community centers. Greenwich Community Food Coop only set up stalls outdoors, and Fareshares operated permanent storefront space-albeit tucked away at the end of a residential street. The GCFC stalls were very visible, and this was the main way that people learned about the coops and started shopping there; in my own observations, there was a high turnout even during inclement weather. The decision to have outdoor stalls was itself a result of input from the community through needs assessments. Fareshares' location was not so visible, which may partially explain the relatively low numbers of customers from the immediate vicinity of the coop; however, once people found the place, they seemed to become committed customers and shopped there regularly. It is impossible to speculate whether the location of Fareshares and Tottenham Food Coop in a higher traffic area of the same LSOA would have drawn more of the diverse constituents of the communities.

## NETWORKS

As mentioned previously, networks – both formal and informal- can serve as channels of mobilization into movement activity. Two main conditions contribute to this effect; social costs incurred by not participating when one’s significant social ties are, and shared identity of constituents of a network eg-interest in sustainability or antagonism to supermarkets that can align with social movement activity (McAdam & Paulsen, 1993). The findings here suggest that customers of the two organic CFIs came to learn of the coops through informal networks based on social ties in the case of Fareshares, or formal networks in the case of Tottenham Food Coop. Fareshares customers tended to learn of the coop through a friend who already shopped or volunteered there, and most of the customers interviewed had a strong anti-supermarket sentiment. Tottenham Food Coop customers also strongly supported small, local food projects and stores rather than supermarkets – which increasingly stock locally sourced produce, but the customers generally found out about the coop through membership in email lists or attendance at events pertaining to sustainability. Although Tottenham Food Coop had an objective of bringing sustainable food to a low income housing estate, it did not succeed in linking into networks on the estate, and the history of underutilization of the community center meant that most residents did not use it and could not learn of it by visiting the center. Thus, it also failed to recruit people locally to help in running the coop, which resulted in low frequency of sales days, which in turn may have resulted in unsuccessful recruitment of customers who may have shopped if the coop ran more often. In contrast, the customers of St. Hilda’s East and Ferrier Coop learned of the coops through the newspaper or visits to the community center in the case of St. Hilda’s East, or seeing it in

the case of Ferrier Coop. This, combined with the fact that the organic coops drew comparatively fewer customers from their immediate neighborhoods indicates that they were communities of interest more than communities of location. They also tended to draw mostly middle class people despite the intent to make organic food accessible to all.

At the organizational level, three of the case study coops showed evidence of links to other food projects. Tottenham Food Coop used the publicity materials of Growing Communities at its stall and used other cooperatives for its dried food supply. Fareshares also used other cooperatives for its food supply, and St. Hilda's East obtained its food through CFE. These practices indicate solidarity and resource mobilization between these coops and with other cooperatives, but as the survey of initiatives indicated, most initiatives did not have working relationships with other coops.

#### **FRAMING**

As reviewed earlier, social movements use framing processes to identify a problem; agree on who or what is responsible for it; and to motivate action to change the situation (d'Anjou, 1996, p. 55). Particularly for coops based in residential housing estates, alignment with the values of the immediate community proved important for recruiting customers. In the case of Tottenham Food Coop, the failure to tap into existing networks on the estate, the use of English-only publicity, and the presence of only white staff and mostly white customers from outside the estate created a cultural mismatch. Discursively, it used the framing of sustainable food and localization, but its practice of applying a small mark-up to make the food as affordable as possible indicated a right to food frame (see Tables 7.1 and 7.2, pp. 233-234). It is possible that Tottenham Food Coop may have been more viable if it set up at a different location rather than inside a



structure in the middle of a vast housing estate, or if it had recruited residents of the estate to help develop the coop in a way that would retain the ethos driving the coop while aligning it with the multicultural identity of the estate. Both organic coops framed their work in a way that did not resonate with existing residents of the immediate neighborhoods – white or other – although this was not the situation for Fareshares when it started. The ethnic minority customers who were shopping at the coops during this study already had an identity aligned with that of the coops. Besides the discursive practices, the types of foods stocked also contributed to the framing effect, and both organic coops did not stock fresh produce from continental Europe, much less exotic produce; doing so would dilute the principle of sourcing food as locally as possible.

It is not impossible for frame bridging or frame extension to occur in community food projects, but the likelihood of these processes in such projects may be partially contingent upon political opportunities and structural factors. Although there were links between some of the coops in London, there seems to have been limited diffusion of knowledge and information among the coops. Most coops knew of Growing Communities and CFE, but others – and any innovative practices they may use – were less known at the time of this study. Consequently, very little cross-fertilization of ideas occurred between coops focused more on sustainability and those focused more on basic food access. In addition, greater resources from local government in the form of policies and programs facilitating community food projects and engagement with ethnic minority communities may have allowed for bridging health or food access frames with more sustainability oriented frames.

## CONCLUSION

Through the various themes that emerged from the work of CFIs in this study, several aspects of the food sovereignty paradigm were demonstrated (See Table 7.3, p. 235). These included democratic process and citizens' control over food; ecological production; just trade and fair compensation; access to public land; opposition to inequality and oppression; and valuing of diverse cultures, foods, and ways of organizing. However, the food sovereignty model itself is quite inclusive and has broad resonance as demonstrated in its movement from the global South to application in the US. As such, the use of the overarching food sovereignty framework may help CFIs tap into more of their sympathizers while retaining their underlying ethos.

The study reveals that a number of factors contribute to coops resilience, their ability to meet their own objectives, and their resonance for potential customers. The presence of other food stores in the area, the visibility of the coop, local residents' involvement in coordinating it, and resonance of coop framing with the identities of local residents influenced the types of people participating in all four case study CFIs. The salience of the coops' framing and ethos to residents of the immediate community seemed to be important in establishing a foundation of regular customers. Even though the local residents who had started Fareshares eventually moved on, by then the coop seemed to have generated a following around London by informal social ties based on interest in sustainable food and cooperative projects. Although both organic coops had an intention of making organic food more accessible to low income people, such people did not comprise most of the regular customers. Essentially, despite their intentions and the use of social innovations to keep prices low, the organic coops seemed to become

associated with mostly white, middle class customers as has generally been found with farmers markets and CSA. It reinforces the idea from social movement theorists that resources alone – skilled people, physical infrastructure, and funding, cannot elicit participation without some alignment with a salient identity of potential participants. Such alignment can occur through framing processes; the way the CFI operates-in terms of food choices, operating hours, or location; or connections to other groups or organizations.

The food sovereignty model provides both a cultural, interpretive tool linking people in Northern urban communities to global efforts to reassert people's control over their food and to resources via a growing body of knowledge and experiences from around the world. This universality can potentially help forge cultural resonance of CFIs' work with both ethnic minorities and white citizens in London and other Northern cities. As such, its potential utility to the goals of the CFIs in this study has yet to be realized. An additional potential means of resonance is the parallel with the Diggers, a well-known movement in England's history that advocated for the right of poor people to common land, and that has been hailed in contemporary movements in England.

**Table 7.1: Comparison of characteristics across case studies**

Characteristic	GCFC (conventional)	St. Hilda's East (conventional)	Fareshares (organic)	Tottenham Food Coop (organic)
<b>Start-up</b>				
Year Started	2002	2004	1988	2008
One individual's idea	No	Yes	No	Yes
Local residents involvement in initiation	Yes	No	Yes	No
NHS/PCT involvement in initiation	Yes	No	No	No
Non-profit organization involvement in initiation	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Operational Context</b>				
Physical location	Outdoor stalls various locations – schools, housing estates, church	Inside St. Hilda's East	Inside storefront community space	Inside community center on housing estate
Operating times	Weekday daytime hours	Weekday daytime hours	Weekday daytime and evening; Saturday	Daytime Friday and Saturday
Frequency	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Monthly
Stores selling produce in vicinity	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mark-up	33%	None beyond cost recovery	10-15%	10% (none for members)
Ave. no. customers/week*	115 (across all sites)	50	40	25
Ave. customer spending/session	£4	£5	£16	£8
<b>Socio-economic Context</b>				
Social location of customers	Mostly low-income	Mostly low income	Mostly middle class	Mixed
Where customers come from	From housing estate	Community center users; not from immediate neighborhood	From various parts of London; few from immediate neighborhood	Within walking distance, but not from the housing estate
Ethnicity of customers	Mostly African	Bangladeshi; African; Caribbean	Mostly white and some black -who were not recent immigrants	Mostly white, some black
Social location of volunteers	Mostly low income	Mostly low income	Mostly middle class	Mostly middle class

\* For Tottenham Food Coop this was average per the Friday/Saturday period it operated once a month.

Source: Author, 2011-based on data collected 2009-2010

**Table 7.2: Specific frames used by case study CFIs \***

Frame	GCFC	St. Hilda's East	Fareshares	Tottenham Food Coop
Human rights/food access	1	-	1	1-but lesser priority
Health	1	1	1	-
Localization	2	2	1	1
Environmental sustainability	-	2	1	1
Collective Action	-	-	1	1-through use of Growing Communities material
Cooperative work	1	-	1	1

\*1= initial framing 2-framing added later

**Table 7.3: Themes and examples across case study initiatives**

	Affordability	Health	Community	Environment	Justice	Economy/Skills
GCFC	Targeting low income areas; low mark-up; use of volunteers	Facilitating healthy diet	Volunteering and social interactions; development of community food growing projects; use of community spaces	Development of food growing project with no synthetic inputs; use of regional produce reduces food miles	Making healthy food more accessible physically and economically; fairness in trade/prices for producers	Using regional suppliers-contributing to local economy
St. Hilda's East	Zero mark-up; use of volunteers	Promoting healthy eating	Volunteering and social interactions; use of community space	Obtaining regional produce (via CFE); re-usable bags; later encouraging people to get involved in sustainable food	Making healthy food more accessible physically and economically	Using regional farmers as suppliers of non-exotic produce; working with another cooperative (upon relaunching coop)
Fareshares	Low mark-up; use of volunteers	Selling healthy foods-including no items with sugar	Volunteering and social interactions	Regional and local suppliers to reduce food miles; organic produce	Making healthy food more accessible physically and economically; just trade-sourcing products from worker cooperatives, using Fairtrade and local producers; publicizing events pertaining to other issues eg- gentrification	Using cooperatives and regional farmers as suppliers; free schools for skills-sharing
Tottenham Food Coop	Low mark-up; use of volunteers	Selling healthy foods	Volunteering and social interactions; development of community food growing projects; use of community spaces	Development of food growing project with no synthetic inputs; local/regional food, so less food miles	Making organic food more accessible economically; just trade-local produce and Fairtrade items	Using only regional farmers and other cooperatives as suppliers

## **CHAPTER 8 - CONCLUSION**

This dissertation studied an under-researched type of community food initiative- those that regularly sell fresh produce in urban settings- to assess whether food sovereignty principles were applicable to the context these projects operated in. In addition to this empirical contribution, it applied social movement theory to entities long associated with food movements, but which had rarely been analyzed as such. The study shows that although community food initiatives demonstrate varying degrees of convergence with food sovereignty principles, few applied the concept completely; this may be due to the lack of a food sovereignty network or alliance. Below, I outline the key findings and implications and conclude with limitations of this study.

### **FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS**

The CFIs' work reflected principles of the food sovereignty paradigm, even though food sovereignty was in its infancy as an organized movement in Britain and Europe. When examining all of the initiatives operating in London, several themes were apparent in the initiatives' work; these ranged from improving access to healthy or sustainable food to the development of skills and livelihoods. Aspects of these themes corresponded to principles of the food sovereignty paradigm, but the extent to which these were reflected in initiatives' work varied widely. The case studies suggest that initiatives with a strong focus on localization and environmental sustainability seem to draw people through informal or formal networks pertaining to that interest, while CFIs focused on food access and health promotion seem to be communities of location, where

customers are already linked to the site of the initiative. As seen in the case studies, this resulted in patronage of organic CFIs by mostly middle class whites and middle class ethnic minorities interested in sustainable food and unconventional means of distribution, with little participation from people from the immediate neighborhood of the CFIs, which included significant concentrations of immigrants. As some scholars have found in the US, a localization-centeredness can code CFI space as white and middle class, even if it is physically contained within a larger space that includes a multicultural, low-cost community café –as was the case in Tottenham Food Coop (Guthman, 2008a, 2008c; R. Slocum, 2007). Another important finding was the limitation of the democratic process in terms of which citizens were involved in or represented in the coop’s management and thus decision making, and the contradiction that sometimes existed between principles eg-citizens’ decision-making and opposition to MNCs.

The involvement of the NHS in several coops demonstrates the political processes underway during the time that most of the CFIs emerged, which encouraged the development of civil-society based action to tackle social and environmental problems. This strategy ascended under the Blair administration and at the time of writing, the Conservative-led coalition planned an expansion of civil-society activity under the ‘Big Society’ program. At the same time as encouraging organizations in the social economy, the Conservative-led coalition government announced cuts averaging 19 percent across government departments, with local councils set to see cuts of 7.1 percent in the amount of funding they receive from the central government (BBC News, 2010). In this context, there has been broad discontent as evidenced in numerous protests against the government’s announced cuts to public spending; protests have occurred across the UK,



and a week of rioting ensued in July 2011-largely by young, unemployed men- triggered by the shooting of Mark Duggan, an unarmed black man, by police (Paton, 2011; M. Taylor, Rogers, & Lewis, 2011; Wainwright et al., 2011). Mark Duggan lived on Broadwater Farm Estate, the site of rioting in the 1980s and the location of Tottenham Food Coop, which indicates the persistence of racial tensions in that area. During the climate of unrest in Britain and other parts of Europe, the first food sovereignty forum was held for the European region. The forum, which adopted the tactics and structure of consensus-based agenda setting of the Nyelini 2007 conference, is likely to shape the nascent British and European food sovereignty movement (Iles, 2011).

While this study has shown that food initiatives are already applying principles of the food sovereignty paradigm, applying the overarching model itself may increase the mobilization potential of both conventional and organic food initiatives because the model uses less restrictive framing. Furthermore, if linked to the wider movement, access to ideas and skills in ways of organizing democratically and forging consensus may also influence how these initiatives organize, potentially broadening the customer bases of these initiatives. The food sovereignty movement transcends food and addresses land use, living wages and employment, social relations, and ecology and the environment; as it gathers momentum in Britain, multi-dimensional initiatives such as the training and skills development that a few of the initiatives are engaged in may become more commonplace. Moreover, in doing so, it may contribute to diminishing the racial/class divide that currently distinguishes various types of food initiatives. Finally, as the food sovereignty movement built alliances with other movements in the global

South, the emerging food sovereignty movement in Europe may build alliances with the movements pertaining to economic and social justice spreading across the region.

## **LIMITATIONS**

This study only examined CFIs in London, and of a specific type; thus it does not represent all variations of CFIs or even of these types of CFIs in the UK. Further study should explore such projects in other multicultural cities across the UK. In addition, the study did not survey a large number of customers because it was difficult to get a high response rate. However, a quantitative analysis would result in a better picture of the socioeconomic characteristics of CFI customers; in this study, I only asked questions that could help me approximate their social location. A related issue concerns the lack of probability sampling of the general population to study mobilization issues quantitatively. Fourth, I did not specifically ask questions pertaining to place attachment or place identity, so the dynamics of these constructs in relation to this study that I proposed were speculative. Fifth, this study did not incorporate an audit of practices among the local suppliers to CFIs or of the foreign suppliers to CFE, which has claimed to be working toward ethical trade with cooperatives in Africa. Thus, it is not known the conditions these items were produced under; the items may have been products of monoculture plantations and exotic items such as plantains have not yet received Fairtrade certification about labor conditions. Given the findings in the US of some sustainable food oriented initiatives using exploitative labor practices, it is important to interrogate the practices of the producers the CFIs are sourcing their produce from (Jarosz, 2008; Trauger, 2007). Finally, as the food sovereignty movement develops in Europe and Britain, it is possible that it will influence and be influenced by urban community food initiatives, and the

reflection of food sovereignty principles are likely to evolve further than demonstrated in initiatives at the time of this study.

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX A- INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

#### **Interview Questions - Coop Staff**

##### Information about Coop

Can you tell me how this coop came to exist?

What was the main objective of the coop when it started?

Has the objective changed over time?

How was the coop publicized initially?

What funding has it received, if any?

What other nonmonetary resources has it received?

How does it source its food?

Is it membership-based?

What is the organizational structure of the coop? (Probe-legal structure, constitution, written policies)

Does it operate at multiple sites or a single one?

Who would you say are the main customers?

Approximately how many people use the coop per session?

Approximately how much is the average expenditure per customer?

How many volunteers work for the coop?

How many employed people work for the coop?

How are decisions made?

What challenges has the coop faced, if any?

Is this coop linked to other community organizations-food or nonfood related?

### Individual Volunteer/Staff person

How far away do you live?

How do you get to the coop?

What benefits do you receive from working at the coop?

What challenges do you personally face with regard to running the coop?

How did you come to work at this coop?

How long have you been working at this coop?

Do you work as a volunteer or as a paid employee?

### Volunteering and Paid Work

Are you involved in other food projects? (Probe as volunteer or paid)

Are you involved in other community activities? (Probe as volunteer or paid)

Are you involved in any paid work?

### Food Growing

Do you grow food?

[if yes] Can you tell me about what you grow and how much your garden produces?

## **Interview Questions – Customers**

### Coop Usage

How far do you live from the coop, and how do you get here?

How long have you been using this coop?

How did you come to learn about this coop?

Why did you start using it?

How often do you get your food here?

What types of food do you get from this coop?

Approximately how much do you spend per session?

### Perceptions of Coop and Other Food Purchasing/Provision

What do you like about the coop?

Are there any changes you would like to see at the coop?

Where else do you get your food?

### Volunteering and Paid Work

Are you involved in other food projects? (Probe as volunteer or paid)

Are you involved in other community projects or organizations? (Probe as volunteer or paid)

Do you have a paid job? (If yes, probe type of work)

Does anyone else in your home work? (If yes, probe type of work)

### Food Growing

Do you grow food?

[if yes] Can you tell me about what you grow and how much your garden produces?

## **Interview Questions – Nonusers**

### Sources of Food

Can you tell me about the places or ways in which you get your food?

How far is this place (or these places) from your home?

How do you go to the place(s) where you usually get your food?

### Awareness/Use of Coop

[If relevant]-Are you aware of the food coop at \_\_\_\_\_?

[If relevant]- Do you ever use the food coop at \_\_\_\_\_?

[If relevant]- What keeps you from using it more often?

How do you feel about your options for getting food?

Are there any changes would you like to see?

### Volunteering and Paid Work

Are you involved with any community projects?

Do you have a paid job? (If yes, probe type of work)

Does anyone else in your home work? (If yes, probe type of work)

### Food Growing

Do you grow food?

[if yes] Can you tell me about what you grow and how much your garden produces?

**APPENDIX B - 77 CFI SITES IN LONDON JUNE 2009 BY BOROUGH AND CFI ORGANIZATION**

Case study sites are in bold

Camden

Calthorpe Project

Croydon

Croydon Food Coop – Croydon (2 sites)

- Shrublands Estate
- New Addington Centre

Greenwich

Greenwich Community Food Coop (11 sites)

- **Ferrier Estate**
- Horn Park
- Storkway
- Coldharbour
- Middle Park and Vista Fields
- Toy Library
- Glyndon
- Eynsham
- Age Concern
- Abbey Wood
- Thamesmead

Hackney

East London Food Access (6 sites)



- Nightingale Estate
- Haggerston
- Stamford Hill
- Granard House
- Landfield Estate
- Pembury Estate

Growing Communities (7 sites for box pickup)

- Chat's Palace
- Hackney City Farm
- The Pavilion
- Pogos Café
- Mother Earth
- Castle Climbing Centre
- Old Fire Station

Hammersmith & Fulham

St. Andrew's Church Fulham

White City Coop

Haringey

**Tottenham Food Coop**

Kensington & Chelsea

Chelsea Theatre Food Coop

Lewisham

New Cross Gate Food Coop

## Newham

Community Food Enterprise (31 sites – stationary and mobile unit sales)

- West Ham Church School
- Curwen Primary School
- Kier Hardie Primary School
- Woodgrange Infant School
- Rebecca Cheetham Nursery
- Scott Wilkie School
- Manor Primary School
- Katherine Road Community Centre
- William Davies School
- Roman Road Primary
- Star School
- Britannia Village Hall
- Winsor Park
- Forest Community Centre
- Grange School
- Beaconsfield Road
- Cranberry Hill Estate
- St. Johns Centre
- Hamilton Road
- Gosfield Road
- Stour Road

- Manser Road
- South Street
- Walden Avenue
- Marconi Road Estate
- Leyton Grange Estate
- St. Helen's Place
- Fiempton Road
- Elizabeth Court
- Liston Way
- Durning Hall
- Gateway Surgical Centre

#### Southwark

#### **Fareshares**

Aardvark Recycling – Southwark, Lambeth (box delivery only at the time)

#### Tower Hamlets

Burdett Community Centre

Hind Grove Food Coop

***St. Hilda's East Food Coop***

Whitechapel Threshold Centre

#### Waltham Forest

Organiclea (box pickup and market stall)

#### Westminster

Beethoven Centre

Westbourne Family Centre (2 sites)

- Edward Wilson Primary School
- Hallfield Primary School

## APPENDIX C – LONDON BOROUGHS

Note- Boroughs with CFIs are in bold

Inner London Boroughs	Outer London Boroughs
Camden	Barking and Dagenham
<b>Greenwich</b>	Barnet
Hackney	Bexley
Hammersmith and Fulham	Brent
Islington	Bromley
<b>Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea</b>	<b>Croydon</b>
<b>Lambeth</b>	Ealing
<b>Lewisham</b>	Haringey
<b>Southwark</b>	Harrow
<b>Tower Hamlets</b>	Havering
Wandsworth	Hillingdon
<b>Westminster</b>	Hounslow
	Kingston upon Thames
	Merton
	<b>Newham</b>
	Redbridge
	Richmond upon Thames
	Sutton
	<b>Waltham Forest</b>

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Source: London Councils. (2010). List of Inner/Outer Boroughs Retrieved 18 May, 2011 from <http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/londonfacts/londonlocalgovernment/londonboroughs.htm>

## APPENDIX D - POLICIES PERTAINING TO FOOD GROWING IN CURRENT LONDON PLAN

3.301 The inclusion of land within the Green Belt performs a valuable role in preventing urban sprawl and promoting an urban renaissance. The Green Belt also protects the openness of the land in order to prevent towns merging, safeguards the countryside and preserves historic settlements.

The use of Green Belt land should provide Londoners with access to the countryside, opportunities for outdoor recreation, protection and enhancement of attractive landscapes, the improvement of damaged and derelict land, protection and promotion of biodiversity and retention of agricultural land.

(Greater London Authority, 2008b, pp. 177-178)

### Policy 3D.18 Agriculture in London

The Mayor and boroughs should seek to encourage and support a thriving agricultural sector in London. Policies in DPDs should provide for the protection of the best and most versatile agricultural land in accordance with national guidance, and allow for appropriate projects for farm diversification and other measures to meet the needs of farming and rural business development. Such policies should be consistent with the other policies of this plan, such as having regard to sustainable development and transport, tackling climate change and the presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

(Greater London Authority, 2008b, p. 191)

3.326 The farming industry in London, as elsewhere, is suffering from decline. However 15 per cent of London's area is farmed and London's agricultural community plays an important part in managing and maintaining an attractive Mayor of London The London Plan landscape, protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat, natural resources and historic features, providing opportunities for recreation and education, contributing to a sustainable source of food, improving air, soil and water quality and promoting sustainable urban development. The development of farmers' markets in London is one good example of this. In accordance with national guidance, appropriate farm diversification should be encouraged, particularly where wider community and environmental benefits would result. Examples include protecting landscapes, the production of bio-fuels and promoting access and enjoyment. The cultivation of bio fuels can both assist in addressing climate change and contribute to the agricultural economy. As the majority of farmland in London is designated as Green Belt or MOL, development associated with appropriate farm diversification should contribute to achieving these objectives. Land management schemes and environmental improvements should be promoted.

(Greater London Authority, 2008b, pp. 191-192)

Policies Pertaining to Food Growing in Draft London Plan

Draft policy 7.22 (Land for food)

Strategic

A The Mayor will seek to encourage and support thriving farming and land-based sectors in London, particularly in the Green Belt.

B Use of land for growing food will be encouraged nearer to urban communities via such mechanisms as 'Capital Growth'.

LDF preparation

C Boroughs should protect existing allotments and identify other potential spaces that could be used for community gardening. Particularly in Inner London innovative approaches to the provision of spaces may need to be followed, these could include the use of green roofs.

(Greater London Authority, 2009, p. 192)

Draft policy 5.11 (Green roofs and development site environs)

Planning decisions

A Major development proposals should be designed to include roof, wall and site planting, especially green roofs and walls where feasible, to deliver as many of the following objectives as possible:

a Adaptation to climate change (ie aiding cooling)

b Sustainable urban drainage

c Mitigation of climate change (ie aiding energy efficiency)

d Enhancement of biodiversity

e Accessible roof space

f Improvements to appearance and resilience of the building

g Growing food.

LDF preparation

B Within LDFs boroughs may wish to develop more detailed policies and proposals to support the development of green roofs and the greening of development sites. Boroughs should also promote the use of green roofs in smaller developments, renovations and extensions where feasible.

(Greater London Authority, 2009, p. 129)

**APPENDIX E: POLICIES PERTAINING TO OPEN SPACE LAND USE FOR HORTICULTURE IN BOROUGH DEVELOPMENT PLANS  
(EXCLUDING GENERIC LANGUAGE DIRECTLY REFERRING TO LONDON PLAN ON USES OF GREEN BELT OR METROPOLITAN OPEN  
LAND AND ABOUT PROTECTION OF EXISTING ALLOTMENTS)**

Borough	Language pertaining to potential horticultural land use	Source
Barking & Dagenham	No specific language.	(Borough of Barking and Dagenham, 2010)
Barnet	No specific language.	(London Borough of Barnet, 2006)
Bexley	No specific language.	(London Borough of Bexley, 1999)
Brent	No specific language.	(London Borough of Brent, 2004)
Bromley	No specific language.	(London Borough of Bromley, 2006)
Camden	<p>Section 4 – Natural Environment</p> <p>4.22 The Council will also encourage the development of new open spaces for allotments, community gardens and city (urban) farms. These uses will be considered an appropriate use for new open space created in association with policy N4.</p> <p>N4 - Providing public open space</p> <p>To ensure that public open space deficiency is not created or made worse, the Council will only grant planning permission for development that is likely to lead to an increased use of public open space where an appropriate contribution to the supply of public open space is made. Other developments will be encouraged to contribute to</p>	(London Borough of Camden, 2006, p. 83)



	the supply of open space.	
City of London	No specific language.	(City of London Department of Planning & Transportation, 2002)
Croydon	No specific language.	(London Borough of Croydon, 2006)
Ealing	No specific language.	(London Borough of Ealing, 2004)
Enfield	No specific language.	(London Borough of Enfield, 1994)
Greenwich*	No specific language.	(Greenwich Council, 2006)
Hackney	<p>OS11 Use of Small Vacant Sites</p> <p>The Council will support the use of small vacant or redundant sites within or near residential areas for permanent or temporary open spaces or other leisure facilities where, in the council's opinion, they:</p> <p>Are needed to satisfy a deficiency;</p> <p>Satisfy OS17;</p> <p>Take into account the nature conservation interest and/or community use of the site and protect and enhance this where appropriate;</p> <p>Do not conflict with any other policies in this plan.</p> <p>Small residual sites can present opportunities to provide, at relatively low cost and with the active involvement of the local community, facilities such as play areas, gardens, nature study areas, allotments and all-weather pitches to meet local needs. In this context, small residual sites refers to 'landlocked' and awkward sites around the edges of development, or sites unsuitable for other development.</p>	(London Borough of Hackney, 1995, p. 224)
Hammersmith & Fulham	<p>Chapter 4: Environment - Open Space and Nature Conservation - Policy EN29</p> <p>(iii) Proposals should use parts of the site that are difficult to develop for potential nature conservation e.g. planting or the creation of ponds, wildflower meadows using crushed concrete etc.</p> <p>(iv) Buildings could include features of nature conservation such as</p>	(London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, 2003)

	climbing plants, window boxes, bird nesting cavities, bat roosting boxes etc. Roof gardens may be suitable provided they do not overlook residential properties.	
Haringey	No specific language.	(Haringey Council, 2006)
Harrow	No specific language.	(Harrow Council, 2004)
Havering	No specific language.	(London Borough of Havering, 2008)
Hillingdon	No specific language.	(London Borough of Hillingdon, 2007)
Hounslow	No specific language.	(London Borough of Hounslow, 2003)
Islington	No specific language.	(Islington Council, 2002)
Kensington & Chelsea	No specific language.	(Royal Borough of Kingston, 2006)
Kingston	No specific language.	(The Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames, 2005)
Lambeth	<p>4.17 Protecting Open Space</p> <p>4.17.24. Other, often innovative, opportunities for the creation of open space are possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road space released as a result of traffic calming measures;</li> <li>• Potential development sites, where temporary open space has been created;</li> <li>• Surplus car parking;</li> <li>• Roof terraces, where greening initiatives have transformed the use of previously redundant space; and</li> <li>• Considering green spaces vertically, with plants growing off buildings.</li> </ul>	(London Borough of Lambeth, 2007)
Lewisham	No specific language.	(London Borough of Lewisham,

		2004)
Merton	<p>Chapter 4 – A Safe, Green and Healthy Borough POLICY NE.3: Green Chains</p> <p>4.4 The Council, in conjunction with neighbouring Boroughs, has designated and will promote the improvement and maintenance of Green Chains, which comprise a series of linked open spaces and which provide walking and cycling routes to relieve the effects of traffic. Green Chains are shown on the Proposals Map. They comprise areas of open space, with the Green Chain notation shown around the periphery of the open space, and the Green Chain links between areas of open space. The Green Chain notation does not indicate actual or proposed walking and cycling routes. The notation is indicative that within these areas walking and cycling will be promoted. It is considered important to promote Green Chains to protect green spaces and to achieve linkages between and across open spaces. Such links could provide important informal recreational opportunities for walking and cycling, create a safe and pleasant environment, and allow appreciation of attractive landscapes and features of historical significance. A large number of open space areas in Merton are linked by rivers, brooks and small or linear open spaces, or are separated from one another by short sections of built development. This provides opportunities to exploit the informal recreation potential of the open spaces and waterways by making them more accessible to the public. Greening measures may involve the conversion of areas of surplus highway capacity to small green spaces, implementation of traffic calming measures, traffic management and restraint, planting of vacant, derelict or other open sites and tree planting within streets.</p>	(London Borough of Merton, 2003)
Newham	Policy OS13: The Council Will Protect the Level of Existing Allotment Provision and Secure Opportunities to Increase Supply, Particularly in Areas of the Borough Deficient in Provision By:	(London Borough of Newham, 2001, p. 275)

	B) Utilizing Poorly Used Open Space And Suitable Vacant Sites For Allotments.	
Redbridge	No specific language.	(London Borough of Redbridge, 2008)
Richmond	No specific language.	(London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames, 2005)
Southwark*	No specific language.	(Southwark Council, 2007)
Sutton	No specific language.	(London Borough of Sutton, 2003)
Tower Hamlets	No specific language.	(Tower Hamlets Council, 1988)
Waltham Forest	No specific language.	(Waltham Forest Council, 2006)
Wandsworth	No specific language.	(Wandsworth Council, 2003)
Westminster	<p>ENV 3 Vacant and under-used land This encourages new uses on vacant and under-used land. The alternative use of vacant or derelict land for public open space or for wildlife habitats will be encouraged, particularly in priority areas for additional public open space and of wildlife deficiency as shown on Maps 9.1 and 9.2. The City Council may require an assessment of the land for open space and wildlife potential prior to considering any development opportunities.</p> <p>ENV 4 Planting on and around buildings The landscaping of forecourts, walls, entrance areas and grounds will be encouraged, where appropriate. Planting on flat surfaces and roofs on buildings will be encouraged subject to the need to maintain the amenities and the privacy of neighbouring occupiers, conservation area and listed buildings policies, and ensuring that views out of the Royal Parks are not compromised.</p>	(Westminster City Council, 2007, pp. 424-425)

\*Food coop existed in this borough prior to the adoption of this plan-previous plan not available from Council

**APPENDIX F: POLICIES PERTAINING TO AGRICULTURAL LAND USE IN BOROUGH SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS  
(EXCLUDING LANGUAGE DIRECTLY REFERRING TO LONDON PLAN ON USES OF GREEN BELT)**

Borough	Language pertaining to potential agricultural land use	Source
Barking & Dagenham	No specific language.	(Borough of Barking and Dagenham, 2010)
Barnet	<p>Agricultural Land</p> <p>5.3.18 There is currently a surplus of certain agricultural commodities throughout the European Union. The extent to which agricultural land in Barnet remains in use is largely dependent on the future demand for agricultural products. It is likely that there will be increasing pressure for development on farmland and some land may cease to be used for agricultural production. Government guidance contained in PPS7 states that the best and most versatile agricultural land should be protected. This type of land is defined by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Agricultural Land Classification as grades 1, 2 and 3a land. Land of lesser agricultural importance is classified as being grades 3b, 4 or 5. Barnet’s agricultural land lies in Green Belt and is of grade 3. However, more detailed investigation may reveal that it should be protected. Where land is to be lost, a ‘worst first’ principle will be applied – for example, sub-grade 3a land should be taken before grade 2.</p> <p>5.3.19 The best and most versatile agricultural land may be allowed for development if there is an overriding need for the development, there is a</p>	(London Borough of Barnet, 2006, pp. 69-70)

	<p>lack of development opportunity in previously developed sites or there is little land in grades below 3a, or there is little lower-grade land which does not have an environmental value recognised by statutory designation. When the loss of agricultural land is acceptable, any development proposed will be assessed on the basis of Green Belt and MOL policy.</p> <p>5.3.20 The attractive landscape character of the Totteridge Valley is partly due to the fact that parts of it are well farmed. It is important that this land continues to be actively farmed. Changes of use from agricultural land to other uses considered appropriate in the Green Belt may be acceptable in principle, but could still have an adverse impact because of the intensity of development that they may involve.</p> <p>Policy O8 – Green Belt – Agricultural Land</p> <p>The council will support the use of Green Belt land for agriculture at an intensity which is compatible with its openness.</p> <p>5.3.21 The predominant use of agricultural land in Barnet is for the grazing of horses. The use of such land for the purposes of feeding horses and for horticultural-type uses, is accepted as being an agricultural use. However, permission may be required if horses are kept on land for some other purpose, such as for sport or recreation. In some areas the condition of the land has noticeably deteriorated through over-grazing and lack of proper management. Where planning permission is required for the grazing of horses, Policy O2 will apply and the following considerations should be met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptable arrangements for feeding must be included;</li> <li>• The potential productive capacity of the agricultural land must be maintained through good grassland management;</li> <li>• Landscape quality must not be affected adversely;</li> <li>• The economic viability of any land holding must not be affected by fragmentation;</li> </ul>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate access should be provided to suitable riding and exercise areas;</li> <li>• The area under consideration should be accessible to the source of demand, i.e. the urban area.</li> </ul>	
Bexley	<p>Policy ENV9 The Council will oppose any form of development which will cause a loss of productive, or potentially productive, agricultural land classified as Grade 1 or 2 or 3a land, as defined by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), or which reduces the viability of farm holdings.</p> <p>5.12 While recognising the continuing need to protect the countryside for its own sake, the Council also recognises the need to protect higher quality agricultural land from development. In protecting the best and most versatile land the Council will have regard to the DEFRA's Agricultural Land Classification system. Strategic Guidance for London indicates that boroughs should, in line with PPG7, protect high quality agricultural land from development, recognising it as a national resource for the long term.</p> <p>Policy ENV12 Garden centres and farm shops will be acceptable in principle in the Metropolitan Green Belt only where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a local need can be demonstrated;</li> <li>the major proportion of merchandise is produced on site;</li> <li>they are of a scale and character which blends in with the surrounding landscape; and</li> <li>there is no detrimental impact on areas or features of nature conservation importance.</li> </ul> <p>5.16 Farm shops are sometimes necessary to the continued economic viability of an agricultural holding. It is not the Council's general practice to allow the establishment of retail uses in the Green Belt. Garden centres and farm shops may, however, be acceptable if they help to support a horticultural or agricultural enterprise accounting for the main part of the site on which the garden centre or farm shop is situated and producing the</p>	(London Borough of Bexley, 1999)

	major proportion of the merchandise. The purpose of these restrictions is to ensure that the Green Belt is kept free from intensive forms of retail use more appropriately located in built-up areas.	
Brent	No specific language.	(London Borough of Brent, 2004)
Bromley	<p>Development Related to Farm Diversification Policy G10</p> <p>Development related to farm diversification schemes will not normally be permitted unless:</p> <p>(i) there is evidence that the wider benefits of farm diversification contribute to the very special circumstances required by Policy G1;</p> <p>(ii) the scheme proposed preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land in it; and</p> <p>(iii) there is no harm to the retail viability of nearby shops or to existing rural businesses.</p> <p>8.39 Rural areas are becoming less reliant on the agricultural industry as a</p>	(London Borough of Bromley, 2006)



	<p>form of livelihood. While not overriding Green Belt policies, this policy allows farmers to look beyond traditional agricultural practice to supplement their incomes. The Council will expect farm diversification schemes to be well-conceived and consistent in scale to their rural and Green Belt locations. Potential diversification projects could include woodland management, farm shops, equestrian businesses, sporting facilities, nature trails and craft workshops. The Council will expect the applicant to explore the possibility of re-using or replacing existing buildings where feasible. Farm shops that sell a significant amount of produce from elsewhere is a separate use and requires planning permission.</p>	
Camden	No specific language other than that mentioned in Table 1 above.	(London Borough of Camden, 2006)
City of London	No specific language.	(City of London Department of Planning & Transportation, 2002)
Croydon	<p>Chapter 6 Development Involving Agricultural Land  RO17 Development will not be permitted which would involve the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a). The Council will seek to enter into agreements to secure the removal of redundant agricultural buildings that harm the character and appearance of the Metropolitan Green Belt, unless the resulting planning benefits would be outweighed by those of any likely re-use of the buildings.</p> <p>6.58 There is a small amount of good quality agricultural land in the Borough which contributes to its landscape diversity. Much of it lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Government guidance recognises the important and varied roles of agriculture in PPS7, including in the maintenance and management of the countryside and the need to protect our valued landscapes, in particular the best and most versatile agricultural land (defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification).</p>	(London Borough of Croydon, 2006, pp. 74-75)

	<p>6.59 The first step in protecting quality land from loss through inappropriate development is by identifying where these sites occur. Agricultural land in Croydon is classified as Grades 3 and 4 (see Map 7). However, this classification is out-dated and more detailed investigation into the quality is required to identify whether this land truly is the best and most versatile and should be retained in agricultural use. When determining planning applications the presence of best and most versatile land will be taken into account alongside other sustainability considerations (e.g. biodiversity, heritage interest and soil quality). (pp.74-75)</p>	
Ealing	No specific language.	(London Borough of Ealing, 2004)
Enfield	No specific language	(London Borough of Enfield, 1994)
Greenwich*	No specific language.	(Greenwich Council, 2006)
Hackney	No specific language.	(London Borough of Hackney, 1995)
Hammersmith & Fulham	No specific language.	(London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, 2003)
Haringey	No specific language.	(Haringey Council, 2006)
Harrow	<p>Agriculture</p> <p>EP36 The Council will encourage the retention of existing farm land in the Green Belt in order to protect the rural character and features which have evolved over a number of years. Development will only be allowed if it can be shown to the satisfaction of the council that:</p> <p>Other significant Green Belt advantages such as improved landscaping and facilities for public access will result;</p> <p>It will be developed in conjunction with an appropriate Green Belt use; and</p> <p>It will not result in the loss of good quality agricultural land.</p>	(Harrow Council, 2004)

	<p>Other criteria for development in the Green Belt as set out in Policies EP32 and EP33 are met.</p> <p>The council will seek to ensure that improvements to the appearance and character of the land, and its value for nature conservation, will be secured by the implementation of appropriate land management.</p> <p>3.125 Farmland in the Green Belt is under continuing pressure to change, particularly on the inner edge of the Metropolitan Green Belt. The Green Belt area of Harrow is distinctive because of its high quality visual character. It is recognised that agricultural land uses are a major element of this distinctive character (e.g. because of field patterns, hedges, ponds etc.) and therefore agricultural land warrants protection and retention wherever possible and practicable. Whilst there is currently the need to bring food production and demand into balance through the EU Common Agricultural Policy reform measures, this does not detract from the continuing need to protect the best and most versatile land as an important national resource for the future. With the continuing downward pressure on farm incomes it is also recognised that there is a need to enable farmers to diversify their businesses, which in turn helps to facilitate a healthy rural economy and ensure continued management of the countryside. Agricultural land should be retained in such a way that the visual quality and character of the land is not diminished and the distinctive rural character is retained even if a change to another acceptable Green Belt use is proposed. Any redundant farm buildings should be put to an appropriate new use.</p>	
Havering	No specific language.	(London Borough of Havering, 2008)
Hillingdon	Agricultural land 3.23 As already described in para. 3.1 above agriculture remains a significant activity in Hillingdon and contributes substantially to its visual	(London Borough of Hillingdon, 2007, pp. 57-58)

	<p>character. Over the next decade it is possible that a substantial area of Britain's countryside will change from food production to some other use. The effect this will have on urban fringe agriculture in Hillingdon is still to be seen, although already "horsiculture" is becoming increasingly common. Many land owners and farmers are likely to consider some form of diversification away from agricultural production to new uses for which there is a demand, such as recreation, wildlife reserves, improved access, maybe even new woodlands. However, it is the Council's intention to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3A) from irreversible development, and to protect the countryside for its own sake rather than primarily its productive value, in accordance with the provisions of PPG7 and Strategic Planning Guidance (SPG, para. 67).</p>	
Hounslow	<p><b>POLICY ENV-N.1.14 PROTECTION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND</b> The Council will encourage the continuation of agricultural uses and will oppose, bar in exceptional circumstances, the permanent loss of high quality agricultural land by other development, particularly the most significant farms (Rectory Farm, Mayfield Farm, Osterley Park Farm, and after restoration Hatton Farm), and encourage farmers and landowners to conserve and enhance the intrinsic features of the open land, including the landscape quality, historic character and wildlife value of the land.</p>	(London Borough of Hounslow, 2003, p. 74)
Islington	No specific language.	(Islington Council, 2002)
Kensington & Chelsea	No specific language.	(Royal Borough of Kingston, 2006)
Kingston	<p>Agriculture in the Green Belt 7.27 It is recognised by Government guidance in PPG7 'The Countryside and the Rural Economy' that changes in agricultural production have led to greater efficiency and output. This has reduced the previous priority of retaining as much land as possible for agricultural use to one of retaining those areas of the highest quality. In line with PPG7, the Council will</p>	(London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames, 2005, pp. 113-114)

	<p>therefore seek to retain areas of good quality agricultural land, graded 1, 2 and 3a as defined by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Foods (MAFF) Agricultural Land Classification. Elsewhere emphasis will be placed on retaining the open character of the land and the function of the Green Belt.</p> <p>7.28 In resisting the loss of high quality agricultural land, the Council will provide a positive framework through the policies of the plan within which farming can continue and develop, given that it retains the open rural nature of the Green Belt. In order to support the viability of agriculture, account will be taken of any advantages that arise from diversifying farm activities and providing recreational activities.</p> <p>7.29 Whilst the Council seeks to support agriculture this should not be at the expense of other aims of the plan. New development should be consistent with Green Belt policy and acceptable in terms of landscape, other visual or residential amenities, ecological interests and highway safety. In particular, in areas of significant ecological interest, the Council will encourage the management of the land for nature conservation.</p>	
Lambeth	No specific language.	(London Borough of Lambeth, 2007)
Lewisham	No specific language.	(London Borough of Lewisham, 2004)
Merton	No specific language.	(London Borough of Merton, 2003)
Newham	No specific language.	(London Borough of Newham, 2001)
Redbridge	No specific language.	(London Borough of Redbridge, 2008)
Richmond	No specific language.	(London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames, 2005)
Southwark*	No specific language.	(Southwark Council, 2007)

Sutton	<p>Nurseries, Farm Shops and Garden Centres</p> <p>5.56 In accordance with PPG7, the need to facilitate farm-based diversification and to ensure the long term future of the smallholdings:</p> <p>Policy OE10 - Nursery/Farm Shops</p> <p>The Council Will Permit The Development Of Nursery/Farm Shops In The Green Belt Provided That The Majority of All Goods Sold Are Produced On-Site.</p> <p>Reasoned Justification for Policy OE10</p> <p>5.57 The Council encourages nursery/farm shops which sell produce, the majority of which is grown on-site, as they develop the agricultural function of the Green Belt and help to diversify the rural economy. Whilst the use of a nursery/farm shop for the sale of a significant amount of imported produce would not be considered appropriate, the ability of the business to provide a service throughout the year may require the bringing in of produce to overcome problems of seasonality. Extensions to existing nurseries for purposes such as coffee shops and landscape contracting would not be appropriate and therefore will not be favourably considered. Garden centres are commercial retail outlets, generally trade in a wide variety of goods, for example fencing and paving materials, and are therefore not an appropriate use in the Green Belt.</p>	(London Borough of Sutton, 2003, p. 59)
Tower Hamlets	No specific language.	(Tower Hamlets Council, 1988)
Waltham Forest	No specific language.	(Waltham Forest Council, 2006)
Wandsworth	No specific language.	(Wandsworth Council, 2003)
Westminster	No specific language.	(Westminster City Council, 2007)

\*Food coop existed in this borough prior to the adoption of this plan-previous plan not available from Council

## APPENDIX G: REFERENCES TO AGRICULTURE, FOOD-GROWING AND FOOD COOPS IN LONDON FOOD STRATEGY

Encourage innovation among producers to meet the demand from London's consumers, for example through product diversification (e.g. ethnic foods); organic food production to meet this niche market; ensuring high standards of production and quality; and sourcing food products in ways that promote and enhance bio-diversity (which includes not just land-based impacts, but impacts on fish stocks and marine life).

- Encourage producer collaboration and cooperation, in order to share ideas, marketing costs and fund product innovations, and access public and private sector procurement contracts.
- Research the feasibility of developing a secondary food hub distribution system that operates in parallel to the mainstream distribution network and enables smaller farms to share resources and distribution mechanisms for mutual benefit and access the London market. This research should take account of the current review of London's existing wholesale markets at Covent Garden Market, Billingsgate, Smithfield, Spitalfields and Western International.
- Encourage, co-ordinate and broker – as appropriate – local and sub-regional logistics partnerships, taking into account the need to consider impacts on the number and type of freight movements into and around the capital.
- Promote opportunities for producers to sell into the London market, through a mix of direct selling (e.g. box schemes, markets, etc.); selling to London's restaurants and independent stores; and, crucially, sales to the major retailers. (London Development Agency, 2006, pp. 92-93)

### 6.4 The Detailed Actions (key actions are bolded in original)

#### Stage 1: Primary production

##### Vision Actions

##### **V1**

**Food and drink consumed in London will be produced to the highest possible environmental, nutritional and ethical standards, including the protection of habitats, fish stocks and Green Belt, adaptation to and mitigation of climate change, minimisation of pollution, fair treatment of producers and respecting animal health & welfare**

- a Increase organic food production within London and the surrounding regions in response to consumer demand
- b Ensure that, as far as practicable, food grown or used as animal feed in London is GM free
- d Reduce "Gangmasters"/illegal migrant labour

- e **Implement high standards of environmental farm management schemes**
- f Ensure climate change impacts on agriculture are considered in mitigation and adaptation studies/strategies in London

## V2

**More of London's food will be 'local' and diverse – that is, wherever practical, it will come from the surrounding area, neighbouring regions and from elsewhere within the UK and reflect the consumer preferences of London's increasingly diverse population.**

- a Increase food production within London, in response to demand
- b Implement brokerage service to improve intra- and inter-regional links between farmers and consumers**
- c Expand individual & community growing in response to demand (e.g. allotments, community gardens, parks & open spaces, school grounds, etc.)**
- d Increase produce diversification to supply and meet the London market**

## V3

**London farmers will be competitive and achieving strong economic success.**

- a Deliver training, advice and market information to farmers
- b Develop producer collaboration schemes**
- c Ensure farmers are able to access and use water supplies in a sustainable fashion

(London Development Agency, 2006, p. 73)

## V1

**Healthy eating should not be consistently or dramatically more expensive than alternatives, and no-one in London will struggle to access healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food and drink**

- a Identify & support successful food access projects

(London Development Agency, 2006, p. 7)



**APPENDIX H – REFERENCES TO FOOD GROWING AND FOOD COOPS IN FOOD STRATEGIES**

Language pertaining to food-growing and food coops in food strategies (in boroughs with coops as of June 2009)

Borough	Language from Strategy	Source
Croydon	<p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of local food through the identification of local producers</li> <li>• Increase the number of allotments used and food growing schemes across the borough (p. 21)</li> </ul> <p>Supporting a whole school approach to nutrition Provide training and advice to schools and parents wishing to set up nutrition schemes within schools e.g. SNAG, growing schemes, cook and eat clubs, breakfast clubs. (p. 34)</p> <p>Improving access to food Fruit and Vegetable cooperatives to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ordering scheme/cash and carry</li> <li>• Cookery groups</li> <li>• Production of resources aimed at low income groups.</li> </ul> <p>Must be easily accessible to all members of the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure equity of access to food projects (p.46)</li> </ul>	<p>NHS Croydon. (2004). Croydon Food Strategy 2004-2009 Retrieved 10 May 2010 from <a href="http://www.croydon.nhs.uk/reports/publichealthinf/food04.pdf">http://www.croydon.nhs.uk/reports/publichealthinf/food04.pdf</a>.</p>
Greenwich	No specific language.	<p>Greenwich Council. (2003). Greenwich Food Strategy Retrieved 20 May 2010 from <a href="http://www.greenwich.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/CB3EA85E-B320-4D21-A340-5CEAADDE5212/0/foodpolicy.pdf">www.greenwich.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/CB3EA85E-B320-4D21-A340-5CEAADDE5212/0/foodpolicy.pdf</a></p>
Hackney	No specific language.	City and Hackney Primary Care Trust.

		(2007). City & Hackney Food and Nutrition Strategy Retrieved 10 March 2010 from <a href="http://www.chpct.nhs.uk/trust_documents/Strategies/CHfoodstrategywithPSAtargets.pdf">www.chpct.nhs.uk/trust_documents/Strategies/CHfoodstrategywithPSAtargets.pdf</a>
Hammersmith and Fulham	Not available – Council could not find the document.	
Lewisham	The Food access section of the strategy will seek to do the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase capacity of local people to access a healthy diet through raised awareness and opportunities for education and skills development.</li> <li>2. Increase physical access to healthy food for socially excluded and vulnerable groups.</li> <li>3. Raise awareness of food access issues in town planning and regeneration initiatives.</li> <li>4. Promote local food businesses to create opportunities for the local population</li> <li>5. Promote and support urban growing in Lewisham (p. 25)</li> </ol>	Nolan, C.; McCormick, K.; Jones, K.; Potier, T. (2006). Lewisham Food Strategy Retrieved 20 June 2010 from <a href="http://www.foodvision.gov.uk/pages/lewisham-food-strategy">http://www.foodvision.gov.uk/pages/lewisham-food-strategy</a>
Newham –but not approved by the council	5a. Vision Affordable and nutritious food will be available through a diverse and culturally appropriate retail sector covering town centres, residential areas and places of work Areas of poor access to food will be addressed by long term strategies and policies Projects and business outlets that improve access to good quality and affordable healthy food will be supported within the Borough (p. 18) [box	Newham Food Access Partnership. (2006). Newham Food and Nutrition Strategy 2006 Retrieved 24 June 2010 from <a href="http://mgov.newham.gov.uk/Published/C00000422/M00005172/AI00014626/NewhamFoodStrategy.pdf">mgov.newham.gov.uk/Published/C00000422/M00005172/AI00014626/NewhamFoodStrategy.pdf</a>

	<p>profiling CFE].  7a. Vision  A range of allotments and growing spaces will be available and used to educate and re-connect people with food and health issues  The environmental sustainability of the food chain in Newham will be improved; in particular there will be an increase in local food use to reduce food miles and more composting of food waste.  Food businesses will minimise their environmental impact  Statutory organisations will use their procurement power as a driver for change by purchasing local and fairtrade goods which contribute to a more sustainable food system (p. 22)</p>	
Tower Hamlets	Not available from council.	NHS Tower Hamlets. (2003). East London Food and Nutrition Strategy. London: NHS Tower Hamlets.

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