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Original Research Article

Self-operated vs. corporate contract: A study of food procurement at two universities in Manitoba

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Abstract

Public institutions are increasingly being pressured to demonstrate how they are meeting their responsibilities and obligations to sustainability. Yet there is little academic research on food procurement at universities in Canada. This article examines the factors that enable and constrain on-campus food system transformation at two academic institutions in Manitoba: the University of Winnipeg (UW) and the University of Manitoba (UM). This comparative case study presents findings from twelve qualitative interviews with key individuals, a student focus group, and a literature review. Following Brown, Kraftl, Pickerill, & Upton's (2012) call for transformational change, we argue that the experiences at each university demonstrate that a food system transformation can best occur by moving away from corporate food service contracts. The ability to do so depends on a number of other factors including, but not limited to, political will of the administration, student activism, and support from non-university sectors.

Keywords: university food procurement; student activism; food system transformation

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Introduction

With the exception of the multitude of students who grumble about it and have voiced their discontent, and generally held conceptions of inadequate university student diets, little is known in academia about food on Canadian campuses. Several studies have highlighted concerns over food insecurity among Canadian student populations (Entz, Slater, & Desmarais, 2017; Farahbakhsh et al., 2015; Frank, Engler-Stringer, Power, & Pulsifer, 2015; Silverthorn, 2016). There has also been research on the ongoing corporatization of the food that is provided on campuses (Martin & Andrée, 2012), and the emerging counter-movements and shifts to more local and sustainable food systems at academic institutions (Attfield, 2014; Friedmann, 2007; McBride, 2011; Park & Reynolds, 2012; Peters, 2015; Roberts, Archibald, & Colson, 2014).

Hinrichs (2014) argues that shifting the concept of food system *change* to food system *transitions*, allows us to "think more broadly and engage more boldly" and be reflexive to factors that enable and constrain within the evolving context of building food sustainability movements (p.144). This more process-orientated approach to transitions encourages innovation and inclusivity, while its plurality recognizes the need for diversity and locality in food system movements. Going one step further, Brown, Kraftl, Pickerill, and Upton (2012) distinguish transitions from *transformation*, contending that, increasingly, discourses of transitions are often used to reform, not transform "assumed neoliberal futures" in rather incremental stages (p. 1607). *Transformation*, on the other hand, is used to describe a profound, all-encompassing shift in economic, political and social structures.

This article examines the factors that enable and constrain food system transformation through shifts in food procurement practices at two academic institutions in Manitoba: the University of Winnipeg (UW) and the University of Manitoba (UM). Following Brown et al.'s (2012) call for transformational change, we argue that the experiences at each university demonstrate that a food system transformation can best occur by moving away from corporate food service contracts. The ability to do so depends on a number of other factors including, but not limited to, political will of the administration, student activism, and support from non-university sectors.

We are particularly interested in the factors that influenced shifts at the UW and UM, and in determining whether or not, or the extent to which, they contributed to food system transformation. Since changes at both universities did not happen in a vacuum, we begin by setting the context. To do so, we present a literature review of how various Canadian universities have addressed food provisioning, and then briefly present some recent developments in the small-scale farmers and marketers sector in Manitoba. Next, we describe our research methods followed by a presentation and discussion of the two empirical case studies. In this discussion we use Holt-Giménez and Shattuck's (2011) framework of reformist, progressive, and transformative change to examine current developments and future potential for food system transformation at the two Manitoba universities.

Before continuing, a brief clarification of terms is in order. For the purpose of this research, local is defined as produced within Manitoba. Defining sustainable, however, is much more challenging and is not restricted to third party certifications. When using the term sustainable, we are referring to criteria developed by Local Food Plus as well as the values and practices reflected in the Small Scale Food Manitoba working group report that together consider various environmental and social criteria regarding production systems, animal welfare, labor standards, biodiversity, energy, and community.[1] We use the term food system transformation when referring to change that, among other things, marginalizes corporate food providers in favour of in-house or self-operated foodservices; food system change and transitions are used interchangeably when the pace and extent of change is incremental and does not directly challenge the corporate food regime.

Setting the context: Food system transitions and transformation on Canadian campuses

In Canada, campus foodservices are characterized by transnational corporation models, defined by efficiency of scale (involving the dependence on large, corporately-controlled supply chains), low labor costs, elaborate marketing and branding tactics, and capital investments in exchange for long-term, exclusive contracts with institutional clients (Martin & Andrée, 2012). On Canadian campuses, food services are typically managed by the institution itself (self-operated) or by an outsourced company through a contractual agreement (contracted). While both arrangements often exist simultaneously on many medium and larger-sized campuses, approximately 70 percent of foodservices operations are contracted out at Canadian universities, compared to 30 percent in the US (Szabo, Koç, & Yeudall, 2013). Further, these contracts are highly concentrated among three companies: Compass Group PLC,[2] Aramark, and Sodexo (Martin & Andrée, 2012; Roberts et al., 2014). These "Big Three" are the highest grossing foodservice management companies in the world (Food Management, 2015) and are the primary expression of the globalized, corporate, industrial, and neoliberal food system on campuses today.

However, similar to what is occurring in broader society, there has been a burst of transformative action on campuses across the country that is resisting the conventional corporate-led food system and demonstrates a compelling need for more safe, healthy, just, and sustainable food systems (Attfield, 2014; McBride, 2011; Park & Reynolds 2012; Peters, 2015; Roberts et

[1] For a short description of LFP see http://www.yongestreetmedia.ca/features/localfoodplus02152012.aspx The work of LFP was taken over by the Land Food People Foundation in 2014 (Mann, 2014). Also see Stahlbrand, this volume. For information about the Small Scale Food Manitoba working group report see http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/food-and-ag-processing/pubs/small-scale-food-report.pdf

[2] Chartwells is the higher education division of Compass Group PLC (and perhaps the more widely recognized name).

al., 2014). This action is pushing campus administrators to introduce changes in foodservices, whether this means switching from one corporate contractor to another, or moving away from contracts entirely to self-operated foodservices. While there is a growing body of criticism of the corporate foodservice model in terms of its ability to respond to demands for alternative food systems, "The Big Three", along with many smaller corporate foodservice companies, are paying more attention to, and in some cases participating in, campus food change—a test of their relevance and survival in what seems to be the beginnings of a shift in campus food systems.

Food system transitions and transformation on Canadian campuses

The literature on food procurement at Canadian universities has highlighted two cases in particular—the University of British Columbia (UBC) and University of Toronto (U of T)—for leading the way in food system transformation. The UBC Vancouver Campus has been engaging in institutional changes regarding food provisioning for over 15 years. Today, UBC Food Services consists of more than 30 outlets and is entirely self-operated (UBC Food Services, n.d.), and allocates 45 percent of food and beverage expenditures to sources within 150 miles of the campus, including the campus farm (Park & Reynolds, 2012). There is little doubt that the campus's well-established and unique applied research hub played an important role in reshaping food provisioning at UBC. Since 2002, the Faculty of Land and Food Systems, the Sustainability Office[3], and several other partners and collaborators have led the Campus Food Systems Project (UBCFSP), a network of "community-based action research" aimed at generating findings to guide sustainable food development on campus. According to Victoria Wakefield, purchasing manager for UBC Food Services, even though leadership may have originated with a few administrators, sustainability-related values are now reflected in decision-making in all departments, which means that "UBC's sustainability strategy is a living thing; it is embedded in UBC culture…As such, it is difficult to pinpoint a key stakeholder or event that continues to drive UBC's push towards sustainable food" (Park & Reynolds, 2012, p. 15).

The U of T's St. George Campus is an example of where changes to provisioning have been significantly driven by the involvement of a civil society organization with local, sustainable expertise. In 2006, a partnership between Local Food Plus (LFP) and U of T was formed; this was prompted by both an upcoming foodservice contract expiry and a conversation between a college administrator and an instructor (who was simultaneously developing LFP) about opportunities to improve the college's commitment to social justice and equity (Friedmann, 2007). LFP helped establish the language of the foodservice Request for Proposal that would mandate the winning provider (Aramark) to purchase a minimum percentage of local, sustainable food, certified as such by LFP (Friedmann, 2007). The contract incorporated a clause

[3] UBC's Sustainability Office (est. 1998) was the first campus sustainability office in Canada. UBC's sustainable development policy (est. 1997) was also the first of its kind among Canadian campuses (Rojas, Richer, & Wagner, 2007).

to procure 10 percent LFP-certified food with an increase of 5 percent each year (Szabo et al., 2013). LFP then worked with Aramark to operationalize those contract terms, along with several self-operated campus foodservice units who voluntarily agreed to participate (Stahlbrand, this volume). The U of T-LFP partnership yielded the largest contract for local and sustainable food in North America at the time and made U of T the first university in Canada to engage in such a contract (Stahlbrand, this volume). In August 2016, upon the expiry of Aramark's decade-long contract at U of T, the university reclaimed its foodservices by launching a self-operated model centered on affordability, sustainability, and nutrition (U of T Food and Beverage Services, n.d.). In some ways, the LFP-U of T partnership "paved the way" for this change in part by providing the administration with the confidence to make such a leap (Stahlbrand, this volume).[4]

Although the specific ways in which food system change occurred at UBC, U of T, and other Canadian campuses certainly differs, the literature reveals that in many cases, change is triggered and/or effected by any one or a combination of the six key strategies discussed below. We also provide specific cases (see boxes below), while noting that shifts to more local and sustainable food provisioning appear to be most often the result of collective action within and beyond the campus community, namely of students, faculty, administration, and non-university sectors.

Stipulating local, sustainable purchasing targets in foodservice contracts

As the box below indicates (Table 1), setting concrete measurable requirements for campus food providers was seen as an important step to altering practices in purchasing.

Table 1: Requirements for campus food providers

Ryerson University	A 3-5 year contract with Chartwells in 2013 stipulated 25 percent of food to be local, sustainable, increasing 2 percent each year (Chiandet & Dandar, 2014)
Concordia University	A 5-year contract with Aramark in 2015 stipulated 75 percent of produce to be seasonal and local in the summer, 50 percent in the fall and 25 percent in the winter and spring (Wrobel, 2015)
Mount Allison University	The university's 2006 contract with Aramark stipulated 33 percent of food to be local, increasing to 50 percent by the end of the contract (Park & Reynolds, 2012)[5]

[4] In 2009, LFP received funding to expand into other provinces, including Manitoba, where it partnered with Food Matters Manitoba (FMM) to develop the Local Sustainable Food Pilot Project, now known as Manitoba on the Menu. LFP's involvement, for reasons that we could not determine, ceased partway through the project (Food Matters Manitoba, 2016b; Government of Manitoba, 2014). LFP also worked with McGill University, the University of Guelph, and hundreds of producers, processors, distributors and retailers across the country (Land Food People Foundation, 2016).

[5] We were unable to obtain information about the length of the contract at Mount Allison. Trent's contracts with Aramark and then Chartwells in 2014, and Waterloo's contract with Chartwells (n.d.) also included commitments to local food purchasing (Meal Exchange, 2015).

Revising food safety policies to account for the unique realities of small, local, and sustainable farmers

Since food safety policies used by corporate foodservice companies are often designed for large-scale industrial supply chains, they tend to be inappropriate for, and restrictive to, purchasing from local sources (Atkinson et al., 2013; Knight & Chopra, 2011). However, these stringent policies—for example, the requirement of suppliers to have liability insurance as well as recall procedures (Knight & Chopra, 2011)—are slowly being adapted to allow the inclusion of more local and sustainable suppliers, including campus farms (see Table 2).

Table 2: Campus foodservice procurement of campus-grown produce

Waterloo, Trent, Ryerson (All Chartwells-serviced campuses)	All have amended their food safety policies to allow the procurement of campus-grown produce.
McGill	Food is serviced by both self-operated venues and Aramark (Szabo et al., 2013), and the campus farm sells 30,000 kilos of produce to self-operated foodservices each year (Peters, 2015). However, the farm struggles to connect with Aramark due to the company's policy requirement that the farm have a formal food safety certification (Wylie-Toal, 2014)
Mount Allison	Here, Aramark sources from the campus garden (McBride, 2011; Park & Reynolds, 2012), suggesting that these corporate policy adaptations *are* occurring, albeit unevenly.

Involving experts and leaders of local, sustainable food systems

As Table 3 indicates, harnessing the expertise and leadership of those involved in local, sustainable food systems appears to be critical in transitioning towards alternatives.[6]

Table 3: Position of campus foodservice experts and leaders

UBC	Hospitality and purchasing manager (Park & Reynolds, 2012)
Queen's University	Chef (Szabo et al., 2013)
Ryerson University	Executive Chef (Roberts et al., 2014)
University of Guelph	Purchasing Coordinator (Pitman, 2012)
McMaster University	Director of hospitality services (Meal Exchange, 2015)
Mount Allison University	Director of administration services (Park & Reynolds, 2012)

[6] The University of Winnipeg and the key individuals behind their transition were also mentioned in the literature for their leadership and influence (Donatelli & List, 2011; Park & Reynolds, 2012; Szabo et al., 2013). Bryan's (2007) study of the food services at Queen's University also emphasizes the importance of an individual who garners the support of both higher administration and other stakeholders.

Establishing strong applied research and curriculum

As Table 4 indicates, another key way that campus communities are actively changing their food systems is through applied research and curriculum (Park & Reynolds, 2012; Szabo et al., 2013).

Table 4: Contributions of applied research and curriculum to campus food systems

McGill University	Student research findings led the campus food provider to ask its distributor for Marine Stewardship Council Certified fish, which then became available to all of the distributor's clients in Montreal (Roberts et al., 2014)
Dalhousie University	Students have created seasonal menus and local food marketing plans that have been used by the campus foodservice providers Aramark and Sodexo (Knight & Chopra, 2011)
Trent University, Memorial University, UBC	These universities have established full-fledged community research hubs that coordinate and conduct studies on food systems: Trent's Community Research Centre (Meal Exchange, 2015), Memorial's Food Action Research Centre (Roberts et al., 2014), and UBC's the Food Systems Project (Rojas, Richer, & Wagner, 2007).

Harnessing the collective action of students

Students make up the largest population on campus and have recently been catalyzing change in their campus food systems (Cilliak & Schreiner, 2008; Meal Exchange, 2015; Park & Reynolds, 2012; Peters, 2015). Meal Exchange, a Toronto-based non-profit organization, has played an important role in student food activism by fostering, supporting, and connecting student food leaders on Canadian campuses since 1993. Among the various campaigns organized by Meal Exchange, most recently the Real Food Challenge supports students in establishing accountability in foodservices to shift more of their budgets towards local, sustainable, 'real' food (Meal Exchange, n.d.). To date, Meal Exchange has worked with students on 40 campuses across Canada (Roberts, Archibald, & Colson, 2014).

While no academic study has yet examined the impact of Meal Exchange, its activities on campuses no doubt have helped raise awareness among students about the significance of food. Bryan (2007) argues that students can be critical drivers of change. Using the University of Guelph as an example, he explains that as students gained a "deeper sense of ownership" and appreciation for foodservices after more meaningful involvement in foodservice decision-making, this then was expressed by more progressive, collaborative foodservice policies (p. 82).

Promoting student-led food production (i.e., campus farms or gardens)

Campus agriculture projects can bring about a multitude of benefits, including education around sustainability, capacity for critical thinking, and community building that can in turn influence the pedagogical approach of the institution (LaCharite, 2015) while supplying local, healthy, and

sustainable food to campus community members. According to Meal Exchange (2016)—which coordinates a Campus Garden Network that provides space for students across Canada to connect and share resources, and hosts regular conference calls—over half of all campuses in Canada now have gardens or farms. Short (2012) argues that community gardens at universities can often function as 'living laboratories', and thus be important agents in transitioning campus and urban environments to alternative food systems.

Persistent barriers to food system transitions and transformation

While there is evidence of a shift on some Canadian campuses, in many cases the change is very slow and minimal. Campus food system transitions and transformation appear to be constrained by a number of factors. Given space limitations, we will only address three that are highlighted in the literature: high costs, limited access to the local sector, and a dominant corporate structure.

The price difference of local and sustainable food compared to conventional depends on the region, but it is most often associated with a premium cost. Several studies, including at Manitoba's UM (Entz et. al., 2017), and media reports in recent years have confirmed this premium cost for local and sustainable food as a key barrier to campus foodservices and students' dietary 'choices' (Atkinson et al., 2013; Attfield, 2014; Berg, Ciotobaru, Mallari, & Pirri, 2014; Dehaas, 2012; Silverthorn, 2016; Vansintjan, 2011). However, recent student surveys at Mount Allison (Park & Reynolds, 2012), Waterloo and McMaster (Meal Exchange, 2015) demonstrate that overwhelmingly, students want and are willing to pay more for local, sustainable food. Also, many campus foodservices strategically offset the premium by creatively reducing costs in other operational areas such as waste reduction, in-house processing, and storage facilities (Donatelli & List, 2011; Park & Reynolds, 2012; Szabo et al., 2013).

Institutional buyers across the country report that inadequate access to the local food sector in their region is another major barrier to procuring more local, sustainable food (Atkinson et al., 2013; Donatelli & List, 2011; Friedmann, 2007; Knight & Chopra, 2011; Meal Exchange, 2015; Park & Reynolds, 2012). First, a food service operation must determine the current amount of local, sustainable food purchases to be able to set goals and track progress. Often this information is lacking on campuses due to poor product labelling and/or tracking systems. Corporate food providers' advanced tracking systems could easily address this, but only if provided with incentives and guidance (Friedmann, 2007). Donatelli and List's (2011) study on institutional purchasing of local food on Vancouver Island argues that the main obstacle to scaling up both supply and demand for local food is the underinvestment in the sector by institutional buyers. This is a 'chicken or egg' scenario, as an increase in institutional investment would fund infrastructure to help producers increase quantity and variety of their products, but insufficient quantity and variety are major reasons institutional purchasers will not buy from local producers in the first place (Donatelli & List, 2011).

Perhaps the most important barrier to food system transitions, though, is the persistent dominance of the transnational corporate food service structure on campuses. Considering the

attempts of Aramark, Chartwells and Sodexo to increase sustainability in their campus operations, there is a debate in the literature about the role of corporate foodservices in the shift to local, sustainable food on campuses. On one side, Martin and Andrée (2012) provide a reformist argument, suggesting that despite the resistance to local food demonstrated by many corporate-run foodservices on campuses, there exist opportunities within the corporate model to support this shift. They claim that inter-firm competitiveness (as The Big Three now compete against each other for contracts emphasizing local, sustainable purchasing), branding and partnership capacity (e.g., the upward trend of retailers developing 'house' brands creates space to partner with local suppliers), influence of progressive campus culture on policy and practice (e.g., the rapid uptake of free-range eggs and fair trade coffee and tea by transnational foodservice corporations in response to consumer demand), and a history of institutional foodservice responding to public policy all represent pathways for change.

On the other hand, Bennell (2008) looked at the potential to develop a farm-to-university program at Concordia University. At the time Concordia was serviced by Chartwells. Bennell suggested that inherencies of the corporate purchasing model (i.e., few, large-scale suppliers, centralized and time-advanced menu planning, menu cycling, and price-fixing) directly oppose the nature of local, sustainable food procurement, making it inconvenient, thus not profitable, for large corporate food providers like Chartwells. Bennell concluded that radical change, best reflected in a switch to self-operated foodservice, was needed for Concordia to fully engage in farm-to-university food services.[7] Similarly, Bryan's (2007) study at Queen's University determined that contracted services have less flexibility in their purchasing practices. The Director of Food Services at the University of Guelph, a self-operated service that has received sustainability awards and top rankings by the Globe and Mail (Szabo et al., 2013), argues that the sense of community and the congruence to a university's core values is lessened when food services are contracted out.

Local and sustainable food in Manitoba

Taking into account these limited and in some cases more successful experiences discussed above, the question is, does the province of Manitoba have the sufficient infrastructure and

[7] It appears that Bennell was correct in assessing the limited possibilities for change within corporate food services. In 2013, two years before the expiry of Concordia's 12-year contract with Chartwells, a network of diverse campus community members formed the Concordia Food Coalition (CFC) with a mandate to "actively support new, affordable, sustainable, student-run food initiatives on campus" (CFC, 2016); in other words, the CFC was established to present an alternative bid to corporate foodservice giants. The CFC's proposal aligned itself with the university's ask of 75 percent seasonal, local produce in the summer, 50 percent in the fall and 25 percent in the winter and spring, among other sustainability-related targets. Unfortunately, CFC's bid did not move forward due to the withdrawal of a key partner, but the CFC coordinator nevertheless commented that "The bidding process 'is just designed for a corporation'" (Wrobel, 2015). After Aramark was awarded the contract, replacing Chartwells, an opinion piece published by *The Link*, Concordia's newspaper, expressed frustration over the lack of innovation in foodservices (The Link, 2015).

community support necessary for transformative change towards local food procurement within its universities?

Manitoba maintains a long and rich history of a conventional, export-oriented agriculture industry. Manitobans consume only 3.8 percent of the food produced within the province (in total dollar value), compared to 29.3 percent in Quebec (Edge, 2013). Yet, the province has the third highest number of local food initiatives (per capita) as well as the third highest number (overall) of Community Supported Agriculture farms when compared to the other nine provinces (Egbers, 2009). Much remains unknown about the demand for, size, and capacity of Manitoba's local, sustainable food sector; but there are increasing efforts from various stakeholders, including some provincial government support, to build alternative food systems.

A number of reports released in the past five years shed light on this food movement. Of particular interest is the establishment of the Small Scale Food Manitoba working group that produced a report called *Advancing the small scale, local food sector in Manitoba: a path forward.* The report was the result of a joint initiative between the Government of Manitoba's Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (MAFRD) and various representatives of the small-scale food sector including farmers, processors, marketers, distributors and chefs. The report presents the working group's findings from various consultations with hundreds of key stakeholders held across the province.[8]

Other studies are consistent with the Small Scale Food Manitoba working group report (Food Matters Manitoba (FMM), 2012; Laforge & Avent, 2013; Anderson, Sivilay, & Lobe, 2017). For example, there is agreement that the local, sustainable sector is compromised at many levels and requires action from a range of stakeholders, especially government, to address challenges. More support is needed to better access institutional supply chains and institutional food safety requirements need to be adjusted to accommodate local, sustainable production (FMM, 2012; Laforge & Avent, 2013; Small Scale Food Manitoba working group, 2015). Yet, Food Matters Manitoba (FMM, 2012) found that universities were seen as the most plausible institutional market for local, sustainable farmers because—unlike other public institutions like secondary schools and hospitals—they had or were in the process of developing a variety of procurement strategies to include more local, sustainable food.[9]

FMM (2016b) examined some of these issues more closely in their report entitled "2013-2015 Manitoba on the Menu project" that was also funded by the Government of Manitoba. This project supported eight volunteer institutions (including the UW and UM) to increase, and

[8] See the recommendations of the Small Scale Food Manitoba working group (2015) on pages 12-13 of the report available at https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/food-and-ag-processing/small-scale-food-manitoba.html

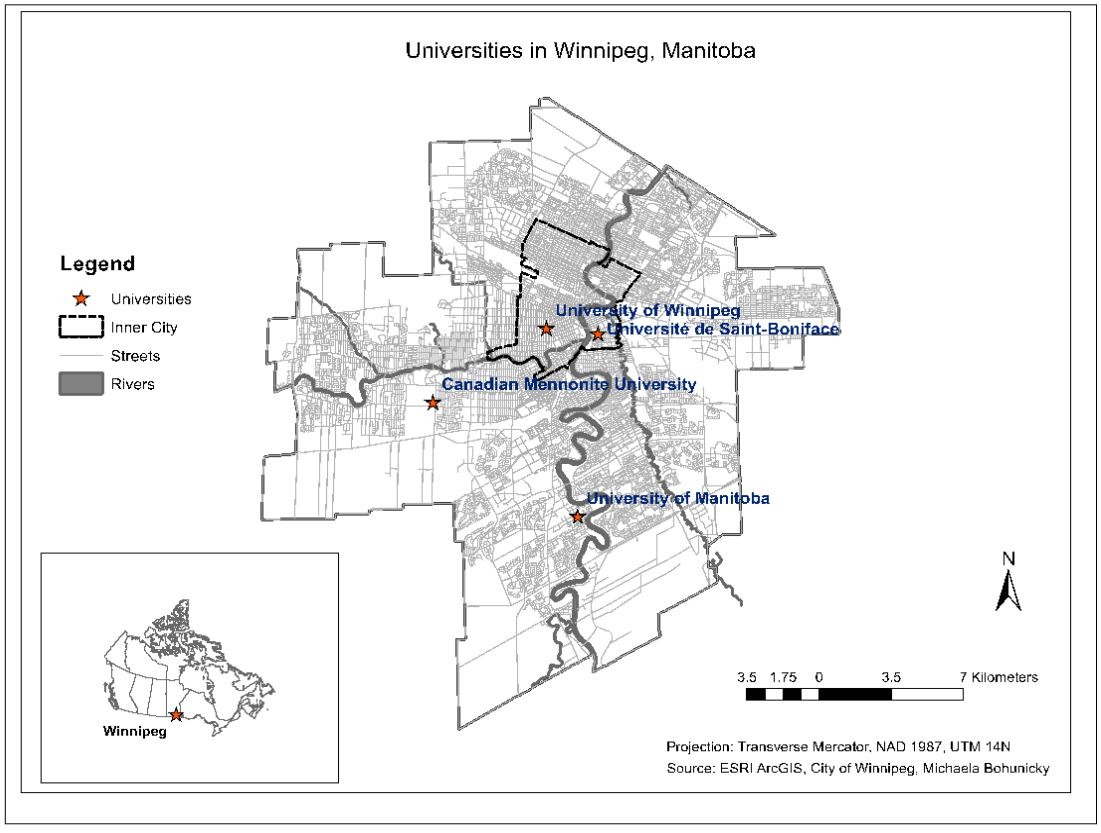
[9] FMM is a non-profit charity built from decades of work in connecting issues of food, health, social justice, and environment. Canada's first National Food Security Assembly, held in Manitoba in 2004, and the proceeding? development of the Manitoba Food Charter served as key catalysts in the establishment of FMM in 2006. The Manitoba Food Charter was drafted from the insights of over 70 public consultations; it calls for a more just and sustainable food system. The University of Winnipeg is one of its 75 organizational signatories (FMM, 2016a). Today, FMM has become a prominent NGO in the province promoting food security and local food systems. It convenes and collaborates with several other provincial food networks in Canada, advocates for policy reform, and is involved in over 40 community food projects (Levkoe, 2014).

identify barriers and opportunities for local, sustainable purchasing (FMM, 2016b). In essence, Manitoba on the Menu calls for institutional food service providers to expand their bottom lines beyond financial profit and adapt more socially and environmentally responsible purchasing models.[10] Likewise, it demands government support to strengthen the network of producers, distributors, and buyers, and include smaller-scale, local producers in these supply chains (FMM, 2016b).

Methods

We used a comparative case study method to examine factors that enable and constrain on-campus food system transformation at the two largest universities in Winnipeg. The UW is comprised of a student population just short of 10,000 (UW, n.d.) and is situated in downtown Winnipeg, while the UM is considerably larger, with three campuses and an enrollment of 29,000 students. The largest of its campuses, Fort Garry, where we conducted our research, is situated in the south end of Winnipeg, 11 km from downtown (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Map of universities in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada



[10] See pp. 35-39 of FMM (2016b) for the full list of recommendations.

Our qualitative research included twelve 30 to 60 minute, semi-structured interviews with key individuals with past and/or current involvement in on-campus activities related to local and sustainable food at one or both of the universities. The research participants were selected because of their different roles at the universities, either in administration, foodservices, faculty, students, or the non-profit sector. This included seven individuals situated at UM, four at UW and one person who had worked with both campuses. We also held a focus group with UM students as part of a Geopolitical Economy course. Finally, we reviewed the available secondary sources, both academic and non-academic (the latter consisting of media reports, organizational websites, non-governmental and government reports, and toolkits), concerning food on the two campuses.

The two case studies: The University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba

The developments discussed above provide evidence of a trend at Canadian universities of addressing (some more adequately than others) food system concerns, and in Manitoba, the existence of an active local, sustainable food sector and a certain level of interest on the part of the Provincial Government in supporting institutional procurement of local and sustainable food.[11] It is in this context that we now turn to examining how the UW and the UM approached institutional food procurement of local, sustainable food, as well as the particular factors and barriers each campus has faced in effecting changes to the food procurement policies and practices.

The University of Winnipeg

In 2009, the UW bought itself out of the university's corporate contract with Chartwells, to shift to its own self-operated social enterprise, Diversity Food Services. This section explores the factors that enabled this transformation.[12]

At the UW, collaboration and mobilization of various stakeholders paired with the interest and support of progressive institutional-level actors (university administration) enabled food system transformation towards locally sourced and sustainably produced foods. UW's bold move to opt out of Chartwells mid-contract and create a self-operated local social enterprise secured the university's place as a national leader in the alternative food system movement (FMM and Diversity Food Services, 2015; Park & Reynolds, 2012). This was not done impulsively. Since the signing of Chartwells' contract in 2004 (Aramark had held the previous

[11] Our study was conducted in 2016, prior to the provincial elections that led to a change of government in Manitoba. The NDP government that supported both the Small Scale Food Manitoba working group and the Manitoba on the Menu initiative was replaced by a Conservative Party government.

[12] Various elements of this process have been captured in the media as well as reports by civil society organizations and the government.

contract), student criticism began flowing through campus channels such as the student union (Klassen, 2004), the campus newspaper, student surveys and even national publications such as *The Globe and Mail* and *Maclean's* (Prints, 2007). In an interview conducted as part of this research, Dr. Lloyd Axworthy, who was president of the UW from 2004-2014, also spoke about widespread student discontent: "…What rankled me is that every time the *Maclean's* survey came out, we were at the bottom of the heap; our students basically said the food was crap and I was being hung in effigy outside the cafeteria". Axworthy also mentioned, however, that although students were certainly expressing their grievances around Chartwells, foodservice did not appear to be big issue on the student agenda. Despite multiple attempts to regain customer satisfaction, students voted with their feet causing Chartwells to lose about 20 percent in cafeteria traffic to the plethora of downtown venues surrounding the campus (L. Axworthy, personal communication, July 2015).

The UW Community Renewal Corporation (UWCRC) that Dr. Axworthy created early on in his ten-year presidency was an example of the UW's progressive institutional agenda. The UWCRC is a not-for-profit, charitable body with equal membership from both the university and community (UWCRC, n.d) that is mandated to make the university more accessible to the downtown community (L. Axworthy, personal communication, July 2015). Originally intended to help develop new campus facilities, as Axworthy went on to explain, the UWCRC board soon realized that it could help mitigate existing food issues by turning the foodservice management from an outside contractor over to the corporation. Subsequently, UWCRC partnered with Supporting Employment & Economic Development (SEED) Winnipeg to develop what is now known as Diversity Food Services (L. Axworthy, personal communication, July 2015).[13]

Diversity Food Services: an alternative foodservice model

Since 2009, Diversity Food Services has worked to "produce quality, nutritious, and flavourful food in an environment that champions all who contribute their energy and skill—from the farmer, to the chef, to the service staff" (Diversity Food Services, n.d.). Diversity's practices are quite unique in institutional foodservices. In particular, it purchases 65 percent local, sustainable food; nearly as much food is purchased directly from producers as is sourced through distributors, both small and large; no contracts are held with suppliers; increased investment in workers through training leads to slower/less turnover; and high training costs are offset through raw ingredient purchasing, in-house processing, and bulk-buying. Its budget is split among three major areas: 34 percent labour, 32 percent food ingredients, and 34 percent other business expenses and profits (FMM, 2015). There are no hard targets supporting Diversity's local, sustainable food procurement. Diversity General Manager, Ian Vickers, explained it to us like this:

[13] SEED Winnipeg is a non-profit organization that provides capacity building services to socially and economically disadvantaged individuals and groups (Diversity Food Services, n.d.)

> We feel that goal setting like this can lead to an acceptance of what is really underperformance… If we had looked at what was commonplace for institutional food service when Diversity was founded and doubled that, then told the kitchen team that the expectation is for them to purchase 20 percent locally - we would probably still be purchasing 20-25 percent locally. By instead telling the team, 'source seasonally appropriate foods as sustainably as possible and as locally as possible'...our small company is more able to respond to a shifting local procurement landscape. (I. Vickers, personal communication, July 2015)

Even in the absence of stated hard targets, Diversity purchases its local, sustainable food from up to 185 vendors, all of whom have no written agreement with Diversity. Axworthy and Alana Lajoie-O'Malley, Director of UW's Campus Sustainability Office, praised Diversity's staff for their level of cooperation with other campus departments that they felt greatly exceeded that demonstrated by Chartwells. Importantly, Lajoie-O'Malley acknowledges that Diversity's strong performance has allowed the UW Campus Sustainability Office to shift efforts that would normally be tied up in food matters to other key areas such as energy, emissions, waste management, and social responsibility as a whole (A. Lajoie-O'Malley, personal communication, September 2015).

The UWCRC's broad, institutionalized social mandate had a strong leveraging effect in transitioning foodservices, while high levels of support, trust and autonomy awarded to Diversity from the university's administration certainly helped contribute to the venture's success. The UWCRC "gave us a lot more flexibility to do things at the university than the conventional decision making through senates and boards of regents that just pile one committee on another," Axworthy reasoned (L. Axworthy, personal communication, July 2015). When interviewed, Kramer insisted that universities trying grassroots approaches to food system change will hit brick walls unless the administration first allows the space for it to happen.

Diversity's presence at the UW has had impacts both on and off campus. Contrary to near-bottom campus food ratings in *Maclean's Magazine* during Chartwells' contract (Prints, 2007), UW now has among the highest ratings for student perception of healthy food on campus. Whereas sales under previous providers rarely exceeded $1 million, Diversity's sales jumped to $2.5 million in its first three years (UWCRC, n.d.). In addition to students' pride in its services, Diversity has also captured significant attention from beyond its campus borders: "The food community in Winnipeg has really rallied behind what's happened here on campus…We've had really great support from external stakeholders," Lajoie-O'Malley added. According to *The Globe and Mail*, Diversity was Winnipeg's most in-demand caterer in 2011 (Agrell, 2011). In response to demand, Diversity has expanded its operations to FortWhyte Alive, a major environmental education and recreational center in the city, and the Winnipeg Folk Festival, and such growth in demand has helped to offset campus foodservice costs (B. Kramer, personal communication, July 2015; I. Vickers, personal communication, July 2015).

There are several other dimensions to the UW's success in engaging in food system change. Diversity Foods has created new opportunities within the province. In addition to helping support the local, sustainable food market through Diversity's purchasing priorities, Diversity spurred an increase in local production and a transformation of city menus (Agrell, 2011). Finally, representatives from at least a dozen universities—including University of Victoria, UBC, and McGill, and some international schools—caught wind of the innovative model and have visited UW to learn more about Diversity (Agrell, 2011; L. Axworthy, personal communication, July 2015). Although the UW clearly did take some important steps that have led to significant achievements, there remain challenges to food system transformation on campus.

The University of Manitoba

Food services at the UM differ considerably from those at the UW. Five foodservice providers operate on the Fort Garry campus: one at each of the three colleges, several student union venues throughout University Centre, and Aramark as the largest contract (for years 2014-2024) with locations throughout the campus (UM Today, 2014). This section focuses primarily on two service providers at the Fort Garry Campus: the most prominent, Aramark, and to a lesser extent, Degrees Restaurant, one of the student union's venues. Degrees is included as an on-campus point of comparison but also as an example of what sustainable foodservice efforts can (and do) look like at the UM.

Food service and beverage contracts at UM are not subject to broad or extensive discussion among members of the university community. The Foodservices Committee, chaired by the Director of Ancillary Services, shapes the Request for Proposal (RFP) for any new foodservice contract; Ancillary Services also coordinates the resulting bids and manages the resulting contract (I. Hall, personal communication, August 2015). According to professor and former chair of the Sustainability Committee Dr. John Sinclair,[14] past RFPs usually started one year in advance of the contract expiry. However, in 2013 when Aramark's contract was nearing completion, the RFP began only six months in advance (J. Sinclair, personal communication, September 2015). Additionally, a number of stakeholders felt they did not have any influence in shaping the RFP. For instance, Ian Hall, then Director of the Office of Sustainability, said that although he was invited to provide input, the process felt more consultative than collaborative and that ultimately, he doubted whether his input would have any impact on the RPF (I. Hall, personal communication, August 2015). The Sustainability Committee was also eager to be involved, but was never invited. Only by chance, Sinclair recalled, did one member of the Sustainability Committee stumble across the imminent expiry of the then-existing contract,

[14] The Sustainability Committee was created to help make all aspects of university activities more sustainable and developed its first sustainability strategy. The Office of Sustainability, an administrative department, was created in response to the resulting strategy. The Sustainability Committee remains separate to the Office of Sustainability and autonomous to the administration, but the relationships are continuously evolving (Sinclair).

allowing the committee a last-minute chance to submit unsolicited input (to which they never received a response) on the RFP that the university would soon make public. Later on, Sinclair was only able to view the sustainability sections of the bids and was obliged to sign a confidentiality agreement to do so. Even once Aramark had received the contract, Sinclair pointed out that he had to sign a confidentiality agreement to see their sustainability plan (J. Sinclair, personal communication, September 2015). Three years into the contract, the terms of agreement between the UM and Aramark remain inaccessible to the public, and despite pledging to develop metrics that better align the company's practices with the sustainability aspects of the University's Strategic Plan,[15] the company has yet to do so (Anonymous, personal communication, September 2015).

Various stakeholders in the UM campus community continue to criticize two additional characteristics of the Aramark contract. First, Aramark's separate contracts for both the major dining service and the sole catering service have created a near-monopoly of food on campus, which smaller campus food providers, professors, administrators, and students express as a concern (L. Dunne, personal communication, August 2015; Focus group; Entz, personal communication, 2015; I. Hall, personal communication, August 2015). Secondly, Aramark's contract spans ten years in length, over two generations of students. According to the former chair of the Sustainability Committee, this is worrisome: "Now that we have a long-term contract, the malaise just sets in…you have to work around the terms of the contract which you aren't allowed to see. . . The opportunity for strategic thinking is long gone" (J. Sinclair, personal communication, September 2015).

As we pointed out earlier in this article, the literature does shed light on how some universities are transitioning to more local sustainable food systems and Aramark too is responding to the increased demand for healthy and sustainable food on campus. For example, in introducing its national "I go local" program, the company (at a national level) declared a commitment to local and sustainable purchasing and indicated that it is providing up to 55 percent local products to their food service programs (Aramark, n.d.). On the UM campus, however, the company is far from reaching this level of local purchasing; UM Dining Services, for example, currently purchases only 19 percent local, sustainable food (D. Duff, personal communication, September 2015).

Degrees Restaurant, run by the University of Manitoba Students' Union (UMSU), is leading the way for UM food providers in implementing a more sustainable vision as it is regarded as being much more receptive to increasing local, sustainable purchasing (L. Dunne, personal communication, August 2015). It is the only restaurant in Manitoba to have achieved

[15] As outlined in the *University of Manitoba Strategic Plan: 2015-2020*, "The University will need to continue its efforts to promote institutional sustainability and to pursue the principles of environmental, social, and economic sustainability, defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development as meeting 'the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'" (University of Manitoba, 2015a, p. 6).

Level 3 Leaders in Environmentally Accountable Foodservice (LEAF) certification,[16] and Degrees is also a consistent collaborator with the UMSU Campus Garden, from using edible flowers for garnishes to hosting a harvest dinner with food grown on site. Interestingly, despite Degrees' openness and enthusiasm for sustainable practices, it faces challenges in scaling up local, sustainable purchases—some of which Aramark shares. The amount of local, sustainable food that Degrees purchases is not known.

Persistent challenges at UM

Earlier on, we reflected on the three constraints that hamper transitions to local sustainable food procurement based on a review of Canadian campuses (high-cost, lack of access to local sustainable supply chains, dominant corporate structure for food procurement). At the UM, managers of both Aramark and Degrees who were interviewed for this research identified two of these obstacles to purchasing more local and sustainable food: cost and lack of supply chains. Dean Duff, General Manager of UM Dining Services, identified cost as a key challenge in complying more fully with Aramark's "I go Local" campaign since the kitchen can only do so much to offset the premium cost internally. He believes that increasing the amount of local sustainable food would mean higher food costs for customers—something he doubts students would be willing to pay (D. Duff, personal communication, September 2015). Despite its break-even model, Ryan Woods, the General Manager of Degrees, also identified cost as a challenge: "More often than not we choose not organic, not local out of necessity…because if our menu was entirely local, sustainable, nobody could afford it". He went on to explain that there is a huge disconnect between the real and perceived cost of *good* food, largely due to the falsely low prices our conventional food system portrays as the *real* cost of food.

The lack of supply chains offering local, sustainable products consistently and in sufficient volumes was identified as a barrier by UM Dining Services and Degrees, even though the latter operates at a much smaller scale. For both, purchasing a staple ingredient locally and sustainably would mean coordinating orders with dozens of farmers on a weekly basis (as Diversity does)—a cumbersome task that neither operation has the labor capacity to carry out (D. Duff, personal communication, September 2015; R. Woods, personal communication, August 2015). However, Duff recognizes the purchasing power that UM Dining Services holds, for example with its largest distributor Sysco. If UM Dining Services used this power to demand more local sustainable items, such products could then be made available to Sysco's entire client base, similar to what Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries has recently achieved.[17] Woods mentioned

[16] LEAF certification is a recognition program that helps foodservice operations reduce their environmental footprints in 10 key areas of sustainability (Leaders in Environmentally Accountable Food Service (LEAF), 2014). Diversity Foods at UW received a Level 3 LEAF certification.

[17] Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries manages liquor and gambling products in the province, primarily out of two casinos in Winnipeg. Recently, they signed an agreement with Sysco to increase local food purchasing. In six months, local food purchases were doubled to nearly 20 percent with a target of 25 percent. As a result, Sysco has been able to offer a larger volume and variety of local products to its client base (FMM, 2016b).

that Degrees' staff do push their purveyors for local alternatives, but find that some of the products made available to them in response are not always what they would consider truly local; instead, they are merely skewed as such for marketing potential.[18] Dunne is similarly skeptical of the use of "local" in marketing contexts; she considers much of the restaurant industry and national foodservices' highly publicized support of the local, sustainable food movement "lip service". Both experiences cast doubt on mainstream distributors' capacity to play a part in developing radically different supply chains.

The UM does have several policies and guidelines concerning the purchase of local sustainable food. But, these lack clear targets and mechanisms for implementation (I. Hall, personal communication, August 2015).[19] Apparently, the same can be said about much of the language within the university's contract with Aramark; so although its vagueness may be a justification for inaction, the University can also use it as an opportunity to discuss and perhaps clarify goals within the contract (Anonymous, personal communication, September 2015). The UM has included "Safe, Healthy, Just and Sustainable Food Systems" as one of its key research priorities in the university's 2015-2020 *Strategic Research Plan.* This could potentially be an important step toward achieving this transition. At this stage, while many are still debating what this research priority area actually means, it is a sign of hope that it has already catalyzed some action, such as the UM's first Sustainable Food Systems Workshop held in March 2015 to discuss current and potential collaboration (M. Entz, personal communication, November 2015; University of Manitoba, 2015b). For example, the Office of Sustainability is leading the first renewal of the *Sustainability Strategy* for 2016-2018 and then director, Ian Hall, was hoping this would lead to more real change including:

> …Some real structure around shaping our food system…something that would push us towards walking the walk when it comes to a safe, healthy, just, sustainable food system on this campus…it might mean booting franchises, it might mean changing the way we deliver foodservice, it might mean increased food prices...collectively, our foodservice providers have a lot of control.[20] (I. Hall, personal communication, August 2015)

There is, however, on-going criticism of the UM administration for not being supportive enough and proactive towards food system transition efforts. For instance, there is a sense that

[18] Ironically, UMSU generously uses 'local' and 'organic' to describe Degrees' food in its promotions, which Woods admitted made him uncomfortable (Woods, personal communication, 2015).

[19] For example, UM's first *Sustainability Strategy* (University of Manitoba, 2012) and its most recent edition (University of Manitoba, 2016), and the UM Students' Union's *Ethical Purchasing Policy* (UMSU, 2015) include supportive language around local, sustainable purchasing but are short on clear definitions, goals, and strategies.

[20] Ian Hall guided the development of the baseline study *Food at the University of Manitoba: A summary of current activities and programs, with additional notes on challenges and opportunities* (Office of Sustainability, 2015) that is perhaps the most comprehensive source of food system information at the UM to date and its contents helped inform our research. He left the UM in the Fall of 2016, and since then, judging from the Office of Sustainability's webpage, it appears to be less involved in food system work.

the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences is driven by corporate funding interests and is consequentially teaching and practicing mainstream, conventional agriculture rather than adequately supporting more research on alternatives such as agro-ecology and organic agriculture (M. Entz, personal communication, November 2015). Dr. Martin Entz, a professor of Cropping Systems and Natural Systems Agriculture at the UM, explains that when he was working alongside students to establish the now-vibrant UMSU Campus Garden, he encountered "silly and unbelievable resistance [from the administration] …we had to steal the land to operate on weekends to get [the garden] going".

Despite these barriers, students at the UM have consistently raised concerns about food on campus, as well as a desire for change. Some students who participated in a focus group as part of our research stated they lack the awareness and opportunities to engage in food activism, including opportunities to participate in applied projects through course curricula. Others felt that the campus' reliance on the corporate food system—demonstrated by the long-term presence of Aramark, Coke, Monsanto, Starbucks and Tim Hortons on campus—presents a barrier to moving towards more socially just and ecologically sustainable food systems. In the focus group discussion, the students' union was perceived as a central source for greater advocacy and engagement concerning food system issues.[21] In a recent survey of food insecurity conducted by UM researchers over the 2015/16 school year, students voiced their disappointment over the quality and price of food offered on campus (Entz et al., 2017). In the comment section of the survey, one student stated, "the quality of the food Aramark provides at this University is terrible", while another mentioned that "Food is difficult [at] the university, and the UofM's good options are particularly terrible. It's both expensive and low quality." The coordinator of the Campus Food Strategy Group, who also ran on a slate in the student union elections, described food system change as being one of the most well-received themes of the campaign and that there seemed to be a growing opinion that Aramark's food is expensive and poor in quality (Anonymous, personal communication, September 2015).

Discussion

Our study of food procurement at the UW and UM highlights the factors that enable and constrain on-campus food system transformation. In analyzing these two cases, we found the comparative framework of global food movements developed by Holt-Giménez and Shattuck (2011) particularly useful. Their framework would view the campus counter-movements as one side of the "double movement" occurring in today's corporate food regime, whereby some institutions and civil society actors resist neoliberal food policies in different ways and to different extents. Holt-Giménez and Shattuck identify mainly three different types of food

[21] This focus group was conducted with the 2015 UM Summer Academy on "The Geopolitical Economy of Food Security and Food Sovereignty in a Multipolar World".

movements: reformist, progressive, and radical. While reformists prioritize food security and sustainable agriculture, their efforts and initiatives often help reinforce neoliberal structures (i.e., mainstream fair trade or organically produced foods); progressive actors, such as food justice movements, focus on localizing food provisioning and tackling labour and racial issues within food systems (i.e., some farmers' markets and food policy councils); and radical actors, commonly acting under the umbrella of food sovereignty, seek to democratize and transform food systems beyond the neoliberal regime (e.g., movements demand redistributive land reform, community-based production, and integration of Indigenous knowledge (Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011). While reformist and progressive movements can establish alternative markets and challenge institutions to introduce some changes, Holt-Giménez and Shattuck go on to argue that *corporate regime change* depends largely on cooperation and building strategic alliances among progressive and radical movements.

While food movements at universities across Canada may not fit neatly into any one of these categories exclusively, the Holt-Giménez and Shattuck (2011) framework is useful. By categorizing the actions taking place, we are better able to understand how or if food system change can be institutionalized and, if so, what kind of movement trends are necessary for such change to occur. More precisely, in the context of campus food provisioning, what role, if any, can transnational corporate foodservices play in building alternative food systems? And, is such food system transformation possible when based on reforms that occur within existing neoliberal structures of food procurement?

Our research on food procurement at the UW and UM indicates that a key driver of food system transformation on campuses involves the support, coordinated involvement, and collaborative actions of multiple stakeholders. Of these stakeholders, students are by far the largest group within any campus community and often generate the greatest degree of change when they mobilize to make demands and their voices are heard.

While the UW supported and enabled the institutionalization of a food system transformation, at the UM there was much less support. At the UW, the participation of students enabled progressive change to occur, change that is compatible with more radical food movements. Both individual and collective student action contributed to pushing the administration to fundamentally change foodservices. First, students voiced discontent through the Student Union newspaper and various popular news channels. Second, they engaged in individual action by 'voting with their feet' and venturing off campus to purchase food from nearby downtown venues.[22] Consequently, students' dissatisfaction with Chartwells food negatively affected the company's reputation and resulted in a significant loss in profit at the UW. Finally, as part of broader efforts to make the UW more accessible and socially useful, the UW administration rejected the corporate food provider (Chartwells) and instead created a home-

[22] We want to acknowledge that there are certainly limitations to "voting with your feet". There is an important literature highlighting the ideological contradictions within this practice, producing what Johnston (2008) calls the "citizen-consumer hybrid", where goals of citizenship are superficially met while elements of consumerism are perpetuated.

grown campus food service that values a diversity of producers and conceded to student demands.

Although not found in the public narrative of the UW transition, there is a third way in which students contributed to food system change. Interestingly, in an article in UW's student newspaper, *The Uniter*, then-University of Winnipeg Students' Union (UWSA) president David Jacks argues that the Diversity model was inspired by a food service bid submitted by the UWSA when Aramark's contract was set to expire in 2004 (Jacks, 2011). This suggests that rather than engaging only in visible student activism they were also contributing to change at UW in subtler ways, by first imagining alternative food services on campus.

Since the successful transition away from Chartwells to Diversity Foods, UW students appear less engaged in food issues, except for their active food bank program. This may be an unintentional result of the foodservice transition in that students do not feel the need to focus on food issues because they trust things are well and good (A. Lajoie-O'Malley, personal communication, September 2015), and the UWSA can now concentrate more effort and energy in a myriad of other social movements such as LGBT, anti-austerity, Idle No More, Climate Justice, Consent Culture, Living Wage, Youth Vote, Divest and more. For example, since 2010, the UWSA has hosted *Grass Routes*, an annual festival geared towards envisioning a sustainable future (UWSA, n.d.).[23]

Comparatively, students at the UM face additional barriers that constrain their abilities to engage in coordinated efforts towards food system transformation. As a result, advocates for change may rely on reforms within the existing food procurement arrangements, rather than progressive shift away from corporate food servicing. First, UM students do not have the same ability to vote with their feet. Given its location in a pocket of the city's south end, half enclosed by a river, the Fort Garry campus is isolated from surrounding venues by over 1.5 km in all directions. In addition, Aramark holds a near-monopoly of food venues on campus, making it difficult for many students to differentiate between Aramark and non-Aramark venues.

Nevertheless, student activism remains alive and well at the UM. The UMSU Campus Garden is a vibrant and growing network of students who are acquiring more campus space to grow food and increasing funding to support coordinators. Harvests are split among volunteers and sold on campus once a week over the summer. The student-led Campus Food Strategy Group (CFSG) was established to promote campus food system change; it has done this through a number of projects—nearly all conducted in partnership with the Office of Sustainability—including participation in UM's first food system baseline report, the Campus Food Map featuring a sustainability-oriented legend, and the UM Food Challenge.[24] In addition, individual

[23] This is in no way to suggest that students at UW were not active in a variety of struggles earlier on. Instead, our point is that the creation of Diversity Foods freed up more time to focus on struggles other than food.

[24] The CFSG is an offspring of Meal Exchange's Campus Food Systems Pilot Project that ran from 2011-2013 while the Food Challenge is a student-centered competition sponsored in part by Guelph's *Feeding 9 Billion* initiative to develop and facilitate campus food system solutions. In the Fall 2016, CFSG's second annual Food Challenge addressed opportunities such as student-led enterprise models for organic waste management (another

students and student groups have organized more collectively around food issues. For example, a diverse coalition of students came together to host UM's first Green Week in March 2016, aimed at celebrating and building capacity around students' efforts in sustainability. Among its most successful events was a two-day farmers' market that spurred the hiring of a part-time coordinator to host more markets throughout the upcoming academic year. In a similar vein, UMSU formed a Student Sustainability Office and is restructuring their eco-oriented groups intended to enhance collaboration and thus enable more effective action. Importantly, CFSG, the Food Bank and Campus Garden are to be the "food" branch of this new office. All of this student activism is prompting the administration to pay more attention to food issues.

Lingering administrative barriers at UM

As other studies have indicated, university administrators play an instrumental role in either enabling, or constraining food system transitions and transformation on campus (Barlett, 2011; Park & Reynolds, 2012; Pothukuchi & Molnar, 2015). At the UW, key stakeholders agreed on the importance of administrative support. The UWCRC served as a conducive, legitimate space for campus and community members alike to move a social mandate forward through university activities, including the incubation and then oversight of Diversity.

The UM administration, however, does not appear to be providing the support necessary to move towards food system change. The lack of administrative will for more transformative change is especially evident when considering the 2013 Request for Proposal process that led to the ten-year UM-Aramark contract. Being neither inclusive nor transparent to the campus community, the administration prevented all but a small committee from being involved in choosing a major foodservice provider and still keeps the now active agreement entirely confidential. There is also concern over the slow, bureaucratic pace of change within administrative activities (M. Entz, personal communication, November 2015; I. Hall, personal communication, November 2015; J. Sinclair, personal communication, September 2015).

However, there may be potential for food system change since other administrative branches have engaged in greater consultative efforts. Among these, the Office of Sustainability held a series of public consultations in preparing the renewal of the Sustainability Strategy while the Campus Planning Office engaged similarly when developing the Visionary (re)Generation plan. It is worth noting that prior to U of T's recent decision to switch foodservices from Aramark to being self-operated, feedback was collected from students, faculty, and staff through focus groups that communicated the overwhelming interest to forgo the contract renewal with the corporate provider (Sagan, 2016, June 7). Would the UM community have voiced similar interests if there had been meaningful consultations in 2013?

priority action area in the UM's 2016-2018 Sustainability Strategy) and alternative food service models in light of Aramark's contract expiry in 2024.

The UM administration is beginning to recognize the significance of food through the determination of *Safe, healthy, just, and sustainable food systems* as a priority research area. This bears huge potential for change, except that there is yet no consensus on what constitutes safe, healthy, just, and sustainable food systems, and it is currently confined primarily to research rather than also including education and outreach. On a governance level, the administration endorsed, at least on paper, a commitment to food system change through the renewal of the *Sustainability Strategy.* The updated strategy emphasized the need to develop a "collaborative campus food strategy" and promote "safe, nutritious food that contributes to resilient local food systems" (University of Manitoba, 2016). This was accompanied by an unprecedented programming budget for the Office of Sustainability and its small team of staff and student interns involved in mobilizing a nascent campus food movement. However, since the departure of Ian Hall, the former director of the Office of Sustainability, who played a leadership role in engaging a broad range of stakeholders around sustainability and food, it is unclear what role this office will now play in promoting food system change. The loss of such leadership makes it all the more important for campus food movements to build capacity through the involvement and investment of a wide range of actors, including those situated off-campus.

Role of external drivers in campus food system transitions and transformation

Another stakeholder that has been important in successful cases of food system transitions and transformation on Canadian campuses is an individual expert and/or organization from the broader community that fosters important links between the university campus and local, sustainable producers (Chiandet & Dandar, 2014; Roberts et al., 2014; Szabo et al., 2013). For example, when U of T took its first major step towards scaling up local, sustainable purchasing, expertise was expressed by the non-profit, non-governmental organization, Local Food Plus (LFP). Previous to LFP, there were no obvious channels for large institutions to access the local, sustainable sector (Friedmann, 2007). At the UW, this stakeholder took the form of two individuals, Ben Kramer and Kirsten Godbout (who were sought out by the university specifically for their well-established ties to and participation in the local, sustainable sector), to better infuse the local, sustainable ethos into Diversity—and by extension the university.

The UM has yet to tap into this kind of expertise, but some recent promising off-campus developments among relevant provincial actors who seek progressive changes to food procurement practices could benefit UM food providers. As part of a series of actions geared to implement the recommendations of the Small Scale Food Manitoba working group (2015) report, the first Direct Farm Marketing Conference was held in Spring 2016, prompting the formation of the Direct Farm Marketing Association of Manitoba Co-op Inc. (Government of Manitoba, 2016; Stevenson, 2016). The new organization, along with other groups such as Sharing the Table Manitoba represent interesting opportunities for the UM to engage in alternative purchasing that better supports the local, sustainable food sector.

There is a significant piece missing in this, though, and that is the role of the government in supporting campus food system change. It is important to note that in 2011, the Government of Manitoba received a proposal for a provincial local food procurement policy (FTC, 2011), yet such a policy remains to be enacted. Additionally, a recent study that explored the feasibility of a food hub in Winnipeg, a financially self-sustaining facility that would create accessible supply chains for the local, sustainable market, concluded that further public investment was needed to establish the relationships, education, and demand for local, sustainable food before such a project could be put in place (Grant & Donkervoort, 2014). Interestingly, as a result of public pressure, the Small Scale Food Manitoba working group, and other developments discussed above, the former NDP Government of Manitoba created two staff positions for local food initiatives (Government of Manitoba, 2016) and it also committed to supporting local and organic food through *Manitoba's Climate Change and Green Economy Action Plan* (Government of Manitoba, 2015). Although the Conservative Party that was elected in 2016 does not appear at all interested in following in the steps of the former government, our point is that government actions can significantly help or hinder food system change.

The Small Scale Food Manitoba working group (2015) report clearly identifies the need for more institutional foodservice engagement while offering various pathways for institutions to begin doing so. By sourcing 65 percent of its food locally and sustainably, Diversity at the UW has had significant impact on the local, sustainable food sector in Manitoba (and perhaps beyond, given the many inquiries from other municipal, provincial, national, and international groups). If the UM—roughly three times the size of the UW and currently purchasing only 19 percent local, sustainable food—committed itself to sourcing more locally, the institutional investment would no doubt contribute to enhancing the local, sustainable food sector. The question is, would this best be done through Aramark or with an independent and self-operated entity? And, will the UM wait until 2024, the year that the contract with Aramark ends, to act?

Food procurement on campuses: sites of slow reform or transformational change?

How one answers these questions depends very much on what kind of change is desired. As Holt-Giménez and Shattuck (2011) remind us, if the aim is *corporate regime change*, then actions must go beyond the reformist and progressive, and instead be more radical. Doing so has much more potential to lead to the kind of fundamental transformational change described by Brown et al. (2012). As we pointed out in our literature review, Aramark has taken steps to adapt and collaborate with the local, sustainable sector and it is more involved in local purchasing at various universities across Canada.[25] However, since Aramark is a key actor in the corporate food regime, its business model dictates a very different supply chain and ways of working than

[25] While the specific results are unknown, in 2013, Aramark received $100,000 from The Greenbelt Fund in Ontario to run pilot projects at Trent, U of T, Wilfred Laurier, and York aimed at increasing local food procurement. Aramark also received two grants in 2011 and 2012, totalling $139,987.00 from The Greenbelt Fund for similar, locally-focused projects (Greenbelt Fund, 2016).

that of, for example, Diversity Food Services at the UW. Aramark's interest in using their buying power to leverage more local, sustainable options through their existing distributors raises some important questions: Will the involvement of transnational corporate distributors ultimately bear similar limitations as with the transnational corporate foodservice management companies? Does food system transformation involve severing ties with not only one corporate link of the supply chain (foodservice providers), but all?

U of T's recent switch at its main campus to self-operated foodservices (Kikulis, 2016) certainly does highlight concerns about the role of a transnational corporation like Aramark in campus food system transformation. As Sinclair stressed, the UM campus community's biggest task around Aramark is to continue to critically reflect and apply pressure through the remaining years of the contract. This is necessary to ensure that a new vision is developed by its expiry. Without such pressure, the next foodservice bidding process will differ little from the one held in 2013. We argue that it might well be in the best interests of the UM community and to the benefit of students and the small scale, local food sector in Manitoba to follow in the steps of UW, U of T, UBC and others that effected more radical change on their campuses. That is, take progressive action to opt out of the transnational corporate contract, and shift to a foodservice model that appears more willing and able to contribute to building alternative food systems.

Increasingly, universities are being pushed on their obligation to sustainability as part of their public mandate. Lori Stahlbrand (2016) argues that they should use their functions as "anchor institutions" to drive sustainable food system transitions and transformation by building infrastructure, conducting research, promoting food literacy, shifting bulk purchasing, and collaborating with community organizations with leadership and expertise to help scale up local, sustainable public procurement. She also stresses that food provisioning must be recognized as more than an ancillary service; indeed, it is a multifunctional and core part of a university's mandate (Stahlbrand, 2016). Similarly, one student leader at the UW emphasized:

> I feel that universities and student associations have a responsibility to try and engage in initiatives that are socially sustainable. The food service delivery that they support and select on campus is such an instrumental, organic expression of this. And it's been a great thing to watch here [at UW]… It would be terribly exciting if UM were to jump into that world… (Anonymous, personal communication, September 2015).

The question is, will the UM make the jump? And if so, when and how significant will the change be?

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