PLANNING FOR URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

A case study of urban farming in Vancouver as an urban sustainable and ecological resilient practice

Kristin Edith Abrahamsen Kjærås

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

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Urban farm, downtown, City of Vancouver

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Abstract

This thesis is a qualitative case study of the mobilization and negotiation of urban farming, as an urban sustainable and economic resilient practice in the City of Vancouver. The thesis is based on a triangulation of data-collection techniques, consisting of document review, semi-structured interview, and minor participatory observation. Considering the concurrent legal imposition of urban farming in this city, this case study analyzes how urban farming is advanced as a legitimate practice within different levels of the urban political terrain. Further, this thesis progresses insight into the concrete dynamics hindering and contributing to the mobilization and negotiation of urban farming as a legitimate practice in the City of Vancouver. By understanding this mobilization and negotiation as entwined relations between practice and discourse, this thesis emphasizes the constructive potential within interim appropriation of urban vague terrains for articulating differential socio-ecological imaginaries. Nonetheless, this thesis outlines simultaneously the risk involved in such endeavours, emphasising the need for sufficient synergy between bottom-up induced initiative and top-down facilitation.

Acknowledgments

-the Battlestar Norvegica-

Above the door she nail a sign, a motto of sorts carved into a plank of redwood, the letters angled sharp like runes 'Outside of the box is where I live' (Riley, 2012, p. 494).

This thesis is the outcome of an entangled process. It has been a worthwhile endeavour and I owe great appreciation to many people.

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Image 1. Urban food production on vacant land, City of Vancouver (photo credit: Andrew Heneghan)

1 Introduction

In 2012, the Vancouver Urban Farming Society (VUFS) was established in the City of Vancouver with the purpose to "support the growth of urban farming in Vancouver, and act as a model for urban farming policy in other jurisdictions" (Thoreau, 2012b). The organization's formation was a moment in a multifaceted process of the evolvement and mobilization of urban farming in Vancouver.

The VUFS defines urban farming as "[a] type of urban agriculture that produces food primarily to generate revenue" (Clark, Regan & Thoreau, 2012, p. 5), and the practice can further be distinguished as a small-scale, labour intensive and locally distributed agricultural model framed within ideas of urban sustainability and economic resilience. Cultivating produce for sale, urban farming can be differentiated from other urban agriculture models, such as, community gardens producing vegetables and flowers primarily for private consumption. Urban farmers in Vancouver appropriate multiple underutilized lawn-spaces and vacant sites for food production, acquired through largely informal land tenure agreements. While the City of Vancouver has a mandate to support the development of a just and sustainable food system, urban farming sits uncomfortably within the city's zoning system and legal framework. Legal barriers hinder urban farmers from becoming registered as formal businesses within the city. However, the City of Vancouver has 'turned a blind eye' to the approximately 20 urban farm ventures operating within their turf in recent years. The establishment of the Vancouver Urban Farming Society, in May 2012, was a response to this legal imposition and was the result of a two-year history of urban farmers collectively mobilizing and collaboratively engaging with the City of Vancouver. This thesis provides deeper insight into the mobilization and negotiation of urban farming as a legitimate practice within the City of Vancouver.

1.2 Thesis Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how the mobilization and negotiation of urban farming, as an urban sustainable and economic resilient practice in the City of Vancouver, have progressed. I will do this by analysing the way urban farming is constructed (conceptually and practically) and factors hindering and contributing to the legitimation of urban farming as a sustainable and resilient practice in the City of Vancouver. The overarching objective of this

thesis is to contribute to the discussion of how the urban is reimagined with reference to 'sustainability' and the practicality of such endeavours.

My research questions are:

(1) How is urban farming mobilized and negotiated as an urban sustainable and economic resilient practice in the City of Vancouver?

I wish to investigate the different ways urban farming is progressed as a legitimate practice within the City of Vancouver, with reference to ideas about urban sustainability and economic resilience. Pursuing insight into 'how urban farming is mobilized and negotiated' is a reference to the thesis' simultaneous focus upon practice and discourse. The legal imposition currently encompassing urban farming in the City of Vancouver makes such an emphasis pertinent, as the practice is concurrently progressed within different levels of the urban political terrain.

(2) What factors contribute to and hinder the legitimation of urban farming in the City of Vancouver as an urban sustainable and economic resilient practice?

I wish to gain further insight into the concrete dynamics hindering and contributing to the recognition and potential legalization of urban farming in the City of Vancouver, with reference to urban sustainability and economic resilience. While I cannot weigh the relevance of differential factors, I will pursue an understanding of the relations and contingencies of, and between, the different factors hindering and contributing to this legitimation.

1.3 Thesis Outline

Chapter 2 comprises my theoretical framework and I present theories concerning constructions of sustainability and nature, the conceptualization of urban food production with reference to ideas of urban sustainability, and the inclusion of civil society actors in urban planning and governance.

Chapter 3 provides an outline of relevant methodological perspectives and considerations for this thesis and engages in a discussion of the methodological decisions made, throughout the extent of this research process.

Chapter 4 presents a contextualization of the City of Vancouver and their decade-long progression of urban food policy development. Further, this chapter describes and characterizes urban farming in Vancouver and the collective organization of the urban farmers taking place since 2010.

Chapter 5 comprises the first analysis chapter and provides an analysis of how urban farming is construed as an urban sustainability and economic resilient practice. This chapter engages, as such, in a discussion of how the City of Vancouver is reimagined with reference to urban farming.

Chapter 6 encompasses the second analysis chapter and provides an analysis of urban farming's practical mobilization and negotiation within the urban political terrain. Discussing the urban farmers informal appropriation and negotiation of urban *vague terrains* and interim land tenure arrangements, this chapter analyses the political and creative potential within such informality.

Chapter 7 comprises the third analysis chapter and provides an analysis of the collective formation and formalization of urban farmers in Vancouver, and the collaborative process instigated between the urban farmers and the City of Vancouver.

Chapter 8 covers the fourth analysis chapter. This chapter analyses the divergent interpretations of urban farming's informal imposition and the prospective legalization of urban farming in the City of Vancouver.

Chapter 9 comprises the concluding chapter and will summarize the findings of this thesis discussed, with reference to the research questions posed in the introduction. Lastly, I provide a brief discussion of the significance and transferability of this work.

2 Theoretical Framework

Constructed by words commonly correlated as in conflict, urban farming conveys an outright convers in its formulation. While urban farming is popularly pursued and legalized in 'shrinking cities' such as in Detroit, a city going through economic recession and holding vacant land in abundance (Colasanti, Hamm, & Litjens, 2012), urban farming in the City of Vancouver is marked by the city's relatively high density and economic prosperity; questioning urban farming's embeddedness within urban sustainability ideals. Accordingly, my theoretical framework is constructed of theory pertaining to ideas and practices concerning urban farming's ability to enter into the urban realm. Firstly, I discuss theory concerning constructions of nature and sustainability. With relevance for urban farming in Vancouver, this discussion provides a foundation for understanding the political foundation of sustainability problematic and socio-ecological relations. Secondly, I discuss theory pertaining to urban sustainability ideals, conjoined with theories on urban agriculture and urban farming. The purpose of this section is to contextualize the significance given to urban agriculture and urban farming within urban sustainability theory. Lastly, I discuss contemporary urban governance and planning theory, with specific reference to political practice in cities, and public participation and engagement in planning processes. With reference to urban farming in Vancouver, this theoretical discussion affords attention to urban farming, as both, an informal practice and a bottom-up induced initiative. However first, I start with a theoretical discussion of nature and sustainability.

2.1 Constructions of Nature and Sustainability

> I hear the iron horse make the hills echo with his snort like thunder, shaking the earth with his feet, and breathing fire and smoke from his nostrils […], it seems as if the earth had got a race now worthy to inhabit it (Thoreau, 1893, p. 82).

Thoreau's depiction of the first trains in mid-19th century North America provides a portrayal of the powerful imagery of 'man' brought to the fore through technological innovation, taking place during this period. While dating as far back as the Enlightenment, Thoreau's depiction exemplifies the idea that human endeavour has instituted a series of anthropogenic changes that manifest in the separation between society and nature (Robertson, 1996). This separation holds substantial ground and is brought forward in contemporary constructions of 'nature' and 'sustainability'. This section engages in a critical and historical discussion about how nature and

sustainability is concurrently imagined and the potential impacts arising from such constructions, starting with sustainable development defined by the Brundtland Commission in 1987.

Sustainable Development

In 1987, 'Our Common Future' (the Brundtland Report) provided sustainable development universal acknowledgment defining it as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (UNWCED, 1987, p. 43). The concept was further illustrated, in the report, as a balanced approach between three dimensions: economic development, environmental protection and social equity; also referred to as the three-legged-stool (Moore, 2007). Sustainable development as defined by 'Our Common Future', united environmentalists, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the sciences, and the business community (Dryzek, 2005). However, universal adherence to the idea of 'sustainable development' has prompted criticism. Hemmersam (2012) argues that the Brundtland report legitimized a departure from the critical edge, distinctive of environmental politics in the 1960s and 1970s, stating,

> The report signalled an important shift in environmental thinking, where the sustainability agenda was inserted into mainstream economic and politics, and a break from the proposals of pioneering environmental movement for a more 'eco-centric' approach based on alternative, anti-capitalist values (p. 125).

As presented by Hemmersam (2012), the Brundtland report was indicative of a broader shift in environmental politics, conceptualized through the formulation of 'sustainable development'. With relevance for my thesis, I will discuss two central critiques of 'sustainable development'. Firstly, I scrutinize critiques of sustainable development as, effectively, ambiguous.

The Ambiguity of Sustainable Development

Formulating an environmental approach through the conceptualization of 'sustainable development' and uniting a global society around its formalization is, arguably, both a progressive and a paradoxical undertaking. Hemmersam (2012) notes that the Brundtland report's de-radicalization of the existing environmental rhetoric sanctioned the incorporation of sustainable development into politics and development, without signalling a radical shift in political or economic direction.

Neumayer (2010) compares sustainable development to other normative concepts stating, "SD[1] is like freedom or peace – that is, something to which no reasonable person would overtly object" (p. 1). Neumayer (2010) argues, that environmental politics have been depoliticized through a globally recognized formulation of 'sustainable development', resulting in essentially meaningless applications of the term. Meadowcroft (2007), on the other hand, stresses that it is this precise equivocality and open-endedness that allows the term relevance in different times and contexts. Meadowcroft (2007) further rejects technological definitions of 'sustainable development' based on set standards and measurable results. Arguing for a pragmatic and context-sensitive approach to sustainability, Moore (2007), similarly, underlines the creative potential in leaving 'sustainable development' ambiguous. Hemmersam (2012) presents a more divergent interpretation of sustainable development's ambiguity. Recognizing the creative potential in fashioning sustainable development broadly, he argues that it is sustainable development's equivocality and anthropocentric foundation that have sanctioned technology-oriented and ecological modernized reconstructions of environmental concerns (Hemmersam, 2012). Hemmersam (2012) contends that policies, as well as cities, can be rebranded through sustainability rhetoric; producing new association and similarly contributing to the potential dilution of meaning, hence, advancing the ambiguity of 'sustainability'.

Sustainable Development as Ecological Modernization

Ecological modernization is based on the idea that environmentally sustainable solutions should be economically efficient solution (Bulkeley & Mol, 2003) The concept was first described in the early 1980s (Dryzek, 2005). While there is disagreement about whether 'Our Common Future' legitimized an ecological modernized approach, subsequent accounts have more positively correlated economic growth and sustainable development (Dryzek, 2005; Hemmersam, 2012). Keil (2007) conceptualizes the turn towards ecological modernization in light of the western political-economic situation of the 1990s. The North American shift from Keynesianism to a free-market based economy at the end of the 1970s and the post-Cold-War reality of the 1990s, presented neoliberal capitalism as a favourable and viable economic system. Similarly, ecological modernization provided capitalism a route of revitalization, effectively 'greening' capitalism (Keil, 2007).

[1] Sustainable Development

According to Dryzek (2005), ecological modernization is founded on the argument that economic growth can be decoupled from increased stress put on the environment. Further, this approach commonly privileges global and technocratic solutions to environmental problematic, seeking "a restructuring of the capitalist political economy along more environmentally friendly lines" (Dryzek, 2005, p. 167). Ecological modernization is associated with consensus-oriented planning, and environmental policy is commonly progressed where win-win situations can be achieved (Dryzek, 2005). Raco (2005) argues that this results in the fragmentation of environmental politics. Radical or more comprehensive sustainability visions are sacrificed, and sustainability policy is implemented in areas of little resistance and where the idea of ecological modernization holds ground. Raco (2005) argues that such fragmentation and strategic selectivity of sustainability policy, is related to the mainstreaming of environmental issues after the 1980s. Hence, Keil (2007) notes that ecological modernization effectively places "nature under capitalism" (p. 46). By setting economic benefits as a premise for all sustainability initiatives, this approach neglects environmental elements not currently measurable in economic terms (Keil, 2007). Dryzek (2005) relates this prioritization of economic growth to ecological modernization's modern conceptualization of nature, stating "nature is treated as a source of resources and a recycler of pollutants – a giant waste treatment plant, whose capacities and balance should not be overburdened" (p. 170).

Baker, Kousis, Richardson, and Young (1997) further associate ecological modernization and the adoption of technocratic solutions with exceedingly anthropocentric framings of environmental problems. Baker et al. (1997) favours an ecocentric approach to environmental problems, understanding the value of nature as not preconditioned on its service to humans or the economy, but as valuable in its own right. Furthermore, Dryzek (2005) underscores that the variety of approaches to, and adoptions of, 'sustainable development' signify the discursive construction of environmental perspectives and, inevitably, nature. While distinguished from each other, contemporary environmental perspectives share several characteristics correlated with modern ideals. Within academia this has been a topic of extensive scrutiny, adding yet another layer to the debate about appropriate sustainable development.

From Modern Nature to Socio-environmental Imaginaries

Since before the Enlightenment, nature has been constructed in increasingly passive terms, a nature that is acted *upon,* and through conceptualizations, such as, 'original nature' (Keil, 2007;

Robertson, 1996). The idea of nature as a physical separated entity where you can *go to*, *visit*, *explore,* and eventually *return from,* exemplifies this modern separation (Whatmore, 2002). Zierhofer states (in Zimmer, 2010) that the parting of human and nonhuman processes is engrained within 'a caste system of modernity', where humans and culture are valued over everything nonhuman. While some perspectives, such as ecocentrism, tries to overcome this value-logic, modern conceptualizations of nature is uncritically adopted in much contemporary discourse, notably by environmental movements and in sustainability rhetoric (Krueger & Gibbs, 2007; Robertson, 1996; Whatmore, 2002). With reference to the critique of naturalized separations of nature and society, I will in this section discuss some of urban political ecology's (UPE) and western environmental history's (WEH) contributions to this critique; starting with a deliberation on the idea of 'wilderness' and the rejection of 'pure landscapes'.

The Idea of Wilderness and the Rejection of Pure Landscapes

WEH emphasizes the relationship between history and nature (Merchant, 2007; White, 2004). Merchant (2007) writes, "[e]nvironmental history comprises a set of approaches to doing history that brings nature into the story" (p. xv). White (2004) argues that the cultural turn in WEH, during the 1990s, initiated "attention to discourse, story and narrative" (p. 558). A central topic within this cultural turn has been the recognition of connections between constructions of 'wilderness' and North American history (Merchant, 2007).

Spence (1999) depicts in 'Dispossessing the Wilderness' how the idea of 'wilderness', constructed by westerners, naturalized the dispossession of Native Americans through national park preservation. Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot's national park conservation politics construed the great North American 'wild' *without* Native Americans. This 'wilderness' was a nature separated from people. It was a nature to explore or hunt game, but nevertheless, a nature to return from. Thus, Spence (1999) argues that the consequences of 'wilderness' constructions are real. Merchant (2007) further exemplifies the power in constructing nature differently, pointing to North American history. Merchant (2007) states, 'wilderness' "was synonymous with home for Indians, anathema to Puritans, the basis of national pride to romantics, and a way to retain masculine, frontier virtues to turn-of-the-century urbanites" (p. xvi). For urban 'explorers', at the end of the 19th century, the industrial urban environments were characterized as an 'evil wilderness', where unsanitary conditions and poverty dominated the urban impression. 'Wilderness' was a reference to unruly and crud characteristics of 'wild' nature (Merchant,

2007). Similarly, contemporary ideas of 'wilderness' are popularly consumed by a western hipster generation, such as, the indie music scene's fascination with deer, lumberjacks, and native populations. While the effect of differential identity portrayed by hipsters through an obsession with 'feathers and antlers' is enigmatic, the impact of 'wilderness' constructions in the past has been noteworthy. Merchant (2007) states,

> If it is an evolved reality that can be documented through evolutionary and ecological science and areas of pristine "wilderness" can be identified, then laws to preserve these remnants be passed, implemented, and adjudicated through the courts. If on the other hand, what wilderness means is an ephemeral semantic debate in different eras, then some will argue that no particular place has any greater claim to preservation or development than any other. Environmental history therefor lies at the core of current policy choices" (p. xvi-xvii).

Merchant's (2007) discursive approach to the concept of 'wilderness' emphasizes the relative meaning and valuation of nature. For the relevance of this thesis, it subsequently questions: What constructions currently inform conceptualizations of nature and sustainability? And; what impact do these constructions have for policy and development?

A second aspect of the cultural turn in WEH is the rejection of 'pure landscapes', a rejection closely associated with the discursive deliberation of 'wilderness' (White, 2004). The rejection of pure landscapes is the problematization of 'Nature' with capital N (White, 2004). The national park's movement in the US, at the turn of the 20th century, defended conservation of pristine areas of 'wilderness' with the argument for preserving 'original nature'. As Spence (1999) states, however, the removal of Native Americans from the land was an act of *creating* an 'original nature'. The North American landscape was a cultured landscape, before Columbus' arrival in 1492, already significantly altered by Native Americans (Spence, 1999). This argument, blurring the creation of human and nonhuman landscapes, is a central critique of the modern separation of nature and society (Robertson, 1996; Whatmore, 2002; White, 2004). Attempting to move beyond the modern separation of nature and society, Whatmore (2002) argues for the entanglement of these constructed terrains. She states "[r]ather than an exterior world of original nature, I start with the premise that animals (and plants) designated wild have been, and continue to be, routinely caught up within multiple networks of human social life" (Whatmore, 2002, p. 9). Drawing on Latour, Whatmore (2002) refers to this blurring of boundaries between nature and society as *hybridity* or *hybrid geographies*. Hybrid geographies are unchangeably incomplete and partial and cannot be separated from other human or cultural

processes (Whatmore, 2002). Zimmer (2010) states "Latour insists on the recognition of non-humans as co-producers of our environment. This implies that hybrids may show behavior, which is independent of humans, and that they may influence human activity" (347).

The rejection of 'pure landscapes', further challenges many arguments presented by environmentalists and in sustainability literature. For instance, arguments for the preservation of pristine nature or reservations for genetically modified organisms (Whatmore, 2002; White, 2004). While acknowledging this potential danger, Whatemore (2002) and (Kaika & Swyngedouw, 2012) argue that the rejection of 'pure landscapes', essentially, moves environmental politics from, an argument for 'Nature', to a debate over possible *natures* and socio-environmental futures. The field of (urban) political ecology has nurtured this challenge in their critically engagement with "the complex metabolism between nature and society (Gregory, Johnston, Pratt, Watts, & Whatmore, 2009, p. 545).

The Urban Metabolism and Socio-environmental imaginaries

The academic field of political ecology was conceptualized with the politicization of environmental concerns in the 1970s, but have roots going back to cultural and human ecology (Gregory, et al., 2009). UPE has developed in part as a reaction to political ecology's prevalent focus on rural and 'third world' contexts, neglecting urban areas, particularly in the western world. According to Zimmer (2010), growing cities and rising global attention to urban environmental problems makes UPE particularly relevant today. UPE is based in a, predominantly, structuralist approach, characterized by the field's general adherence to Smith and Harvey's conceptualization of 'the production of nature' (Zimmer, 2010). UPE most directly employs 'the production of nature' in the conceptualization of 'urban metabolism'.

Swyngedouw (in Zimmer, 2010) argues that Marx' conceptualization of metabolism as flows of 'energetic exchange', should be extended in four directions, namely; "the political changes, the critique of capitalism, social factors and the agency of nature" (p. 348). This application takes into considerations the socio-political power relations that influence both human and non-human actors and enables a political framework for urban geographies (Zimmer, 2010). The structuralist grounding of UPE comes to the fore in the idea of metabolism and while incorporating the idea of hybrid geographies, UPE effectively argues that humans largely control metabolic processes. Swyngedouw states (in Zimmer, 2010) that our current urban metabolism is fundamentally capitalistic. According to McClintock (2010), metabolism is an appropriate

terminology for discussing urban environments as it concerns the alienation of humans and nature through the entangled evolvement of capitalism and urbanization. Producing, according to McClintock (2010), a series of metabolic rifts, metabolism will be discussed in more detail below, with reference to urban agriculture.

Further, the idea of urban socio-ecological imaginaries is a perspective that has influenced UPE in recent years (Kaika & Swyngedouw, 2012). The theory on urban socio-ecological imaginaries, construes, similarly to WEH, that constructions of nature frame political debates and impacts actual political decisions and practices (Swyngedouw, 2007). The argument for socio-ecological imaginaries is, henceforth, related to the argument for hybrid geographies. Swyngedouw (2007) states,

> [T]here is – of necessity- an unbridgeable gap, a void, between our dominant view of Nature as predictable and determined set of processes that tends toward a (dynamic) equilibrium – but one that is disturbed by our human actions and that can be "rectified" with proper sustainable practices – and the acting-out of natures as and (often) unpredictable, differentiated, incoherent, open-ended, complex, chaotic (although by no means unordered or unpatterned) set of processes. The latter implies the existence not only of many natures, but, more importantly, it also assumes the possibility of all sorts of possible future natures, all manner of imaginable different human-nonhuman assemblages and articulations, and all kinds of different possible socio-environmental becomings (p. 18).

While not rejecting climate change or the exigency of the current global environmental state, Swyngedouw (2007) argues that the appropriate way to engage with this problematic, is through the re-politicization of nature. Kaika and Swyngedouw (2012) argue that singular constructions of 'Nature' have consequences for urban inequality and injustice, as it

> annuls the properly political moment, ruptures hopes of environmental justice, whether in the form of procedural justice (through the removal of real debate and dissensus over what stands for equality) or the justice of capabilities (through disavowing more radical pathways to building a more socially and environmentally just society beyond the current status quo) (p. 25).

Modern constructions of nature can, thus, be seen in relation to a post-political condition (Cook & Swyngedouw, 2012; Kaika & Swyngedouw, 2012; Swyngedouw, 2007)(discussed in more detail later). Swyngedouw (2007) contends that we need to engage in conscious political debates of, 'what form of natures we want to live in', 'what alternative form of socio-environmental futures we wish to generate', and 'how this can happen'? The argument for hybrid geographies

and socio-ecological imaginaries is, as such, an argument for taking responsibility in the way we blur and construct natures (Kaika & Swyngedouw, 2012; Keil, 2007; Swyngedouw, 2007; Whatmore, 2002). The politicization of nature is, therefore, not merely a critique of existing climate change- and urban sustainability discourses, it is also an argument for research that investigates the impact of these narratives. Kaika and Swyngedouw (2012) ask: "What issues and whose voices are being silenced and who or what has the right to speak and to be heard" (p. 26)?

The critique of environmental politics and the modern separation of humans and nature can be conceptualized as a motivation for bringing nature and sustainability into the urban discussion. 'Fixing' sustainability at the urban level can, furthermore, be understood as a pragmatic response to contemporary global conditions and, increasingly, urban livelihoods. Urban food production is emphasized, to differing extent, as an aspect of advancing urban sustainability.

2.2 Ideas about Urban Sustainability and Urban Food Production

Bulkeley and Betsill (2005) situate the emphasis on urban sustainable development with reference to the Brundtland Report and the 1992 UNCED's eminence of local action for advancing global sustainable development. Since this period, increasing concerns for human-induced climate change and the conceptualization of urban and personal ecological footprints, have fostered arguments for urban sustainability development (Keil, 2007). Currently, more than 50 percent of the world's population resides in urban areas (Newman, Beatley, & Boyer, 2009), increasing the aptness of advancing urban sustainability. While critique is directed at environmental problems caused by urbanization processes such as suburbanization, urban and regional areas are increasingly viewed as 'sustainability fixes' – the scales at which 'real' sustainability most likely can be achieved (Keil, 2007). Luccarelli and Røe (2012) state, "[t]here is […] recognition that the crisis of the city is closely related to the crisis of environment" (p. 11).

In this section, I will discuss urban sustainability ideals, with reference to literature pertaining to urban food production. Kaufman and Bailkey (2000) understand urban farming as economic-generative urban food production, distinguishing it from other forms of urban agriculture. Research concerning urban farming in a western context is sparse and I will draw extensively on urban agriculture literature. Urban farming is a relatively new concept and some literature refers to urban agriculture and urban farming interchangeably. However, recent

literature, increasingly distinguishes between these terms. In this section, I will refer to urban agriculture and urban food systems on a general level and reflect upon how urban farming relates to the discussion provided where applicable. This section is a critical engagement with urban sustainability and urban food production literature, with the purpose scrutinizing how urban food production is incorporated into urban sustainability theories, differently and contemporarily.

Transcending Globally Scoped Sustainability Ideals

The relevance of urban agriculture for urban sustainability can be understood according to the scale at which sustainability is conceptualized. Describing a global turn in sustainability thematic, Luccarelli and Røe (2012) emphasize the prevalence of globally scoped urban sustainability ideals, stating,

> [G]lobal environmental discourses has had the effect of distracting attention from the local dimension of the global climate crisis and other systemic environmental problems (p. 3).

Luccarelli and Røe (2012) acknowledge the evident benefits for urban contexts from, for instance, global greenhouses gases reductions. However, they argue for opening up sustainability debates, and to move beyond singularly globally scoped initiatives and understandings of urban sustainability.

Arguments for urban agriculture can be conceptualized within globally directed sustainability arguments, such as in the critique of large-scale industrial agriculture and globalized food systems (Delind, 2006; Gorgolewski, Komisar, & Nasr, 2011; Mendes, 2008; Newman, 2008). Resistance towards industrial food production, dependent upon fertilizers, chemicals, cheap oil, and dominated by large-scale agribusiness, have spurred an interest in organic and local food production. Further, increasing abundance of genetically modified foods and increasing food-miles of a wide range of produce is interpreted problematic (Delind, 2006; Newman, 2008). The interest in local, organic, small-scale, and regional based agriculture has advanced through local and organic food movements, such as, 'the slow food movement' in Italy and the 'the 100-mile diet', conceptualized in Vancouver (Newman, 2008; Smith & MacKinnon, 2007). The popularity of urban agriculture can fruitfully be associated with these movements and much urban agriculture is based in organic growing methods (McClintock, 2010; Newman, 2008). McClintock (2010) states, "[i]n North American and Europe, *an ethos of agricultural sustainability* generally informs [urban agriculture] practice" (p. 196). However, arguments for

urban agriculture and local and organic food are simultaneously grounded in ideas transcending globally scoped sustainability ideals. In fact, decisions to 'go local' are founded in complex interrelations of *global and local* reservations concerning the current food system (Gorgolewski, et al., 2011; McClintock, 2010; Newman, 2008). Hence, Howe (2003) understands "urban food-growing projects as a powerful vehicle for tackling intimately linked social, economic, educational and environmental concerns" (p. 257). Urban agriculture can, thus, be embedded within the idea of 'green urbanism', as an approach that moves beyond singularly globally scoped environmental discourses.

Green urbanism is an attempt to move beyond narrow, technocratic and globally directed sustainability discourses, introducing a broader approach to how ecology can be incorporated into urban design and planning (Luccarelli & Røe, 2012). Hence, 'green urbanism' can be understood as an attempt to bridge the modern separation between nature and society. Beatley (2000) states, "in contrast to the historic opposition of things urban and things natural, cities are fundamentally embedded in a natural environment" (p. 197). Furthermore, Luccarelli and Røe (2012) state, "the term 'urbanism' involves a social and anthropocentric perspective needed when reflecting on the social, cultural and political sides of sustainability" (p. 4). 'Green urbanism' asks, as such, not only questions of 'how sustainability can be achieved', but engages in a discussion of 'what possible urban sustainable futures we wish to inhabit'? Further, 'green urbanism' advocates for critically engaging with the idea of metabolic flows, arguing for a circular metabolism where concepts, such as, ecological footprints are taken into consideration (Beatley, 2000). With reference to urban agriculture, 'green urbanism' aims at achieving regional and local food self-sufficiency (Beatley, 2000). 'Green urbanism's' emphasis on healthy lifestyles and livability can also be associated with urban agriculture. Through the conceptualization of the 'biophilic city', Beatley (2012) further underlines the value in directly engaging with the non-human world, through practices such as urban agriculture. Beatley (2012) understands such relations as central for creating healthy livelihoods and sustainable cities.

Resilient Cities, Urban Agriculture, and Metabolic Rift

The 'resilient city' ideal presents an argument for addressing sustainability at the urban scale. Newman et al. (2009) state, "[c]ities have grown rapidly in the age of cheap oil and now consume 75 percent of the world's energy and emit 80 percent of the world's greenhouse gases" (p. 4). 'Resilient city' theory argue for dealing with global sustainability issues at the urban level,

adjusting increasing carbon footprint, and adopting urban infrastructure and livelihoods for a future, post (cheap) oil. Critically approaching the negative rhetoric surrounding much sustainability discourse (Keil, 2007), 'resilient city' ideals aim at creating 'cities of hope' as appose to 'cities of fear' (Newman, et al., 2009). 'Cities of hope' aim at planning for the long term, by creatively generating cities ability of mitigating disaster and crisis, thus, being *resilient* (Yuzva & Zimmermann, 2012). Further, resilience is also conceptualized in economic terms, "as an economic and performance model shifting risk to opportunity" (p. 101). Economic considerations include, lessening dependence on fossil fuel and other irreplaceable resources, as well as, adapting to risks associated with climate change through 'resilient' urban infrastructure (Newman, et al., 2009).

Further, reducing cities' dependence on resources developed and extracted elsewhere, is an aspect of generating resilient cities. However, there is no established agreement as to 'how independent cities have to be to achieve resilience' (Yuzva & Zimmermann, 2012, p. 103). Locally grown food and urban agriculture is promoted as a strategy for increasing a city's food independence and for mitigating food insecurity – distributing risk by partially relying on small-scale and locally produced foods. Furthermore, improving accessibility to locally grown foods is considered an aspect of 'healthier and happier' cities, and is seen as potentially decreasing vulnerability of the urban poor (Newman, et al., 2009; Yuzva & Zimmermann, 2012). Moreover, resilient city theory emphasizes ecological benefits of urban agriculture and urban food production, understood as potentially contributing to waste and water recycling systems, strengthening the city's ecological 'infrastructure' (Kasper & Rau, 2012; Newman, et al., 2009). Newman, et al. (2009) promotes the creation of small-scale and neighbourhood-based infrastructure systems, and the establishment of urban eco-villages, serving a variety of roles, including the production of specialized agriculture produce. This indicates that Newman et al. (2009) understand the role of urban agriculture beyond recreational practice and personal consumption. Kasper and Rau (2012) reiterate this understanding, indicating urban agriculture's potential as an income-generating practice, for parts of the urban population.

Approaching urban agriculture from a rather different perspective, McClintock (2010) echoes the 'resilient cities' literature aim at addressing the conjoined socio-economic environmental crisis of cities. Emphasizing how urban agriculture can alleviate metabolic rifts, McClintock's (2010) account, produces a relevant approach for interpreting motivations driving

urban farming in Vancouver. McClintock (2010) relates the upsurge of urban agriculture to global economic- and environmental instability. While recognizing that economic recessions have encouraged urban food production in the past, McClintock (2010) suggests that urban agriculture today, is constructed differently than in earlier moments of economic recession, arguing, that the "discourse surrounding UA[2] has shifted from one of recreation and leisure to one of urban sustainability and economic resilience" (p. 191). According to McClintock (2010), urban agriculture is constructed as a multifunctional response to a broad variety of capitalist and urban dynamics. McClintock's (2010) endeavour is to explore urban agriculture's multifunctionality with reference to the idea of 'metabolism'. Applying a framework conceptualized through the idea of metabolic rift, McClintock (2010) frames the relevance of urban agriculture by referring to the symbiotic relationship between the three dimensions: *ecological-, social-,* and *individual rift*.

Ecological rift concerns the spatial and scalar reorganization of biophysical processes relating to capitalism (McClintock, 2010). 'Green urbanism' critiques this rift in their argument for a circular metabolism "which nurtures and develops positive symbiotic relationships with and between its hinterland" (Beatley, 2000, p. 7). According to McClintock (2010), ecological rift concerns both "the rift in a particular biophysical metabolic relationship (such as nutrient cycling) and the spatio-temporal rescaling of production that follows in its wake" (p. 193). With relevance for food production, ecological rift can be seen in association with the advancement of large-scale agriculture and the spatial and temporal reorganization of input and output in the food system (McClintock, 2010). McClintock (2010) argues that urban agriculture has a potential for mitigating ecological rift by localizing food production and closing the nutrient cycle, for instance, by using organic cultivation methods such as nitrogen-fixing plants, and compost (food waste) – currently in abundance in urban environments.

Social rift, according to McClintock (2010), ascends from commodification of labour, land, and food, at a variety of scales. While I will not engage in an in-depth discussion about primitive accumulation, McClintock (2010) understands the incorporation of common land, such as, 'the Enclosures' in England (Crouch & Parker, 2003) and the creation of an urban-industrial workforce, fundamental to the idea of social rift. McClintock (2010) states

[2] Urban Agriculture

> Understanding this social rift is not only essential to explaining urbanization but also to elucidating the linkages between urbanization and the agri-food system. The rise of large- and industrial-scale farming has entailed the consolidation of land and expansion of mechanization and other new farming technologies, both of which reduce the demand for agricultural labour (p. 196).

McClintock (2010) further describes how urban agriculture was legitimized during periods of rapid urbanization spurred by industrialization during the 19th century. In Britain, allotment acts ensured spaces for people to grow food. This protective measure enacted by governments continued into the 20th century and periods of war and economic recession have seen the liberation of urban space for food production (Lawson, 2005; McClintock, 2010). In 1970s North America, for example, economic recession and strong environmental movements encouraged the materialization of an abundance of urban community gardens, established with the goodwill of local and national governments in urban 'wastespaces' (McClintock, 2010; Schmelzkopf, 1995, 2002; Staeheli, Mitchell, & Gibson, 2002). Nonetheless, following shifting urban governance and changing economic conditions in many North American cities in the 1980s and 1990s, struggles over the right to these spaces intensified, and many sites were reclaimed by local governments for development (Schmelzkopf, 1995, 2002; Staeheli et al., 2002). McClintock (2010) states,

> The discourse of crisis driving these programmes was used not only to justify UA but also to denigrate it as an act of welfare for the poor once crises has passed (p. 199).

McClintock's (2010) point is significant for the relative value given to urban agriculture throughout recent history. Further, McClintock (2010) describes food as fictitious commodities - bought and sold according to the logic of the market. The socio-cultural significance of food and agriculture knowledge is not easily incorporated into this logic. McClintock (2010) argues that urban agriculture can help mitigate this social rift "by returning – at least partially – the means of production to urban populations" (p. 200). McClintock (2010) states that urban agriculture reclaims and creates urban commons through the utilization of vacant lots and other marginal spaces. Utilizing these spaces, McClintock (2010) conceives urban agriculture as a potentially decommodifying practice, reembedding markets in social structures that warrant a socially just, nutritious and sustainable food system.

Lastly, McClintock (2010) describes urban agriculture's potential in alleviating *individual rift*. McClintock (2010) states,

> As a broader social rift is cleaved by the commodification of land and labour, people experience an internalized dimension of metabolic rift, which I refer to as 'individual rift'. Essentially what Marx called alienation [*Entaüsserung*] from labour and from nature, it manifests as the perception of self as external to the environment (p. 201).

Further, such alienation is a contributive factor to whether environmental problems are experienced as merely external or simultaneously internal (McClintock, 2010). While acknowledging the hardship in overcoming individual rift, McClintock (2010) suggests that urban agriculture can more easily address (and potentially overcome) individual rift "precisely because it arises at the level of individual consciousness" (p. 201). McClintock (2010) construes the separation of people from the land, through the division of intellectual and manual labour, as resembling the separation of people and nature. Understanding people as unavoidably entangled with nature (Whatmore, 2002), the social rift becomes internalized, and affects conscious and unconscious experiences of this entangled relation with nature. McClintock (2010) argues that urban agriculture, as a practice and labour in its most practical association, has the potential in alleviating individual rift and recreate cognitive and experiential relations with nature. Crouch and Parker (2003) name this process *ontological knowledge*, and describes it as "negotiating in a process that is simultaneously discursive and pre-discursive, where mental reflexivity is perpetually disturbed by embodied encounters" (p. 399). As a form of 'lifestyle politics', Crouch and Parker (2003) and McClintock (2009) argues that praxis has political potential, beyond the practice itself.

McClintock (2010) suggests that viewing urban agriculture through the aspects of metabolic rift offer "potential points of engagement" (p. 203) for transforming the present food system. He acknowledges, however, the contingent relation between current rifts and capitalism.

Compact City Development, Land-use, and Urban Agriculture

'Compact city' ideals set land use planning at the center of sustainable urban development. This theory argues for high-density city development with mixed-use integration, concentrating day-to-day activities and dwelling; resulting in energy efficient urban infrastructure and reducing production of pollution and waste (Roo & Miller, 2000). Compared to suburban ideals where life and work is divided into two spheres (Luccarelli & Røe, 2012), life and work in the compact city takes place in one sphere. The appeal of this ideal finds its argument in the resistance towards fragmented and sprawling cities, such as Los Angeles, creating vast ecological footprints as a

consequence of its urban design. Further, compact city ideals embrace urban qualities such as diversity (Uggla, 2012). This urban sustainability approach is, furthermore, celebrated for densification coupled with mixed-use, accessibility, biking and walking opportunities, and efficient public transportation. Compact city ideals often take existing urban structures as starting points, focusing on moderate density-increases and urban in-fill where possible (Roo & Miller, 2000).

However, compact city ideals are criticized for not fully considering aspects of livability, with reference to concentration and intensification of pollution and noise, and the lack of privacy and green space (Roo & Miller, 2000). While compact city ideals emphasize the preservation of green belts and nature surrounding cities, urban green space presents a sustainability hurdle for compact city development (Roo & Miller, 2000; Uggla, 2012). Urban green space represents in many cases an impediment to densification. As argued by Uggla (2012), "the concept of urban nature invokes ambiguity since it simultaneously represents something desirable and problematic" (p. 82). With relevance to urban agriculture, the inferior status of green space subjugates urban agriculture to similar eminence. Further, urban in-fill and density-oriented building design can hinder spaces available for urban agriculture. While green roofs offer opportunity for urban food production in compact cities, urban agriculture commonly takes place in underutilized spaces; the same spaces fronted by compact city idealists as prime locations for densification (Roo & Miller, 2000).

Land-use presents more broadly a challenge for urban agriculture. The prosperity of community gardens in 1970s North America, describes above, portrays the opaque land-use claims securing these sites. Urban agriculture projects commonly obtain favourable land tenure agreements with governments and other property-owners characterized by short-term lease-agreements and are, as such, frequently disempowered in instances of conflict (Schmelzkopf, 1995, 2002; Staeheli, et al., 2002). Howe (2003) argues that the integration of urban agriculture in urban development strategies, plans, and land-use policy, is generally sparse in cities around the world. While the distinction between revenue-generating urban agriculture (discussed here as urban farming) and non-revenue-generating urban agriculture is blurred in much academic literature, this distinction becomes particularly central with relevance to land-use. Ranasinghe (2005) describes how (revenue-generating) urban farming frequently has problems entering into existing urban land use designations, resulting in informal appropriation of vacant or marginal

urban land. With reference to the UK, Howe (2003) depicts how existing land-use policies largely pertain to urban agriculture as recreational or educational practice. Competing with other urban land-uses, offering greater financial returns or higher profiles in a generally highly priced property market, urban agriculture faces fierce competition in their struggle for attaining or holding urban land (Howe, 2003). Howe (2003) notes that utilizing a variety of urban spaces for urban agriculture can be problematic, considering health aspects relating to urban land, such as, brownfields. Lastly, Howe (2003) states "few studies have examined the nature of recognition and integration of agriculture into urban land-use policy" (Howe, 2003, p. 257). Considering increasing prominence of urban agriculture and the lack of knowledge by researchers about land-use policy practices, pertaining to urban agriculture, Howe (2003) deems it a timely research subject.

(A)political Gardening

The construed multifunctionality of urban agriculture bestows this practice as a conscious political argument, bringing to the fore values beyond food production itself. Urban agriculture can, nonetheless, be considered through the broader and less politically loaded term, gardening. Gardening highlight how urban agriculture is significantly praxis (Crouch & Parker, 2003). Crouch and Parker (2003) notes how gardening, being a common and historical *practice*, "can be refigured as a very different politics" (p. 404). Referring to dealienation through cultivation and as an "everyday micro-politics of working land" (p. 404), Crouch and Parker (2003) state,

> reworking that encounter into a development of ideology that has brought increasingly mutual recognition between those habitually politicised and those who 'merely' wanted to cultivate the ground (p. 404).

Crouch and Parker (2003) distinguish, as such, the potentially political dimensions of cultivating the ground regardless of intent, and contrarily, the potentially *apolitical* characteristic of urban agriculture, understood as gardening.

Discussing gardening practices and land encroachments in Vancouver, Blomley (2005) describes the complex relations brought to fore by a bathtub, planted with flowers and situated beyond private property boundaries in an inner-city neighbourhood. Focusing on the bathtub's legal encroachment beyond private property, Blomley (2005) defines it as "a third (legal) space" (p. 294), referring to the bathtub's understood private/public nature in the neighbourhood, adamantly relative to its construed function. As such, Blomley (2005) indicates that lived

realities are hybrid and complex, and do not easily conform to legal classifications, such as, property. With reference to gardening, Blomley (2005) states,

> there may be more to flowers, insofar as property is concerned, that meets the eye. Gardening, I have noted signals a property claim in both a popular and legal register. That said, while law certainly worries about maintaining the public-private boundary, the encroachment in question seems, quite frankly, mundane, compared to more obviously controversial boundary crossings, such as privatization of public space" (294).

The bathtub's perseverance illustrates according to Blomley (2005) "a provisional *privilege* rather than a *right*" (p. 286), related to the bathtub's mundane representation. Further, gardening brings to the fore specific private characteristics. Contemporary discourses on urban agriculture can be seen as attempting to overcome the private characterization of 'cultivating the ground'. Problematizing the clear distinction between 'private' and 'public', Blomley (2004) associates the public/private divide with neoliberalism and the location of "private property as the foundation for individual self-interest and optimal social good" (p. 614). Blomley (2004) views the protection of these rights, as reliant upon the enforcement of property rights and, hence, the enforcement of the coherency of space (Blomley, 2004).

Urban Planning and Food Systems

As noted by Howe (2003) above, urban agriculture has remained largely ignored in urban land-use policies around the world. Furthermore, research has defined urban agriculture and urban food system issues as estranged to the planning field (Howe, 2003; Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000). With reference to a North American context, Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) argue that the food system is a topic of little consideration in planning literature, planning curricula, and within planning agencies. In a study with 22 US communities, Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) conclude, that planning agencies were, at best, only slightly involved in food systems thematic. They state, "when they do get involved, their role is reactive rather than proactive and piecemeal rather than comprehensive" (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000, p. 115). Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) note several reasons stated by respondents for low food system involvement. For instance, several planners understood, food system issues beyond concrete zoning thematic, as a rural issue, or as beyond their turf (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000). With reference to urban farming, Kaufman and Bailkey (2000) reiterate this claim. Further, the planners in Pothukuchi and Kaufman's (2000) survey, construed food systems as a private market concern, and not equal

to public issues, such as, water and air. Lack of knowledge about food systems and lack of relevant collaboration between partners within government, were also understood as hindering the planners involvement (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000). Pothukuchi and Kaufman's (2000) study indicate, that lack of knowledge about food systems and food system issues, enforce the planners' lack of engagement with this subject. Studying land-use officers' involvement in urban agriculture in the UK, Howe (2003) confirms this notion, noting that low awareness of urban food production makes land use officers inclined to attribute less value to food production in the city. Both Howe (2003) and Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) stress the importance of better understanding, documenting, analysing and integrating food systems within and across planning agencies, and argue that planners should take a more active role in ensuring food security and food system sustainability. Pertaining specifically to urban farming, Kaufman and Bailkey (2000) suggest that, urban planners can; incorporate urban farming into zoning designations or open space strategies, collaborate with non-profit organizations and urban farmers, and incorporate urban farming into a wide variety of policy goals such as those pertaining to enhancing low-skilled work employment. Lastly, Kaufman and Bailkey (2000) emphasize a collaborative approach and argue that urban farmers need to be 'smart' when advocating for their place in the city.

Confirming the idea that 'food' is a stranger to the planning field, the considerable emphasize given to urban sustainability issues and the prominence of urban and local agriculture since 2000, potentially indicates, that urban food systems are included within urban planning today, to a greater extent.

2.3 Urban Governance and Planning

Since the 1980s, urban governance has changed significantly. The change from 'government' to 'governance' is emblematic of this shift and can be characterized by the changing role of state, market, and civil society in policy making, and the scalar reconfigurations of decision-making (Swyngedouw, 2005). Swyngedouw (2005) outlines three factors pertaining to this reorganization; privatization and deregulation of state functions, up-scaling of regulatory tasks beyond the nation state, and "the down-scaling of governance to 'local' practices and arrangements" (p. 1998). Following this shift, the act of governing is increasingly contextualized at the urban scale. Non-state actors have increasingly been brought from influencing policy-making on the *outside* to become an integrated part of governance processes and decision-

making on the *inside* (Bulkeley & Mol, 2003). Governance can as such be identified as a shift from hierarchal to networked relations and decision-making. Associated with the shift described by Harvey (1989), from urban managerialism to urban entrepreneurialism, urban governance has increasingly been responsible for attracting and maintaining stakeholders that ensure economic growth and sustenance. Globalization and the escalation of an increasingly mobile workforce and flexible accumulation, have further, stimulated urban differentiation and competition between cities and regions (Jessop, 1998; Turok, 2009).

The decentralization of decision-making can simultaneously be described as an attempt at democratizing governance, including a broader range of stakeholders through participatory governance processes. Bulkeley and Mol (2003) state "increasingly, non-participatory forms of policy making are defined as illegitimate, ineffective and undemocratic, both by politicians and by stakeholders themselves" (p. 144). 'True' democratic outcomes of participatory governance processes are, nonetheless, vastly disputed in much literature. Unequal power-relations, informal techniques of government and blurring of responsibility and transparency in policy-making are underlined as challenging democratization of governance processes (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2010; Bulkeley & Mol, 2003; Swyngedouw, 2005). Swyngedouw (2005) describes the duality of urban governance as 'Janus faced', speaking to the city's role, simultaneously ensuring economic growth, and advancing democratic participatory and consensus-orient decision-making.

Consensus-oriented governance can, furthermore, be associated with the advent of a range of planning traditions since the 1960s, largely arising out of limitations associated with synoptic planning (Hudson, Galloway, & Kaufman, 1979). Synoptic planning can be described as a rational comprehensive approach, having little sensitivity to either political conflict or context (Fainstein, 2000; Hudson, et al., 1979). While the unengaged rationale, employed by synoptic planners, is, moreover, abandoned in contemporary planning, Hudson et al. (1979) note that virtually all planning has to address 4 issues indicative of the logic and simplicity central to synoptic planning, namely; "ends, means, trade-offs, [and] action-taking" (p. 389). Since the 1960s, a range of new planning approaches has evolved and been contextualized within a broader interpretive turn taking place in the 1970s and '80s (Healey, 2006; Hudson, et al., 1979). The interpretive turn in planning has encouraged attention to social construction of value and knowledge and the consequential role of planning (Healey, 2006). This shift spurred the recognition of collaborative planning approaches, based in Habermas' communicative rationality

and American pragmatism (Fainstein, 2000). In this section, I will discuss contemporary planning theory and practice, focusing particularly on the inclusion of different stakeholders in urban planning and governance.

Collaborative Planning

In a collaborative planning approach, the planner is understood as a mediator between stakeholders involved in the planning process (Fainstein, 2000). Fainstein (2000) states "[r]ather than providing technocratic leadership, the planner is an experiential learner, at most providing information to participants but primarily being sensitive to points of convergence" (p. 454). The collaborative approach emphasizes subjective and intersubjective nature of views and ideas, and utilizes dialogue as means to progress in the planning process (Fainstein, 2000). Agger (2007) argues that the inclusion of stakeholders in collaborative planning, is conceptualized as building an empowered and action oriented civil society. Healey's theorization on strategic individual actions, foremost promotes this positive construction of agency (Agger, 2007).

Healey (2002) argues that there is significant potential within imagined conceptualizations of the city. A collective process, embracing multiple 'readings' of the city, can lead the way for 'strategic urban governance', mobilizing actors through re-representation and recreation. Healey (2002) states,

> Strategic 'planning' may thus be understood […] as an explicit activity of 'making' and 'remaking' the city, not in the traditional understanding of making its physical form, but in articulating and mobilising its imaginative form, in such a way that this strategic imagination has the power to frame the mental landscape and material actions (p. 1786).

Healey's (2002) theory on strategic planning underlines the potential ingenuity and power, in allowing the city to be reimagined. Agger (2007) describes Healey's emphasize on inclusiveness, openness, and creativity, as closely related to collaborative planning processes emphasize on face-to-face communication. Referring to Innes and Booher, Agger (2007) understands collaborative planning theory's dynamic reading of participation, with reference to the production of tangible and intangible outcomes. Innes and Booher (1999) distinguish between tangible and intangible outcomes in collaborative planning processes. Tangible outcomes can be formal agreements, agreed-on data, and actions and innovations generated through consensus building processes (Innes & Booher, 1999). Intangible outcomes include, the formation of

personal and professional relationships and trust building between actors, potentially enhancing communication between stakeholders. Further, intangible outcomes account for, the construction of mutual understanding between different stakeholders views and interests and collective definitions and agreement on issues, data and projects (Innes & Booher, 1999). Lastly, Innes and Booher (1999) identify potential intangible outcomes of collaborative planning processes as, the actors 'know-how' of political processes and their ability to collaborate with different stakeholders for achieving political goals.

The collaborative approach is, nonetheless, critically scrutinized for focusing too little on progressing development and reaching coherent outcomes (Fainstein, 2000). Taking dialogue as a vantage point for reaching consensus, the challenge within a collaborative approach is the potential difficulty in providing solutions. Fainstein (2000) states, "the search for explanation either gets lost in the thickness of hermeneutics or dismissed as totalizing" (p. 456). Fainstein (2000) further criticizes collaborative planning for ignoring uneven power-relations and social injustice in planning processes and outcomes. Referring to contemporary environmental governance, Bulkeley and Mol (2003) provides an extension of this critique, noting that collaborative focus can be arranged to produce specific outcomes, and narrow or fragment environmental debates. While the purpose of collaborative planning is to open up debate for a broad variety of voices, Bulkeley and Mol (2003) suggest that power-relations and specific stakeholder interests' commonly guide such processes.

The Just City, Postpolitical Consensus, and the Whereabouts of Politics

Conceptualizations of just city ideals are grounded in a conflictual view of society (Fainstein, 2000; Swyngedouw, 2007). In contrast to a collaborative approach, just city theory adopts a radical understanding of collaboration, advancing the argument for governance by civil society (Fainstein, 2000). Fainstein (2000) states, "progressive social change results only from the exercise of power by those who previously had been excluded from power" (p. 467). Differently than the collaborative approach, the just city ideal aims at specifying "the nature of the good city" (Fainstein, 2000, p. 467). Such utopian ambitions are associated with radical democracy. Allmendinger (2001) defines the idea of radical democracy as,

> [They] argue for a new normative dimension to politics that shifts away from the atomised model of economic liberalism to a constant search for new and better forms of liberty and equality. Within this constant search there will be nodal points of

> temporary stabilisations of meaning and agreement that can form the basis for collective action (p. 209-210).

Fainstein (2000) acknowledges the hardship of adopting a planning approach based in 'just city' ideals, as policy makers are endlessly entangled in the process of captivating business interest.

Allmendinger and Haughton (2010) furthers this critique, arguing that the planning system is used as a tool for neoliberalism, legitimized through postpolitical consensus. With reference to spatial planning in the UK, Allmendinger and Haughton (2010) argue that postpolitical consensus paralyzes fruitful discussions within urban planning, stating

> [A] consensual pluralist mainstream organized around loosely defined and hard to refute 'feel good' issues and labels such as 'sustainable development' (and spatial planning) can in effect deny legitimacy and influence to more radical alternatives, in the process narrowing the search for creative approaches to planning (p. 804).

The idea of a postpolitical consensus can, thus, be seen in conjunction with Bulkeley and Mol's (2003) critique, of the general shift in environmental politics in the 1980s, towards more integrated and precautionary environmental politics; fragmenting and narrowing conceptualizations of environmental issues and solutions. Hence, the argument for postpolitical consensus can be understood in association with the rise of ecological modernization, discussed above. Swyngedouw (2007) furthers this argument, emphasizing how a postpolitical consensus have informed narrow-minded perceptions regarding potential and innovative change, stating,

> The world's premature ending in a climatic Armageddon seems easier to imagine […] than a transformation of (or end to) the neoliberal capitalist order that keeps on practicing expanding energy use and widening and deepening its ecological footprint (p. 19).

The quote depicts Swyngedouw's (2007) account of depoliticized constructions of sustainability and nature, as discussed earlier. According to Swyngedouw (2007), the current postpolitical condition negates a "genuine political space of disagreement" (p. 25) as controversial propositions and alternative imaginaries are radicalized at either end.

While Allmendinger and Haughton (2010) present a thorough critique of spatial planning in the UK, they also argue that the devolution of planning has opened up planning to a diversified set of practices and interpretations. Sehested (2003) confirms this idea, stating that changing governance ideals and structures potentially creates new and undefined spaces for planning and practice. Similarly, Allemendinger and Haughton (2010) associate new informal

and formal spaces of planning in association with increasingly networked governance processes. However, Metzger (2011) distinguishes these spaces problematic, as they are amorphous and complex, henceforth, challenging accountability, and clouding transparency. Metzger (2011) describes these urban governance processes as "a truly Kafkaesque landscape of planning" (p. 192) referring to the covert and endless prosecution process of Josef K in Kafka's novel 'Der Process'. Echoing the confusion experienced by Josef K, Metzger (2011) notes,

> it is sometimes even difficult to figure out who is responsible for the decision, or if any decision formally even has been made, or if some loose consensus to 'go ahead in a certain direction' just appears to have taken on a life of its own (p. 192).

This observation results in Metzger's (2011) argument for a democratic remodelling of contemporary planning. Metzger (2011) argues that politics is merely displaced to other spaces and he rejects the overarching fallacy of a 'true' postpolitical condition.

Socio-spatial Dialectic, the Political, and Vague Terrains

Larsen, Frandsen, and Brandt (2007), furthers Metzger's (2011) argument for the displacement of politics, in their argumentation for the inclusion of *the political* in urban planning. Like Healey (2006), Larsen et al. (2007) differentiate between two interpretations of the term politics: (1) *politics* and (2) *the political*. Politics reflects formal politics played out through formal institutions of governance (Larsen, et al., 2007). Healey (2006) notes this can include "deliberate efforts in social mobilisation, in order to gain control over the mechanisms for the management of collective affairs" (p. 212). The political, on the other hand, is informal political practices and 'life' (Larsen, et al., 2007). Larsen et al.'s (2007) argument for focusing *upon the political is* founded in their argument for the exclusion of this terrain in much contemporary governance and planning. Further, they ground the political in Lefebvre's critique of abstract space and his argument for reconstructing these spaces by formulating an appropriation of urban space, through the processes of everyday practice (Simonsen, 1993). According to Simonsen (1993), Lefebvre critiques modern architecture and urban spatial organization for enforcing 'true' abstract spaces, through homogenization, fragmentation and hierarchical ordering. Vancouver's emphasize on mixed-use developments can be understood as a postmodern critique of such modern spatial arrangements (Hutton, 2004). However, Lefebvre's approach represents a more agency-oriented perspective conceptualized through the socio-spatial dialectic and the theory of everyday life.

Lefebvre (1991) describes *social space* as a necessary relation of its triadic production. Social space is not produced as a final product, but is continuously produced and reproduced in a dialectic fashion. Further, Lefebvre (1991) characterizes social space as continually instrumental, concrete, and abstract, yet unable to be defined by any one such characteristic alone. Lefebvre (1991) illustrates the production of space through the *socio-spatial dialectic*, consisting of three dimensions, defined as; *spatial practice* (the perceived), *representation of space* (the conceived) and *representational spaces* (the lived) (p. 39). Perceived space comprises the continuous use and transformation of physical space, through society's spatial practice, carried out as a relatively cohesive expression of social space (Peet, 1998). Conceived space comprises abstract representations of space, deciphered through symbols and texts as selective representations of perceived and lived space. Representations of space are associated with the ordering and control of spatial practice. Lived space comprises everyday life's spatial practice as it immediately and subjectively is utilized, appropriated and experienced (Larsen, 2007). Lefebvre (1991) describes representational space as "the dominated – and hence passively experienced – space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate" (p. 39).

Like Lefebvre, Larsen (2007) cognizes the political potential within everyday praxis and 'lived space'. Larsen (2007) is, nonetheless, explicit in his apprehensions for reducing the socio-spatial triad to 'lived space' alone. Rather, Larsen (2007) emphasizes everyday practice as *potentially political*. Similar to McClintock's (2010) argument for dealienation, Larsen (2007) argues for the political potential in the articulation between everyday practice and formal urban development. Larsen (2007) states,

> Det er i udtrykket, at den daglige rutiner bliver artikuleret med nedfældede ordner, som fortolkninger og forhandling af dem, hvad enten dette sker på et rent semantisk eller et mer praktisk plan. Forstået som et felt med indhold og grænser, der konstant forhandles under visse betingelser, så udgjør den daglige praksis også en form for politik" (p. 8).

As such, the political potential lies in the practical appropriation and negotiation of existing spaces and representations.

Lefebvre contextualizes the advent of potential appropriations and negotiations in spaces characterized as 'positive voids' (Larsen, 2007, p. 353). 'Positive voids' are not empty spaces lacking definitions, but spaces where multiple meanings and values exist simultaneously. Larsen (2007) defines these spaces as *vague terrains*. Further, Larsen (2007) defines vague terrains in

juxtaposition to *spaces of densification*, for so to define *the order of everyday life* in contrast to *the distant order*. Spaces of densification are spaces dominated by formal politics and interests, hence, the distant order. The distant order can be associated with the level of politics, while the order of everyday life can be associated with the level of the political. The juxtaposition characterizing these terrains and orders are necessarily a simplification of real relations. However, they are useful for distinguishing the power-relations embedded within urban governance, and between formality and informality. While the distant order has the dominance to create new spaces of densification, the order of everyday life holds power to appropriate vague terrains only when sanctioned or ignored by the distant order (Larsen et al., 2007). With reference to the literature already discussed, Blomley's (2005) portrayal of the bathtub, exemplifies the appropriation of vague terrains by the order of everyday life, where the bathtub's persistence depends upon the distant order's sanctioning or ignorance. Arguing for the inclusion of the political in urban planning and governance, Larsen et al. (2007) argue for planners' sensitivity to the potential in vague terrains and within the order of everyday life.

Deliberative Participation and Temporary Space Utilization

Bulkeley and Mol (2003) argue that increasing public doubt in formal institutions and governance in western countries has stimulated ideas in support of more inclusive forms of public participation in environmental governance. Deliberative public participation is brought into collaborative planning and associated with 'just city' theory's call for a 'civic model', and further with visions to mobilize and empower powerless groups (Fainstein, 2000). Bulkeley and Mol (2003) state that deliberative participation has proved to increase participation turnout comparable to public consultation processes; further strengthening trust in local governments and resulting in more concrete actions.

The empowerment perspective emphasizes uneven power structures in society and actors uneven ability to participate, mobilize action, and access knowledge (Andersen, 2007). Andersen (2007) understands empowerment processes as potentially producing socially innovative, transformative conflicts and mobilization-processes that challenges the statues quo. Adopting a radical democratic perspective, Andersen (2007) understands such conflict and mobilization as productive for society as a whole. Importantly, Andersen (2007) underlines the synergy between bottom-up mobilization and top-down facilitation for producing constructive achievements. In their discussion of temporary use of urban 'wastespaces' Larsen (2007) and Oswalt, Overmeyer,

and Misselwitz (2013) emphasize sensitivity to the synergy identified by Andersen (2007) between bottom-up mobilization and top-down enablement. Larsen (2007) identifies the constructive and innovative potential in informal practices, and stresses the predicament of balancing informal practices with formal progression and planning. 'Wastespaces' or vague terrains are defined by their temporary undervaluation as spaces for urban development and growth (Larsen, 2007; Oswalt, et al., 2013). Oswalt et al. (2013) describe 'wastespaces' as arising through continual processes of development and redevelopment. They further associate these processes with the shifting urban characteristic of contemporary cities (e.g. deindustrialization). Further, Larsen (2007) characterizes vague terrains as associated with the fragmentation of modern spatial organization. 'Wastespaces' may include fallow infrastructure, potential development sites, spaces left in-between other uses, buffer zones, and other spaces considered marginal or undefined (Oswalt, et al., 2013). Larsen (2007) identify the innovative potential within such spaces for informal or disempowered actors, referring to Hentila and Lindborg,

> Residual areas have the potential of becoming 'breeding grounds' and sort of 'urban laboratories' for new kind of activities. Current development in art, urban culture and new media emerges in these areas. Even if the activities are in most cases run with low budget they have become the locomotives of renewed urban culture. These residual spaces offer a possibility for various actors to take risk and do various experiments with relatively modest economic investments (in Larsen, 2007, p. 163).

Oswalt et al. (2013) present similarly an argument for the innovative potential within spaces "neglected by the state, capital, and planning" (p. 11). Further, Oswalt et al. (2013) differentiate contemporary temporary users from protest movements and sub-cultures in 1960s, '70s and '80s characterized by more direct political demands and confrontational tactics. On the contrary, today's temporary users moderate political and utopian ideals, emphasizing unique ideas and personal visions. Oswalt et al. (2013) characterize temporary users as distinguished by their ambition towards realizing a specific project or loosely defined idea. Larsen (2007) defines these actors as *tacticians*, creatively and flexibly adopting the space for their temporary needs. Confirming this description Oswalt et al. (2013) state,

> For the opportunity to use a site or building at low cost or even no cost, they are willing to accept an element of temporary insecurity, whether in the form of a short term rental agreement, the absence of a rental agreement, or the illegal status of the use" (p, 53-54).

While presenting considerable risk, the benefits often appear greater than potential costs. Oswalt et al. (2013) describes the illegality of such temporary appropriation as foremost relating to the *lack* of a coherent legal framework. The legal challenges, commonly defining temporary users, can enforce collaboration and network formation (Oswalt, et al., 2013). Oswalt et al. (2013) further characterize three groups of temporary users:

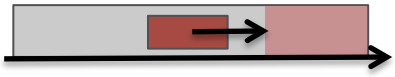
1. *Young entrepreneurs* who utilize these spaces as a catalyst for the realization of an idea. Typically "young, well-educated people between school and career" (p. 53).
2. *Hobbyists* who "belong to established social structures, but parallel to these they seek the freedom to pursue experimental life practices" (p. 53).
3. *Alternative actors* who "is looking for opportunities to 'drop out' of society and build alternative living arrangements" (p. 53). This group include homeless people and trailer- and houseboat dwellers.

Associating the appropriation of such spaces with temporary users and informal actors, Oswalt et al. (2013) identify nine different forms of temporary use, taking place in such spaces (see illustration in Fig 1).

Oswalt et al. (2013) and Larsen (2007) recognize that the inclusion of temporary users in planning can be challenging. Larsen (2007) emphasizes that it is the informality of temporary utilization that enable experimentation and crystallization of ideas. Temporary users are, thus, typically vulnerable to formalization processes. Oswalt et al. (2013) note that "informality has its price" (p. 60) and eventually, temporary users will benefit from formalizing their operations. Larsen (2007) contends, as such, that temporary use of 'wastespaces' (or vague terrains) should be given adequate room to develop on their own premises, before being incorporated and formalized in planning policies and regulations.

Stand-in: The stand-in has no lasting effect on the place. It merely uses the gap between the last use and the next. Such a low-impact approach makes realization easier at the cost of transitoriness (p. 35)

Subversion: The temporary use strategically occupies the spaces of a long-term use in order to disturb and transform it. Although such occupation and sit-ins are usually short lived, they often effect a marked transformation of the institutions concerned (p. 49).



Impulse: In-between use can generate decisive impulses for the programmatic profiling of its location: it establishes a new activity profile that is carried on in a new form even after it ends (p. 39).

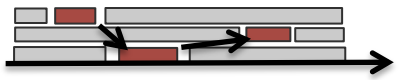
Co-existence: Even after the appearance of new commercial uses, the informal temporary use continues to exist on a smaller scale. A niche existence makes coexistence possible (p. 43).

Parasite: The temporary use exploits the potential of an existing long-term use by operating next to it (p. 45).

Consolidation: Former temporary use becomes established and turns into long-term use. Informal arrangements are replaced by long-term leases and regular permits (p. 41).

Pioneer: Hitherto unused territory is at first temporarily appropriated by the simplest means and used in a transient manner. With the success of temporary use, the activities continue indefinitely and take on increasingly permanent focus (p. 47).

Free-flow: The use continues indefinitely by moving to new locations as the opportunity arises. This approach skilfully combines the pragmatism of the stand-in with long-term development, as it also uses the change of location to update its own activity (p. 37).



Displacement: Permanent uses are temporarily displaced and continue in an improvised fashion until they are able to return to their permanent location. The temporary displacement can generate impulses for the reinvigoration of the program (p. 51).

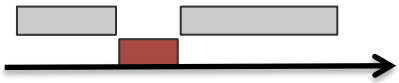


Figure 1. Differentiation of temporary use (Based on Oswalt et al., 2013 and inspired by Larsen, 2007).

2.4 Summary

'Fixing' sustainability at the urban level, challenges established ideas about 'the city' to differential degree. The reconceptualization of cities, with reference to urban sustainability, can be viewed as potential political negotiations of future socio-ecological imaginaries. In this chapter, I have discussed constructions of nature and sustainability, with reference to the diverging and negotiable productions, such constructions entail. Further, I have deliberated urban sustainability with reference to urban agriculture and urban farming. Lastly, I have considered contemporary planning theory and practice, emphasising the inclusion of different stakeholders in the urban political terrain. Together, these deliberations provide my theoretical framework for analysing the mobilization and negotiation of urban farming in the City of Vancouver.

3 Methodology and Data Collection

> [A] human geography that could address the particularities of people and place, and equally intersect broader movements in society. If such an objective appears commonplace today, in the intellectual climate of the early 1970s it was an unlikely venture indeed (Ley, 1989, p. 228).

There has been an upsurge of qualitative research since the 1970s, followed by an increasingly interpretative style of research (Ley, 1989). Since this period, a rejection of 'the objective researcher' and 'objective truths' has been brought to the fore through social constructivist theories and, inherently, the idea of relativism. Relativism ultimately rejects knowledge and representations as singular and true reflections of reality, emphasizing the challenge in favouring one statement about the world over another. Relativism is integrated into social research in a variety of ways. This integration ranges from adopting "a fundamental scepticism vis-à-vis any claim to knowledge about reality" (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002, p. 196), inescapable but not of any great concern, to; the rejection of critical research altogether, considering the equal value of all statements about the world. This latter view can be characterised as a radical relativistic approach. For the relevance of my thesis, I do not embrace this perspective, but emphasize the historically and culturally specificity of knowledge about the world, as well as a critical position to taken-for-granted-knowledge (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002). Like Chouliaraki and Fairclough (in Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002) I adopt "a combination of social constructionism and the ontology of critical realism" (p. 196), with the intent of acknowledging non-discursive features of the world, rejecting *judgemental relativism* and accepting *epistemic relativism*. Further, my approach to knowledge is more entangled with the idea of praxis than, for example, discourse analysis. While knowledge about the world is constructed without direct access to the material world, everyday life takes place through practice and the act of being in the world. Inspired by Lefebvre (1991), I attempt to adopt a methodological perspective where lived and subjective experiences and practices are brought to the fore by focusing on the agency of social actors with reference to their relation to social structures. In this chapter, I provide a reflective exposition of methods, choices and ethical considerations pertinent to the rigour and reliability of this research project.

3.1 Research Design and Rigour in Qualitative Research

Through the cultural turn in the 1990s the rigour of qualitative research has gained recognition. The idea that qualitative research needs to be evaluated by its own specific set of principles and ethics has established solid ground (Bradshaw & Stratford, 2010).

Throughout the extent of my research project I have strived for a critical reflexive approach. According to Dowling (2010) reflexivity "is a process of constant, self-conscious scrutiny of the self as researcher and of the research process" (p. 31). However, acknowledging the limitations within such an approach is crucial. Phillips and Jørgensen (2002) state, referring to Haraway,

> Although she argues that researchers should make the best attempt they can to describe the conditions of possibility for their view of the world, she stresses at the same time that research is always performative in that it constitutes the world in particular ways and therefore privileges certain possible worlds over others" (p. 203).

Winchester and Rofe (2010) agree, portraying the paradox of struggling to root subjectivity in objectivity. Referring to Bourdieu's notion of the 'crisis of representation', they state "reflexivity recreates the myth of the exceptional researcher set apart from their respondents not now by the clarity of their knowledge, but by their level of introspect, doubt and anxiety" (Winchester & Rofe, 2010, p. 16). Critical reflexivity should as such not be understood as escaping the subjective and intersubjective nature of qualitative research. While not attempting to escape subjectivity, several principals have been developed to achieve rigorous qualitative research.

Bradshaw and Stratford (2010) emphasize that achieving rigorous research starts with thorough research design. While there is no *one* approach to good research design, Bradshaw and Stratford (2010) stress that ensuring rigorous research design encompasses the entirety of the research process from choice of research questions to the *credibility* of the study in the participant community and its *dependability* in the overall interpretive community (issues related to validity and transferability are key and will be discussed below). Bradshaw and Stratford (2010) further argue that case and informant selections are important considerations, stating "[i]n qualitative research, the number of people we interview, communities we observe, or texts we read is an important consideration but secondary to the *quality* of who or what we involve in our research and secondary also to *how* we conduct that research" (p. 69 original italics). The selection of informants can further be related to data-source *triangulation*. Hammersley and

Atkinson (2007) define data-source triangulation as the comparison of data pertaining to the same phenomenon, yet originating from differentially positioned informants or different phases of the fieldwork process. For my study, the selection of differential informants with reference to the phenomenon studied became a productive tool for comparing and contrasting information and interpretations (informant selection criteria will be described in more detail below). Similarly, method triangulation, understood as the utilization of multiple data collection techniques, proved fruitful for reaching a more thorough and in-depth understanding during my research process. Moreover, triangulation can be defined as checking data and/or theory from different angles (Bradshaw & Stratford, 2010; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). According to Bradshaw and Stratford (2010), triangulation is one aspect of achieving trustworthy research. Further, Bradshaw and Stratford (2010) note that taking the researcher role seriously is a predicament for achieving trustworthy work. This includes documenting the research process in a critical reflexive manner and achieving *transparency*. Transparency involves a genuine effort for taking responsibility in, and making explicit, "choices that have influenced the creation, conduct, interpretation, and writing-in of the research" (Mansvelt & Berg, 2010, p. 348). Mansvelt and Berg (2010) link transparency with the continuous effort of critically engaging with the research process, as discussed above. Throughout the extent of my research process I have documented and reflect upon the choices made. In the writing-in of this thesis I have attempted to expose the conscious choices taken and the reflections made regarding these choices, both with reference to this chapter and further with reference to presentation and clear argumentation throughout this work.

3.2 Ethical Considerations in Qualitative Research

While ethical considerations apply to both quantitative and qualitative social research, qualitative research brings to the fore specific ethical queries. Ethical considerations will be described in detail throughout the following exposition of my research process discussed below. There are nevertheless some general principles related to ethical considerations that will be discussed, in brief, in this section.

According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) ethical considerations starts with positioning oneself according to an ethical perspective as this decision effects what potential research can be carried out. As recommended by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 221), I have adopted an ethical situationist perspective to my research. Ethical situationism understands

ethical considerations to depend upon the specific context and case studied. The context and the value of the study as a whole are evaluated according to potential ethical discrepancies. This perspective recognizes the researcher as an active participant throughout the research process continuously revaluating ethical considerations. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) state "[t]his point of view usually places particular emphasise on the avoidance of serious harm to participants, and insists on the legitimacy of research and the likelihood that offence to someone cannot be avoided" (p. 219). 'Taking ethical considerations further involves the acknowledgment of the subjective role of the researcher and the intersubjective nature of encounters (Cloke, et al., 2004).

Several ethical deliberations arise during qualitative research, requiring critical reflective scrutiny throughout the research process and aptly before the research project is carried out in the field. My research project was affirmed by the by the Data Protection Official for Research in Norway (NSD)[3] before my fieldwork took place. This affirmation entailed ample consideration of ethical considerations regarding informant security and protection and involved the preparation of interview guides and an informed consent. Informed consent include information about the research and the scope of informant participation; enabling informants to make a more conscious decision regarding their participation (Dowling, 2010). Dowling (2010) notes that while informants rarely gain extensive inside access to the research process itself (with the exception of participatory research), informants should be made aware of the goal and intent of the research as well as their role and rights. My informed consent is attached in the appendix (attachment 2).

Ensuring privacy and confidentiality of informants are important considerations for all qualitative research. Nevertheless, how these issues are approached is relative to the nature of the research topic and the power-relations between researcher and informant. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) argue that understanding the privacy 'boundaries' of a subject is a complex problematic. To what degree are informants exposing or entrusting the researcher with privy insight and information? Hesselberg (2012) argues that it is important to protect informants from themselves, pointing to the potential vulnerable position of informants. The informants in this study have not been fully anonymized, however their identity is not enclosed confirming

[3] NSD: http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/om/english.html

Dowling's (2010) point that full anonymity of informants may not always be possible or desired. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) state that one should not exploit the people studied. Acknowledging that exploitation "is always a matter of judgement" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 218), this study has been carried with careful consideration for avoiding harm and exploitation. Corresponding to NSD's requirements, field notes, interview recordings and transcriptions are stored in a safe location and will be obliterated after the thesis is completed.

3.3 Case study and Qualitative Research

Gerring (2007) argues that a case study enables "better understanding of the whole by focusing on a key part" (p. 1) further stating "[t]he product of a good case study is *insight*" (2007, p. 7, original italics). My choice for doing a qualitative case study about urban farming in the City of Vancouver arises as a response to my interest in gaining in-depth insight about this phenomenon. The benefits of a case study, providing in-depth knowledge about a phenomenon, necessarily hinder other goals for social research. Developing as a relatively new phenomenon with reference to urban sustainability and urban spatial organization, the evolvement of urban farming in Vancouver provides a suitable case for answering questions pertaining to *whether* or *how* a variable matter as appose to analysing the causal effect or weight of such variables (George & Bennett, 2005). Choosing to address urban farming in the City of Vancouver as the case study for my thesis project, results from an academic and personal interest in agriculture as an urban phenomenon. During my four years of study at Simon Fraser University, in Vancouver, an academic and personal interest developed in conjunction around issues of food in urban environments. Awareness about the urban farming movement evolving in Vancouver and my familiarity with the city in general influenced my decision for choosing this case. Acquaintance with the City of Vancouver's sustainability and food policy focus further encouraged my pursuit of a study that engages with these topics in practice. The evolvement and mobilization of urban farming in Vancouver presents a unique example of the complexity rooted in the challenge of planning for urban sustainability.

Gerring (2007) underscores the problem of defining 'a case study'. Baxter (2010) describes a case study as both an entrance to methodology and research design. In line with one of Gerring's (2007) definitions, and for the purpose of my research, I define a case study "as the intensive study of a single unit or a small number of unites (the cases), for the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units" (p. 37). Hence, my case study can be identified as

the intensive study of urban farming as an urban sustainable and economic resilient practice in the City of Vancouver. The decision to do a case study is an inherent aspect of developing a research design and scoping out the intent and purpose of the research itself – the research goals. Baxter (2010) notes that while a case study can be a quantitative or qualitative/quantitative pursuit, qualitative case studies share a range of similar characteristics with qualitative research in general. Qualitative researched is considered advantageous for developing in-depth knowledge about a phenomenon and for refining concepts and representation. Qualitative research studies are considered *intensive* and aim at 'interpreting historically and culturally significant phenomena', giving voice to marginalized groups, refining or advancing theory and exploring diversity (Ragin, 1994, p 51). The richness and 'thickness' of single-case or 'small-number' case studies ensure internal validity (Gerring, 2007, p. 43) and is, according to Baxter (2010), "one of the best strategies for creating credible and trustworthy (rigorous) qualitative case study work" (p. 84). The value of a 'rich' qualitative case study lies in the idea that it can produce knowledge that would not be accessible through a study of a large number of cases. George and Bennett (2005) state that case studies are commonly advantageous where statistical methods are insufficient. The contextualization of qualitative case studies strengthens internal and conceptual validity (George & Bennett, 2005; Gerring, 2007). Qualitative case studies can take into considerations a range of contextual factors and, thus, enable conceptual enrichment. George and Bennett (2005) further notes that qualitative case studies are able to incorporate variables not yet described by existing theory or envisioned by the researcher potentially allowing the refinement or advancement of theory. As a rather new and unique phenomenon, urban farming in the City of Vancouver presents itself as a suitable case study for doing a rich and thick analysis of a rather underexplored phenomenon.

Case Study and Transferability

The generalizability of qualitative case studies is contingent upon different standards than quantitative studies. Generalizing a case study empirically (from case to population), defined in quantitative research as the element of external validity or representativeness, proves problematic for qualitative research (Baxter, 2010; Ragin, 2007). Rather, analytical generalization or 'transferability' is a possible venture for a qualitative case study. Through analytical abstraction (theory development) qualitative studies can apply to other cases of the unit studied. George and Bennett (2005) state that theory development from a case study is typically an inductive process,

where the research identifies new variables or connections between variables. Baxter (2010) notes, nonetheless, that qualitative research "is rarely a purely deductive or purely inductive endeavour (p. 89). While a developed theory can be proven probable by the amount of new cases it is applicable to, the transferability of a qualitative case study is understood relevant to the study's credibility and reliability (Baxter, 2010). Baxter (2010) states that transferability is achieved by; "(1) carefully selecting cases and (2) creating useful theory that is neither too abstract nor too case-specific" (p. 94). Further Baxter and Eyles (in Cloke, et al., 2004) argue that the degree of transferability is relative to the rigour of the research as whole, stating

> questioning how things are done – an essential component of self-reflection – allows qualitative research to demonstrate the relevance of the single case (credibility) and to move beyond it (transferability) with a degree of certainty (dependability or confirmability) (p. 149).

Transferability can as such be seen in relation to transparency – the ability of the reader to trace the 'inner logic' of the research process. Expose reflections made regarding research decisions and deductions made throughout the process proves as such critical and is an essential criteria for ensuring credibility and reliability of the research.

3.4 The Research Process

The conceptualization of a research process can in many instances spawn the idea of a linear process, where each segment naturally follows the foregoing segment in the process. However, the actuality of the research process can be considered profoundly more complex and muddled than commonly depicted in neat and organized diagrams. Continuous (re)formulations and (re)organizations of theory, research questions and images portrays a rather cyclical nature of social research processes (Baxter, 2010, p. 90). Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) state "the development of research problems is rarely completed before fieldwork begins; indeed, the collection of primary data often plays a key role in that process of development" (p. 28-29). A dialectic understanding of qualitative research complicates strict differentiation between inductive and deductive research. Induction can be described as "careful examination of a substantial amount of 'raw data', seeking to discern in them patterns and regularities which can be interpreted as being of some generality, importance or meaning" (Cloke, et al., 2004 p. 216). Deduction, on the other hand, "entails prior specification of theories, models and laws which can be used to account for the details found in 'raw data' as derived from studies of particular

phenomena" (Cloke, et al., 2004, p. 216). Cloke et al. (2004) stress, that most research includes deductive and inductive moments in continual dialogue.

Further, a research process entails the construction of an *analytical frame*, a largely deductive (re)construction of social theory; and the generally inductive (re)construction of *images* from data (Ragin, 1994, p. 57). In qualitative research, analytical frames can be fluid, changing throughout the process depending on the 'availability' and production of data (Ragin, 1994). Adopting a fluid analytical framework, the dialectic 'dance' of theory and 'data' has been a constant topic of scrutiny throughout the extent of my research process. Adjustments to my analytical framework as well as research questions have continuously taken place. I have emphasized flexibility in adjusting the case study to the 'reality' of the field as well as critically engaging with the ethics and rigour of these changes. The following sections trace this research process in more detail.

Planning the Study

Theoretical and contextual exploration was an informative gateway for developing a research design for this case study. Examining policy documents, newspaper articles and reports from Vancouver as well as examples from other cities, informed the early stages of this process. During a visit to Vancouver in the fall 2011 I discussed my ideas with academics at the Kwantlen Polytechnic University[4] engaged in (urban) food system and sustainability research. This meeting provided insight into the evolvement of urban farming in Vancouver and provoked a critical reflexive thought-process regarding the aim and goals of my proposed research. Developing tentative research questions I constructed a research design. I designed an informed consent form (attachment 2 in appendix) and two semi-structured interview guides for interviewing (1) urban farmers and people engaged in urban agriculture; and (2) people working within or in association with the local government. My choice for choosing an interview-based study was grounded in my pursuit in gaining insight into informant's subjective 'reality'. Cloke et al., (2004) describe interviewing useful for *intensive* research with "emphasis on explaining processes, changing conditions, organization, circumstances and the construction and reconstruction of meanings and identities" (p. 50). Choosing a semi-structured interview format further offered my flexibility ordering my interview guide around key topics (Dunn, 2010).

[4] KPU: http://www.kwantlen.ca/home.html

Introduction in the Field of Study and Selection of Informants

My fieldwork took place in the period from May 22nd to July 15th 2012. Two events instigated my engagement with the urban farming community in Vancouver.

The first event took place a few days after my arrival in Vancouver. A personal contact from my studies at Simon Fraser University (SFU) forwarded me an invite to a local food event held in collaboration with several organizations and the City of Vancouver. The event gave me an update on local food initiatives and food policy in Vancouver and several speakers from within and outside government spoke at the event. While the event resulted in only one concrete interview, I became more familiar with the complexity of urban farming in the City of Vancouver, as well as, received recommendations for potential informants and future events. I see in retrospect, however, that I could have more progressively approached potential informants, considering the relative short timeframe of my fieldwork.

The second significant event was the Vancouver Urban Farming Society Annual General Meeting (VUFS AGM). Prior to the event, I emailed a key actor within the urban farming community in Vancouver who forwarded my email to the Urban Farming Network Google listserv (an internet forum). In this way, I was introduced to a wide variety of involved actors before the event took place. At the event, my contact contributed positively to my introduction in the urban farming community and this contact played the role as an initial gatekeeper. An introductory round of all participants further eased my introduction at the event and helped me identify several potential informants. While I approached several people at the event, several participants also approached me, showing interest in my research. My introduction to certain people appeared to spark an interest from other participants at the event, suggesting that my role as a researcher was legitimizing within the network. I recruited several informants from the event. The event also proved a useful reference point for emailing people I knew had participated at the event, but yet not made contact with. Meeting people in person proved to be a productive introduction and these encounters resulted in more interviews than the ones where I introduced myself through email.

Selecting informants for a qualitative research project can be coined *purposive sampling*, highlighting the non-random selection process characteristic of qualitative research (Bradshaw & Stratford, 2010). Bradshaw and Stratford (2010) outline a range of sampling methods for selecting informants. During my fieldwork process I applied a combination of two sampling

methods: *criterion sampling* and *snowball sampling*. Criterion sampling is to select participants according to a set of criteria, which in my study was limited to people engaged in or knowledgeable about the evolvement of urban farming in the City of Vancouver. Further, I selected many informants through recommendations from other informants or contacts, understood as 'snowballing' or chain sampling (Bradshaw & Stratford, 2010). For example, at a second meeting with academics at KPU, I got several recommendations for people to talk to and this resulted in productive interview encounters. I contacted a total of 35 informants during my fieldwork, 15 of which resulted in interviews and/or (minor) participatory observation. Contact was primarily initiated through email and to a lesser degree through phone conversations. I felt more comfortable contacting people through email as it provided me a comfortable space to introduce my research and myself. I also experienced this communication method to be more respectful, allowing respondents to make a more reflected choice regarding their participation in my research. However, in retrospect, I realize that, considering the relative short timeframe of my fieldwork, contacting people by phone could have speeded up the introduction process and potentially resulted in more interviews. I received several emails after returning to Norway from people who were interested in participating in my research. While acquiring more informants could have positively contributed to my insight into the practices and processes studied, I experienced reaching an adequate saturation point, especially considering the limited size and extent of this research project. However one of the most prominent urban farms in Vancouver did not reply to my request (by email or phone) and I believe that their insight could have been beneficial for this research.

Interview, Participatory Observation, Document Review, and Positionality

In this study I have utilized data-source triangulation, consisting of: (1) semi-structured interviews; (2) (minor) participatory observation; and (3) document review. I conducted in total 15 semi-structured interviews with 17 people, representing urban farmers, urban planners, one politician, and people engaged in urban agriculture or working with or in relation to urban food systems (see attachment 1 for list of informants and attachment 3 for exemplary semi-structured interview guide). Two of the interviews conducted with urban farmers were combined with participatory observation in the field. My participatory observation period was not planned for and took place because two urban farmers preferred this method as they had little available time to spare outside of farming. While brief and restricted, these two days was a productive

introduction early on in my fieldwork process. The remaining interviews took from 30 minutes to an hour. All interviews was recorded and transcribed.

Interviews are a collaborative process and Cloke et al. (2004) emphasize recognizing informants as active subjects. Describing interviewing as 'conversation with a purpose' (Cloke, et al., 2004, p. 149) further stressing, "interviewers are themselves implicated in the construction of meanings with their interviewees. Such intersubjectivity is crucial and unavoidable, and the data which result are essentially collaborative" (Cloke, et al., 2004, 150). Cloke et al. (2004) further argue that the critical role of the interviewer is to adequately make room for the informant in the interview situation, stating "one of the key skills of interviewing is a sensitivity to what is being said, linked with an innate flexibility to permit and encourage encounters with the unexpected" (Cloke, et al., 2004, p. 152). The 'skill' of interviewing can therefore be understood as a learning experience, requiring both concentration and respect, during preparation of, and in interview situations. Having little experience with interviewing, I learned lessons from each interview conducted. For instance, gaining more confident asking questions, I felt more relaxed during the interview process; as such, I experienced becoming more attentive to the interviewee. Nevertheless, this boost simultaneously made the conversation more easily drift away from my topics outlined in the interview guide. Thus, I became aware of the skill in balancing my attentiveness to the interviewee and interesting topics brought up, to the topics identified in the interview guide. Throughout the fieldwork, I continuously rewrote my interview guides and included interesting topics brought up in conversation, as well as, excluding unproductive questions. Nonetheless, the overall structure of the interview guides remained the same.

Cloke et al. (2004) state, "understating *how* the meaning-making process unfolds in the interview is as critical as apprehending *what* is substantively asked and conveyed" (p. 150). This statement illustrates the appropriate reflective approach adopted before, during, and after interviews are conducted. Cloke et al. (2004) further state,

> data are co-constructed as interviewer and interviewee work their way through questions which begin as the 'property' of the researcher but which become co-owned and co-shaped in the unfolding interactivity of questioning, answering, listening and conversing (p. 129).

This quote recognizes the researcher's positionality and the intersubjective nature of encounters. As discussed with reference to Haraway (in Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002) earlier, there needs to be

a balance between critically engaging with positionality and (inter)subjectivity and the recognition of the limits within such reflection (Cloke, et al., 2004; Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002).

In regards to my position during my fieldwork I will not describe myself as an *insider*. However, I share with several informants a range of common interests and academic training. My mere decision to chose a case study related to this subject can similarly be said to position myself within a political field. Speaking to the current popularity of urban agriculture an informant states,

> I think we are just in the news a lot more and we are part of a very big group, which involves you, nobody would have done a master's on this, nobody would have done a BA on it, let alone PhD's on it" (Emory).

Hence, my decision to write on this subject positions me as an *insider* within a larger group engaged in urban agriculture. Several informants anticipated my adherence within this larger political field and I did not dispute this position.

Further, I experienced that informants were careful construing their responses and understood me to a large degree as an *outsider* regarding the urban farming community and their experience and practice as urban farmers as well as in regards to City of Vancouver relations. Nevertheless, several informants trusted me with in-depth insight that I believe they would not have shared if they did not perceive me as an *insider* within this larger political field. My personal interest in farming methods and practices may have enhanced this perception and urban farmers gladly shared knowledge and information regarding their farming experience beyond the scope of the research itself. With respect to interviews with planners and people working for the local government my position was perceived in a similar manner, as an outsider within the concrete context of study, yet as an insider in support of urban agriculture on a general level.

My two days of what loosely can qualify as participate observation was a productive encounter with urban farming as a profession. In short, participant observation can be described as (partially) participating in the 'world' of the informants under study "seeking to understand more fully the meanings of places and the context of everyday life" (Kearns, 2010, p. 245). While all research encounters are unavoidably subjugated to an intersubjective nature between the researcher and the researched, these two days proved particularly fruitful for better understanding the everyday lived experiences of being an urban farmer. Cloke et al. (2004) state,

> the intersubjective nature of the research encounter is a necessary reflection of both the researcher as co-constituent of resulting knowledges and the researcher becoming (however briefly) *part of the life* of the researched (p. 130 emphasis added).

While two days of participatory observation does not prove sufficient for understanding the work and life of urban farmers, these encounters gave me further insight into some of the routines, practices and struggles engaged with on a daily basis, as well as abolishing any imagined ideal of a romantic farm life.

Further, as a subjective researcher in the field, attention to power-relations in encounters is pertinent (Cloke, et al., 2004). My encounters with informants can be considered as 'symmetrical' or 'asymmetrical – studying up' relationships (Dowling, 2010, p. 32). The comparable age, academic training and lifestyle of several informants and myself distinguish the symmetrical power-relationships experienced. Asymmetrical power relationships were only encountered on a few occasions interviewing informants within or in relation to government, such as urban planners and politician(s). Two of these interviews took place at 'City Hall', enforcing an asymmetrical relationship. Nevertheless, in both interviews I was met with respect and interest as well as an informal approach, producing productive encounters. Several interviews took place in cafés and I experience that these spaces provided, in both 'symmetrical' and 'asymmetrical' interview situations, a comfortable interview setting, hence balancing power-relations.

Throughout the fieldwork process I wrote detailed field notes. Writing field notes proved to be a positive way of critically engaging with encounters and reflecting upon decisions made. I also kept a log over people contacted, interviews planned and conducted, and events and meetings attended. Throughout the extent of my research, I have reviewed newspaper articles, reports, bylaws, and various internet sources. I gained access to a Google listserv forum created for the urban farming network in Vancouver. This forum proved useful for exploring and documenting the evolvement of the urban farming network, later termed the Vancouver Urban Farming Society (VUFS).

Analysis, Interpretation, and Presentation of Informants

Ragin (1994) understands analysis and interpretation to take place throughout the extent of the research process. Similarly, the researcher's attention to positionality does not end when returning from fieldwork, but extends into the process of analysis and requires equal amount of

critical scrutiny (Ragin, 1994). The process of analysis involves the deconstruction of phenomena into discrete elements, and the comparison of these elements with reference to their relation to the phenomena in its entirety. The analytical frame proves essential for this purpose and constructs the researcher's 'way of seeing' (Ragin, 1994, p. 58). Ragin (1994) separates this process from *synthesis*: the reconstruction of evidence into images. Synthesis and analysis occur simultaneously, finally resulting in representations of social life. While engaging with my data material during my fieldwork, approaching my data material as a whole upon returning to Norway was an overwhelming encounter. Field notes, a wide range of documents as well as access to the Google listserv consisting of several hundred emails, and my transcribed interviews emerged as an overpowering confrontation.

Approaching my transcriptions, I utilized first and second cycle coding to code and categorize my data manually. Acknowledging the subjective nature of coding, Saldaña (2009) describes coding as "primarily an interpretive act" (p. 4). Coding does not ensure validity of the analysis in its own right, but is an interdepended technique used as one element of the analysis, linking data and ideas in a cyclical process. Several coding cycles are often necessary to construct fruitful codes, categorize and potentially uncover patterns (Saldaña, 2009). Saldaña (2009) advises new researchers to code the entirety of a data material, as productively choosing relevant data for coding requires experience. Initiating my first cycle coding process I adopted a descriptive coding method recommended for "qualitative researchers learning how to code data" (Saldaña, 2009, p. 70). Descriptive coding identifies topics using a short phrase or a noun. Engaging with the transcripts a second time I was inspired by a structural coding method, where I linked segments of data to conceptual phrases related to the research questions (Saldaña, 2009). I recoded unproductive codes and categorized sections of the data into larger themes. While not adopting a specific second cycle coding approach I used the codes and categories constructed to further organize and group the data in relation to my analytical framework and the process studied. Alongside analysing transcriptions, I have narrated the historical progression of food policy in the City of Vancouver and the evolvement of urban farming and the urban farming network (UFN) with reference to informant interpretations and document review.

Constructing a final representation is a challenging task requiring close attention to ethical considerations and rigour. Ragin (1994) describes the process of constructing representations of a phenomenon studied by alluding to the act of taking a photograph. Framing

an image includes a range of decisions, such as choosing what elements to include and what elements to exclude; focusing in on one aspect, consequently blurs another aspect. Ragin (1994) writes "[t]here is an interplay of possible frames and potential images in the construction of every representation" (p. 73). The writing-in of the analysis reflects, like taking a photograph, a subjective process, consisting of a myriad of evaluations and choices represented as a (largely) coherent representation.

All informants signed an informed consent sheet before participating in this research project. Informants expressed familiarity with involved actors inside and outside government and generally voiced little concern for being recognized in the final 'write-in'. Acknowledging that the urban farming community in Vancouver is a close-knit community, the study does not strive to achieve anonymity (see attachment 2). Not directly identifying informants ensures, nonetheless, that few people outside the urban farming community in Vancouver can easily identify the informants. I have chosen to refer to informant by a pseudonym and identify their position (e.g. urban farmer or urban planner) when relevant. The pseudonyms chosen are relatively gender-neutral names and are chosen as measure to further hinder identification of informants considering the close-knit urban farming community in Vancouver. While some informants consented to be directly identified in the thesis, I have chosen to give all informants pseudonyms. This decision was made as a measure to ensure more equal presentation of informants and for hindering identification of informants not eager to be directly identified. In the appendix I have attached a list of informants, listing interview dates, informants pseudonyms, and a short description of the informants' position and work (see attachment 1).

3.5 Summary

In this chapter I have outlined my methodological perspective and discussed the relevance and rigour of qualitative research. I have describes my motivation and decision for choosing to do a case study of urban farming in Vancouver. I have further portrayed and reflected upon the choices made and situations experienced throughout this research process. As a whole this chapter portrays my endeavour at achieving rigours, credible and reliable qualitative research and I hope the thesis as a whole proves this effort and reflects a transparent articulation of the research conducted.

4 Contextualizing Urban Farming in Vancouver

Vancouver is located in southwest Canada and situated within the 'Cascadian urban region' encompassing U.S. cities Seattle and Portland (Hutton, 2011). The Greater Vancouver regional district comprises 22 municipalities, counting 2,3 million residents (Fig 2). The City of Vancouver is the region's major urban centre, counting 600,000 residents[5] (Fig 3). Punter (2003) describes Vancouver as a city placed at "the edge of wilderness" (p. 4), making a reference to the picturesque and comprehensive natural environment comprising the city. Vancouverites are commonly distinguished for great environmental awareness and the city is home to a long history of civic environmental advocacy, for instance, the initiation of Greenpeace in 1969 (Punter, 2003). In this chapter I will narrate an historical account of City of Vancouver food policy development and the recent evolvement of urban farming within the city. I will furthermore characterize urban farming's socio-spatial characteristics in the City of Vancouver. However first, I will provide a brief background on the City of Vancouver's organizational form and general urban characteristics.

The City of Vancouver is distinguished by considerable independence from provincial legislation through the 'Vancouver Charter', conceded by the province in 1953 (Punter, 2003). The municipality is governed through a citywide political system, with a weak mayor and a small number of councillors. In opposition to a ward system, a citywide system warrants election of less councillors on citywide basis (Punter, 2003). While the City of Vancouver Council influences and approves larger planning decisions, such as policy, plans and rezonings, the director of planning is granted discretion for approving planning permissions and day-to-day planning resolutions (Punter, 2003). Punter (2003) describes Vancouver's planning system as a conjunction between discretionary and administrative planning. Employing a discretionary zoning system, Vancouver's planning practice is a combination of UK induced discretionary development control/permit processing system and elaborate zoning system distinctive of European and North American planning (Punter, 2003).

Punter (2003) and Hutton (2011) characterize Vancouver's recent planning history as centered on livability, densification and participatory planning. Despite population intensification, nearly 50 percent of Vancouver's land base is zoned single-family residential

[5] Metro Vancouver: http://www.metrovancouver.org/about/publications/Publications/PopulationTrendsCensus1921-2006.pdf

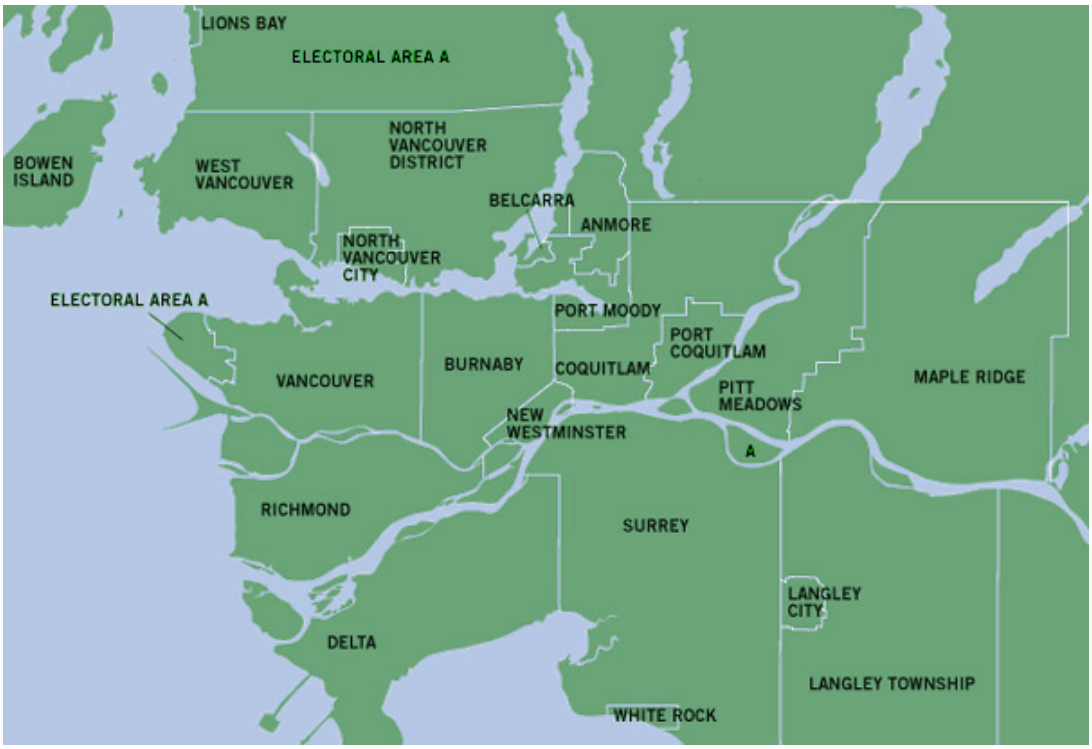


Figure 2. Greater Vancouver Regional District[6]

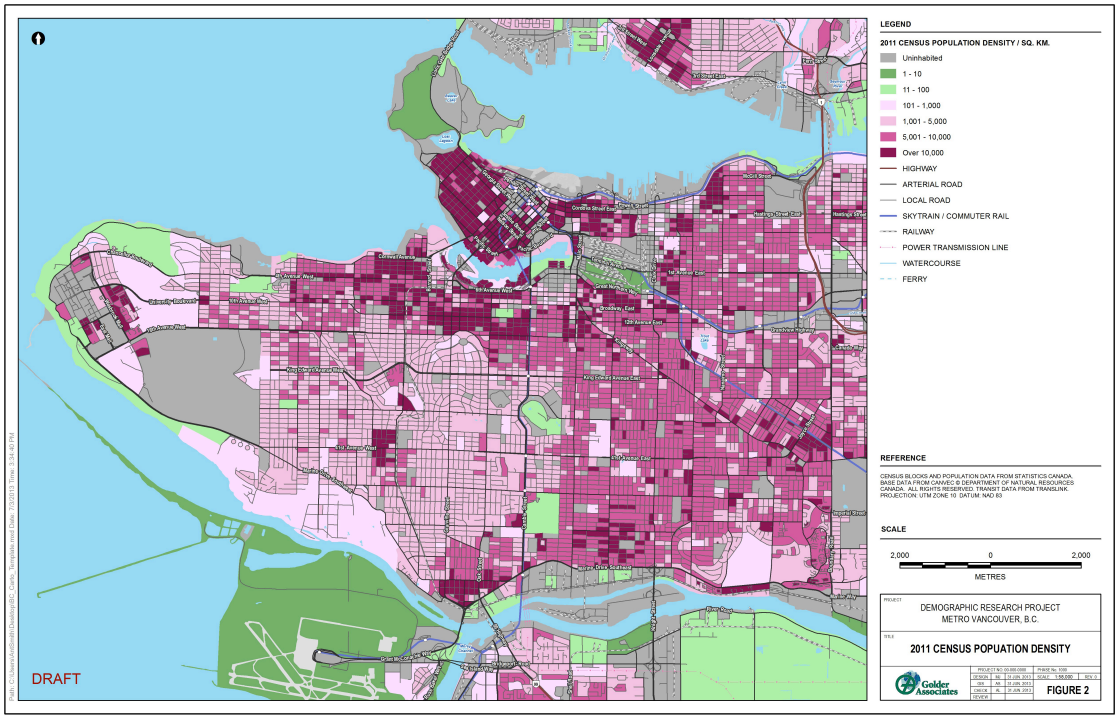


Figure 3. City of Vancouver population density/sq. km[7]

[6] CBC: http://www.cbc.ca/bc/features/electionconnection/index.html

[7] UBC Blog: http://blogs.ubc.ca/maps/2013/07/03/vancouverpopulationdensity/

(Punter, 2003). As an eminent focus of Vancouver's liveability strategy inner-city neighbourhoods have been protected from development. New residential housing has been concentrated around major transportation tracts and within and around the downtown core through high-rise development, frequently on former industrial land (Punter, 2003). The City of Vancouver's urban sustainability focus was initiated with the upsurge of environmental concerns in the late 1980s and integrated with ideas about livability, densification and participation. The incorporation of urban food system issues within city planning and politics lingered, nonetheless, until the early 2000s, arising as a response to multi-actor food policy advocacy within the local and regional community, in the 1990s (Mendes, 2006).

4.1 Early History of Food Policy in the City of Vancouver

In 2003, the City of Vancouver adopted a motion to "provide leadership in developing a just and sustainable food system for the City of Vancouver that fosters equitable food access, nutrition, community development and environmental health" (see illustration in **Figure 4**[8]) (City of Vancouver, 2003). Since this time, food system issues have become engrained within a variety of municipal departments and food policy have been advanced at a range of levels. Reflecting Pothukuchi and Kaufman's (2000) argument for 'food' being estranged to the planning field, an urban planner (Morgan) argues that part of the initial challenge bringing food system issues into municipal planning was "getting internal comfort levels up" around "why food is even an issue that the municipal government would be looking at". Discussing The City of Vancouver's early food policy focus, Mendes (2006) confirms this idea, arguing that multi-actor food policy advocacy initiated in the early 1990s instigated "re-framings of the scale at which food policy was assumed to be most appropriately mobilised" (p. 109). Food policy was reframed at the municipal scale by

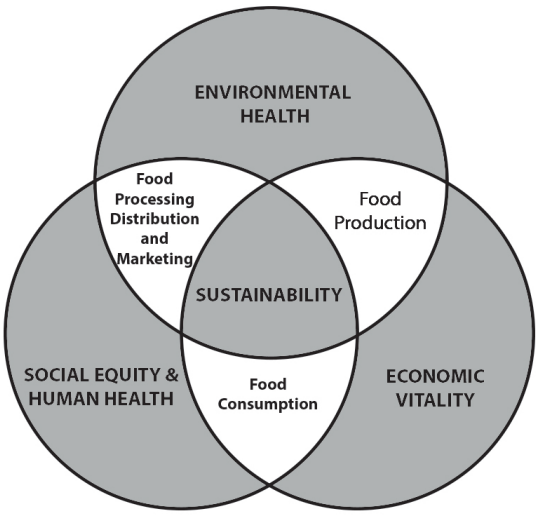


Figure 4. Goals for a Local Just and Sustainable Food System

[8] Ref: City of Vancouver, 2003.

several stakeholder-organizations, constructing the City of Vancouver as "the main 'brokering institution' through which multi-scaled configuration of food policy could be coordinated" (Mendes, 2006, p. 144). According to Mendes (2006), the shifting political climate within municipal government, in the early 2000s, enabled the City of Vancouver to "consider a possible role for itself in food system issues" (p. 145). Following this shift, I will in this section provide a short summary of early food policy initiatives within the City of Vancouver. **Figure 5** offers an overview of central food policy initiatives in the City of Vancouver since 2003 and provides a reference point for the proceeding discussion.

Ensuing the City of Vancouver's move towards advancing 'a just and sustainable food system', a 'Food Policy Task Force' was established, with a directive to develop a Food Action Plan (Mendes, 2008). Through the Food Action Plan, the task force recommended the establishment of a food policy council, with a "mandate to act as an advisory and policy development body on food system issues within the City's jurisdiction" (City of Vancouver, 2003, p 2.). In 2004, the Vancouver Food Policy Council (VFPC) was established with the directive to serve as an advisory group, researching food system issues in Vancouver and providing City Council with food policy recommendations. The VFPC was established as a voluntary citizens board with formal ties to the City of Vancouver (City of Vancouver, 2004). A VFPC representative (Elliot) describes the council as a having a catalyzing role, "[going] out ahead on issues where the city is not yet, either because they are politically sensitive or complex". The informant describes the VFPC as helping to incorporate "food system thinking" within and beyond city departments. Currently, the VFPC consists of 21 members, being representatives from different food system areas within the City of Vancouver and liaisons from City Council, City of Vancouver Park Board, City of Vancouver School Board, and City of Vancouver staff[9]. The VFPC acts as an intermediary between civil society and the municipal government, and internally between municipal departments and levels of government (City of Vancouver, 2004). The council holds monthly meetings open to the public. Referring to these meetings Elliot describes the VFPC as a *link-thank*, bringing together a broad variety of people.

[9] Vancouver Food Policy Council: http://www.vancouverfoodpolicycouncil.ca/about/current-members/

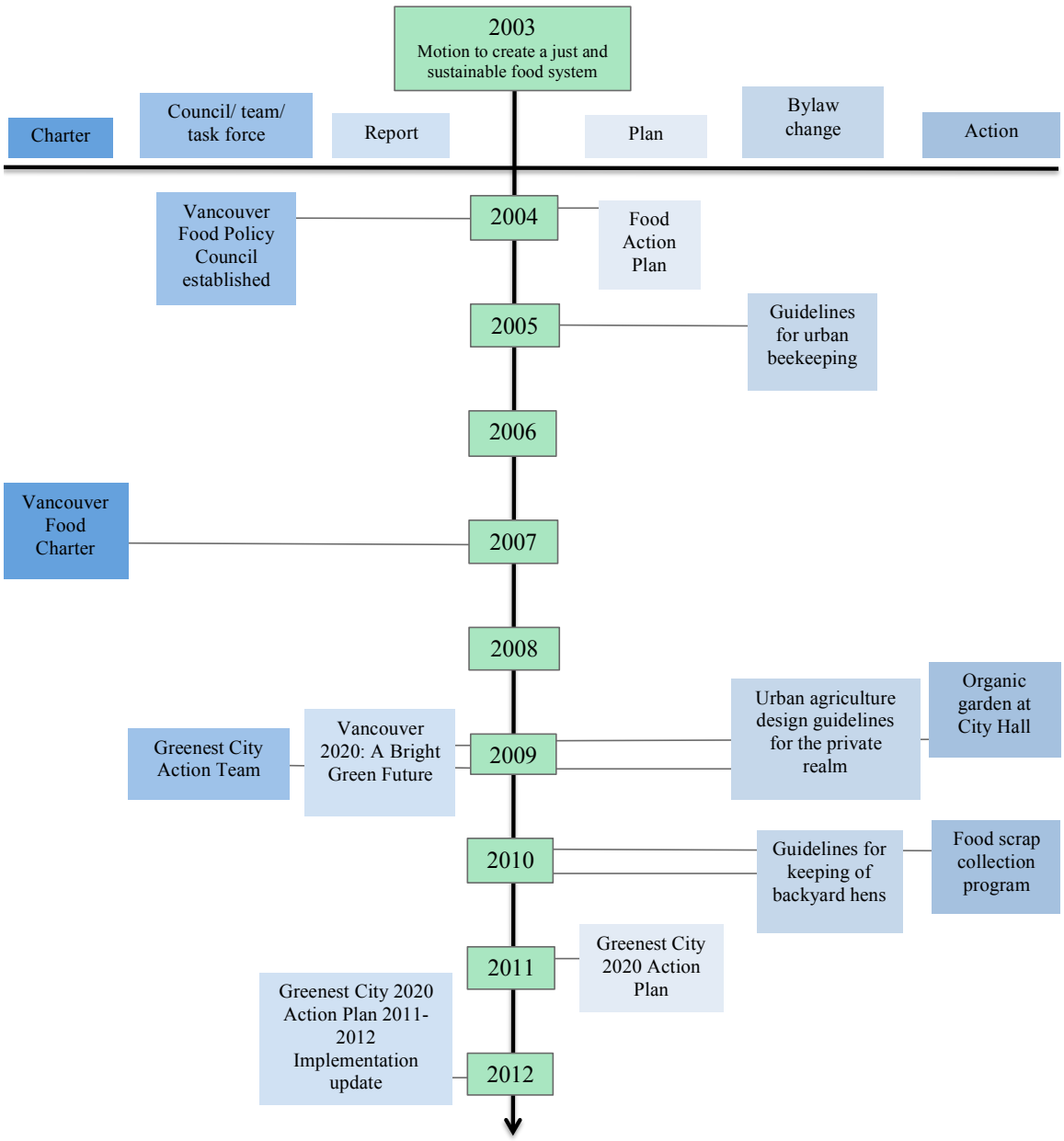


Fig 5. Overview of City of Vancouver food policy development since 2003

One of the VFPC's first achievements was the construction of the 'Vancouver Food Charter', a visionary document, contextualizing the creation of 'a sustainable and just food system' in Vancouver, and, further, grounding this motion in the City's broader urban sustainability framework (City of Vancouver, 2007b). The charter presents five guiding principles for the development of a just and sustainable food system. First '*community economic development*' presents an argument for localizing food systems, echoing 'resilient city' theory's conceptualization of risk and instability associated with global food production and distribution. Secondly, '*ecological health*' echoes McClintock's (2010) reference to ecological rift and is an argument for localizing food systems based on the argument of advancing environmentally sustainable food systems. Third, '*social justice*' is an argument for providing access to, and knowledge about, healthy and nutritious food in Vancouver, making references to food-insecurity and lifestyle related diseases. Fourth, '*collaboration and participation*' promotes collaboration and participation with and between scales of governance, from global actors to levels of government, businesses and civil society actors; thus, echoing Vancouver's participatory emphasis and contemporary governance structures. Fifth, '*celebration*' argues for advancing the cultural distinctiveness of food cuisines and the cross-cultural social linkages associated with the joy and celebration of food, making a reference to 'livability' (City of Vancouver, 2007a). Despite being a short document, a current City councillor and former member of the VFPC, emphasizes the charter's deferential language, yet critical role:

> We took the document to Council. […] how could they say no to a document, a document doesn't do anything. But then, every time we wanted something we would come to Council and go 'well you know, you have passed this document which says that you support these gardens or whatever it is that we are doing. So it ended up being very critical (Casey).

This quote indicates that the charter has enabled approval of more concrete actions.

The amendment of bylaws in favour of urban agriculture exemplifies some of the more concrete moves forwarded by the City of Vancouver (see **Figure 5**). For instance, in 2010, the City of Vancouver legalized the keeping of a small number of backyard hens in residential neighbourhoods in the city. The City of Vancouver made amendments to the health bylaw prohibiting the keeping of chickens within residentially zoned districts and created design requirements and general guidelines for backyard chicken keeping (City of Vancouver, 2010). The informants interviewed value the outcome of bylaw amendments differently. One informant

notes, “it gets a lot of news, I'd be interested in the numbers” (Emory). An urban farmer argues that the bylaws normalizes differential reconstructions of the urban environment, stating, “I think it is a pretty visual cue that the city landscape doesn't quite look like what we grew up thinking the City landscape looked like” (Taylor). A third informant (Emerson) characterises the bylaws as providing a protective measure from potential complaints from neighbours.

4.2 Becoming the Greenest City in the World

In 2009, Mayor Gregor Robertson proclaimed that Vancouver would rise to the challenge of becoming the greenest city in the world by 2020. As a result, the ‘Vancouver 2020: A Bright Green Future’ (ABGF) was progressed (City of Vancouver, 2009). This report fashioned a framework for how the City of Vancouver could succeed in becoming a sustainable and green capital, defining the greenest city in the world as a city that “will be a vibrant place where residents live prosperous, healthy, happy lives with a one-planet footprint, so as not to compromise the quality of life of future generations or people living in other parts of the world” (City of Vancouver, 2009, p 11). The quote makes reference to the conception of sustainability fashioned by the Brundtland Commission and characterizes urban sustainability broadly through positive connotations of livability and creativity. The report further recognizes urban food systems as an integral part of urban sustainability.

The work initiated through ABGF was furthered by the development of the ‘Greenest City 2020 Action Plan’. Ten interdepartmental working groups was established, working on 10 overarching goals identified in the ABGF[10] (City of Vancouver, 2011b). Alongside these working groups a public engagement process, taking place from June 2010 to March 2011 informed the formation of the GCAP. The public engagement process took place through a variety of forums and events, organized in collaboration with more than 120 organizations. Overall the public engagement process was structured to encourage idea creation and innovative and positive solutions organized around the 10 respective goals. The GCAP was adopted by City Council in 2011. Founding the plan in the City’s planning approach and governance structure, the GCAP outline ‘4 key ingredients’ for succeeding with the goals outlined; vision, leadership, action, and partnership (City of Vancouver, 2011a). The four components illustrates how the

[10] Goals: (1) Green Economy; (2) Climate Leadership; (3) Green Buildings; (4) Green Transportation; (5) Zero Waste; (6) Access to Nature; (7) Lighter Footprint; (8) Clean Water; (9) Clean Air; (10) Local Food (City of Vancouver, 2009).

City of Vancouver considers their role, making Vancouver become the greenest city in the world.

One of the 10 goals outlined in the GCAP is 'Local Food' and the goal's overarching ambition is that the City of Vancouver will "become a global leader in urban food systems" (City of Vancouver, 2011b, p. 64). The 'local food' goal identifies 'local' as meaning "that the distance from farm to plate is as short as possible" (City of Vancouver, 2011b, p. 65), and further recognize a socially and environmental just food system as entangled with the idea of 'local food'. The local food goal is as such grounded in the food charter's characterization of supporting the creation of 'a just and sustainable food system'. Further, the 'local food' goal states that within 2020 the goal is to "increase city-wide food assets by a minimum of 50 percent over 2010 levels" (City of Vancouver, 2011b, p. 65). The food assets included are identified in

	November 2010	**2020 Goal**	**% Increase**
Community Kitchens	69	100	45%
Farmers Markets	4	22	450%
Community Produce Stands	3	15	500%
Community Food Composting facilities	0	5	500%
Community Garden Plots	3,260	5,000	53%
Community Orchards	3	10	233%
Urban Farms	1	5	400%
Food Hub	0	1	100%
Total	**3,340**	**5,158**	**54.4%**

Table 1. GCAP Neighbourhood Food Assets baseline and goals

Table 1 (City of Vancouver, 2011a, p. 14). The baseline provided, identify one urban farm operating in Vancouver, juxtaposing the urban farming network's count of nearly 20 urban farms identified in the City of Vancouver, in 2010 (Regan & Thoreau, 2010). While the plan recognizes urban farming, it also reflects unfamiliarity with the number of urban farms operating in the city. The 'local food' goal, further, states that the City of Vancouver will *enable* 3 urban farms within the next 3 years (City of Vancouver, 2011a).

Further, the 'local food' goal states the City of Vancouver will "conduct a comprehensive review of policy and regulatory barriers to growing local food for personal consumption or economic development, and plan to remove barriers" (City of Vancouver, 2011a, p. 145). The plan makes, as such, a reference to the potential impediments of revenue-generation urban food production. With reference to urban farming, the 'local food' goal, further, outline land use policy as a central element in securing food-growing spaces and suggests that potential actions could include; "[e]stablishing dedicated zoning to protect food-growing spaces (including, but

not limited to community gardens), supporting appropriate placement and licensing of urban farms and, amending current bylaws to better facilitate food production, community produce stands, etc." (City of Vancouver, 2011a, p. 145). The proposed actions reflect the City of Vancouver's interest in, and recognition of, urban farming and their awareness of some of the issues associated with this practice. An urban planner and member of the 'Local Food staff working group' (Morgan) maintains that urban farming was not one of the highest priorities in the 'Local Food' goal. Morgan states, referring to urban farming, "we were aspirational about it" (Morgan).

In 2012 the City of Vancouver released the 'Greenest City 2020 Action Plan 2011-2012 Implementation Update'. The update emphasizes the plan's collaborative nature stating, "It's up to everyone to do their part, to rethink, re-evaluate and re-imagine the way Vancouver works and how we lead our lives" (City of Vancouver, 2012, p. 4) making a reference to Healey's (2002) argument for urban strategic governance. With reference to 'Local Food' the update recognizes the City of Vancouver's explicit support in urban farming portraying their collaboration with SoleFood Street Farms, an urban farm operating under the umbrella of a non-profit organization. The update states " The City recently approved a lease for three sites to SoleFood, a social enterprise that provides urban agriculture employment and training opportunities for Vancouver's inner-city residents" (City of Vancouver, 2012, p. 44). Further the section states, "[u]rban farming also takes place in yards in neighbourhoods around the city […] The City is working with urban farmers to examine the regulatory and operational challenges of growing food for commercial purpose in the city" (City of Vancouver, 2012, p. 44). The update recognizes approximately 15 urban farms within the city. This number is not recorded as an increase in food assets, indicating that the City of Vancouver recognizes the GCAP's underrepresentation of urban farms. This indication is reinforced by the way the implementation update speaks to the challenges of measuring food assets and states "food policy and food system planning is a relatively new field in municipal activity" (City of Vancouver, 2012, p. 44).

4.3 Characterizing Urban Farming in Vancouver

In this thesis, I define urban farming as revenue-generating urban agriculture. Moreover, there are specific characteristics differentiating urban farming in Vancouver from, for instance, Chinese urban market farming. In Vancouver, several urban farms have been established within the last three years and urban farming is construed as a largely new phenomena (Schutzbank,

2012). In this section, I describe practices and models distinguishing urban farming in Vancouver. I utilize, foremost, secondary data sources, but also insight from interviews with informants. The secondary data comprises recent studies on urban farming in the City of Vancouver and within the GVRD. As the majority of urban farms studied operate fully or partially within the City of Vancouver I find these studies sufficient for contextualizing and characterizing urban farming in the City of Vancouver.

Urban farming can be associated with permaculture or SPIN-farming, conceptualized as low technology, labour intensive, organic and small-scale farming (EcoDesign Resource Society, 2013). Urban farmers in Vancouver do most work by hand; mechanized tools, such as rototiller and tractor, are only used on a few occasions and commonly shared through cooperative arrangements (VUFS, 2013). Urban farmers in Vancouver cultivate a variety of produce. The most common harvests are annual vegetable varieties, but urban farm products also include wild/weed harvest, livestock, flowers, mushrooms, microgreens, hops, perennial medicinal plants, and fruit and berries. Urban farmers harvest their produce by hand and commonly distribute it to customers by car, bike, feet or co-op vehicle (VUFS, 2013).

Urban farmers utilize a variety of distribution models. The most common distribution models in Vancouver are community supported agriculture (CSA's), farmers markets, restaurants and farmgate sales, (illustrated in **Figure 6)** (VUFS, 2013). CSA is a distribution model ensuring

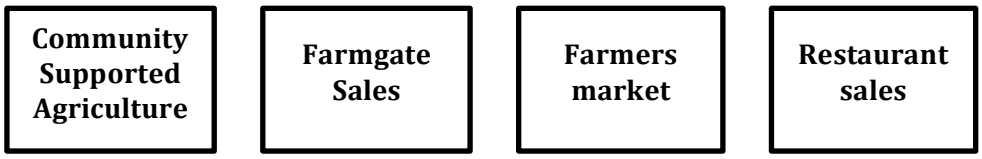


Figure 6. Common distribution models utilized by urban farmers in the City of Vancouver

the farmer economic security and predictability. The model is organized as an upfront 'share' system where the farmer makes available a certain amount of 'shares' at the beginning of season. A customer purchases a 'share' and picks up a box of fresh produce, commonly weekly or biweekly throughout the season. The model gives the farmer flexibility, in that the farmer, not the customer, chooses the produce distributed. Further the farmer receives payment early in the season when expenses are the highest. As a direct sale model, the customer buys into the concept of the farm as well as the risk associated with food cultivation (Schutzbank, 2012; VUFS, 2013). Farmgate sales are on-site produce stands where produce is sold directly from the farm site. This

model allows the farmer time to simultaneously work and sell produce (VUFS, 2013). While representing a common distribution model, farmgate sales are currently problematic in a variety of zoning districts in the City of Vancouver due to legal barriers discussed bellow. Urban farmers also distribute produce through farmers markets. Farmers markets provide opportunity to sell produce at a higher price. Nonetheless, farmers markets' hosts a range of rural farms and can provide competition for urban farmers commonly producing less bounty. Restaurant sales can give urban farmers predictability and steady income if restaurants are willing to feature seasonal produce. This distribution model can nonetheless contribute added risk considering the legal challenges encompassing urban farming in the City of Vancouver.

Compared to rural farmers, urban farmers are able to produce less and higher value produce (Schutzbank, 2012). Schutzbank (2012) categorizes urban farming revenue as 'food revenue', 'grant revenue' and 'other revenue' (p. 87). Food revenue is revenue generated directly from produce sales and processed food sales. Grant revenue refers to donations and grants received, while other revenue is revenue generated through consulting, education and similar related practices (Schutzbank, 2012). Scutzbank (2012) notes that several urban farmers rely on 'other revenue' as a secondary source of income. The seasonality of farming makes urban farmers temporary full-time employees. As labour intensive model, urban farms employ a range of seasonal interns and volunteers.

Urban farms in Vancouver are organized as for-profit ventures, not-for-profit ventures, or organized under the umbrella of a not-for-profit organization (illustrated in **Figure 7**).

Figure 7. Organization models for urban farms in the City of Vancouver

Schutzbank (2012) notes that non-profit and 'under the umbrella of a non-profit organization' urban farms have larger operating budgets and are able to expand production and staff-numbers more easily. The number of people working in relation to an urban farm operation commonly comprises 2-5 people, but range from 3 to 37 people (VUFS, 2013).

Urban farmers cultivate on a range of land types, including institutional, residential, commercial, and brownfield sites (illustrated in **Figure 8**). Commonly, land sites appropriated by

urban farmers are vacant or can in some way be considered underutilized in their current state.

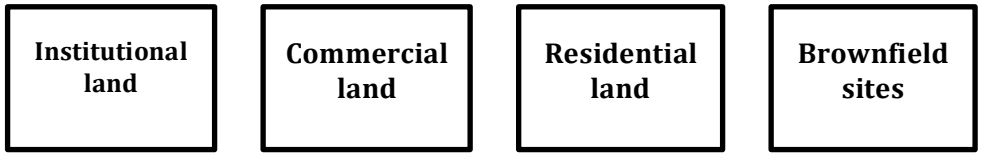


Figure 8. Land types utilized by urban farmers in the City of Vancouver

Urban farmers utilize one or several sites throughout the city. Foremost, urban farmers utilize commercial and residential designated land (VUFS, 2013). The urban farmers ability to access different land types vary according to organizational model and is related to the legal grey zone comprising urban farming. Land is leased through largely informal (but also formal) land tenure agreements (Schutzbank, 2012; VUFS, 2013). Schutzbank (2012) differentiates three types of land tenure relations, namely institutional, residential, and private donations (illustrated in **Figure 9**). Land tenure can vary from one month to about 5 years (VUFS, 2013). Institutional

Figure 9. Land tenure relations between urban farmers and property owners in the City of Vancouver

land commonly enables longer tenure, and can as such provide more security for urban farmers (VUFS, 2013). Commercial and institutional land "tend to be larger in size and more suitable for large scale production and have space for storage or processing" (Schutzbank, 2012, p. 86). Schutzbank (2012) notes that institutional landholders frequently require urban farmers to partner with, or be organized as, a non-profit. Short-term tenure agreements make urban farmers reluctant to invest in long-term structures (VUFS, 2013). Schutzbank (2012) notes that urban farmers rarely pay for the land they lease and land is either donated or traded for services or produce.

4.4 The Legal Grey Zone of Urban Farming in Vancouver

The legal grey zone confining urban farming in the City of Vancouver is foremost related to zoning designations and business licence arrangements. With the exception of the Southlands (RA-1 Limited Agriculture District), located in southwest Vancouver, commercial agriculture is

not permitted as and outright land use within the remaining zoning districts in the City of Vancouver[11]. In district HA-1 and HA-1A (Chinatown) greenhouses *can* be approved as a conditional land use under a development application[12] (Holland & Pander, 2004).

As a for-profit urban farm venture urban farmers are unable to obtain a business licence for their farm venture, as the land that their business is situated on is not approved for the production of product sold. Not being able to obtain a business licence, urban farmers cannot acquire insurance or apply for loans.

Registered under the umbrella of a non-profit organization or being a non-profit entity, urban farmers are able to escape some of the direct legal challenges hindering for-profit urban farms. Private landowners can receive property tax breaks by temporarily changing the land designation from commercial or industrial to non-profit or recreational and allowing non-profits to utilize their land for urban agriculture (Schutzbank, 2012; EcoDesign Resource Society, 2013). Non-profit urban farmers can obtain a non-profit business license and sell produce this way. However, temporary redesignation of land to non-profit or recreational designated land does not directly legalize the production of produce for sale from the sites in question. One urban farmer (Sam), registered under the umbrella of a non-profit organization, notes that while they have been able to obtain insurance for their business, the insurance will not cover issues related to food sales as the produce is farmed on land not designated for commercial agriculture. As such, being able to obtain a non-profit business licence does not necessarily indicate that urban farmers are able to enter the city's legal language coherently.

4.5 Formalizing the Vancouver Urban Farming Society

In May 2012, the Vancouver Urban Farming Society (VUFS) was established. The VUFS was the outcome of a year and half long process focused around collectively mobilizing support for urban farming in Vancouver (illustrated in **Figure 10**). This section describes the evolvement of the urban farming network (UFN) and the formalization of the VUFS.

In 2010, Thoreau initiated an action-based bachelor thesis project in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems at UBC (Thoreau, 2011a). As an urban farmer himself, the thesis aimed at,

[11] City of Vancouver: http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/map-of-zoning-districts.aspx

[12] City of Vancouver: http://former.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/BYLAWS/zoning/ha-1&1a.pdf.

> work[ing] towards developing an adaptive framework that encourages and promotes the development of entrepreneurial urban farming in Vancouver […] the ultimate goal being to aid urban farmers in developing economically viable urban farming businesses which are involved in, and contribute to, Vancouver communities and which promote and utilize ecologically-sensible farming practices (Thoreau, 2011a, p. 3).

In November, 2010 Thoreau organized an urban farming gathering attended by 50 urban farmers and urban farming enthusiasts, representing 18 of the 19 urban farms identified in the City of Vancouver at the time (Regan & Thoreau, 2010). This was the first time urban farmers formally gathered in Vancouver to discuss their challenges and future prospects (Regan & Thoreau, 2010). Following this gathering, a Google listserv (internet forum) was established, for better facilitating discussions and for sharing information. The listserv was used for planning and organizing the UFN and concurrently for sharing information about urban farming related events, practical issues and questions, ideas, suggestions and giveaways.

The second urban farm gathering took place January 30th, 2011. This was a visionary meeting facilitated by a professional facilitator, with the purpose of more directly identifying in what way, and towards what goals, the UFN should evolve (Thoreau, 2011a). A month later, the UFN's collaboration with the VFPC formalized and the network was incorporated as an external working group under the VFPC. This meant that UFN activities could be reported to the VFPC and potentially presented to City Council (Thoreau, 2011b).

The UFN's exposure to the City of Vancouver progressed in late 2011 with the organization of the Vancouver urban farming forum. The forum was held in an attempt to bring together policy makers, urban farmers and food security advocates in Vancouver (Clark, et al., 2012). The forum was initiated as an outcome of the policy and regulation challenges experienced by urban farmers and brought up through the UFN. The idea was to create a platform where urban farmers and policy makers could discuss barriers to urban farming and explore potential solutions (Clark, et al, 2012). 102 people attended the forum, including 6 representatives from the City of Vancouver, 27 urban farmers and several representatives from non-governmental organizations, academics, business and finance as well as representatives from local governments in the GVRD (Vancouver Public Space Network, 2011). The forum was organized "to utilize the expertise present to collaboratively identify opportunities for urban farming to be advanced in Vancouver, and to name the associated priorities for action over the

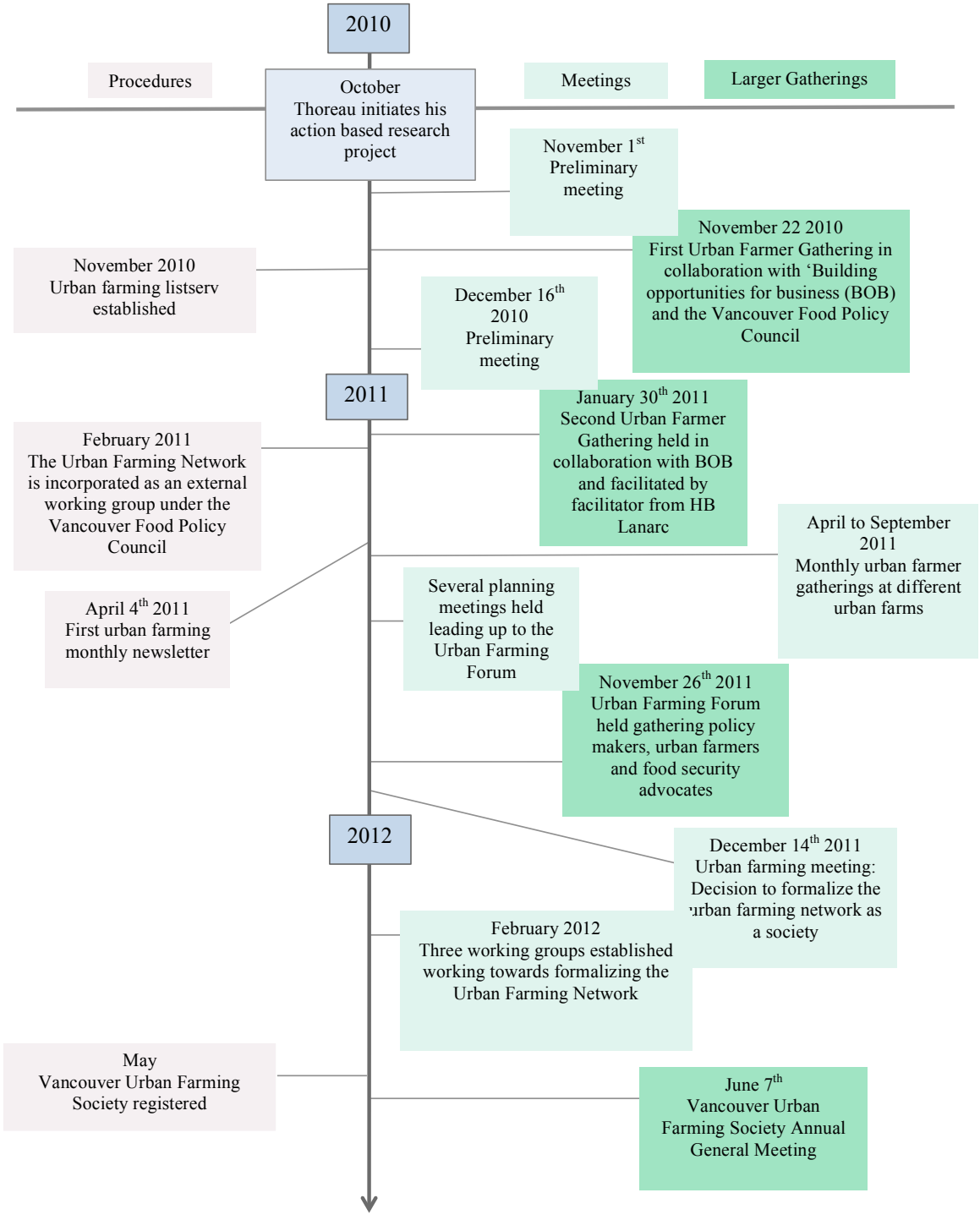


Figure 10. The evolvement and formalization of the urban farming network in the City of Vancouver

next few years" (Clark, et al., 2012, p. 12). Discussing the outcome a forum a summary report states "[f]or the first time in decades supportive city policies are paralleled with a growing movement of urban farmers, and a public interest in local food" (Clark, et al., 2012, p. 17). The summary report further recommends resolving the "two immediate barriers that are preventing urban farms from becoming viable businesses in Vancouver: land access and business licensing" (Clark, et al., 2012, p. 18). Furthermore, the report outlines three recommendations for urban farmers: (1) collaboration with the city; (2) organization and engagement and; (3) building capacity and professionalism. Lastly, the report recommends the urban farmers establish a code of best practices and to formalize the UFN (Clark, et al., 2012).

On a meeting held mid-December 2011 it was determined that the UFN would be formalized as a society. Three working groups were established to work towards formalizing the urban farming network as a society. In May 2012 the Vancouver Urban Farming Society (VUFS) was officially registered with the province.

In this chapter, I have contextualized the City of Vancouver and provided and historical account of food policy advancement and the evolvement and organization of urban farming in the city. This provides a background for the ensuing analysis.

5 Constructing Urban Farming with Reference to Urban Sustainability and Economic Resilience

> No one had a problem with gardening, it's always been there, but to try an put on top of that all the layers that we have like environmental education, all these kinds of things that if you layer them up make it unique to our time now. Because of course the gardening had different times with movements and the wars and economic downturns, but there are more layers right now (Emory).

The quote provided above makes reference to a variety of 'layers', currently constructing urban farming as a meaningful practice within the city. The informants interviewed, confirm the multiplicity of 'layers', attributing value to urban farming differently. While these 'layers' provide differential motivations for supporting urban farming, they all, simultaneously, make references to ideas about sustainability, and echoes McClintock's (2010) argument for the discursive shift, moving constructing of urban agriculture from "one of recreation and leisure to one of urban sustainability and economic resilience" (p. 191). While urban farming can be constructed without references to urban sustainability and economic resilience, the current advent of urban farming in Vancouver is constructively viewed as mobilized within this discursive terrain. As discussed earlier, sustainability is innately an ambiguous concept and informant's interpretation of the value attached to urban farming can, further, be associated with an ambition for changing current socio-ecological imaginaries. The informants' interpretations of the value associated with urban farming can as such be viewed as constructing urban farming as a multifunctional response to a range of socio-ecological issues in line with McClintock's (2010) theory on metabolic rifts.

In this chapter, I provide deeper insight into ideas and narratives constructing urban farming as meaningful practice within the city. Making references to the way these interpretations engage with theories on sustainability and socio-ecological imaginaries more broadly, I analyse these multiple 'layers' and emphasize their construction as political motivations for supporting urban farming in Vancouver.

5.1 Urban Farming as Meaningful Work and Positive Resistance

Several informants, engaged in urban farming and urban agriculture more broadly, conceptualize food cultivation as a meaningful and positively constructed practice. Understanding food

cultivation as an innately positive practice, is further related to the idea that it provides an avenue for personally confronting global environmental problematic. Understood as alleviating alienation, as illustrated by McClintock (2010), urban farming is interpreted as an avenue for regenerating human-nature relations.

One informant (Emerson), experiencing the global environmental state as overwhelmingly destructive, notes,

> It is the kind of cultural fabric that we can sort of get into everyday that allows you to feel comfortable in the world with all of the contradictions that are going on and all of the, you know, the shift in climate and all of that sort of stuff that is almost, it is almost untenable. How can we actually wake up everyday and function in the current context when you know the planet is dying, the oceans are dying, the environment is dying, you know. So food becomes our regenerative way of working with our environments.

The quote makes reference to the negatively construed worldview encompassing much contemporary environmental rhetoric (Keil, 2007). While experienced as overpowering, Emerson describes food cultivation as an advent for reconstructing the dissonance felt, living in the current context. Hence, the informant's view can reflect an advent into Kaika and Swyngedouw's (2012) argument for consciously and politically engaging with the "how's" and "what's" of the way we construct nature. More directly, Emerson makes reference to McClintock's (2010) argument for urban agriculture's potential in alleviating the individual rift. The idea that urban agriculture is a gateway, for positively reengaging oneself with nature, is confirmed by another informant, stating, "anything to do with urban agriculture individuals can do it" (Emory). Urban food cultivation is understood as a possible point of engagement, addressing the separation between people and 'nature'. Further, urban agriculture is understood as, practically through labour, being able to reconstruct conscious and unconscious relations between people and 'nature', making a reference to ontological knowledge.

With reference to urban farming as employment, urban farming can be understood as providing meaningful work. Addressing alienation from nature and labour, urban farming is constructed as an avenue for alleviating, what McClintock (2010) describes as, social rift. One urban farmer (Taylor) distinguishes urban farming as meaningful work, stating,

> Like I put in this much labour and I see the fruits of it later. It feels fantastic. Whereas before, when I was working in school administration and things like that, like you put in so much time, and it was like we don't know how it is going to work

> out, you know. You see your end product, but that end product doesn't necessarily mean success. Like here, if the food grows, that's success. Whether or not it sells is a different measure. It doesn't matter if it sells, just the fact that you have it is a success and it feels great.

The quote illustrates the positive connotations associated with the direct relationship between labour and product. The informant's portrayal renders urban farming as an, at least partially, decommodifying practice, embedding food production within social structures beyond the logic of a capitalistic market. Taylor further speaks to urban farming as meaningful employment, stating,

> I love that everyday I am making decisions that I believe in; that I have the opportunity to act on my beliefs all the time.

In this quote, Taylor portrays the direct relationship between action and personal conviction, as empowering. Another urban farmer (Jayden) confirms this notion, identifying urban farming as a gateway for actively engaging with environmental problematic. Jayden states,

> I know that for our group, putting our effort and our energy and our time into something that aligns with our personal values is really important and urban farming has provided an avenue for us to do that.

Jayden further characterizes urban farming as "a gentle resistance to what's going on in the industrial food sphere and the greater sphere in general", and states,

> I think we are all pretty concerned about where we are environmentally and you know, this project gives us a little window into putting effort into something that is positive and alternative and sort of - all it does really is bring all these questions to the forefront.

This conceptualization constructs urban farming as political practice, manifested as 'positive resistance'. Constructing urban farming as positive resistance makes reference to Blomley's (2005) depiction of gardening as a mundane appropriation and can, thus, be understood as radical politics in disguise. Hence, Jayden's portrayal, reiterates McClintock's (2010) argument for urban farming's potential in provoking a discussion of the ecological- and social rift, associated with global and industrial food production.

Understanding urban farming as meaningful work and positive resistance makes reference to urban farming as a personal gateway for engaging with environmental problematic

and potential socio-ecological imaginaries. While mobilized at a very local level, urban farming can be understood with reference to 'resilient city' theory's objective to create 'cities of hope'.

5.2 Urban Farming as Edible and Environmental Education

> As farming got pushed to the fringes of society, you don't think about it. You don't think about where it comes from (Alex).

The quote above makes reference to individual rift, understood as alienation from labour and nature (McClintock, 2010). The previous narration illustrates urban farming as means for, personally, dealing with metabolic rifts. Understanding urban farming as edible and environmental education, makes reference to the larger social value of introducing and exposing people to food production. Several informants construe the act of exposing people to food production as potentially enhancing food production awareness and, further, contribute to environmental education. This perspective understands the practice of physically 'digging in the ground' as internalizing the value of this practice, described, by Crouch and Parker (2003), as ontological knowledge and is, further, construed as contributory to the internalization of sustainability problematic.

A City councillor, and former member of the City of Vancouver School Board (Casey), understands children's alienation from food production as real. As a member of the school board, Casey frequently asked school children where potato chips came from. Casey states,

> most kids could not identify that they came from potatoes. They came from the store, they came from their mom, they came from the cafeteria, the machine, but they could not answer the word potatoes. And if you asked them how a potato grew, a whole other thing.

Viewing food cultivation as estranged to an urban population, Casey reiterates the idea presented in the introductory quote, cited above. Understanding such alienation negatively, Casey understands urban farming as potentially bridging this gap of knowledge. An urban farmer (Taylor) confirms this notion, maintaining that part of the decision to become an urban farmer was related to an interest in exposing people to food production, stating, "I just knew that I had to be in the city to do that piece of advocacy work". Taylor further notes,

> when people see me in my front yard doing what I am doing, even if it is a look of disgust, there is a conversation that happens, there is a point of interaction, there is an

> opportunity for me to share my believes and my thoughts and my life with somebody.

The quote illustrates the idea that bringing farming into the city, and exposing people to such work, can help alleviate the dissonance between people and their food system. Furthermore, Taylor's reference to 'look of disgust', illustrates urban farming as a provocation in the urban environment, and further depicts Taylor's recognition of people negatively tuned towards urban farming.

Another urban farmer (Jayden) echoes a similar advantage of exposing urban populations to food production, stating "just getting people to consider where their food comes from and make those personal choices themselves". Urban farming is, as such, understood as provoking a conscious relation between people and their food, potentially alleviating the social rift associated with the commodification of food and food systems. Further, an urban farmer (Sam) explains how educating customer through their community supported agriculture (SCA) distribution model is part of connection people with their food system. Sam states,

> We could actually start our CSA later, but I also, I think there's a value in having people there and see the whole, you know, this is what it is like in the spring and it is not always possible to have as much produce as you'd look because you do have to go through the variances of the season.

Exposing people to urban farming and teaching them about food production by tightening relations between the farmer and the customer, can be understood as recreating people's relation with food. One informant presents the idea, that tightening these relations can, further, enhance "environmental stewardship" (Alex). The informant makes a specific reference to a non-profit urban farm, collaborating with a school and providing 'edible education' for children. Alex describes one of the essential values of urban farming as "teaching people how to grow food" and further distinguishes such education as potentially enhancing environmental stewardship. Alex' portrayal, makes a reference to people's potential internalization of environmental problems by being involved in food production, hence, presenting an argument for ontological knowledge. The value associated with directly connecting and exposing people to food cultivation can, further, be associated with Beatley's (2012) conceptualization of the 'biophilic city', emphasizing direct human and nature relations.

5.3 Urban Farming as Community Engagement

Several informants understand community gardens as advancing positive community relations. A City Councillor distinguishes community gardens as "one of the few place that you actually get the community together, talking together" (Casey). Casey further states,

> From a social perspective, I can't think of a single other way a city can get people of different ages of different incomes, of different interest [together] - all they have to have in common is food.

While urban farms represent rather differential endeavours, several informants characterize urban farming as engaging in a variety of community relations associated with the urban farms inclusion in, or mandate for, a specific community.

Urban farmers, growing in residential yards in Vancouver inner-city neighbourhoods, make reference to variable community involvement. One urban farmer notes that these farms can be "quite a conversation piece" (Jayden) and makes notice of farms established in central locations within a neighbourhood. Jayden is, nonetheless, surprised by the degree of community engagement resulting from their operations. Alluding to day-to-day relations between homeowners and people in the neighbourhood, Jayden characterises the urban farmers as involved actors in the neighbourhood. Jayden states,

> just those conversations, and those hallo's and those introductions and you know, now I know this person and that person and that person - all that kind of bond building that happens through this project. There is no numbers for that. You can't quantify it, but it is one of the most important things that we do for sure.

The quote illustrates the informant's emphasis on the value of being an involved community actor. Jayden notes that they have arranged various community events in the neighbourhoods, where they have farms. Further, Jayden distinguishes their role in the neighbourhood as different from rural farming, stating "there is no doubt that that's not something that happens in a rural setting, because there is nobody there to talk to". Jayden relates, as such, urban farmers' entanglement within inner-city neighbourhoods as directly related to their role as community actors and further to their characteristic as an *urban* farm. Another urban farmer (Sam) confirms this notion, differentiating their own urban farm operation, established on intuitional land, from urban farmers growing in residential yards. The informant notes, that while such relations may require more logistics, urban farmers cultivating residential yards involve, not only CSA

members, but also landowners, "so in that way they might be having more impact, actually reaching out to more people". This quote indicates that Sam understands the value of urban farmers growing in residential yards with specific reference to their function as an engaged community actor. However, other informants, growing in residential yards, do not emphasize their community engagement equal to the urban farmer already identified.

For urban farmers utilizing land in the downtown core, their role engaging community is different. One urban farm, organized under a non-profit organization and farming in specialized box systems on urban brownfields and temporary underutilized development sites, has a mandate to "empower individuals with limited resources by providing jobs, agricultural training and inclusion in a supportive community of farmers and food lovers"[13]. This urban farm frequently employs people from the Downtown Eastside in the City of Vancouver, an area distinguished as the poorest postal code in Canada (Ley & Dobson, 2008). As such, their engagement with community can be understood differently, than the relations advanced by cultivating residential yards in inner-city neighbourhoods.

While the nature of urban farmer's community engagement differs, an informant (Sage) explicitly contends that part of the intrinsic value of urban farming is related to this function. Sceptical towards larger-scale urban farm ventures, Sage states,

> You see every now and again a story about these futuristic thirty-story high farms. They even have cows upon the top or something stupid like that, but there is no community. You know, they might be producing some foodstuff, but there is absolutely no community.

While the informant's allusion to 'community' is relatively broad, this quote exemplifies community as associated with smaller-scale and locally involved actors. Hence, urban farming can be understood with reference to various local food movements' support for food system localization and the progression of community relations around food (Newman, 2008). Further, understanding urban farming as community engagement can be interpreted as alleviating social rift, understood with reference to the socio-cultural significance of food engagement.

[13] SoleFood: http://solefoodfarms.com/about/

5.4 Urban Farming as Efficient Space Utilization

Compact city ideals challenges arguments for urban agriculture and urban farming, based within corresponding overarching ambitions for advancing sustainable and economically resilient cities. The City of Vancouver has adopted an objective to centralize and develop high-rise developments adjacent to transportation corridors and in proximity to the downtown core, corresponding to compact city ideals (Punter, 2003). Nonetheless, several urban farmers do not understand their practice as directly contradicting these goals. Utilizing vacant and underutilized sites through temporary land tenure agreements, narrates urban farming as providing an interim or additional productive 'layer' to the urban realm, constructed with references to efficient space utilization and urban sustainability.

One urban farmer (Riley) explicitly underscores the City of Vancouver's responsibility in securing social housing and, further, to support community gardens in front of urban farms. Riley is reluctant to state the virtue of urban farming in its own right, noting how urban farming can play a differential role in cities, such as Detroit, where vacant land is in abundance. Hence, the informant views the righteousness of urban farming in the city with reference to its ability to flexibly and creatively appropriate underutilized urban land. This argument is in line with Kaufman and Bailkey's (2000) argument for how urban farming can be situated within the city, and further distinguishes urban farming as potentially incorporated within compact city ideals as an interim or added use. However, as depicted by Oswalt et al. (2013) in **Figure 1** (p. 32), temporary use may influence further use and compact city theorists may understand interim uses to delay potential development. Nonetheless, a range of informants utilizes compact city theory *logic* for constructing urban farming within the urban terrain, advancing the idea of efficient and creative appropriation of small and underutilized parcels of land. This conceptualization of urban farming, illustrates the willingness to breach modern spatial organization and fragment distinctive land use functions. One informant (Aubrey) distinguishes lawns as underutilized spaces, noting,

> Well I think lawns should go. Every time I see a really well manicured lawn now I am like that is so valuable space and all you are doing is watering *lawn*. Nothing is coming out of that.

Aubrey speaks to the inefficiency of lawn space as productive land in the city. The informant understands the value of urban farming as increasing the efficiency of the space, making it more

directly connected to serving the city's metabolism; representing an argumentation coherent with compact city theory logic. Further, Aubrey's quote speaks to the potential additional layer provided by appropriating lawns and breaching modern divisions of urban land, understood as, for instance, singularly park or residential yard. The City of Vancouver's establishment of a community garden at City Hall can, similarly, be understood as a willingness to blur the boundaries between land use functions (see **Figure 5**). Further, an informant (Emerson) argues for the incorporation of 'edible landscaping' in urban landscape design. Emerson suggests that urban farmers could potentially be involved in the management of such spaces. 'Edible landscaping' includes the incorporation of food bearing trees, bushes and plants in spaces such as parks or along streets.

With reference to urban farming as an interim use appropriating temporarily vacant sites, several informants construe urban farming as providing an efficient temporary provision. Aubrey notes, "there are so many spaces that even temporarily could be used for food production", making a further reference to spaces awaiting development, or sites going through remediation. Emerson challenges nonetheless the efficiency of such farming. Making a reference to urban farms cultivating on contaminated sites, Emerson states,

> as long as you are not farming out of the soil base it is considered safe to put your box and your organic soil substrate(r), growing medium in there and grow food. But the reality is that you are missing out on a lot of really important biological process by having these kind of disconnected soil mediums in these boxes, you can't actually in an ecological way build up the ecological resilience of your soil over time.

The informant challenges, as such, the ecological efficiency of urban farming, as these urban farms are reliant upon significant material in-put for upholding production. However, a City Councillor (Casey), comparing urban farms to community gardens, advances the idea that urban farming contributes to efficient space utilization. Forwarding an argument for functional growing spaces, Casey defines community gardens as "kind of useless from a food production standpoint" and further states,

> I think at some point in the future, because we are so land constraint in the city of Vancouver, we are going to have to think about the community gardens, like getting rid of the plots and making them communally grown. I think from an agriculture perspective that would be a much better thing to do.

While referring to community gardens, the quote illustrates the value attached to advancing efficient urban food production as a goal in itself. This narration makes a direct reference to the changing discursive conceptualization of urban agriculture from "one of recreation and leisure to one of urban sustainability and economic resilience" (McClintock, 2010, p. 191). Narrating urban farming, as efficient production can, further, be associated with resilient city theory's emphasis on ecological infrastructure and the advent for alleviating the ecological rift, associated with urban biophysical processes.

5.5 Urban Farming as Advancing a Sustainable and Resilient Food System Economy

Resilient city theory advances the argument of shifting risk to opportunity, by reducing dependence on fossil fuels and achieving substantial independence from global resource systems (Newman, et al., 2009). Several informants argue for the idea that urban farming can advance food system resilience. Nonetheless, urban farmers, and other informants alike, meticulously object the idea that urban farming can make cities self-sufficient with food.

One urban farmer contends that urban farming "doesn't have the capacity to be an alternative" (Jayden). Rejecting technocratic and grand-scale solutions to sustainability problematic, Jayden characterizes urban farming as having "the capacity to be part of a greater solution" and further stating,

> I interpret large-scale industrial farming as quite problematic. So I don't think that there is one solution to that problem.

The quote illustrates Jayden's scepticism towards large-scale solutions and indicates urban farming's role in contributing to the conceptualization of sustainable and resilient food systems. Another urban farmer (Taylor) argues that urban farming is beneficial for certain types of crops, such as greens, further reiterating the idea that urban farming is part of a greater solution,

> I think we are part of, we have a role in the food system, but we are always going to be dependent on rural farmers.

The quote illustrates the objection of urban farming as making cities self-sufficient in food. An informant (Alex) reiterates a similar point, stressing the need highlight the city's dependence upon rural farmers, stating,

> So the only danger I see at times with the urban farming movement is if people think that urban farmers can feed the world; then there is no need to protect our prime agricultural lands that are right in the edges of urban areas.

Alex' quote illustrates the idea that urban farming should be understood as part of a larger food system, reliant upon rural farming in the greater regional area.

Several informants understand urban farming as an argument for localizing urban sustainability arguments and rethinking food system relations. An informant states, "we all need to be in some way more involved in the food system" (Elliot). The informant argues for creating a post-oil economy where a larger part of the population is involved in food production. Another informant (Emerson) reiterates this idea. Arguing for grounding society in agrarian economy, Emerson states,

> So in my mind a healthy society would have an agrarian base where lots of people are tending their gardens but there is still a healthy economy for a significant percentage of the people in an urban place to be able to make a viable living off of being farmers.

While presenting a perhaps more radical advent, the argument presented by these informants can loosely be associated with resilient city theory's argument for decreasing local dependence on global systems and resources. Jayden makes this argument explicit, stating, "I think that it is time to relocalize a bunch of systems that have gone the way of globalization". However, with reference to urban farming, informants' construe such relocalization differently. One group of informants advocates for establishing urban farming as a viable business in the city. Jayden states,

> Coming from my own life I would like to be able to be a farmer in my city and have that be viable, you know. And to earn a wage that would be enough to live in this crazy city that is very expensive to live in.

Jayden presents, thus, an argument for restructuring the economy to make urban farming viable employment. Another urban farmer (Taylor), understands the advent of establihing urban farming a viable business venture, in conflict with organizing urban farms as non-profits. Taylor states,

> people who are entrepreneurial and are doing this without being a charity, trying to just do it because we believe in it and aren't asking for grant money, aren't asking for recognition for the fact that we are doing community good, but more so that we want respect as a business.

Constructing urban farming as a viable business can, as such, be understood as legitimizing urban farming in its own right. Another urban farmer, presenting a similar argument, notes, nonetheless, that urban farming's ability to become a viable business venture requires the recognition that "you are supporting your local economy" (Kim). Kim further states,

> If you give me a dollar, 80 percent of that dollar is probably going to stay in the community. And you know you are buying a cleaner environment and air and, you know, we do outreach with the community and it is not just about the carrot, you are buying a sense of community and there are all of these other values you have to embrace and buy into if this type of operation is going to be viable.

Hence, urban farming can be understood as a proactive engagement for localizing and shifting the current economy towards incorporating ideas about economic resilience and sustainability. A VFPC representative (Elliot) further associates the argument for advancing urban farming as a viable business venture with the advent of removing the stigma surrounding farming. Elliot states,

> we've been sold - don't do it, it sucks. … We need to change that narrative and actually say this is meaningful employment. This is *the* green economy that we are looking for, or a significant piece of it.

Taylor reiterates this idea and stresses the significance of "putting a face to the kind of people that grow food". Taylor notes how urban farming can get "people to understand that educated people are choosing to become [farmers]". Urban farming can as such be understood valuable with reference to the larger food system as a whole, (re)introducing the idea that farming is meaningful employment.

However, other informants question the idea that urban farming can become a viable business venture in the city. An urban farmer, quoted in a newspaper article, states

> When I got into this project, I was pretty hell bent that we should operate like any other farm, and generate our entire budget by the pound from farm sales[14]

However and despite growing operations, the urban farm did not manage to support the total cost of their operation, and is supported through grants. The urban farm has a mandate to employ people with little resources and the urban farmer, interviewed in this newspaper article,

[14] The Globe and Mail: http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/solefood-farm-changes-landscapes-and-lives/article5471486/

highlights that their operation is able to support these positions. The urban farmer further states, "Agriculture is never going to make money, but I think it's a viable enterprise, and the point isn't really to make money anyway". Reflecting a negative perception of urban farming's ability to become a viable business venture, this quote exemplifies the idea that for certain urban farms becoming a viable business is not the first priority. Another urban farmer, associated with this same urban farm, confirms this idea, stating, in another newspaper article,

> Production is not the number one goal for most urban agriculture projects. Ours is [about] employment creation, which makes high production our top priority[15]

This quote reflects the idea that differential ambitions drive urban farm ventures. Further, the quote illustrates that regardless of these interests, successful food production remains a central aspect of these enterprises.

The narration of urban farming, as advancing a sustainable and resilient food system economy, can be viewed as an argument for changing the current logic of global and industrial farming. While not representing a solution on its own, urban farming is construed as an advent for changing the framework for how food systems should be embedded within the economy.

5.6 Summary and Reflections

The differential motivations for, and valuations of, urban farming described in these sections illustrate a variety of positions driving urban farm ventures in Vancouver. First, urban farming is construed meaningful with reference to personal confrontation of sustainability problematic. Understanding urban farming as *meaningful work and positive resistance* can, thus, be construed as a form of lifestyle politics. Second, urban farming is interpreted valuable with reference to its role as providing *edible and environmental education*. Urban farming is construed as breaching the gap between urban populations and their food system and can, further, be understood as an advent for breaching the gap between people and nature. Third, urban farming is given value as *community engagement*, construed differently with reference to the nature of the urban farm ventures themselves. Fourth, urban farming is interpreted valuable with reference to its productive utilization of underutilized or vacant urban land. Understanding urban farming as *efficient space utilization* can be understood as enhancing ecological infrastructure and urban

[15] The Dependent: http://thedependent.ca/featured/planting-seeds-food-revolution/

biophysical processes. Fifth, urban farming is construed meaningful with reference to the reconceptualization of food production within a resilient and sustainable food system economy. Understanding urban farming *as advancing a sustainable and resilient food system economy* further conceptualizes urban farming as a political argument for changing current food system logic. While not comprehensive or exclusive, informants interviewed describe the value of urban farming with reference to one or several of these narrations. Significantly, these portrayals narrate relatively positive constructions of urban farming's function in the city. These narrations can be reflected in much contemporary urban sustainability and urban agriculture literature and can, further, be understood as an attempt to breach the separation between 'nature' and contemporary society, presenting differential socio-ecological imaginaries. The motivations identified by informants for advancing urban farming can be associated with McClintock's (2010) conceptualization of the metabolic rifts and sustainability ideals reconstructing the city with reference to understood entangled relations between nature and society. Differential from urban agriculture conceptualized in the past with reference to economic recession and concrete crises, urban farming is narrated with reference to broader ideas about sustainability and resilience. Imperatively, the narrations identified in this chapter, do not take account for solely negatively construed constructions of urban farming in Vancouver, which further is related to my informant selection criteria. As a largely estranged idea within the city, it is likely that urban farming can juxtapose ideas related to urbanity and urban lifestyles and be regarded as undesirable in the city. In fact, several informants expressed worry regarding such resistance. However, construed with reference to urban sustainability and economic resilience, urban farming is constructed as 'political correct', making the practice potentially compatible with the City of Vancouver's urban sustainability and food policy politics. Further, ideas associated with urban farming can prove more controversial than the practice itself. As noted, by Blomley (2005), cultivation can be experienced as a rather mundane expropriation.

6 Urban Farming and the Potential in Urban Informality

> There is a certain ferment of what happen in cities that are laboratories and are creative spaces that open this up, that you don't even have to go far out – it is fascinating – but it happens everywhere (Elliot).

The quote provided above illustrates the idea that the city holds a specific potential for experimentation and creativity. With reference to urban farming in the City of Vancouver, this potential is closely related to the informal organization of the ventures themselves. Utilizing vacant lots or underutilized spaces through informal land tenure agreements and with the provisional privilege of the municipal government, urban farming in the City of Vancouver can be framed within Larsen (2007) and Oswalt et al.'s (2013) conceptualization of the political and creative potential within informality. The urban farmers appropriation of urban vague terrains, sanctioned by the City of Vancouver readiness to 'turn a blind eye' to these appropriations, can be understood as, simultaneously, creative, problematic, and political articulations. Informant's interviewed understand, moreover, urban farming in the City of Vancouver with reference to these potential articulations differently and, this chapter, provides insight into these differential interpretation. In this chapter, I analyse urban farming as an urban and informal phenomena, emphasizing the complex relations embedded within the trade-off between, adhering to formal structures and the potential advantages in informality.

6.1 Urban Farmers as Tacticians in Vague Terrains

Oswalt et al. (2013) characterize temporary users according to their motivation for realizing a specific project or loosely defined idea. They further distinguish temporary users according to the entangled discovery and relation between, an idea and a site's spatial characteristics. Larsen (2007) defines as such temporary users as *tacticians*, as they flexibility and creatively adopts a space for their needs. Further, Larsen's (2007) characteristic of *tacticians* is related to these actors relation to formal social structures and their chosen terrain, positioned outside the interest of formal urban actors.

The urban farmers operating in Vancouver can constructively be characterized as tacticians, appropriating the 'positive voids' within the city. As outlined in the previous chapter, the spaces utilized by urban farmers can be construed according to their understood inefficiency in their current state. Further, these spaces can be distinguished by the lack of competition from

other potential users. They can, as such, be understood as vague terrains – spaces open for a multiplicity of interpretations and articulation – and, as wastespaces – distinguished by their concurrent underutilized quality. With reference to Oswalt et al.'s (2013) differentiation of temporary use (see **Figure 1**), urban farming in the City of Vancouver can be characterized according to these differentiations, reflecting the practice's interim flexibility and potential for influencing, or cooperating with, future use. Exemplifying the spaces utilized by urban farmers, I distinguish between two 'land types', appropriated by these actors. First, urban farmers utilize vacant sites, such as, potential development sites in the downtown core. Secondly, urban farmers utilize lawn spaces, distinguished by their understood inefficiency and can include (but are not restricted to); rooftops, residential yards, ornamental gardens and spaces in-between other developments. With reference to Oswalt et al.'s (2013) differentiation of temporary use, these appropriations can potentially influence further land use, or serve as an interim appropriation.

Further, urban farmers can be identified as tacticians with reference to their opportunistic attitude and can be distinguished through two of Oswalt et al.'s (2013) temporary user categories, namely; '*young entrepreneurs'* and '*hobbyists*'. These designations are rather fluid, and urban farmers starting out as hobby farmers, progress into the category 'young entrepreneurs' when an urban farm venture researches a particular size. One urban farmer (Jayden), exemplifies this transition,

> So it didn't start as a business idea or a business plan […] we grew too much food for ourselves and started sharing it with our friends and family and decided that maybe it was a bigger concept in there somewhere. The next growing season we took on a lot more space and sold some SCA shares and took it from there.

The quote exemplifies the organic transition from hobby farmer to entrepreneurial farmer. Further, Jayden underscores, that while they had some food-growing experience, there was a "relatively steep learning curve" and this gentle progression provided room for learning before scaling up. Another urban farmer (Riley), with previous rural farming experience, can more directly be identified as an urban entrepreneur. Producing one high-value crop in specialized structures, this urban farmer conceptualized the idea, before acquiring the space. Riley explains choosing the space according to its proximity to farmers markets and other basic prerequisites. Riley's urban farm venture can, thus, be understood as less directly subjected to the characteristics of the space itself, and is more so related to the space's positionality within the

city. A City councillor (Casey) confirms the categorization of urban farmer as young entrepreneurs, stating,

> the kind of people that do things when there is not a bylaw supporting them, tend to be pretty bold and innovate, they don't loose sleep over it, right.

Casey's interpretation of the urban farmers, as young entrepreneurs, can be related to their readiness to operate without a coherent legal framework.

Defining urban farmers as tacticians in vague terrains, speaks to the actors' interest in appropriating the current order of the city, yet doing so without breaking out from it completely. In contrast to earlier protest movements, urban farmers can be understood as moderating political or utopian ideals, to realize their conceptualized idea. This can be understood as, both, a pragmatic and tactical decision.

6.2 Informal Actors in (In)formal spaces

The legal grey zone defining urban farming in the City of Vancouver further distinguishes the urban farmers' temporary appropriation of vague terrains. As noted by Oswalt et al. (2013) with reference to informal and temporary utilization, the legal quarrels experienced by urban farmers are foremost related to the *lack* of a legal framework, making the practice unable to coherently enter into regulations and formalities.

Informants construe the legal grey zone encompassing urban farming differently. One urban farmer, speaking to the informality of starting an urban farm venture, notes "I just kind of went at it without really thinking about the legalities of things" (Taylor). After expanding operations and running into some legal constraints during the first growing season, Taylor pursued to legally register the urban farm venture and notes,

> we went together to city hall to get our business licenses and explained our situation and it became adamantly clear that what we were doing was definitely not legal.

The quote reflects how the urban farmers *discovered* the illegality of their business venture, indicating that they did not expect their venture to be illegal in the first place. Another urban farmer (Kim) notes that after receiving a business license, the license prohibited the urban farm venture's intended purpose, stating, "they put right on our business license 'no commercial farming from city lots'". Kim understands this outright restriction as contradictory, as the urban farmers have received an informal promise, from the City of Vancouver, that their operations

will not be shut down. Further, Taylor makes a reference to the City of Vancouver's inclination to 'turn a blind eye' to the urban farmers operating without business licenses, stating,

> we were told to operate without a business license, even though there is a bylaw that says specifically that any business operating in the City of Vancouver must have a business license.

The quote illustrates the sanctioned privilege acquired by the urban farmers, reflecting Larsen et al.'s (2007) relation between the ability of *the order of everyday life* to appropriate *vague terrains* when sanctioned or ignored by *the distant order*. Taylor further describes this relation, noting,

> they're never going to come out and prosecute us or shut us down. However, they are also not giving us the tools to defend ourselves.

Taylor quote makes an explicit reference to the current position held by urban farmers, representing a provisional privilege rather than a right. Not able to obtain a business license, urban farmers are unable to acquire insurance and access loans or funding. Speaking to this, Taylor states,

> you can't get insurance for a business you can't get a business licence for. So I mean it is not like we are selling books here, we are selling food. You can't sell food with no insurance. That's crazy.

The quote exemplifies the construed risk associated with farming outside the structure of a coherent legal framework. However, another urban farmer (Jayden) is not equally concerned about such risk, stating,

> I know that legally - historically, what we are doing is not allowed, but I am not really worried about that. I feel like, it is just so clearly, so obviously a simple and good idea in my mind.

The informant differentiates urban farming from other informal practices, indicating that the risk, associated with operating in this legal grey zone, is associated with the value attached to the practice itself.

Sam (urban farmer) construes the risk associated with urban farming with reference to the dimension of the operation itself, noting that their growing client base and economic investment increases her/his concern regarding this legal grey zone. Further, Sam makes reference to the confusion associated with this legal grey zone. Registered under the umbrella of a non-profit,

Sam is, yet, unable to obtain a business license. Sam states that while they have been able to obtain insurance, this insurance does not cover the business entirely, stating,

> So the insurance policy covers all of our operations, but from what I understand, if something was actually to happen, say a CSA member got sick because of the food that we gave them, that insurance wouldn't necessarily be able to cover us, because we are not a legitimate business.

This quote illustrates the lack of legal regulation encompassing urban farming in the City of Vancouver and the vulnerability of urban farmers working within this framework. Understanding urban farming as informal actors in (in)formal spaces, illustrates the lack of a coherent legal framework encompassing urban farming, and the sanctioned privileged characterizing urban farming in the City of Vancouver.

6.3 Informal Arrangements in Temporary Spaces

Urban farmers appropriate a wide variety of land types for farming. While Vancouver is a city with high property prices and a hard press real estate market, an informant states "most urban farmers they don't really find that they have lack of land" (Jessie). The discrepancy between a competitive property market and the idea that urban farmers do not have difficulty finding land, can be understood according to the nature of the land accessed and the land agreements acquired by urban farmers.

Utilizing vague terrains, urban farmers are able to access favourable, yet interim, land tenure agreements. An urban farmer (Jayden), cultivating residential yards, describes the initial concern when acquiring spaces for cultivation, stating,

> Initially we were worried that we wouldn't be able to find any space. That was our first concern. But we got a few yards right away. Just through our social networks and our community, friends and family and stuff [...] Surprisingly it was never actually an issue.

The quote illustrates the relative ease of gaining access to farm sites and that these spaces were acquired through personal contacts. Another urban farmer, also cultivating residential yards, describes a similar experience,

> suddenly people in the neighbourhood and people outside the neighbourhood were like 'oh yeah, you are farming, why don't you farm my yard too'. And before I knew it I had ten different properties that I was doing (Taylor).

The quote illustrates how the urban farmer acquired land through 'word of mouth', a method defined as common among urban farmers in a recent study conducted by the VUFS (2013). The relative ease in accessing residential sites can be associated with the personal and informal characteristics, characterizing these partnerships. Several urban farmers characterize, especially, residential land tenure agreements as porous. Schutzbank (2012) confirms this notion, identifying residential land tenure relations as particularly informal, compared to intuitional or commercial land tenure relations. Schutzbank (2012) states "relationships between farmers and homeowners were rarely formalized by a contract" (86). An urban farmer notes that while asking for a three-year commitment by homeowners, "I have already lost land from last year" (Taylor). Taylor notes that these agreements are hard to impose,

> I asked people that I took over their land to at least commit to me for 3 years. But it is impossible in the city. Because people will sell their houses unexpectedly and all that stuff so you can't really hold them accountable to that.

Taylor's account makes a reference to the vulnerable position held by urban farmers. In his study, Schutzbank (2012) states, "[t]hese urban farms exist solely as a result of homeowner interest" (p. 86) and further notes "[t]hough this benefits the bottom line, urban farmers are without recourse in case of disagreement" (p. 87). Equivalent to the unequal power relationship between urban farmers and the City of Vancouver, the relationship between urban farmers and property owners can be regarded as a provisional privilege rather than a right. The trade-off, getting a favourable land tenure agreement can, nevertheless, be seen as a necessary condition for urban farmers to be able to appropriate urban land in the first place. Further, the legal grey zone encompassing urban farming can suggest that urban farmers and property-owners are reluctant to formalize land tenure agreements. For urban farmers cultivating residential yards, the relative ease in accessing yards can be understood as insurance, compensating for the potential loss of land. Jayden (urban farmer) exemplifies this, stating,

> now we are at a point were we have more space than we can take on so. So we have a waitlist of people that want to have farms in their yards.

This quote can further suggests that homeowners understand urban farming as a subtle encroachment upon their private property. While taking up substantially more space, urban farming mirrors food gardening, a practice familiarized within the private realm. While not representing a public practice, urban farming, ultimately, changes the nature of private yards,

establishing them as private/public hybrids; serving a 'public good' through food production and, simultaneously, opening the spaces up to actors pursuing private ventures. This suggests, as stated by Blomley (2005), that people live in much more complex and hybrid realities than the public/private divide. Informal agreements also give urban farmers the flexibility in giving up inefficient land. Taylor (urban farmer) speaks to this idea, "I have given up a lot of land in the city because it wasn't efficient". However, Taylor further notes "one of my largest plots I ended up loosing because I had only signed a one-year lease". The informal relations can as such be understood as, simultaneously, beneficial and restrictive. Making reference to rural farming, an informant describes urban farmers ability to access favourable land tenure agreement as "a pretty unique situation for a farmer" (Jessie). Another informant (Hayden) confirms this idea, pointing to land speculation in farmland throughout the GVRD. While protected within the Agricultural Land Reserve[16] (ALR), Hayden notes,

> At the moment in ALR, for example, in the lower mainland, the farmland is extraordinarily expensive so land access is almost impossible for young farmers or people who want to learn how to farm or start farming.

Thus, urban farmers can be seen as being at an advantage, compared to rural farmers in the GVRD.

Temporary land tenure agreements are, further, viewed problematic with reference to ecological sustainability and efficiency. While recognizing the generally good soil quality in residential yard, Taylor understands the temporary provision of such spaces as problematic, stating "the goal of course is that next year it will be less work and all that hard work will pay of". Jessie further notes that when using organic or permaculture methods it takes "about three years until you reach your optimum point in the soil and you really start reaping the bounty". Hence, Jessie underlines that temporary land tenure agreements can be problematic, as the urban famers "loose that investment in the soil". Temporary land tenure agreements can, therefore, be seen as challenging the economic and environmental viability of urban farming. Moveable box systems have been constructed for this purpose and present a solution for spaces with soil contamination, and for the instability characterizing interim use. An informant (Emerson)

[16] The Agricultural Land Reserve: a provincially designated zone where agriculture is priority use (http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/alr/alr_main.htm)

understands nonetheless these systems as expensive and ecologically inefficient. Emerson argues,

> in the long run that is not ecological in terms of actually building up the fertility of your […] you might get better at managing that infrastructure, but the amount of labour and capital that has to go in to keep that infrastructure is not actually giving the business advantage to the farmer.

Emerson, further, construes this interim use strategy as related to urban farming's insecure position in the city, stating,

> Temporary means that you don't have to commit, which means that you have an exit strategy, which means that psychologically everybody feels better about giving consent for a temporary farming location.

The quote illustrates the uncomfortable position of urban farming within the urban terrain and further illustrates urban farming as an estranged practice in the city. Favourable land tenure agreements can, hence, be viewed as, a necessary condition for urban farmers to access urban land and, similarly, problematic, as it adds to the urban farmers vulnerability. Understanding urban farming as informal arrangement in temporary spaces, illustrates the urban farmers vulnerable and potentially problematic situation, yet, simultaneously their advantaged and privileged position.

6.4 Creative Potential of Farming the City

Larsen (2007) and Oswalt et al. (2013) argue for the creative potential within vague terrains and interim space utilization. The lack of regulatory framework encompassing actors utilizing these spaces is understood as potential 'breeding grounds' for new practices and cultures. Larsen (2007) and Oswalt et al. (2013) conceptualize such innovation within urban terrains, and urban farming can, thus, be distinguishing by its particular urban materialization. A VFPC representative (Elliot) speaks to the significance of situating farming within the city, underscoring the 'savvy' that comes with being an urban farmer. Elliot states,

> So it is not cool to be a farmer in Chilluaqe, which is an hour from here where there is farmland, but it is cool in Vancouver. Right, which is kind of ironic. So it is all the city kids that have no background in farming that are getting into it.

The quote construes urban farming with particular reference to farming as an urban practice. This juxtaposition can be interpreted with reference to the value attached to urban farming,

outlined in the previous chapter. However, it can, simultaneously, be understood as a pragmatic response to the increasing percentage of people living in urban environments. Characterizing urban farmers, one urban farmer states, "there are two kinds of urban farmers" (Kim), further noting,

> There are people who really enjoy living in an urban area and farming. Then there's people like me who are stuck here for now and because I am still in school, my son is still in school. I am a rural farmer stuck in the city.

Hence, urban farming can be considered a pragmatic response to becoming a farmer. Another urban farmer illustrates (Taylor) this point, characterizing rural farming as a radical undertaking,

> Like you are dealing with people like me who grew up in the suburbs and who have never experiences food production. I am not going to go out and buy a five acre farm not knowing if I even like growing right.

Taylor construes rural farming as a substantial risk, personally, as well as, financially. Speaking to this idea, Kim characterizes urban farming as "a low risk opportunity", further noting, "I am not going out spending a hundred thousands on equipment and a property". As a low risk opportunity, urban farming provides urban farmers the opportunity to experiment and learn skills before, potentially, becoming rural farmers. Kim further argues that the particular constraints comprising urban farming can be valuable for scaling up production. Kim states, "I think by being forced into this box, I am going to learn to farm much more efficiently and that will also be skills that will scale up". Thus, urban farming can be understood as a rural gateway. Another informant (Hayden) underlines the significance of advancing the farming profession, considering increasing national farmer succession Hayden notes, "[s]o we have older farmers and none to replace them". Taylor makes a similar reference, noting, "with more than 50 percent of the world population in cities, like if you don't start farming in the city, people are never going to start farming". The quotes illustrate the productive urban advent of farming for the purpose of reconceptualising farming within ideas of sustainability and resilience. Hence, a VFPC representative understands the creative potential of urban farming with reference to how it can influence rural farming, stating,

> I think we still need to grow food in the city, but the urban farming movement to me, I am actually just as excited about […] how it can contribute to new farmers that don't grow in the city (Elliot).

Elliot expands “there is a certain savvy that comes with urban farmers around marketing and around direct marketing that most rural farmers don't”. Understanding the ingenuity of urban farming, Taylor visualizes this approach to farming as part of a greater shift. Describing urban farmers, Taylor states,

> they understand a new model that I think will be a post-carbon model of what farming and food production could look like in a peri-urban zone, because of their understanding of working with local distribution and social media and all these other things that seemingly are becoming a part of farming.

The quote illustrates the value attributed to urban farming as advancing sustainable and resilient food systems, and is understood by the informant as, necessarily, taking place within the urban sphere.

At the other end of the spectrum, an urban farmer directly defines the interest in urban farming from an urban perspective, maintaining, “I am not interested in being a rural farmer” (Jayden). Pointing to preferences for an urban lifestyle, Jayden states,

> I like being in-meshed in different neighbourhoods that aren't my neighbourhoods and getting to know different pockets of the city that I might not visit, you know. I happily go for fancy coffees in the morning before work.

As such, urban farming can be understood as reconstructing farming as an urban practice. While representing a radical idea, considering the juxtaposed conceptualization between common characteristics of ‘urban’ and ‘farmer’ lifestyles, Jayden embraces these lifestyle preferences simultaneously. The informant can as such be understood as reimagining ideas about urbanity as well as farming. Thus, the creative potential of urban farming can be construed as providing a route for rearticulating these ideas. The VFPC representative (Elliot) directly associates the reconstruction of farming as an urban practice with reference to the informality, and the multiplicity of models, concurrently encompassing urban farming in Vancouver. Elliot states,

> I think if you actually get down to the nitty-gritty of how people are doing things, whether it is on donated land, whether it's city land, whether it's front yards, whether it's industrial, it's all different. And I think the fact that there's kind of that playing around with different typologies is actually really great.

Such as Larsen (2007), Elliot construes the creativity and ingenuity of urban farming with reference to their experimental spatial organization, enabled by informal relations with property-owners and with the municipal government. The constraints associated with urban farming,

forcing the urban farmers into flexible and interim uses, can be interpreted as encouraging creativity and innovation. An informant makes notice of this, stating,

> I think sometimes those constraints lead you to be innovative and flexible and resilient. But I do think for the staying power, their needs to be some sort of more permanence (Alex).

Arguing for the benefit in, eventually, formalizing urban farmers informal arrangements and interim use, Alex takes notice of the creative potential within such constraints. The creative potential of urban farming can, as such, be viewed in association with the reconceptualization of urbanity and farming; innately linked to the urban farmers' ability to access urban *vague terrains* and the constraints giving by these sites and their informal relations.

6.5 Urban Farming as Political Practice

Identifying urban farmers as tacticians, consequently distinguishes these actors as prioritizing the realization of a conceptualized idea. In contrast to political movements, in the 1960s '70s and '80s, arguing for their right to the city through confrontational tactics, urban farmers utilize conditional manoeuvres incorporated within a (broadly defined) logic of capitalistic and urban order. Nonetheless, such tactical endeavours do not negate the political dimension of these undertakings. While potentially reflecting the deradicalization of environmental politics since the 1980s, urban farming in the City of Vancouver can, also, be understood according to Metzger's (2011) argument for the displacement of politics, taking place through the practical negotiation of the urban terrain. Understanding *the political* (as contradictory to *politics*) as an ongoing negotiation of everyday practice, urban farming in Vancouver is necessarily a conscious political argument, negotiating the 'nature' of the urban terrain through their appropriation of *vague terrains*. Temporarily and informally utilizing urban *vague terrains*, ignored or disregarded by other actors, urban farmers are able to negotiate the articulation of the urban terrain through reconstructive appropriation. This appropriation challenges abstract *representations of space*, such as, the privately conceived nature of front-yards. While the differential articulation of these spaces can be interpreted mundanely, as described by Blomley (2005), they represent, simultaneously, potential for formal political deliberation. The potential achievements, of such political practice, rely upon the continuous appropriation and negotiation of such practice and, unavoidably, on the ignorance or endorsement by formal actors. Thus, potential achievements of urban farming in the City of Vancouver can be understood as relying upon; the City of

Vancouver's readiness to 'turn a blind eye' to this ventures and, further the urban farmers successful articulation, potentially opening up these spaces for differential interpretations.

6.6 Summary and Reflections

Understanding urban farming in the City of Vancouver as temporary appropriation of vague terrains, organized through informal arrangements, illustrates urban farming as conducted within *the order of everyday life,* sanctioned by *the distant order's* provisional privilege. In this chapter, I portrayed various narrations of urban farming with reference to their informal and interim appropriation of vague terrains. First, urban farmers are construed as *tacticians in vague terrains*, distinguishing urban farmers' creative and flexible appropriation of underutilized spaces for their realization of a conceptualized idea. Second, urban farmers are interpreted as *informal actors in (in)formal spaces*, portraying the legal grey zone encompassing urban farming in the City of Vancouver and the construed challenges resulting from such informality. Third, urban farming is understood as *informal arrangements in temporary spaces*, distinguishing urban farming as an interim practice organized around informal land tenure agreements. Fourth, urban farming is interpreted according to the *creative potential of farming the city* illustrating the creative and innovative potential within urban and informal practices. Fifth, urban farming is construed as *political practice* and I provided a short discussion of the political articulation of urban farming as informal appropriation of vague terrains. Moreover, this chapter portrays urban farming in the City of Vancouver as an informal and tactical endeavour, distinguished as, simultaneously, creative, problematic, and political articulations. Significantly, both property-owners and the local government privilege urban farmers their right within the urban fabric. Informal appropriation can be understood as presenting greater (creative and political) potential, than the danger of prospective risks. Opening these spaces up through differential articulations, urban farming can be construed as political negotiations of the urban terrain.

7 Taking A Collaborative Approach to Urban Farming

> So there are some bottom-up pressure or movement and interest as well as and interest in local food and there is some bottom-down policy in place that supports the movement kind of on a higher level. And then a willingness to collaborate and work with the urban farmers to figure out the business licensing and the agriculture zoning. (Hayden).

The quote provided above, illustrates the bottom-up pressure progressed through; the collective organization of the urban farmers, a supportive policy framework, and the collaboration progressed between the urban farmers and the City of Vancouver. These aspects, characterize the formal progression of urban farming as a legitimate practice in the City of Vancouver. Thus, the analysis can be understood as advancing from, the level of *the political*, to the level of *politics*. This chapter provides deeper insight into these processes, revealing diverging interpretations.

The formation of the UFN and the formalization of the network into becoming the VUFS, illustrate the development of a vague and loosely arranged group of people into a formalized organization, portraying an explicit political objective. The evolvement of the network and their approach to the local municipal government can be construed as largely collaborative in nature. The City of Vancouver's institutional climate can productively be considered a contingent factor for such collaboration. Yet, several informants, simultaneously, challenge these collaborative processes and question the productive outcome of the adopted approach. In this chapter, I analyse the formation and formalization of the VUFS, and the collaborative processes instigated between urban farmers and City representatives, with reference to the institutional context framing urban farming in the City of Vancouver

7.1 Formalizing the Urban Farming Network

Oswalt et al. (2013) characterise networks as potentially reinforcing the resilience of temporary initiatives. Thoreau's initiative to gather the urban farmers can be understood as an endeavour to reinforce the resilience of urban farming in the City of Vancouver. As argued by Oswalt et al. (2013), the legal challenges, experienced by temporary users, can become grounds for initiating and enforcing collaboration. Thoreau's action based research project can be viewed as the first moment in such collaborative advancement. At the first urban farm gathering issues regarding the legal grey zone encompassing urban farming was brought up, indicating that that this aspect was an integral component of the interest in collaborating and mobilizing support for urban

farming in Vancouver (Thoreau, 2010). As noted earlier, the urban farming network (UFN) was initiated in late 2010. In this section, I analyse the early evolvement and formalization of the UFN.

A VFPC representative (Elliot) describes the UFN as having "their own momentum" in bringing together urban farmers. Elliot characterizes the network according to the "grey zone of their organization development", pointing to how the legal challenges, experienced by urban farmers, have instigated collaboration. An urban farmer (Sam), further, explains how the initiation and development of the network made her/him more concerned with the legalities of their operations,

> I didn't really become too worried about it until probably this past year and that's with the more, I mean things have just become formalized a bit more with the network forming and more communication with farmers.

Sam indicates that the formation of the UFN made the legal grey zone more explicit. The formation of the network can, as such, be understood as advancing the urban farmers conscious placement outside the City of Vancouver's legal framework. Another informant (Emerson) confirms the network's role as a place for collaboratively understanding the legal challenges hindering urban farming in Vancouver. Emerson states, "[t]here has been a real need for young people in the city who are farming to wrap their heads around the bylaw regulations of the city". Further, the early evolvement of the network provided a space for defining and exploring the variety of urban farm ventures, taking place in the city. While the UFN, early on, identified their purpose as advocating for legalizing urban farming in Vancouver, a meeting summary from December 16th, 2010 also defines the UFN's role as,

> how a network could help the City to fill gaps in existing policy, inform them of the policy needs of urban farmers, and work with the city to adopt and create best practices (Thoreau, 2010).

This quote outlines the network's parallel ambition; working with the City of Vancouver to create best practices for urban farming. This illustrates, the UFN's early emphasis, on actively shaping the conditions for how urban farming should look like in the City of Vancouver, through collaboration.

The formalization of the UFN, as a society, can be understood as advancing the urban farmers position as legitimate actors in the City of Vancouver. The UFN was initiated as an

informal group, held together through; various meetings and events, the Google listserv forum, and monthly newsletters updating involved actors. The formalization of the network required the concretization and crystallization of the prospective society's purpose, reach, and role. A listserv discussion, in late 2011, illustrates disagreement with regards to how the formalization of the UFN should proceed. In the discussion, the network was suggested formalized as a business association, a community co-op, and a society. The variety of models suggested, illustrates the diversity of roles imagined for a formalized network, thus, questioning; who should this formal organization represent? Speaking against the formalization of the network as a business association, a respondent states,

> I don't think that a business association is an appropriate or logical next step […] considering that urban farming isn't even a legal business model at this point. It also does not address the needs or interests of the majority of members of the existing UFN who are not, in fact, in business[17]

Another listserv respondent contends,

> An urban farmer is a farmer. A business. Businesses are not non-profits or societies[18]

The quotes illustrate the differential positions taken, with reference to the prospective formalization of the UFN. The latter respondent conceives urban farms equal to 'traditional' farms, disregarding the multiplicity of models and motivations currently encompassing urban farming in Vancouver. The former respondent recognizes the current legal challenges encompassing urban farming and, further, emphasizes the variety of members represented through the UFN. These diverging interpretations prompted reluctance, among certain listserv respondent, regarding the formalization of the UFN altogether. Advocating for the current flexibility and openness of the network in its informal state, these respondents stressed the positive connotations associated with the UFN's inclusive and informal nature. An urban farmer (Sam) associates her/his suspicion, regarding the formalization of the UNF, with an apprehensiveness for too quickly specifying and crystalizing what urban farming should be. Sam states,

[17] Quote retrieved from urban farmer Google listserv, December 6, 2011

[18] Quote retrieved from urban farmer Google listserv, December 8, 2011

> I just think we are going to have to be really careful about being inclusive of all urban farmers […] Because there is very many different types of urban agriculture and us as an urban farming society I don't think we've yet really visualized what urban agriculture in Vancouver should or could look like in 10-20 years.

Sam's apprehensiveness, for too narrowly constructing urban farming, reflects Larsen's (2007) argument for the challenge in formalizing informal practices. Larsen (2007) describes the potential within temporary appropriation of *vague terrains*, with reference to its indeterminate and creative manifestation. Sam acquaints the conceptual crystallization of the UFN as curbing potential conceptualizations of urban agriculture and urban farming in the future. The crystallization of the UFN can, further, be said to construct urban farming in the City of Vancouver, with reference to this organization alone. An informant portrays such an understanding, stating, "before 2010, there were no urban farms to speak of, so we are talking two year history" (Jessie). While recent years have seen an upsurge in urban farm ventures in the City of Vancouver, urban farmers interviewed records farm operations as old as four years and other urban farmers have operated within municipal boundaries since 2006[19]. The current formation and formalization of the network can, thus, be understood as potentially narrowing the conceptualization of urban farming in the City of Vancouver, historically as well as conceptually.

The incorporation of the network as a society received, nonetheless, support from other informants and was experienced as a move towards legitimizing and legalizing urban farming in Vancouver. However, the dialogue initiated between the urban farmers and the City of Vancouver was established before the formalization of the VUFS.

7.2 Dialogue and The Vancouver Urban Farming Forum

> The stars were aligned and they are moving towards, it is not instant, but they are moving towards making it happen in a collaborative way (Hayden).

Thoreau's agenda, to gather the urban farmers, was grounded in an explicitly collaborative approach to progress urban farming in Vancouver. Collaboration was a central element of the development of the UFN from the start. However, this collaborative approach is not been viewed as entirely constructive, and informants voice divergent opinions regarding this route of action.

[19] City Farm Boy: http://www.cityfarmboy.com

The UFN's organization of the Vancouver urban farming forum (VUFF) (see **Figure 10**) advanced the dialogue between urban farmers and the City of Vancouver. However, some urban farmers distinguish the VUFF as signalling a shift, changing their understanding of, and confidence in, the network itself.

The VUFF was planned as a collaborative platform, gathering policy makers, urban farmers and food security advocates in Vancouver. The purpose was to discuss challenges and solutions to urban farming, at a one-day event, taking place November 26th, 2011. An urban planner (Hayden) working closely with the UFN to plan the VUFF, stresses the initial dialogue established with the city. Hayden states "we had an ally in the City, so we were able to communicate with the City". Another informant (Emerson) characterizes the UFN as having "enough bridges into the municipal government for a dialogue". Emerson further states, "I mean our mayor is ex-farmer […] he is definitely progressive about food". The quote indicates the existence of supportive and central actors within the municipal government. Hayden (the urban planner), further, states,

> moving towards these goals there needs to be collaboration, open mindedness and flexibility on both sides and a really solid understanding of the issues from both sides

Hayden's view reiterates collaborative planning theory's emphasis on advancing understanding and progress, through dialogue (Healey, 2006). Further, Hayden states that the VUFF was planned through several meetings, to "defining what are the challenges and the barriers that the municipalities are responsible for. And also how do you frame it?" Planning the VUFF through several stages, Hayden notes, "we had a meeting with other stakeholders to kind of define our goals and the structure of the forum". Working towards streamlining the issues in a comprehensive way, Hayden states that one of the biggest hurdles, from a planning perspective, was "getting the planners there that we wanted there". Further, Hayden emphasizes the lack of knowledge from within planning departments. Identifying a few people knowledgeable about the practice, Hayden notes, "the people who make the decisions don't really - are still learning about what it is". Reflecting the idea that food is estranged to the planning field, the estrangement of urban farming can further be associated with the recent upsurge and newfound conceptualization of urban farming more broadly. Further, Hayden equally identifies the challenge of "making sure that urban farmers understand the complexities of planning":

> So getting them to understand that things aren't happening as quickly as they want because the planning process is long and complex and involves community, it involves multiple levels of stakeholders - developers, land owners who got zoning to deal with, so for them to - also for them to understand that and understand that there needs to be regulations and permits.

The informant's approach can, as such, be associated with Innes and Booher's (1999) conceptualization of potential intangible outcomes of collaborative planning approaches. Hayden construes the VUFF as a platform for achieving mutual understanding between stakeholders; to reach collective definitions and prospective goals. Referring to UFN more broadly, a VFPC representative (Elliot) echoes this take, defining the network as serving a similar function as the VFPC. Elliot states, "I think the urban farming network is doing a similar function, of spaces that provide that dialogue". Hence, Elliot understands the formation of the network itself as part of fashioning a collaborative planning approach. Returning to the VUFF, the urban planner (Hayden) describes the event as relatively successful, stressing this success as contingent upon the urban farmers readiness to take on a collaborative attitude, noting,

> Most of the urban farmers were also on board and, I think, willing to collaborate. If they were more kind of rebellious or guerrilla gardening or with a guerrilla approach, there would be problems I think with that collaboration.

Thus, the urban farmers can be considered to have a degree of political 'know-how' identified, by Innes and Booher (1999), as an intangible outcome of collaborative planning processes themselves. As a newly formed network, such political 'know-how', can be associated with the UFN's inclusion of a range of professional actors, such as Hayden, identified above. Further, the UFN's ability to bring together a range of stakeholders can be associated with their connections to people within local government and within the VFPC. Elliot notes that there are "more than two or three folks on the food policy council who are quite involved and then numerous others who are very connected", suggesting that there are links to local government and quasi-government bodies. Moreover, the UFN's collaborative advent can be a reflection of the City of Vancouver's planning history, identified according to their participatory planning tradition.

The collaborative approach taken on by the UFN was, however, not viewed as entirely positive. An urban farmer (Sam), relatively unfamiliar with the network up until the VUFF, describes the forum as "about public relation and about the City seeing that there's people interested in the topic". While recognizing the importance of implementing the idea of urban

farming within the City of Vancouver, Sam further notes, “I don't know how representative it actually was of all urban farmers up to that point, and even still”. Sam further states, “I think there is people in it with very personal interests that are moving it forward for the greater good, but also because that's what they want”. The informant’s view reflects doubt in the UFN’s (and later the VUFS’s) internal representation. This can be understood as a critique of the UFN/VUFS’s ability to act as a representative body when collaboratively progressing urban farming in Vancouver, and to adequately open up the debate for a broad variety of interpretations. Another urban famer (Kim) echoes the doubt voiced about the evolvement of the network. Engaged in the UFN from the beginning, Kim notes “I got pretty disenchanted with it around the time of the urban farming forum”. Kim further states, “there is schools of thought of how farmers should approach the city with regards to the policy. Like I said, a lot of farmers are just happy to take the wait and see approach”. Kim’s apprehension for the established dialogue can be understood as doubt in the effective timeframe of such negotiations. Advocating for more confrontational tactics, the urban farmer’s frustration, regarding the collaborative approach, can be understood with reference to Larsen (2007) and Oswalt et al.’s (2013) problematic interpretation of formalizing and incorporating informal practices as bylaws and regulations. Moreover, Kim’s interpretation can be seen in relation to the critique associated with collaborative planning and the prospect for reaching productive outcomes (Fainstein, 2000). Another urban farmer (Taylor), echoing the unease described regarding the timeframe and potential for the prospective legalization of urban farming, similarly, construes the dialogue established with the City of Vancouver as positive. Taylor states,

> I am really excited that we are a part of that dialogue and that we have the opportunity to inform that dialogue and that we might actually be able to implement all the things that we want as urban farmers into it.

This quote reflects the constructive potential within collaborative processes, potentially empowering actors and involving them in the progression of policy and planning regulation.

This discussion portrays informants’ differential interpretation of the collaboration advanced, between urban farmers and the City of Vancouver, with specific reference to the VUFF. The collaborative approach instigated by the urban farmers can be understood, with reference to the UFN’s collaboration with a range of actors familiar with progressing change at

the municipal level, and, further, with reference to the City of Vancouver's participatory planning tradition.

7.3 Achieving Mutual Understanding

Achieving mutual understanding, of the issues in question and different stakeholders interests and views, is identified as one potential intangible outcome of collaborative planning processes (Innes & Booher, 1999). Several informants indicate that mutual understanding has been progressed through the ongoing collaboration process.

The communication established with the City of Vancouver through the development and formalization of the VUFS has, according to an urban farmer (Sam), advanced the urban farmers ability to inform this dialogue and, further, the City of Vancouver's comprehension of urban farming. Attempting unsuccessfully to gain contact with City staff on her/his own, Sam describes the dialogue established, between the City staff and the network, as more productive, noting

> So as individuals no, I don't think our approaches has worked. As a group and like going to that city meeting, yeah they were very nice to talk to and I hope it was productive.

While being unsure about the outcome of the meeting, Sam suggests that the meeting contributed to the City of Vancouver's comprehension of urban farming in Vancouver,

> it took a while for them to figure out the difference between what we were talking about - urban agriculture to sell, for commercial purposes and things like community gardens - I don't think they understood that that was actually happening in the city.

Sam's quotes indicates that the dialogue established, has advanced the City of Vancouver's understanding of urban farming as distinguished from other forms of urban agriculture. A City councillor (Casey), familiar with several actors within the VUFS, illustrates recognition of the urban farmer's legal challenges, stating,

> I still think at an individual level it is just frustrating right. It would be like, if you had a business, in I don't know like a McDonald's restaurant, and we're like, no you don't get a business licence, no we are not, we might shake it down tomorrow, we don't know.

Casey's reflection indicates that the collaborative approach taken has been successful in raising awareness among certain actors within the local government. However, Casey maintains that there is little recognition of urban farming within City of Vancouver departments and the City

Council, in general. An urban farmer (Taylor), illustrates understanding of the City of Vancouver's effort in accommodating the urban farmers, noting,

> they are working hard. Like every meeting has been very positive. They have told us how much they want us to be doing this, even if it is technically illegal. They want to, I have had bylaw officers telling me that they are not going to do anything, even though I am in direct violation of some things; like that the City wants to support food growing as much as possible.

The quote illustrates Taylor's understanding of, and trust in, the City of Vancouver's intent for supporting urban farming. Taylor further recognizes the legal risk taken by the City of Vancouver when 'turning a blind eye' to the urban farmers operating. Taylor states,

> I think they have to be very careful. They have even been warned, by their legal department, that this is really dangerous what they are doing.

The quote further illustrates Taylor's understanding of the potential controversy of urban farming's informality. Another urban farmer (Jayden) is more ambiguous in her/his understanding of the City of Vancouver's true intentions. Jayden states,

> It seems like the people working at the city are pretty on board and you know they are just trying to figure out a way to make it as clean and ok and acceptable as possible. So I don't feel any resistance.

However, Jayden further notes, "I think that it is a mix of a trying to do good and trying to look good". While illustrating understanding of the City of Vancouver's imposition, with regards to urban farming, Jayden, also, portrays doubt in the City of Vancouver's motivation for collaborating with the urban farmers. Hence, the collaborative process can be understood as producing a certain amount of mutual understanding, between urban farmers and certain actors working within city government. Nonetheless, this mutual understanding does not, directly, influence the urban farmer's trust in the City of Vancouver's 'true' intentions. This indicates an understood duality, with reference to City representatives appeasing dialogue and the City of Vancouver's 'true' intentions. This duality further point to Fainstein's (2000) critique of collaborative planning's neglect of existing power-relations.

7.4 Empowerment through Green Language

The City of Vancouver's inclination to 'turn a blind eye' to urban farmers operating, can be considered with reference to the City of Vancouver's ambition for becoming the greenest city in

the world, by 2020. Several informants construe the ambitions and goals, stated in the GCAP, as providing urban farmers with enabling language and informal security.

An urban farmer (Taylor), familiar with the goals in the GCAP, regards the plan positively, noting, "I think it gave us a lot of ammunition". Taylor, further, describes the GCAP as specifically bringing urban farming to the fore, stating,

> It put this whole thing on the map I think. The fact that they would articulate increasing local food production and local food assets I think has really helped our case.

Taylor makes specific references to the 'local food' goal, in the GCAP, identifying the concrete goals outlined as providing the institutional climate for urban farmers to evolve and argue their case. While positively construing the GCAP, Taylor voices unease about the City of Vancouver's lack of concrete action, noting, "[a]t the same time I kind of want them to do something". A City of Vancouver urban planner (Morgan) identifies the GCAP as providing an overarching language for creative initiatives, noting, "I think with a high-level citywide policy you only want to go so far in terms of being explicit". Morgan further states, "it does require other people to come up and step up to the plate". The overarching framework outlined in the GCAP states the City of Vancouver's role through the '4 key ingredients'; vision, leadership, action, and partnership (City of Vancouver, 2011a). As such, urban farming can be understood as evolving as a result of the 'vision' outlined in the GCAP and, further, through 'partnerships' formed through the collaborative process place. Compared to Taylor's argument, quoted above, Morgan construes the timeframe, of such prospective changes, differently.

Expressing less worry about the timeframe for prospective legal changes, an urban farmer (Riley) understands the City of Vancouver's commitment in the GCAP to provide adequate security for farming without a coherent legal framework. Another informant (Hayden) confirms this notion speaking to goals outlined in the GCAP,

> They have policies in place that support this. So they can't say no to it, because they actually need us, they need urban farming to happen to some degree to meet some of their goals.

With reference to the food assets goals outlined in the GCAP, Hayden illustrates the City of Vancouver's reliance upon urban farming. The quote indicates that the GCAP provides the urban

farmers with empowering language. An urban farmer (Jayden) is, nonetheless, doubtful regarding the City of Vancouver's obligatory commitment to these goals. Jayden states,

> I am sure that they are not tied to their numbers at all and it is like you know, it just a, it is great, it is like this idea and this concept that is out there and, right on, let's do that.

While critical to the concrete actions outlined in the GCAP, Jayden understands the more abstract conceptualization of 'local food' as principally positive. The urban farmer further interprets the City of Vancouver's institutional climate as essentially coherent with her/his practice, stating "it just seems right in line with that philosophy". Jayden further notes,

> with everything that this city in particular stands for, you know, the greenest city initiatives, and you know, sustainability.

While making reference to a supportive institutional climate, Jayden is not expecting the City of Vancouver to take an active role with regards to urban farming, noting,

> The more encouragement and support, great, and the more they provide opportunities for us to success at this, great. But I am not counting on the city either to do that. I just, I am more afraid of the potential restrictions and the potential kind of roadblocks (Matchstick).

Hence, Jayden's account illustrates recognition of a supportive institutional climate and, simultaneously, depicts an apprehension for relying on, or trusting, the City of Vancouver. This dubious relation to the City of Vancouver is confirmed by another urban farmer (Taylor), interpreting part of the security provided through the GCAP as related to the City of Vancouver's need for upholding adequate transparency and trustworthiness. Taylor states, "the last thing they need is us going to the press saying we have been shut down".

Thus the GCAP and the City of Vancouver's ambition to become the greenest city in the world can be understood as providing urban farmers with security and 'ammunition' when advocating for their legitimation.

7.5 Summary and Reflections

The dialogue initiated, between urban farmers and the City of Vancouver, has taken place through 'bridges' into different levels of government, and the collaborative spaces of dialogue created through the formation and formalization of the VUFS. The City of Vancouver's green agenda, exemplified through the GCAP, and City officials' readiness to 'turn a blind eye' to the

urban farmers operating within their boundaries, can be viewed as conditional circumstances for the collaborative approach initiated. Similarly, the urban farmers' non-confrontational tactics and collaborative advance as a group can be viewed as another contingent factor upon advancing collaboration and mutual understanding. However, the disregard expressed by informants can be said to murmur underneath the surface and makes reference to Swyngedouw (2007) and Allmendinger and Haughton's (2010) argument for circumcised debates under the concurrent postpolitical condition. The 'Kafkaesque landscape', of networked governance processes, makes urban farmers' question the accountability and transparency of internal and external progression and, further, the potential to reach prospective solutions. Further, the urban farmers and the City of Vancouver's (in)direct dependency on each other, suggests that radicalized ideas are excluded at either end. With reference to the ideas and narratives constructing urban farming as valuable in the urban terrain, urban farmers' political motivations for shifting socio-economic and environmental global trends are merged, with pragmatic and deradicalized approaches to their place in urban governance and, equally, their place within the urban terrain. This adopted positionality can be understood according to Innes and Booher's (1999) intangible outcomes of collaborative processes. Stakeholders learn the political know-how of political mobilization, and the consensus-oriented- and deradicalized language of contemporary urban and environmental politics (Innes & Booher, 1999). While confirming the idea of a postpolitical condition, it can, this can also be understood as the mere displacement of politics, to other political terrains (Metzger, 2011).

8 Balancing Informality and Formality: Reaching Potential Solutions to Urban Farming in Vancouver?

> "So are these the salad days for urban agriculture in Vancouver or is the best yet to come?" (Thoreau, 2012a).

Posted with reference to the legal quarrel encompassing urban farming in the City of Vancouver, the questioned posed, in the quote above, guides this final analysis chapter. The evolvement of urban farming in the City of Vancouver can be distinguished by its informal characteristics. However, the collaborative process instigated, between the urban farming community and the City of Vancouver, differentiates urban farming as an informal venture. Thus the question remains, 'can informality be balanced with formality?', or posed in a different manner, 'can urban farming productively enter into formal planning regulations and policy?' The City of Vancouver's readiness to allow the urban farmers to operate within their turf, without conforming to bylaws and regulation, can be interpreted as an attempt at slowly absorbing informality within the formal institutional system. However, it can, similarly, be viewed as negating concrete responsibility for the visionary goals outlined in the GCAP. In this chapter, I analyze the informants interpretations of the current imposition of urban farming in Vancouver, with reference to the collaboration taking place, the City of Vancouver's institutional climate, and potential resolutions for urban farming in the city.

8.1 Putting Their Necks on the Line for Becoming the Greenest City in the World

> Other cities have policy, other cities that didn't stand up in front of the whole world and say 'We are the greenest city in the world!' So I think maybe we should be at least as green as the other cities that aren't the greenest cities in the world (Kim).

The quote above illustrates the discrepancy between the City of Vancouver's mandate to become the greenest city in the world and the legal challenges experienced by urban farmers. This duality can be interpreted as the 'Janus face' of contemporary urban governance (Swyngedouw, 2005). In this section, I analyse informant's interpretations of the duality between the City of Vancouver's green ambitions and legal imposition of urban farming.

Several informants make notice of this duality and express doubt in the City of Vancouver's ambition to become the greenest city in the world. An urban farmer states,

> most people don't even know it is illegal and the City is just marching forward with their greenest city initiatives and urban farming is so awesome and everything, it is ridiculous (Kim).

The frustration expressed, in this quote, indicates that the informant understands the City of Vancouver to receive credit for supporting urban farming, while, simultaneously, leaving the urban farmers in a vulnerable situation. An involved actor in the urban farming community speaks to this incongruence, in an urban farming newsletter. The stakeholder discusses the misconceived ease portrayed through the media of the work involved in the process of establishing an urban farm venture. Referring to the City of Vancouver's "outdated institutional framework", the stakeholder describes her/his attempt to work with the City of Vancouver to legally realize a proposed aquaponics. Stating that the project has been "caught in a policy and regulatory labyrinth", unable to fit into any existing category, license, or permit requirements, the stakeholder further notes,

> I know we're not the only company or organization that feels that we're trying to do exactly the kinds of things the City wants us to do to help make Vancouver the most sustainable city on the planet (Thoreau, 2012a).

The quote reflects the duplicity experienced between the City of Vancouver's stated goals and their concrete practice. The stakeholder understands this inconsistency as the City of Vancouver's inability to follow-up their stated goals, with concrete actions. Further noting how municipal staff is "confounded and cautious when we bring them our project descriptions" (Thoreau, 2012a), this narration illustrates the stakeholder's frustration with reference to their proposed project framed within the ambitions of the GCAP. An urban farmer (Kim), similarly, critiques the City of Vancouver's lack of concrete action, stating, "they haven't even done the most basic thing required to support urban agriculture - making it legal". Kim contends that the City of Vancouver can rush regulation and policy when they want to, and understands the municipal government's unwillingness to do so as a form of deception. Another urban farmer confirms this view, stating, "the city right now is in a really great position (Taylor). Taylor further notes,

> So they have kind of appeased the urban farmers […] They have our support. They also have the developers support, because they haven't done anything that's going to negatively affect them, you know. They haven't done anything to piss off the residents or anything like that, because nothing is actually happened.

The quote illustrates Taylor's suspicion regarding the prospective legalization of urban farming, considering the pacified position attained by the City of Vancouver. Taylor contends, "I feel like they are going to try to be in this position for as long as possible". Taylor further construes the City of Vancouver's pacificity as ignoring the risk, taken on by urban farmers, of working without a coherent legal framework. Taylor states,

> I just feel sometimes really resentful for the City to have us put our necks out on the line and have us act as guinea pigs for them, without actually offering any type of support and actually putting themselves at risk in any way.

Making reference to the City of Vancouver's formal acknowledgement of one urban farm in Vancouver, 'SoleFood Street Farms'[20], Taylor further notes, "they have for Sole food and that is, in my mind, a redeeming factor for them".The City of Vancouver's collaboration with 'SoleFood' can be viewed as directly partnering with urban farmers. 'SoleFood' has obtained a specifically designed business licence for their operation and the City of Vancouver has leased three sites to the farm. A City councillor (Casey) identifies 'SoleFood' as a pilot project, confirming the City of Vancouver's collaboration with this urban farm. While 'SoleFood' has been able to escape the legal challenges encompassing urban farming in Vancouver, other urban farms have to balance their advantages, as informal actors, against potential risks. Taylor's interpretation, considering this risk unfair and substantial, confirms Oswalt et al.'s (2013) argument that "informality has its price" (p. 60).

As outlined earlier, urban farmers consider this risk differently. One urban farmer (Kim) has moved operations outside municipal boundaries awaiting the City of Vancouver's provision of a legal framework encompassing urban farming. Kim contends, "we have kept our plots there; we've got our foot in the door. As soon as the city makes it legal will go bull hog". Kim further notes, "This is my livelihood. It is not something I am just trying out. I have actually invested a lot of time and money in this". This indicates that, Kim considers the informality of urban farming in the City of Vancouver as too great a risk, considering her/his personal and financial commitment. Understood as a formalization process, going from 'just trying out' to 'full commitment', Kim's illustration confirms Oswalt et al.'s (2013) argument that eventually informal users will benefit from formalization. Kim distinguishes, nonetheless, the differential approach taken to this risk, stating,

[20] I identify SoleFood Street Farms by name in this thesis as the farm is formally acknowledged by the City of Vancouver.

> A lot of people don't seem to care, including producers. I mean there are plenty of farmers out there that haven't taken a stand […] that are willing to just wait it out.

Another urban farmer (Sam), keeping operations within the City of Vancouver, is more optimistic with regards to the timeframe of prospective legal changes. Yet, Sam conditions such patience on circumstantial factors and states,

> It is probably good that it is nice and slow and methodic and just so long as nothing bad happens in the meantime, you know. If something was to happen and we are not covered by our insurance and my partner ends up being sued because he's associated with me, you know, those vulnerabilities that start to become too much to bare.

Sam's quote illustrates an understanding of, gradual and thorough, collaboration processes as contributory to the successful legalization of urban farming in the City of Vancouver. Yet, Sam considers the risk, associated with urban farming's informality, as sever. This illustrates the urban farmers' lack of concrete rights and security in potential instances of disagreement when operating within municipal boundaries. Another urban farmer (Riley), less concerned with these risks, contends, nonetheless, that if the City of Vancouver provides appropriate legal framework she/he might invest in a greenhouse and farm throughout the whole year. This suggests that Riley understands the legal grey zone encompassing urban farming to be holding her/him back from further investing in, or expanding, the operation.

Several informants interpret the duality, between urban farming's legal imposition and the City of Vancouver greenest city goals, as a discrepancy, decreasing the municipal government's trustworthiness. This doubt can be interpreted as a reference to the 'Janus face' of urban governance' imposition, simultaneously, ensuring economic growth and advancing participatory decision-making. Thus, the City of Vancouver's green ambitions can be understood as part of a strategy for rebranding Vancouver with reference to urban sustainability. Nonetheless, no informant voices such one-sided and outright critique of the municipal government, suggesting that the City of Vancouver's dual role is interpreted as, utterly, more complex. However, the discrepancy between urban farming's legal imposition and the City of Vancouver's greenest city goals solicits the question: 'why has the municipal government not, yet, legalized urban farming?'

8.2 The City As the Last Frontier

While informants critically scrutinize the City of Vancouver's inability to take concrete actions with regards to urban farming's illegality, several informants also justify the lingering creation of a legal framework. In this section, I will analyse informants' construed rationalizations of urban farming's legal imposition with reference to the 'nature' of contemporary governance and bottom-up induced change.

Deliberating the lack of a legal framework, in support of urban farming in the City of Vancouver, an informant states,

> So on the one hand you have a municipality that is pro food and then on the other hand you have a municipality that bureaucratically is not pro food (Emerson).

Emerson differentiates between the City of Vancouver's political mandate and concrete administrative regulations and practice. Further, Emerson problematizes the reciprocity between these levels of governance, noting,

> While the City and policy is really supportive of food there is still that translation into how that actually functions on an administrative basis.

The informant's viewpoint can be understood as recognizing the complexity of bureaucratic change and processes, while, simultaneously, pointing out the divergence between levels of government. The problematic assimilation of overarching political support and administrative regulation is, further, understood as related to the timeframe of potential regulatory change. An urban farmer (Jayden) understands the lingering creation of a legal framework as related to the 'nature' of contemporary governance, stating,

> I feel like the public sphere is very very slow, so I think that's why it is taking time. Because doing anything at the City takes forever and that's ok. That's intentional within that system of governance.

A City councillor (Casey) reiterates this idea. Deliberating the comprehensive task of changing bylaws, Casey maintains, "the challenge is, bylaws, bylaws are forever". Casey exemplifies her/his claim by making a reference to the prohibitory bylaws implemented in the late 1990s, to impede indoor grow-ups, stating,

> In the late 1990s we had a problem in Vancouver where people were growing drugs inside houses – we call them grow-ups. There was this massive response and we changed dozens of bylaws within a couple years to prevent that from happening. So

> electrical bylaws, plumbing bylaws, building bylaws, window bylaws, you name it, they were all changed.

Casey further contends that these bylaw amendments are part of the framework currently prohibiting urban farming from legally operating within the city. Reiterating the idea that systems of governance are intentionally slow, the City councillor recognizes the value of adequately 'thinking' about potential bylaw changes. Casey notes, "you want to try and think, not just of what the need is today, but what the need is ten years from now […] maybe you can think 30 years". Casey's narration illustrates the municipal government's role, responding to actor-induced change and, simultaneously, ensuring responsibility and coherency for the long-term. Tolerating the undetermined timeframe of prospective legal changes, Jayden (urban farmer), considers such patience contingent upon the political support articulated by the current City Council, stating,

> I think they are right behind us in what we are doing and they still have a couple of years over there so if they can set it in motion before then, then I think everything will be fine.

By separating bureaucratic practice and political intent Jayden rationalizes the lingering legalization of urban farming. However, Jayden also illustrates a lack of trust with reference to the 'nature' of politics, noting, "I am also quite aware of how fickle municipal politics tend to be and how quickly that can change".

An urban farmer (Riley) justifies the lingering legalization of urban farming with reference to the recent progression of the practice in Vancouver. Pointing to the direct political mobilization of urban farming initiated through the UFN, Riley construes the current timeframe as relatively short. Making references to the City of Vancouver's informal support, through funding and collaboration, Riley notes that the municipal government also has other and more imperative issues to worry about. The informant's interpretation can be understood with reference to the shifting role of municipal government, from hierarchical to networked governance relations, and the prospective timeframe of adequately including and democratizing participation and decision-making. Considering the role of contemporary urban governance, a VFPC representative (Elliot) understands the City of Vancouver's role as; visionary, enabling, and supportive. Elliot states, "the reality is a lot of the stuff with the City policies they don't actually do. Their regulations or bylaws just enable stuff to happen". Elliot further notes,

> So the reality is the City could pass amazing things that, you know, a random example, all homeowners would get incentives if they would have urban farmers farming their land, right. But if urban farmers and homeowners weren't engaged in that discussion they could pass it tomorrow and guess what, nothing would happen.

The quote illustrates the VFPC representative's processes-oriented perspective, understanding contemporary governance as relying upon the synergy between bottom-up interest or initiation, and top-down guidance and support; reflecting an understanding of networked governance relations and Andersen's (2007) empowerment perspective. Elliot further confirms this, noting, "public participation is policy, is part of that whole process". Identifying public participation broadly, Elliot suggests that the ongoing collaboration process, between the City of Vancouver and the urban farmers, serves the resulting quality of prospective solutions. Illustrating an actor-oriented take on collaboration, Elliot notes,

> half the time it is the citizens, the civil society, the business that are pushing the government to make the changes,

and further contends,

> if they are not involved in the conversation, how could they contribute to that change that the mayor may or may not see.

As an argument for participatory planning and governance, the quotes illustrate the VFPC representative's recognition of bottom-up induced change and networked governance relations. Identifying the municipal government as "a reactionary kind of system", an urban farmer (Sam) echoes the VFPC representative's perspective. Sam states, "I think it will only go in the right direction if there is people like me and other people of the VUFS actually being a part of that discussion". Sam further notes,

> A lot of good things that happen places is because of the grassroots work that's already been done and the city is kind of a last frontier for any kind of movement that is successful.

Identifying the municipal government as 'the last frontier' the informant exemplifies the changing configuration of municipal government, from hierarchical incentivised initiatives to increasingly networked relations and actor-induced change. Further, Sam quote, construes the success of grassroots work as contingent upon the righteousness and 'goodness' of the incentivised and proposed change. Another urban farmer (Jayden) confirms this idea, stating,

> I fell like that is reflective of policy often in that people in communities and society move and then policy catches up to those people if it is deemed that what they are doing makes sense and it's ok.

This quotes makes reference to the significance of identifying urban farming as a resilient and sustainable practice. Jayden understands the legitimation of urban farming as depended upon the successful mobilization of urban farming as meaningful and legitimate within the urban terrain. Thus, bottom-up induced initiatives are understood contingent upon their ability to communicate (through practice and dialogue) the virtue of their practices. Jayden does not considering bottom-up induced change as virtuous in its own right. As such, the informant understands the potential legitimation and legalization of urban farming to be contingent upon their ability to negotiate their place within the urban political terrain. This construal reflects the urban farmers' focus on, through practice and dialogue, communicating the value of their practice. An informant (Jessie) discussing the City of Vancouver's precaution for legalizing urban farming makes a contribution to this point. Talking about the City of Vancouver, Jessie states, "now they are starting to realize that, no, this is legitimate businesses and they need to be recognize so they can do a lot more". Jessie relates the City of Vancouver's willingness to progress the legalization of urban farming within their turf with their appreciation of urban farming as legitimate business ventures.

The narrations portrayed in this section, illustrate several informants' rationalization of the prospective timeframe for the legalization of urban farming in the City of Vancouver. Understanding the City of Vancouver as 'the last frontier' is interrelated to the informants' interpretations of contemporary governance understood with reference to networked relations and the 'nature' of bottom-up induced change. The legitimacy of bottom-up induced initiatives is understood as contingent upon the actors' ability to communicate the value of their proposed initiatives through dialogue and practice.

8.3 Urban Farming as a Nomadic Experience or Designated Zoning?

The collaborative approach adopted by urban farmers and the City of Vancouver, ultimately begs the question of how a potential legal framework should frame urban farming within the City of Vancouver. Two main advents, for the legal resolution of urban farming in the City of Vancouver, can be differentiated according to land use regulations. These stipulate; (1) legalize urban farming across all zones (blanket zoning), or (2) legalize urban farming within specific zones (designated zoning) as suggested in the GCAP. In this section, I will analyze these

proposed resolutions with reference to other factors, highlighted by informants as relevant for the legalization of urban farming in the City of Vancouver.

An urban farmer (Sam) argues that zoning regulations for urban farming should be blanketed. According to Sam, this idea is understood as controversial by the City of Vancouver. Referring to a meeting with City representatives, Sam states,

> they were talking about how it would be impossible to have a blanket zoning where agriculture would be permitted in every .. like there is 72 different zones in Vancouver and it is not feasible to put urban agriculture into each of those zones.

While supporting restrictions to potential animal husbandry and the *amount* of public or private land put under cultivation within the city, the informant does not understand the logic of restricting urban farming according to zoning. Another urban farmer (Taylor), making references to other North American cities, construes a similar viewpoint. Taylor states,

> Portland, San Francisco, they have blanketed conditional uses or accepted uses all across the board, in every zone. So I mean some people will disagree and say that industrial areas shouldn't be, but I think where we need to regulate is more so in the best practices and not in the zoning.

'Best practices' encompasses regulatory guidelines for how urban farmers should operate within the city with reference to, for instance; homeowner relations, farming methods, and animal husbandry. The VUFS (2013) supports the development of best practices in collaboration with City officials and through neighbourhood outreach. An urban farmer (Taylor) further construes the value of best practise as ensuring the small-scale organization of urban farming. Noting that she/he believes that the City of Vancouver is "worried that big companies are going to come into residential areas and set up shop", Taylor contends, "I think that is where the best practices come in". Further, Taylor understands the VUFS' role in leading the process for establishing best practices, as critical. Another urban farmer (Sam) questions the VUFS' ability to provide adequate solutions for the creation of a legal framework, for urban farming in the City of Vancouver, stating

> the City is going to be asking questions about best farming practices and where farming should happen and what the arrangements should be with land owners or with the city or, you know and the whole private/public land question, they are going to be asking us what we think should happen I don't think, and we don't know.

Sam questions the urban farmers ability to provide solutions that will ensure creative and innovative urban agriculture practices in the future. With reference to the discussions provided earlier, the informant's interpretation can be understood as an argument for awaiting the legalization of urban farming.

A City of Vancouver urban planner (Morgan) suggests that one potential pragmatic response to the legal grey zone of urban farming, is to legalize urban farming in all zones for an interim period of time, as a pilot project. As an example, Morgan makes a reference to the recent legal changes with regards to farmers markets in Vancouver, stating,

> there was a council directive to make it easier to plan farmers markets, so what that meant is that we did a review of the zoning bylaw and we passed a bylaw amendment that said farmers markets are permitted for, I think it was a pilot period of 2 or 3 years and all zones in the city.

As a pragmatic response, this potential solution could ease the impending legalization process of urban farming in the City of Vancouver. Another urban planner (Hayden) reiterates this idea. Valuing such liberal legalization, Hayden states, "because right now urban farming is happening everywhere". As an interim solution, Hayden understands the value of legalizing urban farming across all zones with reference to the creativity and innovation such legalization could ensure and provide. However, potential changes to the current City council can jeopardize the permanence of such pragmatic facilitation.

Further, prospective resolutions for legalizing urban farming make reference to the differential valuations distinguishing urban farming as an urban sustainable and economic resilient practice. Morgan notes,

> we shouldn't think of urban farming as this nomadic exercise where we set up, you know, for a couple of years in one location and the shift location and then shift location. Because I think if we can actually advance things having permanent infrastructure in place provides a bit more security to the people actually doing urban farming.

Morgan makes reference to the trade-off between urban farming as temporary provision and the urban farmers interest and ability to invest in, and expand, their operations. Establishing urban farming, as a designated practice within one specific zone, would, nonetheless, challenge the valuation of urban farming associated with interim use, and negate urban farming as potentially

compatible with compact city ideals. An informant (Jamie) directly objects the rational for appointing designated areas for urban farming within the city. Jamie further states,

> I am still not totally convinced that there should be farms in the middle of the city, unless there is a site that can't be used for anything else.

Jamie's remark makes reference to the valuation of urban farming as contingent upon its ability to use interim or/and underutilized land. An urban farmer (Sam), arguing for legalizing urban farming across all zones, simultaneously, understands such legalization as ensuring urban farming's advantage as an interim use. Sam states,

> Even on lots where they are doing like soil remediation you can have raised beds and people are doing that you know. A lot of places where there is development on hold, like that is one use that the developers can put the land to without having to pay taxes.

Another informant (Aubrey) confirms this notion, stating, "There are so many spaces that even temporarily could be used for food production and I would like to see zoning around that and the bylaws make that possible". Further, Aubrey makes a reference to the amount of health and safety considerations associated with temporary appropriation. Aubrey argues for more flexible zoning regulations and enhanced clarity with reference to potential tax benefits, for the purpose of making such temporary provision more feasible. Hence, legalizing urban farming as a designated use in some zones can be understood as hindering urban farming's ability to function as efficient space utilization. However, adopting urban farming as an interim use can, similarly, be construed as challenging the ecological sustainability and efficiency of urban farming.

The progression of urban farming as a permanent practice is, further, distinguished with reference to urban farming as providing edible education. An informant states,

> I think edible education is going to be the gateway into more permanent urban garden, food production, farming projects, because they have such a high level of benefit for the education of young people and also those huge soccer fields that are attached to cities and the school become a massive potential resource bank for urban farming. So I think that that is going to be the gateway by which more permanent locations develop and grow over time and have more ecological resiliency and permanent location (Emerson).

While acknowledging the City of Vancouver School Board's potential apprehensions for partnering with a for-profit urban farm, Emerson describes edible education as a positive advent

for non-profit urban farms. Making a reference to an urban farm already collaborating with the City of Vancouver School Board, Emerson notes,

> I think socially, edible education becomes a much more tolerated or acceptable place as a society for these gardening projects to happen because everybody wants their kids to be outside and to be healthy and you know learn about growing food and to get healthy food in their schools and a lot of their parents don't have time and then there is a lot of low income that can't afford that organic food and if their kids can get it at school it is amazing.

Thus, prospective solutions for legalizing urban farming in the City of Vancouver can be understood with references to the differential valuations of urban farming as urban sustainable and economic resilient practice within the urban terrain. This suggests, as such, that the adopted resolution for the prospective legalization of urban farming will inform the concrete evolvement of the practice, in the City of Vancouver, in the future.

8.4 Planning for the Unplanned?

> I think it is positive for the future, even the immediate future, and the long-term sustainability, thriving really, of urban farming. I think it sucks for the people doing it right now (Casey).

The informal progression of urban farming is construed as providing the urban farmers with a range of opportunities, otherwise unavailable within the boundaries of the present legal framework. While informants interpret the legal grey zone as challenging the urban farmers' viability and prosperity within the City of Vancouver, informants, simultaneously, understand this informality as helping and even ensuring the quality of urban farming's sustenance for the long term. Several informants understand the gentle easing of urban farming into formal organization structures and regulations, as constructive for the near future. In this section, I will analyze informants' interpretations of the potential within, adequately, balancing informality and formality. The section will provide a gateway into the ensuing conclusion and discussion, in chapter 10.

Making a reference to the collaborative dialogue, constructed in-between urban farmers and between the VUFS and the City of Vancouver, an urban planner states, "I honestly think what is happening now is the best-case scenario for the process that Chris and the other urban farmers started" (Hayden). Pointing to the contingent contextuality of urban farming in Vancouver, Hayden maintains,

> So bringing the urban farmers together, the collaboration, I think it is context specific. Personally I think it depends on the context of the community. I don't think there is a blanket way for it to become legal.

Hayden alludes to the differential 'nature' of bottom-up induced change. Hayden understands an extensive collaboration process as the most constructive way to understand the contextual factors relevant for, productively and comprehensively, legalizing urban farming in the City of Vancouver. A VFPC representative reiterates this view, stating,

> So how do we find that balance that is unique to Vancouver? Is the direction unique to Vancouver? Not at all. But that grey zone I think provides us the ability to not rush in and get something we didn't actually want (Elliot).

The quote illustrates Elliot's interpretation of the constructive space fashioned through the legal grey zone concurrently encompassing urban farming. Making a reference to the upsurge of urban farming in other North American cities, Elliot contends that the contextual characteristics of urban farming in Vancouver should be deliberated with reference to best practices from other cities.

Elliot's apprehension, for rushing the legalization of urban farming, is based on two arguments. Firstly, Elliot makes a reference to the danger in rushing regulation, stating, "Be careful what you wish for" and notes,

> you can actually over-institutionalize things to where they become overly bureaucratic and you end up getting things that you thought you wanted but you actually don't want.

The quote makes reference to the creative and innovate quality of informality. Elliot understands the City of Vancouver's readiness to 'turn a blind eye' to urban farming's informality as providing the urban farmers with opportunities, otherwise unattainable within the formal terrain. An urban farmer (Jayden) confirms this notion, stating, "my hope is that the city will just stay out of our way. To be honest, that would be ideal". Alluding to the broad variety of models and methods utilized and developed by urban farmers in the City of Vancouver, as well as their organizational collaboration and formalization, Elliot states,

> It might turn out that 10 years from now, two ways are the only ways that it is happening. But the fact that it is creative and exploratory kind of allows that. So when things become bylaws and regulations it is actually experience to build that on.

The informant's view reflects the characterization, provided by Larsen (2007) and Oswalt et al. (2013) in their argument for the creative potential of informal actors working in informal terrains and the challenges associated with formalizing such entrepreneurship. As argued by Larsen (2007), Elliot, similarly, understands the urban farmers' access to a variety of urban *vague terrains* as providing them room to develop and prosper, before eventually being incorporated within the formal urban landscape. While constructing her/his understanding differently, Jayden portrays a similar interpretation of the danger in rushing regulation. Jayden states,

> I am not really sure that even those that are trying to set policy really has a sense for what it should be. It just seems so new and different and like you know it is such a new way to approach our space right, and I don't think that there is a top-down solution for it. I think, that we just need to do it and see what works and see what doesn't work and then work accordingly.

With reference to new and differential advents within the urban terrain, Jayden's view underscores the hardship of ensuring quality when shifting regulation. This illustrates the, potentially, problematic synergy between bottom-up initiation and top-down facilitation. Urban planning can be constructed with reference to Healey's (2002) conceptualization of strategic urban planning, encouraging the 'remaking' of the city's imaginative form. The City of Vancouver's pursuit, becoming the greenest city in the world, can be construed as encouraging such 'remaking. However, the challenge, with such ingenuity, results from the pursuit to formalize these reconstructions.

The second argument, presented by Elliot, makes a reference to the prospective timeframe of communicating the value of urban farming within government, local communities, and between the urban farmers themselves. Elliot states, "there is that understanding within communities and at the government level that need to come along" and further contends,

> Actually seeing the urban farming community and the broader communities appreciation for and value over urban farming grow before it gets embedded.

The quotes illustrate the informant's emphasis on, through informal introduction and collaboration, building momentum for the differential practice urban farming represents. Hence, easing the prospective incorporation of urban farming within the formal legal terrain. A City councillor (Casey) speaks to the value of understanding urban farming and testing community support, stating,

> We are not enforcing bylaws because we want to see how it works, we want to understand it and that actually helps us make a much better bylaw moving forward. So things we are looking at are how much does it impact the neighbours. Is anyone complaining, nobody is.

Casey further distinguishes the potentially radical conceptualization of farming as an urban phenomenon. Differentiating urban farming's material expression and discursive connotations, Casey makes a reference to "people's imagined reality", and states,

> if we were to come forward with a bylaw saying you could do urban farming on your property, I suspect there would be quite a few people who would say 'Oh no, that's going to be to much of an impact on me' even though they might have one operating next door to them right now, and they just don't realize it, right.

'Turning a blind eye' to urban farming can, thus, be understood as utilizing urban farming's potentially mundane expression associated with the apoliticality of gardening and the potential within such exposure. As referenced by Blomley (2005), *lived realities* can be much more complex and hybrid than legal classifications indicates. Following such logic, the introduction of urban farming as practice, before conceptual legalization, can be rationalized; lived spaces are construed as the entry point for potential reconceptualizations of urbanity. This interpretation alludes to Lefebvre's depiction of representational space (lived space) as "the dominated – and hence passively experienced – space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 39). Hence, the practical materialization of urban farming through informal arrangements can, arguably, strengthen urban farming's potential for becoming legitimized and legalized within the City of Vancouver. Elliot, further makes notice of the positive press given to urban farming in the media, arguing that this attention, coupled with the legal grey zone, advances the chances for urban farming to become legitimized as a righteous practice within the city.

8.5 Summary and Reflections

This chapter portrays the difficulty of balancing informality and formality with reference to the 'nature' of contemporary governance and planning, and the current legal imposition of urban farming in the City of Vancouver. First, this chapter, narrates the legal imposition of urban farming with reference to the 'Janus face' of contemporary governance, portraying the incongruity between the City of Vancouver's green ambitions and concrete actions. The urban farmers can be understood as *putting their necks on the line* for the city's green city goals.

Second, the City of Vancouver is construed as *the last frontier* understood with reference to the contemporary role of local governments and bottom-up induced change. Third, I have portrayed the differential advents for progressing the legalization of urban farming in the City of Vancouver, emphasizing the distinction between constructing *urban farming as a nomadic experience or designated zoning*. These differential resolutions are related to the way urban farming is constructed with reference to urban sustainability and economic resilience. Fourth, I have explored interpretations construing the potential for advancing bottom-up planning through informality. Moreover, this chapter illustrates the potential for, and the problematic in, planning for the unplanned.

9 Discussion and Conclusion

This thesis seeks deeper insight into the evolvement and negotiation of urban farming as a legitimate practice within the City of Vancouver, with an overarching objective to inform how the urban is reimagined, with reference to 'sustainability' and differential socio-ecological imaginaries. In this concluding chapter, I will discuss the findings portrayed in the analysis with reference to the research questions posed and, further, I will reflect upon the potential impact and relevance of these findings. Lastly, I will discuss the relevance of this study with reference to urban sustainability more broadly.

9.1 How is urban farming mobilized and negotiated as an urban sustainable and economic resilient practice in the City of Vancouver?

The mobilization and negotiation of urban farming in the City of Vancouver can be understood as, simultaneously, taking place at different levels of the urban political terrain. This mobilization and negotiation is, at the same time, discursive and practical.

The informants interviewed construes urban farming with reference to urban sustainability and economic resilience, differently. These narratives can constructively be understood as reimagining urban sustainability with reference to differential socio-ecological imaginaries; essentially, seeking rearticulations of the entangled relation between people and nature in the urban, with reference to McClintock's (2010) theorization of metabolic rifts. Thus, the advent of urban farming in Vancouver can be understood as a political negotiation of potential socio-ecological futures, challenging the 'urban nature' concurrently characterizing the City of Vancouver. This discursive negotiation is, further, entwined with the practical mobilization and negotiation of urban farming within the City of Vancouver's (material and legal) urban terrain. This materialization is, fruitfully, viewed with reference to Lefebvre's (1991) theorization of the socio-spatial dialectic and everyday life. Urban 'positive voids', defined by Larsen (2007) as *vague terrains*, provides room within the urban terrain for practical articulations of discursive reconceptualizations, opening up 'the urban' for potential reimaginations. The urban farmers' appropriation of vague terrains represents, as such, conscious political articulations. These articulations can be understood with reference to Lefebvre's critique of abstract space and his argument for the active appropriation and (re)articulation through everyday practice (Simonsen, 1993). Vague terrains are immanently related to the urban cycles

of booms and busts, associated with the interim fixation of capital in the urban terrain and, further, to the multiplicity of meaning existing within these spaces' discursive construction; challenging the coherency of use and subjective conceptualizations. In these spaces, urban farming is a potential political articulation, challenging socio-spatial coherency. Challenging *representations of space*, urban farming presents a potential provocation within the City of Vancouver and relies upon the ignorant or sanctioned privilege for sustaining the appropriation and rearticulation of these vague terrains. The City of Vancouver's willingness to 'turn a blind eye' to the urban farmers and, further, the property-owners favourable land tenure agreements, represents *the distant order's* sanctioned privilege, providing the urban farmers the power, as *the order of everyday life*, to appropriate these vague terrains. Thus, urban farming can be construed as mobilized and negotiated in *the political*; representing a urban and practical politics, achieved through the urban farmers tactical and pragmatic approach to, their entry into and sustenance in, the urban political terrain. This tactical endeavour fashions the (creative and political) potential within urban farming's practical manifestation and, similarly, presents the urban farmers with a range of potential risks. Further, understanding urban farming as mobilized and negotiated in the political is, simultaneously, associated with the discursive constructions of urban farming, within ideas of urban sustainability and economic resilience, making such appropriation and articulation meaningful.

The mobilization and negotiation of urban farming as an urban sustainable and economic resilient practice in the City of Vancouver, further, takes place at the level of *politics*. The formation and formalization of the UFN (later VUFS), and the collaboration instigated between the urban farmers and the City of Vancouver, distinguish this level. While marked by divergent interpretations of the process initiated, the collective momentum forged by the urban farmers organization and the collaboration, established between the urban farmers and the City of Vancouver, define the strategy adopted for negotiating urban farming at the level of politics. The collaboration unfolding, is marked by the stakeholders' dependence upon each other. The urban farmers are reliant upon the City of Vancouver's provisional privilege, allowing them access to the material urban terrain. The City of Vancouver, on the other hand, is reliant upon the urban farmers for successfully upholding their 'greenest city' ambitions. This mutual dependence can indicate that arguments are deradicalized at either end, confirming the idea of post-political consensus (Swyngeddouw, 2007). However, it can also suggest that the 'real' political debate, is

resituated within the practical negotiation and mobilization of urban farming. This idea is confirmed by the City of Vancouver's 'wait and see' approach, and, as such, their judgment of prospective legalization according to the urban farmers ability to successfully negotiate a space for themselves within the established domain. The City of Vancouver's awaiting legalization of urban farming can, further, be viewed with reference to the city's participatory planning tradition and institutional climate. The informants' construed justification of the persisting legal grey zone, indicates that there exists substantial trust between the current City Council, the City of Vancouver operations, and the urban farmers. Utilizing Innes and Booher's (1999) conceptualization of intangible outcomes, this trust can be understood with reference to, the stakeholders already weighed relevance of collaborative processes, and the political 'know-how' of operating within this terrain, reflecting back on the city's participatory planning tradition and the urban farmers networked relations with a range of actors, within and outside government.

9.2 What factors contribute to and hinder the legitimation of urban farming in Vancouver as an urban sustainable and economic resilient practice?

Understanding urban farming in the City of Vancouver as, simultaneously, mobilized and negotiated at the level of *the political* and at the level of *politics* is productive for gaining deeper insight into the factors contributing to and hindering the legitimation of urban farming in the City of Vancouver. Mobilized through practice and discourse, enables both confllictual and consensus-oriented negotiations to be taking place.

The City of Vancouver's readiness to 'turn a blind eye' to the urban farmers operating within their turf has, arguably, contributed to the formation of the UFN. The legal grey zone encompassing the urban farmers already operating within municipal boundaries, created grounds for collective organization. Further, the City of Vancouver's green agenda and specifically the GCAP is construed as providing a reference point for the political mobilization of urban farming as an urban sustainable and economic resilient practice in the city. The construction of an overarching 'green' vision can be understood with reference to Healey's (2002) argument for strategic urban governance, mobilizing reimaginations of the city. Similarly, the informal position characterizing urban farming in the City of Vancouver is understood as encouraging the advancement of urban farming through differential spatial arrangements, various organizational methods, and interim land tenure agreements; essentially, encouraging creativity and innovation.

Such an interpretation, confirms Larsen (2007) and Oswalt et al.'s (2013) theorization of the (creative and political) potential within temporary use of urban vague terrains. Informal structures allows for experimentation and entrepreneurship. Thus, the urban farmers tactical approach, operating within the vague terrains of the urban established domain, allows the urban farmers to realize their ventures. Yet, this tactic is contingent upon taking on the (differently construed) risk of operating without the support of a coherent legal framework. The urban farmers role as tacticians, and their relative success in producing differential articulations in the urban terrain, can, thus, be understood as fundamental for the potential legitimation of urban farming within formal planning regulations and policy. However, the differential articulations produced by urban farmers can, simultaneously, be interpreted as mundane and commonplace, potentially hindering conscious political negotiations of the practice.

The urban farmers formalization of the VUFS and their collaboration with the City of Vancouver can be understood as advancing the conscious political articulation of urban farming as a concrete differential practice. Understood as advancing intangible outcomes, enhancing mutual understanding and trust between stakeholders, the collaborative process can be construed productive for the legitimation of urban farming. Further, the collaborative process is understood as progressing a thorough legalization process, where this legalization is adequately deliberated and legitimized. However, the prospective timeframe for potential legal changes is, simultaneously, interpreted as decreasing the urban farmers trust and dependability on the City of Vancouver's 'true' intent and ambition. The legal grey zone can be said to provide a temporary headrest, stifling movement in any direction. Hence, the collaboration process can be understood as the City of Vancouver's attempt at legitimizing their lagging legalization of urban farming. Such doubt can hinder constructive collaboration and legitimization. Further, the informality currently encompassing urban farming, is considered a substantial risk by several informants, confirming Oswalt et al.'s (2013) argument that eventually informal actors will benefit from formalization. The synergy between bottom-up initiation and top-down facilitation is, nonetheless, problematic as it involves the trade-off between flexibility and creativity and security and formality. The multiple 'layers' currently constructing urban farming as a meaningful practice in the City of Vancouver and the apprehensions for, too quickly, crystalizing urban farming's practical and discursive articulation, suggests that a narrow formalization of urban farming can hinder creativity and fruitful experimentation. Hence, *how* urban farming is

legalized, with reference to zoning and best-practices, is significant for urban farming's potential legitimation as an urban sustainable and economic resilient practice.

9.3 Thesis Relevance and Concluding Remarks

This thesis provides an example of how the urban is reimagined with reference to 'sustainability'. Understanding the mobilization and negotiation of urban farming as, simultaneously, taking place at the level of the political and at the level of politics, underscores the relevance of Lefebvre's theorization of the socio-spatial dialectic and everyday life. Lefebvre's (1991) approach provides an opportunity for gaining insight into how the urban is reimagined and the potential within such rearticulations. With reference to the estrangement of 'food systems' to urban planning and Swyngedouw and Kaika's (2012) argument for taking responsibility in the way we blur and construct nature, exploring alternatives for how urban sustainability can be articulated, emerges as a pertinent undertaking.

This thesis does not provide a resolution for how, or whether, urban farming should be legalized in the City of Vancouver. Rather, it provides an analysis of how urban farming has been mobilized and negotiated as an urban sustainable and economic resilient practice, and the differential factors contributing and hindering such legitimation. However, this insight can prove useful for further deliberating the prospective legalization of urban farming in the City of Vancouver. While, the contextual and circumstantial factors pertinent to the mobilization and negotiation of urban farming in the City of Vancouver make this a unique case, theoretical abstraction of the insight resulting from this thesis can be relevant for understanding, deliberating, or planning for, urban farming in other cities.

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APPENDIX

1. List of Informants

June 6th, 2012	**Jessie:**	Local political actor and co-founder of a non-profit community organization
June 7th, 2012	**Emory:**	Director of an urban agriculture organization
June 7th, 2012	**Charlie:**	Intern with an urban agriculture organization
June 7th, 2012	**Sage:**	Employee at an urban agriculture organization
June 10th, 2012	**Taylor:**	For-profit urban farmer
June 13th, 2012	**Kim:**	For-profit urban farmer
June 15th, 2012	**Jayden:**	For-profit urban farmer
June 15th, 2012	**Riley:**	For-profit urban farmer
June 15th, 2012	**Hayden:**	Urban planner in a private planning and design firm
June 24th, 2012	**Jamie:**	Co-founder of an urban agriculture charity
June 28th, 2012	**Sam:**	Urban farmer (organized under the umbrella of a non-profit organization)
June 29th, 2012	**Emerson:**	Coordinator of an agriculture network based in Vancouver
July 3rd, 2012	**Morgan:**	Urban Planner in Planning and Development Services department, City of Vancouver
July 6th, 2012	**Aubrey:**	Representative from an urban environmental NGO
July 10th, 2012	**Alex:**	Representative from University of British Columbia (UBC) Farm
July 10th, 2012	**Elliot:**	Representative from the Vancouver Food Policy Council
July 12th, 2012	**Casey:**	Member of the City of Vancouver Council

2. Informed Consent

Interview Request for MA Thesis

My name is Kristin E. A. Kjærås and I am a Human Geography student at the University of Oslo in Norway. I am currently working on my MA thesis writing about urban farming in Vancouver. The purpose of this thesis is to better understand how urban farming is enabled, realized and challenged in the City of Vancouver.

I would like to interview urban farmers, urban planners, politicians and other urban farming/agriculture enthusiasts in the city. The interviews will concern the importance of different initiatives, policies, events and trends that are and have been influencing urban agriculture in Vancouver, with a further focus on the dialogue between The City of Vancouver, urban farmers, organizations and networks. The interviews are expected to take from half an hour to an hour and will take place in the period from May 22th – July 15th, 2012. I will be recording the interviews and also taking notes throughout the duration of the interview.

The information gained from the interviews will be confidential as you will not be directly identified in the thesis if not otherwise agreed upon. However, your identity may be recognized by your affiliation with an organization or official position. The interviews are optional and you have the opportunity to withdraw your participation as an informant at any time, without further explanation. If you withdraw, the data concerning your participation will be made anonymous and excluded from the data collection. After my thesis is completed, personal identifications in the entire data collected will be obliterated.

If you would like to participate as an informant for my thesis and would like to be interviewed please sign the informed consent agreement below.

If you have any questions please call me (+47 408 83 310) or send me an email at kekjaera@student.sv.uio.no. You can also contact my advisor, Per Gunnar Røe, at p.g.roe@sosgeo.uio.no or +47 228 55 217.

This MA thesis is affirmed by the Data Protection Official for Research in Norway (http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/om/english.html).

Sincerely,

Kristin A. Kjærås

Informed Consent Agreement:
I have received written information regarding Kristin A. Kjærås' MA thesis and I would like to be interviewed.

Signature…… Phone number……..

3. Exemplar Semi-structured Interview Guide

Themes and examples of topics and questions

1. **Presentation and introduction**
    - Position, association, role, personal history etc.
    - How was your urban farm venture initiated?
    - In what way have you been involved in the progression of food policy in the City of Vancouver?
    - Are you familiar with any urban farms in the City of Vancouver?
2. **The City of Vancouver and urban farming: regulations and bylaws**
    - Have any particular City regulations or bylaws affected your project (directly or indirectly)? If yes, in what way?
    - How do you perceive the City's support for urban farming through the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan?
    - What are the greatest challenges of successfully integrating urban farming in Vancouver with regards to policy and bylaws?
    - Have there been any major changes in policy or bylaws relevant to urban farming in Vancouver, in recent years? If yes, what kind of changes?
    - Does the City of Vancouver make exceptions from established regulations and guidelines to enable urban farming initiatives? Examples?
    - How do you perceive the current legal grey zone comprising urban farming in Vancouver?
3. **The role of the different actors**
    - How do you perceive the current role of the City of Vancouver in promoting and enabling urban farming?
    - How do you perceive the role of the UFN (now the VUFS) for the evolvement of urban farming?
4. **Dialogue and cooperation between various actors**
    - What is the basis for dialogue with the City? Issue, collaboration, information, guidance etc.
    - How do you perceive the City's attitude to your project and similar projects? Have this attitude changed in recent years?
    - How would you describe the City's collaboration and dialogue with urban farmers?
    - Is the City collaborating with urban farmers operating in a legal grey zone?
5. **Urban space and urban farming**
    - What characterizes spaces of urban farming in Vancouver?
    - What is your perception of temporary urban farming initiatives?
    - How did you gain access to this space?
    - What are the general terms in the lease for this space?
    - How would you describe your project's role in the neighbourhood?
    - How do you see the urban farm's current use of space? Collective benefit, exclusive/inclusive space etc.
6. **Value of Urban farming**
    - How do you perceive the role/benefit of urban farming in Vancouver?
    - Why did you become and urban farmer?
    - Urban farming versus community gardens?
7. **Additional points and comments.**