

# LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

## -Sustainable Communities & Balancing Capital Stocks-

Author: Shannon A. Courtney  
Supervisors: Dr. Brian Cumming and Dr. Jane Webster

### Introduction

- Sustainability and resiliency of communities is essential for survival
- Current economic paradigm does not support sustainability
- Local food development represents an important effort to develop a restorative system and preserve community capital stocks

### Research Objectives

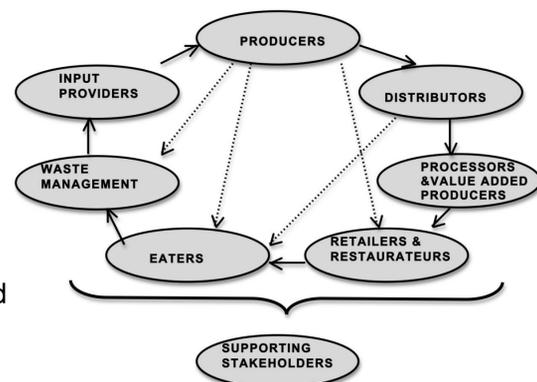
- Explore how local food system development relies upon and/or contributes to community capital stocks
- Determine if local food system development preserves an appropriate balance of capital stocks and contribute to sustainability

### Local Food Systems

- Definition and conceptualization remain source of discourse. Local food characterised by 'place' and 'social embeddedness'
- Literature dominated by empirical research, namely focussing on producers and consumers; systems-based research lacking

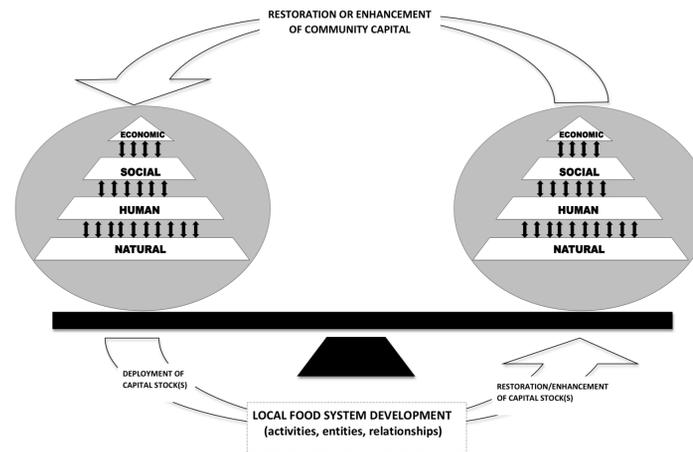
**Fig 1: Local Food System & Stakeholders**

A closed-loop system that produces no waste. Multiple relationships between actors, and support from external stakeholders



### Conceptual Framework

- Community capital represented by pyramid; two directional arrows reflect interdependency
- Like a bank account, community capital is debited and credited over time by activities pursued
- Ideally, investments enhance capital stocks, creating positive feedback loop and restorative system



### Initial Findings

#### Balancing Capital Stocks

- Local food initiatives benefit from availability of all forms of capital
- Development efforts, in turn, have resulted in formation of new capital stocks, especially human and social capital
- Social capital and networks integral to sourcing economic and human capital
- Economic capital production often aligned with goals of environmental preservation, social justice, education/health betterment

#### Challenges and Opportunities

- Bonding social capital may be inhibiting trust across stakeholder groups ; bridging social capital important to LT success
- Availability of economic capital integral to development efforts; communities remain reliant on external sources
- Supporting stakeholders contribute human and economic capital
- Capitals stocks, particularly social and natural capital, can take years to build or restore, but can be quickly destroyed
- Collaboration, communication and co-operation amongst and between stakeholder groups is essential
- Development impacted by dominant economic paradigm, geo-political conditions, and other external factors/actors

#### Comparative Analysis

KINGSTON	HARDWICK
Producer-driven, response to farming crisis	Entrepreneurs & producers driven by social/ environmental values, community building
More dependent on public funds and community volunteers	More dependent on private donors and non-monetary support of stakeholders
Large, transient pop'n; stable economy	Small, rural community; high unemployment
Few stakeholder groups engaged	Many stakeholder groups engaged
Remains an open system	Has 'operationalized' closed-loop system

### Methods

- Multiple case study approach
- Kingston, ON and Hardwick, VT represent communities with developing local food systems; and heterogeneous and homogenous characteristics
- Interviews (n=32), participant observations
- Singular analysis of each case study, cross-analysis comparing the two communities

**Fig. 2 Kingston, ON**



**Fig. 3 Hardwick, VT**

