TOWARD FOOD JUSTICE IN THE NEOLIBERAL ERA?: A CRITICAL EXPLORATION OF THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

by

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ABSTRACT

Broadly, this research is about how philosophy is translated into a set of practices, and about how these practices are affected by the political economic context in which they are imbedded. Using ethnographic methods I explore how the Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House (DTES NH), originally a grassroots organization in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES), attempts to transform the predominantly low-income DTES's "food system" according to its understanding of the "Right to Food" philosophy. The DTES NH differentiates itself from, is critical of and constructs itself in opposition to, charitable food organizations. It aims to empower the most marginalized victims of systemic injustice and to transform oppressive social relations through the modality of food rather then merely delivering food to poor people. However, the DTES NH is growing in a direction that reflects broader neoliberal currents that bear the risk of structurally aligning the DTES NH with the non-profit organizations it critiques. Examining the practices of the DTES NH through the perspectives of its staff, volunteers and program participants and linking them to the broader political-economic context, my research ultimately questions the degree to which social change is possible from within the non-profit sector.

Keywords: Right to Food; Food Security; Charity, Non-Profit Sector; Downtown Eastside; Neighbourhood House; Neoliberalism; Social Movement

DEDICATION

To my grandfather Carl Kline, who always hoped but never dreamt. To my mother, Nathalie Berger, who is not here but here through me. To Jacques Bodolec for the "tours du lac" at various breaking points. To J. N, who is always willing to dream with me.

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I am indebted to the staff and volunteers of the DTES NH who let me into their lives, and to the residents of the DTES from whom I have learned tremendously through my various roles engaging with them in their community. Without you this research would not be have been possible.

Finally I owe many thanks to my colleague and friend Sandalia Genus for her help (intellectual, technological and psychological) throughout every aspect of the research process, to my Dad Tim Kline for sacrificing his sanity (and hours of his time) to edit my grammar and misuse of idioms, and to my colleague and friend Jay Friesen for "formatting this gravestone."

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GLOSSARY AND ACRONYMS

- BC: The province of British Columbia
- BWIN: Building Welcoming and Inclusive Communities
- CAS: Community Agriculture System
- CCAP: Carnegie Community Action Project
- CED: Community Economic Development
- CFS: Community Food System
- CK: Community Kitchen
- DERA: Downtown Eastside Residents' Association
- DTES : Downtown Eastside
- DTES NH: Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House
- DNC: Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood Council
- E.D: Executive Director
- E.I: Employment Insurance
- FTA: Free Trade Agreement
- GVFBS: Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society
- KT: Kitchen Tables Project
- MA: Masters
- MAT: Maximally Assisted Therapy
- NDP: New Democratic Party
- NH: Neighbourhood House
- NAFTA: North American Free Trade Agreement
- NPIC: Non-Profit Industrial Sector
- PHS: Portland Housing Society
- RCK: Roving Community Kitchen
- ROV: Return On Investment
- SSHRC: Social Science and Humanities and Research Council
- SFU: Simon Fraser University
- SRO: Single Room Occupancy Hotel

- UBC: University of British Columbia
- UGM: Union Gospel Mission
- UN: United Nations
- VANDU: Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users
- WTO: World Trade Organization

1: RESEARCH INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 From Philosophy to Practices

Broadly speaking, this research is about how philosophy is translated into a set of practices, and about how these practices are affected by the political economic context in which they are imbedded. My research takes a micro-focus examining a live organization: The Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House (DTES NH). This grassroots organization is situated in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, a predominantly low-income—though rapidly changing—neighbourhood where many residents live in abject poverty and face multiple barriers. The DTES NH is an organization that has a unique philosophy that is applied to a set of programs and guidelines through which it aims to promote equity, foster dignity and empower the low-income, often marginalized residents of the DTES.

The DTES NH is critical of the donor-driven charitable system of food delivery that encompasses the majority of food programs on which many residents in the DTES subsist. Most of these charitable programs emerged to address the gaps in a political system that fails to provide adequate social provisions. However, the director of the DTES NH maintains that charitable food programs are inadequate on nutritional and social grounds, and she is not alone in directing criticism at charity. As a result of these critiques, one of the DTES NH's primary aims is the reform of food delivery across the DTES. The DTES NH envisions this food-reform according to their interpretation of the Right to Food philosophy, which stems originally from the UN covenant of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. The DTES NH has implemented this philosophy through a number of food programs, which are ever-expanding. These include on-site activities, and increasingly diverse forms of outreach in the DTES, that contribute to making the organization visible in the community.

As a grassroots organization, one would expect that the DTES NH's interpretation of the Right to Food philosophy would reflect the needs and desires of the community from which it emerged. The DTES NH is described in its "biography" as "community-driven." I examine the degree to which this is the case and, broadening my scope, the degree to which remaining "grassroots" and representing a low-income community is possible in the current political-economic context in which this organization is evolving. The DTES NH began in 2004 in

borrowed space, as a grassroots, predominantly community volunteer driven organization, but has grown rapidly. The organization was registered in 2009 as a non-profit, moved into a larger space in the spring of 2010 (the time frame of this research), and now employs an increasing number of staff as its programming capacity expands with its budget. Examining this transition, I suggest that since the DTES NH is increasingly connected to a specific funding structure as it grows into a non-profit organization, the same funding structure that governs the charities the DTES NH criticizes, it may come to function structurally more and more like those charities. In order to survive in the current political-economic context, non-profits face pressure to adopt certain structural features that are market-based and market-driven. Notably, competition is exacerbated by severe cuts to social spending that allow the corporate sector to move into the public services arena, as state responsibly continues to recede (Smith, 2007). I posit that the penetration of market-relations in DTES NH organizational life could force the DTES NH to eschew its grassroots sensibilities and allegiance to the low-income residents of the DTES. The crux of my argument is that in this climate the DTES NH could become a non-profit not just in terms of its status, but, more importantly, that it bears the risk of becoming so in terms of its ethos, a transition that my data helps to elucidate. I argue that if the DTES NH moves in this particular direction, its activist goals could be stymied, since neoliberal thinking and practices cause and exacerbate much of the social injustices the DTES NH aims to alleviate. Thus, broadly speaking, my research also raises questions about the ability to foster social change from within the current non-profit framework.

Using ethnographic methods, I explore the dynamics within the DTES NH by observing the interactions that take place between staff, volunteers, residents, and people from outside of the DTES, in the recently expanded programming space. For instance, I explore how the DTES NH philosophy is implemented in a variety of programs that aim to empower DTES residents and to reflect their needs, but also how these programs are mediated by non-community driven factors, such as funding. This line of inquiry allows me to assess the relationship between philosophy and practices, by paying close attention to how these programs are received by participants. I also examine how the DTES NH philosophy translates into a set of regulations at the DTES NH, and how these shape interactions between DTES NH staff and DTES residents. This inquiry allows me to analyze how those on the receiving end of DTES NH programs and services might interpret the intentions behind the DTES NH philosophy, such as fostering an inclusive, non-hierarchical environment and restoring dignity to DTES residents. Through semi-structured interviews I collect a variety of perspectives about the DTES NH, its role, activities, and growth, which I analyze in relation to my observations of DTES NH activities, and to their philosophy explicitly

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communicated to me in both verbal and textual forms. Furthermore, I reflexively examine my own roles as a multi-sited actor within this organization where I have been a volunteer, staff member and researcher. My methodological contribution lies in reflexively weathering the struggles associated with juggling the "ethnographic selves" I found myself continuously negotiating during my research processes (Coffey, 1999). My research occurs at a particularly important time in the DTES NH's history, as my fieldwork coincided with a move to a larger space, a larger staff base, and changes to programming hours and delivery. These changes are underlined by different relationships between stakeholders, which could reflect the penetration of market forces in non-profit social spheres. In interviews, the participants in my research often mentioned these changes, thus guiding my research process.

My data is organized around three tensions: the implementation of philosophy versus actual practices, food standards versus food preferences, and the way in which the expansion of the DTES NH underpins a tension between the organization's grassroots, community driven sensibilities, and its current transition toward becoming a non-profit. Through these tensions I am led to question the DTES NH's interpretation of the Right to Food approach, when I see key differences emerge between how staff and low-income residents interpret the food needs and desires of the community (itself a contested term), as well as differences in how expansion is interpreted and experienced. I examine how these tensions are interconnected in light of the fact that the expansion of the DTES NH is increasingly focused on food reform--a movement that will increasingly connect the DTES NH to third party stakeholders and middle-class experts. These associations could reflect the general trends toward the professionalization and standardization of the non-profit sector. Specifically, the associations will also facilitate the DTES NH's goal of transitioning into a for-profit social enterprise. The transition into for-profit activities could also reflect broader changes, the limitations in the structure of the non-profit sector, and the heightened competition for decreasing funding that increases pressures to enter market relationships in order to garner sufficient resources to fulfill the mandate (Eikenberry and Kluver, 2004). While more lucrative than the traditional granting structure in its immediacy, a shift into the realm of "social enterprise" bears the risk of further de-emphasizing government responsibility in social provisions, thus potentially lending the DTES NH a neoliberal flavour.

1.2 The Neoliberal Context

Since the late 1970s, neoliberal political economic thinking and practices have taken hold all over the rapidly globalizing world, where we see similar trends in terms of the deregulation of economies, the privatization of an increasing number of social life arenas, and the retrenchment

of the state (Harvey, 2005: 3). Neoliberalism is not just evidenced in a set of policies; it is also increasingly becoming the lens through which we interpret the world. This hegemony is facilitated by the insertion of neoliberal proponents in all influential spheres of social life: in education, the media, corporate boardrooms, financial institutions, international organizations that govern global trade such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO), where the ethos of the market now dominate (ibid, 5). It would seem that few can escape neoliberal ideology. As I will explore briefly in this thesis, even the UN is increasingly sympathetic to the corporate sector, despite being the articulator and defender of human rights par excellence.

The main premise behind neoliberal ideology is that "human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within institutional frameworks characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (ibid, 2). As a world-view, neoliberalism can be characterized as an unwavering faith in "the virtues of the market economy and by extension a market-oriented society"(Coburn, 2000: 138). Underpinning neoliberal thinking are the following philosophical assumptions: 1) That markets ought to allocate the production and distribution of resources, as they are most efficient means to do so; 2) That societies are composed of autonomous individuals who are primarily motivated by economic and material goals; 3) That competition and the market are the major vehicle for innovation (ibid, 138). The market takes centre stage in a neoliberal climate and its deregulation, made possible by minimal state involvement, is believed to bring freedom and human dignity through a "trickle down effect," now favored over the state-driven redistribution of wealth and resources.

The characteristic of neoliberalism that may be most pertinent to this thesis is the view that the social provisions of the welfare state interfere with the functioning of the market, and that social inequalities are symptomatic of a well-functioning economy, since what one puts into the market one gets out (Coburn, 138). Thus, in the current political economic context, the multiple barriered and under/unemployed residents of the DTES are considered "unproductive," and are therefore disqualified from social rights, such as the human Right to Food, which the DTES NH wants secured for the materially poor in the DTES. The neoliberal line of thinking justifies the erosion of the welfare state, which was put in place to protect citizens from the instability of markets. The social logic of the welfare state has been reversed. Thus, "against a background of economic restructuring, globalization, and the overriding imperative of deficit reduction, the Canadian 'welfare state' is in retreat… fuelled by recent recessions, growing concerns about trade globalization, the restructuring of the labour market, and a focus on cuts to social spending to the problem of the deficit" (Evans & Wekerle, 1997: 3, in Elfenbein, 2008). The market has taken

centre stage since the 1980s, as governments have embraced (or faced pressures) to globalize their economies. The state, society and the economy are inextricably linked through neoliberal policies that have rapidly increased the marketization of every aspect of our social life, human services and social movements, as my research will help to elucidate (Eikenberry and Kluver, 2004).

1.3 Organization of the Thesis

Following this introductory chapter, in chapter two I discuss the various "contexts" pertinent to my case study of the DTES NH. I describe the DTES of Vancouver, paying close attention to some of the neoliberal policies that have affected the area and its residents. I then provide a brief history of the non-profit sector, and discuss the recent development of what has been conceptualized as a "non-profit industrial complex" (NPIC) in light of the retrenchment of government social provisions, and the penetration of private interests in public service provision as a result of neoliberal policies (Smith, 2007). I then narrow my focus and examine the emergency, or charitable, food system that has emerged and grown in tandem with neoliberal practices since the early 1980s. I follow this discussion by examining the types of alternative food initiatives that have arisen in light of critiques directed at non-profit charitable food services. Finally, I bring forth the theoretical considerations that arise from the literature, and that have informed and at times been challenged, other times been re-enforced, by my fieldwork processes. In chapter three, I present my case study, the DTES NH, by first providing a brief history of the settlement house movement and then by introducing the DTES NH history, philosophy and practices. I present a brief discussion of the UN conception of the human Right to Food, which informs the DTES NH's conception of food justice. I examine the degree to which the UN itself represents corporate interests and the neoliberal agenda. Finally, I present the research questions arising from my literature review, and from prior experiences in the field, that have guided my inquiry. I follow with a discussion of my methodological and analytical considerations, and provide a reflection on my own assumptions that underlined issues I faced during the research process and that permeate my data analysis.

In chapter four, I examine three tensions that emerged through my data analysis: the philosophy of the DTES NH versus its practices; the DTES NH food standards versus the food preferences of DTES residents; and the DTES NH direction of expansion in which lies a tension between its grassroots sensibilities versus its growth as a non-profit organization. In chapter five I discuss the implications of my research findings, paying close attention to the future growth of the DTES NH, particularly its large-scale project, the Kitchen Tables Project (KT), which aims to

reform the DTES food system and to move the DTES NH into the realm of "for profit" enterprise. Examining general patterns of non-profit "marketization," I situate the current and future changes of the DTES NH within the neoliberal political economic context, arguing that some aspects of the KT project reflect a neoliberal ethos. I then bring forward a fourth tension—social changes versus service delivery—which ultimately leads me to question the degree to which social movements occurring within the non-profit sector can be effective at fostering the radical social change necessary to topple systems of domination. In conclusion, I discuss solutions to the dilemmas faced by non-profit organizations, provide recommendation for the DTES NH that could also be helpful to other movement-oriented organizations, and also discuss the limitations of my own research.

Before delving into the substantive areas of my research, it is important for me to mention a dilemma that I faced in undertaking critical analysis of an organization that aims to challenge the poverty, and alleviate the pain, that so many people live with in the DTES of Vancouver. I am cognizant of the fact that the critiques I will make could be perceived as an attack directed at the DTES NH (and organizations like it), and used by conservative political interests to justify the continued decrease in support for non-profit organizations and social services. My intention with this research is not to facilitate such a process. It is my contention that in light of the government eschewing its responsibilities, the burden of care has fallen on organizations, and that these organizations offer the last vestige of support for the increasing number of people falling victim to a system that benefits fewer and fewer. Non-profit organizations are not the answer to poverty. However, until the state begins to take its social responsibilities seriously, and until there is radical social change to assure that this is done, non-profit organizations bear the burden of keeping many alive. When subsistence needs are fulfilled by organizations, life is extremely precarious, as these organizations do not have the capacity to assure even a basic standard of living. Currently, in BC the government continues to aggressively cut funding for human services, moving even further away from its responsibilities. Many organizations, including the DTES NH, do the best they can with very few resources. They deal with outside pressures creatively, yet they are increasingly forced to reconfigure their values and services to remain open for the people they care about. For those individuals working on the front lines of poverty and witnessing the most acute, violent expressions of systemic injustices, there is simply no choice but to remain open at all costs. The DTES NH attempts with integrity and creativity to deal with many of the structural challenges I explore. Most of the critiques I will make in subsequent pages are directed at governments rather than the DTES NH specifically, for

though my research and critiques are at the organizational level, my contention is that what I observe reflects broader policies that individuals within organizations cannot control.

2: BACKGROUND, LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BUILDING BLOCKS

2.1 The DTES: A Contested Space

The Downtown Eastside (DTES) of Vancouver is where my research takes place, and the DTES NH was born in part from, and thus reflects the effects of, broader policies that reverberate intensely in this area. The DTES is a contested space where policies and ideologies collide, tensions arise in competitions for dwindling resources, and middle-class and low-income interests clash in the midst of intensifying gentrifying forces, that reflect the prioritization of profit over social citizenship rights. This is the oldest neighbourhood in Vancouver and has historically been an ethnically diverse, low-income area in the city. The majority of the 16 000 declared individuals residing there are unemployed or under-employed. A high proportion of them are elders, and many live with chronic mental or physical health issues and disabilities. Life expectancy is so low in the DTES that one is considered a senior citizen at the age of 45 (Thomas, 2002 in Burk, 2003). The DTES continues to be characterized by diversity: a sizable proportion of residents are Aboriginal, Chinese, Vietnamese, and a number of residents are immigrants and refugees from the African and South American continents. A large proportion of residents have lived in the DTES all or most of their lives, as this neighbourhood has had the second lowest resident turnover in Vancouver (Duncan, 1992, in Burk, 2003). Part of the reason for long-term residence was that the DTES represented (and to some degree still represents) the last vestige of affordable housing in what has become one of the most expensive cities in the world (Baxter, 1997; Eby, 2007 in Schatz, 2010). However, this is changing, as the area has been swept up in a tide of "revitalization" and heightened profitability. As a result, rental prices are rising beyond the reach of many (ibid).

The boundaries of the DTES have continued to recede over much of its history, and there is a palpable threat of displacement in light of the rising property values in Vancouver coalescing with an intense push to "redevelop" the DTES. Historically, the area has been left to decay by the municipal and provincial governments, and the owners of the numerous cheap hotels and apartments that were a draw for low-income residents. The official and historical DTES boundaries include the areas of Gastown, Strathcona, Chinatown, the DTES-Oppenheimer, Hastings Corridor, Victory Square, Thornton Park and a large industrial area (City and CCAP

map of DTES), and represent an area measuring three kilometers east-west, and two kilometers north-south (VACU, 2002, in Burk, 2003). However, these boundaries are contested. Middle-class families and young professionals, many who vehemently deny that they live in the DTES, which they equate with poverty and stigma, for example, increasingly populate Gastown, Victory Square, and Strathcona. Many of the low-income residents that I engaged with view the DTES as representing only the DTES Oppenheimer area and Hastings Corridor, areas that are also now threatened by gentrifying forces. In fact, the municipal government has debated whether or not to keep the DTES on city maps (Smith, 1998: 502), and whether to rename the area Eastern Downtown. The displacement of low-income residents can be analyzed as being part of an historical continuum, when we take into account the fact that the DTES represents the third largest off-reserve First Nations population in Canada. Statistics are often conflicting when it comes to the scope of the First Nations population in the DTES. Estimates of the population that self-identifies as First Nations range from 10% of the DTES population (DTES Community Monitoring Report, 2006) to 40% of the DTES population (C. Benoit et al, 2003). Census statistics tend to represent only those with a fixed address. Therefore, the numbers are likely higher than more conservative estimates, as First Nations peoples (particularly women) are overrepresented amongst the homeless (Shatz, 2010: 10). It is also important to acknowledge and remember that the DTES lies on unceded Salish territory.
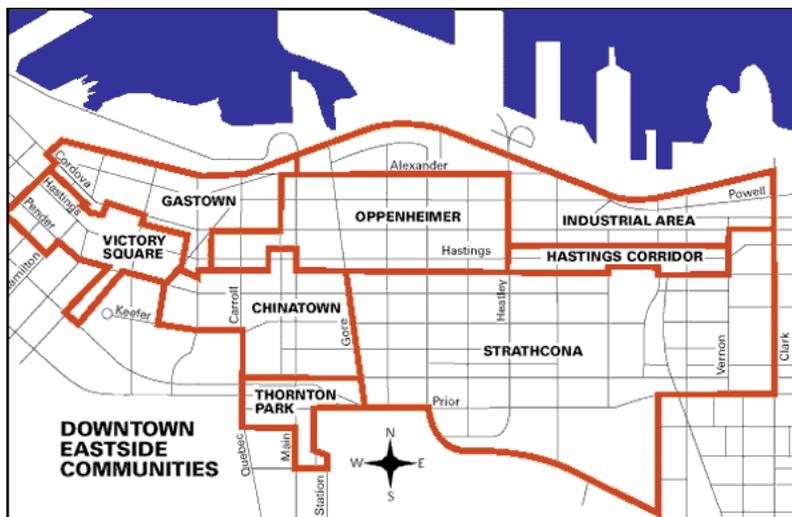
Figure 1 Map of Vancouver's DTES, City of Vancouver, 2009

Contributing to the push for gentrification is the construction of the DTES as a site of social problems, and therefore a stigmatized space. Since the mid-1990s, the DTES has become highly publicized in an ideological climate that increasingly criminalizes and individuates

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poverty. Culhane and Robertson (2005), examining the types of media portrayals of the DTES, state that often the focus is on "promulgating implicit and explicit messages to the effect that the homeless (people too poor to rent or purchase shelter), drug addicts (people whose lives are principally ordered by drug use), and survival sex workers (people who rely on exchanging sexual services for money for basic subsistence), are lazy, deviant, and individually to blame for the impoverished and often brutalizing conditions in which they live" (18). In Vancouver, the DTES is commonly referred to as "crack town" (*The Province*: July 23, 07), and sensationalized despite rapid gentrification as "the poorest postal code in Canada" (*the Globe and Mail*: Aug 15, 2008). Portions of it have simply been referred to in headline news as "Four Blocks of Hell" (*Vancouver Sun:* Dec 8, 2006). The DTES has become infamous for its highly visible open drug market, and has also become renowned as having one of the highest levels of HIV infection in the western world (Smith, 2002: 501). The media routinely churns out images of boarded up buildings lining the Hastings corridor, drug addicts in garbage filled alleys, and survival sex trade workers lining the streets: these types of images constitute our collective representation of the DTES and are effectively used as ideological devices by developers and their state-level supporters.

Gentrification initiatives are often framed by the discourse of "revitalization" or "community improvement," which capitalizes on representations of the DTES as the site of urban decay, and on the consequent "conflation of space and person within a stigmatized space" (Robertson, 2007: 528). Pro-gentrification interests use the concept of community as "a physical inventory of local heritage buildings, threatened by the inappropriate forms of property use by low-income residents, who appear not to value heritage as good (Blomley, 1998: 571)." The government is complicit in such efforts, as is evident in the 1995 "Housing Plan" that capped social housing (including single room occupancy hotels, or SROs) in the area at 10,000 units, and increased market housing from 2500 units to 4500, despite the fact that there has been a marked increase in the number of individuals who are in need of low-income housing (Smith, 2002: 504). The decrease in low-income housing has recently been exacerbated, as the municipal government has been engaged in crackdowns on SRO landlords. The "slumlords" are not the only ones penalized by the sudden interest in a long-time problem. Crackdowns have resulted in hotel closures and evictions, which, not coincidentally, facilitate speculation in a lagging real estate market, a move that prioritizes investors and developers rather than citizens (Blomley, 1998: 503). In terms of the DTES, what is seldom discussed explicitly is the extent to which the obvious issues in the DTES have structural causes--that these obvious symptoms of poverty are

exacerbated by neoliberal policies, particularly those linked to the retrenchment of the welfare state and the diminishment of government responsibilities.

The policy of de-institutionalization, for example, has occurred globally and has resulted in heightened rates of homelessness in municipalities around the world (See Wolch's study of homelessness in Los Angeles 1998; Joao Biehl's work on Brazil, 2005; Bourgois and Schonberg's work on San Francisco, 2009). In Vancouver, the policy resulted in the closure of much of Riverview Hospital, a psychiatric institution, in 1987. This closure forced hundreds of individuals with mental health issues to migrate to the DTES in order to access the low rents and the large number of non-profit service agencies there. Many of these vulnerable individuals have since become homeless and drug addicted, as the New Democratic Party's (NDP) promise of community mental health facilities (underpinning their rationale for Riverview's closure) was never fulfilled by subsequent governments. The DTES service agencies are not equipped to deal with social issues of this complexity, but unfortunately, in the current climate, the burden of care falls on community organizations and families, as the government eschews its social responsibilities (Biehl, 2005: 48).

Other policies related to the prevalent laissez-faire ideology also negatively impact the DTES: for example the scaling back of social assistance. Many DTES residents rely on government income assistance programs that have seen drastic cuts in recent years. Since 1997, there have been increased barriers in accessing Employment Insurance (E.I.), and for those accessing E.I. a shortened period of coverage means that resources are often exhausted before a recipient is able to find employment. This has devastating consequences, especially in light of the recession and dwindling number of meaningful jobs both nationally and provincially (*Tyee* Feb 2009). This issue is exacerbated by the fact that minimum wage in BC is the lowest in the country, $8 an hour, and that those receiving minimum wage are de facto under the poverty line (*Epoch Times,* May 2010). Furthermore, since the 1990s the government has added a number of barriers to accessing income assistance, including a two-year independence test, whereby applicants need to prove that for two consecutive years they earned at least $7000 annually; proof of a three-week work search prior to applying for assistance; a two-year time limit for most people; and a number of administrative barriers such as multiple meetings with ministry representatives, computer orientations, and weekly workshops during the assistance period (Raise the Rates: 2010). Assistance rates represent a fraction of the income necessary for survival in Vancouver. Since 2007 the welfare rate for a single person has been $610 a month in a city where the average bachelor apartment costs $722, and the minimum estimated cost of a nutritious diet is around $167 a month (ibid). Those "fortunate" enough to access income assistance are often

forced to find ways to supplement their income. Many turn to underground economies due to the clawback policy tacked to income assistance, whereby any additional income accrued (pension, inheritance, child support payments) is deducted from the welfare payment. It is no coincidence that the DTES has become a hub of black market activities. These activities attest to the resilience of many individuals who face precarious life conditions, but also to the inadequacy of the social safety net in BC.

Regional factors coalesce with ideology and policy in the DTES. Located in close proximity to the ports of Vancouver, which brought both illicit substances and seasonal labourers, the DTES has historically been a centre for both drugs and prostitution. These activities remained largely underground in the DTES, until the advent of crack in the 1980s resulted in an open sex trade, and more obvious street culture. As noted, this visibility provides images of urban decay used ideologically to support revitalization. Cuts in social funding contribute to the fact that there are few resources in place to deal with these issues. For example, in the DTES there are very few detox beds, and a three-month average wait list for treatment. Furthermore, there is little government support in place to provide services to deal with the underlying issues of drug abuse, such as the legacies of colonization—seldom mentioned---that affect up to 40% of those residing in the area. These issues are symptomatic of the mass cuts to social spending, also symptomatic of neoliberal policies, and of a neoliberal ethos whereby those "unproductive" in our market-driven society are viewed as undeserving of citizenship (civil and political) rights, as they are blamed for their downfall (Teeple, 15: 2005).

What might appear paradoxical in light of social spending cuts is that a high concentration of non-profit organizations is another notable characteristic of the DTES. Indeed, nearly 200 agencies operate within a 10-block radius, mediating the subsistence needs of thousands of residents. These agencies represent an economy in and of themselves. Their presence is also indicative of policy: with the government increasingly eschewing its social responsibilities a "third sector" has boomed in the post-industrial world, one that is becoming inextricably linked to the corporate sector, forming what some call the Non-Profit Industrial Complex (NPIC) (Rodriguez, 2007; Kivel, 2007; Smith, 2007). I will elaborate on the general characteristics of this non-profit structure in the next section. In terms of the DTES, one cannot minimize the role of these services in the daily lives of multiple barriered impoverished residents, nor the fact that the presence of services likely draws a considerable number of people to the area. However, the prevalence of these services raises the question of efficacy. How is it that so many services continue to operate with such seemingly minimal substantive impact on the live of the residents who use them? The role services play in the DTES is complex and could fuel an

academic career. For our purpose, suffice to say that many DTES residents form complex and nebulous relationships with services.

Many rely on organizations to survive. It is even conceivable that service organizations contribute to community formation in the DTES by virtue of the fact that they mediate so many aspects of daily life, such as food, shelter and social space. Some agencies perform a political function, as progressive services raise questions about the sustained poverty, and are involved in mobilization for causes that affect the DTES, particularly gentrification. The DTES has a long history of political activism, and this activism has tended to involve or even result in the formation of a number of organizations. For example, the Carnegie with its Community Action Project (and indirectly with its provision of space for community movement organizing); the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU), which successfully lobbied for Insite (the first safe injection site in North America—operated by the Portland Housing Society, a mega non-profit); the Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood Council, which aims to reduce the impacts of gentrification; and the Downtown Eastside Residents' Association (DERA), which lobbied for officially renaming 'skid row' to the DTES to relieve stigma. These are among what the DTES NH considers sister organizations.

Some of these activist-oriented organizations are, of course, to some degree imbedded in the same funding structure as other less overtly political services in the area. My research explores the tensions between grassroots sensibilities and funding pressures that intersect within an activist organization. Many residents I talked with expressed distrust of service agencies, including progressive activist-oriented agencies. Many referred to 'poverty pimping,' pointing to what some perceive as virtual service oligarchies thriving in the area. A few participants said that social service agencies are a means of keeping money in the hands of the middle-class. It is worth examining the political economy of the non-profit sector in light of this growing presence in our social landscape. While much of the historical information in the next section stems from studies of the American context, similar developments occurred in Canada, particularly since the 1980s. Similar patterns arise in light of the pressures exerted by the emphasis of trade globalization, and the consequent "continentalism" of economic structures, facilitated by global trade mechanisms like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Within countries Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) link the state, society and the economy by "encourag[ing] the drive to privatize, deregulate, and liberalize the economy, with large international corporate capital playing a key role in the private sector and in consolidating these relations (Grinspun and Kreklewich, 1994: 33)." In the following section, I will explore how corporate capital is increasingly playing a key role in the public sector as well.

2.2 The Non-Profit Sector: A Benevolent Industrial Complex?

Non-profit organizations have been a long time feature of North-American life, particularly in the US. As far back as the mid-1800s, Alexandre de Tocqueville commented on the tendency of Americans to form associations as a particular means of exercising citizenship when he wrote: "Americans of all ages, all conditions, and all dispositions constantly form associations…Wherever at the head of some new undertaking you see government in France, or a man of rank in England, in the United States you will be sure to find association" (Tocqueville 1945 II: 114 in Dobkin-Hall, 1999). Tocqueville was writing about associations of "a thousand…kinds, religious, moral, serious, futile, general or restricted, enormous or diminutive." Non-profits were not specifically included in his observations since this particular type of association only emerged in the 1960s (Dobkin-Hall, 1990: 153). Non-profits developed into a bona fide "sector" by the mid eighties, rising to prominence by engaging in starkly different partnerships with both the public and private sectors and redefining "citizenship. As we shall see, Tocqueville's observation not only captured a feature of North American social life, but can also be interpreted, as foreshadowing the dramatic role organizations of a specific type would play in North American life by the end of 20th century.

Prior to post WWII, private, voluntary organizations represented an ad hoc line of defense for those in need (Salomon, 22: 1993). These associations were independent from governments and stemmed entirely from private philanthropy. However, the pre-war Depression caused people to lose faith in the capacity of the private sector to mediate the ills of the economic market (ibid, 22). After the second world war, the New Deal provisions of the Keynesian state would herald the age of the public sector: a welfare state, social net, and tax programs were put into place to protect the weakest citizens, and to assure the protection of newly articulated social citizenship rights. While typically the "golden age" of government responsibility is understood as beginning in the post-war period, progress was slow, and the riots and social movements that broke out in the late 1960s expedited government involvement in social services provisions. In our context, the Canadian Assistance Plan (CAP), a comprehensive program whereby every 50 cents spent by a provincial government on these distinct public services would be matched by the federal government, was enacted in 1966. In 1976 Canada ratified the UN covenant of Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, which it would later contravene.

Non-profits also changed during the post-New Deal era. While conventional wisdom would have it that non-profits would be rendered redundant by a social safety net, Hall and

Salomon posit an inextricable link between the welfare state and a non-profit sector, as the number of tax-exempt non-profits surged at the same time as Keynesian policies were implemented. In the early 1960s, citizenship was being redefined as grassroots organizations also proliferated, representing a more active vehicle for participation in civil society than voting or paying taxes (Dobkin-Hall, 1999). Many of these organizations were subversive. Virtually all social movements, including the Civil Rights movement in the US, and the women's movement, can be linked to non-profit organizations (Salomon, 1993: 18). Paradoxically, these organizations were either directly or indirectly funded by the governments, signalling the formation of partnerships between the state and non-profits that would come to constitute a "third party government," as public authorities increasingly utilized private non-profits to enact policies (Ibid, 18). Many social movements, including the civil rights movement, were appropriated by non-profit organizations through which government monies were funnelled. Kivel (2007) maintains that by absorbing movements through a funding structure, governments facilitated the creation of "buffer zones" that could quell dissent and appropriate and control revolution. One of the key ways in which this would happen is by shifting the purpose of community organizers from social change to service delivery, by shifting activism into a career framework (Ibid, 136). It is no coincidence that the birth of the non-profit industrial complex coincides with the period of revolutionary strife in the 1960s. Kivel demonstrates how in the 1960s, for example, policy makers decided to fund some of the more moderate leadership in black communities. The intention was twofold: to encourage their co-operation and to provide minimal services that could lessen dissent (ibid, 136). This heralded an era where increasingly money would be funneled into non-radical groups, representing incentive, and thereby forestalling and co-opting dissent by directing it through more acceptable channels (ibid, 136). This process is particularly relevant to my own study, as the DTES NH aims to enact social change simultaneously with program delivery: indeed social change since the 1960s continues to be attempted through non-profit frameworks of service delivery.

By 1980, 40% of funds spent by federal and local governments in the United States were going toward service delivery, and specifically to what had emerged as a veritable sector---during the liberal era non-profits had become the dominant deliverer of human services. The adage "corporate giving is to philanthropy as advertising is to literature" (Dobkin-Hall, 154: 1990) illustrates the degree to which the private sector was still very much viewed with suspicion since the Depression. However, a series of policies enacted by a different type of government would soon signal another type of partnership—this time with the business community. The emergence of this type of partnership would herald the greater expansion of the non-profit sector, the

blurring of the lines between private and public sectors, and the radical redefinition of citizenship as a result. This process has resulted in what some call the Non-Profit Industrial Complex (NPIC): "the industrialized incorporation of pro-state liberal and progressive campaigns and movements into a spectrum of government-proctored non-profit organizations" (Rodriguez, 2007: 21). The NPIC, like the military industrial complex and the prison industrial complex, is characterized as a set of symbiotic relationships that connect "political and financial technologies of state and owning-class proctorship and surveillance over public political intercourse, including…progressive and leftist social movements" (ibid, 22). This funneling mechanism was further nurtured by policies that seemingly diverge from the welfare state and that allow pro-market elements to enter the public realm and civil society.

By the mid-1970s, governments were beginning to be viewed as inadequate and inefficient, in light of the recessions that were troubling the developed world, and the large, convoluted bureaucracies forming to manage the complexities of government. Dissatisfaction would culminate in the 1980s, with the election of neoliberal governments in the United States, Canada, and in England that would prioritize market competition, economic deregulation, minimal government involvement and a concomitant emphasis on the role of the private sector in the public arena (Hall, 154: 1990). However, it is worth noting that even left leaning governments adopted some of these changes. For example, the economic downturn in France forced president Francois Mitterrand to curtail his socialist policies. The "Reagan revolution" typifies these shifts. Enacting retrenchment of the social safety net, Reagan put pressure on non-profits to use resources more efficiently, to find new financial resources, and to turn to the communities in which they operated for support. At the same time, his political rhetoric celebrated volunteerism and corporate responsibility in the form of business dollars and expertise to help the non-profit sector deal with mass funding cuts (ibid, 154). Tax cuts encouraged corporations to make contributions and as a result a chance to better their images in order to best compete. These maneuvers signaled the beginning of "corporate responsibility," reminiscent of the pre-Depression era, but far more extensive then ever before, as it would come to be defined as corporate citizenship.

Neoliberal policies such as state retrenchment, privatization and contracting out have facilitated the continued institutionalization of the non-profit sector. The number of non-profits steadily increased in the 1980s as government funding was cut, and mounting poverty rates heightened the need for social services, which were increasingly dependent on the private sector. The emergency food system, which I will closely examine in the next section, illustrates this entrenchment. For example, Poppendiek (1997) shows that in New York City alone food banks

went from 30 in 1980 to 700 in 1989—a growing trend worldwide. Even socialist Sweden has begun to see its first food banks emerge in recent years (Riches, 2010 personal communication). The development of the Canadian Association of Food Banks, which forged a vast network of these types of organizations, facilitated by companies like Purolator and CN rail (privatized in 1995), also illustrates this shift (ibid).

What is now known as the non-profit sector relies on government, corporate and private funding. Resources have become increasingly scarce due to the coalescence of continued funding cuts and the expansion of non-profit agencies. As a result, organizations are met with increased pressure to compete, taking on characteristics of both government and corporate funders to better their chances of surviving. A silent relationship between private and public has taken on increasingly symbiotic dimensions, as the voluntary sector moves toward a more vigorous adoption of mechanisms that closely parallel the bureaucracy, the rigidity, and the depersonalization of government agencies in order to gain a competitive edge in getting funding (Wolch, 1990 in Curtis, 1997). This is attributed in part to the phenomenon of donor exhaustion **(**Tarasuk and Eakin, 2003**),** whereby the multiplication of charitable agencies has led to the multiplication of demands on the public, and consequently to the depletion of donated resources. Non-profit service organizations increasingly and ironically compete for scarce funding from the government, which has made the non-profit sector even more vulnerable to neo-liberal restructuring (Evans et al, 2005), therefore blurring the distinctions between the public and private sector (Wolch, 1990 in Curtis, 1997). It has been argued that this conflation has lead to the emergence of a shadow state, by which the non-profit sector increases the adoption of explicit and restrictive eligibility criteria that mirror those practiced by governments. These processes result in what Rodriguez (2007) calls the "Dynamic of Reduced Autonomy," whereby groups are forced to plan reactively in response to new policies and practices, rather then being able to proactively plan their own goals and objectives. Contracts and grants increasingly come with rigid quantitatively oriented frameworks for evaluating, monitoring and planning "outcomes" that organizations become bound to. Organizations that are unable to meet these demands will become increasingly marginalized and will not be able to access funding. Overall, the formation of the shadow state results in reduced service accessibility, which is devastating as a greater number of individuals are affected by poverty.

Of course, not all non-profit organizations are the same. Lipsy (1990) categorizes non-profit agencies into three types: Pre-New Deal foundations, which have large constituencies and are largely funded by independent wealth; agencies that started with the availability of government funds in mind, and which tend to most resemble government structure; and

grassroots "mom and pop" community organizations, which tend to be activist ventures, staffed by underpaid passionate people and volunteers, operating non-hierarchically on a shoestring budget (630). In the DTES there are a number of organizations that harbour grassroots activist sensibilities, and fight to maintain advocacy potential, including the DTES NH. These are the organizations most threatened by the current funding structures. Illustrating this particular dilemma of community organizations Lipsy states:

> "The most pronounced shifts and the greatest conflicts with government occur with those agencies that initially resemble government least…for all these agencies, however, some degree of change is virtually inevitable as government contracting increases…[creating] difficult organizational dilemmas for non-profit organizations. While contracts may allow an agency to expand services, pay their staff better salaries, and move into new service areas, contracts bring administrative and accountability demands that may conflict with an agency's mission" (620).

Since the 1960s, grassroots movements have been challenged to maintain their independence. Many have fallen prey to various forms of appropriation due to funding pressures, historically from the government and now increasingly from the corporate sector, as I have discussed. Government funding has gotten even scarcer in recent years, with the continued tax cuts favoured by the government. The increasingly rachitic social safety net has lead to a novel form of appropriation: what some call the "corporatization of the welfare state," whereby non-profits must rely almost completely on corporate resources to survive (Riches, 2010). Organizations are getting swept in a tide of "marketization," whereby non-profits are being radically altered structurally and in terms of the services they deliver (Hall, 1990; Salomon, 1993). At an interactive level, the penetration of market-type relationships into the social welfare arena leads to intense structural changes and threatens the advocacy potential of grassroots operations. Most symptomatic of this marketization is the transition of non-profits toward for-profit activities, in which agencies increasingly face pressure to engage for survival (Eikenberry and Kluver: 2005). Organizations face pressures to professionalize, in order to compete with other organizations to access funding. This leads to class divisions within organizations that must increasingly hire "knowledge workers," and business professionals, who engender management processes aligned with those of corporate funding bodies (Hall, 1990). Management processes tend to take precedence over organizing processes necessary to build social movements, which can have devastating effects on grassroots organizations in particular (Perez, 2007: 98). Preoccupation with the development of these bureaucratic processes leads to disconnection with the community social service workers emerge from (Kivel, 2007: 146).

Corporations now also affect non-profits structurally. For example, they visibly subsidize non-profits through grant competitions. Across the DTES there are banners in the windows of organizations that state: "Vote at Pepsi Refresh." While working in a non-profit in Vancouver, I applied for one of these Pepsi grants and was encouraged to advertise my application on Facebook, and to sign off with my Pepsi-link on professional and personal emails, in order to get all my friends and colleagues to vote as my proposed initiative competed with thousands of other proposals nationally. This type of initiative is taking corporate philanthropy to the next level, as non-profits are enlisted to advertise corporate brand names in hopes of getting funds. These initiatives make it strikingly obvious that the owning classes benefit directly from poverty, and thus have a stake in maintaining the status quo. There is also increased corporate representation on the boards of the most institutionalized non-profits. For example, those governing the Canadian Association of Food Banks consist entirely of executives from large-scale industrial food giants, such as Safeway and Loblaws (Riches, 2010). Finally, individual non-profits are pressured to adopt managerial structures that resemble those of corporations to better market themselves and compete for grants (Smith, 2007). The state also takes on corporate characteristics, no doubt because its priorities have shifted so radically to serve the interests of the business sector (Harvey, 2005). The prevalence of the neoliberal individualist ideology is reflected in recent changes to the government structures put in place to fund non-profits, which mirror those of corporations like Pepsi. In our local context, this is illustrated by the adoption of the BC bid, whereby non-profits must bid for contracts online, therefore directly competing with other organizations. The government justifies these measures by asserting that the reform will limit redundancy in services (Leba, Tanniar personal conversation). This is ironic, considering the fact that most organizations are operating past capacity, and cannot keep up with the needs of the communities that they serve.

The restructuring of the economy in light of globalization, the retrenchment of governments, and the scaling back of the welfare state has allowed poverty to increase in the post-industrial world. Deregulation and free trade have removed barriers that previously held the corporate sector accountable to local communities, such as the need for local investment and local employment, as well as employment equity policies (Menzies, 1996: 57). Thousands have seen their jobs slashed or diminished in light of the restructuring of labour characterized by increased computerization, the concomitant deskilling of labour, the flight from capital, out-sourcing and the shift from manufacturing based economies to service and information (ibid, 57). In the Canadian context of the early 1990s, part time positions increased by 39%, while full time positions declined by 40% in the newly dominating service sector, and we began to see increased

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rates of "work intensification" with no pay increase, and the dismantling of unions facilitated by a climate of heightened competition for increasingly scarce employment (ibid, 57). Individuals reduced to "working-poverty" or unemployment have been forced to rely on non-profits, in light of a lack of government social provisions. However, non-profits are also being re-structured, and even threatened, by lack of resources, increased competition for funds, and the pressures of increasingly relying on the corporate sector to survive, as I discussed. Those working at non-profit organizations are also facing an insecure labour market as they are increasingly hired on a contractual basis, and are pressured to professionalize and to fit the profile of "knowledge workers " adorned with the credentials our market-driven economy requires (James, 1996).

There is mounting criticism directed at this third sector, in light of the fact that the poverty it is meant to alleviate persists. I will explore some of these criticisms in the next section, in which I focus my attention on food related organizations. Since poverty is a complex issue, resource strapped non-profits must focus their attention on specific issues related to poverty, thereby potentially de-emphasizing the root causes of the particular issue they focus on, which results in the tendency to form niches. Andrea Smith aptly expresses the consequences of specialization characteristic of the NPIC (2007):

> "As we become more concerned with attracting funders than with organizing mass based movements, we start niche marketing the work of our organizations. Framing our organizations as working on a particular issue or a particular strategy, we lose perspective on the larger goals of our work. Thus niche marketing encourages us to build a fractured movement rather than mass-based movements for social change" (11).

In the DTES, we see a microcosm of this tendency to specialize through different agencies focusing on shelter, health care, drug abuse, education, gerontology issues, and particularly hunger. Hunger has emerged as a real problem since the 1980s, which coalesces with the recent "sexiness" of food as a preoccupation in North America by the middle-classes, and the fact that food is a tangible approach (less costly) than shelter and other subsistence needs. Food plays a central role in the vision and activism of the DTES NH, my case study, as well as in its plans for expansion as we shall see. By focusing on current hunger solutions that have emerged in near-tandem with neoliberalism, I will set the stage for a more focused micro- analysis of the DTES NH, an organization that is shifting from grassroots to non-profit status while aiming to foster social change.

2.3 From Hunger to Food Insecurity: Charitable Food and Emerging Alternatives

2.3.1 Charitable Food

Since the early 1980s, hunger has become a widespread issue in the post-industrial world as the gap between rich and poor widens. This issue is due in part to the neo-liberal policies I have outlined, such as state retrenchment, economic deregulation and the privatization of services (Harvey, 2005: 2). A specific type of non-profit organization has developed and become institutionalized to deal with the problems of hunger. These fall under the rubric of what some call the emergency food system (Riches, 1997), and what others call "the charity model of food delivery" (Poppendiek, 1997). Most of these organizations are private non-profits which rely on a combination of government, private and, increasingly, corporate resources, in order to meet the needs of their mounting client base. Like many non-profits, food delivery organizations can be characterized as being part of a system due to their current scope and increased institutionalization. Paradoxically, these organizations were originally conceived as temporary solutions to what was perceived as a short-term emergency, as was the case during the Depression when we first saw breadlines emerge (Curtis, 1997; Riches, 1997; Allen, 1999). However, since the 1980s hunger has in effect become a long-term problem and has continued to grow in tandem with charitable food organizations, which have never been more prevalent. Illustrating the temporariness with which charitable food solutions were conceived, the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society states in its mandate that: "The purpose of the GVFBS was to be a temporary social service provider; however, because the number of those suffering from hunger problems has continued to increase, the GVFBS has become one of the most important **non-government** funded food assistance providers in Canada" (emphasis in original, food bank web site www.foodbank.bc.ca: 2010). Nowadays across Canada and the US, welfare workers refer their clients to food banks and similar charitable organizations, a practice that signifies the degree to which they have become acceptable and entrenched in our social landscapes.

This "emergency food system," which might be more accurately conceived as a charitable apparatus, is now a veritable institution and consists of an entrenched network of programs that distribute either prepared meals or bagged groceries directly to people in need. For example, such programs include soup kitchens and bread/sandwich lines that deliver prepared meals consumed onsite or taken away, and food pantries that distribute groceries at no or low cost. Food banks, which are large-scale warehousing operations, receive donations from individuals and corporations and often supply a network of pantries and kitchens throughout one

particular municipality (Poppendick 1994). Food Runners and Food Rescuers transport food from donor to food bank, from food bank to agency or from donor directly to agency (ibid). Donors sometimes also supply any given agency directly (ibid). The charitable food system is a great example of the shifts occurring in the non-profit sector due to the fact that it was predominantly born out of neoliberalism. For example, it is predominantly a corporate system in light of the fact that corporate food giants are the biggest contributors of food-stuffs directly through representation of the boards of food banks and mass donations of non perishable goods, and, indirectly through the media support of canned-non perishable processed (and therefore corporate) food drives. Corporations govern (and in many ways benefit from) the networks in place to distribute food. For example, CN rail and Purolator move food from one end of the country to the other (Riches, 2010). In effect people who receive their meals from charitable food organizations are, for the most part, subsisting off of corporate waste. Of course, corporations are rewarded by tax write offs and free advertising for their contributions to the charitable food economy. The link between charitable organizations and the corporate elite raises questions about the degree to which the wealthy may benefit from raising rates of poverty and from the monopoly of charitable organizations as a response to hunger. Indeed with the mass entrenchment of food charities have emerged mounting critiques, critiques that can to a degree be directed at the non-profit sector as a whole.

Critics of the charitable food system question its political-economic underpinnings, its efficacy in terms of delivering basic nutrition, and its interpersonal and ideological implications. For example, critics maintain that the visibility of charities in both the media and the social landscape depoliticizes the issue of hunger (Delind, 1996) and that it allows the government to scale back the welfare state (Riches, 1997). It is also argued that the charitable food system fails to address the socio-structural underpinnings of poverty: the fact that the gap between rich and poor has continued to widen despite the development of these institutions, and that the number of food banks and related programs continuing to steadily increase *with* hunger is a testament of ineffectiveness (ibid). Further, it is argued that the increased visibility of these organizations contributes to the invisibility of chronic hunger in the collective consciousness, as an evident apparatus is in place to deal with the problem (Poppendiek, 1994; Tarasuk and Eakin, 2003; Delind, 1994). Some also question the contradiction of using the market economy for social development in light of the fact that it is those same market forces that are at the root of poverty (Delind, 1994; Riches, 1997).

In terms of the food delivered by the charitable system, critics point to its non-sustainability. Since food banks rely on private donations, largely from the corporate sector, the

delivery of food is predicated on a "supply based model" that reflects the donations available to a particular organization contingent on the whims of particular donors, rather than a "needs based model" which would reflect the needs and preferences of the community that it serves. In light of its inherent "donor driven" structure, the quality and quantity dimensions of food security are inconsistent (Tarasuk and Eakin, 2003; Dachner and Tarasuk, 2002; Poppendiek, 1994). Others (Davies, 2000; Graves and Riches, 2007) demonstrate the poor nutritional value of food being delivered in food agencies, which tends to be high in starch, and simple carbohydrates, and low in protein and vitamins, which can have devastating health impacts when one takes into account the fact that poverty underlies a number of severe health problems. These authors also point to the incompatibility between methods of food delivery and the lifestyles of many of those marginalized poor who utilize services, for example the lengthy line-ups, rationing mechanisms, and rigid scheduling that make the very basic nutrition offered by emergency food even more inaccessible. Critics also argue that the emergency food system reproduces class stereotypes and tends to perpetuate an individualizing, "blame the victim" approach (Curtis, 1997; Travers, 1996). These programs also often use spatial divisions between staff and clients; mechanisms to limit communication between clients; line-ups, which alienate individuals from one another and from those who can acquire food from mainstream channels; the limiting of choice and of self-service; and physical barriers to food, such as padlocked doors (Curtis, 1997). Most studies mention the degree to which clients find the emergency food system dehumanizing (see in particular Hobbs et al. 1993), with the notable exception of Glasser (1988) whose seminal ethnography of a soup kitchen suggests the potential of charitable agencies in fostering a sense of social acceptance and involvement in otherwise marginalized participants, indicating a potential positive function of the current emergency food apparatus.

2.3.2 Alternatives

Dissatisfaction with the increased role of the corporate sector in all aspects of public services has resulted in dissent globally, as evidenced by anti-globalization and anti-corporate movements, protests, films and publications, particularly rising in the post-industrial world where prolonged poverty is a newer phenomenon than elsewhere. This trend is particularly evident in the food domain. Industrial corporate food in general is met with increased scrutiny, and it is becoming common in North America to view our current food system as a "corporate food regime" that is unsustainable. Critiques have emerged due to the environmental and health impacts of industrial food, due to food-emergencies that were widespread and publicized as a result of mass industrial food processing, and also due to social/cultural impacts of the corporate

hegemony in food processing and distribution globally. These movements are diverse, globally manifesting, and fall under the heading of "Right to Food movements," "food justice," "food security," "food sovereignty" just to mention a few incarnation of this fragmented, generally ad hoc, expression of dissent. A common thread that links food movements, aside from a desire to transform or reform food systems, is a reformulation of the problem of hunger as food insecurity. Proponents maintain that hunger simplifies the issue as it encapsulates solely biophysical dimensions. On the other hand food insecurity entails physical, psychological, social and cultural dimensions.

The term " food security" often arises in relation to these movements, which is the principle that food that is nutritious, culturally sensitive, and accessible in socially acceptable ways ought to be a basic and enforceable right (Riches et al, 1997; Curtis, 1997; Dachner and Tarasuk, 2002; Stringer-Engler and Berenbaum, 2007). These measures are, of course, subjective, which is reflected by the fact that there is little consensus in how to secure the ideals of food security. Some proponents of food movements focus on the re-institution of a welfare state: they speak of rights, universal programs, protections, and a strong government role in their provision. Some just focus on food and the creation of programs that foster self-reliance in what they conceive of as communities. Some espouse anarchist principles informing punk praxis, choosing to reject both state and community approaches on ideological grounds, as both are believed to maintain the structures from which the corporate food regime was born of (Clark, 2005).

How food movement principles inform practices is another issue, one that my research will explore. The relationship between intentions and actions is certainly not clear-cut. Since many of the issues related to industrialized corporate food affect poor people most directly, many initiatives arise specifically for the poor and have emerged from critiques of the charitable food apparatus. The charitable food system, as I have discussed, is implicated in the corporate structure in several ways: born out of neoliberalism, which marketized human services, and supported through many types of corporate sponsorships. Therefore, the ideals and philosophies imbedded in the food movements are expressed in progressive initiatives that aim, to a lesser or greater degree, to supplant the charitable (and to some degree, at a broader level, the corporate) apparatus.

Initiatives stemming from food movements are difficult to define in a systematic way due to the fact that they manifest in a variety of practices that are not always congruent and also due to the fact that the momentum of such initiatives is relatively recent. Initiatives can be transformative or more middle ground. These approaches are not mutually exclusive and we can analyze them as part of a continuum of food security approaches (Slater, 2007), although in

reality the food movement seems far more ad hoc than this device would allow (Tarasuk, 2001), and, in reality the continuum should include all types of organizations. For in this economic climate, organizations that aim for social change are often implicated in the same funding structure as regular non-profits, as I have discussed. Further, those organizations that are self-reliant tend to adopt a paradigm of social enterprise, which implicates them in the market economy that is also part and parcel with the charitable economy as it underpins it. Thus, the boundaries between these different types of initiatives are not always clear when closely examined and, I will argue, the fact that most initiatives are either directly or indirectly linked to the market could indeed stymie the degree to which they can foster long-term food security.

Proponents of transformative responses tend to frame food insecurity as a problem affecting communities, not individuals, which has heralded a movement toward Community Food Security initiatives meant to replace the globalized, corporate food system through movements geared toward fulfilling the ideals of a local Community Food System (CFS). A CFS is conceptualized as a collaborative network that integrates sustainable food production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste management in order to enhance the environmental, economic and social health of a particular place. Such a system connects farmers, consumers and communities thereby creating a more locally based, self-reliant food economy (U of C: Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program, 2008). The ideal of the CFS is deployed in current programs such as community gardens, farmer's markets, food policy councils, and urban farms. These programs stress *self-reliance* over entitlement (framed here as mutually exclusive), localism, participation and self-determination predicated on the notion that food insecurity stems from the failures of a globalized, corporate food system and the market economy (Allen, 1999). However it is important to note that "self-reliance" can shift responsibilities to the poor who are expected, in this rhetoric, to overcome deficits of infrastructure and services themselves. This discourse shifts responsibility away from the market forces that determine the poor. Thus "self-reliance" reflects neoliberal ideologies rather then genuine structural change (Philips and Berner; 2005).

Alternatively, some advocates suggest adopting recommendations that seem to be indicative of a middle-ground approach, whereby the charitable food system is reformed, and a political and advocacy function is re-injected. An example is the building of coalitions between activists and charitable food providers, who become politicized as a result of this relationship that leads them to adopt measures to minimize the worst attributes of mainstream charitable food delivery. This is done, for example, by rejecting certain foods deemed most pernicious to those who use food delivery services, making explicit the importance of food security as an ultimate

goal (and educating various stake holders as to what this means), and transcending routines that mask, and even encourage, the perpetuation of food insecurity (Rock, 2004). A push toward more co-operative institutions (Poppendiek, 1994) is also characteristic of these types of recommendations, as made evident by programs that allegedly satisfy, if not all the dimensions of food security, more of them than the traditional charity model. In Canada, for example, there are currently over 2500 Community Kitchens, which are inspired by the Comedores Populares of South America (community cafeterias that aim to empower and nutritionally feed) that strive for participation, solidarity, dignity, and equity (Stringer and Barenbaum, 2007), while remaining more accessible than other initiatives such as community gardens (ibid), which are often and quite paradoxically gated: one such garden in the Downtown Eastside is a case in point.

The degree to which these types of initiatives challenge the status quo, let alone function better than traditional charitable approaches, is still very much unclear. Stringer-Engler and Berenbaum (2007) demonstrate that community kitchens foster dependence much like food banks, which is constructed as a negative attribute by researchers but not necessarily by those who participate in such programs. For example, some participants perceive these programs positively on several grounds (nutritional and/or interpersonal), despite the overarching critiques of the researchers (ibid; Tarasuk, 2001; Henrichs and Kremer, 2009). Therefore, while these programs do not achieve all the criteria of food security, they do fulfill a positive social and nutritional function in perceived contrast to food banks, according to participants (ibid). The satisfaction reported by community kitchen participants, despite the critiques of scholars aiming for the fulfillment of a food security ideals, indicates a potential differences in interpretation (and definitions), which my own data will shed light on. This potential clash in interpretation, which I will explore in my own context, likely has a class basis, exacerbated by the fact that the facilitators of programs geared at the poor, are increasingly professionals from the "knowledge-sector" and middle-class. Emphasizing class, Henrichs and Kremer (2009) describe the paternalistic dimensions of some "just initiatives" by demonstrating how notions of "community" and "equity," lauded by the middle-class developers of a community agriculture program targeting low-income people, became contested in terms of both the meaning and importance of these concepts in the lived reality of low-income participants. It is notable that both of these studies demonstrate that the "poor" participating in these programs are not the most marginalized.

Allen (1999) demonstrates how community food security alternatives, which are explicitly aimed at low-income people, tend to benefit the middle-classes who overwhelmingly participate in these programs, as well as the local food producers in the case of community farms. It is worth noting that terms like "poor" and "middle-class" can, in reality, encompass a broad

spectrum of different sectors. For example, in the DTES the "poor" include the working poor, who are employed and have relatively stable housing (subsidized or otherwise), and individuals who are in recovery or in supportive housing. There are those more marginalized within this category, such as those with mental health issues, drug issues, dual diagnosis issues, survival sex trade workers, the homeless and severely under housed (i.e. in sub-par single room occupancy hotels). Conversely, in my context the middle-class consists of service providers who may or may not reside in the neighbourhood and the majority of food security advocates. It is worth noting that the DTES NH explicitly aims to serve the community as a whole, yet makes a distinction between high functioning (the "stable" poor) and low-functioning (the more marginalized poor) individuals. Often the latter are underrepresented as participants in the programs.

Allen (1999) also problematizes alternative initiatives for a crucial contradiction: the fact that they not only stem from the same market forces that underpin poverty, much like their charitable counterpart, but that they also strive to participate in these markets, despite the fact that many food justice advocates blame the market economy for the poverty that underlies food insecurity. She also argues that food policy councils (which are currently operating in a number of Canadian cities such as Toronto, Kamloops and soon Vancouver and lauded as a victory by community food security advocates) often represent the voices of the loudest and most outspoken members of a particular, socially constructed, even imposed, community and are therefore not necessarily representative of the preferences and interests of the most food insecure (ibid). Plyushteva (2008) also demonstrates the ways in which the celebratory discourse of community that is central to community kitchens can indeed mask the structural causes of poverty. Furthermore, Allen argues that the foods produced by urban farms tend to be only nominally important nutritionally, and could therefore only be supplemental, and that most of the produce made available by urban farms and farmers markets takes for granted access to the means with which to prepare these foods. Tarasuk (2001) further argues that many alternative initiatives are inaccessible due to the financial barriers that remain unchallenged, and that like food banks and other charitable initiatives, current community development initiatives make food the focal point, thereby precluding an analysis of the social and economic forces underlying poverty. Furthermore, both Tarasuk and Travers demonstrate the propensity for food services (of all types) to impose a paternalistic and moralistic stance, especially in light of a favoured "public health" and skill building pedagogical frame that is increasingly being adopted to "educate" the poor about nutrition, thereby perpetuating an individualizing approach.

The notion that everybody can (or desires to) be self-reliant and to participate in programs that aim to foster contribution, self-determination and other similar values is a

"magician's illusion" (Allen, 1999). Moreover, the ideal of many food security initiatives is predicated on reification of social constructs, such as "the local" and "community," which tend to be mediated in the case of the former by global forces and for the latter by factors such as income, gender and race (ibid; Henrichs and Kremer). Allen demonstrates, for example, that localism is anything but liberating for the most marginal members of so-called communities, who tend to be silenced by the louder more authoritative voices of community organizers and advocates, and who often tend to be the most food insecure (for example women, children, immigrants, and the elderly and in my context, the mentally ill, and addicted homeless and under housed). Many of these critiques run parallel with those made at more mainstream charitable programs and warn of the potential dangers of uncritically replacing one set of assumptions with another.

Both transformative and middle ground approaches not only coexist with the charitable food system, but they also form structural relationships with it. On one hand, this type of hybridity could illustrate a trend toward coalition building and perhaps radicalization of the mainstream charitable food system as a result. On the other hand, this hybridity represents the limitations of food security initiatives. These relationships are certainly not black and white. For example, in the DTES, my research context, an urban farm is being developed which will provide a vehicle for participation and create a number of jobs within the community (in theory), but also provide produce to local soup kitchens, thereby in essence feeding the emergency food system (albeit with food that is more nutritionally sound). Moreover, until residents of the DTES have access to cooking facilities, which many do not, the food produced by this farm will have little direct impact on these people. None of the literature I have examined explores the dynamics of this apparent hybridity, perhaps due to the fact that many of these initiatives—and partnerships—are relatively recent. My research explores the dynamics of this hybridity and the extent to which it conditions (and circumscribes) programming insofar as the DTES NH competes for increasingly scarce funding with other types of non-profits. In effect, through its growth, it can be argued that the DTES NH increasingly resembles a non-profit organization, which directly implicates it in the Non-Profit Industrial Complex. Already I have observed increased rationing, more rigid scheduling, and added restrictions to access food that are reminiscent of more traditional food delivery programs. The DTES NH also reflects the continuum of food security initiatives insofar as it is hoping to move from a middle-ground initiative into a transformative model. If it is successful in reforming the food system in the DTES, which involves a transition into social enterprise, this would make the reformed food system self-reliant and independent from funding bodies, therefore disconnected from the NPIC.

3: CASE STUDY, RESEARCH DESIGN AND FIELDWORK PROCESSES

In the last chapter I provided discussions of the particular contexts my case study research is imbedded in: the DTES, the non-profit sector, the emergency food system and the food justice movements through which I articulate a political economic theory of food delivery initiatives. In this chapter I provide information about the DTES NH, my case study, and the settlement house movement it emerged from. I also provide a discussion of the UN conception of the Human Right to Food, which the DTES NH embraces philosophically and present my research questions and methodological orientation.

3.1 "Our Truth": The Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House

Neighbourhood Houses have been present in North America and England far longer then the Non-Profit Industrial Complex has. Their roots go back to the era of the settlement house movement that started in England in the mid 19th century and quickly spread to other parts of Europe and North America. This was a reformist movement that emerged to facilitate the transition of the vast numbers of people moving from rural areas into urban centres to find work. The main goal of the settlement movement was to foster cohesiveness between the poor and the rich, the rural and the urban increasingly coming into contact in cities. Settlement houses were typically built in city slums, in which university educated, middle-class and often religious people would live and work, providing services and education for poor people. These organizations were flexible in their programming, as the services offered depended on the particular needs of the residents of the particular neighbourhood in which the houses were "settled." Most settlement houses had a secular orientation. Some sought to convert target populations to Christianity. Settlement Workers in general articulated an allegiance to those neglected by society and had the goal of making their lives better. The ways in which these goals were articulated and, more importantly, enacted through sets of policies and programs, varies according to time and to place. However, it is important to consider the degree to which settlement houses represented a particular juncture, where the dominant classes intersected with the lower classes in societies stratified according to class and/or cultural identity.

The most famous settlement house, Hull House, was co-founded in 1889 by Jane Adams, during a time where increased and diverse immigrants from Europe were moving into the inner city of Chicago. Jane Adams became very influential in the field of social work, developing new social justice and reformist perspectives from her experiences at Hull House. Through Hull House, Jane Adams was also able to build relations and contribute to the work of the Chicago School Sociologists, many whose work in urban sociology used methodologies developed by Hull House. The movement has continued to thrive: today in 31 countries there are thousands of community-based organizations that follow the settlement house model. These organizations are diverse, even in the US and Canada: some have budgets of less than $20, 000, others of millions of dollars (Koerin, 2003). In Vancouver there is an association of 8 neighbourhood houses, which the DTES NH is no longer part of, that was founded in 1894. Even in Vancouver the diversity of these Neighbourhood Houses is remarkable[1].

Although Neighbourhood Houses have a longer history then the NPIC, they are neither invulnerable to policies that contributed to its development in the 1980s, nor are they separate from non-profits as they compete for the same funding. One could even argue that like most social movements in the post industrial context, the settlement movement has also been absorbed, although due to its reformist bent it was feasibly more likely to be aligned with state interests. The main funding for Neighbourhood Houses in Canada are municipal and provincial grants and the United Way Foundation, which was started in 1887 and has grown into the largest foundation in North America (though it operates worldwide) having accrued 4.2 billion dollars in contributions in 2007. The United Way has historically been the main funder for Neighbourhood Houses, along with many other community-based projects, but this funding has, along with state funding, become increasingly scarce in the last few decades (Koerin, 2003). As a result Neighbourhood Houses must rely on many different funders and private donors (ibid). This can result in unpredictability in terms of program delivery and staff longevity. These pressures can also result in further professionalization and hierarchy as "knowledge workers" are hired for

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[1] Neighbourhood Houses by design are meant to reflect the communities they are situated in. Because Vancouver is a diverse city (in terms of ethnicities) and a city of extremes (in terms of socio-economic statuses), the 8 NHs that are part of the association of NHs and the 7 that are independent are starkly different in terms of their size, their access to various forms of capital, the programs they deliver and the populations that they serve. For example the South Vancouver NH has a volunteer base of 300, whereas the DTES NH struggles to secure even 6 regular volunteers. The Kitsilano NH space consists of a large multi-leveled, multi-roomed building, whereas the Little Mountain NH is a tiny one-room storefront. While the Sasamat Outdoor centre NH provides camp-style outdoor activities in a wilderness setting, the Mount Pleasant NH focuses on activities for youth considered high-risk (among other activities). See the Greater Vancouver Association of Neighbourhood Houses Website for more information (http://www.anhgv.org/temp/index.html).

competitive grant writing and standardized outcome measuring to attract, and keep, funders. These trends are characteristic of pressures faced by most non-profits currently.

Indicative of the types of pressures Neighbourhood Houses face in this political economic climate, the DTES NH, which operated as a satellite of the more established Gordon Neighbourhood House, decided to become independent and registered as a non-profit in 2009, because of conflicts with the newly hired director of the Association of Neighbourhood Houses. The former aimed to impose a standardized business model to Neighbourhood House administration: including terminating the jobs of the 1.5 grassroots staff working there, advertising their jobs to the general public, and making these founding staff compete externally for their positions. The staff of the DTES NH deemed that these changes would threaten allegiance to the DTES low-income community by potentially fostering class conflict and encouraging the appropriation of the DTES NH, which would be detrimental to their members due to the rapid pace of gentrification in the neighbourhood. However, the DTES NH registered as a non-profit society in 2009. My research has led me to question this autonomy, if independence means becoming a registered non-profit, and if the structure of the non-profit sector is governed by corporate and state influences.

Interestingly at a time where it is getting ever more difficult for non-profits to survive, the DTES NH seems to be flourishing. The DTES NH was formed in 2004 by a steering committee of 20 DTES residents under the guidance of staff from Gordon Neighbourhood House. It operated from borrowed space in other organizations of the DTES until 2007, when it got its own 824 square foot storefront one the intersection of Hastings and Jackson Street. In the spring of 2010, coinciding with my fieldwork, the DTES NH moved to a new 10 000 square foot storefront one block east, at Princess and Hastings. They retained the smaller space as administrative offices for the staff and the executive director, whereas prior to the move administrative tasks were carried out in the same space as programs and also at the executive director's home office. Since its inception 6 years ago, the DTES NH has grown fiscally as well: in 2004 it operated on a $23, 000 budget, had only 1 part time staff member, and offered 2 or 3 programs in borrowed space; in 2007, it operated on a $30, 000 budget, had 2.5 staff member, and offered an average of 7 programs; in 2010, the DTES NH has grown to 4.5 staff, has moved into a larger space, has a budget of over $400, 000 (plus another $100, 000, for its large-scale initiative, the Kitchen Tables Project, which it co-leads with the Potluck café social enterprise), and offers about 15 programs.

Much of this growth can be attributed to the DTES NH's popularity with funders, and to the Executive Director (E.D) Joyce Rock's skill in getting funding through food related proposals at a particular time when food sustainability is growing ever more popular in Vancouver and

beyond. Rock is a particular asset to the organization, as she is both considered grassroots, due to her status as a long-term resident of the DTES, and as someone who has been on the receiving end of services; but she also has the cultural, and symbolic capital of a "knowledge worker" insofar as she is a highly educated and compelling wordsmith with a Doctorate in Philosophy. The visibility of the DTES NH has also grown through the creative efforts of staff: in the community through colorful and distinct signage and through partnerships with "sister organizations," particularly by taking on responsibilities in organizing the Annual Women's Memorial march, the Alley Health Fair, the Homeground Festival and through food outreach programs that are meant to be cheerful and engaging. Outside of the DTES, Rock makes presentations regularly at events: she has become a local authority on the Right to Food due to her presence on the Municipal Food Policy council, and through taking opportunities to publicize the work done at DTES NH by piggy-backing off the middle-class popularity of food sustainability and the numerous events throughout the city that are meant to promote these ideas, such as the Stone Soup Film Festival and the Food Justice Forum. Despite its innovativeness, the DTES NH has retained several aspects of the traditional settlement house, such as the commitment to community development and cohesiveness through programs that reflect the needs (or what are perceived as needs) of the community. An emphasis on reformism is also part of the Settlement House legacy. Partnerships with universities are also part of the DTES NH life: through student internships with both SFU and UBC and serving as a location for a large scale SSHRC funded research that involved multiple universities nationally, such as the Photo Voice Community Action Project, which showcases environmental inequity. These aspects of the DTES NH will be further discussed in chapter four.

Unlike typical settlement houses, which were middle-class operations through which outsiders entered disadvantage neighbourhoods, the DTES NH identifies itself as being of the community. The DTES NH defines itself as a grassroots organization that reflects the needs of the community, because it views itself as part and parcel with the community. In their biography, which is handed out at all public events, it states that: "The glory of our DTES NH is that we are it and it is us. This means that what we have created is a pocket of grassroots privilege in which our disadvantages recede to the background as simple facts, not testaments of our potential or harbingers of our futures. In this invested reality our disadvantages are no more determining than wallpaper." In its positioning as part of the DTES community and as a voice of the community, the DTES NH is an overtly political organization. For example, it is highly critical of the large number of religious organizations in the area; it is vocal against media presence; and it has made a staunch commitment to humanize the DTES, by providing a space in which residents can see

their full potential without barriers of discrimination. The DTES NH strives to fight stereotypes that are imposed on the DTES and to educate, to some extent, anyone that comes into contact with them of the structural and historical factors that determine the lives of their neighbours. For example, they regularly remind people of the colonization of First Nations peoples. Every flyer the DTES NH hands out states on the bottom that " the DTES NH acknowledges and honours the fact that [their] community lies within the traditional territory of the Coast Salish people." The DTES NH adopts multiples approaches such as promoting "environmental equity" and articulating a policy of bringing "creativity, fun and beauty" to the neighbourhood, through gardens, murals, the Splendor in the Night program, and other creative initiatives.

The DTES NH differentiates itself most from other organizations through its philosophies, which I will briefly highlight here to orient the reader before delving into the more pragmatic aspects of implementation in chapter four. The general DTES NH philosophy highlights secularism, self-government, "neighbourliness" (a key concept in the organizational narrative), inclusiveness and the celebration of the strength and gifts of DTES residents. This is done through promoting respect and nurturing trust and dignity; listening to people's needs and giving everybody the benefit of the doubt; having a zero tolerance policy on sexism, racism, and other forms of judgment; having a commitment to health and safety through the offering of healthy food and the promotion of safe practices; and being open to all through a policy of not barring individuals (DTES NH philosophy, 1). Another distinct aspect of the DTES NH is its food philosophy, which is becoming increasingly central to its programming and operations. The DTES NH food philosophy emerged because of what founding members understood as the widespread nutritional vulnerability of DTES residents, and a perceived need for "local seasonal produce, healthy sweets (bananas/dates/figs), dishes made without additives and refined sugars, gluten and wheat free foods, alternatives to dairy products – generally speaking fresh, identifiable foods." The DTES NH considers food to be a determinant of physical, mental and emotional health, and also considers food to be an important means of community building that can be offered in a way that restores dignity and deservedness to residents of the DTES. An emphasis on restoring "choice" is highlighted in their food philosophy. The DTES NH defines itself in many ways through its food philosophy, thereby aligning itself in opposition to the charitable model of food delivery, which they are very critical off. In promoting what it refers to as "a grassroots expression of the Right to Food philosophy," the DTES NH has adopted a middle ground, reformist, approach in that it educates donors and food recipients and purchases most of its own foodstuff for programs. But the DTES NH's ultimate goal is transformative, in that it hopes to see a radical change in the DTES food system and economy. The DTES NH has partnered with the

Potluck Café and the Sole Food Farms, both social enterprises in the DTES that aim to create jobs for local, multiple barriered residents.

3.2 A Word on the UN Right to Food Perspective:

Philosophically, the DTES NH is aligned with the Right to Food approach, particularly with Graham Riches' conception of it as he is cited as Rock's mentor (and a national treasure) and is consulted for the DTES NH's larger food reform projects. The Right to Food approach as articulated by Riches (whom I interviewed and whom I cite in my literature review) is derived from general comment 12 of the UN's Covenant of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, which is a long, complex discussion of the Human Right to Adequate Food. The Right to Food is conceptualized by the UN as an entitlement that is secured when "every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement. The *right to adequate food* shall therefore not be interpreted in a narrow or restrictive sense which equates it with a minimum package of calories, proteins and other specific nutrients." The Right to Food is not achieved through charity, as this is viewed as part of the problem rather than the solution (Riches, 1995). Adequacy, accessibility and acceptability are given lengthy discussion, but the essential normative points are that food ought to be of enough quantity and quality, easily available and in the reach of all, and that the foodstuff itself be culturally acceptable, and delivered in a dignified, socially acceptable manner. Notably, while the responsibility of multiple parties is articulated, the state has a legal obligation that is threefold: respect, protection and fulfillment of the right. The obligation to respect means that governments must not violate the Right to Food, for example by evicting people from their land or destroying crops. The obligation to protect means that governments must shelter their citizens against violations by other actors, for example by instituting regulations on food safety. The obligation to fulfill means that governments must first facilitate the Right to Food by providing and enabling an environment for people to feed themselves, for example by engaging in land reform and stimulating employment, but that the government must also act as a last resort in cases where people cannot feed themselves through viable social safety net programs (Riches, 1995). According to the UN, this obligation ought to be implemented through legislations and constitutions, the development and protection of sustainable food systems, and government regulations.

Canada has fulfilled its UN obligations at the international level, but at a local level, despite ratifying a number of conventions and drafting its *Action Plan for Food Security* (1998), our government has failed to protect the rights of the most vulnerable. If the government is not

fully fulfilling its obligations, what can be done? Pressure comes from below according to Riches, who highlights that in Canada "actions by civil society including charitable food banks, alternative community food projects, the development of local, provincial and national food security movements and food policy councils indicate increasing concern about the Right to Food (1995)." It is important to emphasize that the Right to Food is not considered an end in and of itself, as human rights are indivisible and interdependent. Rather it is one necessary right (a means) that must be secured in order to achieve the human right to an adequate standard of living (UN comment 12). When I interviewed Graham Riches, he stated that one crucial miscue of some people involved in the Right to Food movement is an over emphasis on food at the expense of the larger struggle against poverty and iniquity, and the re-institution of government responsibility. Although the DTES NH aligns itself with this definition, it will be worth exploring the means through which the DTES NH implements these ideals and the degree to which they can indeed foster the human Right to Food, particularly when we take into account the emphasis on state responsibility.

It is important to be critical of UN frameworks, particularly as the UN is increasingly shedding its "neutral" façade to serve global-capitalists forces (Teeple, 2005: 153). For example, in 1992 the UN dismantled its Centre on Transnational Corporations, which was implemented to help Third World countries monitor transnational activities (ibid, 153). In 1997, the UN/corporate sector partnership became obvious when newly elected secretary general, Kofi Annan, appeared at the World Economic Forum proclaiming the corporate sector as the dominant engine of growth (ibid, 154). In 1999 Annan would make the UN/ Corporate partnership official by introducing the Global Compact which aims to promote human rights, labour standards and environmental practices through corporate self regulation (ibid, 154). The UN proposed to help promote an environment that will foster global trade and open markets if the transnational corporate sector signed on to self regulate their conduct (ibid, 154). The UN invited some of the worst human rights violators, for example Shell Oil and Dow, to contribute to their centre for Global Sustainable Development, but revoked this proposal due to extensive NGO criticism (ibid, 155). However, UN agencies have since partnered through a number of initiatives with McDonalds, Nike and other questionable multinationals; and human rights abuses have yet to be significantly diminished (ibid). Annan has presented the Global Compact as a "global new deal, " however, whereas Keynesian provisions aimed to protect citizens from the market, the GC encourages market driven abuses by essentially giving multinationals a "friendly face" as it provides corporations a medium through which to appear socially responsible without the pressure of accountability (ibid, 154). Furthermore the question remains as to whether state intervention,

which the UN favours (on the surface), is the only option or if it is even a viable option, particularly as governments and the corporate sector become increasingly linked. As I discussed, the history of the problematic NPIC began during the golden age of the welfare state, which was conceivably a means through which radical movements were appropriated. I will concern myself with these macro questions in the concluding discussion of this thesis. I now narrow my focus and turn to my research questions.

3.3 Research Questions

I have always been angry at the world. As a teenager I expressed this anger "destructively" turning this indignation inward. Thanks in part to my class position, particularly the expectations framing my upbringing as a young woman of the "educated classes," I enrolled as a mature student in college and since my first sociology course in my first semester, taught by a Marxist, I never looked back. The Marxist tradition provided me with a language with which to articulate this anger—to direct this anger outwards. It is in this mode that I have more or less continued to operate in no matter what I am doing. It is these Marxist sensibilities that frame my current inquiry.

In chapter two I articulate a critical political economic theory of food delivery organizations. Ontologically, critical theory rests on the notion of historical realism; therefore that there is a comprehendible "reality," albeit socially constructed, that is shaped by social, political, economic, and cultural forces that is reified and crystallized into social structures. In the context of my research, the Non-Profit Industrial Complex (NPIC) is a product of political and economic forces and stems from specific policies that have historical roots. Through the lens of critical theory, then, we can understand how two seemingly opposite political ideologies, neoliberalism and progressive liberalism, can indeed be connected by historical social structures that benefit some over others. This is why, from my perspective, both market and state "initiatives" to combat poverty will only do so nominally as band-aid solutions, as these underlying structures remain in place.

Reified social structures are considered immutable and natural—as "truths"---even though they ought to, and hopefully can be, dismantled, or at the very least questioned. Ideally, social research can contribute to this dismantling by bringing attention to patterns that are taken for granted, in a way that illustrates our active role in reproducing oppressive social relations. In other words, by "making the general particular," through describing social dynamics we take for granted, in a way that hopefully also makes sense to those implicated. The researcher needs to be in some ways a fish out of water. However, distance does not mean removal, as the researcher is

never objective and is always implicated. I myself take for granted a particular perspective, critical theory, which I consider apt to articulate the "truth." I must, however, remain open to the fact that those I engage with might have competing ideas as to what their reality constitutes. In analyzing the social world, in packaging some aspect of it, it is important to do so in a way that does not silence those with whom (and in part for whom) we are engaging. Far too often abstract formulations of social patterns tend to emphasize broad social forces without making room for those who are implicated: those who reproduce structures, attempt to survive within them, and even to transform them.

An element missing from much of the literature I examined, both involving critiques of the charitable system and alternative initiatives, is the perspectives of those whose lives are most immediately impacted by the neo-liberal policies above theorized. In coming up with the research questions guiding my inquiry, I wanted not only to understand the impacts of policies on the DTES NH, but to gain insight into how different actors understand the changes occurring with the DTES NH. In order to "generalize" without being too general, and to illuminate "truths" without silencing with my own conception of the "truth" which is itself situated (as I will elaborate further in this chapter), I wanted to explore a variety of perspectives from actors implicated in the organizational structure in the hopes of unraveling common threads. Because of my primary commitment to those on the receiving end of services or programs, to those most dependent on organizations (although staff members depend on organizations for their livelihoods) by virtue of their more immediate vulnerability to the policies I discussed in prior sections, I wanted to understand most specifically how the materially poor understand and articulate the role of the DTES NH in their lives, how they understand food delivery and food justice, and most importantly whether the DTES NH philosophy is representative of the perspectives of those it is meant not only to serve but to reflect. I hoped to capture some of these dynamics—to create some sort of dialogue---through the following research questions and sub questions that guided my inquiry:

1. What is the philosophy of the DTES Neighbourhood House?
   a. How did this philosophy emerge?
   b. Has it evolved over time? How so and why?
2. How is the philosophy of the DTES Neighbourhood House implemented?
   a. What are the programs at the DTES NH?
   b. What are the methods used to train service providers and volunteers?
   c. What are the challenges facing the DTES NH, and how are they dealt with?
3. How do service providers experience the DTES Neighbourhood House?

a. What do they do? How do they go about doing their work? What do they see as being their role at the DTES NH?

b. What challenges do they face and how do they respond to them?

c. How do they regard those who use their services?

d. How do they define and interpret the successes and failures of the DTES NH?

4. How do service users experience the DTES Neighbourhood House?

a. Who are the service users at the neighbourhood house?

b. What does the DTES NH mean to them? Why, when and how do they use the DTES NH?

c. How do they regard the service providers at the DTES NH?

d. How do they define and interpret the success and failures of the DTES NH? What do they like and dislike about the DTES NH?

Question 1 allowed me to explore the assumptions upon which the DTES NH is built. Since the DTES NH distinguishes itself through its philosophy, I wanted to understand how its philosophy was developed and why: the logic and conditions of its emergence. Question 2 allowed me to explore the link between philosophy and practices, some of the factors that might mediate or even curtail the implementation of aspect of the philosophy. Questions 3 and 4 allowed me to get a sense of how different parties experience organizational life at the DTES NH. I am cognizant that the structure of these questions could force an artificial polarization between staff and program participants and that it might be assumed that I anticipated homogenous responses from each "faction." While certainly staff will perceive some aspects of the DTES NH differently from program participants (and vice versa) through the information they may or may not have access to, there was no cut and dry division. This division was for analytical purposes primarily. These questions necessitated the use of multiple qualitative methods to which I now turn.

3.4 Methodology: Research Methods and Natural History

In this section, I will discuss my methodology in two parts. Part one is a more traditional discussion of the research methods I adopted and a brief introduction to those who participated in this research. Part two is a more anecdotal "natural history" through which I reflexively present some of the difficulties I encountered in the field (Silverman and Marvasti, 2008). I believe a close examination of some of these struggles is important in light of the fact that I conducted research as a partial insider, by virtue of my relationships to an organization, the DTES NH, in

which I performed a variety of roles over a period of three years: volunteer, staff member, and volunteer/researcher. These roles mediated my interactions, as a middle-class white female, with a number of actors in this predominantly low-income, ethnically diverse neighbourhood, situated in one of the most expensive cities in the world, where some of the most abjectly poor people in the western world survive and are currently threatened by gentrifying forces. Nor were these roles ever clear-cut. Instead they often overlapped in both how I approached and viewed the field, and in how others in the field approached and viewed me. In presenting an honest discussion of my struggles in negotiating my multi-sited position in a field that I have viewed through different lenses and at different times, I hope to shed light on my particular biases and assumptions (which were constantly being renegotiated), and to inform readers as to how they might contribute to the particular story constructed through this particular research process. I also see in this disclosure potential for a methodological contribution: certainly the issues I faced as a researcher are not unique.

3.4.1 Research Methods and Modes of Analysis

I conducted my fieldwork using a combination of ethnographic methods that I will discuss in turn: participant observation, semi-structured interviews, document analysis and auto-ethnographic journaling. The latter allowed me to analyze where my own perspectives were coming from and to situate myself in various interactions in the field and in my data. I draw from this auto-ethnographic journal extensively in part 2, the "natural history" of my research process.

3.4.1.1 Participant Observation

For three months I spent four days a week at the DTES NH as a volunteer. I did not have trouble accessing the programming space as I had been frequenting the DTES NH since spring 2008 as a student-intern, fall 2008 as a student researcher and then in the fall as 2009 as a temporary staff member. However, much to my chagrin, the staff did not feel comfortable having me present during their weekly staff meetings at the newly separate administrative location up the street from the programming space. The E.D suggested that I question staff about the meetings each week, which I attempted to do with those I felt most comfortable with. However, for confidentiality reasons I decided that I could not include the things they said in my formal analysis. However, the fears, frustrations, ideas, excitements, hopes, and observations shared with me during post-staff meeting conversations (or inevitably overheard by me during observation within the space) certainly informed my line of inquiry in further "official" (on the record)

communications and contributed to my analysis. Certainly I was more likely to pick up on things that confirmed my own perspectives, despite my efforts to remain open to, and reflexive about, perspectives that might challenge and even disrupt my own understanding of this social "reality." Throughout my fieldwork, I attempted to keep this tendency in check by constantly questioning my choices of people to gravitate toward, and what I would consider data to include in my analysis.

I also had to be wary of how situations I engaged in as a volunteer might impact my independent (though independent does not mean neutral) research process. For example, at the request of Rock I would regularly facilitate the "Right to Food zine workshop" on Tuesdays, a type of arts and craft open focus group, during which I engaged people about their "Right to Food." This activity was difficult for me as a researcher, for as a facilitator I was obligated to engage with participants using the DTES NH concepts that thus framed my interactions with DTES residents. For example, I was told to engage people by asking them to write what food justice and injustice means to them, to share bad food-line experiences, and to create art that represents good healthy food. Part of my role was also to engage people in public education about their Right to Food. I felt this activity involved me too much directly in the DTES NH ideology, and as a result I did not recruit participants for my own study that way. However, indirectly the activity benefited my research as it produced a document that I could analyze: specifically a collection of recipes and food memories that reflect food preferences, which I could then contrast to the food that fits the DTES NH standards. I also helped with a new child drop-in program on Fridays, and spent most Wednesdays and Thursdays as a general volunteer, which allowed me to float around the space, conversing with people casually, or to do kitchen duties in the semi-detached kitchen space, allowing me to listen to and observe daily interactions in a less involved way than when I was actively facilitating a program.

3.4.1.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

I engaged 20 people in semi-structured interviews. These included all four staff members, the executive director, and one former staff member, two volunteers, and twelve individuals who have participated in the DTES NH programs. I had hoped to interview some of the board members, but was only able to speak to one representative, whom I chose not to provide details about for confidentiality reasons. In this instance, much like the instance described above regarding utilizing staff accounts of staff meetings, abiding to ethics had to be my priority, as I do not want to risk putting those who work in the organization in an uncomfortable or detrimental position vis-à-vis their peers and superiors. Both ethical consideration and lack of access to some

perspectives circumscribe my understanding of the DTES NH and, in this way, help dictate the particular picture that can be constructed by me.

I also spoke with Dr. Graham Riches, chair of the University of British Colombia Department of Social Work, and pioneer of the Right to Food philosophy, whose ideas I discussed earlier. Riches is consulted for some of the bigger DTES NH projects and, on the international level, by organizations like the United Nations as a Right to Food expert. I was very happy to have an opportunity to get his perspective in person, as he also figures prominently in my literature review. All but Rock and Dr. Riches have been assured confidentiality. It is interesting that in doing research with both these participants who have, in relative terms, more power then the researcher ("up researching"), as well as participants who in relative terms have less power than the researcher, the tendency is to assure (and sometimes impose) confidentiality for the latter.

Confidentiality concerns allow me to only provide brief demographic and personal details for each participant. In fact, my interviews seldom touched on their personal lives, save for the few who told me much of their personal histories, which I always kept off record—although the "off record/on record distinction" was moot in light of the time I had spent in the field. What I knew about certain participants impacted my analysis of data; for example, I was in a position to sense when a demeanor changed during an interview and to make inferences about why so and so's demeanor might have changed in this particular instance[2]. Because of my relatively long-term relationship to the Neighbourhood House, I knew quite a lot about many participants. This was a little bit problematic sometimes, as I may have selected participants that I believed would have perspectives aligned with my own. However, my impressions of people were often challenged throughout the research, and I also made conscious attempts to select people whom I did not know from the past.

In terms of staff and the one student volunteer I engaged with, I will not provide personal or professional details to go with each pseudonym (Anna, Carol, Tina, Leona, Sheila, and Jane who range between the mid-twenties to early 40's and who, with the exception of one, are all educated and middle-class). I interviewed everyone who works at the DTES NH, one past staff and one (a food activist) commencing work after my fieldwork. During my fieldwork 3 women were hired for, but left for various reasons, the position of Community Developer. Unfortunately,

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[2] I am in no way under the impression that the interview is ever "natural" for any one involved. Recently the tables were turned on me when a friend interviewed me for his PHD research. My hands began to shake uncontrollably as soon as he hit "play" on the digital recorder. This inability to control my body resulted in a pitcher of beer landing in my lap five minutes into the interview. The inferences my friend could make of this nervousness would likely be different if I had been selected randomly or through snowball sampling.

I was not able to interview these women. In terms of program participants, I interviewed the following individuals whose names I have changed: Bobby, a long-term resident of the DTES is in his mid-fifties who has been coming to the DTES NH for under one year; Lewis, a long term DTES resident is in his early forties who has been coming to the DTES NH for about four years; Lyle a DTES resident of two years in his late forties, who has been coming to the DTES NH for under one year; Cat, a DTES resident of over twenty years who is in her mid-forties, and has been coming to the DTES NH for four years; Kristine is in her mid-twenties, has been coming to the DTES NH for just a few months and has lived in the DTES for about two years; David is in his early thirties, has been coming to the DTES NH for a bit over a year and lives in the DTES where he was born and raised; Marie is in her mid-thirties, has been coming to the DTES NH for a bit over a year and has lived in the DTES for several years; Roger is in his mid forties, has been involved with the DTES NH for about 4 years and has lived in the DTES for most of his adult life; Lorenzo is in his forties, has been coming on and off for about four years and no longer lives in the DTES as of very recently; Frank is in mid-sixties, has been coming to the DTES NH for about two years and has lived in the DTES for about thirty years; and Carla is in her mid twenties, has just started coming to the DTES NH and does not live in the DTES.

The majority of the DTES NH program participants I interviewed live in single room occupancy hotels (SROs), or in subsidized housing in the DTES. All are on some form of income assistance, mostly disability, for either physical or mental health issues. My sample represents a degree of diversity, as my intention was to generate a variety of perspectives about an environment shared by different types of individuals. However, the participants in this research do not represent the most marginalized in the DTES, as the more marginalized people tend not to be present at the DTES NH, for reasons that I will elaborate on in chapter four. I can say with confidence that all those participants in my research who use services at the DTES NH struggle with poverty and related issues to some degree.

The choice of descriptors that I have used in introducing (for ethical reasons rather vaguely) the participants in my research is somewhat arbitrary. Gender and approximate age were easy inferences for me to make if these details were not offered to me in dialogue. I could have included occupation and race/ethnicity but I was concerned that these details could betray confidentiality. The question of sexuality could have come up, but hardly ever did. Perhaps part of it lies in my discomfort at breeching the subject or recording an inference relating to orientation. It is important to note that most of my interviews did not even start with an exchange on demographic information. While I was taught in undergraduate methods courses that these types of questions are good ice breakers, I felt that since my interviews occurred with people after

far more informal chats at the DTES NH, these types of questions would add a degree of formality that I was not comfortable with, and that I felt participants would not be comfortable with either. However, I did question everyone about the length of time spent in the DTES and time spent as a participant at the DTES NH, and included these details, as they are pertinent to my study of the DTES NH. Perhaps I concerned myself too much with the present when I was interviewing, with keeping the process comfortable. I should have maybe thought about the question of representation a little more thoroughly, for I can understand that choosing to include one set of indicators over another, more or less details, in a final write up will influence how those reading the final write up will interpret what is said, leading my voice to ring more authoritatively.

3.4.1.3 Document Analysis

In order to contextualize my interviews and observations, and to understand the premises and rationale for programming and other occurrences in the field, I analyzed a number of the DTES NH textual sources including the Neighbourhood House biography (a long-form version of its philosophy and vision which is given to potential funders and handed out at functions where the DTES NH is represented, generally outside of the DTES); the short simplified version of the DTES NH philosophy, which is intended for community members and is displayed on the walls of the programming space, posted in the washroom of the programming space, and taken down to be read with a member in the incidence of bad behaviour. I also analyzed documents related to the largest project in the DTES NH history and bedrock of its expansion: the DTES Kitchen Tables' project, which include a 60 page "community action" report draft, a website, and a number of simple handouts meant to be circulated. Finally, I examined the DTES NH website/blog.

3.4.2 Natural History

My fieldwork can be characterized as an ongoing process rife with tensions and struggles related to interactions in the field, negotiating my identity in the field, particularly in light of the multiple roles I have juggled, and navigating others' perception of me, and vice versa.

3.4.2.1 Rapport and Power in the Field:

Recruiting participants among "service users" for my interviews was often an intuitive process that was not always cut and dried. Many participants I had gotten to know and built

rapport with through my interactions on site as a volunteer and then as a staff member—although it is worth noting that quite a few of these individuals had never identified me as a staff. At first I was most comfortable approaching people I was familiar with. However, this strategy sometimes backfired: I experienced several instances where I approached somebody I felt comfortable with about doing an interview only to watch the warmth drain out of their faces and their body language completely close, as in this example from my field notes:

> I saw J for the first time in months and pounced on him for an interview. Totally tactless in my ambush technique: he completely shut down all life fading from his eyes upon realizing that I am perhaps nothing but an opportunist underneath it all.

This particular program participant was someone with whom I had shared a good rapport and many conversations three months prior, as a staff member. We shared a cultural background and he often brought me books and records. It is likely he felt taken advantage of after not seeing me for three months and being met with an immediate request for such a favour. This is a community where people are often taken advantage of and disappointed by researchers who mine them for data and then leave, students who come in to volunteer primarily to better their CVs and never come back once their goal is fulfilled, and by politicians who make lofty promises and never deliver. For example, research participants often mentioned the Woodward's building as one such disappointment. My initial lack of sensitivity likely stems from my own lack of personal experience with repeated disappointments and instances of being taken advantage of due to my class position. I entered the field not thinking deeply enough about what I might represent categorically to others. There were several other such incidents where I was shot down, possibly for displaying much zeal, which may have been perceived as opportunism. This resulted in a period during which I felt afraid to approach people, leading to the opposite problem exacerbated by the fact that many regulars were not coming back as frequently to the "new" Neighbourhood House.

Time was another issue that impacted my rapport with people in the field. Because of the relatively small window I had in which to recruit and engage with individuals (a timeframe dictated by requirements defined by the University, and also by my lack of funding), I found it difficult to avoid sometimes falling into the mentality of viewing participants in quantitative terms. For example, during a slow recruitment period, on a daily basis I would think, "okay, ten down, ten more to go." Such thinking made me uncomfortable, as I did not want to treat my research process as purely a data mining exercise, and those participating in my research as data to be mined. Time constraints also impacted my research in terms of interviewing people out of

convenience, for example, in interviewing under haphazard and rushed circumstances that limited my ability to give the process sufficient thought.

I was also, for a time, reluctant to engage with new members of the DTES NH, because on several occasions I am convinced that I scared people off. For example, two women, who were new to the DTES NH and with whom I shared some very nice and even intimate conversation, seemed very excited to participate in my research, but never returned to the space after I approached them. Both stood me up for our scheduled interviews and avoided me on the street from then on. I felt very awkward and aware of a power imbalance between myself and one of the women when I ran into her on Commercial Drive and she proceeded to make apologies to me with a similar tone and demeanor to the one I adopted at the age of 16 when, as a high school drop out, I ran into my guidance counselor on the street. I realize now that in some interactions I must have come across as an authority with all the negative connotations authorities can carry for those acutely aware of the propensity toward abuses of power.

Power imbalances became very clear to me in other instances. For example, when somebody I had known a long time and shared a strong rapport with approached me to do an interview, as I was speaking about my research to somebody else, and quickly and agilely asked me about an honorarium. This was a strange situation that illustrated the degree to which the DTES is a research economy, a point that was further amplified when this participant told me she had been an informant in a research project undertaken by one of my own research advisors. My interactions with this participant caused me to question quite a few things about the process of doing research in the DTES and of managing identity while doing so, such as in the following example from my field notes:

> The layers get more and more complex: the "professional interviewee" I talked about yesterday came by today specifically to ask me if we could do the interview now (she did not say she needed the money, but I could tell this was why she wanted to do so). I had learned from x who told me with a raised eyebrow that she had also come by the day before asking for me specifically. I felt really weird because roles seemed to be conflating and I came face to face with the idea of power. I have the power to schedule the interview whenever is convenient for me. Yesterday I felt she has the power to get something out of me, and to give me a particular story that I need to fulfill my research, but today I really realize (beyond the theoretical) that she needs to sell me her story as part of her own survival. Even weirder and more ethically bizarre (I will need time to reflect on this) is that she asked me if I know Leslie Robertson and proceeded to tell me that she (and Dara, my second advisor) have published her story in which she is a pseudonym, but that she disclosed to me. I have her story at home and will re-read it; therefore accessing info about her that I maybe should not have. I told her that I am out of town until next week trying hard not to make false promises (hard to do, I felt awkward and conflicted). She walked off and I

wondered if I should have given her the money ahead of time, but decided this could open up a Pandora's box of difficulties for me in the future. I need to set boundaries now: not sure if I learned this advice in class, or working at the DTES NH.

This was the first person I interviewed, an experience that stayed with me long after the interview ended, and that left me very uncomfortable. I am still trying to understand this discomfort, even as I continue to work on this section months later. My discomfort in part stemmed from my lack of experience and her complete professionalism during the interview, professionalism I would not have perceived (or fixated on) had I not been privy to some of her research history. Why would her professionalism make me uncomfortable? Was I haunted by the ingrained assumption (expectations) of researcher as an in-control, neutral expert? Perhaps, I was on some level. There would be many instances where I did not feel in control, and none that stood out quite so much as this one.

I think what also made me uncomfortable is a lurking assumption that "professionalism" is somehow less honest, less sincere, and that somehow this participant giving me what she thought I wanted would skew my data. I was uncomfortable with these feelings because I knew this is a problematic way of viewing the interaction, but I couldn't help feeling this way. It is interesting that this would get under my skin, considering the fact that I too am following a professional script in the field, but what I could not admit to myself is that I too was doing this research in part also to gain material benefits. Does that make my interest in the research any less honest? Only now do I see the double standard implicit in my discomfort. Despite my attempts to distance myself from objectivist paradigms, on some level I couldn't escape the epistemological position that social research (and the researcher as a result) is somehow removed from the social (market mediated) relations I am examining. As much as I knew that, on some level, this is not the case, that researchers are implicated social agents, that we even perpetuate oppression in our relationships with communities, in the dissemination of certain discourses, in the assumptions that we carry in everything we do, I think there was here a disconnect between my own philosophical ideals and everyday practices. Reconciling that disconnect is easier said than done.

My discomfort also stemmed from my concrete awareness of her poverty, as it unavoidably permeated and mediated our interactions, which directly involved me, whereas before I had the privilege to witness it from afar. But this realization truly only hit me when the quantitative worth of the interview led me into negotiations that were messy, due to my lack of experience and refusal to consider this aspect—the fiscal dimensions—of research beforehand. Why does money make me uncomfortable? Is it because I am privileged enough not to have to

really discuss "such matters," because in fact, for those who are privileged like I am, discussing finances is considered rude? We had hardly discussed an honorarium but I had quickly and painlessly named a figure, which she had agreed to prior to meeting to do the interview. When we met on the day of the interview I offered to go to a café and have a meal (I bought a meal for most of the DTES residents I engaged with in addition to an honorarium). She asked me to do the interview in a park and for me to give her the meal money instead. That request galvanized my discomfort. But how could I not see my own contradiction: I am critical of solutions to poverty that mediate access to resources, and am in favour of solutions that provide money to be used on one's own terms. Yet I myself was sugarcoating somebody else's poverty by offering a meal (which would make me feel like we were in a more equal relationship, I believe), rather than a cash amount. When we finished the interview in the park she complimented me on the questions, and I felt bad because part of me regarded the compliment in the same vein as when a sex worker might compliment a client she cares nothing about as part of the service. Obviously my own issues were being brought into the research process. I have no choice but to write these issues into my data explicitly, as they are implicitly part of the picture.

I am not convinced I ever really did find a balance or that balance is even possible. In the field, power is negotiated through discussions of honorarium, through setting (for example, the restaurant interview that left me feeling like I had just been on an awkward date), and through conversational style. A good example of the latter is the interviews where questions were redirected to me, where I ended up being the interviewee and had great difficultly regaining "control." Another example of power shifting through conversation would be how at the DTES NH I was occasionally the butt of jokes; once when I was struggling with a manual task, a program participant said to me: "How many MA students does it take to screw in a light bulb?"

3.4.3 Identity in the Field

Throughout my fieldwork my struggle with my own self-consciousness was never truly alleviated. My emotions in the field manifested as a continual ping ponging between second-guessing and acceptance, comfort and discomfort akin to what Coffey conceptualizes as the negotiation and cultivation of ethnographic selves (1999). This process of negotiating feelings and identity was emotionally difficult for me, which surprised me at first. No matter how many progressive-methods classes one takes, no matter how much, intellectually speaking, one understands that fieldwork is an embodied process, it seems the notion of the strong, rational, intellectually removed researcher still prevailed in the field or at least it did for me. The inevitable emotion-work of fieldwork was a daunting process most of the time.

I felt fragmented not just in terms of my mind and body being split, but in terms of my identities. Impression management went beyond downplaying my relative wealth through clothing choices and consciousness of vocal inflections. For a long time I felt like I needed to juggle roles: I was at times ex-staff, a volunteer, and now a researcher and the lines between these identities often blurred in both my own mind and in interactions, which made for some uncomfortable and confusing situations. Sometimes the lines were blurred in the way others treated me. For example, when I started interviewing people who had known me in my capacity as a DTES NH employee, I found that some did not really understand that I was conducting independent research, and that I was no longer staff. Sometimes in interviews, participants answered my questions with praise for the DTES NH and staff with comments such as "You guys are doing great!" or "Keep up the good work!" Conversely, some participants seemed to regard me with suspicion during the interviews, questioning me about my relation to staff and to the organization. I addressed this problem by really asserting my independence at the beginning of the interviews, by interviewing individuals who did not necessarily identify me as staff, and by asking questions that were less directly related to the DTES NH.

An ongoing issue I had in my interactions with people was that I often felt like an impostor—I never felt quite like a researcher, but I also never quite felt like a non-researcher. Yet I couldn't escape from a researcher/non-researcher dichotomy. I felt I was always shifting and losing my conception of self in these rapid shifts. I was never quite sure of the tone to take in neither my interactions nor the extent of my disclosures. Was this because I really wanted specific answers that risked disrupting my own pre-conceived notions, my initial theory? Perhaps, I did on some level. Obviously, there is fear at the possibility that one's entire research framework will come undone in the field, and this is a frightening idea to the inexperienced and time-constrained researcher. However, I strove to remain open to participants changing my perspective and broadening my scope. One must also remember that the bulk of my burgeoning theoretical understanding of processes occurring at the DTES NH stemmed from prior experiences and interactions with people there. These contributed to, and oriented, my understandings.

My discomfort had in large part to do with my lack of self-confidence and uncertainty as a researcher. Certainly, I do approach the world as a practical sociologist, but this manifests as intellectualizing everything that happens to me, which is distancing. Further, I learned in my two years of training as a grad student that the "academic research" role is one that encompasses a multitude of considerations (ethical, practical, etc.) that do not come naturally to me, as well as epistemological and ontological questions (the post-modern questioning of everything, of every choice) that I found quite paralyzing throughout this first attempt at practicing what I thought I

understood academically. In the field I was unsure, and old modus operandi surfaced. In conducting my interviews, at least with some participants, rather than paying attention to setting, to language (both verbal and non-verbal), to the interactive elements we shared, I was pre-occupied by an uncomfortable tendency to adopt a "neutral" tone, reasoning with myself that if I disclosed my more critical bent I may sway participants too much or make them defensive or uncomfortable. But this stance made me feel hypocritical, dishonest, and made the interview process emotionally exhausting for me. In fact, for the most part I dreaded interviews. At first, and repeatedly, I wrote in my field notes about the sense of relief I felt when a participant did not show up—which was a fairly regular occurrence. As I got more comfortable with the interview process, I felt, at least with some participants, that I could partially disclose some of my own perspectives, which I generalized by leading the conversation toward the non-profit sector and its role in the DTES, something many of research participants were vocal about. I found that this type of disclosure allowed for more natural exchanges, and I felt more comfortable being honest, though certainly such honesty could have facilitated an exchange that would be more likely to support my own perspective.

The most uncomfortable aspect of my fieldwork, at the crux of my "impostor syndrome," and persisting today, was the fear that I was making a big mistake. I felt duplicitous, because I knew that at least some of what I would write would be critical, and I felt (and still feel) like I was selling people out. I care about the people I have worked with at the DTES NH and consider a few of them mentors. As a volunteer, I enjoyed my time at the DTES NH more than nearly anything else in which I've been involved. I have shared authentically intimate moments with some of the people who were willing to help me with this research. During my entire research process, I questioned what I was doing, and if I was horribly misled. At times, I questioned (and still question) not only my interpretations, but also the usefulness of this work for the organization, the benefits of this work to low-income residents, how my research could potentially be used against them and my motivations. I wondered (and wonder still) if I should focus on some other organization: one that I don't like so much, one that is exploitative in far more obvious or careless ways. There are plenty to choose from in Vancouver.

3.4.4 Perceiving Perception and the Conflation of Roles

"How many masks can I wear without my face starting to stretch (Behar, 2003: 244)?"

I tried to be cognizant of how others might perceive me, and the effects of these perceptions (and my perceptions of them) on the interactions in which I partook. There were times that staff and volunteers, at least those whom I had worked with, still treated me as (and likely perceived me as) an employee. Volunteers would expect me to delegate to them and ask me for help doing tasks, or permission to go on breaks. I found that the amount of responsibility I was given often made it hard for me to fulfill my research responsibilities, as I was just too involved in organizational activities to take a step back. Furthermore, the staff I had known as an employee sometimes forgot that I was no longer a colleague. I was as a result reprimanded for things that I was not required to do as a volunteer:

> The Roving Community Kitchen (RCK) left a bitter taste in my mouth for other reasons: namely the way in which I was treated like an employee. Tina informed me by email that she hoped I hadn't forgotten about the RCK (as though we had discussed it, which we hadn't) and warned that I better have a volunteer (even though I am one myself). Of course I only read this email the morning of the RCK—so I did not have anyone to go with me. When I arrived at the DTES NH nothing was ready and I was treated and reprimanded as though I hadn't done my job!

Incidents like this one, in which I was treated like a bad employee, embittered me, although I continually attempted to externalize my feelings by trying to analyze why such incidents occurred. I would reason to myself that the DTES NH was currently undergoing major transitions, which made it hard for time-starved staff to demonstrate the amount of tact I am accustomed to in the more privileged and leisurely world of a graduate student.

At times, even I would forget that I was no longer staff. And while it was sometimes difficult for me not to step into the public educator mode that had been expected of me months prior, I tried to remain cognizant of my role in field dynamics, and was sometimes concerned as a result with the degree to which I should interfere as a researcher. The following incident described in my field notes (with the names blocked out to assure confidentiality) captures the tension and awkwardness I sometimes felt when faced with specific dilemmas:

> Today x was telling me that they had to call the cops on y yesterday and that if he comes back to the DTES NH we need to ask him to leave. Sure enough he did come back and I felt like hiding in the washroom because of the fact that I

interviewed him and that this makes it hard and confusing to go from research relations to DTES NH staff/service user relations of power. In the end I had to step in for x's safety. I tried to navigate the situation in a neutral easygoing manner, and y asked to speak to me personally and started begging and pleading with me: he was completely chaotic, inebriated, aware that he has fucked up, yet unable to figure out a way to get out of it. I was literally watching a man on a downward spiral and there was nothing that I could do. This was very difficult for me, because of the fact that I was at his house mere weeks ago interviewing him and his girlfriend, eating the cake she had baked and playing with their baby. This conflation of roles put me in a very weird position. I decided in this instance to be a staff/volunteer. To interfere. Nothing is black and white and y is now barred. He is the second barred person that I know of.

For reasons of safety, this particular situation forced me to act primarily as a volunteer. But often it was not as clear to me which hat to wear. For example, it was difficult for me not to step in at times, when newly hired staff members were confused with their responsibilities when the DTES NH re-opened, and I was the only person on the floor who had seen, and even facilitated, certain programs at the old space. I generally chose not to interfere in these instances. However, I did step in when a staff member quit, which would have forced the DTES NH to open three days a week rather then five. The DTES NH had already lost a fair number of regulars in the move and attendance at programs was on the decline. I realized that being open for only three days at this stage could be critically detrimental to the DTES NH.

3.4.5 Observing the Observer

I felt most uncomfortable around the DTES NH staff, particularly in the beginning when I was nervous about how they might perceive me. I felt as though every time I came near them they imagined I was eavesdropping, which was what I was essentially doing at first. While to some there is no distinction between participant observation and interviewing (and I agree on some level there shouldn't be), during my own research I fell into making a distinction, and I think this has to do with the fact that during interviews it was clear to the person I was engaging with that I was doing research, so I did not feel misleading. As I have discussed, in the field my identity was not as clear-cut. I knew that the staff had not felt comfortable having me at their meetings, and I felt hurt and rejected by this, particularly in light of the fact that I had been an employee. Furthermore, the way my contract had been terminated at such an exciting time in the DTES NH history contributed to feelings of exclusion.

More importantly, this exclusion indicated to me the staff was suspicious of my presence, which was most manifest in the beginning when I often felt like "an observer being observed" (Kemple and Huey, 2005). I found that one staff member in particular would employ what could

be characterized as counter-surveillance techniques (ibid) to monitor what I was doing. For example, she invited me to come observe an unscheduled Community Kitchen on a Saturday, purely as a researcher and not as a volunteer and proceeded to read over my shoulder as I was taking field notes. The same staff member firmly suggested that I conduct interviews at the DTES NH where she would engage in uncharacteristic tasks, seemingly to monitor what I was doing and perhaps what participants were saying:

> I interviewed x this morning. Y suggested we use the backroom at the DTES NH. I was nervous about this but felt like I could not refuse. Invisible (and perhaps imagined) coercion in the name of alleviating her invisible (and perhaps imagined) suspicion. She spent the entire time I was doing the interview doing dishes in close proximity. She never does dishes. Is this a way that DTES NH can maintain control over my research?

> Every time I do an interview, y is doing dishes. Being watched forces me to avoid certain questions and to adopt a tone of neutrality, which I feel, is fundamentally false.

I realized that conducting interviews on the DTES NH ground was infringing research participants' confidentiality and anonymity rights and stopped doing so. In addition, I felt that the value of these interviews was lessened, both because I felt compelled not to sound too critical in my questions, and because I worried that my participants would not feel as free to critique. However, a positive side of this was that it seemed to put staff at ease and likely contributed to them trusting me a bit more.

I was cognizant of my own resentment and concerned with what to do about it. From day one of my fieldwork I was filled with conflicting feelings stemming from my difficulty letting go of resentments and frustrations harboured from my employment at the DTES NH, which had initiated me into the all-consuming, burnout-producing nature of non-profit work and from the way my contract had ended. I tried to keep my feelings in check by keeping a journal in which to analyze negative thoughts as they emerged, but was also wary of my research becoming a narcissistic inquiry. I constantly questioned my nascent analysis throughout the entire process of doing fieldwork and even in the writing of my analysis. I was wary of being critical because of personal resentments, questioning if I was interpreting this or that particular observation and observing this or that particular moment or interaction as a confirmation of my critiques because of a completely skewed perspective stemming from the past rather than from sound social analysis. Even when some of my own participants echoed my critiques or elaborated some that I had not yet encountered, personally I wondered if my attitude was contagious.

The most enduring roadblock I encountered during my fieldwork was the "ghost of objectivism" against which I constantly measured myself (Culhane, 2010). The ideal of objectivity, despite my desire to free myself from its shackles ontologically and epistemologically, permeates my research. Evidence of this burden resides in my focus on self versus other (researcher versus subject and in corresponding expectations); my discomfort and focus on identity fragmentation; and my attempts to hold on to a holistic atomized self that I envision to stabilize me. An implicit notion of "good" or "sound" research versus "bad" research betrays an implicit positivist protocol, as do my distinctions between "official" versus "unofficial" modes of observation or "formal" versus "informal" research interactions. Implicit in these ways of approaching the field is the ideal that there is some "truth" to be found, measured against, and that this could emanate from me if I succeeded in freeing myself (or of being transparent about) my biases. No research endeavor is ever neutral of course, but my particular multi-situated experiences at the DTES NH and my critical bent (informed by past first-hand experiences) made it more difficult for me to allow the perspectives of others to come through, limiting my interpretive framework. I decided to temper my own resentment by constantly questioning my critiques and attempting to situate them in dialogue with both the literature and what participants have told me. I also took my resentments and the emotion-work of research seriously by attempting to analyze what they represented in the broader scheme of things.

4: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICES: THREE EMERGING TENSIONS

As I engaged in interviews and observation, points of tension began to emerge and informed the subsequent interviews and observations in which I engaged. I transcribed the interviews and took notes during and after participant observation and after interviews. From both transcripts and notes data was analyzed using preliminary codes, which I continually refined. The preliminary codes that I worked with represented themes that often came up during interactions with participants. Some were specific, such as "philosophy," which was repeatedly mentioned to me by staff. Other codes represented broader categories, such as "critiques," which would vary from one participant to the next. I made analytic memos throughout the coding process that allowed me to link the emerging themes to broader processes informed by my continuing fieldwork and increasingly targeted readings. This back and forth between the literature, my conceptualizations and my data formed the basis of my research conclusions.

Three central areas of tension emerged from my analytic process: 1. Philosophy versus Practices, consisting of contradictions between the intentions behind the DTES NH philosophy and the unintended consequences that arise in how it is implemented, particularly through the DTES NH guidelines and the programs that are informed by the DTES NH philosophical principles. 2. Food Standards versus Food Preferences, a tension that emerged when I compared how senior staff explained the DTES NH food philosophy and the rationale behind it with what the DTES residents I interviewed highlighted about their particular food preferences. 3. The direction taken by DTES NH in its recent and future expansion also emerged as a point of tension whereby my conversations with DTES residents and staff led me to question the degree to which the growth of the DTES NH is supporting its grassroots, community-driven philosophical ideals.

In section one of this chapter I first discuss the discursive dimension of the DTES NH philosophy, which is the primary way the DTES NH engages with people outside of the DTES. I will examine what I call the " DTES NH narrative" by focusing on three organizational concepts: the poverty mentality, the work of material poverty, and the importance of language. I then discuss the problematic elements of representation inherent in the DTES NH's engagement with outsiders. Next, I examine the symbolic and programmatic dimensions of the implementation of the DTES NH philosophy, which are the means through which it is communicated to DTES

residents. I follow this discussion by examining some barriers that hinder implementation such as funding, relationships with different stakeholders, and competing understandings of what constitutes "needs." Finally, I will analyze how staff and program participants I interviewed and observed describe the DTES NH philosophy.

In section two I will focus on the implementation of the food philosophy by examining an emerging tension between food preferences and food standards through which I find the organization and DTES residents to some degree polarized. I examine the intentions behind the DTES NH food philosophy and the implications of the DTES NH food guidelines, particularly in relation to the DTES NH's philosophical emphasis on meeting the needs of the community by fostering choice as a requisite to dignity. I also examine the political intentions behind some of the DTES NH food standards, which further complicate and limit their definition of choice, as well as the barriers the DTES NH faces in its food programming such as funding and the structure of grant systems which tends to favour programs that individuate issues relating to poverty (through skill building, for example) over more flexible options and/or structural interventions.

Finally, in section three I examine the direction the DTES NH is taking through its expansion, wherein resides a tension between the DTES NH's grassroots sensibilities and its rapid growth into a manifestly non-profit organization. The expansion of the DTES NH in many ways encompasses both the tensions in philosophy (expansion might challenge some key tenets of the philosophy) and food standards (as food reform will occupy a more prominent role in the direction the post-expansion DTES NH will take). With expansion, representation is also problematized.

In chapter five I will discuss the implications of these organizational tensions in greater detail by focusing on the broader macro processes that they reflect.

4.1 From Philosophy to Practices

> *"Well I think if we're successful and if people find us attractive in what we do and how we do it I think it's because…there is no disconnect between our philosophy and our practice so our philosophy, policy and practice are all wedded together all the time"(Rock).*

The Neighbourhood House has a distinctive philosophy. It is important to examine this philosophy closely for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is a key way in which the DTES NH differentiates itself from other organizations of which it is critical. The philosophy is at the crux of the DTES NH's grassroots's identity, as it emerged from the lived experiences of founding

staff who were once among the most marginalized residents of the DTES and who are, as a result, intimately familiar with being on the "other side" of service delivery. Secondly, the philosophy encompasses a set of ideals that inform organizational practices that aim to rectify the social injustices perpetuated by the charitable system of food delivery. According to staff, the philosophy represents the guiding principles behind everything the DTES NH does. Abiding by the philosophy at all times is a crucial means through which the organization attempts to adhere to its principles, particularly remaining grassroots, as it grows as a non-profit. In the few organizations that I am familiar with, including the traditional non-profit I worked for in the spring of 2010 (while I was doing research at the DTES NH), the vision, missions, and mandate (what could be considered akin to philosophies) are seldom referred to unless required by funding bodies. In comparison, at the DTES NH, the philosophy is evoked multiple times on a daily basis and is directed to program participants, outsiders, and staff—virtually all who come into contact with the organization. This is important, since the audience for the DTES NH is growing and diversifying.

In this section I will concern myself primarily with the implementation of the philosophy—the means through which it exists beyond its textual form. I will discuss how implementation of the philosophy is done discursively, symbolically, and finally programmatically. I will then examine factors that mediate the process of implementation, and how program participants and staff understand the philosophy.

4.1.1 Discursive Dimensions

Some of the intentions behind the philosophy are to foster dignity, health, respect, self-government and inclusivity, and to do so from the bottom-up, through a commitment to low-income residents and to community-driven programming. However, in order to achieve these goals the DTES NH engages not only with those residing in the DTES, but with other organizations within, and individuals and organizations outside of, the community. It is necessary for the DTES NH to engage with outsiders in order to acquire visibility and resources. But resource mobilization is not the only reason the DTES NH finds numerous platforms through which to engage with varied audiences. During my fieldwork, I attended three public presentations given by the DTES NH: one outside of the DTES at the Stone Soup Festival (an event that celebrates sustainable food), one at the DTES NH for the community, and one at the DTES NH for a class of UBC social work Masters students who were there as part of a course taught by Graham Riches. A primary function of the DTES NH's public engagement is public pedagogy. While the main topic of these presentations was related to food security and the DTES

NH's food programming, the talks went beyond the issues of food and evoked themes related to social injustice and poverty in the DTES.

Through these platforms the DTES NH aims to fulfill its role of humanizing and demystifying society's most marginalized by emphasizing the conditions in which many DTES residents live. Central to this notion is the belief, which I share, that social injustice stems in large part from widespread tendency to blame the poor for their life circumstances. However, the DTES NH intends not only to educate, but also to represent the voices of those marginalized members of their community. The DTES NH implements its philosophy discursively, through a set of concepts that are unique to the organization. I noticed narrative consistency in the presentations I attended and in other interactions with outsiders that I observed. The three primary components of this narrative are the poverty mentality, the work of the material poor and the importance of language.

4.1.2 The Poverty Mentality

The DTES NH describes the "poverty mentality" as the idea that poor people lack ambition and are therefore undeserving of dignity, humanity, and empathy. This mentality is endemic to a neoliberal context, and reflects the market-based, pseudo-Darwinist ideology that since there is equality of opportunity, we are all free to compete and, thus, that the fittest prevail. The DTES NH addresses neoliberal ideology by maintaining that the charity model is the poverty mentality's "handmaiden," whereby the poor are subjected to dehumanizing conditions, which are somehow justified by the notion that "beggars can't be choosers." The DTES NH aims to reverse these attitudes primarily in interactions with outsiders. For example, the staff of the DTES NH educate donors who come to the DTES NH with food deemed inappropriate and explain to often indignant individuals why they are turning away day old pastries. Part of the DTES NH philosophy, of course, is health promotion and the service of "intuitive foods, " in other words foods that do not exacerbate common health problems associated with poverty. However, the concerns of the DTES NH go beyond the question of biophysical health.

In DTES NH public presentations, (at least those I attended), the underlying causes of poverty are seldom mentioned. However, the DTES NH staff describes in great detail, and from a place of experience, what it is like to stand in line for hours under the judgmental gaze of more affluent people for a meal that is mediocre at best, and often poisonous to those who must survive off of an inconsistent supply of highly processed, sugary, starchy food provided by the charitable system. They vividly describe feeling hungry and being cold and wet after standing in line, and having to sit through a twenty minute sermon before being directed, like cattle, into an

impersonal, dirty, cafeteria-like space, being told to eat as fast as possible in order to make room for the next batch of hungry people. They explain to their audiences what it is like to go through the line-ups multiple times a day.

The poverty mentality, according to the DTES NH, reflects a set of attitudes directed at the poor, which homogenize individuals, minimize personal complexity, while simultaneously individualizing poverty. This concept was explained in all the public presentations made by the DTES NH that I attended and is central to the organization insofar as its aspires to address the effects of these attitudes by demystifying what they always qualify as "the materially poor." It is worth noting that by referring to "material" poverty, the DTES NH is intending to highlight to outsiders that poverty does not equate to being spiritually and socially bereft. In opposition to the poverty mentality inherent in charitable organizations, the DTES NH commits to celebrating the complexity and strengths of DTES residents in its space.

4.1.3 The Work of the Materially Poor

To combat the poverty mentality, staff describe in great detail to people, particularly outsiders, what they have conceptualized as "the work of the materially poor," which refers to the seldom acknowledged survival work marginalized people engage in on a daily basis. In the public presentations I listened to DTES NH staff provided rich, evocative descriptions of the difficult, taxing, constant, planning that most homeless and under housed struggle with to secure even a simple breakfast. Often, lived experiences are evoked which reinforces their description of what "others" go through. The following excerpt from an interview with Rock serves as an apt example of what is the characteristic DTES NH narrative in the public sphere:

> First of all, you haven't had a good night's sleep because the walls are so thin and your door barely locks and somebody could blow it in basically…then you are lining up to use the one bathroom for about 23 people and maybe it's too late to have a quiet bath or shower, or maybe the washroom is too dirty, but you are lining up even just to pee and brush your teeth…then you are thinking it's 7: 30, what's open, where can I get a cup of coffee or tea or anything? You've got to go line up for that or wait until something opens like First United at 8:30 and…even in the morning at most places where you would line up for something you probably start the day with soup. Then you will have to shuffle off because there are so many more who need to get in while it is open…then it's like well I need to do a washing. If I line up at 9: 00 at life skills, because they open up at 10, maybe if I am among the first 12 lined up I will be one of the 12 to get a ticket to do one load of laundry and one drying. But do I have time to do the one load of laundry in time to have it ready and take it away with me to then go line up for lunch someplace? I also need to go to the doctor today because my worker needs this form filled and that's a 4-5 hour wait so do I do that over lunch and miss lunch because of course there is no food at the clinic? Do I go to the Women's

Centre or wherever and line up for whatever lunch might be there and miss getting to the doctor? If I need to make a phone call where is one of maybe 6 free phones in the neighbourhood that scores of people also want to use in a day? I am using that phone in a public space where everyone is hovering over me to make sure I am not using more than my five minutes, but I am having a tearful conversation with my mother in Bella Bella. It's that constant work of just living your day even if you are not in super survival mode… there is no room in all that, in that survival work to have any pretence.

This narrative or some variant of was told at all the DTES NH presentations that I attended in order to combat the notion that the poor are lazy and undeserving of the same privileges those deemed "productive" enjoy. To some extent this narrative also shows how the DTES NH defines itself relationally. By evoking "line-ups" repeatedly in this description, Rock is implicitly critiquing the structure of service delivery that is prevalent in the DTES. Among the privileges the DTES NH states it wants to see restored to their proper position as rights is dignity through privacy and choice. Dignity, which is central to the philosophy, is a theme that is repeatedly emphasized, particularly in the often stated notion that "the first things that you lose when you are poor are choice and privacy." Dignity, through choice and privacy, is a key aspect of the organizational narrative that the DTES NH tries to promote in the discursive realm through the power of narrative description, as well as in its dealings with individuals in the programming space where line-ups are discouraged despite the propensity of many program participants to automatically line-up at the DTES NH (a testament perhaps to the pervasiveness of this mode of organizing in the DTES).

4.1.4 The Importance of Language

Language plays an important role in disseminating aspects of the philosophy and staff explicitly highlight the importance of words. When I first approached Rock with my statement of research purpose, she immediately confronted me about my use of the terms "service users" and "service providers." She suggested using the terms "community member/program participant" and "staff," explaining to me that these terms signify, and therefore foster, an equitable relationship between parties, which is important since the DTES NH strives to promote a non-hierarchical environment where social inequalities recede to the background. Further the DTES NH maintains an aversion to the language of "helping" the poor which the notion of "service-provider" encapsulates:

Rock: We are not a helping organization…I think that the notion of helping people has become very dangerous and if there is someone being helped it means there needs to be a helper. I would say it has turned into a mechanism by

which…I get to go amongst those who I…and the rest of society deem to be in some way run down, they have less of a great many material things and they have more challenges in life, and I get to go and say, well I'll help them, which is an incredible amount of power to be given or to allow oneself. So we're not comfortable with that and we're more comfortable with saying we create this environment because the community tells us that they want it.

The consequences of using "service user" and "service provider" is the reinforcement at a discursive level of an us versus them dichotomy, one in which a power imbalance is embedded. At a discursive level, constructing program participants as "community members" (and reinforcing this with community-driven programming) could be a powerful equalizing mechanism. It could represent a re-appropriation of the us versus them mentality that disempowers when it is imposed.

The DTES NH uses language, on one level, to challenge assumptions about the poor, but also to foster a particular sense of community, one that is diverse, misunderstood, and that can be unified by shared causes, which the DTES NH--as part of the community—can articulate. Divisive labels are also challenged discursively through the use of the concept of "neighbourliness," which is meant to convey and re-enforce unity and refers to anyone sharing space in the DTES, including business owners, religious proselytizers, and middle-class residents of the Woodwards building (an important symbol of gentrification), as long as people behave in a way that is "neighbourly." In this way the DTES NH goes a step further than just reclaiming the us versus them discourse. Behaviour can be referred to as "neighbourly" if it fosters inclusivity (such as sharing information and resources) and conveys respect (to others and to the DTES space) or "unneighbourly" if it excludes (such as gating a community garden) or disrespects others and the DTES space. The concepts of neighbourliness versus "unneighbourliness" emerged time again in public presentations and in my interviews and more informal conversations with senior staff.

However, during interviews newer staff and volunteers would sometimes express confusion about the DTES NH terms and the importance of language. These would emerge as a repeated theme in some interviews but the message was confused and sometimes resembled rote memorization rather than an organic understanding. Language is part of an implicit training and representatives of the DTES NH constantly correct people in many settings. Within the space, if somebody uses the prefix "those people" or seems to express pity for "those prostitutes and drug addicts," staff step in and explain the "poverty mentality" that this type of language reflects. During the Homeground Festival, an event hosted by the DTES NH at Oppenheimer Park to create places of solace from media and tourists, and a venue for community-driven entertainment

during the Olympics, I overheard a senior staff member correct a newer staff member who was explaining to someone who had wandered into the DTES NH why on this day it was off-limits. The DTES NH space had been transformed for the occasion into an area of refuge for festival volunteers, the majority of whom were DTES residents. A senior staff member stated quite adamantly that "It's not 'we're serving volunteers here' it's 'this is the Homeground Volunteer Canteen.'" I interpreted the highlighting of this difference in the discursive realm as an attempt to enforce the volunteers' dignity. If volunteers were "being served" they are represented as passive recipients or "service users" rather than the empowered actors the DTES NH envisioned them to be the crucial facilitators of this mass event. While the philosophy seems evident at verbal levels as senior staff members staunchly articulate it, the implementation of this philosophy may not always be evident to other parties.

4.1.5 The Politics of Grassroots Representation

Grassroots organizations are typically groups that do not just reflect the voices of those people most affected by the issue being addressed, but are responsive to and largely led by these constituencies (Idealist. Org, 2010). In many ways the DTES NH fits this definition: it began from the lived experience of founding members who were DTES residents; it aims to represent the most marginalized members of the community and engage these members through channels that do not alienate, for example through what staff call "street side consultations." Being and remaining grassroots is important for maintaining legitimacy both within and outside of the community. However, the question of representation is complicated by the DTES NH's growing links outside of the community and the rapidly changing context of the DTES.

The DTES NH positions itself in presentations to outsiders as representative of a low-income constituency. Powerful statements are made in all public presentations such as, "We are telling the truth as we see it." It is often emphasized that DTES NH projects are "led by the community because they are led by us," and that the projects will work because their "neighbours want them to work." Often staff would tell outsiders "this is what our neighbours need." The following excerpt from my interview with Rock highlights how this responsibility is understood:

> When we go in the community and beyond and we're in meetings or at events, we have the responsibility of carrying very vividly in our heads and hearts the thousands of voices and faces of our community members, of our neighbours and…to listen with the filter of their realities and to speak on behalf of the neighbourhood within the context of those gazillions of people in this community. It isn't about what I want, or what would be best for me, because I'm not one of my vulnerable neighbours.

It is important for the DTES NH to represent the truth of the community due to the fact that the DTES is co-opted by a number of competing interests particularly with the specific threat of gentrification, and in the broader context of the non-profit sector in which the DTES NH must compete for funding. Representing the community is also important to the DTES NH agenda due to the fact that there are indeed few avenues for marginalized residents to be heard and the DTES NH aims to create avenues for unheard concerns to be voiced. The DTES NH narrative constructs community discursively by presenting the DTES as a place of diversity and human complexity that is ultimately unified by several strong overarching needs, which the DTES NH (as part of this community and as a needs based rather than a supply based organization) is able to articulate.

However, mobilizing community in contexts of disadvantage like the DTES can silence those most oppressed (Allen, 1999). In the DTES, claiming community is both a necessity and a danger. Part of the DTES NH's conception of community is a delineation (and a re-appropriation) of the us versus them binary that is usually imposed on the DTES by outsiders. Delineation is characteristic of all conceptions of community (Drevdahl, 2002). However, the DTES NH does not allude to potential divisions *within* the particular community they have delineated, and cannot necessarily make room for competing interests within their sphere of interest, so to speak. A related problem that I will discuss is that the DTES NH is increasingly involved with outsiders, not just through presentation but also in partnerships with various experts and in fiscal relationships with various parties. Further, the founding members no longer inhabit the same space as the marginalized people they aim to represent. To paraphrase Rock, they are not their vulnerable neighbours. While they have lived experiences and understand injustice intimately they have also gained upward mobility and the symbolic and cultural capital that differentiates them vividly from those whom they speak for and want to maintain allegiance to. The power imbalance is an important reason to explore various understandings of the DTES NH organizational life.

4.1.6 Symbolic Dimensions

The DTES NH philosophy is expressed symbolically as much as it is discursively, and in this realm implicates DTES residents more than outsiders. For example, the DTES NH's commitment to the promotion of health and cleanliness is evident in the accessibility of harm reduction supplies, through the abundant colorful signage posted throughout the space reminding people to "wash your hands" (no exclamation points allowed, because the DTES NH "doesn't tell people what to feel"), a reminder that is always verbalized when people no matter who they are-- come into the space. More implicitly, the philosophy is communicated through the very detail

oriented construction of the programming space, where thought goes into the lighting (no harsh lights allowed), the non-institutional colours of the walls (that get repainted brightly every year), the music, the placement of tables (intended to foster sociability), the way food is displayed (abundance, colour, choice, and labels that spell out ingredients), the cleanliness of the space (impeccable), the furnishings (homely), what goes on the walls (posters for community events), the type of literature available (secular, health related), and the types of movies selected. Cleanliness and order are of primary importance, but the space must also look inviting and not too rigid, a balance that is very deliberate but not always easy to maintain. The first time I came to the DTES NH, as an undergrad doing the community component of a health promotions seminar, I was told to photograph the kitchen in order to remember exactly where everything goes. The intent of this attention to detail is to communicate respect to the residents of the DTES non-verbally, as Rock illustrates:

> We are using water, soap, paint, light bulbs, colour, music…as modes of messaging. And the message is: 'we see you, we respect you, we see your complexity. And you belong to your self.' The mostly unstated, but when needed stated, purpose of that environment is to experience… in moments or clusters of minutes and overtime clusters of hours… a pocket of safety in which you feel the comfort to be self-reflective. Because things may be calmer or…let's say…that you get it, that you get the intangibles, [that you get] that we are communicating our respect for you then perhaps over time that determines the light in which you are self-reflective because you see yourself more kindly. And instead of spending most of your time saying to yourself 'I should do this, I shouldn't do that, I should be doing this, I should stop this, I should go for this'…maybe you take your own judgmental morality off yourself and you…are more of a self-determining self-aware individual…If we contribute to that in anyway amongst our neighbours I think we are a success. But each individual person is the person who lives inside of them…We don't live inside of them, they don't live inside of us.

The DTES NH is constructed more like an open-concept home than a social service organization, which helps it stand out as a unique place among the more institutional charitable establishments in the area. One of the intentions is to empower through the space. The assumption is that an environment can bring out either the worst or the best in people. The idea of "self-betterment" through self-awareness, eventually leading to self-mastery, is also implicit in the above statement, and in the pedagogical frame adopted and directed at low-income residents in some of the programs. Many participants commented very positively on this space and were cognizant of a certain level of respect conveyed, and the effects of these gestures on the people within it. For example, the lack of hostility and violent incidents; the fact that there are no broken crack pipes in the washroom or syringes, and that people generally "behave" at the DTES NH:

Marie: Well I think because you guys behave in a certain way, you attract certain energies; so pretty much anybody who is not behaving in that way…is not going to be drawn to the NH.

Bobby: You see at Carnegie you get all those druggies outside and you've got to go through them to get inside, you don't have to get through that to get to NH. Our area is a little better.

Lewis: [The NH is] not right in the DTES, it's toward the eastern end of it so I'm not sure if you are getting the people you would if you were at Main and Hastings, so it seems like a bit of a haven.

There are potentially a number of reasons why certain types of people from the community may not be as visible in the DTES NH. On a symbolic level, the space might potentially intimidate certain people. For example, one participant suggested that the open-concept was confusing, as she needed some order and compatmentality to be able to relax:

Cat: With the open concept you don't really have this ending of one thing and starting of another, you know what I mean? Like from the hair cutting, to the arts, to the food…now its all one thing, it's all in this space all at once, so you don't have a designated area. So if you're hungry you can't just eat and take your mind away from things… it's like all in your face, and then with the TV going at the same time, you've got all this being thrown at you. It's confusing.

Further, in the last few months the DTES NH has moved to a different location further away from the high-activity areas of the DTES, which has certainly shifted the demographic, a fact frequently remarked upon by the staff. However, meeting the needs of the community means being cognizant of the limitations of the space vis-à-vis more marginalized individuals, and indeed the DTES NH addresses this through food related outreach programs, such as the Banana Beat and the Roving Community Kitchen (RCK), that target more marginalized individuals specifically. It is also notable that the quality of the space is one of the most important ways in which DTES residents who are regulars of the DTES NH differentiate it from other organizations, which indicates that at a symbolic level the philosophy is understood by some community members, but not others.

However, in recent months, the environment of the space has been affected by the increased presence of different types of people: because the DTES NH has a larger space it has been welcoming different organizations who wish to host meetings there during opening hours. Making their space available to various groups reflects the DTES NH's commitment to inclusivity and to community. However, some research participants have felt strange having, for example, the police come in to do a talk with the community, or the predominantly middle-class

and/or high functioning DTES Neighbourhood Council (DNC) congregate at a table with their clipboards in tow. I was on site when the latter was happening and noted that displacement occurs even within a small programming space as I watched two DTES NH regulars awkwardly eat in a corner while the council loudly discussed gentrification. The ideal of inclusivity is reflected in the diversity of people attending the DTES NH and the variety of the programs offered there; but inclusivity could also marginalize those in most need of the DTES NH. Evident class differences within the space can be alienating, particularly when the same pattern is occurring on DTES streets.

4.1.7 Programmatic Dimensions

The DTES NH tries to adhere to its philosophy by creating programs that reflect the diverse needs of community members, foster community building, promote healthful practices and challenge the poverty mentality by celebrating and promoting the strengths of DTES residents who, as the DTES NH biography states, "face the soft bigotry of lowered expectations." Programs at the DTES NH are manifold, ranging from leadership and development to a parent-tot drop in, community kitchens, movie afternoons, arts and crafts, sewing, recycling workshops, fiscal fitness, and organized afternoons at the Sole Food Inner-City farm, among others. These diverse programs are indicative of the DTES NH's mandate to reflect diversity, indicating that manifestly the DTES NH is able to resist niche specialization. Overall, programming tends to emphasize skills building and self-betterment, as Tina highlights here:

> [By] teaching them how to do things. A lot of our neighbours I find, the older [people] and especially those with addictions and with mental health…don't have life skills. They don't know how to cook, they don't know how to do things. [They are more] like "Oh my pocket is ripped I got to throw them out." No, pick up a needle and a thread and sew it…[We are] just empowering people to remember the skills that they have, because lots of them…[have] grown up in the system, [and] were never taught anything other then your job is to wash the dishes every day because this is what you do in residential school…They've been in the system and in foster home after foster home [and] never had any structure or anyone who really taught them how to do things as simple as how you grocery shop.

It is uncertain the degree to which DTES residents come specifically for the programs or if they are drawn to the DTES NH for other reasons. The identity of the DTES NH as a program based organization is challenged by the fact that many research participants view the role of the DTES NH as more of a resource, a place to find information, supplies, food, a phone, social time, and other necessities under one roof. While the role of the DTES NH in the eyes of participants

doesn't necessarily have to be either about programs or resources, the question is important to consider in light of current changes the DTES NH is undergoing. The role of the DTES NH as a space and resource should in no way be minimized: most research participants were very upset when the DTES NH was closed for its renovation and some worried that it would never re-open, which indicates the importance of the DTES NH in people's lives. The need for space to relax (to simply "be") was articulated by many and is likely exacerbated by the heightened criminalization of poverty in the DTES, a practice characterized by more aggressive regulations of public space that is particularly detrimental in this context where the street represents the living room of many (Kemple and Huey, 2005: 8). However, one of the many changes that have been recently implemented since the DTES NH re-opened at its new location is a shift from being a drop-in space to being completely program based. This translates into more stringent regulations at the DTES NH. For example, the removal of a large popular outdoor tented area to discourage "just hanging around and drinking coffee," the fact that people now have to sign in and state which program they are there to participate in and that staff and volunteers now need to remind people who come in that the DTES NH "is not a drop in." One reason for this change is that the DTES NH now has a large enough space to facilitate multiple programs, which are viewed by staff as beneficial in building community capacity. Another reason is that the DTES NH doesn't have the resources to operate as a drop in as well as a programming space. Many participants commented on these changes negatively:

> Cat: The DTES NH the way it was before…was giving that person the opportunity to eat, having food available to them that was nutritious, and giving the freedom to say thank you. Now, basically with this activity, you're saying that you can eat but that you have to participate in this activity…if I'm hungry, I don't want to sit there and paste some stickers on a board or do something like that. I just want to come in, eat and leave.

> Lewis: Well I notice you have a guestbook there now. You're supposed to sign that? Right well the other day I was asked if I wanted to make a box. They were playing with these little boxes…gluing stuff on them. I was like, ok, that's fine for some people, but I'm not about to glue glitter on one of those little wooden boxes.

> Carla: What is with these programs now? Like escape with reading? Jewelry boxes and recycling? Now they want us to do composting? They don't even do recycling themselves. What are we going to recycle in the DTES, bread? They should open the house for everyone, put the sewing machine in the front for everyone, have stuff for art, make computers accessible for all…if someone needs housing they can use one, if someone is hungry they can eat.

One reason the DTES NH has always focused in part on program delivery is because it is assumed that these are beneficial to the community. It is understood by staff that despite the time-consuming aspects of the work of the materially poor, boredom and isolation affect the quality of life for many residents of the DTES who face a dearth of educational and social opportunities that are sensitive to the challenges many residents face. Staff maintain that while the DTES is an area that is over-serviced, it is also an area that is "under-relationshiped." By having scheduled programs available to DTES residents in a relatively unstructured environment, the DTES NH aims to foster a sense of meaning and belonging to marginalized DTES residents while also providing them with life skills in an environment that is conducive to fostering dignity and self-respect in program participants. However, the ways in which needs are articulated by the DTES NH is to some extent through a top down approach as the above quotes suggest. Programs, developed to reflect the needs of participants are contingent on (and predicated by) funding and filtered through the understanding and politics of the organization, which complicate the DTES NH's mandate to reflect the interests of DTES residents.

4.1.8 Whose Needs Are Right[s]?

The DTES NH aspires to fit a needs based model rather than a supply based model, to borrow from Tarasuk and Eakin's terminology (2003). As discussed earlier, it is assumed that programs and organizations that are needs based reflect the interests of the communities they are meant to serve, as opposed to organizations and programs that reflect what is made available to them (in terms of resources) by third parties. However, in a context where organizations must navigate multiple demands and contingencies in order to meet the needs of their constituencies the question is raised about the extent to which there is a distinction pragmatically between needs based and supply based organizations. Further, defining and articulating needs and desires is problematic for it raises questions about who gets to determine what is needed and desired by a particular group. It is also problematic to determine the categorical differences between needs and desires, as in doing so one faces the troublesome task of attributing more or less importance to certain things and therefore of running the risk of further disempowering those who have no forum to determine (let alone secure) what they consider important and necessary. Mehta and Gupta (2003) pose the important question of whose needs are right, which evokes the more problematic aspects of human rights discussions. On a smaller scale a discussion of determining needs in the DTES reflects, and is tied in to, the complexity of the question of human rights that occurs at a global scale.

In the simplest formulation, needs would seem to possess objective properties in so far as we tend to think of them as the basic physiological necessities for survival, such as food, water, shelter, clothing and basic healthcare. These are the same things most would argue are basic human rights. We tend to assume that there are universal needs based on a loose understandings of conditions required for basic survival. For example, such needs could be defined by experts based on scientific measures of malnutrition, although there is no international standard for measuring hunger—which hints at the limits of a standard conception of "basic" needs (Riches, 1997). A conventional, narrow, understanding of needs would tend to differentiate between basic needs and less pressing desires—and to some extent there is an obvious difference between desires and needs when we compare regular meals with regular manicures at a ritzy salon. But when we are comparing satisfactory daily caloric intake with other less pressing comforts that some would argue are still needed (like dignified access to regualar meals), the distinction becomes complicated. And in the context of the DTES determining needs is also complicated by the fact that Vancouver is an affluent city. Whereas what is considered basic in a context of uniform scarcity might be somewhat clear-cut (and I suggest this with much trepidation), as a result of the fact that here the materially poor are constantly reminded of their relative disparity it is perhaps even more difficult to accept the most narrow articulation of basic needs in our context. For example, it is difficult to consider sleeping on the pews of the First United Church in the DTES as adequate shelter, when four blocks down in the Woodwards building people are living in million dollar condominiums.

Furthermore even when formulated in narrow terms needs are still subjective and as a result standards are power-laden. Who determines what is needed for an adequate standard of living? Who is to say that the power to satisfy at least some desires is not a necessity of the human condition? How can dignity be measured and defined? Proponents of the right to food are aware of the subjective dimensions of the basic need for food. This is evident in the use of the term "food insecurity" (that allows for a more holistic, subjective understanding of "lack" than hunger does). We can also extend the subjective understanding to other categories of basic survival, which the DTES NH does by attempting to provide a variety of programs and activities that aim to fulfill what is understood as the basic need (or the human desire) for dignity, self-worth, belonging, and other immeasurables that are not, in the strictest sense, life or death necessities.

While at a discursive level the DTES NH seems to take for granted that what they articulate reflects the interests of DTES residents, staff are aware of their inability to meet all interests in a context of structural iniquities. They also articulate an awareness of the fact that

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some residents don't have the capacity to determine their own needs, which complexifies any discussion of rights relating to a number of marginalized people in the area (Riches, 2010). In the context of the DTES the question of what constitutes needs (and rights) is complicated by the fact that there are many residing there that are affected by severe mental health issues who do not always have the capacity to articulate (or secure) what they need. So who steps in to "speak" on their behalf? In a neoliberal climate those that take responsibility to define (and often enforce) the needs of those with mental health issues fall under the register of what Foucauldians refer to as biopower, whereby interventions are a means of monitoring, regulating and disciplining citizens (Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009: 18). However, rather than focusing on structural issues, (the fact that people do not have the means to define and secure necessities for themselves—what could be refered to as equality of conditions), these interventions tend to focus on the individual moral responsibility (or the lack thereof) to make lifestyle choices (ibid, 109). Need in those terms is articulated by public and mental health paradigms that focus on the minimization of risk by disciplining subjects through a knowledge/power nexus (see Bourgois and Schonberg's discussion of harm reduction initiatives directed at intravenous drug users as an example of the process of biopower, 2009: 109). Biopower is to some extent reflected through DTES NH programs that emphasize harm reduction, nutritional education, life skills, and to some extent in its implicit goal of encouraging self-reflectivity (self mastery) through empowerment and pedagogy. The programs are seldom addressing the structural barriers that have brought many DTES residents to the DTES NH in the first place. They tend to emphasize minimization of risk (or immediate and nominal betterment rather than long-term structural impacts). These types of programs are encouraged by most funding bodies reflecting a preoccupation with safety, health, and productivity that places the onus of change on individuals and on their practices, rather than on structural changes. Choice, which the DTES NH emphasizes in its narrative as central to dignity and lacking to many residing in the DTES, is thus limited to the realm of responsible (and informed) practices.

My research suggests that if given a choice at least some DTES NH participants would prefer to have access to the space without being active participants in the programs that are meant to empower them. The idea of empowerment through public education is central to the DTES NH. However, when education is directed at DTES residents two questions are raised for me: first, who is doing the educating? Second, does education challenge the structures that determine the lives of low-income residents of the DTES? The fact that the DTES NH is staunchly articulated as a community driven program rather than service-based organization (which would disempower those it aims to empower) is clearly and explicitly emphasized by staff. This

distinction is meant to challenge the poverty mentality, as DTES residents become active participants in programs rather than passive recipients of services. It also presupposes that these skills and social benefits that the organization prioritizes as necessary over other needs, (such as the need for "space" articulated by some of my participants), will be relevant beyond the walls of the DTES NH programming space.

Programs are not inherently negative. Some participants noted that they would like to share more in the decision making as to what type of programs are delivered at the DTES NH. The fact that the DTES NH doesn't regularly hold general meetings (like other more traditional non-profits) was pointed out on several occasions, indicating the degree to which the needs and desires of the community may not fully be met and that more participatory processes could be beneficial. However, while the DTES NH attempts to meet the needs of DTES residents through program development, the primary determinant is funding, which stymies participatory processes, the DTES NH's ability to fully implement all of its ideals and to meet all the needs of program participants. Quite a few of the staff commented on the fact that there is a difference between what is fundable and what is needed (or desired). The DTES NH strives to have an "ear out to the pavement" in determining the programs it offers, but does not have the capital to provide the popular request for photography courses, for example, (unless, of course, it associates itself with a University that is doing qualitative research through photography). The dilemma is particularly evident in the food programming, as direct funding for food that fits the DTES NH's philosophy is not easily available. This means that the DTES NH doesn't have the capacity to make unlimited healthy food available to all, even though they are cognizant of a need among their neighbours (which is articulated by a number of DTES residents) for quality food in appropriate quantities. It also becomes difficult to celebrate the talents of DTES residents when lack of funding leads the organization to rely primarily on volunteers. In the following quote, Tina, a staff member, articulates the dilemma faced by the DTES NH:

> T: I find it really frustrating that I have to put ads [up at] the film school and all these student based places, when we could support our own community. But it's just getting that knowledge out there for people, and a lot of it's volunteer too. We don't have the capacity to pay people an honorarium…so it's based on the volunteer thing where people who are from the community need money. So, you know, it's kind of a double edged sword: we want to support people, expose their talents and appreciate their talents, but how do you do that when you can't monetarily compensate a vulnerable population?

Inherent in reliance on volunteers and staff from outside the community is the risk of curtailing an equitable, non-hierarchical environment. It is true that all tasks are presented as

essential to the DTES NH operations, and most DTES volunteers are very proud of their work no matter what it is they are doing. There is, however, the risk that comes with polarizing outsider volunteers in program facilitation positions, and resident volunteers in clean-up positions, representing a class-based division of labour, which is difficult to avoid if volunteers from outside the community are taken on because of a particular expertise. Class dynamics related to marked symbolic differences could exacerbate existing tensions in a gentrifying neighbourhood. Some participants made comments that echo the sentiment expressed here by Tina:

> The way the community got screwed with Woodwards and so many other things in the last ten years, it's just kind of like, well maybe it might happen, and then it's taken away…This makes people uncertain of anyone that is not from [the DTES]…[because] they don't know a struggle…[its obvious] without them actually saying it 'cause…they have different body language, and different ways of speaking to people.

The DTES residents that I engaged with expressed a deep awareness of differentiations in symbolic and cultural capital, and these marked differences are not anodyne. It is worth noting that most participants highlighted the importance of staff and volunteers being from the community.

One of the future programs at the DTES NH, from which it and other neighbourhood houses in the area have received funding, is the BWIN project (Building Welcoming and Inclusive Communities). This program illustrates the complexity of translating the principles of the philosophy into a set of practices. In the context of the DTES, the BWIN will create forums for different groups to share their perspectives and experiences, thereby fostering community and inclusivity through understanding. This particular funding is meant to honor what the DTES NH has identified and refers to as the "founding members" of the DTES, the low-income, Japanese, Chinese and First Nations originating groups. However, this funding will also be used to develop programs and solutions that aim to bring the new middle-class residents and originating residents together. Such programs are interestingly becoming commonplace in the DTES. The DTES NH sees its role as a bridge between potential factions, reflecting the DTES NH's conception of itself as a representative voice of the community and perhaps as a mediator within the community. Both these roles could complicate one another, however, as the DTES NH becomes implicated in potentially competing interests. This excerpt from the DTES NH website illustrates how a balance between inclusivity and low-income allegiance is conceived:

"In the coming months, our Community Developer will bring the DTES NH to tenants of the Woodwards' Redevelopment, welcoming the newcomer populations of all incomes, including the small number of longtime DTES community residents. At Woodwards we propose to act as the host community organization and secure the participation of sister organizations across the DTES and beyond. We aspire to showcase the history of DTES founding communities, divulged through films, guests storytellers, roundtables and a variety of other programming in order to facilitate the integration of newcomers with long time DTES residents, of present with past and debate any conflicting community visions. This community development work is critically important if Woodwards is to avoid becoming an isolated enclave within the DTES."

By enlisting the help of "sister organizations" (outspoken, activist organizations), the DTES NH is adopting strength in numbers tactics, mobilizing social capital resources with the goal of making the inevitable gentrifications of the DTES less harmful to those most oppressed. They hope that in fostering understanding of, and sensitivity to, the realities of low-income neighbours, the transitions will be less pernicious to vulnerable people. The general goal of BWIN projects—across Vancouver-- is to build community capacity and cohesiveness in an integrated rather then exclusionary way. However, problems arise particularly in the context of rapid gentrification, as the BWIN reflects a reformist bent that may not necessarily benefit the threatened low-income majority in the area. Through the BWIN, the DTES NH could facilitate the transition of middle-class people in the DTES by giving the sense that the DTES is hospitable to gentrification, particularly as the DTES NH credibly presents the perspective of low-income residents by speaking from experience, which could indicate to powerful newcomers that the entire community shares the perspectives they put forth, explicitly and implicitly.

The DTES NH is critical of revitalization determined by outsiders. However, by virtue of its funding, the DTES NH actions and programs are reformist rather than radical. The BWIN project, specifically, is funded by the government and sponsored by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development. The unintended consequence of this type of program is that the DTES NH, despite its intentions, could become an agent of gentrification and of social control. The example of the BWIN reflects the degree to which available funding can dictate the types of actions taken by organizations, and is an example of the "buffer" function of non-profits to funnel dissent into less disruptive channels (Kivel, 2007).

4.1.9 Interactions: Practicing Philosophy

During my fieldwork I went to a volunteer orientation where the relationship between philosophy and practices was elucidated in some detail. The first interesting point that was made

is that the DTES NH doesn't have rules, it has a philosophy. During the orientation, the way the philosophy works was illustrated through scenarios that demonstrated that the philosophy serves as a guideline for behaviour akin to rules, albeit more flexible. For example, a senior staff member explained how the DTES NH works on an honour system, and that "regardless of what we may know about them, we give people the benefit of the doubt, and we treat all people objectively." This principle of neutrality means that no matter what you know about a particular person from another context, within the DTES NH space this person is to be treated neutrally. The principle of neutrality can, of course, be problematic and not always possible to enact, especially in a place like the DTES where stories and names circulate easily. Volunteers must abide by the "Right to Food" philosophy, which means not eating junk food in front of other people, in order to make sure there are no contradictions. (However, on many occasions after a long day, when the doors of the DTES NH were finally closed, "contraband," in the form of Pepsi or cakes, would come out of the storage room, and quite a few volunteers, including myself, would utter "man I need some chocolate" or something along those lines.) The Right to Food philosophy is enforced when DTES residents come into the DTES NH. In order to promote inclusivity, people aren't barred from the DTES NH, but they are asked to "take a break" from the DTES NH if their behaviour is offensive on that particular day. This principle represents a particular juncture at which the philosophy is most explicitly expressed to DTES residents: when there is an incident of "bad behaviour," a simplified copy of the philosophy is brought outside, and staff review the philosophy with the participant to explain why he/she is being asked to leave for the day.

The link between philosophy and practices is not clear-cut, however. Implementation can be complicated by a number of factors such as funding, grant structure, and basic human interactions. The difficulty of implementation is particularly evident in the hiring of new staff:

> Tina: We've spent most of the year one person short because it takes probably two or three weeks for someone who's never been exposed to the NH [philosophy]. Even the couple people who have been exposed [to the organization] it takes [us] time to get them in the groove...[We can't just go] 'hi nice to meet you, welcome to the NH, okay take the place'…you can't do that because of the way that we integrate our philosophy into everything we do. It's not like 'here's our philosophy and now fuck off and get out.' We integrate everything…so it's trying to figure that out.

There is significant staff turnover in some positions: over two years, the position for which I filled a contract, Nutritional Nexus Co-coordinator, was filled three times. During my four months of fieldwork the position that most involves interacting with residents—Community

Developer--was filled three times. Turnover indicates funding pressure and the unstable, contractual structure of most non-profit work. Further, the DTES NH is very selective when it comes to hiring staff, and looks for people who "speak the same language;" in other words, people who will not perpetuate the poverty mentality in their attitude toward program participants. The difficulty finding and keeping staff also indicates a certain level of difficulty in translating the philosophy into a set of practices at an interactive level:

> Carol: I was trying so hard to figure things out…but they never gave me clear guidelines and… no one was really willing to answer because they're a bit intimidated…or are sometimes not willing to deal with day-to-day stuff. But you know then [they] sort of come in, like we're working in the kitchen, and [they] start] setting things up exactly th[is] way. It's very intimidating; you get flustered…you get defensive.

> Anna: Before stepping into the role I felt a little bit lost. I didn't get that orientation or whatever. They just assumed that I knew everything from having done stuff in the past. Which I didn't, but then I learned by just asking a bunch of questions.

> Jane: That's what I'm constantly obviously trying to put together: what is the Right to Food, how do these programs work to fulfill that philosophy, and how to live it. I think it will keep becoming clearer as I go along…The tangible thing is the programs but the programs don't encapsulate the entire idea. That's the thing that's the most unclear to me. I think it's just because it exists on a really high philosophical level.

This confusion is amplified by the fact that the two senior staff, Rock and the woman who is considered the "face of the DTES NH" by many DTES residents, are spending less time in the programming space since the recent creation of a separate administrative space. Their absence was commented on by everybody who participated in my research. Many residents commented that the staff member known as "the face of the DTES NH", in particular, is the grassroots component of the DTES NH, so her absence at the frontlines could have significant implications in how DTES residents perceive the organization, especially with the hiring of new staff from an educated middle-class background to oversee programming, and the shifting of grassroots staff to administrative (and movement building) work. The lack of clarity on the relationship between philosophy and practices is further exacerbated by constraints on time and funding, and the lack resources necessary for extensive training inherent in a non-profit organization. For the DTES NH this gap in communication is exacerbated by the rapid growth of the organization and the multiple projects in which it is involved.

In interviewing the DTES NH program participants, the DTES NH philosophy never really came up, and most seem unaware that this is an important aspect of the organization.

Several staff members also questioned whether program participants are aware of the philosophy. However, many of those coming into the DTES NH differentiate the organization from others in the area, and comment on these differences positively, which indicates that the philosophy is effectively being communicated implicitly, if not explicitly. For example, participants commented on the fact that there is less of an us versus them division between staff and program participants. Further, as I discussed earlier in my section on the symbolic dimensions of the DTES NH philosophy, research participants often commented that people in the space behave differently (better) than in other organizations. Food was also often mentioned as a distinctive quality of the DTES NH, in both positive and negative terms.

4.2 The Right to Food: Preferences or Standards?

The DTES NH has a distinct food philosophy that is an extension of the DTES NH general philosophy, and which inspires a number of food programs that are meant to implement DTES NH principles. The DTES NH aligns itself with Graham Riches's conception of the Right to Food, though the DTES NH's implementation of the philosophy diverges from Riches' ideals of government responsibility and of food being one means through which to secure an adequate standard of living, rather than an end in and of itself. The food programs at the DTES NH can be understood as a means through which the organization aims to fulfill a perceived need in the DTES (i.e. the need for quality whole foods due to nutritional vulnerability and inequitable access to this resource in our society). They can also be understood as a means through which to promote healthy practices (by educating about food preparation and nutritional information). Food programs are also understood as a means through which to restore dignity to low-income DTES residents through the program-based rather than charitable, delivery of food. By offering some choice, eliminating line-ups, and allowing people to serve themselves and to consume food in a pleasant environment that promotes sociability rather than alienation, the delivery of food at the DTES NH is also used for community building.

Food for the DTES NH is political as much as it is communicative. By offering food in a dignified manner, and through public education, the DTES NH aspires to empower DTES residents to stand up for their Right to Food at other organizations. Food is thus used as a means to promote an idea of social justice that is relational to how other neighbouring organizations deliver food, and the type of food that they deliver. According to the DTES NH, other organizations that fit the charitable model promote the poverty mentality, and are a cause of the problem of poverty rather than a solution. The DTES NH hopes that DTES residents will understand that charity is unacceptable, and that they need not settle for mediocre food delivered

in a humiliating manner. Food programs at the DTES NH are intended to challenge the poverty mentality, by raising consciousness in and empowering those who are forced to rely on organizations to meet their basic sustenance needs. These programs are also intended to serve as a small-scale model of how the food system could be reformed: they represent creative possibility.

From day one, food has been an important part of the DTES NH. At its first steering committee meeting, the goldfish crackers and pastries brought by mentoring staff members from Gordon Neighbourhood House were turned down. There are a variety of food programs at the DTES NH that fit its guidelines, and reflect its food philosophy: the Banana Beat involves handing out bananas to those lining up for their checks on Welfare Wednesday; the Roving Community Kitchen involves making smoothies in other organizations that deal with the most vulnerable members of the neighbourhood (i.e. Insite, VANDU, the Needle Exchange, the MAT program) the day before welfare; the DTES NH has a weekly community kitchen during which cooking and nutritional skills are promoted; the farmers' market coupon project also engages women and children and provides access to the market. All of these programs are about promoting health in a way that is meant to be non-patronizing and fun. Reflecting the idea of food as a means of community building, the DTES NH ensures its availability at all of its programs and events. The explicit primary goal of the DTES NH food philosophy is to democratize food.

Attention to detail is evident in the food at the DTES NH: everything relating to food is deliberate, much like the construction of the programming space. For example, there are very specific guidelines and standards, such as not offering soup, pasta, kidney beans, oatmeal or white rice, as these are the foods most often offered to poor people in charitable organizations, and are therefore symbols of the poverty mentality. The DTES NH emphasizes creativity in cooking, using whole foods and natural ingredients—preferably local, seasonal and organic. Menus are developed with the most nutritionally vulnerable in mind. Therefore they avoid refined sugar, gluten and dairy. Most of the food at the DTES NH is vegetarian, which reflects budget, but also the reality that a legume based diet is lacking in the DTES (although meat was also mentioned by participants as much needed). The cook at the DTES NH during fieldwork was a vegan, and her preferences for a restricted diet were reflected in the daily menus she created. Finally, no junk food is allowed on the premises, as I discussed earlier. When somebody entered the DTES NH with pop, chips or candy they were told to put it away, and the rationale behind this is always explained in accordance with the DTES NH public educational frame.

By the same logic, the DTES NH is selective of the donations it accepts, and will turn down anything that does not match its standards. Through educating donors the DTES NH not only means to promote health, but also to dismantle the poverty mentality reflected in the notion

that "beggars can't be choosers" (which is indicative of the neo-liberal worldview), and that the DTES is not a dumping ground for food nobody else will eat. The DTES NH's conception of choice then is limited by specific guidelines as articulated here:

> Rock: When you come to a program at the DTES NH, there is always some kind of healthy snack, and choice of what it is. So you have more than one choice of protein, and you have more than one choice of carbohydrate, and basically the choice—because we are very big on choice and restoring choice in the lives of low-income people---but the choice you have around food at the DTES NH is to not eat counter intuitive foods, because if you want the pastries and if you want chips or you want hot dogs you can either go buy it or you can get it where they give it away some place else.

The above quote signals the extent to which the choice offered is limited. However structural constraints are not elaborated here. Rather choice is articulated with undertones of moral responsibly with the onus on individuals to make that healthy choice for themselves. One has a choice to eat intuitive foods according to DTES NH standards that reflect health expertise. Educative food programming reinforces this choice of foods. While the DTES NH is perhaps doing a service to the DTES by educating donors (and dismantling the problematic assumptions underlying many of these acts of supposed altruism), problems arise when education is directed to those on the receiving end of charity, especially when one takes into consideration the ethnic diversity, the high percentage of First-Nations people in the DTES, and the fact that an increasing number of program facilitators at the DTES NH are white and middle-class—not to mention the structural limitations that could circumvent the applicability of pedagogy aimed at disadvantaged program participants. Choice in this context could become shaming, to some, rather than empowering. The DTES NH is cognizant of the issue of paternalism, and strives to maintain respectful and equitable interactions. However, with so many stakeholders involved (students, volunteers from outside the DTES, health and nutrition experts that facilitate workshops), and the lack of time and resources to monitor all interactions, this is easier said then done. While some staff are quick to put ignorant people in their place, they are not always on the floor. Paternalism can also be symbolic.

To many research participants, the food at the DTES NH is a very positive aspect of the organizations. The food programs, such as the community kitchen, are extremely popular for their social function. The DTES NH house is often favourably contrasted to other local organizations, which are critiqued for poor food quality and their dehumanizing modes of food delivery. However, if the DTES NH wishes to maintain allegiance to the low-income community, while also fulfilling a political agenda, I would argue that it is important that it engages with people

about their preferences in a meaningful way, to be aware of, and to acknowledge, some of the limitations of their food philosophy. For example, the food does not necessarily reflect the preferences of all, which is counter to the organization's aim to be community-driven and non-hierarchical. There are issues with the rigidity of the parameters of access, and the food education not always being relevant in light of broader, structural constraints, that curtail the ability of DTES residents to put this education into practice. There are also issues with the delivery of food. These issues are akin to the issues DTES NH critiques in other charitable organizations and stem from the fact that the DTES NH is, despite its philosophy, an organization that mediates access to resources. I will now discuss each of these issues more thoroughly.

4.2.1 Contested Definitions

Who is to define what is appropriate food? The philosophy behind the menu selection at the DTES NH is to keep the nutritional needs of the most vulnerable residents of the DTES in mind, and to offer foods that address their health needs. The DTES NH refers to the foods generally donated to organizations as "counter intuitive" foods, as they exacerbate common health problems in the DTES. For example, the pastries, powdered drink crystals, and coffee whitener offered at most non-profit organizations are considered poison to individuals suffering from diabetes, a condition that is well known in the scientific and public health community to be exacerbated by poverty. These counter-intuitive foods are banned from the DTES NH. However, what constitutes healthy food is debatable, and our ideas of nutrition possess ideological dimensions. For example, the nutritional value of tofu, which the DTES NH serves, is widely debated with some even maintaining that soy is harmful (Hank, M et al, 2006). Furthermore, health is not the only concern of the DTES NH, as its motivations for serving food are also meant to fulfill a political and social function. The DTES NH not only bans "counter-intuitive" foods, it prohibits other foods on symbolic grounds. For example soups, stews and chilies are prohibited because they reflect the poverty mentality. The political agenda, however, might actually challenge the needs or desires of those the DTES NH aims to maintain an allegiance to: many foods banned on symbolic grounds are well liked by the people who come to the DTES NH. Similarly, the rejection of food in a neighbourhood where so many are hungry is viewed by some who suffer from hunger as illogical. Some participants commented on this, for example:

> Roger: Turning away stuff because "we don't eat that," or " we don't drink that," is bullshit. Take it and give it away then. Don't serve it there. But I mean, if someone drops off a cow, don't turn it away, send it off down the road if you can't use it, and give it to everybody. They do that, they won't take bread, they

won't take…I mean I know it's not a drop in for food, but if it's there, people can sure use it. You know smoothies aren't the answer.

The potential consequences of combining a political agenda with a service framework are not an uncommon problem in the DTES. During the Olympics, for example, a number of organizations turned down free tickets to Olympic events for political reasons, despite the fact that some of their members wanted to attend Olympic events, which would be otherwise inaccessible. These examples illustrate a frequently occurring paradox, when organizations that aim to represent and honour the downtrodden nonetheless engage in behaviour, which could be interpreted as paternalistic.

Many participants demonstrate in their interviews that the problem of food insecurity do not always rest in a lack of skills. When I facilitated community kitchens at the DTES NH, I was frequently impressed by the nutritional insights of many of those participating in the program, a large percentage of whom had worked in kitchens as cooks. The DTES NH website biography challenges the idea that DTES residents "lack nutritional ambitions, expectations and knowledge," and suggests that it is structural barriers, such as limited access to cooking facilities, and low-income that hinder access to nutritious food. However, the DTES NH seems inflexible with some of its guidelines, and the desires of many research participants do not necessarily fit their conception. The desire for meat was frequently expressed:

> Lyle: Good food is important for those who have cancer. I would like to find more chicken, and even chicken has cheaper parts too, chicklet is cheaper then chicken, and also liver is cheap and hearts are cheaper than chicken meat. Also protein could be used in soup and everything here.

> Lewis: Maybe lean more toward the meat and potatoes thing. Maybe once or twice a week or something. It doesn't have to be every day, you know. Chicken or something.

> Roger: I mean, no meat I know it's healthy and all. But you don't have these people for their teens, their adolescence—you have them for the day and they need carbs and protein to keep them alive till tomorrow. Give them an option, so they can throw the meat away if they don't want it—more of them want the meat than not, I promise you. Like even their community kitchens don't work and shit, because now you can't buy cheese anymore. And who wants to eat beans at ten in the morning?

The DTES NH is not necessarily philosophically opposed to meat, but cannot provide it for participants primarily due to the cost. While the local food bank could provide them with a surplus of meat, their food runner delivers to organizations only once a week and the DTES NH has storage limitations. This is one reason that has propelled the DTES NH to draft plans

advocating a centralized storage and delivery system for the DTES, as part of the Kitchen Tables project that I will discuss in chapter five. However, in the meantime the DTES NH is unable to satisfy this particular preference.

When asked about their favorite foods, many participants cited symbols of the poverty mentality, which are banned from DTES NH, although not necessarily for nutritional reasons. Items that came up most often (after meat) were rice, pasta, chili and soup. When I facilitated the Right to Food zine, and asked participants to share their food memories, and to contribute recipes, many of the items mentioned would never be served at the DTES NH, such as liver and onions, chicken noodle soup, meat tacos, and spaghetti. Often participants questioned some of the foods offered:

> Roger: Oh the tofu, you know, it's not food. And I mean they say tofu is healthy, it's not. I don't know where you get your tofu, but there is something going on with the tofu, you know? It's genetically altered? And they did tests on animals about it. The results of these tests are not good: they are worried about what it's going to be doing to humans.

> Frank: I mean some of the stuff they serve is terrible. One time there was this noodle dish and I took one bite of it and looked around and we were all like, what the heck is this? I ended up pushing it aside and…it's terrible, I mean it tastes fucking terrible. I couldn't believe it. The food there, it's alien. Nobody should be eating that. That was only that one dish.

> Lorenzo: I think there is a long way to go. Your policy says we are just serving nutritious and vegetarian food, but how about pizza or chicken or whatever people want? Remember, this is a variety neighbourhood, and people want different things, their country food too. I'm asking you, if you have a party and you are serving only vegetarian food, and no chicken or something, what's gonna happen?

There are class dimensions to determining food appropriateness that need to be considered in a diverse context like the DTES. While the DTES NH, in its food philosophy, stresses that it does not serve ethnocentric food, one could argue that there are still limitations. Furthermore, the fact that program participants' food preferences sometimes clash with the DTES NH food standards indicates the limitations of a system where it is organizations that determine access to food. If choice is a precondition to human dignity, the DTES NH is limited by its structure in promoting it.

4.2.2 Food Delivery

Sometimes the food philosophy gets in the way of engaging program participants meaningfully, which curtails the goal of inclusivity. The inflexibility of the guidelines, for example, sometimes alienated members. I noticed this when I facilitated community kitchens, and had to turn down suggestions from DTES residents because they did not fit the "food standards." The same conflicting sentiments were echoed with one research participant who experienced the same thing during her tenure at the DTES NH:

> Carol: When I worked at the Community Kitchen, participants would come up with ideas of things they would like to make, baked potatoes or a certain soup. Food that could be good and that they would like to make because that's what people are hungry for, or want to learn to make, and want to eat. We would have to say: no sorry we can't make that. There are definitely lots of things that you could make that are primarily vegetable and bean based, and I think it is good to have that as your primary, but I would be a little bit more flexible. I think to them it's a political statement as much as a nutritional statement.

Such conflicts are typically understood as pedagogical issues by senior staff, who reason that individuals are simply not accustomed to the type of food provided at the DTES NH, and that conflicts reflect a problem of habit rather then a problem of food appropriateness. Senior staff often relay anecdotes of how regulars eventually come to expect the type of food served at DTES NH, after exposure to it, and even educate new members about the DTES NH food guidelines, taking it upon themselves to explain why "we don't eat that here." I will discuss in chapter five how the use of a pedagogical frame will likely increase, as food reform becomes even more central, and DTES residents increasingly become exposed to the DTES NH food agenda through expanded outreach, as this is the direction DTES NH is taking. One could argue that establishing food standards, and educating about food quality, is akin to encouraging and finding ways to help marginalized HIV positive individuals to access and take their retroviral medication. However, how these food standards are defined, articulated and disseminated (and to whom), and the effects of these modes of dissemination, is not just circumscribed by funding (such as the MAT program which facilitates access to retrovirals for the most marginalized HIV positive residents of the DTES), but to a larger extent by politics. While I agree with standards being set to stop rotten food from being dumped into the DTES, for the creation of different avenues to access food (and a choice of foods), and for the opening of avenues to access food related skills, these initiatives require sharing input and acknowledging the structural causes that hinder access in the first place. Emphasizing pedagogy bears the risk of blaming the victim as Travers (1996) suggests.

4.2.3 A Question of Context

Conversely, when resources are scarce for movement building, let alone service provision, pedagogy could be the most economical solution to implement. Indeed, my experience applying for grants in the non-profit sector has shown me that many granting foundations reward proposals for initiatives that encourage healthy living and life skills building, in other words initiatives that adopt a pedagogical frame. One staff member understands the role of the DTES NH providing information as follows:

> Jane: I think that it's more about providing options. It's not like I have to be some authoritarian person who says [to DTES residents], 'Well, you have to have the fruit.' Basically I want to say [to them]: 'You have a choice, and the choice is yours. Here are the benefits of fruit over candy for your health, for your well being, but ultimately the choice is yours…and as much as your decision rests on your inability to procure the kind of food that you need and want then we can talk about that, but just in terms of your desire it's a choice.'

The above statement embodies a pervasive organizational contradiction. Here the recipient of this valuable information is constructed as someone whose nutritional ambitions are on one level curtailed by structural factors, but who ultimately has a choice when it comes to desire, desires that ought to be changed by knowledge, which the DTES NH has the power to (and will) provide. Again, individual moral responsibility is highlighted over structural constraints, which are overshadowed by the power/knowledge nexus the DTES NH operates within. It is assumed here that desires are different than needs and that with the right knowledge, desires can come to reflect what one needs (they can be aligned through education). The following interaction, noted during my fieldwork, further illustrates some of these competing assumptions:

> Field notes from June 8th 11 am: It's the community kitchen. There is only one participant this morning, the Community Kitchen facilitator, one staff and two DTES resident volunteers. Everyone has been summoned to participate in the food prep due to the lack of program participants, and everyone is sitting around the table. Leona has asked the few people present "What are your favorite foods?" in order to mobilize a conversation.
>
> Vol 1: Spaghetti.
>
> Vol 2: Tacos with beef!
>
> Facilitator: Let's talk about food.
>
> Vol 1: I like pasta.

Program participant: I'm used to talking about drugs.

CK volunteer facilitator attempts to direct conversation: Let's talk about healthy food.

Program participant: I love soup.

Vol 2: I love hamburger soup.

CK facilitator and staff start talking about having an outside community kitchen with a bbq in order to entice people to participate in the program.

Vol 1: We could throw on some steaks.

CK facilitator: I don't think we can have steak but we'll have lots of food.

Staff talks about how her marinated tofu has most people converted.

CK facilitator starts talking about the wonders of tofu.

Vol 1: I love yoghurt.

Facilitator: That puts good bacteria in your tummy.

The staff and the CK facilitator start talking about gluten-free pizza.

Program participant: Can we talk about something else? I'm too fucking hungry to talk about this.

There are conflicting ideas of what constitutes appropriate food, and the thoughts of DTES NH staff and facilitators, in this instance, do not necessarily align with the preferences or needs of program participants and DTES volunteers. The pedagogical bent, although "soft," is less effective in the face of immediate hunger, nor does it necessarily help to solve the underlying causes of food insecurity, let alone hunger. I would also argue that in a context whereby structural factors limit access to food of one's choice, the pedagogical frame could come across as paternalistic despite intentions to foster an equitable, inclusive environment.

In terms of food delivery, many participants noted the degree to which they despised the charitable model, and were just as critical about aspects of it as the staff of the DTES NH were. However, participants also highlighted some problems with the DTES NH mode of delivery. For example, many participants pointed out rationing techniques such as small bowls, and the monitoring of quantities, which reflect both the inability of an organization to fully alleviate the hunger of poor people, and also the degree to which principles can be eroded by outside factors such as limited funding, or concerns about the "secondary market," where food is traded for

money or drugs in the DTES (Culhane, 2010). The following from the DTES NH (and Potluck Café) Kitchen Table's project report, which I discuss more thoroughly in chapter five, highlights this concern:

> "Although products such as Ensure have been administered as a necessary stopgap measure for individuals who are at severe risk of extreme malnutrition, such products have a high street resale value in the DTES and are often sold for quick cash as opposed to being ingested by the individuals for whom they were prescribed (22)."

What is not clear is whether this concern was included to appeal to potential funders of the project, who would regard the choice of drugs over food as a lack of personal moral responsibility, rather than a lack of financial resources, or whether this indicates that lack of personal moral responsibility is an implicit assumption held by the DTES NH. Graham Riches highlights the need to accept that if provided with money some people will spend some of it on drugs, but that it is important to keep in mind that when welfare rates rise, rates of food insecurity lessen (2010). Across the entire social fabric people spend money on both food and their addictions (and food can also be considered an addiction in some cases), on categories of goods considered necessities and on goods considered whims (desires): with enough resources, one does not cancel out the other.

Since the DTES NH is reliant on funding to support its programs, it is also in a way predicated on a supply based rather than a needs based model, which is a primary critique directed at charities as we have seen (Tarasuk and Eakin, 2003). Some participants felt that the organization fostered a service user/service provider dichotomy, despite the explicit efforts of the DTES NH to challenge this discursively:

> Kristine: Because we couldn't plug our oven in our place and our two places were really shitty you know? We didn't really have access to a kitchen, so we were really into the idea of a community kitchen, a place where we can cook in collectivity. So we asked "Can we cook poutine? Because we're hungry for it." They said "it has to be healthy though" so yeah. It didn't happen so much…I remember just going there spontaneously and trying to help with the bannock one day because I wanted to cook, and I know a bit how to, but they said you have to be certified and you couldn't just cook like that. Especially with the oven, because of the dangers with oils. Those restrictions made me enter more in a relation of getting there to have services not going there with the people initiating this stuff, getting to know each other and doing stuff together.

Many research participants suggested that the DTES NH could deregulate access to its facilities. In this respect, such issues bind the DTES NH as the liability to which they would be exposed by allowing everybody access to the stoves and kitchen knives. The DTES NH must deal

with the realities of the law and of city regulations as an organization, regardless of its principles. It must also deal with the realities of the DTES. For example, allowing people to indiscriminately access large kitchen knives could have severe consequences in a context where street-scores are a feature of daily life. Yet these necessary regulations can amplify the service user versus service provider dichotomy. One participant noted that the community kitchen at the DTES NH is actually an appropriation of a community kitchen as staff control access, hours of operation and menu. Some participants also expressed frustration at the number of non-profit organizations and activists speaking on their behalf. For example:

> Lorenzo: The day I was watching all these fucking activists, they fucking think they know what they are talking about. They don't know shit. One thing is that you can go and proclaim that you are a social activist and say we need more fucking rooms, we need more fucking this and that for the homeless, and blah blah blah, but when we take a homeless person to the fucking room where the activist wouldn't even last a week because the bed is broken, there are bed bugs, rats... I mean you should see the rooms. These guys don't last a week, these fucking activists...You better know what you are talking about.

In her 2003 MA thesis, Barbara Waldern wrote that despite awareness of the ties between service agencies with the corporate and state sectors, DTES residents tended to support organizations because they provide services and even employment (p.76). My research indicates these attitudes may be changing, which could reflect frustration at the obvious contradiction between the continued presence (and outspokenness) of such organizations in the DTES, and the fact that conditions are not getting better and in many ways are getting worse. For example, Kristine elaborated the following:

> I don't know a lot about the Carnegie Community project, but I heard the name and thought 'what is that?' And that thing going on, the DNC, what is it, the neighbourhood council? Who is in that? [Names a well-known community activist].

Many research participants indicated, not only that they are aware of activism in the DTES, but also that they are also suspicious of some "community activists." Some perceived the Homeground Festival (established as a place of solace from tourists, the media, and the police during the Olympics) as a means of clearing the streets and of placating the homeless/under housed during the Olympics. Some also indicated a belief that the Carnegie supported the closures of Oppenheimer Park for renovations, and that it is therefore a pro-gentrifying mode of social engineering, indicating that this suspicion may be fuelled by the threats of displacement and gentrification that were exacerbated around the Olympic games. Such suspicions impact

activist organizations like the DTES NH, where regulations become increasing stringent due to funding criteria, conveying an us versus them message.

Participants often brought up another problematic aspect of food at the DTES NH: namely, how food is used to elicit participation. Participation is regularly encouraged through food offerings. For example, during the Splendour in the Night Photography Project, bananas and water are handed out in exchange for portraits. DTES residents can see these exchanges in a negative light:

> Carla: It's interesting because both types of organizations have good intentions and they want to offer something. The religious organizations want to offer something that they believe is good, and that will help heal people in some ways. And the program based ones, it's like, "well, we're going to teach you something." It's the same thing I guess! We'll teach you something and then you get something out of it. There are some sort of strings attached...

It can be seen that there are indeed strings attached to the DTES NH's conception of the Right to Food, despite its areas of distinctiveness from charitable organizations that "use food as a weapon." There are obviously limits to what one organization can do to alleviate poverty and pain, and the DTES NH, like many non-profits, is operating past its capacity while it attempts to meet the needs of many. As a researcher I can understand the intention behind the exchange of food for involvement: deserved compensation for a valuable contribution. However, ethics, as well as the limits of the organizational framework, regardless of philosophical orientation, must be taken into consideration by those trying to foster social change through the non-profit structure. While the DTES NH does, in some ways, provide an alternative to the charitable model (as differences are noted by a great majority of those who come through their doors), the DTES NH is structurally a non-profit, and though it does define itself in opposition to more mainstream charities, my data suggests that the differences are not radical indicating the extent to which the DTES NH is a hybrid organization. Some participants refused to say that one model is better than the other, and were critical of organizations of any type mediating access to food in general, for example:

> Kristine: I don't really want to relativize. I don't want to say, "oh this is better so this is ok." Personally I would prefer to see hunger strike in the hood than everybody fed...by [an] organization. And I know maybe it sounds...wrong...like I don't want to see nobody starving obviously....[but] I would [like to] see a hunger strike rather than seeing cops serving people food when Oppenheimer Park is getting closed. I would [like to] see people fucking getting together masked and tak[ing] over a store, and bring[ing] all the food in Pigeon [Park] and shar[ing] it with everybody. The people that did the action can

just hide so they don't get caught, or stuff like that… but at the same time in the 'hood, I don't know if I'm going to see that one day…

The limits of the non-profit framework are also articulated by some of the staff, who feel conflict in their role as paid agents of change, as Leona expresses here for example:

I should not be paid to give food! That's the whole conflict right there. What the fuck! There are just so many questions. I have to do my job but at the same time I ask myself when I do have the time to think. Am I just part of that? Am I making it worse, you know? Because I'm there, I'm making food for people, and giving them food, and those people want to thank me and they don't even have to say thank you, you know. Because that's a human right. They should have food. I feel I'm in that circle of poverty, and just encouraging it…

As I will explore in the next section, the limits of the philosophy and its implementation risk being exacerbated (rather than addressed) in light of recent rapid and continuing changes.

4.3 Expansion

What is going to be a challenge forever, is how to keep our allegiance to the low-income, homeless, under housed, really vulnerable part of our community--our neighbours--and still accommodate families and the condo owners? How do you welcome everybody in a space at the same time?" (Rock).

The opening of the "new neighbourhood house," as many DTES resident participants refer to it, heralded a number of changes, both explicit, in terms of shifts in program delivery, opening hours, number and type of staff, but also implicit, in terms of the "vibe" of the place and changes in demographics. It is not a coincidence that all research participants, staff and program participants alike, commented on these changes. Expansion emerged as an important theme from the perspective of those I engaged with, but it is also important at a broader level because the direction the DTES NH is taking with its expansion reflects broader structural forces that could impact what the organization stands for philosophically: namely, allegiance to the low-income residents of the DTES. The challenge the DTES NH is facing also reflects the difficulty of maintaining the DTES as a low-income community, but one that is also a healthy community (Culhane, 2010).

The new DTES NH space opened in April, after much planning, hard work, and a two-month closure. All of the DTES residents I interviewed commented on how the DTES NH closure affected and disheartened them, which attests to the importance the old space had in the lives of those who spent time there regularly. The new space symbolizes the growth of the DTES

NH, and means that several programs can now be accommodated simultaneously (meaning more needs can be served), and that finally the DTES NH can accommodate the child drop-in staff had always envisioned. However, the changes created by this move rippled through staff and long-term program participants, as my data indicates, in ways that suggest that the DTES NH would experience some fundamental changes. The new space is located one block east of the old location, reflecting the general movement of gentrification in the area. Despite a physical difference of only a few hundred yards, the distance makes both spaces seem worlds apart in terms of the demographic changes, from one corner to the next. The old space was located at Hastings and Jackson Street, which is characterized as a "high activity corner" for prostitution and drug dealing. This location was also one block closer to the high activity 100 block (considered the most "infamous" part of the DTES as this was where the notorious open drug market was, and to a lesser extent is still, located) and to many other service organizations in the DTES. As a result, the older space was more accessible, at least in terms of its location, to those most entrenched in street life.

One block up and the new DTES NH is suddenly serving an entirely different population. The DTES NH is now at the Hastings and Princess intersection, an area dominated by a large religious presence, including multiple organizations run by the powerful Union Gospel Mission (UGM) and the Salvation Army. Staff commented on the number of visitors from UGM showing up at programs to "suss out" the new DTES NH, on offers being made to pool resources, and on religious paraphernalia being left throughout the space. It is also relevant that the new location places the DTES NH in a "grey area" between the neighbourhood of Strathcona (where residents are adamant about not being of the DTES) and the Hastings Corridor. Staff relayed to me that many living on this intersection consider themselves to be from Strathcona, and as such looked down on other parts of the DTES—despite many of these people residing directly on Hastings Street, which to many in Vancouver is synonymous with the DTES. Many of these residents are now finding their way to the DTES NH. The tensions between sections of the DTES underlie boundaries of inclusion and exclusion that have real consequences. For example, many parents from parts of the DTES other than Strathcona report their children being chastised in Strathcona (where there are far more parks and amenities for children than in other parts of the DTES), and Strathcona parents forbidding their children to play with children from other part of the DTES. Often difference is expressed through racial and ethnic lines, particularly manifesting through tensions between Asian and First Nations groups. Because of its location, the DTES NH serves an increasing number of Asian participants, and this is particularly evident during the child-drop in.

The older space had diverse participants (including members of the Asian communities), and many of these participants have found their way back to the DTES NH, but their visits are less frequent, and those remaining are among the more "high functioning." The shifts in demographics, and the reasons underlying them, challenge ideological notions of the DTES as a unified community, and complicate attempts to foster unification or solidarity. Many participants commented on the demographic shifts:

> Tina: The two corners, oddly enough, are just two hundred yards apart. Yet they are absolutely night and day. One corner is very active with under housed and homeless people living their complex lives. The other corner is, well we got UGM [Union Gospel Mission] on two of the four corners of Princess [Street]. So we've got a massive religious component at this end. There is also mass construction on that corner, so nobody really hangs out 'cause it's empty and it's a different vibe, it's different people. There are a few more Asian families at this end while on Jackson there are more First Nations and Caucasian families. People won't come this far. A lot of our members who used to come all the time don't come this far up the road. It's too far away because they turn down there or…there is nothing up there for them other than us.

The change in location is not the only reason the demographics have shifted at the DTES NH. In order to accommodate the family drop-in, the DTES NH has had to change its hours of operation drastically. In the past, it generally opened its doors at noon and remained open until five in the evening. Now, it opens for the general public at ten in the morning, closes at two, and re-opens from three to six for children and guardians only. This has proven to be quite de-stabilizing to many, since mornings are inconvenient to the majority of low-income people in the DTES for a number of reasons, including what the DTES NH refers to as "the work of the materially poor." For example:

> Tina: Our hours changed, which was Huuuuuuge. I cried when I found out we had to share this space with the kids and the families. We had to 'cause that's part of the DTES NH's idea of including everybody. I didn't want to disappoint our members…. Mornings aren't a really good time for the community. People aren't up that early, or they've got to make it to the doctor's or the pharmacy and welfare or whatever, and they don't have time till the afternoons or they don't get up until the afternoons. For us to close for general programming at two o'clock is detrimental. It was really hard for people to adjust.

> Bobby: The old one [NH] was convenient. It was right around the corner from where I live. Because of my lung problem, it's just a little more effort to get down there. The old one stayed opened up later than two o'clock in the afternoon, and that was so much easier. I don't like the [new] time at all. I get there and it's already closed. I can't seem to get there early enough. It's disappointing.

Roger: If it was back to the old…if there was no family…you know kids used to come there? Things were fine before and now all the guys think it's a girl thing again, and they don't come there because of that. At two o'clock it's all done and [people are] just starting their day. When they wake up at whatever time they've got to figure out how to get high, what to eat, how to do their laundry, dry their [clothes]…stuff like that. I don't think it's helping anyone…and [the NH] are like "oh give it a year when [we] can get another storefront," but come on, a year down the road? How many more are going to die?

Changes may have the unintended consequence of exacerbating not just ethnic and racial tensions, as I discussed earlier, but of also fuelling divisions along gender and generational lines. The question of who is more deserving, and the framing of this as a question of life and death, illustrates the fact that the community is not necessarily unified, and contains divisions, which can be amplified when resources are scarce.

Issues with the new hours are reflected in levels of participation in the programs, and the number of people coming to the space. When I facilitated the Community Kitchens at the old space, in the afternoons the program would typically have at least 15 participants, and over 150 people would come in to enjoy the food. Since re-opening, the same program, now starting at 10 am, has generated very little participation. This is unfortunate, as the CK was, according to participants, one of the most popular programs. The DTES NH is again caught in a bind, knowing that many low-income residents are not morning people, but also that there are few resources for children in the DTES after three o'clock. They have had to compromise. But at what cost?

Many participants questioned why the DTES NH had to separate children from adults. For example:

Lewis: Well to me it's always been a real wonder why we have to separate ourselves from children. I think it's great to have kids in here. Why do we have to kick out all the adults? Because there are children here? I think it sends a really bad message to people in general: that there's no interaction between the generations. That it's either children or adults. I come from an environment where people cherish their children and try not to get in the way or damage them. I don't know why we need to kick people out because there are children here. I think that sends the wrong message. I'm really quite opposed to it.

Though the separation of children and adults is due primarily to liability issues, it is worth analyzing how this separation may be understood symbolically, in light of the fact that the DTES NH emphasizes giving DTES residents "the benefit of the doubt." Some participants interpret separation of adults and children as mistrust on behalf of DTES NH staff. Other similar contradictions were pointed out to me, such as the fact the washroom door at the DTES NH has no lock, and the fact that only staff and student interns have access to the kitchen and are allowed

to cook. The DTES NH, despite its intentions, is also bound by bylaws, and the realities of operating in the DTES. But how DTES residents interpret these various responsibilities is another question.

Separation is, of course, one of the critiques directed at charitable organizations, which at a symbolic level betrays a power imbalance between those providing and those receiving services. The following quote helps elucidate how both staff and program participants might interpret the separation:

> Anna: I think one of the big challenges I have day to day is that we are only open for families. Having to turn people away from the DTES NH is really challenging. And not just when I get yelled at…that sucks too. But people are genuinely in need of a place to go. They want to sit down, have a coffee and relax. It's telling them they can't, because we have kids in there. It makes a bigger sort of dichotomy between the two communities. I've heard people refer to the families and, then, the general community. No! Everybody is part of the same general community. It's too bad we have to distinguish between them. But I know it's for safety and because of the world we live in, and, in the DTES it's a necessity.

Many agreed that children need resources too, but felt that the sequestered drop-in promoted division rather than inclusivity. In that respect, the DTES NH is caught in a double bind. The rationale behind this shift is aligned with the DTES NH philosophy to be inclusive and to fulfill a variety of needs, reflecting the community--which is indeed diverse, despite indications given in the above quote that at least some of the staff conceive of a "general" community. However, for now, during this transition period, it seems that fewer people are accessing the DTES NH, and particularly those who are most marginalized seem to be fewer in number. The DTES NH is in a difficult position because it wishes to maintain allegiance to both the low-income community, particularly the homeless and under housed, but also aims at inclusivity. Furthermore, children are among the most vulnerable to poverty in BC, the province where there is the highest rate of child poverty in Canada— though many DTES residents and some staff are under the impression that there are more services for women, and by extension for children, in the area than for single men (Raisetherates.org). These competing interests could be impossible for the DTES NH to reconcile without significantly more resources.

Structural changes at the DTES NH may also deter individuals from coming, and further exacerbate the alienation some residents express regarding the changes. With more space, there has been an administrative push to run multiple programs concurrently. This has been problematic, given that there are hardly enough participants for even one program that early in the morning. This could be indicative of the administration loosing touch (or being forced to loose

touch) with the everyday realities of the organization, as some suggested to me. Carla expressed how the vision formulated in the office up the street and away from the programming space is incongruent with the daily reality of the DTES NH:

> Carla: Some ideas, like having three or four programs at once, present challenges on other levels. Running a community kitchen while there is a movie going on is hard. And I guess there's no real balance between being present [and being behind the scenes]. Because all the time that I was there…with the new space they [senior staff] weren't there at all to over see [the execution of their ideas].

The issue of programming at the DTES NH indicates an area of disconnect between philosophical intentions and practices: the rationale behind multiple programs is to meet more needs; however, as I discussed earlier, the emphasis on programs is not necessarily congruent with the preferences of DTES residents, how they define their personal needs, or how they interpret the role of the DTES NH in their lives. During my fieldwork I noticed it was difficult to get people engaged in even one program, as a number of people just wanted (and were accustomed from the past) to come in, have a cup of coffee or a bite to eat, and relax. The change to an officially program-based organization calls for a stricter adherence to insisting on program participation. This translates into a set of regulations that result in a less relaxed environment, as staff members are instructed to employ a number of restrictive mechanisms. For example, the removal of a popular outdoor seating area, the insistence that people sign in when they arrive at the DTES NH, placing food and coffee at the back of the space to de-emphasize it, and telling people explicitly when they come in that the DTES NH is not a drop in and that it is program based. A stricter adherence to a program-based framework could also be detrimental given what my research suggests about why people valued the DTES NH in the first place, namely the fact that it represented something rare in the DTES: a pleasant, relaxing space to be social, a flexible space just to be, a space to access a number of resources without hassle, a space of minimal supervision with very limited rules and regulations: a "haven."

Another reason people enjoyed the old DTES NH space was the staff. With the re-opening came a change in staff. In fact, the most senior staff members of the DTES NH were not present as often during the crucial transition as they had been in the past. During the transition Rock was on holiday, and the most identifiably grassroots member of the organization took on a more behind the scenes role, which removed her from the floor. The absence of the latter member was commented on extensively by both newer staff and program participants, as she is known as the "face of the Neighbourhood House." The popularity of the organization is bolstered by the fact that this woman was in the past homeless and entrenched in drug culture, and that she is very

well known, competent, credible and able to put even the most marginalized people at ease. While staffing has tripled (quadrupled since my fieldwork ended), those most visible at the programming space are clearly not from the neighbourhood. This likely affects the perception of the DTES NH being a grassroots organization. Obviously, people from outside the neighbourhood are capable of doing good work in the DTES. I am not arguing that middle-class individuals are categorically repellent to the lower-class residents in a totally black and white way. However, there are many possible issues relating to power imbalances wherever the "haves" are in direct and regular contact with the "have nots." Issues relating to change in staff could also be exacerbated by the fact that many long-term volunteers were lost during the DTES NH closure. Many participants expressed a strong preference that staff be of the neighbourhood:

> Lewis: To me it's important that staff come from the community. A lot of places in the DTES have exclusionary policies where they won't hire people from the DTES. It's so discriminatory. The only people working there are people from outside the community. Here at least it's run by people who are from the community, and you don't have that chasm.

> Frank: Wherever I go, it's an issue when I see people taking jobs from [those in the DTES]. If they're coming from an outside community and they're taking jobs here [then] they're spending their money someplace else. Why don't we bring people from the community and let them have an opportunity to run these places? Or at least give them an opportunity to see how these places are run, even if not to run them. I think it enfranchises people. I think the higher expectation you have of people the more you're going to get it back. And I mean this is one of those places, where if you come in and you're part of the community, you're going to get a lot of benefit from it.

> Cat: Why call it the Neighbourhood House if you're not from the neighbourhood?

Conversely, one participant preferred that staff be from outside of the neighbourhood and, in her words, "educated":

> Marie: It's not the same as if you would go to WISH or another organization. At the DTES NH, I see people who are from the neighbourhood, but who are not the hardcore drug users or the hardcore temperamental person. I think having people from outside the neighbourhood can change a little bit of the panorama and the mentality of the neighbourhood.

I think it is important to highlight the tendency of organizations to employ people from outside the DTES. Many middle-class people are able to do a good job in service organizations. They can easily demonstrate empathy, understanding or attempt to challenge oppressive social relations in daily interactions. However, often organizations favour hiring middle-class (formally

educated) employees because credentials are increasingly required to fulfill the standards required by granting agencies. However, even the most well meaning, progressive, social justice oriented, middle-class person carries specific symbolic capital that can be off-putting to those who do not possess the same distinctions. I have personally seen how easy it is to someone seeking drug treatment from within the system to tell if the "specialist" they are dealing with is speaking from theoretical rather than lived experience. Recently I also went to a talk given by an expert on the "globalization of drug addiction" that was being held at a rehabilitation centre in the DTES. I remember thinking how strange it was to be in a room full of obviously well-healed experts (many who worked in the area) as I observed the networking and hobnobbing going on during the intermission, while outside residents would walk by sometimes looking in as though we were in a strange aquarium. One of the strengths of the DTES NH is that it emerged from lived experience.

The DTES NH is trying to find ways to create employment for DTES residents, but at the moment it cannot practice what it preaches. It is likely that the DTES NH doesn't have the resources to hire moderately functioning people from within the DTES. However, a few participants expressed disappointment when an "outsider" (myself included) was taken on for a particular job, rather than a long-term, high-functioning DTES resident volunteer. Who works at a particular organization does impact the perception of that organization, I would argue. Many people I engaged with would describe organizations in the DTES in terms of how "ignorant" their staff came across.

The direction the DTES NH has taken in its expansion has emerged as an important tension in light of the various critiques articulated by the low-income DTES residents I interviewed. My data indicates that the people the DTES NH wishes to support may be dissatisfied with the recent hours of operation, the type of programming offered and the emphasis on programs in general, the inter-generational separation fostered by the child-drop in centre, and the changes in staff. These transformations are deepened by the fact that they have occurred all at once. My data suggest that the credibility and popularity of the DTES NH amongst the low-income residents of the DTES is threatened by recent changes in direction. For example:

> Marie: I think what happens is that when you start getting more people in, you start getting more bureaucratic red tape. All of a sudden when you need something you have to go through the channels and that takes time. Whereas when it's just one on one or one person, you get the job done immediately.

> Cat: It sometimes feels like a dream where all the old stuff has been transplanted into a new space. I guess with you, you're there every day so you are getting used to it, as opposed to me when I go in I have that nostalgic kind of [feeling]. I miss that homey, safe place to go. I got used to it, it's been taken away and that kind of bothers me.

Bobby: It's just not the same place anymore. It's changed. It's like Sony: they make a special machine, they're doing good with it and then they screw it up and make it so you can't play a disc you have to download things and it's not easy. [The NH] is just so impersonal now. I just don't feel it. In our world everything is changing, expanding…it's too fast and I feel left behind.

Bureaucratization, transitoriness, rapid growth are all reminiscent of the late capitalist mode of production, the political-economic context in which the NH, a non-profit organization, is imbedded —and my research indicates an acute awareness of this, as low-income participants articulate frustration and a sense of displacement in the face of rapid transformations. DTES residents seem to be the most aware—or vocal–of the broader forces that mediate the NH philosophy, which could be because they are most acutely affected by these and at the same time less directly implicated. However, responses to my questions were not unified according to class position, and certainly staff articulated various levels of understanding of the tensions I isolated.

In this chapter I presented some of my data, which I organized around three tensions. I first explored the NH philosophy versus its practice. I then examined the NH's food standards versus the food preferences of some DTES residents. Finally, I examined the NH direction of expansion through which I have tried to demonstrate arises a tension between its grassroots (low-income oriented) sensibilities and its evolution as a non-profit organization. Through organizing my data around these tensions, the voices of DTES residents (and to some extent of some staff members) reverberate in a way that I interpret as complicating the NH's goal of being "community driven." In the following chapter, I will examine the implications of my findings by connecting these tensions to broader political-economic forces, such as the 'marketization' of the non-profit sector and discussing broader implications for social change.

5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

5.1 Implications For the Future of the NH: A Critical Discussion

> *"Suddenly you're in this space that feels three times as big, though it's only twice as big…and we basically tripled our staff. For everybody it's an adjustmentt, a realization, and a letting go of a very mom-and-pop organization. Before we were on one little corner and there was this little miracle of getting it all done all the time and now…really it's our virginity we're losing. Because now we're manifestly a non-profit organization, one that is growing, moving and changing. It's remarkable how that awareness rippled through us all" (Rock).*

The DTES NH has grown extensively and rapidly since it opened its doors only six years ago. This growth can be characterized by a two fold shift: from grassroots organization to "manifestly a non-profit organization" and, as I will soon discuss, the DTES NH hopes to move toward the direction, at least partially, of a for-profit social enterprise through its newest and largest initiative yet: the DTES Kitchen Tables Project. In chapter four I discussed three tensions that organize my data: philosophical implementation, food preferences versus food standards, and expansion. In this chapter I will discuss how these tensions are connected and what these tensions suggest about the future direction of the DTES NH. I will also contextualize these developments by examining how broader structural forces affect the DTES NH: namely the marketization of the non-profit sector, a process I described in Chapter two of this thesis. I conclude this chapter by discussing a fourth and overarching tension: social change versus service delivery, which has emerged as an implication of my research findings. I then provide recommendations for the DTES NH and activist oriented organizations, and discuss the limitations of these recommendations, and of my research.

A key goal of the DTES NH philosophy is to reflect the DTES community. In its online bio, for example, it is stated that the beauty of the DTES NH is that "we are it and it is us," and in this statement lies the implicit (and perhaps tautological) assumption that the DTES NH is the DTES (2010). However, my data suggests that this grassroots aspiration is currently affected by the transitions through which the DTES NH has been going. For example, I have found that only one staff member is considered from "the community" by the low-income program participants I spoke with, and that she is no longer present on the floor; that DTES residents are not as active in

decision making as the organizational narrative suggests; and that many of the programs, particularly surrounding food, are not always compatible with the preferences of DTES residents. Notably, I have found that community input is minimal when it comes to the directions taken with the expansion of the organization, and this is reflected in the dissatisfaction expressed by many of the participants in this study toward recent changes in the DTES NH operations. While much of what the DTES NH does is popular with many (including those who come to programs), my research indicates that the direction the DTES NH is taking could undermine what many participants view as the most positive aspects of the organization: the provision of a positive, inclusive, flexible space, the type of place that there is a dearth of in the DTES, particularly as it becomes increasingly gentrified and regulated. While this growth is still in its early stages, and it is possible that the issues I have noted are simply growing pains, it is worth exploring these critiques in order to inform the continued growth of the organization. This is especially true in the case of the latest project the DTES NH is embarking on in partnership with the Potluck Café: the DTES Kitchen Tables project (KT). This is a major project, which combines and potentially exacerbates the tensions imbedded in the DTES NH food philosophy and its current expansion.

The KT project is co-led by the DTES NH and the Potluck café. It is a reformist initiative to transform and centralize the procurement and delivery of food in the DTES as a whole, a conglomeration that could be indicative of a broader trend toward the formation of Mega Non-Profits such as (in our local context) the Portland Housing Society (PHS) or the Union Gospel Mission, to which many residents refer when they talk about service oligarchies in their neighbourhood. The KT project involves a variety of stakeholders: residents (the three hundred and seventy six who were surveyed), health professionals, restaurant professionals, service providers, and the local business community. These stakeholders will work together to create a sustainable food system in the DTES, meaning "abundant quality food for all delivered in a dignified manner" (Kitchen Tables report, 4: 2010). The strategies that will be adopted are two-fold, embodying both middle ground and transformative strategies. The former is evident in efforts to politicize other non-profits and to make them more discerning. The latter is evident in the creation of a food economy (including jobs for low-income residents) through the creation of food ordering, processing, delivering, and preparing mechanisms, as well as the exploitation of existing initiatives such as the Sole Food community farm.

Though the KT is described as a "grassroots expression of the Right to Food," the term grassroots in this case may be problematic, in light of the multi-sectored approach that will be taken, the involvement of powerful stakeholders, the limited resident involvement, and the tactics used to elicit resident involvement. For example, the original input for this project consisted of

surveys to be filled out by residents at various locations during the Roving Community Kitchen. These surveys were highly structured, over five pages in length, and administered the day before welfare, a particularly desperate day for many in the DTES, in exchange for offerings of fruit and cigarettes. While the data generated indicates (as does much qualitative research) that those using food charities to subsist are unsatisfied with this mode of food delivery, residents were not surveyed about the seven solutions put forth in the Kitchen Tables report.

These solutions consist of: 1. Creating nutritional standards; 2. Developing menus and recipes; 3. Food procurement; 4. Food preparation and processing; 5. Food distribution; 6. Engaging professional and food industry expertise; 7. Food waste and composting solutions (DTES Kitchen Tables, 2010: 6). The solutions proposed are to be developed through extensive meetings and brainstorming sessions with the other more powerful stakeholders, such as social and health service providers, food industry professionals, policy makers and researchers (ibid, 5:). I would therefore argue that the KT project is not likely to be a community driven initiative, especially when considering the disconnects between philosophical intentions and implementation my data has elucidated, although the DTES NH might argue that many of the solutions developed are derived from unofficial "street corner" consultations over the years. In order to foster a more systematic participatory process, I would suggest developing more open-ended consultation processes and methods in order to better reflect what DTES residents envision as an improved food system in the DTES. Inclusion of residents, however, should not be coercive, which is easier said than done.

A problematic aspect of the KT is that the majority of DTES NH programs will now be geared toward mobilizing for the KT project. For example, as of September 2010, new programs are offered, such as the creation of Right to Food banners and murals that will circulate throughout the DTES, Right to Food street theatre to be performed for those lining up at other organizations, the continuation of the Right to Food Zine, and the screening of food related movies. This years' Homeground Festival will also be oriented toward the Right to Food. There will now be community kitchens targeting children and teens on Saturdays in order to get children to develop skills-sets, but also to get them to encourage their parents to buy certain foods. This is a tactic akin to the "nag factor" employed by corporate psychologists in their marketing schemes (Bakan, 2004), and is also potentially insensitive to the fact that some of these parents may not have the means to purchase and prepare the foods demanded of them. Although my research showed many enjoy the DTES NH for being a relaxed space in which to enjoy food and coffee, because of the increased emphasis on program participation, people may be coerced

into mobilization efforts for the KT agenda, or may stop coming to the DTES NH as a result of changes in the ambiance there.

The KT will also make the DTES NH more visible in the DTES and beyond. A food activist has been hired to court other organizations, and to mobilize DTES residents in breadlines, in SRO's, and within the DTES NH space. The activist will teach residents, through public education and consciousness-raising methods, to demand their Right to Food at other organizations in the area. This type of activity can have troubling symbolic dimensions in a neighbourhood like the DTES where there is already a great deal of proselytizing.

The question of representation is also raised in this context. The DTES NH aims to reflect the DTES "in its harshness and in its poetry," but in a diverse neighbourhood like the DTES, where there are so many conflicting perspectives, it would be very difficult for any group to fully represent the community and the sensitivity of the issue of representation is heightened due to the network growing around the DTES NH nexus. One might ask: does an organization have to be grassroots in order to be a positive attribute to a community? Likely, as the DTES changes and is increasingly gentrified, being "grassroots" will mean something different than what it once did, as Tina illustrates:

> Tina: Our neighbourhood is changing. Grassroots could be someone from down the road, and there's a lot of people [now] who come in here who have no issues, no addictions.

In a gentrifying context like the DTES, it becomes even more important to find ways to provide the most powerless with forums to be heard. The DTES NH is very much aware of this and strives to be one such platform. But representation in this context will always be contentious because of the very power dynamics the DTES NH is speaking to. One could argue that the DTES NH presentation of itself as "representing the thousands of voices of the community," is used as a swaying (legitimizing) device to garner public and financial support in a climate of increased funding cuts and competition for resources. This type of public relations marketing may be necessitated by the funding structure for non-profits, but it nonetheless risks essentializing community by focusing on one cause and neglecting others. There is also the risk of silencing those the DTES NH aims to represent which is particularly problematic in the contested DTES. Graham Riches articulates the need for initiatives not just to focus on food *per se*, but to look at, and address, the whole continuum of inequities:

> I think if [a movement] is just about organizing the food system, its going to miss the point, not that it shouldn't happen, but if the other part doesn't happen, it's going to pass by the issue, and governments will continue to ignore the problem.

But how can one small organization focus on and resolve the deep injustices of our political economic system? It would seem that on one hand the DTES NH has avoided niche specialization but has run into the opposite problem of having to meet too many interests. The people who work at the DTES NH do as much as they can from within a system that may be impossible to escape. They are passionate, hard working, and genuinely care about the low-income residents of the DTES. They are critical of the current social structure, and believe in their vision of community building. A lot of what they do makes people smile, a tangible effect (and immediate reward) that I have seen over and over in my nearly three years of contact with this organization. I believe that the DTES NH's vocal efforts to educate potential donors about dumping expired, damaged and toxic food in the neighbourhood are especially positive and useful, particularly as municipalities, in an attempt to increase donations, adopt legislation protecting donors and charities from civil action, should the food they provide prove harmful (see the *Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act* in the US, and in BC *the Food Donor Encouragement Act*, for example.) Further, in light of the close relationships staff and administration share with so many DTES residents, immediate betterment of the brutal circumstances that shape so many lives is encouraging to them. If an individual benefits from a leadership program, has improved health from better nutrition, becomes more social from contact with others at a CK, the DTES NH considers this a positive outcome. My critiques, though related to the daily operations of the organization, are structural and therefore abstract, and could be considered academic and therefore unrealistic by some of those who are on the frontlines of systemic iniquities, who consider "academic" a pejorative term. There is a role for academic analysis, I argue, but the changes I advocate cannot stem from just one organization, as I will be discussing in my concluding thoughts. However, there are certain things that can be done by those who deal in pragmatics.

Empathy and concern for health are conflated with politics and power. When a political function is mediated by structural and economic forces, and operates within a framework such as the non-profit system, which funnels activism, a movement (or organization) bears a greater risk of perpetuating systems of domination. When corporate/market interests are promoted in the name of social change, political dogma becomes all the more powerful. But this power is exercised in the wrong direction. The DTES NH is caught in a bind as it is swept up in the current of marketization to which all non-profits are vulnerable. This is evident in the degree to which the organization is supported by government monies, public health interests and, increasingly, the corporate sector (for example, competing for grants from corporations like Pepsi and Hellmann's Mayonnaise). The fact that the board consists of middle-class academics and planners (save for

one low-income resident) is also reflective of pressures to accrue specific cultural capital and legitimacy with which to best compete. This type of involvement inevitably impacts the organization and those for whom it speaks.

5.2 The Marketization of the Social Right to Food?

Organizational theory is a useful framework with which to understand the changes occurring within the DTES NH, as it allows us to see the connections between internal attitudes and external environmental pressures (Eikenberry and Kluver, 2004: 133). The main assumption of this framework is that organizations are imbedded in communities, political systems, and industries, and that there are rules and requirements organizations must abide by in order to receive support and build legitimacy (Feely, 1997: 490 in ibid). In the current political economic context, non-profits such as the DTES NH are manifestly forced to take on some of the values of the market, in order to procure support from governments and from corporate donors, which are increasingly implicated. Eikenberry and Kluver argue that this type of influence manifests in four different ways: through the generation of commercial revenue by which non-profits engage in for-profit activities (e.g. by opening gift shops); through the influence of new donors from the corporate sector: "venture philanthropists" who invest in non-profits most likely to provide "ROV" (return on investment); through contract competition, which discourages the sharing of resources between organizations; and through the increased shift towards social enterprise (ibid). The positive short-term results of these shifts, if undertaken properly, include access to more reliable resource streams, greater efficiency (in the corporate sense, not necessarily in terms of meeting needs), legitimacy, and, some might argue, better accountability (ibid). However, these changes come at the cost of potentially compromising values, as organizations are forced to focus on measurable outcomes.

The DTES NH, despite having a registered non-profit status, does not consider itself to be part of the system, as my conversation with Rock indicate:

> I guess I never think of us in terms of the system…because what we do here is so creative. Of course people, funders, and individuals say no to us, but nobody says no in a way that stops what we want to do. And we know what we need to do. And we don't feel like… we are part of the system. We all take from our individual experience in this community…and we ask what isn't attractive to do, what doesn't work, what makes people feel diminished and what makes people feel better? And we work on a very human scale. We need to keep humanizing ourselves to the community, as much as we help the community humanize itself. ...I think in terms of what you're calling the system, we just look at it as there are all these means and tools out there… you write grants, you get funding, you determine your philosophy, and you're clear on it, and you abide by it.

Certainly many of the program participants I engaged with consider the DTES NH different from other organizations (in positive terms). Most of the staff at the DTES NH whom I interviewed also viewed the organization as different from others, insofar as they perceive the DTES NH as non-competitive, aiming to share resources, and not claiming ownership over its members. However, they acknowledge that the current funding structure contributes to competition with other organizations and many have implied that there are increasing levels of fragmentation within their organization. The DTES NH is not immune to market penetration, as it is utilizing several of the strategies described by Eikenberry and Kluver, including "contract competition (2004)." As a result, the DTES NH is implicated in the corporate and government bidding structures. This could force the DTES NH to become competitive in other ways, despite its philosophical objection to competition.

The DTES NH is also increasingly forced to rely on the influential new donors of the "venture philanthropy" breed, particularly in generating funding for the KT project. The DTES NH is competing with numerous other organization for Pepsi Grants and promoting corporate interests through emails sent by staff signed with the Pepsi-refresh link in order to win votes, generating substantial corporate publicity. Furthermore, the DTES NH plans to approach "venture philanthropists," as Rock stated:

> We will also be asking shortly different private businesses if they want to invest…in KT, and I can imagine without cynicism that there are multiple parties who support KT…because they foresee that it's going to save them money. And I don't really care, and I don't think that's a problem... as long as we remain true to KT allegiance to the low-income community and their Right to Food.

The strategy of the DTES NH is, explicitly, to use market forces to their advantage, to piggyback on the system while protecting themselves from interference, by remaining true to their low-income allegiance and their philosophy. However, my research suggests that transformations are already taking place that are further complicating these philosophical ideals.

The goals of the KT project are "community economic development" (CED) and the creation of social enterprise to allow the project to be self-sustaining (rather than contingent on private and public monies, which are currently funding the project), and to encourage the building of community capacity and a revitalized DTES that is beneficial to the low-income community. This move toward enterprise is symptomatic of disillusionment with both government and corporate solutions to poverty; however, CED and community capacity embody neoliberal rhetoric, the same rhetoric used by developers, and carry the danger of de-politicizing struggles by de-emphasizing government responsibility. Berner and Philips (2005) demonstrate how

through this type of rhetoric the poor are "empowered" and "are assumed to be able to overcome deficits of infrastructure and services" and to "exhaust their tremendous entrepreneurial potential (17)." However, they argue that social entrepreneurship is problematic, insofar as it will exclude those who are unable to participate in the economy and may in fact prevent resources from reaching the most vulnerable members of a community, by encouraging the government to continue scaling back the welfare state (ibid).

The KT project acknowledges this limitation by focusing on the reform of food organizations, as well as social enterprise. However, reform also perpetuates and legitimizes the structures in place, as one participant aptly puts it:

> Kristine: Those intentions scare me, because they are reformist intentions. The way that [the DTES NH] for the moment express themselves, and who they employ there, even if it was people from the community, I think I would be pretty skeptical about economic development. But at the same time… I would say the majority are not people that…are from the 'hood really. And even if they have good intentions in their projects, or they're not fascists, they're not like "oh you have to go to the mass and you have to listen to Jesus"…I think a lot of leftists are good at…play[ing] the good cop you know what I mean? Like it's another fucking good cop place. And I don't want to generalize like that, but I just feel…[that] it legitimatizes the right. The DTES NH will just legitimize UGM [Union Gospel Mission] right beside it, and I think they will also legitimize the other guy down there, and Potluck Café. [It] also legitimizes the structures that are already implemented. It will create another… bridge, another place for activist leftists to infiltrate.

Kristine describes the degree to which market, state, and charitable solutions are inadequate, and indeed mutually reinforcing, which can lead to defeatism or, conversely, to inspire actions that run the risk of being appropriated by the Non-Profit Industrial Complex (NPIC), as has historically been the case, and now the market.

5.3 Social Change versus Service Delivery

> *Take a moment to imagine yourself, 20 years ago, in a room full of…leftists discussing strategies for moving forward in a country drifting rightward. Few of you would conjure the image of…a vast army of Non-Profits leading the people's revolution (Tang, 223: 2007).*

The most insidious dilemma faced by grassroots organizations in the current political-economic climate is a limited choice: ultimately, to register or to die. As discussed in chapter two, since the 1960s revolutionary period, social movements have been co-opted by the NPIC — a

growing trend as a result of its capacity to absorb dissent and channel movements into more legitimate, reformist channels —whereby social change gets conflated with service delivery within the non-profit system. As a consequence of this type of funneling, the structures that perpetuate poverty and social injustice remain in place. Social change and social service provision are increasingly incommensurable, as the current grant funding structure, and consequent marketization and corporatization of non-profits, are antithetical to radical social transformation.

My research supports the above argument. For example, contract competition distances the administration from the day-to-day operations of the DTES NH, a source of frustration for the executive director:

> Rock: There is a disproportionate amount of time spent fundraising, writing grants, and reporting on them. As a director of this house, I would say that as much as thirty percent of my time goes to that. And given that almost every penny of my salary comes from public funds, I think it's a misuse of public funds. But I'm obliged to do it because that's the system…

While the DTES NH may strive not be part of "the system," I would argue that in dealing with the system (i.e. the funding structures), it is constrained by outside forces. Time spent securing funding is an example of the way structural aspects of the system have significant effects and unintended consequences on the DTES NH and, at more interpersonal levels, on the people it aims to represent and empower.

My exchanges with the DTES NH staff support this proposition. For example, staff mentioned that, with the separation of administrative and day to day operations brought on with the DTES NH's expansion, as well as the increase in administrative duties related to new programs, more time at staff meeting is spent on updates, and less is spent on the creative exchange of ideas. Due to limited time and resources combined with rapid growth, staff members are less integrated, as they must focus on the specific tasks circumscribed by job titles that are governed by (and routinely change due to) funding bodies. DTES residents were not the only party critical of the direction taken by the DTES NH. A number of the staff and volunteers expressed uncertainty and conflicting feelings at the approaches undertaken, and this dubiety seems to have been galvanized by the KT project.

Historically, the structure the NPIC forces upon the organizations it absorbs is not conducive to movement building. In order to secure scarce resources, non-profits are forced to rely on funding bodies and to find creative ways to deal with their rigid requirements even as it is acknowledged, in the words of DTES NH staff, that there is a difference between what is fundable and what is needed. In order to remain viable, organizations are forced to

professionalize. This process threatens grassroots values, encourages class conflicts, and discourages meaningful collaboration as movements from within the NPIC framework become narrowly focused, or focused on reformist and educational goals, and as non-profits must compete with other organizations for resources that come at a high cost. Furthermore, the structure of the non-profit becomes unsustainable due to the amount of work needed for movement building. Andrea Smith (2007) states:

> The NPIC contributes to a mode of organizing that is ultimately unsustainable. To radically change society, we must build mass movements that can topple systems of domination, such as capitalism…The NPIC encourages us to think of social justice as a career…However, a mass movement requires the involvement of millions of people, most of whom cannot get paid…(10).

Many of the staff members I interviewed frequently mentioned the importance of the "big picture" to me, which refers to the broader movement building activities that go beyond service delivery. But the big picture can become secondary when even basic service functions are difficult to manage. This seems to be a vicious cycle within the DTES NH as it seems that those services most valued by, atleast some, DTES residents are compromised in the name of movement building, which is in turn compromised by the daily operations of non profit work. Some staff and volunteers could be alienated by a division of labour that keeps some, more than others out of the more creative process of movement building:

> Sheila: There is just so much stuff that needs to be done, and not enough time or people to get it done. You are finding yourself just barely skimming the surface of what needs to be done. Cleaning is the most important and anything above that sometimes doesn't get done.

> Leona: When I work I never have access to anything related to the big picture. I am forced to focus on the details: the milk on the tables, twenty people asking me for something, cleanliness, making sure that every single piece of cutlery, every cooking utensil, is in the right place.

This particular exchange with Leona reminded me of when I worked at the DTES NH, and often found myself alone in the space during programming hours. I was so overwhelmed with demands that I would go into the storage room and pretend to get milk in order to stave off a full-blown panic attack. It is well known that burnout is a reality for most non-profit workers. It is sometimes impossible to engage in big-picture movement building on top of already crushing daily burdens.

During my fieldwork, the main critique I heard about some past staff members that did not work out was their unwillingness (or inability) to work all the extra hours necessary to demonstrate commitment to the tasks deemed more important than the daily operations. These

demands proved very difficult for me, and I worked there when the DTES NH was of much smaller scale. As the plans grow more elaborate for the movement building aspect of the DTES NH, the big picture encapsulated by the KT project, the DTES NH may encounter barriers as a result of an already overburdened staff and a dearth of volunteers. The following quote from a staff member accords with arguments made that have questioned the viability of enacting social-change from within the NPIC:

> Jane: I will sit down to write an email that I had to write to someone at nine, and am interrupted so many times that I don't finish it until like three…so it's just that kind of stuff—time. I could get really anxious about it, but I can only do what I can do in the time that I have. I'll do the best that I can do. 'Cause I've got to keep my own health and sanity clear in my own mind so I don't totally over extend myself. The possibility, I think, for over extending oneself in non-profit or community work, is so great, and especially because it is work that you think is important, and that you want to do. But I have to be realistic about my own stores of energy and capabilities as a person.

While I agree with Smith's argument that social change and the non profit structure are incongruant, in a context like the DTES it would be unfair for me, a middle-class white woman working toward an advanced degree that will help me compete in the market, to say that people should not be paid for movement building, or to expect people, especially impoverished marginalized people, to topple the capitalist system from which I also benefit. Furthermore, as I discussed, staff at the DTES NH are well aware of the constraints placed on them due to their inability to offer DTES residents honoraria for program facilitation. They acknowledge that having to seek outside volunteers is a "double edged sword" in a context of extreme disparity. Many organizations in the DTES rely on a great number of community volunteers to operate; but in this context of stark imbalance it would be unrealistic to expect to find "millions" of people who could work for free when there are a great number of obstacles to securing even basic subsistence needs even defined in the most narrow terms. What alternatives are there for me to propose, when I myself am complicit in the very system of which I am critical, and when organizations like the DTES NH that articulate critiques of the current system on a daily basis, and are front line witnesses to social injustice, face the apparent inevitability of "marketization?" Is there the possibility of a middle ground approach that is sustainable? What does revolution look like? If I cannot provide comprehensive answers to these questions, what is the purpose of my work?

5.4 Concluding Thoughts and Recommendations

"The oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular
representatives of the oppressing class shall represent and repress them..."
(Lenin, 1917).

The DTES NH's implementation of its Right to Food philosophy is problematic on several levels. At the most basic level, I argue that, in light of its mobilization tactics and food miscues, its "grassroots interpretation" has diverged from its community-driven origins. The DTES NH's interpretation of the Right to Food, while more appropriate in terms of providing food accessibility, acceptability, and adequacy than the charitable framework, is not without its inconsistencies. For example, the choice that it allows program participants is nevertheless circumscribed by structural factors, both within the organization (itself a structural limitation to the Right to Food) and beyond. The staff of the DTES NH are also constrained by the political-economic context that they operate in. As a result, they cannot fully fulfill their goals of supporting low-income interests and find themselves in a situation where they must navigate and mediate sometimes competing interests in order to survive. Moreover, as a result of relationships with funding bodies, experts, and knowledge workers, they are adopting programs that implicitly emphasize moral responsibility, thereby limiting the "choices" of program participants to the realm of individual behavioural practices and as a result shifting blame. The DTES NH's multi-situatedness complicates its ability to interpret, represent, meet, and even define the needs and desires of low-income residents, which is something that to my knowledge has not been acknowledged by the organization. This is reflected in the imbalanced participatory processes some of my participants describe in terms of the programs offered, the food standards implemented, and the directions taken by the DTES NH through its expansion.

Furthermore, as a result of structural constraints, the DTES NH's interpretation of the Right to Food diverges from the UN definition and criteria (an ideal) through its attempts at implementation. Due to an increased emphasis on social enterprise and on charity reform, DTES NH initiatives could allow the government to drift even further from meeting its social responsibilities (which the UN emphasizes). While the KT report does state the need for welfare provision, the project focuses on the reform of non-profit organizations, and the creation of a DTES food economy that is self-reliant (though dependent in part on venture philanthropy, not to mention imbedded in a global economy). Of course, one can criticize the UN conception of the Right to Food by pointing out that even those governments that have taken some responsibilities through the provision of a welfare state have contributed to the formation of the NPIC. Therefore,

the ability of governments (not to mention the increasingly corporatized UN) to foster social justice is questionable. I contend, however, that some government responsibility rather than none is the lesser of two evils. It is the absence of government regulations and of an adequate social safety net that allows for the complete corporate takeover of human services, enabling the corporate elite to continue to profit from poverty. Naturally, a government that is actually willing to work for its citizens—to govern--is a precondition to this type of reform, a prospect for which I reserve doubt.

Hardly anyone who has ventured into a DTES soup kitchen would deny how dismal conditions are for those who must rely on charity for survival. The founders of the DTES NH actually experienced the line-ups, the humiliation, and the inadequate food delivered on a daily basis and the efforts they are making are in reaction to these lived experiences. The issue of food security is a symptom of a abhorrent social system and a lack of collective responsibility. The DTES NH should not be criticized for reacting to the injustices they are intimately familiar with and for trying to take some collective responsibility. In our current climate it is understandable that frontline witnesses to structural iniquity have little faith in the state, which also contributes to steering away from state solutions to poverty (and from the current, inadequate government support that is still availlable to those who can successfully qualify and compete for grants). Unfortunately, the most innovative seem to find their independence by adopting market techniques. Berner and Philips (2005) remind us aptly that "no development strategy can 'opt out' of the realities of power (25)." What can be done, then, once constraints are acknowledged?

I too am constrained. As an academic researcher examining a grassroots organization in a marginalized community, I am caught in a bind, for I need to put forth recommendations on two planes that are not always easily aligned: one that follows my theoretical and empirical conclusions and one that gives back to said community in the form of tangible suggestions. The staff at the DTES NH want something that they can use immediately, but I am not certain that I can satisfy them. Does that minimize the value of my work? How can these two seemingly opposed planes be reconciled? Bridging theory and practices is the ideal I envision as an academic and a challenge I must try to face. Since starting my MA program I have questioned the utility of academic analysis in the everyday world. I now believe that paradoxically my cynicism stemmed from my strong belief in the value of anthropological and sociological analysis, for the doubts I articulated stemmed from focusing my analytical capabilities (afforded by these disciplines) on the very institution that surrounded me. I do not think that anthropological and sociological work is irrelevant, that we are necessarily disconnected by virtue of being affiliated to the university (though some of the participants in this research believe so); but I think our

work—or at least the process of executing our work-- is increasingly constrained by the neoliberal currents the university (much like the NPIC) is subject to. Mirroring what I observed in my fieldwork is what I lived within the university where we are also constrained by funding, by bureaucratic protocols, and by a competitive climate where we are told to "cite the editors of 'A' journals in our work to get published," as continuous publishing is the bedrock of the increasingly rare tenure-track carreer. However, having followed through with this project I continue to see the benefits of applied sociological and anthropological work. It is through theory that we are able to conceptualize present taken-for-granted experiences and to see patterns as we situate these historically and politically. Most importantly it is through theory that we are able to articulate relations of power (as we have a language with which to express our anger and indignation at the world) and thus to look power in the face. Bourgois and Schonberg (2009) aptly remind us of the difficult balance in applied work, when they state that while "it is politically and analytically gratifying to engage with critical theory…we also need to operate at the level of immediate policy options and specific local interventions that can be implemented in both the short term and long term to reduce the structurally imposed suffering of our research subjects…[yet] applied work is never straightforward politically, theoretically, or practically (297)." Most importantly, we must enter social service and public policy debates with caution to avoid reproducing relations of power that silence and "distribute misery unequally (ibid)." In many ways I find myself facing the same quandaries that I have raised about non-profits.

Despite my focus on one organization the implications of my work are broad and in this respect I can't help but to feel that those who were willing to help me complete this project will in some ways feel cheated. They might find my language alienating, they might take my critiques personally, and they might question the direct implications of my work for them. They could also question how my "representation" of some DTES residents is in any way different (in essence) from theirs and direct some of the critiques I have made back to me. If I were to view Marxism in dogmatic terms the conclusions of my work would not bring too much to the DTES NH except for a warning of imminent failure in light of the unavoidable perpetuation of oppressive social relations. That is not my contention. I do not view theory deterministically, but rather as a means with which to analyze relations of power in order to inform social change. Further, while actions are always constrained there is always an element of unpredictability due to anticipated and unanticipated consequences and aspects of "reality" that theory cannot fully grasp (Culhane, 2011). Already, the DTES NH, though governed by the same social forces as other agencies in the area, has managed to differentiate itself creatively from other nonprofits in ways that are commented on positively by DTES residents, funders and private donors, as well as the staff and

volunteers working there. Similarly, not everyone within the university has fully and mindlessly succumbed to the corporatization of our own institution. While it becomes increasingly difficult to diverge from the currents of neoliberalism we still engage in actions, within the system, and question the system, which suggests some agency. Meaningful social change could result from organizations like the DTES NH and academics making noise together. By articulating our messages— desire for change in various incarnations-- to the diverse audiences to which we have access our goals become more compatible. Twenty years ago, little was said about the problems of charity, and ten years ago little was said about the alternatives that are increasingly being discussed in various circles. This attests to the power of pushing issues—the important role of critique. There is room for creativity and for dissent despite the innumerable challenges of the limits we work within.

On a pragmatic level I can make some small scale recommendations to the DTES NH based on what participants have shared with me, regarding the every day operations of the organizations, suggestions for a less encompassing reform, or suggestions that will improve the lives of more people in the small-scale but significant way the DTES NH has excelled in. The DTES NH could encourage more grassroots involvement on its board of directors, which today consists of only knowledge workers, professionals with academic backgrounds, from outside of the community, aside from one DTES resident. The DTES NH could encourage resident consultation by holding general meetings through a flexible yet systematic approach that won't intimidate (flexibility is indeed one of their strengths), and also by inviting DTES residents to meaningfully share in decision-making, particularly about large-scale projects like the Kitchen Tables. Furthermore, efforts could be made to maintain a non-hierarchical climate between staff, for example, by creating an environment that fosters the exchange of ideas at staff meetings.

In terms of funding, the DTES NH could focus more on fundraising initiatives that target donors that are sympathetic to social justice, rather than relying on corporate sponsorship from companies like Pepsi that have troubling track records, particularly in the Third World (Sen, 2003). By accepting money from contentious sources, the DTES NH is giving such corporations positive publicity, thereby allowing the flawed notion of corporate responsibility to circulate. The DTES NH could also aim to avoid implicitly shifting blame on the low-income residents by minimizing its emphasis on skills-building and health promotion, but most importantly by shifting the blame back to those with far more power, governments and corporations, and using every opportunity they have available—particularly the avenues for public engagement they have successfully forged—to verbalize the connections between the corporate sector, the state and the

NPIC, which limit the actions the DTES NH can take and jeopardize its allegiance to and ability to meet, low income interests.

More difficult to implement for the DTES NH, but a suggestion I will make nonetheless, is to encourage and listen to the ideas for more radical social actions put forth by DTES residents and some DTES NH staff that waver from the DTES NH's reformist bent. During my research, I found that many participants had valuable ideas to encourage social change, such as taking over the kitchens of non-profit organizations, including that of the DTES NH. One of the most valuable contributions the DTES NH could make, rather than imposing an agenda on DTES residents by focusing on mobilization through programming, is to make a deregulated space available for people. It could be a space where participants can "be," and in which they can exchange ideas, rather than a place where they are to be educated and politicized according to other peoples' dictates. While this could result, in the short term, in a loss of resources for the DTES NH, in the long term perhaps more gains will be made.

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