HUMAN CENTEREDNESS; THE FOUNDATION FOR LEADERSHIP-AS-PRACTICE IN COMPLEX LOCAL/REGIONAL FOOD NETWORKS

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ABSTRACT

HUMAN CENTEREDNESS; THE FOUNDATION FOR LEADERSHIP-AS-PRACTICE IN COMPLEX LOCAL/REGIONAL FOOD NETWORKS

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Our local and regional food systems are predominately modeled on a failed capitalist market-based economy. In the absence of corporate accountability, and/or support on the federal policy level, local and regional leadership and self-organized networks are critical to the scaling across and evolution of a moral and equitable food system. Networked food systems leaders are developing the capacity to solve wicked problems, and spark change. Understanding the values and practices of local food systems leadership, that initiate, influence, and support activities is essential to understanding how to foster conditions for local and regional food network growth. My dissertation research is designed to better understand the leadership practices, values and use of power which contribute to the flourishing of food system networks. In this mixed method study, I set out to answer the question, "What is the nature of leadership in emerging local and regional food networks that provides the foundation for a network to strengthen and scale?" The leadership practices, values, and use of power in three local/regional food networks are studied; synthesizing social network analysis data with semi structured interviews, using the results of an iterative thematic analysis as the foundation from which to consider a critical analysis. This dissertation establishes Human Centeredness as a foundation for Leadership as Practice to occur in self-organized food systems networks. Human Centeredness, for the purposes of my framework and model, is a recognition of the importance and contribution that relationships and

connection, essentially a human centered way of being make to laying the foundation for leadership as practice to occur. The findings also reveal the need for a greater understanding of the importance of power and accessing various forms of power within and beyond the known boundaries of networks.

Keywords: Crisis, Food Systems, Leadership, Self-Organized Networks, Social Change

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Four and one-half years ago, when I embarked on this exploration of leadership in local/regional food systems networks, I could never have imagined that in the middle of my dissertation journey the world would be engulfed by a pandemic. Humanity is facing an unknown. Inequity and health disparities are raw and right in front of us. People are scared, but so many of them are reaching out, they are coming together. I have noticed that there seems to be a hunger to connect, or reconnect to others, to nature, and even to ourselves. While there are huge challenges resulting from the current crisis, even one year in we do not even have a full understanding of the impact, there are also opportunities.

Even more than ever networks give me hope, because they can bridge new ideas, and innovation across barriers. I maintain that networks can help to break down old dysfunctional systems, inspire change, and challenge the status quo. Self-organized networks in particular hold the potentiality for the emergence of a new kind of society in which people and the planet come before profit. In this dissertation on leadership in networks, or networked leadership,[1] In this dissertation I share, based on the literature and my findings, key insights and suggested research needed to advance a network practices for dealing with these complex problems and transitioning to a more just and equitable society. My central argument is that we need self-organized networks to create systemic change related to the things that are important to "the people". This systemic change is possible because network activity can create new priorities and redistribute power. I believe that this is what happens when new faces, and new cycles of discovery and exchange emerge in the network. Networked leadership is a leadership that is not

[1] I use these terms because it needs to be called something. My feelings are the same about the terms used to refer to food systems, i.e., local, sustainable, etc. I may use them interchangeably during this dissertation, sometimes explaining, sometimes not, but always with a bit of uncomfortability with the naming and labeling.

only connected to the people, but emerges from the people. Most importantly, existing literature from various perspectives indicates that networked leadership can help us to build relationships that circulate these ideas and practices, that inspire change, throughout society (Bennet, Segerberg, and Walker 2014; Renting et al., 2012; Kadushin 2012; Wheatley and Frieze 2011; Krebs and Holley 2005). However, there is little if any empirical research to support these theories. My research aims to identify the leadership practices, values and use of power which enable these networks to thrive and scale. To show that network leadership has the potential to "curate" the conditions, context and spaces for large scale change, ultimately for a social revolution. I want to know more about the leadership practices and values of these networks. Because I am a food systems scholar and professional, I will start broadly then narrow my focus to local and regional food systems networks.

Before exploring food systems leadership, it would be helpful to briefly discuss neoliberal market-based capitalism, and our dysfunctional food system. As both a scholar and a practitioner my interests are in equity and true democracy in our food system. I have spent most of my career working with communities to create change in non-profit and municipal government. I would not be writing about leadership at all if it were not for the urgency surrounding this confluence of food and politics, a confluence that creates a deadly storm that is ripping through our planet. Consequently, before diving into networks and networked leadership I am going to share with you some history of how I believe we arrived at where we are in our society in terms of politics and economics, as well as how politics, our failing food system and the agenda behind it relate to the need for a networked approach to change. Along the way, I will touch on how these social factors impact our environment, and contribute to climate change, creating a downward spiral for people and the planet.

Humanity currently faces an onslaught of intertwined crises; political, economic, social and ecological. Yet world and national leaders fail to confront the origin of the problem, namely neo-liberal capitalism. “Most of human history had been bred, fed, and watered by another sort of economy, but the market has replaced, as far as possible, the social capital of reciprocal obligation, loyalties, authority structures, culture and traditions with exchange, price and the interpersonal principals of economics” (Fleming 2016, 179). While this is true, most people on this planet, having grown up in a world dominated by capitalism and nation-states, cannot wrap their brains around the concept of a world without capitalism. So many do not see the root of the problem, “solutions” include more of the same faux democracy that is clearly not working. Beyond resistance and protest, participatory process and self-organized networks offer a tangible grass-roots level reconstructive process for society that starts, in our cities and towns, and globally with those that hold a shared interest or common goal (Alperovitz 2013; Bekridaki and Broumas 2016; Biehl and Bookchin 1998; Clark 2013; Crutchfield, 2018; Shirky 2008)

The work undertaken in this dissertation is based on the understanding that we can shift and improve this paradigm, together, by building relationships with those who are committed to a similar set of values, both in our communities and globally. Specifically, we can work to gain accomplices[2] by bridging differences with those who have the most “skin in the game.” Those of us who are “well positioned” can use our privilege to make heard, the seldom-acknowledged voices of the oppressed. Everyone eats, humanity’s survival and well-being depend on food systems, and they offer an excellent starting point in relation to building a sustainable and equitable society. I maintain that the “local/regional foods movement” is about more than food, it

[2] Accomplices is the language I am choosing, specifically because Indigenous Action Media writes about “accomplices not allies” and it makes a lot of sense to me. http://www.indigenousaction.org/accomplices-not-allies-abolishing-the-ally-industrial-complex/

is about revolutionary change, a social ecology of food. A "food led" cultural evolution is possible, old constructs of humanity, such as hierarchy and oppression, can be changed. Diverse writers, that I will reference throughout this dissertation, make various arguments that suggest that self-organized values-based networks[3] can play a significant role in building equitable and "moral" economies, with a cooperative culture of mutual sharing and social equity. I will end this section by sharing what Crutchfield suggests, "Winning movements are fueled by energy that materializes from the bottom up . . . seeding and growing vast networks of millions of passionate individuals organized around a single cause is infinitely more powerful than any single organization or association- no matter how well-resourced or branded" (2018, 12).

My research explores leadership in three food systems networks, all successful, as defined by either a history of accomplishments, or emergent growth. I began this exploration by using social network analysis to discover where the people in positions of influence are in three separate food systems networks. Then I conducted semi-structured interviews intended to reveal the specific leadership practices, values, and the use of power of these individuals. Using a mixed-method approach, incorporating social network analysis enabled me to map and view network properties, and relationships and then use this information to inform my selection of interviewees. These semi-structured interviews further facilitated the exploration of the meaning, dynamics and relationships in the networks. Using existing network and leadership literature and theory, along with inductive data from interviews, I sought to identify the leadership practices, values and use of power associated with specific positions of influence on maps created through the use of social network analysis software.

[3] The is language that my colleagues and I have recently begun using to refer to what are commonly called local food or alternative food systems. Using self-organizing values-based food networks is intended to both clarify and distinguish the phenomena and work.

The Backstory Behind the Problem

The connection between human suffering, planetary destruction, neo-liberalism and colonial hegemony, climate change, and our food system is an extremely complex and wicked problem. Gross inequities and an imbalance of wealth and power have gathered over time resulting in where we are now as a global society. Although extremely funneled down, in the following sections I will touch upon the history, issues, and circumstances that brush up against my argument and research questions.

Inherited Wealth and Privilege

Wealth-to-income ratio, top wealth shares, and the share of inheritance in the economy have all been the subject of significant interest and debate. "Economists have long recognized that the magnitude and distribution of wealth play an important role in the distribution of income—both across factors of production (labor and capital) and across individuals" (Piketty and Zucman 2014, 1)**.** Piketty and Zucman, at the Paris School of Economics have surveyed the empirical and theoretical literature on the long-run evolution of wealth and inheritance in relation to output and income. Their findings suggest that current trends toward rising wealth–income ratios and wealth inequality might continue during the twenty-first century, both because of the population growth slowdown and productivity growth, and also because of increasing international competition to attract capital. Kate Raworth asserts that, "Humanity faces some formidable challenges, and it in no small part thanks to the blind sports and mistaken metaphors of outdated economics thinking that we have ended up hear" (Raworth 2017, 10). Essentially, the wealth gap and our humanitarian and environmental challenges are only going to worsen, because a slowing economy hurts the poor and middle class the most. This is because wages, purchases, everything that the poor and middle class do is from earned income, whereas the wealthy make their money from money, which they already have plenty of. At the top of the

corporate compensation ladder these executives, many, if not most are already from privileged backgrounds further fueling inequality (Zweigehaft 2016). Our economy favors the wealthy, and to that extent capitalism gives sweeping power to the wealthy.

Capitalism and Commodification

There are limitless horrifying stories of the path of destruction that profit, greed, capitalism leave across the world. Social position determines the level of privilege individuals possess along multiple axes, including race, class, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, and immigration status; social position is the primary determiner as to which side you land on, that of having power or being controlled.

Capitalism and commodification are responsible for human beings all over the world being deprived of life's necessities, water, air, and food, for the profit of a few (Shiva 2016; Zinn 1997; Parenti 1995, 2007). Beyond necessities, what about extracted resources? Why should corporations have the right to deprive families of electricity, of gas to cook with, or fuel to heat their homes? Just because the elite have inherited wealth and power that enables them to purchase the equipment to suck fossil fuel out of the ground that is not theirs, yet in our society that is currently the status quo. Some authors (Hardin 1968; Ostrom et al. 1999; Ostrom 2000) suggest that these resources belong to the commons, not to an individual or a corporation. No one owns the sun, the wind, and the water. Land grabs for resources, forced migration, and the destruction of developing nations are also externalities of hegemony, but a fuller discussion of them is beyond the scope of this paper.

Neo-liberalism and Globalization

Built on the foundation of inherited wealth and privilege, capitalist neo-liberalism has evolved to become a politics of the oligarchy (Chomsky, 1999, 2003; Formasiano 2019; Parenti, 1995). The free market is no longer free, the ruling class uses this system to keep their financial

interests the top priority in all policy, regulation, and trade. As Noam Chomsky aptly describes in the following quote;

> What remains of democracy for the populous, is largely the right to choose among commodities. Most people know nothing else but capitalism. The privileged living in developed nations get up, go to work, make just enough money (or not) to survive, and all the while they are bombarded with images of "things" they should desire in order to be happier. Nothing could be further from the truth. Nonetheless, "deluged by such propaganda from infancy, people may accept their meaningless and subordinate lives. (Chomsky 2003, 139)

Currently, though rhetoric may say otherwise, globalism is simply about the power of capital finance made possible through the internet and other advanced technologies. The global trade bureaucrats, the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Trade Organization have all successfully facilitated private interests in absorbing and consolidating "literally millions of formerly independent enterprises" (Graeber 2009). This is a really bad situation for humanity, whether distracted, numbed, paralyzed by hopelessness, or possibly wide awake, and then there is the planet to consider.

The Climacteric

Neoliberal capitalism is also responsible for climate change, and it is almost certain that even in the best scenario the market alone cannot slow it or certainly not turn it around. In *Capitalism and Climate Change: Can the Invisible Hand Adjust the Natural Thermostat*, Storm states, "the authors are almost unanimous that if humanity sticks to the simple insight of mainstream climate economics and continues to fight warming half-heartedly, as it is doing now, it is bound to end up in deep ecological trouble and climate apartheid" (2009, 1027) Simply put this is because the purpose of capitalism is profit, and profit needs growth and consumption.

"Greenwashed" or not, another dysfunctional greenwashed market-based strategy will not lead to change (Anderegg et al. 2010; Legagneau et al. 2018). Furthermore, though we very likely have the science and technology to achieve the rapid changes necessary to reduce the degrees of change that will lead to (among many externalities), a world of worsening food shortages, wildfires, droughts and poverty, it is politically unlikely to happen (Davenport 2018). "Mitigating climate change is a political problem created by inequitable distributions of the benefits of carbon emissions and the costs of climate change; that is, the people who benefit the most are not the same set of people who pay the most costs" (Ponte et al. 2017, 1444). Fleming, in his book *Surviving the Future*, describes the situation as a climacteric. In addition to the geographical, land and sea changes that will result from climate change there will be deep deficits in energy, water and food. This could lead to economic descent, followed by economic and social fracture, and infrastructure failure. Because change within our current political system is unlikely, or some would say impossible, collapse, may be our only way out of this mess. "In *The Great Leveler*, historian Walter Scheidel, concludes that only mass mobilization, wars, transformative revolutions, pandemics or state collapse have redistributed wealth once it has reached current extremes" (Moser 2017, para. 20).

The conditions in the preceding paragraphs lead to hunger and starvation, which have historically been the root cause of wars, revolutions, and many mass migrations worldwide. "Findings validate, complement and extend descriptive results that causal and substantive linkages exist between food security and violent conflict, spanning the individual, local, regional, country and global levels" (Martin-Shields and Stojetz, 2019, 23). Among the basic things that human beings need to survive is food. This being the case a review of our food system is in order.

Failing Food Systems

Looming over any conversation about failing food systems is the issue of greenhouse gases and climate change. “The food and agriculture sector are both a major contributor to climate change and especially vulnerable to its worst impacts” (Clapp et al. 2018, 80). There seems to be no progress toward solving these catastrophic problems. Our current culture and economic system views food as no different from other commodities in the market. Focusing on profit rather than people or the planet, from seed to stomach our capitalist, corporate controlled food system creates and maintains interwoven forms of oppression, power, and control. These “externalities” involve all of us whether we are conscious and aware or not. Beyond the injustice to humans the commodification of food is equally unhealthy for the environment. Mono-cropping systems used by industrial agriculture result in reduced biodiversity and increased agricultural vulnerability to weeds, disease, and pests, which results in the routine application of pesticides, and herbicides. Synthetic Fertilizers become necessary to grow food in unbalanced and depleted soils. Industrialized livestock practices similarly require the intensified use of animal antibiotics, and growth hormones. Animals live in massive feedlots and tunnels where waste accumulates, where it is not only unavailable for reincorporation as a soil nutrient for crops, but also runs off into watersheds and is a major source of water pollution. This is by no means a complete account of the environmental externalities of commodified food, the point is all of these herbicides, antibiotics, hormones and manure become waste and threats to water supplies and the environment (Altieri 2000; Magdoff et al. 2000).

Superseding the world-wide oppression of human beings and a failing food system there is the looming issue of ecological crisis and the need to address that immediately, or face the extinction of our species. The most fundamental route to a resolution of our environmental crisis is a social one. Until neo-liberal capitalism is dismantled as the driving force in our society, and

replaced by a truly communitarian, egalitarian and sharing society, other weak attempts to create equitable relationships, mitigate climate change and other urgent issues are destined to failure (Sayer 2009; Klein 2015; Monbiot 2016). Even those producers with the highest of values and the best of intentions are hamstrung by late stage capitalism. It is suggested that Werner Sombart was the one who coined the term, "late capitalism" around 1903, with the Marxist Ernest Mandel popularizing it in the 1960s, as a reference to the period after the Second World War, at a time when corporations and conglomerates began gaining strength (Lowery 2017). That said, late stage capitalism has no single definition, and its meaning has evolved over time. Some of the first descriptions of late stage capitalism indicated a thriving middle class. Additionally, it may be referred to as crony capitalism or corrupt capitalism. Some imagine late stage capitalism as a stepping stone to socialism. It has been used more commonly to describe economic inequity in general following the Occupy movement, and that is the context in which I am referring to it in my dissertation.

Food Oppression

Food oppression and injustice come in many forms: lack of economic access to fresh, nutritious or cultural foods, loss of land or hunting/fishing grounds, low paying or forced labor in a food system designed to create wealth for a few, not sustenance for the people. Food oppression is any structural, institutional, systemic, food-related action or policy that negatively effects a socially subordinated group in terms of their access to food (Agyeman 2014; Freeman 2013). Politically and financially vulnerable communities bear the brunt of the externalities of food oppression, yet this is often invisible to mainstream society. The effects of the oppression also constrain those oppressed, reducing their voices, their work capacity, and their overall quality of life. Food oppression diminishes already vulnerable populations power. Food

oppression also leads to social invisibility, decreased social status, depression, and despair (Alkon and Agyeman 2011; Freeman 2013).

The externalities of food oppression are difficult and complex, both emotionally and as intellectual concepts. These externalities of food oppression are likely not considered by the majority largely because of the powerful rhetoric regarding personal choice that is pervasive in the United States. This rhetoric blames individuals, and diseases of obesity or food insecurity are often regarded as individual weakness, regardless of the very real constraints that shape a person's intake. This is particularly off the mark in low-income, rural and urban communities. "The focus on the individual that dominates medical, scientific, and social views of health carries harmful consequences. By ignoring the structural aspects that shape consumption choices, this myopic perspective forecloses effective prevention and treatment of illnesses that disproportionately harm vulnerable communities" (Freeman 2013).

Minorities and the poor are clearly at a disadvantage when it comes to the adoption of healthier eating habits. Simply put, trans fats and sweets cost less, whereas many healthier foods cost more (Drewnowski and Damon 2005; Drewnowski 2004; Bernstein et al. 2010). Researchers have shown that low-income neighborhoods attract more fast-food outlets and convenience stores (Drewnowski 2004). The obesity debate in the United States has steered clear of the complex issue of social class. Instead, much time has been spent on genetics, physiology, race/ethnicity, personal responsibility, and freedom of choice. The narrative in public health nutrition is that most Americans could follow a healthy diet but simply choose not to. Attempts to improve population dietary habits have therefore emphasized the food-choice behavior of individuals. Personal choice is certainly a piece of the issue, but less so as you move down in pay scale. Obesity and hunger are symptoms of massive systemic issues in our food system, and food

insecurity is more closely related as a driver of obesity than is acknowledged. Obesity and hunger, as well as devastating effects to humanity and the planet, are a consequence of a commodified food system. Our commodified food system, controlled by multinational corporations, transnational NGOs, lobbyists, and federal and state governments is made possible by neo-liberal capitalism (Otero 2018).

The United States has one of the highest rates of hunger and food insecurity among developed nations; "In 2019, 34.9 percent of households with incomes below the Federal poverty line were food insecure. Rates of food insecurity were substantially higher than the national average for single-parent households, and for Black and Hispanic households" (USDA ERS 2019). Though not published yet, since the beginning of the pandemic these numbers have increased. "Stigmatizing narratives about those who are the hungry, and food insecure—that is poor people, women, and racial minorities—serve to uphold and legitimize the unjust food system" (deSouza 2019, 3). In his book *Big Hunger: The Unholy Alliance Between Corporate America and Anti-Hunger Groups* (2019), Andy Fisher describes the collusion between corporate America and anti-hunger groups, as the "Anti-Hunger Industrial Complex." These relationships are feeding people today, and that is a good, but this is "managing hunger" rather than solving the issues at a systemic level. All the while corporations sell the illusion that they are contributing to society, while profiting from sales of expired food they would have to pay to dispose of, and through tens of billions of dollars of subsidies in the form of federal government programs, as well as enjoying huge tax breaks. Food banks, churches and local pantries get to feel like good Samaritans. The result is stigmatizing ideologies and a hunger narrative that casts the hungry as uneducated and lazy, among many labels...depending on the context. Conversely, the anti -hunger industrial complex is falsely seen as charitable, good, helping and "the American

way." Neither of these narratives is the truth. Consider the irony, that farmers who are far from lazy folk, "are now accessing food assistance programs because they are food insecure; farmers grow commodity crops, not food, and as a result cannot disperse food locally to feed people and are food insecure themselves" (deSouza 2019, 24).

A phenomenon in the divide between the rich and the poor, and a major contributing factor to food oppression, is the growth in low paying service jobs. Service jobs are those that involve assisting or serving others, including food service workers; security guards; janitors, cleaners and gardeners; home health aides; child care workers; and personal appearance and recreation occupation. The portion of labor hours in service occupations in the United States increased by 35% between 1980 and 2005 (Dorn 2009). The rise in service employment has been even sharper for workers with just a high school education. The share of high school graduates in service occupations rose by 53% between 1980 and 2005, from 13.9 to 21.2%. If it continues to rise at current rates of growth, more people will work at restaurants than in manufacturing in 2020 (Thompson, 2017). As the former numbers demonstrate, the stereotype of fast food workers in wrong. Exploited fast food workers are not just people who dropped out of school, or have substance abuse issues. They are not just high school kids working part-time.

Fast food is not the solitary domain of food oppression by any means. Farm workers, especially undocumented migrant farm workers, suffer terrible abuse here in the United States. Next time you bite into that apple, remember it only costs fifty cents because of the 90 cents per bushel undocumented workers picking the fruit are being paid. Wages for planting, and caring for fruit trees are also most often below minimum wage (Cornell 2015). In addition, despite the revenue in the billions in tax dollars and consumer spending in the United States by

undocumented workers annually, they are afforded none of the protections of our citizens: no Medicare, no social security, and unemployment benefits. On top of this, every day these hard-working people live in fear of going to work and never seeing their families again if they are seized by Immigration Control, which is currently happening at an alarming rate.

Short of war, collapse, or other extremes, described in previous sections, is there hope for turning humanity around, of invigorating change and true democracy? Where does local leadership fit into this? In particular, what type of leadership is best suited for the "assembly" of a politically potent collective action of "the people" (a network) that can sustain legitimate power and systemic change in our food system and society. These questions are at the heart of my research.

A New Leadership is Needed

I want to remind my reader that in this section I am describing the problems of our present leadership, this is a "needs statement.". Then in the subsequent literature review I will conduct a more robust review of the leadership requirements needed to address them in the future. Now I will continue with my critique of our current state of circumstances.

Leadership that arises from capitalism is flawed from its roots. "Capitalism's goal is to convert nature into commodities and commodities into capital, to invest and accumulate, transmuting every part of the world into its own image for its own realization (Parenti 1995, 155). The trickle down from an economy that depletes local communities of their monetary, human, and natural resources, often ultimately destroying them calls to leaders at every level of our society to push back, and to find another way. "One way that local communities can resist such exploitation is to form cooperatives that seek to serve the communities needs and preserve the community's local resources" (Falk 2010, 275). Local and regional food systems are often

held up as exemplars of this. These values-driven, community-based alternative food systems models are pointing us in the right direction. However, paradoxically, the normative indicators of success within the movement still largely support the strategies, language, and measurement tools used by the dominant economic system. Nevertheless, some local food systems are different in a number of ways. Most significantly there is a growing awareness of the fact that they are operating in the dominant economy, but with a different set of values. For example, research in process (Trocchia-Baḷḳīts and Martinez 2018), suggests that 59% of local producers confirm a strong commitment to "place," as a factor in why they are a local food producer, and another 31% indicate that it is an important factor. Place is defined as a community of people, or physical community, and/or environment. As an effect of their commitment to place, these producers are equally committed to local/regional food production, rather than a growth imperative or accumulation of wealth found in market-based capitalism. Though more research needs to be done but the values found in local and regional agriculture suggest that there is opportunity to begin a societal shift within these local food system networks.

Despite the prominent health and environmental narrative regarding the organic or local foods movement it is not just about how we grow food, in a sense, the issue is not really about the food at all. It is about the underlying social structures in our present society. The late Murray Bookchin describes this succinctly, "The present social illness lies not only in the outlook that pervades the present society; it lies above all in the very *structure* and *law of life in the system* itself, in its imperative, which no entrepreneur or corporation can ignore without facing destruction: growth, more growth, and still more growth" (Bookchin 2015, 33).

Changing the way in which we grow food, even the scale of production will not change the outcomes until we deconstruct the scaffolding that keeps the systems of oppression and

control in power. Large scale systemic change has the potential to change far more than our food system. Building on the post-structural political economy theories of Gibson-Graham, Resnick, Wolff, Chatterton, and others, and case study research and observations by Wilson (2013, 724–728) suggest that food spaces, outside the capitalist economy, offer opportunities to build new ways of understanding social and economic relationships. Alkon and Mares (2011,12) suggest food sovereignty as a measure to define a "collective approach to food politics, capable of limiting the power of the dominant food system, eventually transforming the food system into one built on foundations of ecological production, community control, and the multiple meanings of justice." Examining the impacts of local food production relative to food sovereignty establishes an alternative valuation construct, one based in notions of community food security, food justice, and transformative social alliances.

How leadership enters into this discussion is that the rules and logic for successful capitalism, are ones that are highly incompatible with true democracy. This puts responsible leaders at every level of governance in a position where their ethics are "neutered". For example, in Bernie Sander's Medicare for All campaign, or the Fight for $15, groups that may appear on the surface to be activist groups, consumer groups or even passed off as think-tanks are actually being funded by corporate interests with the intention of affecting public opinion or Congress. It also gives unscrupulous leaders hall passes for undemocratic behavior. Today economic power has become political power, citizens' voices are left unheard, drowned out by the global financial complex, those with capital, their corporate lobbyists and back room deals. "Life conditions under capitalism are most humane in those countries where democratic forces have organized and won some important victories against corporate power, as in the Benelux countries. West Germany, Austria, Sweden, Norway, Canada, and even in the United States" (Parenti 1995, 170).

This critique is offered from my prospective as an American, but applies globally, the unfettered accumulation of wealth and power of a few has resulted in an unprecedented level of simultaneous environmental and human crisis for the majority. How best can "we" as citizens at a grassroots level organize and work together to not only survive but thrive in the future? What is needed? These are some of the questions that guide my exploration of networked leadership.

Change is Necessary

The preceding critical analysis of capitalism is essential to understanding how completely at odds this concentration of market power, vertical integration of production and supply chains, exploitation of humans, and increasing corporate control of resources is with the pillars of food sovereignty. In the next section I will describe concepts of food sovereignty, a system of beliefs that values people and the planet, in particular food producers, regenerating the land, and reducing food waste.

From Food Oppression to Food Sovereignty

"Food Sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems" (Viacampesina 2017). Food Sovereignty is not just about access to good, healthy food, or about sustainable forms of food production. It is radical politics, a platform for resisting social injustice and constructing a values-based food system. Food Sovereignty is also uniquely related to geography, as "geography is a starting point for the study of environmental impacts of local food systems...One's location on the planet accounts for what fruits and vegetables and other food products will be available at what time of year, which in turns impacts one's use of natural resources" (Duram and Oberholtzer 2010, 104).

However, it is important that food systems research promote a geographic understanding of place-based food, beyond location or miles, one which incorporates the political, social, and

ecological components of the system. This requires a realignment of not only our thinking, but education, and marketing about food in many layers of our society. For example, this would involve considering what crops are “appropriate”, at what season, for any given region, while at the same time being deliberate in supporting both environmental and community sustainability, and food sovereignty.

In 2016, I was a presenter and attendee at the University of Vermont Food Systems Summit. In his keynote address, Jahi Chappel spoke about food as a class issue. Jahi asked three key questions: “Good for whom?”; “Good for what?”, and; “How do we “do” good food?” These are good questions and ones that are politically loaded. One thing no one in the “market” likes to talk about is the true cost of cheap food. The profit for the corporations and low price for “the consumer” comes at a very high cost to food industry workers and the environment. “We need new food marketing relationships that enable farmers to produce more value and retain a larger share of that value in the economy of the farm and the local community” (Kirschenman 2010, 186).

A substantive need is for higher food prices on both a macro and global level. It has been demonstrated that in the long run higher food prices actually lower global poverty. Researchers have found robust evidence that in one to five years higher food prices reduce poverty and inequality (Headey 2014). This happens when the gross funds from those higher food prices go back to producers and circulate in the local community. In the long run this is an important means for reducing poverty, even in the poorest countries (Headey 2014). Logically it would also have an impact on food waste, if food costs more people are going to waste less. A strategy such as this could also have a positive impact on, and lower the consumption of “environmentally expensive foods” such as meat. Of course, it is also necessary to consider the socio-political

issues surrounding how food is distributed. For example, the price ideally should reflect the true cost of food production, furthermore food should be accessible to all, which is possible as wages rise in step with the "true cost" of food. An approach such as this would also require, higher wages in urban areas, in addition to the higher prices to be paid for products purchased in the rural sector. The environment and planet would also benefit from a more conscious production and consumption model such as what Headey and others have described. So back to Jahi Chappell, he closed his talk with a rephrasing of the words of Martin Luther King, "Agriculture and food without love is reckless and abusive, and "good food" without justice is sentimental and anemic. "Good food" is implemented with respect for the demands of justice and supports the power of all people to correct everything that mitigates against love" (Chappell 2016).

Evolutionary Reconstruction, Traditional or Radical Reform

An examination of these issues of human suffering, planetary destruction, neo-liberalism, and climate change, signals the need for a new social order, to realize the goal of good food for everyone. The bottom-line is that all people have the right to access healthy and nutritious food and clean water. In his book *What Then Must We Do: Straight Talk About the Next American Revolution,* Gar Alperovitz points out that in traditional reform it is assumed that wealth and power remain in the control of corporations, and that policy is the method of controlling corporate behavior. On the other hand, he describes revolution as generally assuming a violent takeover and radical forced shifts in power and ownership. Alperovitz goes on to explain another option, which he calls Evolutionary Reconstruction. This is a more evolving parallel "community development" model (Alperovitz 2013). This approach to shifting the societal paradigm is in line with both current developments and theory. There are forms of change happening on a small scale all across the world that involve democratic ownership of productive wealth. These include cooperatives, land trusts, social enterprises, and worker-owned services and businesses.

What these experts and scholars have to say seems to point to the need to support these values-based community networks with a complexity-based framework for leadership and authorship, one that reimagines leaders as facilitators of connectivity, rather than authorities that distribute orders through hierarchies or corporate organizational charts. By tapping into the self-organizing potential, distributed power, and collective action of communities we can create equitable values based-food systems and societies. This thesis aims to explore what the "leadership" traits, values, and practices that enable the learning, creative, and adaptive capacity of local and regional food system networks.

Positionality

Overview/Researcher Background

In *Cultivating an Ecological Conscience,* Kirschenman asks, "How do we begin to make that difference?" (2010, 351) Among the suggestions he has for making a difference in our communities is to start by "scrutinizing" the narrative in which we currently do our decision making, for the purpose of observing whether we are "imprisoning" ourselves in a paradigm that prevents us from really investigating the values we adopt. This is because we can really only interpret reality from the perspective of the narrative in which we live (Falk 2010). Foremost, critical food systems theory is concerned with the power relations, politics, and patterns of dominance in our food system. It utilizes food as a lens for considering and contesting broader structures of inequity, rather than simply advocating for food as an end in itself. Without doubt my critical theory worldview, political beliefs, social ecology mindset, and certainly my experiences as a female farmer inform my narrative, and consequently my approach to this research. My worldview is pragmatic; however, it is also constructivist. Connecting theory, such as that found in the literature on networks, to data is important to me. Utilizing a pragmatic approach to enhance the quality of constructivist worldview of interaction and discussion of the

most significant and relevant issues related to network leadership ultimately will help me produce more meaningful research outcomes.

I am attracted to the idea of interpreting the patterns of meaning that arise from semi-structured interviews prompted by open ended questions. I like the potential for the free flow of narrative and what can be discovered from that. I believe that the process of learning about networked leadership is much like leadership itself. “Leadership is a complex dynamic process that emerges in the interactive “spaces between” people and ideas. That is, leadership is a dynamic that transcends the capabilities of individuals alone; it is the product of interaction, tension, and exchange rules governing changes in perceptions and understanding" (Lichtenstein et al. 2006). Much like the manner in which I believe that leadership emerges, is the theory of co-creation between the interviewer and the interviewee, one within which the meaning is created in the interview. In addition, as a constructivist I do not believe that we can be completely objective or subjective in our research, that our values and politics are part of who we are and we bring that to our research, we make the choice about what is important based on our history, background and cultural assumptions (Morgan 2007).

Having been in the food systems “field” for so many years, my understanding of the language, challenges, and experience situates me in an exceptional position to both understand and interpret (acknowledging my own bias of course) these conversations. I am in a unique position as a peer, and as a woman, and recognize that my identity will also affect the interviews. Again, “from a critical perspective” these narratives “result from a “bricolage” of the narrator’s self-conceptions in the temporal moment, place, or historical context in which the narrative is told, the depth of relationship between the narrators, and the purpose of their conversation” (Clandinin 2006, 7). Beyond the individual interview, and really the ideal research perspective

for my social network analysis project, is Creswell's statement, "the basic generation of meaning is always social, arising in and out of interaction with a human community" (2014, 9).

I have worn, and continue to wear many hats, both figuratively and literally. They include the sort that might be found on a farmer's head while out in the field, which I have been, or at the Saturday farmers market or a livestock auction...where I also have been. From this perspective I know first-hand, and by witnessing the lives of fellow farmers, the impact that our "social illness," to steal a phrase from Bookchin (2005, 2012), has on farmers, real people, in the many places I have lived and farmed. Some of them, especially those I call friends, are aware of the economic conundrum within which they are forced to operate, others are not. Either way, I find this distressing to live with, when it could be so different for us all. In addition, at one of those places, the farmers market, I have at different times and places worn another hat, that of a customer. During certain periods of my life, I have been privileged to be able pay the price a farmer really needs in order to make their business financially sustainable. Yet there are other customers not willing, or unable, through no fault of their own to do so, and this I also find distressing. I find painful both the ignorance, and inequity of this othering that happens (much of this discourse I have covered in my introduction).

In these elite food spaces, the vegetables are locally grown, most without pesticides, and with heroic attempts at sustainable practices behind them, yet despite this, and the quaint "setting" of the farmers market, or the picture-perfect nostalgia invoking farm stand... the dance is much the same as the one in the larger economic system we are all imbedded in. This is because at the core of the problem it is not about the food, but it is about the system, the system we grow our food in whether it be local, regional or global. These thoughts bring to mind a quote from a book written by Philip Ackerman-Leist, a friend, and most recently the former Dean of

New American Farmstead at Sterling College. Philip is a person who has helped to shape much of my thinking about food systems. What he writes just makes so much sense, “rebuilding of local food systems by any descriptor—resilient, sustainable, or community-based—will succeed only if we begin this hard work as citizens, not as consumers or producers or entrepreneurs” (Ackerman-Leist 2013, 291). It is about a new social paradigm, food is just the medium, and a very important one, for action. It is about the citizens, the people, and their relationships with each other, and it like waves it ripples in and out from there.

Beyond these theoretical views, there are some things I know from my years as a young activist, and from reading about actions in Venezuela, Rojava, and other places, that there are some things that increase the odds of a revolution “sticking,” and people acting in solidarity certainly heads that list. However, many years ago I left the activist world in frustration because the disorganization and inability to be strategic or tactical frustrated me.

Among many things I observed was that well-meaning attempts to be non-hierarchal, for example, as enacted through collective decision making was hamstrung by lack of facilitative process and structure. Yet year over year nothing changed, the same failed scenarios were re-enacted. I am not alone in this thinking by any means, Micah White (2016, 27) writes, “Change won’t happen through the old models of activism”. Michael Staudenmaier, in a piece he wrote for *Taking Sides* (Milstein ed. 2015), emphasized the need for progressives and radicals to constantly scrutinize the strategies and tactics used. It is necessary to learn from past mistakes, innovate and support our leadership, otherwise our movements will fail to progress or collapse. Crutchfield (2018), Graber (2009), Tufekci (2017), White (2016), and others write about these issues in detail. However, what this disillusionment with protest meant for me was the beginning of a search for another way, rather than a continued critique. Believing without a doubt that we

as a society were beyond the ability to generate change through our votes, through the political system, and now convinced that protest as I knew it, particularly here in the US would likely never be successful, I looked for something else. There was a point when I realized I was now on a different journey, and more learning was required. So, I began my study of leadership.

My study of leadership had me seriously asking myself (and others) what could activists and revolutionaries, even Anarchists, learn from the "establishment," from traditional leadership theory and academic research? At this same time, I was becoming more and more involved with food systems work. This nexus of activism, food systems and leadership on a very personal level churned up much soul searching. While on this path to becoming a Ph.D., I have continuously struggled with how to align this knowledge with my collection of ideas about resistance to capitalism, hierarchy, and domination that were banging around in my brain. Slowly the connection of these thoughts with my passion for farming and food equity, and of course leadership became clearer, Facilitative Leadership and Complexity Leadership theories in particular appealed to me. Complexity Theory Uhl Bien (2008) argues is typified by nonlinear, emergent change; interaction and interdependence; unpredictability; autocatalytic behavior; and dynamic movement. In addition to understanding complexity, truly equitable change, the type that represents real and lasting solutions for all those involved, requires high levels of collaboration and inclusivity. The leadership called for is sensory aware and embodies the evolutionary experience of the group. To lead "human swarms" and complex, dynamic networks does perhaps contain an array of facilitative steps, but it is also a dance through a mutable human and dangerous political landscape. I wondered if perhaps a leadership that understands this complex interplay of many interacting forces could help create the shift that is essential to a successful food revolution. A sense of place and community is extremely important to me. I also

believe it is to many in the local and regional food systems around the world, and to building the sense of community necessary for a successful movement or revolution.

It is also significant to mention that my prior research, mentioned earlier (Trocchia-Baļķīts and Martinez 2018), where we examined food producer values, the social relationships of food producers within community-based food systems and alternative valuations for local and regional food production which we found also informed my argument and positionality as well. That study revealed that these food citizens are motivated by values rather than capital. While flawed as a result of being modeled on the dominant market-based system, local and regional food networks are largely self-organized by the food citizens that support the production, distribution, and consumption that takes place within these values-based value chains. This renders these food spaces, and the people and communities in which they live the perfect research site for understanding how we, as a society, can shift from a profit narrative to one of social innovation and transformative change, one that values people and planet. I was beginning to see my research path emerge. Melding my understanding of action and social movements, food systems, complexity theory, a sense of place and community guided my inquiry. Knowing that revolutionary movements of any sort are a collective, relational, and lived experience for those involved, and we are all part of this complex system is a significant factor in the position from which I approached this study.

Finally, I would like to share how my experience as a facilitator and local/regional food systems network mapper also informs my research. During this COVID-19 pandemic I have had the opportunity to bring food systems people together on virtual platforms such a Zoom and Microsoft Teams. These pop-up planning meetings have included school superintendents, chefs, social workers, non-profit leaders, pantry volunteers and many others. Many of these individuals

had no previous experience with digital communications, or large group networking. Most had never been involved in non-hierarchal conversations across so many disciplines. However, during the 6-weeks we have met a tremendous amount of innovation, adaptation, and response has occurred. So here I am, writing this dissertation while actively involved in helping to facilitate a network emerging during a pandemic.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of studying these three food systems networks was to explore what the specific leadership practices, values, and uses of power are that facilitate the conditions that provide the foundation for a network to strengthen and scale. I gathered information about the emergent "leadership," intricacies, and critical relationships in these networks, I aimed to identify specific leadership practices, values, the role that power plays for leadership in these networks. This analysis will contribute to the empirical research on leadership practices in networks, and a greater understanding of the specific leadership practices that sustain these self-organized values-based networks, and create the conditions for scaling across moving forward. What I sought to understand is, what is the nature of leadership in emerging local and regional food networks that provides the foundation for a network to strengthen and scale? A foundational concept for beginning my study with social network analysis is the understanding that, "Social network analysis takes as its starting point the premise that social life is created primarily and most importantly by relations and the patterns formed by these relations" (Carrington and Scott 2011, 9).

Rational and Significance of the Study

My research aims to identify everyday examples of leadership practices, values, and use of power found in food systems leadership. In my research I acknowledge and approach the

research with an understanding that this type of leadership as complex. Furthermore, this network leadership is embedded in our society, a web of interrelated elements, which cannot be fully understood apart from each other and the larger systems in which they exist. This makes for a unique research focus that will contribute to the understanding and knowledge of how local and regional food systems can gain power, and their potentiality as systems shifting networks beyond food. System shifting networks are an attempt to transform complex systems. Empowering communities is a pathway to change that requires many leaders, and a distinct style of leadership, "Once network participants start to understand the systems they are transforming, they can make sense of collaborative experiments they undertake and notice when they are shifting the system" (Holley 2012, 314). Networked leaders through their values, and practices curate and nurture systems shift and change. This is different than the individual model of leadership that is generally more, directive, top-down, and transactional. Network leadership, unlike conventional leadership approaches, is collective, distributed, bottom-up, facilitative, and emergent.

My research is unique because it reaches beyond the food systems research that looks at profit motivated supply chains, non-profits, federally funded programs, and other segments. My research explores leadership in three self-organized food systems networks. Participants in these networks may include individuals that represent organizations and institutions, however, their involvement in the network is a result of their interest in self-organizing around specific common values and goals. This makes for diversely composed networks in terms of strengths, experiences, and connections. This is significant because "the scope of work that can be done by non-institutional groups is a profound challenge to the status quo" (Shirky 2008, 48). Our social

media tools, cell connectivity, and the commons[4] like never before facilitate action by loosely structured groups, that can operate without hierarchy and outside the capitalist profit motive. Actions such as the Arab Spring, Occupy, and many citizen lead disaster relief efforts demonstrate the power of decentralized groups. People are gathering both physically and online. They are organizing, creating system shifting networks, to challenge social issues. These self-organized groups generally reject the status quo and power structures of "traditional" social movement organizations in favor of emergent collaborative leadership. These revolutionaries present a hopeful vision for the future, where individuals and communities act, and inspire transformative change at a local level, that through bridging their networks, can scale across to regional levels and beyond. Network leaders are "weavers," and catalysts that can enable people to find areas of common interest, self-organize, better align their efforts and, identify gaps they can work together to address. June Holley refers to this as "knitting the net" (Holley 2012), helping people to discover each other.

Delimitations, Assumptions and Limitations

Delimitations

My delimitations are strongly related to my theory and my research questions. These delimitations are set to specifically focus on a much-needed area of research, understanding the practice of leadership in networks (Hoppe and Reinelt 2010; Strausser et al. 2019; Raelin 2016), to limit my study to a specific population, and to ensure that my research project is manageable. For example, I have chosen to study food systems networks, so I excluded networks from different sectors, for example, a network fighting for migrant rights, or a network working to

[4] Commons are not things, they argue, they are "an organic fabric of social structures and processes." Thus the commons are not an object we can just point to, and say "there it is," but rather becomes so through enacting it with others and that "thing" (Agyeman 2016, 4).

establish electrical vehicle (EV) charging stations. The decision to exclusively study food systems networks occurred for numerous reasons, primarily because sustainable food systems is my area of expertise. I also chose this focus on these particular local/regional food systems networks because I had access. However, I do believe these boundaries I have set for my research, are a good choice. This is because food systems networks are unique sites for research. There are multiple reasons for this, one being that it is not characteristic of such networks to have a start finish agenda, meaning the network has accomplished its agenda when the bill is passed or so forth. Also, it is not limited to the moving of information or resources, there is a tangible item at the center of all this, food. Finally, there has been little research focused on self-organized networked leadership, and none that I am aware of in local and regional food systems.

Another delimitation is that despite my efforts to include a diversity of "leadership" in this study and to examine food systems networks in relation to broader structural factors, my research is still very much time and context dependent. I have capped the boundaries of these networks to be able to complete this study in a timely and manageable manner.

Assumptions

This study assumes that the presence or absence of network roles, elements of network mindset and activities of leadership-as-practice are the foundation for effectual network "leadership." This study assumes that identifying the presence or absence of these themes can inform our understanding of how knowledge diffuses and practices bridge across in networks. The literature assumes that there are network roles, elements of the network mindset (distributive decision making, emergent planning, diversity, transparency, and trust) and activities of leadership-as-practice within networks. Finally, the study assumes that a correlation between the presence of the variables of network roles, network mindset, leadership-as-practice and the number of connections, and indicators of "scaling across" is a plausible indicator of an effectual

network. What the study will assume is essentially that the leadership practices and specific values of individuals at crucial points in the network matter, and that if we have this information we can develop and maintain networks more effectively.

Limitations

The greatest limitation of my dissertation, and potential weakness of my study is that my analysis of the network is limited by the time stamp of the mapping portion of the research. Networks are continuously evolving and restructuring, hence my analysis is just a snapshot. Additionally, the mapping heavily relies on self-reported data. Finally, though significant efforts have been made to include all members of these networks, some may not be represented in the study due to communication platforms the study relies on and inability to contact individuals due to the rural nature of the profession, religious or cultural reasons.

Organization of the Rest of the Study

Chapter II

In this chapter I present the literature that informs this study. The notion of complexity is fundamental to a study of these networks so I will review some applicable literature regarding that. I also cover the relevant literature regarding the "leadership theories," i.e., network roles, the elements of a network mindset, and leadership-as-practice which have formed the basis for my inquiry. However, I will also cover the literature that points to the need for a large-scale change in our society, and supports the fundamental concepts that synthesize and form the matrixed theory that contributes to both the function of, and understanding of leadership in food systems networks.

Chapter III

In this chapter I discuss the rationale for my choice of research design and methodology. Including the use of a mixed methods approach which includes a social network analysis, and

in-depth interviews. I have included a detailed explanation of social networks, and my use of social network analysis and its applications for researching relationships in networks. As well as a large section explaining my interview question design, and defining the “leadership” codes from the literature as well as the process I will use for coding my transcripts. Finally, the last section of this chapter will discuss the confidentiality and ethical considerations in conducting this study.

Chapter IV

In this chapter I present my findings, the themes that have been found in and emerged from my study. I will also review my research questions in light of the results.

Chapter V

In this chapter I give my interpretation of the results, my key finding, conclusions, and finally recommendations for future research. I give meaning to the results by tying them to past literature and theory. I then look forward to future research, and implications for practice.

CHAPTER II: A REVIEW OF RELEVANT THEORY, RESEARCH, AND PRACTICE

> This is a world that knows how to organize itself without command and control or charisma. Everywhere, life self-organizes as networks of interdependent relationships. When individuals discover a common interest or passion, they organize themselves and figure out how to make things happen. Self-organizing evokes creativity and results, creating strong, adaptive systems. Surprising new strengths and capacities emerge from new relationships (Wheatley 2007, 60).

In this chapter I present the literature that informs this study. This literature includes the material that supports an argument for the potential for complex, self-organized structures within community-based food systems networks to manifest rhizomatic characteristics[5], which in turn create participatory, multi-scalar, and effective pathways for change (Holley 2018). This includes relevant "leadership theory" literature which addresses network roles, the elements of a network mindset and leadership-as-practice. However, as it is apropos, to informing my research, I will also cite some of the political, food systems, and other theories and viewpoints that are interwoven in the framework of my dissertation. Those topics and theories which influence exponential change across differences and distances, and that contribute to both the function of, and understanding of this unique leadership. Because my personal reasons for engaging in this research and my study are rooted in my interest in leadership in food systems networks, I will begin with a review of the relevant food systems literature. I will then examine various scholars' writing on networks and networked leadership as is relevant to my study. I will also address hierarchy and power in the context of leadership and collaboratives. I will then provide a snapshot of the supporting theory and literature that is significant to an understanding of

[5] Rhizomatic characteristics describes thinking and learning which is interconnected and replicating, much in the way in plant biology subterranean roots such as ginger grow.

self-organized food systems leadership. Finally, I will tie this all together before introducing the methods section.

The Food Movement

The purpose of this section is to review and critically evaluate the existing research on our present food systems, whereas in Chapter I the purpose was to briefly introduce the history of our food system. A detailed discussion of the history of the food movement, or discussion on whether it is even a movement at all is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, it is important to name some elements, that may (or may not) be present, in the multiple layers from local to global, of what is generally considered the food movement. Among the many actors that are found are local food policy councils, state and/or federal programs and financing, non-profits, educational institutions, local churches, businesses, indigenous group, and more. These entities may or may not be present in various levels of the movement. Also, they could be connected, but often are not, and may not even be conscious of each other, and thus are left operating in parallel. For these reasons, the food movement can be described as a very complex, often disconnected array of individuals, groups and/or organizations. There are many different foci for food systems efforts, some even conflicting; including food insecurity, solidarity and equity issues, local production vs factory farming, genetically modified (GM) vs. non-GM, Organic, sustainable, and pesticide free advocates. There is additional fragmentation in what is referred to as the local or regional food production; locavores, pastured livestock enthusiasts, urban farmers, aquaponics and more. Rather than trying to corral or subdue the chaos, there is a growing number in the movement who recognize the power in embracing the complexity.

Confounding the complexity, here in the United States, is that interest in local food has taken root in many different parts of the country, and is not completely tied to conventional

markers of socioeconomic status, such as income and education level (Cranfield et al. 2012), or political affiliation (Schoolman 2014). *Interest* in local foods is high in urban, rural, and suburban communities. However, *actual opportunities* to regularly buy local food are still far greater for relatively higher-income, well- educated individuals (Alkon and Agyeman 2011; Alkon 2012; Allen 2004, 2010). This gap between interest and availability is an equity issue that will not be resolved by modeling our emerging food system on the current social, political, and economic models. Furthermore, what is revealed in the work of Alkon and Mares (2011) is instrumental because it acknowledges that currently the food movement is constrained by both immersion in and adherence to the neo-liberalism and capitalist model. This work illustrates how activists, who continue to work within the capitalist system, limit their ability to achieve true food equity in their communities. It also acknowledges that given these constraints within our society, a deeper engagement with the ideas and practices of food sovereignty may be the best hope to radicalize community food security and food justice projects, and create alliances capable of transforming, if not the dominant food system, then the ethics and practice in our own local food networks.

In addition, Alison Alkon and Theresa Mares (2011), in two separate in-depth case studies, establish that a food sovereignty approach allows food activists to understand (and potentially address) injustice in the corporate food regime and its intersection with local, national, and global policy. Their research insights point to the validity of a "collective approach to food politics, capable of limiting the power of the dominate food system, eventually transforming the food system into one built on foundations of ecological production, community control, and the multiple meanings of justice" (Alkon and Mares 2011, 12). Their study is foundational in that it establishes that most food activists do not currently factor in the role that

capitalism plays in oppression and control of our food. Even "food justice organizations while rightly critical of the role of institutional racism in producing hunger among communities of color, still tend to be less aware of the role of capitalism" (2011, 11).

For example, in *Food Sovereignty in Everyday Life*, Figueroa (2015) tells the story of how the Healthy Food Hub in urban, black Chicago developed. Tracing history back, the roots of this initiative can be found in slavery, and the collective buying, born of the economic resistance in Mississippi. That past made its way to Chicago, tucked away in individual memories and households. In another time of crisis, in 2008, this history became the foundation for developing a new articulation between food and the power of communities. The concept developed by Figueroa (2015) of shifting the lens of analysis from food production and processing, to the everyday social experiences of people in the food system also supports the concept of a self-organized or social ecology-based approach to food systems work. This approach suggests new strategies for research and action. This is an example of a shift away from deficit thinking in community-based research, toward a focus on supporting the resourcefulness, fortitude, and resistance that people sustain and develop in conditions of adversity. Figueroa's work not only exposes the capitalistic control and oppression that lie at the heart of the food system, but also reveals the relationships, resources, histories, struggles, and ambitions that express themselves in the everyday experience of food. Figueroa's work, and her stories of Healthy Food Hub, are foundational for me in moving forward with my own work. Relationships, community experiences, and stories are the materials from which values-based community food networks are woven. This perspective, as articulated by Guthman, is about "Seeing food systems in terms of their social lives—as sets of relations, articulations, and conveyors of meaning" (cited by Figueroa 2015, 506).

Further examples of self-organized collectives gaining traction can be found in Wilson's (2013) case study research and observations. Her research adds additional validity to the conversation regarding what she calls "autonomous food spaces," spaces outside the capitalist economy. What I find significant about Wilson's work is not only that she challenges the term *alternative*, which is often still used in food systems work, but she also reframes it as well. She points out concern with the use of the term *alternative or alternative food system* both as a *heuristic device* and as a *reflection of practices on the ground*. Wilson further suggests that this *polarizes emerging food practices* as a reaction to the conventional system, as an attempt to dislodge the hegemony of dominant systems and practices.

However, for some, the goal is not to overtake or influence the mainstream market driven food system, but to build something completely new and separate from existing systems. Building on the post-structural political economy theory of authors Gibson-Graham, Resnick, Wolff, Chatterton, and others, Wilson (2013, 724–728) forms a post-structural theory of food sovereignty, and coins the term "autonomous food spaces." Wilson's work confirms that there are opportunities to build new social and economic relationships in our communities, however it also illuminates the constraints and challenges to sustaining and strengthening these new forms of social and economic interaction. I believe that there is room for food systems leaders to both work to reform the existing food system while simultaneously creating healthy vibrant local and regional food systems.

The potentiality, challenges and barriers of local food networks serving as "catalysts" for creating communities that are more socially just and environmentally friendly are outlined further in case studies of two Canadian cities, Edmonton and Vancouver (Connelly et al. 2011). The case studies and analysis in this research were based on a comprehensive literature

review, semi-structured interviews with key local food stakeholders, and a review of local secondary sources. Once again, what they found, and something I have personally experienced, is the difficulty that local community food people have in achieving a values-driven food economy within the dominate capitalist system was demonstrated, “these initiatives are competing with mainstream economic activities that are heavily subsidized and do not account for negative social, economic and environmental externalities” (321).

The food buying groups studied in *Emancipatory or Neoliberal Food Politics? Exploring the “Politics of Collectivity” of Buying Groups in the Search for Egalitarian Food Democracies* (Moragues-Faus 2017) create autonomy and connectivity by regaining control over the food system, reshaping it, and embedding their practices in wider processes of social change. Nevertheless, the study also once again brings up questions about how to assure equality assuming the lack of common ground and potential exclusionary practices. This illustrates the need for further efforts toward socio-political infrastructure and reflexive egalitarian politics in our food systems work.

In addressing the socio-political or social change aspect of food, Hassanian (2003) argues that the ‘‘sustainability’’ of food and agriculture systems is understandably challenged because it inevitably involves both conflicts over values and uncertainty about outcomes. It should be noted that these debates are still happening in food activist circles almost 15 years later. As the author points out, “if it is the job of a critical social scientist to go beyond surface impressions and uncover underlying social structures and conflicts as a way to empower people to improve society, it is the job of activists to execute strategies for social change” (Hassanian 2003, 78). The author describes how the “alternative food movement” is very diverse in terms of organizational forms and strategies, and that there are important opportunities for developing

coalitions among various groups. Lastly, that the "analysis of the interactions (1) within movements, (2) among allied movements, and (3) between movements and their opponents can inform theory and action, and deserves more critical attention" (2003, 85). Certainly, the preceding is supportive of a focus on a networked leadership approach to local and regional food systems.

In reference to the above-mentioned diversity in food movements, it is worth pointing out that there is a significant amount of self-organized food work happening under the radar, particularly in rural areas. Also, that certainly not all of the posture is political. In *Quiet Food Sovereignty as Food Sovereignty without a Movement? Insights from Post-Socialist Russia* the authors ask, "What does food sovereignty look like in settings where rural social movements are weak or non-existent, such as in countries with post-socialist, semi-authoritarian regimes?" (Visser et al. 2015, 513). What the research showed was something they label "quiet food sovereignty," that this food sovereignty in practice plays an important role in Russia, with both the rural and urban population as smallholders producing a significant amount of the food they consume in a predominately sustainable and ecologically sound manner. Interestingly how this happens is neither apolitical or in isolation. In fact, the exchange of food from these "smallholdings" forms a sociality that is both valued and has a long cultural history. I myself have experienced this while living in extremely rural communities in Vermont and the Appalachian foothills. I believe that to some extent these pockets of food wisdom, especially those handed down through generations, have their food sovereignty in constant danger of the threat of not only capitalism, but also gentrification. How this coopting and appropriation happens in capitalism is well explained by the Herbert and Micyte (2014) below.

Sustainable self-sufficiency is also explored in an ethnographic and archival study of people in rural Alaska and Lithuania (Hebert and Micyte 2014). However, the researchers found that these forms of everyday autonomy are threatened by "market liberalization." In downwardly spiraling economies, semi-subsistence producers are enticed into carving out producer niches, thus ironically reproducing neoliberalism, the ultimate threat to both sustainability and self-sufficiency. In the study, both in Alaska and Lithuania, this introduces a similar paradox in each locale, whereby neoliberal ideas come to be embraced by some of the very people who have suffered the most as a result of market liberalization in their bioregion. Again, capitalism and large-scale food for profit is the culprit, and points again back to the benefit of self -organized local and regional food systems.

One unique theory of this is described in research that gives credence to the notion that innovative collective ideas and strong local and community networks can foster interdependent social relations and create equitable access to "good food for all." This is the ultimate call to blur the lines between consumer and producer through interdependent social relations. Trauger and Passidomo (2012) present three case examples of "civic agriculture" representative of a sampling of agricultural production and distribution types. In all of the cases, producers form associations to engage directly with alternative modes of production and create markets that enroll consumers in the process of food production and distribution. Posited against Gibson-Graham's (2006) "post capitalist politics" theories, a case is made for self-organized collaborative networked efforts, as a space created to envision a community economy that values the interdependence and relationships between producers and consumers. Community centers, food cooperatives, gardens, farms, and other enterprises supply the food needs for a group of people, at the same time creating community economies, more equitable societies, and protecting the ecosystem.

In summary, the differences and fragmentation in food systems work are not limited to issues, or causes such as organic, vegan or local. For example, people's and institutions' values, narratives, and political attitudes on how to approach food systems transitions are also extremely complex. In his work on food as a commons, Jose Luis Viveropol (2017) attempts to reduce this agency into variables. His descriptions are detailed, but the variables fall into three main categories:

- The food related activity being either regime or niche.
- The political stance of the food-related activity, either reformist or transformative, the latter subdivided into the categories of alter-hegemonic or counter hegemonic.
- Whether food is regarded as a commodity or a commons

Though there are of course variations and exceptions, "regime" can be briefly described as those working within the institutional system that are bound by the "rules and practices" of governmental or non-profit organizations. An example of this would be governmentally funded or NGO food systems projects. "Niche" on the other hand tends to refer to more innovative approaches that are not bound by funding, or organizational rules and practices. An example of this would be self-organized community groups or neighborhood coops. Viveropol also describes this reformers' approach as, for example, activists that work to attain incremental changes in the food system rather than a more radical approach focused on correcting the root causes of imbalances of power in the food system. Viveropol describes *Alter-hegemonic* as working toward an incremental change on issues around the edges of the capitalist food system, while *counter hegemonic* is a total uprooting of the structure of the capitalist food system. Then finally, he discusses whether the approach views food as a commodity or a commons. In other words, do

the actors see food as no different from an automobile, or a piece of furniture; or as a human right that all should have access to regardless of capital?

I maintain that despite these complex differences between approaches, in order to create large scale change in our food system and society, cooperation, collaboration, and communication are essential. Remaining open to collaboration with governmental and non-profit partners and leaders will be important to moving the work forward. Likewise, there is room for both strategies that are reforming and those that are transforming, as well as work on multiple levels. Networks and communities of practice provide the space for this to happen. Next, I will discuss complexity and how it shows up in food systems networks.

Complexity in Food Systems Networks

This literature review would not be complete without acknowledging the role of both complexity and chaos theories. Change happens on the "edge of chaos." The edge of chaos is where there are enough structures and patterns in the system that events are not purely random, but also where there is enough fluidity and emergent creativity that occurrences are not deterministic. Human networks and environmental systems on multiple levels are deeply connected and dependent on the actions and balance of the other. Complexity and diversity in the natural world are good and necessary (Brown et al. 2002). The actions of humans impact this balance, and the edge of chaos is challenged. However, humans are also capable of an evolution in our thinking and our response.

The way we receive and perceive the world matters. It is time for a new way of thinking about what this means, and Bateson (2016) describes this beautifully. She describes an ecological mind as being one that is both nimble and open to thoughts and ideas that are always becoming. The actions we take and the decisions we make are informed by our perception, and

vice versa. In talking about knowledge Bateson says, it "is alive; it requires and learns from the ideas that are brought forth from other ideas. The conversation of ideas in an ecological context gives rise to new ideas, and so on. The knowing is multi-directional" (Bateson 2016, 39–40). This flow and ebb of ideas and knowledge from one to another in the network create a unique and unapparelled process of leadership. This seemingly complex and chaotic process, combined with open and agile human thinking creates the conditions for emergence and the opportunity for "shifts." This signals how complexity and chaos, two distinct but very much interconnected phenomena, are significant to leadership in food systems. Complex systems and complexity theory are non-deterministic systems, like social networks. "Such a view of complexity-based leadership relies upon the self-organizing potential, distributed power, and collective action that become possible, or emergent, when collaboration and connection are prioritized over more traditional, hierarchical views of leadership" (Murray 2017, 512). The multiple interdependencies and complexities of our world, both social and environmental require a wholistic approach to the problems we are facing. These issues cannot be resolved by selecting isolated causes or issues, for example, hunger, wage inequity, or climate change, and tackling them one at a time. Focus on the problem(s) is likely to be ineffective as well because the problem is just a symptom. "The future of a system lies in its patterns of internal interactions, its complex behavior. These interactions are all social in nature. Complexity theory examines the patterns of dynamic mechanisms that emerge from the adaptive interactions of many agents" (Uhl Bien and Marion 2008, 5). This perspective in examining self-organized local and regional food networks makes sense because these networks are capable of spontaneously generating new innovations and outcomes, because they are driven by continuous unique random and complex interactions.

Self-Organized Societal Shifting Network Praxis

Leadership practice can be informed by what we know about complexity and applying the notion of an "ecological mind." We can also learn a lot about leadership from watching nature. Bees, flocks of birds, the thousands of ants in a hill, can all diversify their collective behaviors to best meet the exigencies of the moment (foraging when food is available, repair work when the ant hill is damaged, etc.). Their response is the result of simple bottom-up networked communication (often non-verbal). These various species make quick and efficient choices to maintain equilibrium and survive without a "boss" making these decisions for them. Together an ant colony can solve problems impossible for individual ants, but as colonies they respond quickly and effectively to their environment. They do it with collective or swarm intelligence.

Swarms of ants and bees engage in these intelligent acts, such as building and foraging, because each of the individuals involved in the collective act of doing does what needs to be done right where they are. Each of these individual acts intersects with others and create a sum of the whole from this complex, dynamic network. These "agents" present a diversity of options to the whole, there is free competition among ideas, and there are effective mechanisms for narrowing choices (Miller 2007). This adaptive behavior is a distinction of intelligence in nature. Connections between this kind of activity and human communities have been explored in texts such as *Swarm Leadership and the Collective Mind*. The author, Peter Gloor, states that, "Swarm leadership means listening first. Swarms practice competitive collaboration, not collaborative competition" (Gloor 2017, 1). Swarm theory would seem to suggest that complexity finds leadership unimportant, but human systems are quite a bit different ant colonies. Human systems,

of course are capable of intelligent, deliberate decision making, so the complexity dynamic is more sophisticated in human systems and therefore so is the leadership (Uhl- Bien 2008). Efficiently coordinated swarming behavior combines to create a larger effect in both ants and humans. Those larger effects are capable of powerful movement, sometimes referred to as large scale transformative change.

Large Scale Transformative Change

Effective leaders of change understand that our world is increasingly complex, fast moving and digitally connected (Shirky 2008). Digital tools enable us to be in almost constant contact with almost everyone in the world, at very little cost or effort. Increased connectivity brings with it increasing complexity. Our increasingly connected and complex society can help to erode traditional power structures. Because of this, self-organized leaders have to learn to work effectively through both traditional hierarchal systems and self-organized networks, no more refusing to partner with "the other." In talking about local food systems change, Buchan (2018) and colleagues agree that transformative change strategies that address the public, political, and bureaucratic spheres, rather than just for example the public sphere may be the most successful from a planning perspective. Real power, or the power of the people, is created within organizations and existing systems or within communities of mutual self-interests, but the most effective leaders of change are those who can harness that power to build and facilitate diverse networks that create relationships that builds bridges across communities. Buchan and colleagues assert that being an effective change agent is less to do with hierarchical power or positional authority and more to do with the ability to influence through a network. The bottom line is that real power and influence can create large scale change, and this is what is needed.

"The path to transformative change is long, incremental, and laden with power relations and struggle" (Buchan et al. 2018, 23).

Networks are where change happens (Holly 2012; Wheatley and Frieze 2007). An unpredictable, but amazing outcome of the emergence created through networks and communities of practice is the sudden manifestation of a system with real power and influence. Networks are testing grounds for the transformation of complex systems. "Once network participants start to understand the systems they are transforming, they can make sense of collaborative experiments they undertake and notice when they are shifting the system" (Holley 2012, 314). What these networks are capable of, though not necessarily a goal, is what Steve Waddell (Waddell et al. 2014) and others describe as Large Systems Change (LSC). LSC is not just a fundamental realignment of power structures, but one of scale that honors many ways of making sense of the world and involves many people and organizations. This necessitates the engagement of multiple frameworks, strategies, and tools. "LSC entails a power shift among actors in society and a related redistribution of resources in a system. LSC vision involves interconnected change across multiple sub-systems: for example, to change the food and agricultural system, the financial, energy and political systems among others also need to shift" (Denton et al. 2017, 11). An intentional networked approach, scaling across, is systems shifting, with the potential for large scale transformative change. These are some of the ways in which networks offer alternatives to traditional ways of operating, particularly in relation to how power operates within them. Though I certainly do not expect that my research project will identify or demonstrate LSC, the precursor really is understanding what constitutes leadership, even successful leadership in these networks so that information can be shared. Next, I will explore what a networked approach to leadership and change means, as well as the role of networks in

diffusion and scaling across, and finally the obstacle of breaking free from systemic power and control.

A Networked Approach

In the late 1960s, the structure of several social movements was studied by Luther Gerlach and Virginia Hine (Gerlach 2001). What they found was that "the most common type of social movement organization was neither centralized and bureaucratic nor amorphous, but one that was a segmentary, polycentric, and integrated network" (as cited in Gerlach 2001, 289). They proposed that this segmentary, polycentric, and networked type of organization was more adapted to the task of challenging and changing society and culture, than was centralized organization. Segmentary is described as being made of many diverse groups, which are continuously growing, and these groups may also divide or fall off the network as well. Polycentric means having many, often temporary, leaders or centers of influence. Finally, they are networked, which Gerlach describes as, "forming a loose, reticulate, integrated network with multiple linkages through travelers, overlapping membership, joint activities, common reading matter, and shared ideals and opponents" (2001, 289).

Authors Brafman and Beckstrom (2006) have a similar story to tell about the successes of decentralized populations in *The Starfish and the Spider*. They use the spider as an example of centralized, meaning a central body with legs, "cut off the head and it dies." The starfish represents a decentralized network, no head, and because the major organs are present in each arm, cut a starfish in half and you get two starfish. They use this analogy to construct an argument for the unstoppable power of decentralized movements.

The food movement is a social movement made up of many fragmented entities, as I have described earlier. Though many are presently to some extent working as collective, cooperative, and collaborative groups, self-organizing into a larger network is essential for large scale change

to occur in our food system and society. So while the larger capitalist neo-liberal food system continues to consolidate, these small decentralized food entities, once networked, hold the potentiality through diffusion and scaling across of knowledge to create change. Consider the story of the spider and the starfish which you have just read.

The Role of Social Networks in Diffusion and Scaling Across

Before diving into why diffusion and scaling across of knowledge is important, I need to describe some of the basic characteristics of a network. The objects in a network are called nodes (also sometimes called actors) or vertices, and in social network analysis nodes are essentially people. The relationships that link them are ties. These are represented as lines, and sometimes also referred to as edges or arcs. I will now explain how this is relevant to my research.

"In social network analysis, diffusion scholars look at how an innovation gets communicated through the network to adopt or reject a given innovation" (Prell 2012, 64). Identifying nodes, especially those that bond and bridge can help to identify how ideas, knowledge, and even skills and resources spread in self-organized networks.

Our current economies of scale were designed for efficiency, most often with economics as the driving force. They rely on replication and standardization, founded on a belief that "one size fits all." Small business and organizations are led to believe that the only way to survive is to scale up. But bigger is not always better, and assuming what works in Connecticut can be replicated and implemented successfully in Arizona is not only a mistake, but often an affront to a reverence for place, social, and cultural heritage. Not to insinuate that scaling up is all bad, regional and even international growth is sometimes appropriate. However, growth for the sake of power and profit no longer makes sense in terms of human and planetary survival. In contrast, scaling across happens when people find solutions or create something locally and inspire others through networks of relationships in which ideas can diffuse and adapt, evolve, and grow

somewhere new. That is not to say that because they are driven by passion and conviction, rather than power and profit, self-organized networks are free from inequity and imbalances of power. Because of this, any critical food systems research would be amiss not to mention that, while local and regional food systems are practicing new ways of relating and working together, they certainly have not reached a utopian ideal. Issues of hierarchy, power, and control are present in self-organized food systems work and must be acknowledged.

Hierarchy, Power and Control

A self-organized networked approach holds the possibility that we as a society can move beyond traditional hierarchical driven power, that it is no longer the only mechanism to drive transformational change. However, systems of hierarchy, domination, and power are still present, and must be deconstructed in our networks and communities of practice. Increasingly a different set of politics, and social relations are practiced prefiguratively within these networks.

To describe this sought-after dynamic, I look to Mary Parker Follet's explanation of power and control in her book *Creative Experience* (1924), "All pure majority power is getting control over. Genuine control is activity between, not influence over. This kind of "power with" is what democracy should mean in politics or industry, "but as we have not taken the means to get a genuine power, pseudo power has leapt into the saddle" (186). She also convincingly clarifies that by pooling our power we are not giving anything up. Power produced in the relationship is a qualitative not quantitative phenomenon. "The origin of power in experience is what we do not sufficiently consider. Interweaving experience creates legitimate power" (Follet 192). So, while "power with" and emergent horizontal leadership-as-practices are happening in self-organized networks, researchers have yet to gain a solid understanding of what it takes to incubate these efforts and maintain equilibrium over time. "There is a big gap between an intuitive understanding of how our social world works and a more precise understanding of how

these interactions and relationships form" (Prell 2012, 1). There is a need for more comparative research to better understand the varying degrees of success of these social networks, and better assess the viability of strategy for social change that mobilizes through communication between network nodes, rather than institutions or political parties.

A Networked Style of Leadership

In the past, many researchers of leadership have worked from the assumption and definition, "That leadership is the resulting product of individual, permanent, and stable leader's actions, and thus an absence of leaders also implies an absence of leadership" (Carroll et al. 2015). Traditional leadership studies look at the behavior of individuals as leaders. When we talk about leaders in our society, it is generally within a hierarchal framework. Whether it is a county, a non-profit organization, or a department of a corporation, many theories assume that a leader is a single person, a leader at the top of a hierarchal structure (Turchin and Nefedov 2009). It would appear that this lens of leadership is predominant because the construct of hierarchy is so normative in our society that a solo leader is assumed. This seems to be true whether we are talking about "best practices" in organizations, or the assumption that man (sic) naturally dominates nature (Bookchin 1982). This leader at the top model is flawed in numerous ways, however essentially in that "leadership cannot exist without those who would enact it, the content from which it arises, as well as the socially constructed appreciation of it as a kind of interaction between human beings" (Ladkin 2020). In both academia and in practice there are increasingly greater numbers of researchers and practitioners whose work takes on leadership through a different lens, seeing leadership as a process and a social phenomenon (Conely and Goldman 1994; Hughes and Uh-Bien 2006;, Kuenkel 2016; Ladkin 2020; Gloor 2007; IISC 2014; Miller 2007; Lichtenstein et al. 2006; Raelin 2004, 2016).

My study specifically explores leadership practices that take place in three networks: The Root to Seed Growers Collaborative, The Washington Food Policy Network, and the Food for All Coalition. First, I mapped the networks, and then used that data to identify relationships that contribute to bridging and scaling across of ideas, innovation, and support for local and regional food systems change. This type of leadership phenomena is not present in top down hierarchal leadership scenarios because it manifests spontaneously from the action of individuals in the network, who are purposefully engaging in independent plans and projects, based on local knowledge, and continuously adapting to feedback about the actions of others. (Chiles, Meyer, and Hench 2004; Gleick 1987; Hayek 1988).

In my research, I am joining this growing group of scholars who maintain that leadership is deeply embedded and alive within our society, and within each of us, in both our geographic and virtual communities. This is important because I believe that the scope of work that can be accomplished by these collaborations in self-organized community networks can not only change the food paradigm, but also represent a profound challenge to the status quo in our society. This "complex dynamic process that emerges in the interactive spaces between people and ideas" (Lichtenstein et al. 2006, 2), presents an opportunity for these collaborative networks. When there is the right balance of freedom and order these networks self-organize, become adaptive, and are able to generate novel solutions (Murray 2017). These networks have many characteristics of complex systems: a primary one is emergent self -organization, which can drive system change. I will delve into that in this next section.

Leadership Toward Systemic Change

Though I will draw on some of the literature of practitioners and researchers who focus on leadership as an individual trait, or a list of attributes that an individual possesses, the "leadership" in my research is exploring something else. My focus is on what happens to spark

an emerging connection, and how collaborative actions create patterns and actions that evolve and move towards a common cause or objective, in this case, food systems leadership. This is a study of those who grow, process, and distribute for the good of the people and planet, rather than for profit as their predominant goal, and those who provide the many forms of support for that work to be accomplished.

Some of the work that supports this is recognized as networked leadership, network mindset, and leadership-as-practice, however, little empirical work has been done to substantiate these leadership practices and values within networks.

The Prior Work on a Networked Style of Leadership

In a significant piece of work in the field, *Social Network Analysis and the Evaluation of Leadership Networks,* Hoppe and Reinelt (2010) present a framework for evaluating leadership networks that is applicable to the field of leadership development. In their work they give four very different case study examples of leadership networks across the spectrum, from intentional to emergent; peer, organizational, field policy, and collective (601). They suggest that some networks may fit neatly into one of those categories, however, networks may be hybrids as well. The authors also describe how Social Network Analysis, and an understanding of core social network concepts, can be used as an evaluation tool for working with networks. This work is significant not only to the field, but was the impetus for my interest in researching the role that a networked form of leadership specifically can play in transforming our food system. Also of significance is that while they hold doctoral degrees, the authors are not academics. The origins of this work are not just theory, but practical work with years of consultation in the field behind it.

A great deal of my knowledge and theory of networks can also be attributed to the work of June Holley. Holley is also a practitioner in the field. In 2012 she published the *Network*

Weaver's Handbook "for people in communities of all kinds who want to explore the potential of network strategies" (Holley 2012, 1). Holley talks extensively about the Leadership Roles in Networks (Appendix A, Table A.1) and approaches this work with a focus specifically intended for self-organized, community, or interorganizational networks rather than NGO's, non-profit organizations, or businesses. Holley also delineates the significant differences between organizational and network leadership (Appendix A, Table A.2) and describes the four aspects found in healthy networks (Appendix A, Table A. 3). These networks have individuals or many individuals engaged in specific aspects or roles related to building relationships to intentionally create the network. These are also networks where people are fostering collaboration for the purpose of action, and there is support for the network weavers.

I will mention here that a description of the general characteristics of healthy networks is important as I refer to healthy and strong networks throughout. Meehan and Reinelt (2012) describe strong networks as those where there is a shared sense of purpose and many avenues for engagement and action. I lean on the work of these scholars and practitioners as providing the basis for my definition of what makes for a healthy or strong network. Now I will discuss in more detail some of highlights of Holley's work that help to drive my research.

Holley (2012) points out that to build a network culture you must engage your network. This is not to say that this networked style of leadership only exists in those that are weaving self-organized networks, certainly any leader in non-profit or business can also practice in this manner. However, the major reason that networks have the potential to be transformative is they engage people rather than broadcasting orders or directing. Some self-organized networks can border on being "organization like," meaning that they are structured and coordinated, yet many other self-organized networks are little more than a web platform for connecting. For larger more

structured networks there are four ways to avoid becoming too organization like: “building relationships among members, having clear agreements and guiding principles, increasing opportunities for input, and spending time broadly distributing work” (Holley 2012, 230).

Building relationships is primary. The role that connects and convenes people, and creates the conditions for new relationships to form, is referred to as a network catalyst or network weaver. Likewise, a similar role is the network facilitator. This is when someone steps up and helps convene people and keep them connected and engaged. A self-organized project coordinator may consciously monitor projects to keep them going, or act as a guardian by providing support for communication and resources needs of the network. It is important to remember that in a network these roles are not formal, and a person may not necessarily always be the one in a specific role, or may hold many at once. Networked leadership draws on the natural leadership in all of us there are no set roles, and we can all wear various hats depending on what tasks need to be done. However, naturally, some may be more comfortable in one role than another based on interests and skills. Also, many people in the network are often simultaneously doing these “jobs,” especially in larger networks.

The foundation of my inquiry rests on the work of Holley because she focuses on self-organized networks. That said, though it may be defined by different language, there is agreement among network theorists about what leadership generally looks like in healthy networks. This is the notion that, “ideally many participants are exercising leadership by weaving connections, bridging differences and inspiring others to recognize and work toward shared goals” (Scearce 2011, 21). In addition to this prior work on network roles, jobs, and what makes for a healthy network is the mindset that contributes to network leadership. Below I will discuss what a network mindset and practice entails.

Network Mindset & Practices

As described previously, our world is full of complex problems that require system level change. Igniting change through the creation of a network, or use of a networked approach, makes sense because networks encourage creativity and collaboration on many levels (Meehan and Reinelt, 2012). Yet this is not always a purely organic process. Scholars and authors generally agree that networks are different from businesses, organizations, or even social movements. Networks require a leadership mindset and practices that are unlike those commonly found in organizations. "Learning to lead with a network mindset is not as simple as acquiring a new skill. Often our deeply held ideas about leadership collide with new ways of leading that are more distributed, relational, and interdependent" (Meehan and Reinelt 2012, 7) Broadly speaking, what network mindset looks like is building relationships, facilitating collective intelligence, bridging divides, and nurturing feedback loops. Beth Tener describes what a network mindset is as follows, "With a network mindset we focus on building relationships to create a dense web of collaboration and connections. Everyone can play the role of being a network weaver, connecting people and ideas, with spirit and generosity and "pay it forward" (Tener 2013, para. 4). Meehan and Reinelt (2012) provide additional descriptions of leading with a network mindset in a white paper designed for leadership training. They ask and answer the question, "What are the core principals of leading with a network mindset?" The first thing they describe is "support convening and processes that build relationships across boundaries" (Meehan and Reinelt 2012, 7). This is important, and where it differs from traditional "networking" is that by supporting relationship building across boundaries, positive social capital that can be build. New relationships can grow that span economic, racial, and other boundaries. Another important principle that the authors touch on is the need to "cultivate and practice with a network mindset and network tools" (Meehan and Reinelt 2012, 9). This

highlights the importance of experimenting, and practicing with tools that enable networking across place and geographical boundaries, and understanding how mapping can be a tool for networks. Meehan and Reinelt also describe mindset core concepts as *connecting and weaving, doacracy, and self-organizing,* and finally, *learning and risk taking.* The first concept, connecting and weaving, I have described while covering Holley's work. The last two are important to discuss. As a leader and a network practitioner I have observed both doacracy and self-organizing, as well as learning and risk taking. Doacracy and self-organizing are about action, doing, stepping up, and collaborating. A mindset that welcomes learning and risk taking is one that is essentially open to failure as a way to learning. These concepts are important to my research, and it is significant that there is obvious cross-over with Tener, Meehan, Reinelt and Holley's work. I believe that having multiple scholar practitioners write about these roles and mindsets strengthens the case to be made for a networked style of leadership.

"When we invite people to join a network, we cannot expect people who have spent their entire careers working in organizations to know how to "show up" to work in networked ways" (Tener 2013, para. 1). We have grown up in a world where we have known nothing but hierarchal top-down leadership and organizational structures, where planning, directives, rules, and power are executed from the top down. Perhaps the best way to create large-scale systems change is to learn to see the world in a different way, to learn a new set of skills, to adopt network mindset and practices. A networked way of working is based on a different metaphor and model, that of an ecosystem, where everything is connected and interdependent and the focus is on self-organizing and learning/adapting" (Tener 2013, para. 3). In the following paragraph I will discuss in further detail some of the additional activities and phenomena central to network mindset practice.

Bridging divides is an important concept to network mindset and practice. This is especially true now that we for the most part are no longer limited to collaborations in the physically small, sometimes homogenous, geographic places where we live. Digital platforms and social media tools are enabling people around the world to connect and bridge divides. People who act as "brokers" are also sometimes called bridgers, because they can bridge divides to those who otherwise would be unlikely to cross paths. These brokers are necessary to create strong networks. Brokers are intentionally creating stronger connections through their ties across what are typically fragmented parts of a system. With this mindset there is a shift from simply focusing on the work and the problem at hand, to concern with the higher level of the larger system, e.g., asking the question of "what does the system need?" or "what can we do together that we cannot do alone?" (Tener 2013, para. 4).

Along with bridging and connect, there is a consciousness of the need to build relationships. With a network mindset, the first order of business is to work on building relationships. Building relationships are how we create collaborative opportunities and connections. This is the role of network weavers (Holley 2012), connecting people and ideas. In a blog post of a conversation with Holley, Beth Kanter writes about network weaving as the "art of being rhizomatic" (Kanter 2009). She also asks, "what the heck is network weaving?" In response, Holley makes it clear that network weaving is not a specific job description but a role for everyone in the network, that ideally you want people all weaving on different levels, and sharing or exchanging the roles of networker, project coordinator, facilitator and guardian, from time to time. Along with these various weavers' roles and the network mindset are some ideas about how these function within a network, and I will talk about this next.

The activities and interactions within a network are important. A network mindset respects the connectedness and interdependence we have, and is cognizant of nurturing feedback loops. This is different than the top down cascading of actions and information typical of hierarchical systems. Complex systems, such as networks, evolve and are full of feedback loops to facilitate listening, learning, and adaptation. These conditions are not only about constant adaptation and learning, but also foster an awareness of the need for positivity of sentiments and attitudes of the humans in the network in order to support continued engagement. “Positive sentiments lead to further engagement” (Kadushin 2012, 76). These feedback loops are essential, they are the heart of a network.

Related to these feedback loops is dynamic opportunity creation. This is the balance of “goal-directedness” and “serendipity.” Functioning on the edge of chaos requires not only generating mechanisms, but also individuals or practices to maintain a balance. This is another area, this management of the ecosystem of the network, where leadership may be seen.

An aspect of network mindset is a nimbleness that adapts to preceding conditions. A facilitation that acknowledges the unique, random, and complex interactions that occur through the mechanism of emergence. This dynamic process, a mix of variables and “events,” continuously manifests and creates spontaneous new forms.

Finally, a network mindset facilitates collective intelligence. Rather than pushing an agenda, or trying to convince others to agree to an idea, a network mindset is about facilitating the “collective intelligence” of the group. This calls for leading with questions, not answers, and trusting that if we show up with the “right strategic question, that the diverse perspectives of the system can together come to a better solution than any one part could alone” (RWJF 2018). “Exposure to entirely different ways of operating and of viewing the same issue

contributes to people's ability to see the larger context in which they were embedded" (Kuenkel 2016, 17).This network mindset is what helps to fuel effective movements. In the following quote, Crutchfield (2018) is talking about non-profits, but what he has to say really applies to all movements: "Most effective nonprofits adopt a network mindset, working with and through other groups in coalitions and alliances instead of simply shoring up their own organizations" (Crutchfield 2018, 17). This is a great example of the strength of collective intelligence and network mindset.

Leadership-as-Practice

In addition to network leadership and network mindset theory, the work being done with Leadership-as-Practice (LAP) provides an alternative lens for understanding a different leadership paradigm that supports more collective and collaborative forms of action. According to Chia and Holt, "ultimately the impact of exploring leadership through a practice orientation aims to penetrate how actors 'get on'" (as quoted in Carrol et al. 2008, 364) with the work of leadership, something both traditional and mainstream leadership has shed surprisingly little light on. Essentially, practice theory is at its roots a social theory which explores the "subtle, moral, emotional, and relational aspects of leadership" (Carroll et al. 363). Precursory to LAP, the authors of *Leadership not Leaders* (Crevani, Lindgren, and Packendorff 2010), discuss the development of "founding scientific assumptions" that come from a perspective that leadership is something that is practiced in daily interactions, processes, and practices. In other words, that these leadership activities emerge and transform in everyday social interactions. The authors define concepts such as constructing and reconstructing, action-spacing and co-orientation as leadership. Their argument "challenges the dominant or prevailing leadership discourses and redirects focus onto what they refer to as the mundane and relational aspects of leadership work" (84). In discussing their own research, they emphasize that "the label "practice" enables us to

focus on how work is conducted and performed rather than on actors' intentionality" (Crevani, Lindgren, and Packendorff 2010, 82). They argue that "the empirical study of leadership should be based on a process ontology, focused on leadership practices as constructed in interactions" (77). Essentially, they have established the groundwork for understanding and constructing leadership from a processual perspective.

Though I am interested in leadership as practice, I would like to mention the research has been done on strategy as practice, a precursor to leadership as practice. This work suggests that practice theory is a movement toward an equitable evaluation of leadership. What that means is that strategy as practice recognizes that the work of strategy happens at all levels of an organization including middle and lower level employees, not just those with high profile status, power, and position (Lichtenstein et al. 2006), and LAP follows suit. The preliminary work done in strategy as practice that I mention above, and Raelin's previous work on leaderful practice, is the foundation and my starting point for examining the theory of LAP, which is what I will be digging into next.

According to Crevani and Endrissat (Raelin ed 2016), rather than a central leader, LAP is about relationships, the emergent dynamics and patterns of action, and "is thus a phenomenon taking place as work is done, in space and time" (34). Those engaged in the practice manifest leadership through "mutual, discursive, sometimes recurring and sometimes evolving patterns in the moment and over time (Raelin 2016, 3).

In *From Leadership-as-Practice to Leaderful Practice*, Raelin describes LAP as "focusing on the everyday practice of leadership including its moral, emotional, and relational aspects rather than it rational, objective and technical aspects" (2011, 2). LAP is quite similar to a relational style of leadership in they are both focused on providing more processual stories

about leadership, yet also different, as described by Raelin. “L-A-P is a process model that cannot be reduced to an individual or even to discrete relations. Rather, it is a synchronous interpenetrating process which is irrevocably evolving” (11). When I first began to read about LAP, I quickly made a connection to the process that happens in network practice and network mindset.

Raelin (2016) supports his framework of LAP citing prior scholarly work. In particular, he cites Heidegger, stating that LAP is concerned with how leadership emerges and unfolds through coping in day-to day experience (4). Another connection I made, and really what all of this work on LAP means to me,is in how it relates to Butler’s notion of performativity in *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Butler 2015, 9). Butler talks about performativity, and its history as being thought of in terms of individual performance and how “acting in concert” calls in play forms of performativity “that only operate through forms of coordinated action” (2015, 9) The performativity present in the day-to-day interactions, in the spaces between, those emerging dynamics and evolving patterns of actions, are the story of leadership as practice, and at least in my mind, the process that takes place in networked forms of leadership.

Consequently, the activities to be found in leadership as practice (Crevani, Lindgren, and Packendorff 2010; Raelin 2014) make a significant addition to my theory of network leadership. I will briefly define these activities of constructing, scanning, signaling, weaving, stabilizing, inviting, and unleashing. Crevani and colleagues (2010) describe the activity of constructing as “action-spacing and co-orientation.” This concept entails an ongoing cycle of constructing and de-constructing boundaries at all levels from individual to organizational. Scanning refers to the process of identifying resources, such as information or technology, that can contribute to new or

existing programs through simplification of sensemaking. Signaling is described as mobilizing and catalyzing the attention of others to a program or project thorough such means as initiating, building on, modifying, ordering, or synthesizing prior existing elements. Weaving, much like the way in which June Holley speaks about it, is creating webs of interaction across existing and new networks by building trust between individuals and units, or by creating shared meanings to particular views or cognitive frames. A practice of stabilizing includes offering feedback to converge activity and evaluate effectiveness, leading, in turn, to structural and behavioral changes and learning. This is followed by inviting, or encouraging those who have held back to participate through sharing their ideas, energy, and humanity. Finally, one last significant practice is unleashing, making sure that everyone who wishes to has had a chance to contribute without fear of repercussion, even if their contribution might create discrepancy or ambiguity in the face of decision-making convergence. To clarify, the activities described above are not necessarily limited to an individual, they could be experienced (or observed) by either an originator of the practice, a recipient, or between the two, or even many in practice. It is a flow of interaction and experience that occurs within the matrix of relationships.

Finally, because Joseph Raelin's theory of LAP makes a considerable contribution to my research, I feel I would be remiss if I did not mention there is some critical critique of LAP, generally stemming from what some feel is Raelin's claim that it is a "new movement." In *What's New about Leadership-as-Practice?* Margaret Collinson (2018), challenges Raelin's central claims for this Leadership-as-Practice perspective, namely that this is not new theory as he suggests. Nor is it a "distinct movement" more radical than critical leadership studies. Collinson argues that his claims are excessive and have little evidence in support, even from his own peers. None of this dampens my enthusiasm for what he has assembled in the way of a

leadership theory that is about practice as the coordinated effort of many leading together. The work I have mentioned in the review you have just read, the practice theory and activities, contribute to my understanding of leadership in networks and whether or not these are new concepts or a movement is irrelevant to the value they provide in constructing my framework. Raelin has identified activities, practices, and processes that I believe give further insight in my study of a networked style of leadership and deserve further exploration. Next, I will talk about a final piece that informs the framework of my research.

Network Leadership Through the Lens of Transformative Social Innovation Theory

A final consideration in my understanding of leadership in networks is inspired by a research article, *Developing the Transformative Capacity of Social Innovation through Learning: A Conceptual Framework and Research Agenda for the Roles of Network Leadership* (Strasser, et al. 2019), and the dissertation work of Tim Strasser. Strasser et al. developed Transformative Social Innovation Theory (TSI) in their EU-funded TRANSIT project. TSI is described as "a process of change in social relations involving challenging, altering and/or replacing dominant institutions and structures" (TSIT 2017). This is important for my research because Strasser and colleagues are interested in how network leadership can transform dominant institutions and structures. Strasser's overall topic is large and concerns itself with much more than what is relevant to my network leadership research. However, an aspect of his research that interests me, and is somewhat parallel with mine, is when, for example, he ponders "how various actors in social innovation networks can purposefully shape and support learning processes to strengthen transformative capacity" (Strasseret al. 2017, 2). I am interested in learning about the practices of leadership and values in networks because the literature suggests that certain types of networks and practices in networks can facilitate the bridging information and innovation. This in turn can shape and support learning and build the capacity of networks. One of the research questions

Strasser asks is, “Which relationships can be empirically identified between specific network leadership roles, related learning processes and resulting increases in transformative capacity and impact?” (17). This is very similar to the foundation of my research. I do not expect to answer this question in my dissertation, but aspire to have a solid grasp on identifying the practices which support these roles, and that could certainly be a foundation for future research such as Strasser poses, “In particular, identifying recurrent patterns of relations that can be seen in multiple cases would be important to increase validity and wider relevance. This could also clarify to what extent or which kind of network leadership is important” (15). My research will focus on identifying those leadership practices and values that are consistently found to be present or recurrent in network leadership.

In this chapter I have presented the literature that supports my argument for the potential of complex, self-organized networked structures within community-based food systems networks to create participatory, multi-scalar, and effective pathways for much needed change in our food system and society. I began with a review of the systemic economic, political, and social issues responsible for our current state. Then, because my study is about self-organized leadership in food networks, I established the connection between politics, economics, and our food system, closing with the food systems literature that establishes the need for change in our food system. I closed with a review of the prior theory on the elements of network roles, network mindset, and leadership-as-practice that contribute to both the function and understanding of this unique style of leadership in networks. In my review I have highlighted specific authors and theories because their work provides a foundation for my research, however, there are certainly other researchers that have contributed to my thinking in particular on the dynamics of horizontal,

non-hierarchal, collective leadership in self-organized networks. Finally, I have illuminated both the context and significance of the relationship between our current food system and the emergence of these self-organized food networks, and where that compass points, in a larger context, to an emerging story of a new society.

> Putting blind faith in markets—while ignoring the living world, society, and the runaway power of banks—has taken us to the brink of ecological, societal and financial collapse. It is time for the neoliberal show to leave the stage: a very different story is emerging. (Raworth 2017, 61)

Before heading into Chapter III and my research methods, I will quickly review my research questions.

Primary Research Question

What is the nature of leadership in emerging local and regional food networks that provides the foundation for a network to strengthen and scale?

Sub-Questions:

- What are some of the values that contribute significantly toward local and regional food networks strengthening and scaling?
- What are the key leadership practices that facilitate local and regional food network development and growth?
- In what ways are the values and practices of these leaders consistent with what the literature in the field says?
- What are the other factors contribute to sustainability and scaling of local food networks?

In the next chapter, I will discuss how I have decided to answer these questions, and the details of my research methodology.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY/GUIDING QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH PROCEDURES

> A majority of social network research has been quantitatively focused, drawing on primary data collected through name generating surveys, such as through snowball sampling or roster recall. While creating value, these traditional sociometric sampling techniques have limitations in identifying and measuring important node, dyadic and network level constructs (as cited in Williams and Shepard 2017, 269).

The intention of this chapter is to introduce my dissertation research methodology. I have organized the chapter to first convey the purpose and goals of my research, including a recap of the research questions introduced in Chapter I. I will then describe the overall design, including the background and rationale. Following this, I will give a brief description of social network analysis. Next, I will describe the elements of phase one of my research, the social network analysis and mapping. Following this, I will review the qualitative approach I will be using for phase two of my research. Then I will go into the details of the interview and analysis process I will be using. The chapter ends with a consideration of the ethics and limitations of this dissertation.

Purpose and Goals

The over-arching purpose behind my research is to understand how leadership in self-organized food networks can instigate or generate conditions that not only create flourishing networks, but also have the potential to create large scale change (LSC). I used a mixed method approach that includes social network analysis and semi-structured interviews with specifically identified network members.

The primary objective of my research is to identify the leadership practices, values, and use of power that take place within emergent local and regional foods networks. This will help

gain a better understanding of the "essential" leadership practices that may result in a societal shift. I maintain that leadership is deeply embedded and alive within our society, in both geographic and virtual communities. This leadership takes on many forms, but as reviewed in Chapter II, there is a common mindset, roles, practices, and values that are hypothesized to signal the presence of this type of leadership.

I used an exploratory mixed methods approach for my research. A mixed methods perspective encourages the use of multiple methods and theoretical approaches. "Many of the social science problems we face are complex, and therefore they require multiple perspectives and methods to help solve" (DeCuir-Gumby and Schultz 2017, 2). This is certainly true of my research as the phenomenon I investigated lends itself to this type of treatment. From a quantitative point of view, I learned what the structure of each these networks are, where the individuals with influence are, and then, from a qualitative perspective, to understand the practices, values, and power structures which contribute to the leadership, values, and power structures in these networks. This is a strong rationale for the use of mixed methods.

Social Network Analysis

Why Understanding Networks is Important

Recently, academic researchers, social activists, and community change makers have begun to recognize and tap into the power of networks. Networks are acknowledged as a powerful emerging form of organizing. Exploring networks is attractive to researchers "because understanding network structures and relationships increases our understanding of outcomes critical to individuals, teams, groups, and organizations" (as cited in Williams and Shepard 2017, 268).

What is Social Network Analysis

Networks are a set of relationships, and dyads and triads are the basic units that a network is comprised of, whether large or small. They are the "analogue of molecules," meaning they are similar yet different in their structures. In social network analysis, among many things, we are interested in looking at how these networks formed, why people came together in the first place, and the feedback loops that result. June Holley and Valdis Krebs both talk about how certain patterns of relationships in networks are more conducive to cascading of information, innovation, and collaboration, these are found in what they call "Smart Networks." These networks have a dense core with many overlapping clusters. Each cluster may represent different world views, demographics, and strategies. Everyone at the core may not know everyone else directly, but are only a "few steps away." These networks also have a large periphery of people, all of whom know someone in the network. "A healthy periphery will have 3 to 5 times as many nodes as are found in the entire core" (Holley 2012, 20). A network researcher analyzes network structure and patterns to identify people and clusters with high and low centrality.

Centrality measures are calculations that describe the network position of a particular node. There are many different types of centrality measures. For instance, degree centrality is measured by the number of edges directed a node has, the higher the degree, the more central the node is. Indegree measures the number of incoming connections for an element. In general, elements with high indegree are the leaders, looked to by others as a source of advice, expertise, or information. Reach centrality measures the portion of the network within two steps of an element. In general, elements with high reach can spread information through the network through close friend-of-a-friend contacts. Closeness centrality measures the distance each node is from all other nodes. In general, nodes with high closeness can spread information to the rest of the network most easily and usually have high visibility as far as what is happening in the

network. There is also betweenness centrality of a node, which measures the number of times a node lies on the shortest path between other nodes; it is often used as a metric for measuring influence. In general, elements with high betweenness have more control over the flow of information and act as key bridgers within the network. They can also be potential single points of failure bottlenecks/blockers. Betweenness centrality can be used to identify which nodes (person or groups) are strategically positioned to allow information to pass from one part of the network to the other (Prell 2012; Kadushin 2012).

In my research I was concerned with how influence and diffusion happen in networks. An aspect of centrality that I used was betweenness centrality. This is because, as Hoppe and Reinelt (2010) explain, the people that connect those clusters and bring people in from the periphery are "bridgers." Researching the leadership practices, values, and use of power of these individuals with high "betweenness" in a network is important because they have been identified as those who "provide opportunities for innovation, growth, and impact because they have access to perspectives, ideas, and networks that are otherwise unknown to most network members" (Hoppe and Reinelt 2010, 603). Recent research by Rehman and colleagues (2020), *Identification and Role of Opinion Leaders in Information Diffusion for Online Discussion Network,* also supports the notion that betweenness is the measure of choice for identifying leaders. Also, that the weak ties (measured by betweenness) "matter most" when looking at the spread of new information in a network. The most important role of weak ties is connecting network segments or clusters. "Weak ties facilitate the flow of information from otherwise-distant parts of a network. Weak ties help to integrate social systems (Kadushin 2012, 31)." This was of particular interest to me in my local/regional food systems research because the literature in the field indicates that bridgers and weak ties facilitate the scaling across of theory, concepts,

and innovation. (Krebs and Holley 2002,2006; Kadushin 2012; Prell 2012; Granoveter 1977). In my research I explored the leadership practices, values, and use of power of those with high betweenness, those in positions of influence in three local/regional food networks. I also considered indegree as there is a connection with indegree and leadership as this measure may indicate people who are who are sought out for advice and expertise within the network. Finally, because the total number of connections, the people a person knows, and the reach or steps to another person is important, I considered reach centrality as well.

Technical Aspects of the Research Process

In social network analysis, the choice about which algorithm to use and how best to visualize the network is not a given. There is more than one way to produce a network map. The algorithm is the different steps that have been programmed by the developer to produce the results you see on the map. Also, experimenting with different views can reveal different aspects of the network's connectivity. I was very excited about the opportunity to do participatory mapping using the software programs sumApp and Kumu. SumApp is a tool for collecting self-reported relationship data, and Kumu is a mapping visualization system. These tools enabled me to analyze the connections, clusters, edges, and additional information to begin to make sense of the relationships in the networks. A flow chart and software brief can be found in Appendices B and C.

My research used SNA and subsequent interviews to study the structures and relationships in the Root to Seed Growers Collaborative, The Washington Food Policy Network, and the Food for All Coalition. I chose to study these three networks because they are all emergent, healthy, or expanding. In addition, they are situated in geographical regions that have 20 to 30 year community histories of support for local/regional food systems and food justice. This is important because there is much to be learned from this success and the experience of

leadership in these networks. My intention is that the results of this research will contribute to what we know about the nature of leadership in emerging local and regional food networks that provides the foundation for a network to strengthen and scale. In turn, providing society with practical strategies for implementing more democratic, citizen-engaged, sociopolitical structures. Next, I will describe my design.

Description of my Design

My dissertation research is a design developed to explore leadership practices, values, and power dynamics in local and regional food systems. To do this I used mixed methods, including social network mapping and semi-structured interviews. I have a critical pragmatic world view so it is important to me that my research explore problems in a sensible way. I approached the research by analyzing each of the network maps, identifying the leadership I wanted to learn about, and then interviewing a role set around them. I will discuss the specifics of this in the design section, as well as how these networks and participants were selected, and more detail as to how data will be collected and analyzed.

The Background and Rationale for my Design

Janice Morse's definition of mixed methods, explained in *Toward a Definition of Mixed Methods Research* (Johnson et al. 2007, 120), is the one that strongly describes my research philosophy and approach; "A mixed method design is a plan for a scientifically rigorous research process comprised of a qualitative or quantitative *core component* that directs the theoretical drive, with qualitative or quantitative *supplementary component(s)*. These components of the research fit together to enhance description, understanding and can either be conducted simultaneously or sequentially." I used a mapping process to identify network structures, connections, and the relationships in each of the networks. The information discovered in the mapping process informed my qualitative phase. In that same publication Jennifer Greene also

suggests, “mixed method inquiry is an approach to investigating the social world that ideally involves more than one methodological tradition and thus more than one way of knowing, along with more than one kind of technique for gathering, analyzing, and representing human phenomena, all for the purpose of better understanding” (Johnson et al. 2007, 199). I used data collection tools such as a participatory relationship survey because I wanted to learn about the relationships in the network from the participants perspectives. I administered the surveys, and then after reviewing and analyzing those results, was able to purposefully select network participants for interviews.

The first step in visualizing a network is to collect that data. To create each of these maps I first launched the SumApp[6] participatory surveys. The survey results imported into Kumu display the connections in the network that can then be used to analyze the structure of the network. I will talk about this in detail later in this chapter and in Chapter IV.

I specifically chose this methodology because I maintain that using a relationship survey and mapping, along with interviews, would yield the best data collection results and the most insightful set of analyses and conclusions (Prell et al. 2009; Herz et al. 2014). In addition, this approach is both innovative and creative, which was necessary to uncover the information needed to fully explore my research questions. Next, I will describe the two phases of my research, the Social Network Analysis and Interviews.

Phase I- Social Network Analysis of the Three Local/Regional Food Networks

The three separate social network maps for this research were developed with data from a prior study and two separate consultation projects. The process of participant invitation to the sumApp survey and participatory data entry was completed for the first map, the Root to Seed

[6] http://greaterthanthesum.com/sumapp/

Growers Collaborative, as part of prior unpublished research (Trocchia and Martinez 2018). The purpose of the project was to learn how community-based food producers are organizing collaborative complex leadership structures to support values-based regional food economies. Individuals who were connected to the Root to Seed Growers Collaborative via personal or business connections, conference participation, supply chain transactions, or other food system activities were invited participate after signing the disclosure. The information from this map is valuable to my dissertation research because of the relationships between the nodes and the bridging present in this geographically large network. Below is a snapshot in time of that network (Fig.1.1).

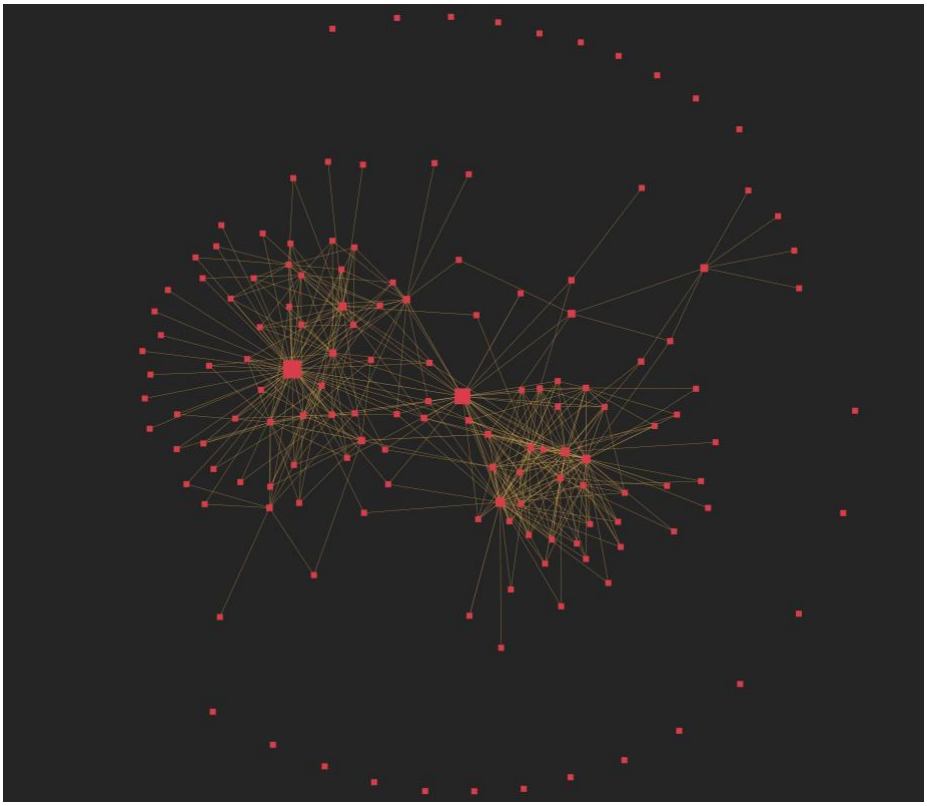

Figure 1.1. A snapshot in time visualization of the elements in the Root to Seed Growers Collaborative.

The information for The Washington Food Policy Network (WFPN) and Food for All Coalition (FAC) was gathered during consultation projects. In both cases the goal of the network

mapping was to increase understanding of each specific network in order to have a foundation for beginning work to strengthen relationships and connections to add to the effectiveness of the network. In the case of the WAFN, the mapping was part of an organizational assessment. The information for the mapping was collected using the "old fashioned" method of having participants place sticky notes on a wall to represent their connections (Fig. 1.2). I then manually entered the relationship data that was collected. After inputting this data (which is public knowledge) into Kumu, I realized that there are individuals with distinguishable betweenness and reach scores in these networks, so including these networks in my study would be beneficial to answering my research questions.

Figure 1.2. Washington Food Policy Network Mapping. Photography by MaryAnn Martinez May 6, 2019.

Selection and Recruitment

I would like to note that I am deeply networked within the local food, sustainable, and organic agriculture sectors, and the possibility does exist for the SNA participants and the

researcher to have personal and/or business knowledge of one another. This was to some extent also a factor in my having access to these networks.

Selection and recruitment for the Root to Seed Growers Collaborative (RSGC) was driven by a database of 25 individuals who are currently affiliated with the RSGC. Inclusion in the social network analysis of this network was limited to staple foods growers, processors, customers, or others connected to the staple foods value chain who gave consent to participate. Those who did not meet that criteria were excluded from the survey. Individuals who are currently connected to the RSGC via personal or business connections, conference participation, supply chain transactions, or other food system activities received an email link to the sumApp online software used to collect network mapping data. When invited participants followed the link in the e-mail, they were able to access the questionnaire. The questionnaire began with the disclosure and consent document and only after individuals had read and agree to participate were they able to respond to the questionnaire and join the study.

I used chain-referral sampling to identify additional participants. As a part of the questionnaire, participants had the opportunity to identify others in the network to participate. They were able to invite these additional connections via sumApp. All individuals within the network are able to view the network map. No information was shared beyond the researcher, the dissertation committee, and network members, and this was made clear to the participants in the disclosure. In addition, sumApp has gone to great lengths to ensure the security of their software and processing (Appendix B). The data collected is accessible to only the researcher and will be securely stored in encrypted and password protected files. Should opportunities arise where the data might be useful in another context, the participant will be contacted and asked for permission to share the data prior to doing so. I will talk more about this in the ethics section.

There was no purposeful selection or recruitment for the WFPN or the FAC mapping process. The participants and information gathered for mapping was available to me during network consultation projects which are public knowledge.

Network Survey Question Design

When creating the survey for the RSGC, I had two main objectives, the first being to collect the relationship information I needed for mapping and identifying interviewees. The second was to collect information that could be informative, anecdotal, and also used by the network members in the future. Beyond collection of demographic data, my most important questions were connection questions. Essentially, I needed to know:

- Who is in the network (nodes)?
- What are their characteristics (node attributes)?
- How are they connected to each other (ties)?
- What is the strength of those ties?

I asked the following connection questions, and participants were forced to choose only one response per question:

1) Which best describes your regular interactions with this person (select 1)
   I have had meaningful exchanges and shared ideas
   I have shared advice, learning, resources and/or mutual support.
   I currently collaborate with this person.
   I have in the past, or plan to do collaborate with this person in the future.

2) How well do you know them? (select 1)
   Not at all familiar
   Slightly familiar
   Somewhat familiar
   Moderately familiar
   Extremely familiar

3) How frequently do you connect with this person? (select 1)
   Very rarely
   Rarely
   Occasionally

Frequently
Very frequently

4) Do you feel this person has contributed to the growth and development of the local food and/or hunger prevention network?
no
yes

The individual responses to these questions generated the map, in which the nodes represent entities such as individuals, organizations or businesses, and the links represent the relationships and levels of relationships between them. In the case of the WFPN and FAC the information was collected during in person interactive mapping sessions in which participating individuals and organizations used one sticky note to identify themselves and/or their affiliation, group, and/or organization, others to identify programs or actions/affinities and then were asked to draw lines signifying the different connections and relationships. This method was chosen because these are smaller geographically close networks as compared to the RSGC. Using this in person mapping method helped to facilitate the active engagement of participants which was necessary for my consulting projects.

However, in order to address my research questions, I needed to go beyond analyzing the characteristics of the networks on maps. To understanding why people in the network formed the relationships they did, and to what extent the values and practices of these leaders were consistent with what the literature in the field this required investigating a set of assumptions gathered from the literature in the field. I chose to do this by conducting semi-structured interviews of the role set around specific nodes identified on these maps. This informed the answers to my research questions.

Phase II - Interviews

I used semi-structured interviews and template analysis for the second phase of my sequential mixed methods study. “The term ‘template analysis’ does not describe a single, clearly delineated method; it refers rather to a varied but related group of techniques for thematically organizing and analyzing textual data” (King 2004, 256). Each of the 18 interviews were done with the role set of three individuals connected to a person in a position of influence. These individuals had high betweenness scores, which signals a person of influence. I used a template or “theme book” created from the literature in the field, and along with emergent themes used that to code the interviews.

Background and Reasoning for Semi-structured Interview

Prior to COVID-19 I saw my work as being slightly ethnographically inspired as many of my interviews would take place in the context in which the leaders role sets live and work in their communities. I had anticipated visiting people at their farms, bakeries, and perhaps other settings of their choice within their communities. However, due to the virus and stay at home order I ended up conducting all but two of the interviews over Zoom. I was still able to conduct them with a mindset inspired by Clandinin (2006), remembering that “capturing and making sense of conversation is a slippery thing” (17). I believe I was able to form the appropriate relationships with the individuals I interviewed to get not only answers to questions, but also some compelling stories of their “leadership” experiences with identified leaders in the network. Through the use of carefully crafted questions and appropriate responses, I learned about the network and the elements of leadership from the perspective of the interviewee’s experience. These interviews were semi-structured, however, I left room for stories to emerge, and they did, along with wide and deep themes. A good deal of what informed my research happened as conversations took a more relaxed path of the interviewees’ choosing. Using these semi-

structured interviews allowed me to learn things to confirm the patterns on the maps, and to hear how these role sets make sense of the leadership in the network, and more. It was my intention to have some structure for the purpose of direction, but it was in moving away from the questioning that the richness of the story emerged.

Interview Methodology

Selection Criteria for Interviews

Network leaders were identified using multiple indicators as previously described in the section Social Network Mapping Research Design and Justification. To review, initially leaders were "discovered" based on various centrality measures. Then their reach and indegree were considered, and finally, they were ranked within the network by their betweenness values. To review what this means, the first is degree centrality, which counts the number of ties or connections an actor has (Wasserman and Faust 1994). Someone with high degree centrality may be able to diffuse information through the network more broadly than someone with low degree centrality. The second, reach centrality, counts the number of nodes. In my research that would be relationships that the leader can contact through their ties. This metric suggests the possibility of messages traveling between actors (Wasserman and Faust 1994) from one to another in steps. This is an important measure because the leader's ideas and influence can travel indirectly to more people. The third is indegree. This is a person people come to for advice or information, an expert. Finally, betweenness which is a significant measure as it shows people who have numerous contacts and are often a conduit for opportunities, innovation, growth, and impact (Hoppe and Reinelt 2010).

The Interviews

As discussed above, I conducted semi-structured interviews. Though questions were asked, "semi-structured interviews unfold in a conversational manner offering participants the chance to explore issues they feel are important" (Longhurst 2016, 143). For the interviews, three network members connected to an individual who is identified as a "leader", using the SNA criteria above, were interviewed. Rather than interviewing the leader, I chose to conduct the interview with the role set surrounding the "leader." This is much like key informant interviews because these individuals will have first-hand experience and knowledge of the values and practices of the "leader," as well as their own experiences of leadership in the context and space of the network and their relationship with the leader. Again, the intention in my interviews was about more than collecting of facts, my perspective going into these interviews was to hear stories and co-create meaning (Creswell 2014). I wanted to remain flexible to changing the number of interviews and therefore monitored the data as my interviews progressed, and considered adding new interviews if I felt there was new information to be discovered (Silverman 2010). I will talk in detail about the maps and how they were used in the interviewee selection process in Chapter IV.

For the interviews, a consent form and the questions were sent in advance. As mentioned above, due to COVID-19, all but two of the interviews were conducted digitally via Zoom. In addition to memoing, I recorded using a feature in Zoom as well as a digital recorder for backup. For the non-Zoom interviews, I used my iPhone and a handheld recorder.

Interview Questions

In order to form interview questions, I first had to think about what things I wanted to know about theses "leaders." Essentially, my questions fell into three categories: leadership practice, values, and power.

Here are examples of the interview questions:

- What would you consider to be (name) role in the network?
- How does (name) encourage people to take initiative or advantage of resources?
- Are relationships important for (name)? Can you give me an example?
- Who has (name) introduced you to?
- What does (name) do to build trust?
- Do you consider (name) a listener? Can you give me an example?
- How often does (name) share resources, information, and connections? How have those resources made a difference for you?
- What do you think (name) values?
- How does (name) handle power and conflict within the network?

Analysis: Transcribing and Coding

Alan Bryman's (Bryman 2001; Gibbs 2011) style seemed to be the best fit for how I sought to gather data and tell the network weaving story in my dissertation. For my analysis I also followed the guidance of Morgan and Nica's new method, Iterative Thematic Inquiry (Morgan and Nica 2020). They suggested "beginning the development of themes as early as possible, through an assessment of initial preconceptions, and that it relies on writing rather than coding, by using a continual revision of tentative results as the primary procedure for generating a final set of themes" (1) Bryman (2001) recommends, from a constructivist perspective, that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being changed and revised through social interaction, e.g., the researchers' own accounts of the social world, where nothing is definitive as the versions evolve with experience. Applying these methods in both interviewing and coding means keeping a constant consciousness of this complexity. Accordingly, I used a theory driven approach in my research, but with room for inductive codes.

In a sense, my template or code book began long before I began working on my qualitative methodology. During the last four years, while conducting literature reviews, and through my practical experience with a networked style of leadership and social network analysis, themes began to emerge from the different theories surrounding a networked style of leadership. The themes in my template represent ideas that scholars have about relationships, values, resources, opportunities, innovation, and engaging with a network style of leadership, including the themes from LAP. I intentionally created my template or theme book so that I could move from descriptive to analytical (Appendix D). The questions that I developed helped me decipher responses and find information that was meaningful to my research, such as the presence or absence of leadership practices that support my research agenda. "Template analysis works particularly well when the aim is to compare the perspectives of different groups of staff within a specific context" (King 2004, 257). While not staff, the members of these networks are being interviewed within the context of their relationship to a leader in that network.

In summary, in planning for the analysis of my interviews, I read materials on qualitative analysis, template analysis, and thematic analysis. Boyatzis' (1998) book, *Transforming Qualitative Information,* as well as journal articles and YouTube videos on Alan Bryman's (Gibbs 2011) narrative theory, and finally, Morgan and Nica's Iterative Thematic Analysis, were the most helpful learning resources. Essentially the process I used for coding was an amalgamation of what I learned. I will talk about this in greater detail in Chapter IV.

Ethics

The study contributes to what we know about the potential for complex, self-organized leadership structures within community-based food systems networks to demonstrate rhizomatic

characteristics which create participatory, multi-scalar, and effective pathways for change. In turn, this provides society with practical strategies for implementing more democratic, citizen-engaged, sociopolitical structures. I do not anticipate any psychological, social, legal, economic, or physical risks to be associated with this dissertation research. No information will be shared beyond the researcher, the dissertation committee, and the network members. This was made clear to the participants through the disclosure statements they signed before interviews. In addition, for the network mapping portion of the research, sumApp has gone to great lengths to ensure the security of their software and processing (Appendix B). The data collected will be accessible to only the individual, researcher, and dissertation committee members. As the social network analysis is complete, should opportunities arise where the data might be useful in another context, the participants will be contacted and asked for permission to share the data prior to doing so.

All phases of the research were designed so that all potential participants were required to read a consent document before participation in the study. For phase one, mapping, agreeing to the terms of the study enabled access to the questionnaire. Those who were unable or unwilling to provide consent were unable to access the questionnaire. I also offered assistance with reading or interpreting the questionnaire, and technical assistance with the software. There were no requests for assistance of this type.

For phase two, the interviews, a disclosure was presented to the participant via e-mail prior to each interview, and consent was gained verbally before the beginning of the interview. It was made clear that involvement in the study was voluntary and could end at any time without consequence. No one who agreed to interview opted out of the research.

Research Limitations

No research method is flawless, and it is likely that I have made some trade-offs with mine. I chose to conduct a small-scale set (18) of in-depth semi-structured interviews in order to gain the individual perspectives of network members with connections to specific individuals who may be "network leaders" because more in-depth narrative interviews provide potential for greater insight into the phenomenon of interest. This style of interview is better able to answer questions concerning what leadership is actually doing to help networks thrive. This is to some extent because of the possibility of unpredictable and unsolicited responses that can manifest in semi-structured interviews. Information on the values and practices of "network leaders" is valuable to this young field. However, there are tradeoffs of not conducting a second survey and analysis. I am sacrificing a quantitative approach to understanding networked leadership that might yield its own set of important insights, and certainly would provide a much larger sample size.

Finally, it also should be mentioned that during my pre-dissertation research I completed readings on research methods. This led to my beginning to think, in a personal way, about my own subjectivity in regard to my thesis. I had been operating in a framework that saw my background in political science and food systems/farming as a complete asset to my research and of value to the field, and I still believe that. However, after reading *Developing a Mixed Methods Proposal* (DeCuir-Gunby and Schutz 2017), I now also understand the value of disclosing this experience in my subjectivity statement, as well as taking into consideration how this personal experience and the inherent bias may sway my analysis. "This disclosure is important because it helps to reveal any biases, attachments, or insights you may have to the topic and research study" (DeCuir-Gunby 2017, 51).

CHAPTER IV: PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

This mixed methods research is designed to better understand the leadership practices, values, and power structures which contribute to the flourishing of food system networks. The primary research question being asked in my research is: *What is the nature of leadership in emerging local and regional food networks that provides the foundation for a network to strengthen and scale?* This chapter discusses my findings in regard to specific leadership practices, values, and power in three local/regional food networks.

Review of Methods and Approach

Here I offer a quick review of the methods and approach used. Social network analysis was used to identify individuals who are positioned to influence the spread of ideas, innovations, and learning among network clusters, sometimes existing within the three bounded networks, and also extending beyond. This was followed by semi-structured interviews with a role set of three network members connected to that individual. The purpose of the interviews was to learn about the leadership practices and values of the individual identified in the social network analysis, as well as others within the network. Prior to interviewing, existing literature in the field was used to produce deductive themes to create a "code book." During interviews I used a process modeled on Iterative Thematic Analysis (Morgan and Nica 2020) to continuously revise my original themes through memoing, revising, and memoing again. Final themes were not settled on until all interviews were complete, and transcripts were reviewed and coded in Dedoose qualitative research software.

I purposefully applied several strategies throughout the research to insure the reliability of my findings. Beginning with the social network analysis, I consciously selected a diversely positioned role set in order to learn about the leadership from different perspectives. I also chose

to conduct semi-structured interviews to create space for additional themes to be identified. I performed extensive memoing throughout interviews, and I used Dedoose qualitative research software for coding themes, excerpts, and additional memos. Finally, to ensure intercoder reliability, I asked two colleagues to each look at different sections of my raw transcripts. What one individual, a professor in food studies, found was consistent with my identification of the themes. The other individual, a leadership scholar and practitioner, identified several leadership sub-themes present in the excerpts that I had breezed by, and I was able to add these to my theme count.

The Research Process

In this section, I will review how I used the maps to choose my interviewees, and then present the iterative thematic analysis of the interview material. First, to explain how individuals were chosen to be interviewed, I will provide a figure of each map along with a legend. This is followed by some interview data and dense rich narrative. The interview data are organized by themes, again, these themes were first defined from the literature in the field and then revised throughout interviews and during iterative thematic analysis. This review will also clarify my rationale for these selections.

Identifying Interview Candidates

Network leaders were identified using multiple social network analysis methods as previously described in Chapter III Social Network Mapping Research Design and Justification. To review, initially leaders were "discovered" based on various centrality measures. Then they were ranked within the network by their betweenness and reach values. Betweenness centrality measures the degree to which a network member bridges between clusters. Bridging within a network provides valuable opportunities for innovation, growth, and impact (Hoppe and Reinelt 2010). For individuals with high betweenness scores, I also ran an indegree analysis to see if

these people were also those whom others in the network might go to, for example, for information and advice. In general, reach counts the number of nodes (individuals) that the leader can contact through their ties, as well as how many steps it takes to reach them. This metric suggests the possibility of messages traveling between actors (Wasserman and Faust 1994). This is an important measure because the leader's ideas and influence can travel indirectly to more people than they are directly connected.

Figure 4.1 below shows the map for the Washington Food Policy Council (WFPC). The blue dot and green dot represent those identified as being in potential leadership positions due to their betweenness and reach within the network. The corresponding colored numbers indicate the role set of three surrounding them that were interviewed.

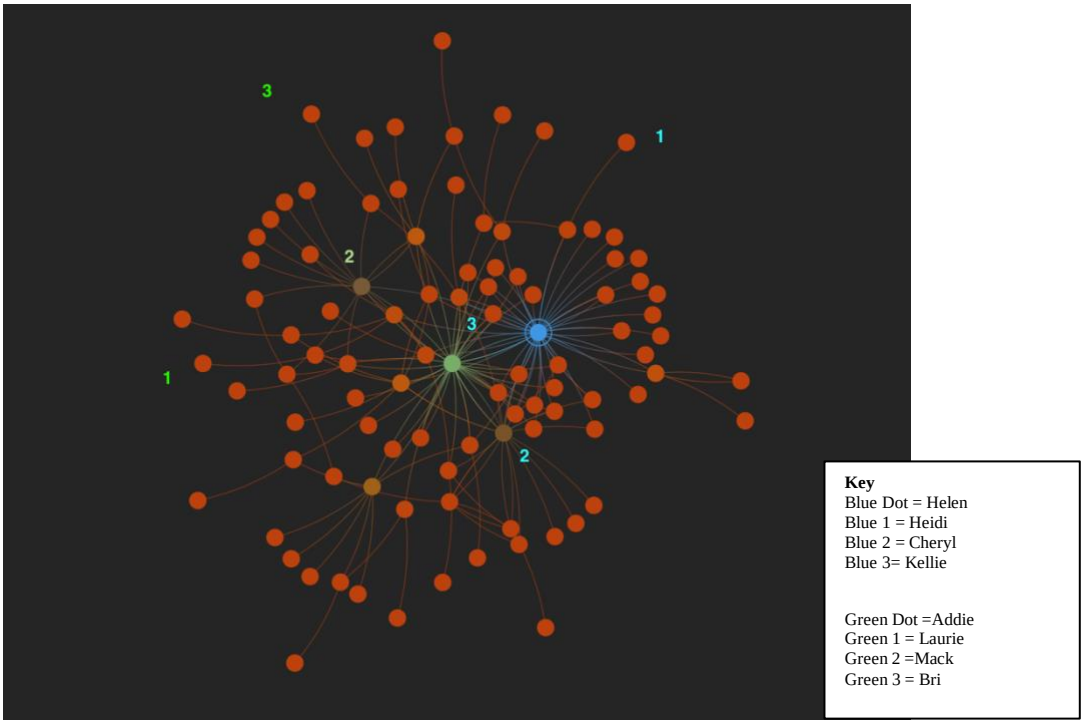

Figure 4.1. Washington Food Policy Council.

In the Root to Seed Growers Collaborative (RSGC) in Figure 4.2, the dark blue square and the lower yellow square represent identified potential "leaders" as indicated by their position on

the map. The corresponding colored numbers indicate the role set of surrounding them that were interviewed. In this instance, one of the role set was also an identified leader.

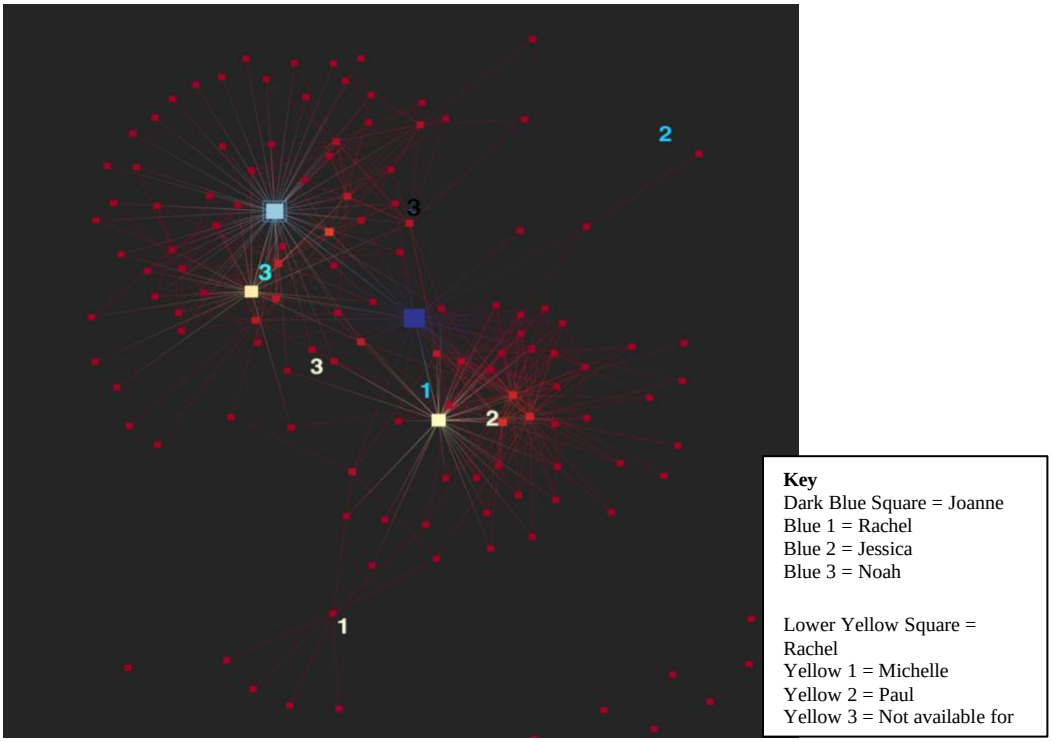

Figure 4.2. Root to Seed Growers Collaborative.

In the final map, The Food for All Coalition (FAC; Fig. 4.3), the two red squares and the lower dark yellow represent the individuals chosen for their position in the map. The corresponding colored numbers indicate the role set of three surrounding them that were interviewed.

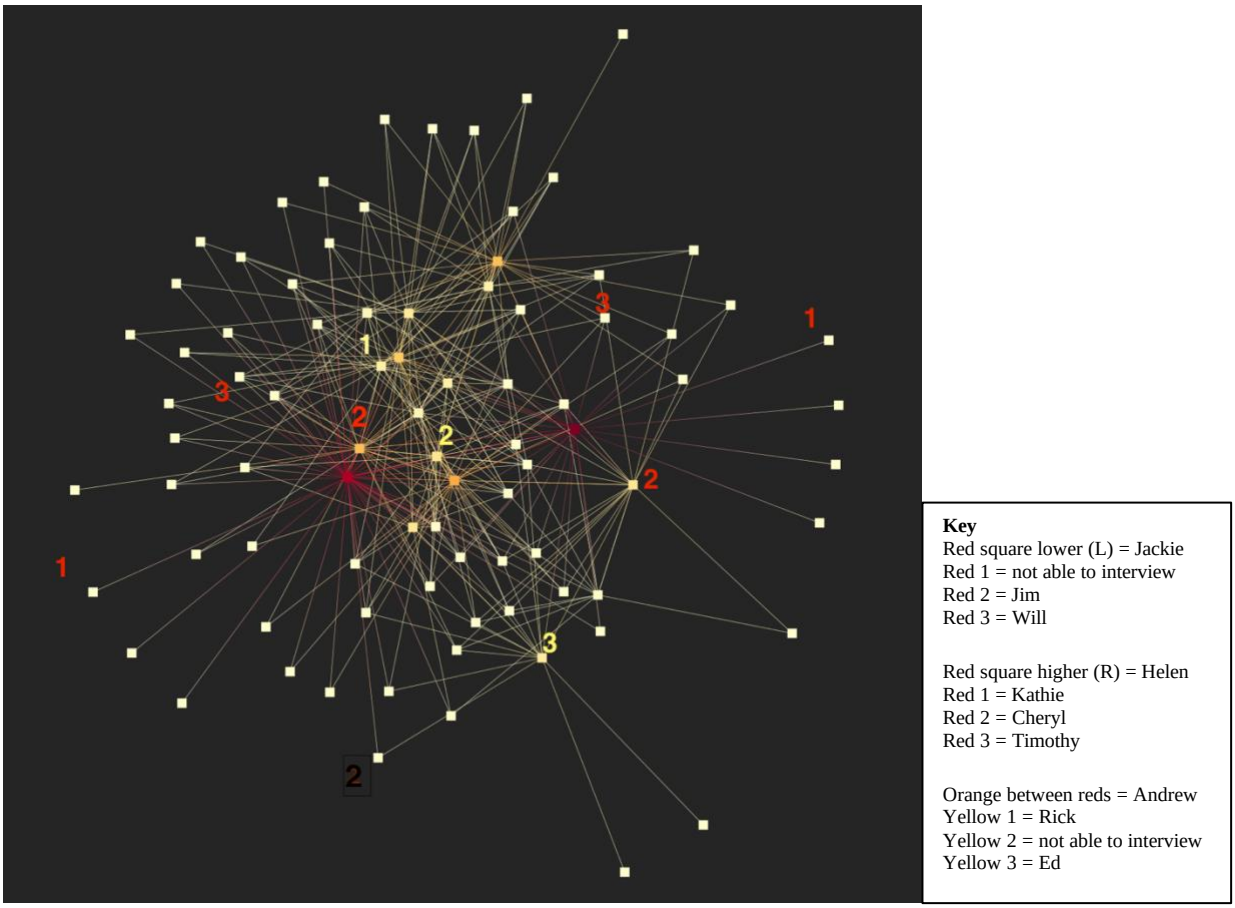

Figure 4.3. Food for All Coalition.

Interviews

It should be noted that in all the networks, although a role set for interviewing was chosen based on positioning relative to the individual with high betweenness and reach, not all of the 21 originally selected agreed or were available for interview. I chose some additional role set members and was able to complete interviews with 18 of the 21. However, even after selecting new candidates, I was not able to interview red 1 (on left) or yellow 2, in the FAC (Fig. 4.3), or yellow 3 in the RSGC (Fig. 4.2). Eighteen interviews are sufficient, so this is not a limitation, I am sharing these details to provide context to my interview choices.

It also should be mentioned that although some of my interview questions were intended to solicit information about the leadership practice and values of individuals with high

betweenness, in all of the interviews there was a significant occurrence of the mention of others, within and beyond the bounded networks. These individuals were brought up and discussed by the interviewees, so essentially, I heard stories and gathered data on the leadership practices and values of over 100 individuals involved with these networks. What meaning I made of this will be discussed in Chapter V.

Further Context Regarding my Findings

Before I delve further into my findings, I would like to provide some context of why this research is important to me. Ultimately, I am interested in learning how infrastructure and systems can be created which will provide a sustainable alternative to a market-based corporate food system. I want to know more about the relationships, the actions and values of activists, farmers, bakers, educators, and other members of local food network(s) as they self-organize. I described exhaustively about these topics in my introduction and Chapter II, so it should suffice to say here that those scholarly interests and my professional experiences led me to my main research question, *What is the nature of leadership in emerging local and regional food networks that provides the foundation for a network to strengthen and scale*? I review this question now in order to frame my analysis. I will be discussing multiple layers of leadership findings. First, I am going to talk about the leadership practices of the individuals who were the focus of my role set interviews. I wanted to learn about these individuals specifically because their high betweenness and other measures indicate map positions consistent with influence within their network and perhaps beyond. Following the individual profiles, I will discuss the leadership practices occurring in the space between these individuals and others in their network(s), as well as those individuals whose names came up in interviews. Then, I will examine what I have learned about the leadership climate, culture, and spaces where leadership happens within the network(s). Next,

I will share what I discovered about both values and power within these networks. Finally, I will discuss the findings within the context of my research questions.

Leadership Profiles

Now I will introduce you to the six individuals who were the intended focus of my role set interviews. I say intended, because what and who I learned about in these semi-structured interviews extended beyond the individual that the role set interview was focused on. For example, in response to the question, "Tell me about someone in the network that you learn from?" or "…someone that shares ideas," all my interviewees spoke about other network members in addition to the person who was the intended focus. I dealt with this additional information by asking the interviewee to focus on three individuals when answering specific questions, but then explored the other individuals in an open-ended fashion from mid-point in the interview and on.

As I describe each of the individuals who were the focus of my role set interviews, I will use multiple quotes in an effort to create a portrait of the individual and their diverse values and leadership practices. These are complex human beings, leading in complex networks, and my intention is that in these pen portraits you will experience these individuals as I did when they were described by those around them in the network. In my findings and discussion section, I will spend time connecting these quotes to leadership practices, values, and power themes.

Helen

The first leader I will discuss is Helen, a member of both the Washington Food Policy Council (WFPC; Fig. 4.1–Big blue dot) and Food for All Coalition (FAC; Fig. 4.3–Red square slightly higher on the right). I set out to learn about Helen by interviewing specific role sets in the two networks. It is notable that Helen was mentioned in all six role set interviews in the WFPN, and in six of the seven role set interviews in the FAC. This is likely because as her high

indegree suggests, people in a network with high indegree are the leaders, looked to by others as a source of advice, expertise, or information (Kadushin 2012; Prell 2012; Granoveter 1977). This implies that Helen is a person with influence that people go to. She also has a high betweenness score, which means she is an important connection point for many individuals in the network.

It is also significant that a high number of the themes from my literature review on leadership practices surfaced in descriptions of Helen during the interviews with both her role set and others. Those themes are action oriented, connecting, cultivating, relational, and supportive (Holley 2012; Crevani et al. 2010; Raelin 2014). Helen, among others in the networks, was also referred to as intentional enough times that intentional became a theme that I added to my "theme book" as I continued to interview, memo, and code. Additional specific descriptors of her that arose in interviews were; leads by doing, inspirational, gentle giant, strong morals, calm, encouraging, upbeat, supportive of policy work and good practices, provides structure, handles power gracefully, quality communicator, and resourceful. Most of these found their way to being categorized via leadership practices, values, or power sub-themes. Finally, to add additional perspective on Helen, as well as being, what I would call, deeply involved in these self-organized networks, she works in paid employment for municipal government.

Next, in no specific order, I will share some quotes about Helen. I am consciously not separating these quotes by theme as it is my intent to create a portrait of her unique leadership. I will share some context, as to why this narrative about Helen is important. First it is clear from these quotes that relationships are very important to Helen, and the literature in the field supports relationships as key to leadership in networks (Holley 2012; Kadushin 2012' Lanfer, Brandes, and Reinelt, 2013). Interview content also clearly illuminated what I will call a human centered way of being, and though Helen is exceptional, within the networks she is a member of, she is

not unique in this characteristic or practice. This way of being with people was a description which applies to many who were discussed in the interviews. I will talk more about this in Chapter V. Connecting and cultivating resources and people in the network are also something Helen was reported to excel at. Furthermore, the influence she has, and her connectedness, are significant both in terms of the ability to sustain the work of the networks she is involved in and for boundary spanning growth beyond those networks. These characteristics are encapsulated in quotes such as:

*She really believes in what she is talking about, because otherwise I don't think she would be doing this, and that really comes through, whether she is talking to a food insecure individual or a farmer. It is that gentle encouraging nature that comes across, and I believe that goes a long way. (*Kellie*)*

I am really impressed with how many people Helen knows and the network she has, those kinds of relationships are critical. (Heidi)

*In the wake of what's happening now for her to be doing the work she is doing, and not at least show us, how exhausting the work has to be and how frustrating and if something is frustrating is seems, to me anyway, it's kind of a shrug, and oh well it will get better kind of approach. So, with this, and may things be it just sort of her attitude. Helen is a come on let's go kind of leader. (*Mack)

Helen gets things from point A to point B, and you realize when you get to point B, wait a minute, how did that happen, something very difficult but it did not seem that way. She makes it happen and, in the process, lifts up, you know, other people who are around her. (Timothy*)*

Helen never shows worry, or anxiety, but at the same time, she has I'm not going to let that get in my way. (Kellie*)*

Helen is a very approachable person, you know likable, and again passionate about what she does. I think people naturally gravitate to that. She does great things and people want to be part of that. (Timothy*)*

From the way in which both Cheryl and Kathie talked about Helen, it seemed that they see and appreciate Helen's attention to relationships and her human centeredness. Here are two of many quotes that demonstrate the importance of relationships and people to Helen:

Without a doubt, even as busy as she is, the person I worked with one on one the most, who mentored me was Helen. (Cheryl)

Also, Helen, she is awesome, she and I have very long conversations about things and it really helps. (Kathie)

Addie

Addie is also a member of the WFPC (Fig 4.1-Big green dot) and though she had a slightly lower betweenness score, her reach is higher than Helen's. Addie spreads and receives information and resources in the network through close "friend-of-a-friend" contacts (Krebs and Holley 2002-2006; Kadushin 2012; Prell 2012; Granoveter 1977). In many ways, she is one of the most important connections for the work of the WFPC, she is the link between the council, the larger community, and also has important connections beyond the network. Because of this, she is a pivotal or powerful connection for the WFPC. However, conversely without her, the WFPC would be cut off from information and knowledge from grassroots community members and her outside resources. Addie's paid employment is in direct services social work, but interviewees tell a story of someone whose entire life focus seems to be about helping others and cultivating a team to assist her.

The main themes and sub-themes that dominated interviewees' descriptions of Addie were: action oriented, cultivating, encouraging, curating, nurturing, expert, influence, knowledge, group reflection and learning, nurtures emergent leadership, resourceful. Additional ways in which Addie was described include: a good mediator, a shoulder to lean on, ensures inclusion, glues people together, carrying the water.

An aspect of these interviews that is significant enough to touch on is that although the majority of what I heard in interviews was related to leadership themes, values themes were present more often when people talked about Addie (and Jackie as well). In particular, in mentions of Addie was the way that words and phrases which support a theme of community as

a value came up. The theme of community (as both a geographical place or affiliation) was coded 31 times during this research. Community appears as something that the networks as a whole value, however, with both Addie and Jackie it arose as something connected to their identities within their networks. Community is expressed as a value because in these sub-themes a strong connection exists to both the geography and the social value of place, and the people in it. The members of these networks are all involved with sustainable food systems on a community level, and this may well be a factor in their valuation of community and place. I will discuss all the values mentioned, including community, in regard to both individuals such as Addie and the network in a separate section. However, the following quotes indicate this, as well as the other unique qualities Addie brings to her network, and that is why I comment on this now.

The following quotes describe Addie and some of her leadership qualities and practices. Laurie describes the way in which Addie is very action oriented:

Addie is a community champion with boots on the ground, for her I think it is about doing the right thing. She has her hand in so many projects. (community name) is so important to her.

She is so resourceful, people will need food, and there is no food…then like magic food appears, and people can be fed. It is almost like she has this power that draws it in. (Bri)

Mack talks about the uniqueness in the way the Addie cultivates and mentors' new leaders while at the same time getting work done:

Addie keeps me coming back to volunteer and do community work. I guess somehow without saying anything she has convinced me that there is real potential for change by not just doing this work, but modeling it for others.

I definitely feel that Addie is someone you go to bounce ideas off. She has so much experience doing work like this and although the woman has an incredibly busy schedule, she seems able to make time to talk about life. (Mack)

She sort of, well, invests in people and a community that has never had anyone care or invest in them. She values, nurtures and encourages everyone, even those that the community has just given up on. (Cheryl)

Kellie described the human centered way in which Addie connects and cultivates self-organizing:

I think that sense of inclusion is really important for Addie, she always tries to navigate that divide between sort of the non-profit community, and the folks with maybe with less educational attainment in more of the rural townships and villages.

Joanne

In the Root to Seed Growers Collaborate (Fig. 4.2), Joanne, (the large blue square) is clearly the individual with the highest indegree centrality, as well as betweenness. This indicates that she is an influencer with significant control over the flow of information and resources (Krebs and Holley 2002-2006; Kadushin 2012; Prell 2012; Granoveter 1977). Joanne has been working in food and farming her entire life and is clearly looked up to and respected for what she has accomplished. As one interviewee mentioned, she is referred to as an icon. Though not a factor in my analysis, it is interesting that nearing retirement age, Joanne is the oldest of the network members.

The predominate leadership themes and sub-themes identified in the transcripts about Joanne were collaborative, fostering collaboration, and others that were added because they arose in the interviews; expert, knowledgeable, and outspoken. Action oriented was also present, but not in a "boots on the ground" manner, or really as much about circulating ideas and practices, but about acting on opportunity and a sense of agency. Power was also a strong theme that was prominent in several forms (authority, influence, and economic power) and will be discussed further on in this chapter.

Some of the comments that were said about Joanne's leadership practice:

Jessica and Noah both point to Joanne's expertise, knowledge and influence:

Since I got involved with the collaborative we have spent a lot of time together. And just the wealth of knowledge that she has…the amount of people that just know who she is and what she has done. It is kind of mind boggling at a point. (Jessica)

I don't think I realized it when I first got involved with the collaborative, but once I started going to these conferences and seeing people come to our region, and you know, I think pretty early on I started to realize, okay, I need to start getting as much information out of this person as possible. (Noah)

Joanne's distinctive leadership and her knowledge, authority, and influence also come through in the following excerpts:

Joanne asks the hard questions, I respect that she brings this directness and keeps it real. (Rachel)

I don't know if it is so much about relationships, I think it is more about bringing resources in for us, like relationships serve that purpose. Joanne is no-nonsense, like a like a resourceful outspoken mother of the collaborative. (Rachel)

I think with the base of a lot of that wisdom and experience, understandably, comes a lot of confidence. Right, where she might assume that the way that she done things for the longest time are the best, which often they are, but I think that can sometimes get in the way. (Noah)

Rachel

Rachel, also in the RSGC (Fig. 4.2), is represented by the lower yellow square. Another individual had a higher betweenness score, however Rachel was chosen not just for betweenness, but for her high number of overall connections (Kadushin 2017; Krebs 2013; Prell 2012), indicating she is a connector and a hub which also suggests that she has influence within the network. In addition, I selected her to discuss in this narrative because of the quality of the mentions she had in interviews of the role set. Rachel can be summed up as a person who both steps in and steps up to get things done, and brings others along with her. Those interviewed saw Rachel aligned with the following themes and sub-themes: inspiring, intentional, circulates ideas and practices, common practice or purpose, communication, acts independently, agency,

encourages action, fostering collaboration, supportive, mentor. These characteristics are also found in the literature regarding network leadership and Leadership-as-practice (Carrington and Scott 2011; Holley 2012; Kanter 2009; Meehan and Reinelt 2012; Raelin 2016; Tener 2013). Additional descriptors were organized, clear communication, and administrator. Power in the form of natural authority arose as well in dialog regarding Rachel. That will be discussed in the section on power.

Jessica spoke about ways in which Rachel inspires and mentors her, as well as encouraging action and collaboration. For example, as she says in this quote:

Rachel inspires me so much, so often with not only the way she gets people on board, and working together with an idea, but also despite being super busy also walks the talk. (Jessica)

Much was said about Rachel's mentorship as a teacher and the way she also steps in and steps up to coach people and also get things done in a hands-on manner. This quote illustrates a bit of her organizational and administrative abilities as well as being able to juggle many roles well.

Her heart is in teaching, but Rachel also knows how to get whatever needs to be done completed. (Michelle)

Noah talks about communications:

It is great that she is open to feedback and input into how things can be improved, and will listen to ideas, that is big when you are like an expert and pioneer is the field.

I now return to the Food for All Coalition (Fig. 4.3), and the final two individuals I will be talking about, Jackie (red lower on the left), and Andrew (orange between the two reds). Though not part of my analysis, I will mention that along with Rachel (above), Jackie and Andrew are in their middle to upper thirties, making them significantly younger than the other "leaders." Also, Andrew is the only person of male gender that was identified in my social

network analysis with significant betweenness or high score in other measures. I will discuss Jackie first.

Jackie

Jackie has high indegree which means a large number of people come to her for resources and information (Kadushin 2012; Prell 2012,). Considering both her profession and her involvement in the coalition involve direct food access, this is not surprising. In addition, she has a high betweenness score, second only to Helen. The dominate leadership themes and sub-themes associated with Jackie are as follows: supportive, provides resources, caring, collaborative, fostering collaboration (common practice or purpose). Values (generosity and community) were also mentioned in specific reference to Jackie, rather than just the network or a cluster. Values were brought up more frequently with both Jackie and Addie than they were with other individuals. This will be addressed more fully in Chapter V. However, it should be noted here that from what was said by their role sets and others, though Addie is seen as generous and kind, Addie's values more significantly support a theme of the importance of community and place for her, and her role as champion in that respect. Jackie's values not only make a considerable impact on those around her and her work, but they also seem to do this to the point that they define her. Jackie is considered a kind and thoughtful person whose heart and hands are in her work, a person for whom relationships are very important. Her values and others will be discussed in-depth in a later section. Here are some examples of the ways in which Jackie's leadership was described:

What Kathie has to say demonstrates the generous and kind way in which Jackie provides resources in both contributions of food to the community and bringing resources to people:

"*The resources Jackie provides, sometimes multiple times per week, have made a huge difference. She has connected me to learning opportunities, jumped in to fetch tables, she's just, she's always there, and I look forward to seeing her.*

Others talk about her relational approach, supportiveness, and dedication to the community:

Jackie's heart is in it, and she works so hard. Whatever it is preparing food, or moving hundreds of pounds of vegetables. (Rick)

She is a great person to co-exist with in this work. I appreciate the honest kind of commiserating, but constant positive perspective that it is not hopeless, ever. I think it is easy to fall into just seeing it as work and to forget exactly what happening, so the positive attitude and deep level of thinking is what she brings". (Jim)

It's like she is always finding these relationships and things in the work that we might otherwise not take time to appreciate, she brings it back. (Ed)

Andrew

In analysis of the network map, Andrew has a substantially lower betweenness and indegree score. I included him in this narrative for two reasons. First, like Addie, Andrew has significant reach. In general, Andrew can spread information through the network through close friend-of-a-friend contacts (Kadushin 2012; Prell 2012). The second reason is that Andrew was mentioned numerous times in interviews of the role sets of others, enough so that he appears to be an emergent leader.

The leadership practice theme and sub-themes present in interviews and transcripts related to Andrew include: action oriented, acts on opportunity, acts independently, cultivating capacity, circulating ideas and practices, peer learning, and group reflection. Peer learning was voiced as a value with some, with Andrew, his intentional planning for peer learning opportunities and group reflection clearly make this a leadership practice for him. Andrew is also described by others in the network as reliable and dependable.

Kathie describes Andrew's contribution to creating a climate for peer learning and group reflection through his acting on opportunity other leadership practices:

There is a lot of self-learning, especially peer learning. So, for example, I don't remember maybe a year ago, right, we should be talking about SNAP. And Andrew said, "let's get together and try to learn about it as a group, so sometimes it is not like someone is an expert, but more like they motivate us to learn more about it.

Andrew's action oriented and cultivating practices also are seen in the following quotes:

I feel like Andrew jumped right on the bandwagon of FAC, and is one of our, you know, best coalition members to help advocate for this work and like tell this person and that person, word of mouth. (Cheryl)

> *Right off the bat he was super supportive. Andrew was always, you know, channeling information to people. I was really trying to push members to help with specific projects, and he jumped all in with the Central Park project, and would go to the town council meetings with me and that is a lot to ask of people who are already doing their own community work, so I feel like he really believes in the work we do. I now I can rely on him for that.* (Ed)

It is clear to me that I could continue indefinitely describing the profiles of the numerous people who were mentioned spontaneously, often more than once, during interviews. These would include people such as Olive, an older woman in her 70s, seemingly not an active participant in any local food system network, but still seen to be making significant impacts. A former activist, and now a successful entrepreneur, she continues to contribute through mentorship and philanthropy. Olive is described with the following delightful words: generative, energetic, spark plug, storyteller, big picture person, and one quite obvious description, networker. Then there is Maggie, again though not specifically connected to a network, she is depicted as an organizer who goes "shoulder to shoulder with the people" and has a sense of justice that is "deep in her soul" (Helen). Maggie was described as a person who continues to show up, and usually just when she is needed. There are others of note in these networks, however, it is time to move on to a discussion about leadership in the network beyond the individual. For a quick review before moving on, please reference the summary table (table 4.1)

below. The next section will discuss the leadership that happens in the spaces in a network when dialogue occurs, sensemaking happens, and people accomplish things together.

Table 4.1

Summary of Individuals Who Were the Focus of Role-Set Interviews

Name	**Key Leadership Practices, Values and Power Themes (not including Sub-themes)**	**Centrality Scores**	**Antidotal Information**
Helen	Action Oriented Connecting Cultivating Relational Supportive	Very high betweenness with high indegree	A member of two networks, and also works in local government
Addie	Action Oriented Community Oriented Connecting Cultivating Curating Influence Supportive	High betweenness and high reach	Works in direct social services, in addition to her network involvement
Joanne	Action Oriented Authority Collaborative Economic Power Influence Supportive	Highest indegree, and betweenness in her network	Long time farmer in her community. One of the oldest network members both in network involvement and age
Rachel	Action Oriented Collaborative Connecting Cultivating Intentional Supportive	High betweenness and reach	Instructor, business person, and very active in her network
Jackie	Collaborative Community Oriented Connecting Generosity Supportive	Second highest betweenness in her network, and high indegree	One of the younger network members. In addition to hunger prevention work she is involved in other causes
Andrew	Action Oriented Connecting Cultivating Intentional	Lower betweenness score, but significant reach	Only male in role set interviews. Younger network member, but mentioned in many role-set interviews.

Review of My Initial Findings

Before presenting my unique findings, I want to briefly cover those findings that align with the current literature on leadership practices in networks, particularly self-organized networks. In parentheses are the code counts for reference: connecting (40), relational (39), supportive (38), action oriented (37) and cultivating (36). These are theories and practices found in the literature (Carrington and Scott 2011, Crevani, Lindgren, and Packendorff 2010; Holley 2012; Kadushin 2012; Kanter 2009; Meehan and Reinelt 2012; Raelin 2014, 2016; Tener 2013). The themes of collaborative (22) and curating (21), although not as frequently coded, are also supported by the literature. There were also findings on values and power in these networks, and I will share them further on in the chapter.

Before diving into what I learned in detail, I will mention that the majority of interviewees addressed leadership practices rather than identifying values, except when I specifically asked about values. This is not to say that values are not important, but perhaps more of a reflection on the nature of these networks, or that "practices" are a more tangible discussion point in interviews. I will discuss what this may mean in more detail further into this chapter. Also, though the values of importance of community, sense of place, and peer learning were spontaneously mentioned, it was not always with regard to an individual, more in the context of a value held by the network as a whole, or a cluster within the network or even beyond the bounds of the network. Being intentional and passionate also emerged as themes in interviews and seemed to be mentioned in the context of leadership.

Table 4.2 summarizes the number of instances that each theme was coded based on information shared in interviews. The revised theme designation of "yes" refers to themes that were not originally found in the literature in the field or that arose from my experience working

in networks, but rather themes I added while memoing and interviewing. Note that the counts are not one per participant, but are a count of the number of times the theme was identified and emphasized during the interviews.

Table 4.2

Count of Themes Identified

Theme Category	**Theme**	**Count**	**Revised Theme**
Leadership Practices			
	Connecting	40	
	Relational	39	
	Supportive	38	
	Action Oriented	37	
	Cultivating	36	
	Collaborative	22	
	Curating	21	
	Intentional	19	Yes
	Passionate	15	Yes
Values			
	Community	31	Yes
	Generosity	14	
	Trust	11	
	Respect	10	
	Sense of Place	6	Yes
	Peer Learning	5	Yes
Power			
	Influence	30	
	Potential Capacity to Change Systems	18	Yes
	Economic Power	16	
	Shared Power	15	
	Authority	14	

In this next section I will briefly introduce the two top leadership practice findings, connecting and relational, or relational ways of leading. I have chosen to focus on these two themes here as they are deeply interwoven. Throughout this chapter I will continue to discuss

these two findings within the context of the literature's other findings, and what I learned in my interviews, as well as with my own experience in local food networks.

Connecting (40)

Holley (2012) talks extensively about "Connectors," in her section on leadership roles in networks (30–32) as well as throughout the *Network Weavers Handbook.* She describes network connectors as, "network connectors are skilled at discovering the needs of people in their networks and then linking them to others" (100). She lists one of the "key skills" of a connector as listening, reaching out and getting to know people. Connecting is important for linking people in the periphery to the core, drawing in new people, connecting clusters, connecting people to power and influence, to jump start actions. For more detailed information on connectors, please see Chapter II.

From my findings it appears that connecting is the leadership practice that has the greatest implications for network health and strength because those that are connecting were also characterized as collaborating, cultivating, stepping forward, and supportive. Below are quotes that support these co-occurrences:

I think of her as a connector, collaborator, kind of bringing people together to better serve our community and address hunger." (Kathy)

Addie brings people in, she has created a very large extensive network of not just nonprofits or activists, but folks that need the services those institutions can provide. (Mac)

These are just a few examples of what I learned about the importance of connecting. This leadership practice will be discussed throughout this chapter and the next.

Relational or Relational Ways of Leading (39)

I also want to touch briefly on relational as an aspect of leadership practice in these networks, as it was second to connecting in number of mentions during interviews. It is different than connecting in that a relational way of leading seemed to be articulated as going further than

just connecting. Relational was described in many different ways from "bridging divides" to "group reflection and learning." My data indicate that a relational leadership practice facilitates collaborations so that connections can blossom. This is indicated by quotes such as:

> *I think a lot of it comes down to we have good relationships and people who work to understand each other. It can take years to develop. It doesn't always. But I think she (Helen) would you know, work to both understand and facilitate that in the community, to really understand, you know, why a certain person cares about an issue, and why didn't why they want to be at the table. And I think that makes a huge difference."* (Cheryl)

In *Building Smart Communities Through Network Weaving*, the authors ask the question, "but, what are better connections, and how do they lead to more effective and productive communities?" What I heard from individuals in the networks offers an answer to that question. The following example of Cheryl talking about Helen is one description of this:

> *Just watching how it* (the network) *has expanded, to think that all the hodge podge of relationships enable this fairly small group to do what they do in in terms of education and hunger prevention work. We were really lucky to have such a strong leadership that I think acts as a hub and spoke with in the region . . . it is kind of like patchwork . . . but connected and that is what helps us be successful.*

What I gathered also confirms what Holley and Krebs say about relationships and collaborations, "There are two parts to network weaving. One is relationship building, particularly across traditional divides, so that people have access to innovation and important information. The second is learning how to facilitate collaborations for mutual benefit" (2006, 9). In another example, Cheryl describes Helen's approach like this:

Time and again I see her taking the time to get to know someone, and arranging these alliances . . . sometimes, well I wonder why? It is not always some big thing that is going to benefit her or the coalition, but it's just how she is.

This points toward the significance of connecting and building relationships which also provides the foundation for my contribution which will be discussed in Chapter V. To summarize the data collected in my study, the themes of connecting (including sub-themes

stepping forward and weaving/building) and relational (including sub-themes shared identity, bridging people and divides) were coded 40 and 39 times, respectively.

Leadership in the Spaces Between

In the previous section I looked at the leadership practice of individuals, and that is important because social networks are dependent on the practices and values of the individuals in them. Fundamentally, without individual human beings there would not be networks. There is of course a more sophisticated dualism at work with individuals nested within networks. Emirbayer (1994, 1417) discusses this, and points to the early work of Georg Simmel that essentially asserted that the nature of groups is determined by the relationships of the individuals nested within them. Furthermore, the capabilities of networks to innovate and have impact far surpasses what individuals alone can accomplish. These theorists subscribe to the view that leadership is not a solo practice, that it happens in the day-to-day interactions, in the spaces between people who are working together to accomplish a shared goal. There were many triads and small clusters in these networks which gave me the opportunity to learn more about this.

My findings on what is happening in clusters and between people is consistent with the literature that supports an understanding of leadership as a process that takes place in the spaces between in networked forms of leadership. Writings such as the work of Arendt (1958), and in particularly Butler's (2015) theory of assembly and plural performativity, suggest that the practice which emerges between individuals in networks is significant because as individuals in networks assemble they create generative spaces. Lichtenstein and colleagues (2006) would argue that the very definition of leadership is that which is a result of the "practice," that is, the exchange that happens in this space between. In addition to excerpts to support this, in looking back on my memos and transcripts "we or our" was more frequently used than "he/she" to

describe a leadership transaction, leading me to conclude that my findings support the literature. Consequently, in the second level of my analysis I looked at the aspects of leadership manifesting in the interactive spaces between individuals in these networks. Below I use multiple quotes in an effort to depict the nature of these conversations, and convey diverse values and leadership practices that are shared in these spaces. In my findings and discussion section, I will spend time connecting these quotes to leadership practices, values, and power themes.

Jim, Will, and Rick

Jim and Will were role set interviews surrounding Jackie, in Food for All Coalition. Rick was one of Andrew's role set interviews. Though Will has the fourth highest betweenness score in a network of 101 individuals (at the time of bounding), I was not able to interview a role set around him. Nonetheless, he came up frequently in dialogue with Jim and others, and is clearly positioned to be influential in the network. Rick's betweenness score puts him ninth. Jim, younger and newer to the network, has a much lower betweenness score putting him 24 out of the 10, however, I felt input from someone more on the periphery of the network would be valuable, so I chose to interview him.

In addition to the leadership happening in the spaces between individuals in the network, the following quote also clearly shows how the FAC network works together across intersections and leaders and how important those relationships are to the meaning that is made and the work that gets done:

> *There is no way in my immediate circle I would understand this in the way that I do without, you know, conversations and experiences with people like Will, and Rick they have really helped to shape this sense of solidarity, the work, and the purpose. Yeah, this very real approach to the work and the purpose we all have. I think this is quite different than the people who have broadly influenced me, you know like different writers and thinkers.*

This quote from Will about what happened when a truck broke down seems to be an example of the type of everyday leadership as practice that takes place, a discussion, interplay, and action of a small group of individuals in the network; “Yeah, I had some ideas . . . but Andrew got in touch with Jackie and we talked . . . then we had another driver who made a suggestion . . . we ended up coming up with something that worked for everyone.”

Cheryl, Addie, Helen, and Others

These folks are all members of the Washington Food Policy Council. I conducted a role set interview with Cheryl, and she is the one who produced the narrative below. She referenced Addie, Helen, A.J., and others whose names I do not have as she talked about her initial experience with a more horizontal type of leadership in her network. This quote captures the learning together, and the construction of meaning and knowledge and the collaborative environment between these individuals:

> *I struggled at first, seriously to the point of being angry. There would be this project we were working on and no one would tell me what to do. I would ask questions and get a question in reply (laughs). I think Addie is so amazing, and I just wanted to ask her what to do. Then a bunch of us got together, did some research and came up with a great strategy. A.J and I took it from there. Anyway, I guess I have adjusted now . . . but man that growth was painful (laughs again).* (Rachel and others)

Rachel, both an identified leader and a role set interviewee, talked about her experience in the Root to Seed Growers Collaborative. How important the relationship is to their success and longevity as a collaborative. The following quote points out how these relationships offer a collective reflection and stabilizing effect during stressful situations:

> *There can be this problem, like when the codes were all wrong on paperwork, or a delivery problem keeps happening and it gets procrastinated because we are just so busy . . . We have a lot of work, and really it is way beyond our actual jobs . . . but eventually things get solved. I mean without our partnerships we would not have the ability to go through this and figure it out.* (Jim, Jackie, and others)

An experience in the Food for All Coalition is shared, it shows not only the importance of relationships and community, but also how coalition members have modeled openness and learned to lead, both from and with each other. This is shared by Jim. Jackie is not mentioned verbally, but from the context it is inferred that she is involved in what he is describing:

We don't always see eye to eye, at first at least, with the way she chooses to approach a problem or get something done. Generally, in the end I do understand the reasoning, and also realize there is more than one way to do things . . . I think in a way this is part of why the coalition works.

The following quote is an example of how these relationships can result in complementary interactions that then effect subsequent reactions and actions:

We laugh it off, and realize that, like, we are all human and just kind of be real and say, opps, we messed up. I think that has been like a cornerstone of how we've gotten through this year together. I think it's just been openness and those relationships and doing it all together.

These quotes, and the many other stories I heard about people and hubs within the network, demonstrate that although there is leadership in these networks, it is not about a leader. It is about connecting and collaboratively brainstorming ideas, solving problems, and creating leadership together.

The Broader Network and Community Beyond the Network

The purpose of this section is to tell you more about what I learned during my interviews about the importance of these people who are beyond the periphery of the formal or "known network," and also those partners and allies beyond the periphery who may not be formal members of the network. This notion of the rhizomatic ability of networks to include people outside the "formal" network, to flow back and forth to the larger social system is supported by the literature (Holley 2012; Kadushin 2012).

During my research I collected information on specific individuals, heard stories about numerous other individuals and the complex relationships and practices within these networks.

However, on multiple occasions I heard statements such as “well really it is everyone,” references to those who were described as being “outside of the network.” This supports network theory and horizontal leadership as not being so much about the individual, and confirms what has been written about leadership in networks as drawing on the leadership capacity that exists in all of us (Holley 2012).

For instance, there was mention of the critical contribution that community volunteers and student interns make in the local hunger prevention network and on local farms. This included reference to the persistence, resilience, and skills that they contribute. In addition to the literature, the data also confirms what I know from my experience working in sustainable agriculture and other food access networks: that a systems approach where *everyone* is listened to and encouraged to participate creates the best collaborations.

For example, Kellie spoke of the contribution that local pantry workers, often food insecure individuals themselves, make, not only regarding food distribution, but also what she and other “leaders” have and can learn from them. She shares:

I do love data, assessments, and reports, but I think the biggest reason we have been able to improve our network and serve more people is by listening to the voices and stories of the folks that run and operate the pantries.

Kellie’s reference to the importance of listening to the voices of the community is indicative of how networks and a network mindset are different than traditional hierarchical organizations, and an example of the growth that can happen listening to the voices and the stories of the people. I appreciate how June Holley sums this up in *The Network Weavers Handbook*, “It is not just what we do, but how and with whom we interact that brings transformation” (2012, 11). I was very interested in the fact I was hearing about both the importance of individuals in networks, yet at the same time was hearing confirmation of a wider

presence and the importance of a network mindset, practices, and a networked way of "behaving." For example, Bri said this when speaking about who she learns from and is influenced by:

There is always like someone who motivates us to learn more about the food insecurity issue. Yep. I think (I learn the most) directly from (pantry) users, like the international students during Covid, and them educating us about what their needs are, and how to better serve them. Yeah.

In addition to the above narrative which shows the flow of connections back and forth between the boundaries of the known network, I have included below an analysis from data available from two of the mapping sessions. Using data available from SumApp questionnaires available for two of the networks, I ran a frequency test which is displayed in Figure 4.4 below. The results of a frequency test confirm that a higher percentage of members from both networks reported that they connect beyond the boundaries of their network very frequently and frequently. A lower percentage reported connecting beyond the network only occasionally. This has interesting implications for future research into how and with whom communications occur in these networks and others. I will also come back to this in Chapter V when I talk about power in and beyond the known bounds of networks.

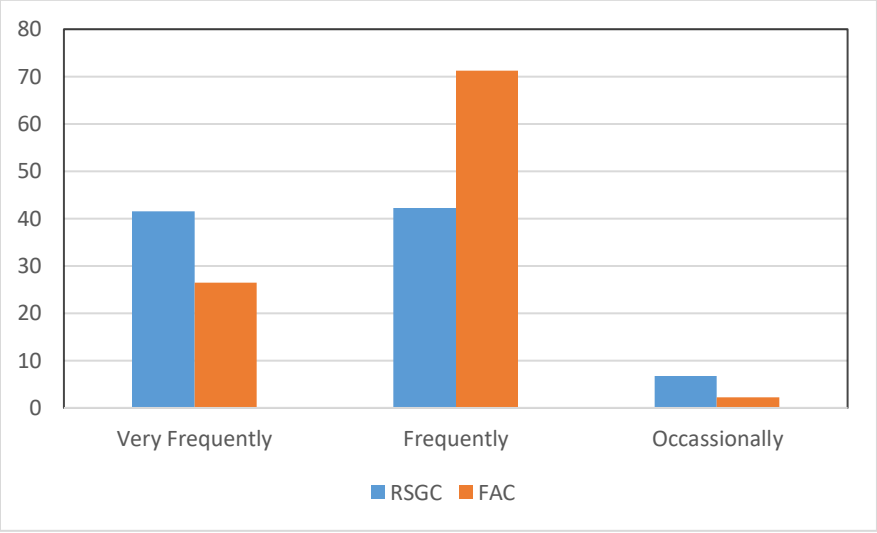

Figure 4.4. How Often Network Members are Connecting Beyond the Network.

Values Findings

Now I will discuss values findings. First, briefly those consistent with the literature, and then the findings unique to my research. The values findings consistent with the literature are as follows: generosity (14), trust (11), respect (10). There were also themes that arose in the interviews and were added: community (31), sense of place (6), and peer learning (5).

I will preface these findings by stating that values cannot be observed or experienced in the way that many of the leadership practices can be, so when my interviewees talked about values, I took this into consideration and checked for understanding. There were many variations in the reporting of values, as well as the importance interviewees ascribed to them. During interviews, the majority of what I learned addressed practices rather than identifying values, other than when I specifically asked questions about values. Nonetheless, based on my experience, any study of networked leadership would be remiss if it did not attempt to investigate values. While there is clearly opportunity for more exploration and research in this area, I speculate that this may generally be due to the fact that there is a certain level of assumption about values, particularly in local/regional food networks. However, I also see this as a possible indication that the work of supporting networks might be better facilitated by a focus on leadership practices. Despite these issues with the reporting of values, I believe that values are extremely relevant for understanding people's attitudes as well as their actions. Table 4.3 is a summary table of the values mentioned in interviews. The values mentioned most often are in bold and italic font. To clarify, in the table below I have included those findings where a zero is present in the count column included because they were part of my original code book. I thought that the reader might find this interesting.

Table 4.3

Values: Top Themes in Bold Italic

Values Theme Category	Sub-Theme	Count
Trust		***11***
	Reliability	1
	Truth	0
	Confidence	2
	Faith	1
Transparency		5
	Disclosure	1
	Open Exchange	3
	Honesty	5
Open		4
	Free	0
	Unrestricted	0
	Transparency	5
Respect		***10***
	Appreciative	5
	High Regard	0
	Admiration	1
	Honor	0
	Humility	3
Generosity		***14***
	Kind	5
	Caring	***9***
	Unselfish	1
	Sharing	3
	Giving	3
Other Values		
	Sense of Place	6
	Friendship	1
	Community	***31***
	Peer Learning	5
	Quality	2

First, I will share my values findings that support the literature on networks, then I will explore the themes I identified during interviewing and coding. Values will also be discussed again further on in this chapter when I discuss my findings in light of the research question, *What*

are some of the values that contribute significantly toward local and regional food networks strengthening and scaling?

Generosity, Trust, and Respect

Values consistent with the literature that appeared as themes during interviews were as follows: generosity (14), trust (11), respect (10). As there has been plenty written on the importance of these values in networks, I will not explore these in depth (Holley 2012; Strasser et al. 2019). One surprising finding that stood out in regard to one of these values, both as I interviewed, and then particularly upon reviewing my memos, was the underwhelming amount of times that trust was talked about. In the literature about networks, trust is generally regarded as a value of extreme importance (Holley 2012; Kuenkel 2016), so I had to wonder why I was not hearing about it more often. This is not to say that it was not mentioned, but rather the frequency. Trust was referred to only 11 times throughout all interviews, even when coded to include mentions of reliability, confidence, and faith as forms of trust. This was a low level of reporting compared to community (31), an emergent value, which I will discuss below.

Generosity

When generosity and the sub-themes of caring, kind, sharing, or unselfish were mentioned, they were more likely to be a point of emphasis in a conversation that had started off on another topic and then the role set interviewee would use these terms to describe a value held by an individual(s). However, as part of my interviews I did ask a question, "What do you think *name* values?" and those responses would be more specific. For example, as she was responding to this question, Kellie emphatically characterized Addie (with joy in her voice and hand gestures):

She is a nurturer, I think that is one of the fundamental things, she nurtures with her life, and her work. There is this incredible caring, kindness, and compassion.

This quote points out both how values were used to describe and were "assigned" to an individual, but also shows what Kellie values as a member of the network values. It seems that Kellie has a great deal of appreciation and respect (which I mention further down) for Addie.

Trust

Jim describes the importance of trust and also appreciation for a deep level of thinking and commiserating. I have chosen this example because he seems to be both talking about Jackie and also generalizing to some extent about others in the network.

> *The trust is important, I think, especially where the work is so demanding, and can feel so hopeless. It is not that it is hopeless ever, but I think it is easy to just see it as work and to forget exactly what is happening. And so, somebody that reminds me a lot of kind of the deep level of thinking and just being very honest and kind of commiserating is Jackie. Honestly, she …is just a great person to coexist with in this work.*

To clarify the significance of trust, overall in my study, values were not coded as high as leadership practices. For example, the top coded leadership practices were connecting (40) and relational (39), while top values were generosity (14) and trust (11).

Respect

Another value mentioned in interviews was respect. In addition to the verbal mentions in interviews, themes such as respect and sub-themes of appreciative, admiration, and high regard, were very clearly conveyed as important by the manner in which interviewees spoke when talking about the values of individuals or the network as a whole. This quote by Cheryl nicely summarizes this:

What struck me . . . was how there is patience, and respect for people, and no matter whether your someone important or not, everyone is valued.

Community and Sense of Place

These two values related themes were added during coding because of the number of times related subject matter was identified in the transcripts. Those themes were community (31) and sense of place (6). They are connected because one of the ways the value of community was

expressed was geographical. Sense of place also presented as collective beliefs, attachment, and social life. I will discuss both community and sense of place as they are significant findings. I will discuss them together because that is how they presented most often in my research.

Community was mentioned in the context of a value, for example, as expressed by Noah:

People along the way are so important, so vital to what we have here. Whether it is individuals like Will who shows up and helps move food almost every week, or even farms like Lower Pond who are donating because they value community.

In addition to community as a value that is a human experience within a specific cluster, group, or network, there is a strong connection as well to the geographic or a sense of place of a town, city, or region. This is consistent with the literature in the field of place-based food systems (Blay-Plamer et al. 2016; Feagan 2007; Wilson 2013), as well as my own unpublished research on drivers for alternative economies in food systems (Trocchia and Martinez 2018).

It is also notable that this value was mentioned in reference to the network or a cluster, but also in specific reference to Jackie as an individual. Community was brought up more frequently by the role set around her than it was with any other individual, other than possibly Addie. Will talked about how during the first weeks of the pandemic, as need increased and logistics were still being figured out, there was a lot of stress and a feeling of being overwhelmed as people were just trying to figure out what was next. One thing he said was:

During that time, I could see how Jackie was driven by her values, commitment, caring and passion for her community, but also that she could hold this pleasant space and really value maintaining relationships and avoid conflict.

The reason this matters is because Jackie's and Addie's values were seen to make a considerable impact on those around them and their work in a way different than others. Jackie in particular is considered a kind and thoughtful person, whose heart and hands are in her work, a person for whom relationships and community are very important. Her values seem to define her.

Again, to articulate why community is noted as a value, it is because of the suggestion in interviews that for many in these networks, in addition to geographical region, community also seemed to signify a collective belief, a social ecology, and attachments within a human community or region.

It is also noteworthy that sense of place was expressed more by folks in the Root to Seed Growers Collaborative. The importance of that sense of connection, especially in terms of local environment and geography, makes sense for farmers and those that produce food from the earth. However, sense of place was often co-occurring with community, meaning that the theme of place can be interpreted as being both a geographical location and a social experience.

In reviewing these values findings, my thinking led to considering values as possibly part of the systemic structure of these networks and wondering if values are what draw people to a particular network, in particularly, to food systems networks. Additionally, this finding raises the question about the extent to which values held within the system of the network "grow" or reinforce those values within members, both within and beyond that network's boundaries. Exploring this however, is beyond the scope of my research. What is remarkable is that when community or sense of place were mentioned, the theme was often interwoven into the conversation, even as part of another point. In one instance it seemed almost as if it was assumed that community was a value held by all. For example, this is what Will had to say:

Everyone believes that community is important, that we need to have a relationship with both our land and our neighbors and community. We cannot build a better society unless more people invest in this.

Although my findings point to aspects of leadership practice as being what is most important to members of a network, it is mentionable that this may very well be because community and place-based values, as well as generosity, trust, and peer learning are already

part of the culture of these local/regional food networks. The values of transparency, trust, intimacy, empowerment, and connection satisfy relational and belonging needs have all been noted as important in transformative capacity and network leadership (Strasser et al. 2019), while also supporting autonomy. I know as a food-systems activist and a former farmer, these values, in particular those of a sense of place and community brought forth in my research, , are extremely important to me and to many involved in local and regional food systems around the world. Revolutionary movements are a collective, relational, and lived experience for those involved, so I also believe it is important to consciously cultivate the sense of community necessary for successful local/regional food systems networks to thrive and ultimately lead a food revolution. This would be an excellent starting point for further research and will be discussed in Chapter V.

Power Findings

Power was a robust theme that presented in several forms: influence (30), potential capacity to change systems (18), economic power (16), shared power (16), and authority (14). The top theme, influence, was present a significantly higher number of times than the other power themes. It is also notable that the power theme, with the second highest count, potential to change systems, was emergent and added during memoing. Though economic power, shared power, and authority were present in both the literature and my findings, here I will focus most of my discussion on the top two which are in bold and italic in Table 4.4 below. In subsequent sections and in Chapter V, I will make meaning of all of these themes, both collective power and that held by individuals. I will also postulate about power relative to effectiveness and flourishing in local food networks.

Table 4.4

Power Themes

Power Theme Category	Sub-Theme	Count
Authority		14
	Traditional Authority	3
	Government	2
	Reward	0
	Coercive	1
	Seeking Power	3
Economic Power		16
	Assets	4
	Connections to Capital	6
Influence		***30***
	Expert/Information	4
	Charisma	3
	Personal Influence	7
	Connection to Power	4
Potential Capacity to Change Systems		***18***
	Commitment/Dedication	9
	Vision	4
Shared Power		16
	Connecting/Connector	4
	Collaboration	3
	Interdependence	2
	Mutual Support	4
	Non-Zero-Sum Relationships	2

Clearly influence stands out as the form of power mentioned the most in my interviews, but certainly other forms of power were also brought up. The context in which shared power was mentioned was where it manifested between people and projects in the network. Whereas authority, and in particular economic power, were mentioned as an important connection beyond the bounds of the network, via specific members of the network.

In general, there were a few things to be said about the ways in which power was shared and authority used within networks. For example, this interesting quote points out the management of power within the FAC:

I've watched her handle conflict directly with people, but not rudely. Um, which I think is really interesting, and I think that is hard for people to do. It's been interesting seeing things coming to a head and thinking oh, no, I have really appreciated Helen's ability to handle that situation, especially in a group of men. (Cheryl)

Also, in the following quote Jessica speaks appreciatively of Rachel's use of shared power:

She has this natural authority that doesn't come from position or age but from what she has done for the community. Still she steadfastly seems to try and facilitate sort of a horizontal democratic approach to resolving things fairly.

There has been much written about social capital and the power of social networks within organizations and business, and not so much in regard to power in self-organized community-based networks. What I found striking about my findings was the clear recognition of the importance of influence, and of power gained by individuals within a network who have influence, in particular connections for accessing economic power.

For instance, in relation to economic power, Noah talking about Joanne says:

When you talk about our network, she is our tentacles out into the larger world. Yeah. You know beyond local funders, and resources, the other side of the country.

In respect to influence Noah also has this to say:

Joanne has this vision for the local food system, I think she wants it to be her legacy. She has this authority by virtue of what she has accomplished and I mean she is an icon, but you have to be self-driven she is not going to spoon feed you.

As well as:

Even though she has the power, and I think to an extent she kind of seeks that, she's not a do it because I said so person.

Again, I will talk more about what I learned about power in the three networks in subsequent sections and Chapter V.

Findings as Applicable to the Research Questions

I will now discuss my findings in relation to my research questions beginning with the first sub-question, *"What are the key leadership practices that facilitate local and regional food network development and growth?"*

Ultimately, what I found is that specific leadership practices are frequently mentioned together. Earlier I summarized my key findings, but I am returning to them here because they provide the foundation for one of my most significant findings. Let us first look at the top leadership practices that were present in the networks (table 4.5). Then I will connect these findings to what the literature says about network development and growth.

Table 4.5

Leadership Themes

Connecting	40
Relational	39
Supportive	38
Action Oriented	37
Cultivating	36
Collaborative	22
Curating	21
Intentional	19
Passionate	15

Connecting, relational practices, being supportive, action oriented, and cultivating people and projects and curating were the dominate themes in all three of the networks, and these themes are supported by the literature on networks. Acting intentionally and being passionate were not themes extrapolated from the literature, but rather themes that were uncovered after they arose in the interviews a significant number of times.

There were also strong patterns of co-occurring themes and sub-themes. All of the themes from the literature that surfaced during interview descriptions of individuals or descriptions of

events, interestingly were most often mentioned in conjunction with one another or with multiple themes. This led to some significantly paragraph size chunks of excerpts, almost what I would describe as "mini stories." Using Dedoose qualitative software, I was able to run a code co-occurring matrix of these excerpts. Code co-occurrence is when both themes are present in the transcript excerpts, where one theme was found, the other was also present. These co-occurring themes are a major finding so I will introduce them here. However, I will be discussing them and their significance further in Chapter V.

- Connecting and Cultivating
- Connecting and Collaborating
- Connecting and Stepping Forward
- Collaborative and Supportive
- Action Oriented and Circulates Ideas and Practices (and boots on the ground)

The strong co-occurrence of these themes indicates that leadership practices do not happen in isolation. I discussed connecting in the presentation of my initial findings, but before discussing the co-occurring themes, I will first say more about the theme of connecting in relation to this finding around co-occurrence.

Connecting

Connecting was present in three of the five top co-occurring themes, this clearly signals connecting as a significant finding. In both individuals and the networks as whole, connecting is unmistakably a leadership practice of importance to the growth and development of these networks. This supports June Holley's theories. In Chapter II of this dissertation, I referenced *The Network Weavers Handbook* (2012, 30–31) in which Holley describes four network weaver roles. One of these roles is the Connector Catalyst. She argues that this role is critical in building the network through connecting people in a strategic manner so as to create a core of overlapping clusters, with a variety of connections, including ties to the periphery to ensure the flow of new resources and innovative ideas into the network. My data demonstrate the importance of

connecting, both in the number of times it was coded individually and as a co-occurring theme. Connecting was a leadership practice that was present throughout interviews more than any other Leadership practice and this is significant.

Connecting and Cultivating

Co-occurring with connecting was cultivating, which is also proposed by the literature. In a Leadership Learning Community white paper, *Leading Culture and Systems Change; How to Develop Network Leadership and Support Emerging Networks* (2017), practitioners in the field describe why cultivating is important and make a case for cultivating specific competencies or principles; relational leadership, learning by doing, sharing power and promoting equity, openness and transparency, and self-organized/peer driven. I also interpret cultivating to mean paying attention to and developing all aspects of the network, everything from nurturing emergent leaders to cultivating programs and projects. The presence of these practices and principles was certainly articulated by my interviewees and reflected in quotes I shared previously. However, where I think the strongest case can be made for alignment with the literature is that there is clearly a cultivation of common practice/purpose in all three of the networks, as well as a consistent nurturing of emergent leadership as exemplified in the following excerpts.

Jim had this to say about both the common practice and purpose as well the nurturing of emergent leadership:

> *I think we all see how this ties together . . . which is kind of this asset-based model for unity development, but just in this, like, holistic approach to why we're even doing this work. But really, it really took me getting involved in the work on the ground and the mentorship that that had me really understanding what this common goal, that in our sustainable agriculture work, that we can't really build up the food system in the region without addressing the elephant in the room, which is the fact that food insecurity is rampant in in the region.*

This quote demonstrates a focus on nurturing emergent leadership, as well as some wonderful indications of an inclusive culture striving toward equity in this network:

We all are really committed to equity and justice . . . I think Joanne has it in her mind to make a stronger network one individual at a time, while at the same time trying to be super inclusive. She has led and coached some of us the way she does for that reason. (Noah)

Connecting and Collaborating

In looking at the patterns of relationships in all three of these networks, you can see that there are many collaborations. Collaborating, and doing it well so that everyone has their say, can be difficult, particularly in large groups within a network (Shirkey 2008). There are pitfalls such as working in parallel, isolated and uncoordinated, and thinking because you are working with another group or organization, you are collaborating (Kuenkle 2016). However, the outcomes of collaborations, these combined efforts, can be significant, therefore the co-occurring leadership practice of connecting and collaborating is an important one for the networks that want to accomplish things. As I listened to interviewees talk about their experiences, I heard some indications that that people were connecting and truly collaborating. Here are a few examples.

Cheryl described a multilayered example of connecting and collaborating:

> *At my library during Covid we started operating it as you know, a choice pantry really focusing on, you know, offering healthy food items we've obviously never worked with the farmers market to bring in healthy produce, but we made that connection. Then we collaborated with the senior center to bringing some of the baskets out to you know, older folks in need. Just simple really, but tapping into all our existing resources and areas of expertise.*

Bri describes a connecting and collaborating like this:

I actually met Laurie through Addie. I think she intentionally tried to spark the collaboration the we now have, which is great . . . I don't know Laurie well, but our skill set and our new partnership has helped establish a pretty sustainable project that has brought some great things to the students.

Connecting and Stepping Forward

Another co-occurring theme was connecting and stepping forward. Stepping forward was actually listed as a sub-theme based on the literature. However, what I learned from interviews where both connecting and stepping forward were mentioned is that they seemed to be different in some cases. I came to interpret stepping forward as a more dynamic action, or even more physical action. Nevertheless, I am not surprised to see the co-occurrence of both practices. Now I will share a few quotes that illustrate this.

Will describes Jim as stepping forward in the sense that he simultaneous pushes ahead with things that need to get done by volunteering, effectively enlisting people to join him:

Something has to get done and he just materializes (laughs), offers his services, and somehow other people end up joining him and stuff gets done. It is his unique way of leading really, I guess, I don't know I follow him.

Michelle describes the way in which Rachel steps forward by offering her time and organizing talents:

Rachel is like a bridge between the real world of business and the local economy. And people working in food security, working to both food security and also a bridge to the farmers. So, she kind of like offers her services to make sure those things are interconnected and things are good . . . she interacts with each of those three branches and connects people.

Collaborative and Supportive

Now I will address the co-occurring themes of collaborative and supportive. There were many examples of collaboration and being supportive throughout my interviews. Holley sees these within the role of network guardian (2012, 37–38). She describes the network guardian as being, "like a hot air balloon, floating over the whole network . . . the Network Guardian thinks about the systems a network needs, whatever its structure so that it creates results." What I saw is evidenced by quotes such as what Mac has to say about Niko:

Most of us have done a certain amount or organizing online, but when COVID happened it changed everything, all these people that were pretty tech illiterate suddenly were left out, but Niko dropped everything to help.

This is consistent with what Holley says about network guardians, that most often if a network guardian is collaborating, it is to develop and support systems and provide resources. I will talk more about the sense I make of network guardians in these networks in Chapter V.

Here I summarize the response to my first research question, *"What are the key leadership practices that facilitate local and regional food network development and growth?"* While all the leadership practices found in my research are important, because it had the highest theme count of all the leadership practices and was also present in the significant co-occurring themes, the key leadership practice identified in my study is connecting. It would appear that connecting is the starting point for a relational, supportive, collaborating, and cultivating leadership to occur.

Another Co-occurrence Action Oriented/Circulates Ideas &Practices/Action Oriented & Boots on the Ground

Finally, I will discuss the last two sets of co-occurring themes centered on action oriented. However, first I will talk about the theme of action oriented, as it is not only co-occurring with circulating ideas and boots on the ground, but was coded as a theme or sub-theme 37 times. Action of all sorts is a function of the network weaver and the facilitator, and one of the four "aspects" found in "healthy" networks (Holley 2012, 23). Interestingly, the data collected on action in these networks was most often co-occurring with circulating ideas and practices, and also with an emergent theme I am calling "boots on the ground," which I will discuss in Chapter V. In my research I heard stories that support circulating ideas and practices as common to both the individual and the network(s) as a whole. These also include examples of ways in which network leaders encourage people to take initiative or action. A wonderful term

that is used to describe the many actions that happen in networks is "Doacracy," expressed within the context of self-organizing. "Strong networks have a shared sense of purpose and many avenues for engagement and action" (Meehan and Reinelt, 2012, 8). My data from these small local/regional food networks support a sense of purpose and opportunity for action, both in organizing or hands on. For example, as expressed by Noah:

Rachel really is like a cheerleader . . . and I do think she is much more of an action-oriented person and just brings people along with her.

Action-oriented activities are also found in the Leadership-as-Practice literature (Crevani, Lindgren, and Packendorff 2010; Raelin 2014). These activities described by Leadership-as-Practice scholars, in addition to that of network practitioners, make a significant addition to my framework of network leadership. Those activities are constructing, scanning, signaling, weaving, stabilizing, inviting, and unleashing. I describe what each of these means in detail in Chapter II of this dissertation.

In these networks, it clearly appears that igniting community engagement happens through action, aligned action both initiated and shared by leadership and those around them. The interesting co-occurrences that stood out and also belong together were action oriented and circulates ideas/ practices, as well as action oriented and boots on the ground. It was interesting, but not unexpected, that these would show up together showing how central to a successful network is action, whether it be more communicative action or actual physical action. Throughout the interviews I heard action oriented mentioned in a number of ways; acting on opportunity, gathering or clustering people, and scanning (identifying resources). However, the sub-themes circulating ideas and practices and boots on the ground showed themselves as dominate practices when they appeared as co-occurring themes, thus another leadership pattern

emerged. This interesting quote below demonstrates action oriented with both of the co-occurring practices:

Also, you know, the fact that the FAC has a lot of like boots on the ground practitioners doing the work. It's like a great source of information we get from them, and also how we get ideas and information out to the community. (Kathie)

This is consistent with what the literature has to say about the importance of action whether as a practice within an individual, or inter-active, or a physical act (Holley 2012; Kadushin 2012; Krebs and Holley 2005; Meehan and Reinelt 2012; Raelin 2016). Kadushin points out that the beauty of a network, is that though there are structural patterns, the present network does not necessarily determine the outcomes of that structure, because within structured patterns people have agency (2012, 57).

The Findings in Light of Research Sub-Questions

The Values Sub-Question

Though I have presented my values findings earlier on in this chapter, I will now share them in the context of addressing the research sub-question regarding values, "*What are some of the values that contribute significantly toward local and regional food networks strengthening and scaling?*" Generosity, trust, and respect were mentioned most often in my interviews, and I will discuss these three values here as applicable to the research question. However, I will wait until Chapter V to discuss in depth the two values of community and sense of place that were added while memoing and reviewing transcripts because of the emergent nature of the strong connection to food systems networks.

Generosity

Generosity and sub-themes of kindness and sharing were mentioned often in my research. Generosity had the highest incident of coding and included the sub-themes of kindness and sharing. If you recall my remarks about both Addie and Jackie, you may remember how both

their role sets and others mentioned their generosity and kindness repetitively. These themes were also mentioned in connection with others, such as Helen and Will,however, not to the extent that the values became a predominate narrative of Helen and Will. Yet these mentions showed that generosity and kindness are present in less obvious ways in these networks. For example, Jim, in talking about mutual aid, said in regard to Will:

He always shares resources, and I think really cares a lot about people, and wants to know a lot of people . . . and it comes full-circle in a way.

One interesting example of the literature that points to these values can be found in Shirky (2010). The author writes about the work of two scholars, Benkler and Nissenbaum, who describe the phenomena of how social motivations work, specifically when we are part of a group. Interestingly, the scholars divide these motivations into two groups, quite predictably one is connectedness and membership. However, interestingly, the other is sharing and generosity. Though Shirky (2010) is using this information to point out the interactiveness of internet rather than the one-way messaging of television, looking back at what Kuenkle has to say about values, I think the inference can be made that this also illustrates the difference between a traditional organizational experience versus collaboration in a network. For example, here is an excerpt from a conversation with Noah that illustrates this:

So I think what I find interesting is the graciousness present in the way we work, people are for the most part so generous with each other, like we know we need each other . . . that is as important as the project.

Generosity has been explored in a business classic by authors Ferrazzi and Raz, "A network functions precisely because there's a recognition of mutual need. There's an implicitly understanding that investing time and energy in building personal relationships" (2014, 16). The authors also suggest that though the impact of generosity has not been fully realized by corporations, its value in the world of networks has been proven (15). This would seem to be

supported by what I heard from people in interviews regarding the importance of these values to the collaborations and overall health of these networks. For example, as Tim shared:

I think those kinds of relationships are critical. It's not even as if they have to be like all doing the same thing. But you could have these common connections and this mutual need to where, I don't know, people can connect people to other people that maybe are doing something . . . Yeah, I think those personal relationships are really important to the network.

Lastly, it seems that generosity and kindness in these networks may be significant both in how practicing these values makes both the generous person, and recipient of the generosity feel, as well as how they ignite feedback loops that can ripple through a network. One small yet significant example of this is in something Mack described that he had witnessed:

> *Addie has a table in the summer where she shares donated fruit and other stuff with kids who don't have food at home. Max, who is probably around 9 years old, has been around Addie and going to the table for years. Last summer the table was already empty, and I saw him giving his snacks to a little girl. It seems like despite his own crappy situation he is modeling himself on Addie. I know it makes her happy to see this.*

Trust

Though leadership practices were mentioned far more often than values overall, in discussion values, the second most often mentioned was trust. The literature on the importance of trust in networks is exhaustive. One aspect of trust is the building of trust, and the consciousness of network leadership of the need to build trust among members, which can happen through self-organized projects where people get to know each other. June Holley devotes a chapter to talking about trust in networks (2012, 146–168). Specifically, the values and accompanying behaviors that support trust; reliability, reciprocity, openness, honesty, acceptance, and appreciation. Both the literature and my interviewees also expressed trust being gained by individuals, dyads, and triads paying attention to relationships and mentoring. These excerpts are typical of what was said:

Someone who is so willing to share stuff about themselves. It makes you trust them a little bit more. (Noah)

You talk to her and she can be self-deprecating, self-effacing, but also very confident, funny and warm. You know, I think when you encounter someone like that who does have those traits, you're going to eventually trust them. Right? That is just the kind of human condition. (Jim)

I also heard the word trust without specific descriptors numerous times in my interviews. For instance, in some of the stories, participants described what could be interpreted as a feeling of trust, confidence, faith, and even friendship. For instance, Jim shares this:

I have confidence in Jackie, she values our friendship.

Consistent with what Holley says was the presence of appreciation, reliability, honesty, and openness. I did not hear acceptance or reciprocity, but this may simply be semantics rather than anything worth further investigation. Other themes related to values that arose in the interviews that I have not found in the literature specifically were friendship, and also quality, value of peer learning, sense of place and community. These will be discussed further down and also in Chapter V.

Respect

The third most often talked about value was respect. The themes mentioned in connection with respect were appreciation, which was discussed above, because it was also used co-concurrently with trust. In addition, admiration and humility were voiced as forms of respect. I have discussed the importance of shared values and projects in the formation of trust in these networks. However, I cannot end this section on values that contribute significantly toward local and regional food networks strengthening and scaling without acknowledging some important pieces of trust formation that may not have appeared in my research because of the nature of these networks. In the three networks in which I conducted my research, the process of trust formation may be understated because there are "short cuts" (Holley 2012). What I mean by this is there are some assumptions significant enough to have negated the importance of trust as a

discussion point. For instance, possibly because there is a culture of trust already formed so people do not feel the need to talk about trust. This makes sense because these networks in my study are all food systems networks, which means they all have a common purpose. In addition, only one network is still emergent, and all three are networks that have a history in which many individuals within them have known each other through means other than the network, for example, business ventures or their children are friends. This may mean that assumptions about trust are made more implicitly.

Finally, these networks are fairly homogenous. Holley talks about trust as "removing the veil" (2012, 154). However, when there is a level of familiarity already present, such as exists in these networks based on similar appearance or mutual friends, or when there are no significant cultural differences and so forth, the veil may already be off. This is interesting, but is only a speculation as to whether this level of familiarity is the case in these networks, and beyond the scope of this research to go into further detail. In closing my discussion on the conditions of trust in these networks, I will say that the intentional trust crafting process that Holley talks about that includes modeling and coaching (154–162) may not apply to these networks for the reasons I have stated. That is likely why this did not come up as a stronger overall theme in interviews despite what the literature says about the importance of trust.

Themes Consistent with the Literature Sub-Question

In previous sections of this chapter, I have presented and discussed in detail the findings that were consistent with the previous literature on networks and leadership practice. Here I will do a quick visual review of the themes consistent with the literature in regard to the sub-question, "*In what ways are the values and practices of these leaders consistent with what the literature in the field says?"* (Table 4.6). For the possible interest of the reader, I am including all the themes from the literature that were in my original "theme book," even those that were not significantly

reported in my interviews. In Chapter V, the significant findings will be discussed in further detail as relevant to my conclusions, the implications, and my recommendations.

Table 4.6

Themes Consistent with the Literature

Theme Category	Theme	Sub- Theme
Leadership Practices	Action Oriented (37)	Acts on Opportunity (5) Act Independently (3) Encouraging People to take Initiative or Action (6) Coordinating & Engaging (5) Circulating Ideas and Practices (12)
	Collaborative (22)	Fostering Collaboration (14) Network Guardianship (9)
	Connecting (40)	Stepping Forward (14) Weaving/Building (13)
	Cultivating (36)	Engaging (5) Common Practice/Purpose (6) People/Signaling Programs/Projects (5) Bridging Divides (6) Nurturing Emergent Leadership (16) Spreading Vision & Values (7)
	Curating (21)	Supporting Network Wide Learning (7), Classes (2), Peer to Peer Learning (6), COP's (1)
	Relational (39)	Promoting a Shared Identity (3) Bridging New People into the Network (7) Bridging Divides (5) Group Reflection and Learning (4)
	Supportive (38)	Provides Resources (9) Stabilizing (2) Expert Mentor (16) Setting up Communication Systems, Spaces (4) Monitoring (1) Designing & Adapting (4) Helping People use Technology, Social Media (7) Restructuring Resources to Support the Network (7) Supporting Network Weavers (14)
Values	Generosity (14)	Kind (5) Caring (9) Unselfish (1) Sharing (3)
	Open (4)	Transparency (5)
	Respect (10)	Appreciative (5) Admiration (1)

Theme Category	Theme	Sub- Theme
	Trust (11)	Reliability (1) Confidence (2) Faith (1)
	Transparency (5)	Disclosure (1) Open Exchange (3) Honesty (5)

Other Factors Sub-Question

The final sub-question asks, *"What are the other factors that contribute to sustainability and scaling of local food networks?*" In this section I will discuss the "new themes," those that emerged during the interviews (Table 4.7). First, I will introduce the "new leadership practices themes" of intentional thinking and behavior, and leading from a place of passion. Then I will describe the new values themes of community and sense of place. Finally, I will present a new power theme, the potential capacity to change systems.

Table 4.7

"New" Themes Arising from Interviews

Theme	**Sub-Theme**	**Count**	**Example from interview**
Leadership Practices			
	Intentional	19	"Helen really believes in the relationships, and therefore is very intentional about cultivating them."
	Passionate	15	"I think her leadership comes from sense of religious space, and a deep sense of responsibility …I would call it passion."
Values			
	Community	31	"Addie is always encouraging and supporting community building and understands the importance of sharing a meal together."
	Sense of Place	6	"There is a sense of rural place here. Yeah, and also bringing this sort of sense of values that is really embedded in sort of a philosophical foundation."
Power			
	Potential Capacity to Change Systems	18	"We are never going to cover everybody, that is not possible, but we have so many good things happening, and people are seeing it work and are getting excited. Officials and leaders are noticing."

Emergent Leadership Themes

Intentional

Intentionality and having an intentional mindset, behaviors, and choices within these networks arose repeatedly within my data. Intentionality seemed important whether it was in interactions with others, recruiting resources, or indicative of the conscious choices about the way to live one's life, there was a common thread. In addition to the first quote in Table 4.7 about Helen's intentional development of relationships, the excerpts below help illustrate the intentionality of the leader in question.

When Paul talks about Rachel he specifically uses the word intentional as a practice:

She intentionally reaches out and tries to make other farmers succeed, she constantly will take the time to say did you try this, or when I had that problem . . . It is pretty impressive that someone so successful takes the time.

Mack shared the following quote. I interpret the use of the word *created* as forward looking and purposeful, as well as quite intentional behaviors on Addie's part:

She has created this large extensive network of not just non-profits or activists, but also the people those institutions want to serve . . . she is very much forward looking and purposeful about doing these things.

During her role set interview, Jessica said something which struck me as very intentional in regard to her own life:

I could be doing something else, have a degree, but I chose this farm life. I really value my connection with the earth and the way nature works, providing quality food for my neighbors, contributing to the local economy.

Stories like this suggest that in addition to intentionality in relationships, what leaders in these local/regional food networks accomplish may in fact be by design, by what they set out to accomplish through critical thinking, conscious choices, and intentional behavior on their part. This intentionality is not present in the literature about the practices needed to create and sustain successful networks.

Passionate

Based on my interview encounters with terms that seemed to fall under a theme of passionate, I added passionate to my list of leadership themes. This insight was such an interesting experience. I heard someone described as passionate in an interview and it prompted me to look back at memos for several other interview transcripts in which I had descriptions with question marks, but had not at all thought of these descriptors as belonging to a sub-theme. This was because at first, they seemed very diverse, until I heard passion or passionate voiced, and I realized that previously interviewees were expressing a similar theme using "from her heart,"

personal, faith/religious, self-dedication, and sense of responsibility. Different than passionate leadership, this was a phenomenon in which the individual's leadership was in a sense driven by passion, whether rooted in faith, religious, or other personal conviction.

He has become like this metaphor for how someone can take this, and run with it, this, really a passion and how it can kind of become your life. (Jim)

Andrew has this sort of mission, this drive, nothing short of just self-dedication towards this work . . . it is pretty inspiring. (Ed)

A very interesting insight came from a conversation with Rachel in which she talked about an older woman she knows in the network who has been doing the work for years. She does not use the word passion to describe Carol, but it was what I interpreted as her meaning when she said:

With Carol I think what motivates or keeps her going, it is her religious space and her sort of deep sense of responsibility.

Shared passion has been recognized as essential to social action and movements (Graber 2009; Kuenkel 2016), and that is definitely true within local and regional food systems networks. However, there is little if anything written about the passion of individuals within networks. I will explore this connected with my findings in Chapter V.

Emergent Values Themes

Community and Sense of Place

In this section I will describe the emergent value themes of community and sense of place. Community and the value of community was the most often mentioned value, and one not mentioned in the literature. Perhaps its absence in literature on networks is because it is a given that those invested in networks value community, or it may be that what was presented in my interviews is unique. Whether it was describing people who volunteer because it is a form of resistance and resilience, or farmers who contribute produce to a food pantry, or professing love

for their roots and the region, it was clear that those I spoke with felt that community and also a sense of place were huge factors in doing what they do.

I shall frame what I am saying by providing some background. A place-based or bioregional perspective emphasizes the characteristics and meaning of place as a fundamental starting point for planning and development. Educational scholars began theorizing place-based education or bioregional education in the early 1990s, mainly focused on re-centering Indigenous and other marginalized voices (McGinnis 1999, 22). Since then, the term place-based, or a "sense of place" has increasingly been used outside of education, and often interchangeably with bioregional.

The RSGC, FAC, and WFPC are rooted in local communities that recognize their own inherent value, meaning its (the people in the community) success cannot be separated from the success of its place, its natural setting, and surroundings; its forests, grassland, plants, and animals, water, light, and air (Berry 1989). Place can also transcend the geographic and be a feeling or perception held in common, in this case food systems, which explains the comradery and community between for example a grower in Vermont and a grower in Italy. In approaching what I was hearing, I am doing it both from a research perspective, but as a starting point I also have my beliefs in the form of personal experience with farming and food systems work, and my knowledge of the previous work on a subject which I have mentioned above. What I have learned in my research is that a factor that significantly contributes to the sustainability and scaling of local food networks is that of being immersed in a community which recognizes and values community, place, and a place-based food system. The many and varied tenets or values that were voiced in interviews by these network members, who are also producers and consumers, are very much community and place-based and include a strong belief in equity,

justice, and environmentally sound food production. It is also notable that the purpose of the role interviews was to learn about "leaders around them," yet in several circumstances, interviewees talked in the first person when expressing values of community and place. The following excerpts from conversations help demonstrate the significance of these values:

> *I think human and environmental justice are two of Rachel's primary values and that is reflected in her business plan . . I absolutely agree that it is important for small/local producers to distinguish ourselves from bigger companies that are diluting that language used to describe truly local/sustainable agriculture. Forming genuine, personal, meaningful connections with the land, and with customers in the community is key to achieving this*. (Jessica)

> *It is my passion, creating a life design that fills my heart and my communities' beliefs is wonderful. I am so happy to have these like minds to do the work with.* (Jim)

> *The more food I can produce for self-consumption and for friends is important to my core values in life.* (Rick)

> *Selling produce and investing in our immediate community means I can't charge as much as at markets an hour away in higher income areas. In a perfect world I would service both, but we've made the choice to invest our time in building food system infrastructure and relationships in our own community specifically*. (Jessica)

Furthermore, this culture of shared core values, such as those that I have described throughout this chapter, is important because this paradigm is different from the dominate food system structure which focuses solely on maximum profit as the end game. Individuals within these local food systems networks are the antithesis of a market-based approach that is authoritarian with a rigid organizational structure, and generally has a vertical integration structure of management and production. My data suggest that the intentionality of putting values, relationships, and community/place as a priority may be key to better understanding of local and regional food networks and contribute to the sustainability and scaling of food systems networks. This is an area for further research.

Emergent Power Themes

Power and Influence

In this section I will be using the terms "within the network" and "beyond the bounds of the network." To clarify, networks like these local/regional food networks are essentially without boundaries other than when they are purposefully bounded for a study as I have done for this research. However, for the purposes of this discussion the definitions are as follows, "within the network" refers to core members and participants and "beyond the bounds" indicates those who are not been identified as involved in the network. These distinctions will be important as I discuss my findings around power and influence.

A new theme that arose, the potential capacity to change systems, is included in Table 4.2. Going into this research I had a hypothesis that the ability to acknowledge and use power and influence was an important but not so commonly addressed factor in networks. Literature often addresses power structures within networks (Kadushin 2012; Mirzruchi and Potts 1998; Prell 2012), but there has not been significant attention to the exchange of power and influence back and forth between the known bounds of networks. Certainly, the importance of power structures within the network were part of what I learned in my interviews. However, what is interesting is the number of times role sets mentioned power beyond the network. In interviews, having persons of influence in the network was voiced as helpful, if not necessary, for connections to capital and power beyond the network. Some expressed that without these individuals and their extended contacts beyond the network, they would not have access to the resources needed. For example, in a quote I shared earlier about Joanne, Noah voiced that she is "their tentacles out into the larger world" and the importance of her connections "even beyond to funders, the network and resources across the country." You can hear this same theme a bit more subtly when Mack speaks about an acquaintance that works with Addie:

In a recent situation . . . she made one quick call about it, but because people she knows, and people she is able to contact, and say this is what is going on.

However, another interesting way in which power showed up was in relation to the potential to change systems. This was voiced by individuals as a confidence that they had in their network. For instance, Jim says:

Many changes for the good over the past 30 years. So much more to do, but it is really remarkable how far we have come.

It was attributed back to commitment and dedication, as well as the shared vision. This is a strong indication that this was a driver for continued involvement and fundamental to the sustainability of the network. I will talk more about these types of power in Chapter V as they relate to my findings.

Answering My Primary Question

Finally, to my primary question, "*What is the nature of leadership in emerging local and regional food networks that provides the foundation for a network to strengthen and scale?"* In interviews with 18 individuals, I have learned not just about the six individuals who were the focus of the role set interviews, but about over 100 individuals in three networks. Throughout this chapter I have shared the data that support my response to this question. What I have learned is that it is leadership that is connecting, stepping forward, and building and weaving the network. That the nature of leadership in these emergent local networks is one that comes from a place of generosity, sharing, and kindness. This is leadership that is action oriented, whether it be circulating ideas and practices or boots on the ground work hauling produce. It is one that supports bringing resources in and out of the network. It is cultivating emergent leadership through mentoring and coaching. This leadership has access to or at least acknowledges the importance of power and influence as a vehicle for the exchange of resources in and out of the

network in the form of people, capital, and possibly ties to "authority." Finally, the nature of this leadership is that relationships and community/place are priorities. This is key to sustainability and scaling of food systems networks. These self-organized food systems networks are weaving webs from local to global, building the capacity for transformative social change, and are capable of altering the current view of food as a commodity to a basic human right.

What I have learned is significant because it provides empirical research to support theory that has been developed by network practitioners. My research also demonstrates the ways in which these practices, such as connecting and collaborating, work together, something that has not been written about previously. Finally, my research indicates that there are some "new" leadership practices, values, and aspects of power that have either not been previously identified or documented as being significant to leadership in networks: being passionate and intentional, demonstrating care for community and a sense of place, and having the potential capacity to change systems.

In the next and final chapter, I will interpret my findings, discuss future implications of my research, recommendations, and conclusion.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In the previous chapter, I presented my findings in light of my research questions. In this chapter I will conduct a more in-depth discussion of the most significant and unique findings, my conclusions, the implications of my research, and recommendations for further studies.

However, first it is important to point out that there is a lack of empirical research on the subject of leadership in networks, particularly in self-organized networks. Existing literature indicates that certain leadership practices can help us to build networks that bridge new ideas, innovation, and action across barriers (Bennet, Segerberg, and Walker 2014; Holley 2012; Meehan and Reinelt 2012; Renting et al. 2012; Kadushin 2012; Krebs and Holley 2005; Wheatley and Frieze 2011). However, there is little if any data to support these theories. My research aims to identify empirically the leadership practices which support healthy networks, as defined by Holley (see Appendix A, Table A.3) and others. These are networks that have the potentiality to break down old dysfunctional systems, inspire change, and challenge the status quo. This is important because in the absence of corporate accountability and/or support on the federal policy level, local and regional leadership and self-organized networks are critical to the scaling across and evolution of a moral food economy. Understanding the leadership practices, values, and power structures of local food systems leadership is essential to understanding how to foster conditions for local and regional food network growth and an equitable food system.

In addition, network practitioners and scholars have called for more research, for example, Raelin (2020) has suggested fundamentally a praxis-oriented framework for the study of LAP. However, there is little else in the way of a foundation for the development of leadership from a practice perspective, and is not rooted in research. What Crevani, Lindgren, and Packendorff have to say is, “in terms of theory of leadership, there is a clear need for a deeper

empirical understanding of everyday leadership practices and interactions" (2010, 84). There are certainly others, however, I will close this argument by referring to what Reinelt and Hoppe stated, "We think comparative leadership case studies will significantly strengthen our capacity to understand how networks evolve and function in different contexts, and how they contribute to achieving desire leadership development outcomes" (2010, 617). While my work is not a comparative case study, it goes far beyond what would be learned from a network survey, the typical method used for gathering information on individuals in networks.

In my initial phase one analysis, I followed the theory and guidance on social network analysis to understand how these three networks function as information maps to identify the different levels of conduits. I then used specific criteria to select individuals in positions of influence within the networks. Finally, I conducted interviews of role sets around those individuals to investigate at a deeper level how members of the network experience leadership within the network. By using this unique mixed method approach of social network analysis and role set interviews, I argue that what I have explored contributes to the field, both by providing empirical support to theoretical claims, as well as introducing new findings.

I will now compare my findings with what theorists and practitioners have said about leadership in networks.

Discussion of Key Research Findings

In this section I will briefly review what I found regarding answers to my research questions. I will share my conclusions in light of my findings and the applicable literature. The reader may find it helpful to reference Table 4.1 back in Chapter IV for further details on the themes while reading my conclusions. Here is a summary of my research questions, ending with my primary research question which I will discuss in more depth.

Research Questions

RSQ 1: *What are some of the values that contribute significantly toward local and regional food networks strengthening and scaling?* The values from the literature that I found to be important in the networks in my study were generosity, trust, and respect. Values that were discovered during interviews are the value of community and sense of place.

RSQ 2: *In what ways are the values and practices of these leaders consistent with what the literature in the field says?* As noted above, the values of generosity, trust, and respect were present in these networks. Leadership practices found in these networks consistent with the literature are action oriented, connecting, cultivating relational, and supportive. Emergent practices, those not found in the literature, are leading from a place of passion or motivated by passion (faith, religion, personal or from the heart) and intentionality.

RSQ 3: *What are the other factors that contribute to sustainability and scaling of local food networks?* The emergent leadership practices that I mention above of intentionality in thinking and behavior, and leading from a place of passion as well as the emergent values themes of community and sense of place.

Primary Research Question: *What is the nature of leadership in emerging local and regional food networks that provides the foundation for a network to strengthen and scale?* What I found that provides the foundation for these networks to strengthen and scale is human centeredness as a practice, the presence of co-occurring leadership practices with connecting as the hub, and the importance of the knowledge and use of power.

Before moving on to the implications and significance of my findings, I will review the co-occurring practices I presented in Chapter IV as they support a key finding.

Network Leadership Practices Do Not Occur in Isolation

Looking back on my findings, the co-occurring leadership practices is significant because it supports the notion that leadership practices in networks do not occur in isolation. In Table 5.1, I present a small snapshot of my Dedoose spreadsheet that shows the co-occurrence of themes and sub-themes that support my theory that network leadership practices do not occur in isolation.

Table 5.2

Snapshot of Theme Co-Occurrences

	Action Oriented	**Collaborative**	**Connecting**	**Cultivating**	**Curating**
Relational	7	0	12	9	5
Supportive	6	14	9	8	4
Network Guardian(ship)	1	3	2	1	2
Collaborative	9	0	15	15	5
Cultivating	8	15	15	0	9
Curating	5	5	5	9	0
Intentional	9	6	10	7	3

What I discovered is, for example, that the leadership practices of network guardianship and connecting co-occur at relatively low rates compared to connecting and collaborative. The relatively high frequency of co-occurrence indicates that during an interview, as participants were thinking and discussing an experience of a leadership practice, they often mentioned the other.

Next, I chose to consider which significant leadership themes seemed to co-occur most often. What I found was connecting was clearly the most common co-occurring theme. Connecting was paired with collaborating, cultivating, stepping forward, and supportive. Another

co-occurrence that stood out was action oriented and circulates ideas/practices and boots on the ground. Cultivating and influence (a power theme) also were a co-occurring theme of note which I will discuss when I talk about my conclusions in regard to power.

Observing these patterns allowed me, in a sense, to narrow down and make meaning of my overall findings. The co-occurrence of these themes suggests an overarching pattern which indicates these and other high frequency practices are actually patterns of leadership practices. It also led me to a further understanding of the significance these patterns of leadership practices have in creating the foundation for a network to strengthen and scale.

Though they may be doing these things, and other practices as well, connecting, or what Holley (2012) calls "knitting the net," was found to be the most important leadership practice to build and sustain the work of these networks and for boundary spanning growth beyond those networks. This is because connecting in and of itself does not necessarily make for a healthy network, but because my data show that connecting is related to all of the leadership practices, that does make it possible for a network to flourish. Here are examples of co-occurring practices that show that connecting is present with the other practices.

Mack shares how Addie leadership practice includes connecting and cultivating:

I think she's just a connector . . .Like, you know, lots of places struggle with volunteers, but it seems like not only does Addie always have enough people, but they appear magically like at the last moment . . . she just cultivates these relationships that keep people coming back I guess.

Cheryl describes Helen connecting and supporting during difficult times:

With COVID it's been a lot, I had just stepped into that role, and Helen has been such an incredible teacher and resource, you know, reaching out and working with me, really coaching me through all this.

To summarize, what I make of this collection of significant themes and co-occurring themes is that effective leadership practice that builds a strong network foundation is one that

steps forward and connects people and projects. This practice is cultivating and supporting those around them. It is an action-oriented practice that not only circulates ideas and practices, but often involves getting "boots on the ground." Lastly, there are individuals within the network with influence who understand the use of power. My findings on power will be discussed further toward the end of this chapter. Next I will present my findings on the significance of human centeredness as a foundation for the leadership practices in networks.

Human Centeredness is the Foundation for Leadership as Practice in Networks

While I was evaluating my findings on co-occurring practices, I sensed that there was something I was missing. What I mean by this is there was a quality that I am inclined to naturally refer to as "human centeredness" that came through on some level all throughout these interviews. At first pass I was almost convinced that I should add it as a theme. However, after consideration, the phenomena seemed a bit too broad and general. Sometimes it was about folks taking the time to listen, or simply taking the time to be with, and in a somewhat unique manner across peer groups, socioeconomic levels, and other factors. Yet, quite distinctively, I can say that the interview content illuminated what I will call a "human centeredness" or "human centered way of being."

Although Helen, the focus of one if the role set interviews, was spoken of as being exceptional in manifesting this, she was not exclusive in the mentions of this "human centered way of being." This was a description which could apply to many who were discussed in the interviews, if not clusters of people or the majority of the network. So though Helen is exceptional, she was not unique in this characteristic or practice. There is evidence of a connection to a human centeredness when Helen and others embrace a network mindset, demonstrate an ability and passion for listening, for caring, or supporting and encouraging

others, essentially putting people first. This quote from Cheryl about Helen gives an example of this human centered way of being:

She is definitely still productive and solutions oriented, it is not to say otherwise, but it is that she does gets stuff done with a great emotional insight and compassion for others.

Human centeredness seemed to be a constant in these networks, and with the exception of perhaps a few outliers, it was the soil that enabled the seeds of practice to grow and flourish. What I came to understand is that human centeredness is the foundation for leadership practice in networks. This finding perhaps provides a new foundation for the activities of Leadership-as-Practice (Carroll et al. 2008; Crevani and Endrissat 2016; Raelin 2016). This is essentially because how humans function together is about more than a practice. I will discuss the details of what I learned about human centeredness as the foundation for practice in the following sections.

I uncovered this notion of human centeredness during my multiple reviews of transcripts and recordings. It appeared specific leadership practices were central to a foundation of human centeredness, the three most significant are what I had coded as relational, intentional, and passionate. I will talk about relational or a relational way of being first.

Human Centeredness as the Foundation for Practice is Relational

Though relational did not show up with any significant level of co-occurrence with other themes, I am not about to discount the importance of the relational practices in these networks. Relational was the theme with the second highest overall code count in my study, just below connecting. Many of the ways in which these relational practices appeared in the interviews was subtle, such as the importance of promoting a shared identity, a focus on collecting and sharing common stories, intentionality in bridging people into the network or bridging divides, promoting a sense of inclusion, or a focus on group reflection and learning. Relational also appeared in interviewees' descriptions of the values of individuals or hubs within the network;

caring, generous, engaged, humble, grounded, listener, nurturing sharing, unselfish. I will not further speculate as to why it was not a co-occurring theme other than to say in these networks, it is likely that a relational way of being and leading is somewhat of an assumption as relationships and nurturing relationships seem to be a characteristic of or a norm in these networks, as exemplified in the following quotes;

Tim speaks of the human centeredness in the way Jim goes about getting things done:

Jim makes sure people know each other, and there is this sense of reverence. I think with how he approaches relationships, he's going to be real.

Addie's human centeredness is described by Mack in this manner:

She makes it a point to make sure everyone is at the table, that is a huge thing for some of these folks, and honestly a lot of work for her I am sure . . . it is important though, these are people that are usually left out of the decision making even though they are recipients of the services.

What I heard in my interviews, and certainly the literature in the field supports, is that relationships are key to leadership in networks. For those in positions of betweenness that take on leadership roles, the importance of both connecting and a relational way of leading is important. Meehan and Reinelt, in a section in the white paper entitled *Connecting and Weaving Could Not Be Clearer*, say that "relationships are the foundation of networks. Leadership programs are uniquely positioned to build strong ties and cultivate authentic relationships among diverse groups of leaders" (2012, 7). Similarly, Krebs and Holley talk about "Relationship building, particularly across traditional divides, so that people have access to innovation and important information" (2006, 9) as one of the key aspects to network weaving.

Furthermore, in an interesting experiment with a cohort of Boston, MA area non-profit leaders, it became clear that relationships that were developed resulted in connectivity. That connectivity not only allows for the flow of information, but can be a powerful accelerator and amplifier of all kinds of network activity" (Lanfer, Brandes, and Reinelt 2013, 76). What I have

found is significant because it demonstrates what network practitioners have theorized: that relationships are the glue in networks. The relational aspect of Human Centeredness as Practice supports relationships and therefore helps build the foundation for a network to strengthen and scale.

Finally, in talking about leadership-as-practice, Raelin describes the importance of relationships as stepping stones to getting work done in a manner that echoed what I heard in nearly all of my interviews, "relationships and the conversations that ensue are as likely to be lateral across a range of individuals connected with each other . . . as people contribute to accomplish the work of the community, they exert a leadership that is not only collective but concurrent (2011, 21). My research confirms that, and I would argue that Human Centeredness actually provides a foundation for Leadership-as-Practice to occur in these networks. I will discuss the characteristics of this human centeredness further in the next sections.

Human Centeredness as the Foundation for Practice is Intentional

Intentional was not a theme that I found in my literature review on leadership in networks. However, intentional or intentionality was brought up enough times during interviews that it became a theme that I added to my "theme book." As I continued to interview, memo, and code I heard this theme of intentional expressed in numerous ways. By the time I completed all the interviews, intentional was mentioned 19 times. Intentional was described as, for example, purposefully engaging people to develop strategies and actions or deliberately bringing a focus to an opportunity, a problem, or issue. However, the additional ways intentional or intentionality were described are very much in line with what I saw as a human centered way of being and leading. That is, leaders were seen to be intentionally cultivating relationships or consciously doing things to inspire others. For example, the description of the practice of cultivating relationships was said in a positive and enthusiastic manner:

Helen really believes in the relationships, and therefore is very intentional about cultivating them. (Rick)

Intentionality or an intentional way of being seemed to be a practice that was overall appreciated by network members:

Addie is so busy, but always takes the time to appreciate people and that means something, whether a little gift or just a text . . . often it is food, she knows we like snacks (laughs). (Mack)

From Will:

He lets them use the truck, it makes more work for us, and it is definitely not what I would say is, beneficial on our end or . . . but in his head I think it is about the comradery and I think building the connection . . . I get it.

What I make of this engaging, inspiring, and purposeful helping is that these actions collectively point to an intentionality in the way people in the network operate and engage with each other. It is characterized by an understanding on some level of the importance of putting people first in the network. These are the types of actions that demonstrate a critical piece, a human centeredness that provides a foundation for other practices. From these quotes and other details, there also seems to be an openness on the part of individuals in networks to this sort of conscious or semi-conscious intention or structure amid the complexity.

Next, I will talk about the leadership practice of being passionate.

Human Centered Practice is Passionate

As I mentioned in Chapter IV, hearing passion or passionate to describe leadership practice was such an interesting experience. The use of terms such as "from her heart," personal, faith/religious, self-dedication and sense of responsibility struck me in the same way. For example:

He has become like this metaphor for how someone can take this, and run with it, this, really a passion and how it can kind of become your life. (Jim)

Andrew has this sort of mission, this drive, nothing short of just self-dedication towards this work . . . it is pretty inspiring. (Ed)

She just loves inspiring other people to get on board, you can feel now important this is to her.

Clearly the passion these individuals have is heartfelt, but it is not just about them, it acts as a motivator and that is important to the work that gets done in these food systems networks. One could assume that these food systems networks attract individuals who are very passionate about the work for a variety of reasons. However, I would suggest that this passion is contagious or rhizomatic. Though passion would not seem to be a leadership practice that could be taught, it is likely that the presence of these passionate individuals creates an atmosphere that also motivates other network members and sustains the passion of the "leader" and those around them.

As this is a research study about networks, before I summarize my framework of Human Centeredness, I will briefly address what this human centeredness looks like beyond the individual, in hubs and throughout a network.

Human Centeredness as the Foundation for Practice Leadership Beyond the Individual

Previously I have discussed human centeredness as an individual leadership practice, and certainly the leadership practice of individuals is very important to supporting healthy networks. However, individuals practice within a network, so these practices are not occurring in isolation. Network leadership is a coordinated effort among network members. This is true for human centeredness as the foundation for practice as well. In addition to the intentional, passionate, and relational leadership practice of the individual, there is the coordinated effort, or dance of the many within the network. It is in this space that the work of a network is accomplished. I appreciate how June Holley sums this phenomenon up in *The Network Weavers Handbook*, "It is not just what we do, but how and with whom we interact that brings transformation" (2012, 11).

The concept of a human centeredness beyond the individual is very much aligned with the agency, structure, and activities of LAP as well. The individuals in these spaces in networks are creating shared meaning and tasks. Human centeredness not only becomes part of, but is almost indistinguishable from the collective action of the network, or as Raelin (2016) suggests "collaborative agency is the intersubjective interaction among parties to the practice rather than the individuals who are presumably mobilizing the practice." Raelin also says, "Leadership-as-practice is less about what one person thinks or does and more about what people may accomplish together" (2016, 3). This was clear time and again in what I heard from individuals within these networks. (2010, 84). I will share a few last quotes which illuminate intentional, passionate, and relational practice occurring beyond the individual.

In talking about why they have so many volunteers working in the Food for All Coalition, Kathie said:

A lot of the other people involved, they're drawn because it is such as welcoming and caring group, and kind of maybe our passion for that population as opposed to like a generic fighting hunger type of group. Yeah, we're motivators in a little bit different way maybe, because we are very conscious about how we roll and oh, I do think that's important.

Another quote from Kathie talking about Helen seems to show intentionality in gathering people to spark action:

She took the lead, but I wouldn't really call it the lead, does that make sense, it was not hierarchical at all. We were all at the same level, she just convened people. It was collaborative, 'let's all put stuff in this document, what do you want to focus on'?

In Chapter IV, as well as the quotes above, I gave examples of the leadership that happens in day-to-day interactions in the many triads and small clusters in these networks. I shared examples of the co-construction of ideas, solutions and more, between people who are working together to accomplish a shared goal. These examples illustrated how important those relationships are to the meaning that is made, and the work that gets done. Ramsey (in Raelin 2016, 200) both acknowledges and gives some attention to the theory of leadership as being

created relationally rather than a set of tasks, activities, or the leader/ follower dynamic, "Leadership activity is understood as socially created." Crevani and Endrissat (in Raelin 2016, 27) also offers, "Broadly speaking, in relational leadership approaches people are involved in a co-construction of each other and the leadership process." My findings, for instance, the conversations in the spaces between shared in Chapter IV (17–19), illustrated the leadership practices, the exchanges and interfaces, occurring in the constantly shifting dyads, triads, and clusters throughout these networks. These along with the work of scholars and network practitioners I have cited above and throughout this dissertation seem to support a model of human centeredness as the foundation for practice that extends beyond the individual to the network and beyond.

What this further demonstrates is leadership as a coordinated effort of network members practicing, creating meaning, and leading from a foundation of human centeredness in these local/regional food networks. This is important because it contributes to the theory on Leadership as Practice, as well as introducing a framework that suggests that human centeredness may be the foundation for leadership as practice, at least in networks. It also provides knowledge as to what practices incubate the conditions for non-hierarchal leadership and accomplishment of goals in networks. Below is an emergent model (Fig. 5.1) that represents what my findings indicate about the way leadership practices create flourishing networks. Note, although I have findings related to the understanding and use of power, I see these as separate and so not included as part of the model.

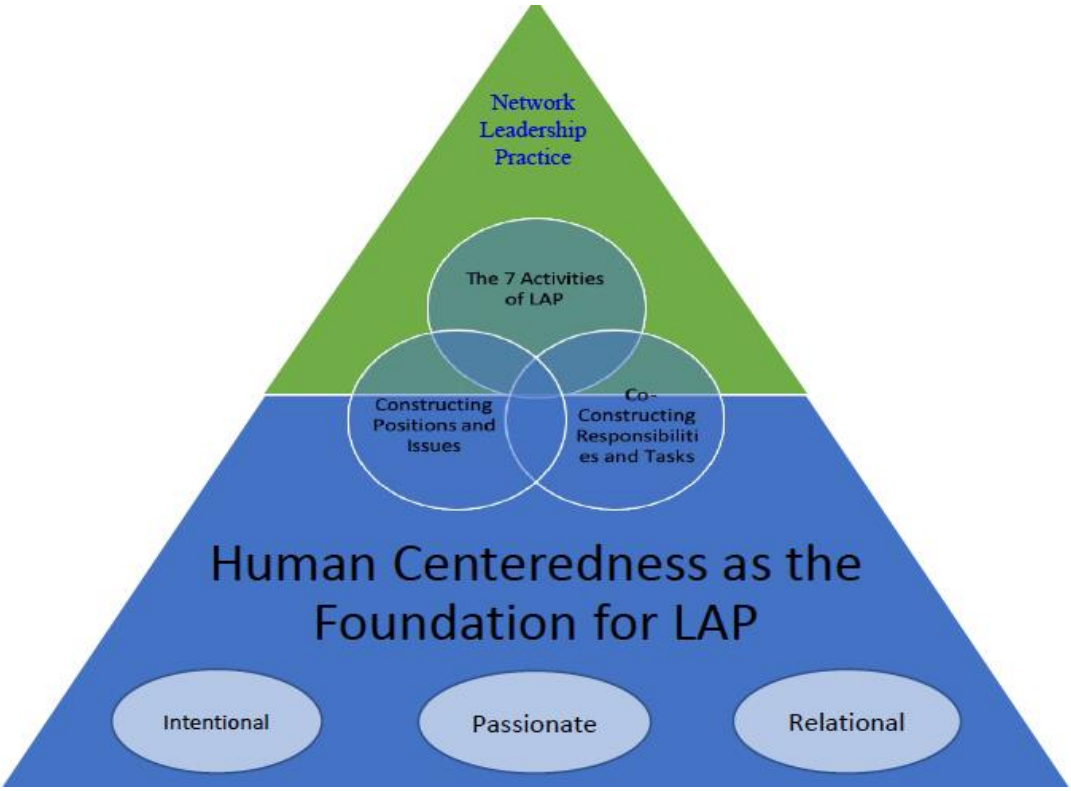

Figure 5.1. Human Centeredness as the Foundation for LAP in Networks.

Summary of Human Centeredness

In summary, it seems that human centeredness (intentional, passionate, and relational) sets the foundation for the activities of Leadership-as-Practice, as well as other connecting and the co-occurring leadership practices (collaborating, cultivating, stepping forward, and supportive) to occur within these networks. This is because as I have demonstrated, leadership is about much more than practicing a set of activities together, it is being passionate, not only about the "cause" but the people "in it with you." It is about intentionally connecting and cultivating the relationships within the network both before and while coordinating efforts and focusing on outcomes.

Next, I will discuss a surprising finding, which is an important one as often the work of the network guardian often goes unnoticed.

The Work of the Network Guardian

A theme which my data offer a unique perspective on is that of curating. Curating is one of the roles of a network guardian (Holley 2012, 273). Curating was not a theme that coded a high number of times compared to other leadership themes, and unlike collaborating, it did not receive a high co-occurring number to boost its significance either. However, when curating was brought up in interviews it was most often in reference to providing resources and supporting peer and network wide learning, and that is notable. The reason it is important is because this support or curating provided by a network guardian is critical to communication and resources in networks. Interviewees expressed that these leadership practices around curating were in part contributors to the network success and that these opportunities kept them engaged. For example, Tim shared how Michael quickly got meetings and projects online when COVID happened:

I am not sure if we would be where we are right now if he had not stepped up and gotten all of our courses in an online format . . . I think he has begun to work on transforming a fall fundraiser we do to a web-based auction. It is great we have our own in house one person "geek squad.

Mack shared the following example of curating in supporting technology as well holding the big picture view:

Niko, has been the most consistent worker on it. It's often work that gets quiet pushed aside and not recognized, a lot of the logistical work, website design, and what not, and like keeping folks on task, work that is not very sexy or publicized."

In addition, a glance back to supportive, a leadership practice that was coded 38 times, was informative in understanding curating as a leadership practice of significance. This is because though supportive most often was found co-occurring with connecting, supportive was also mentioned as connecting people to technology or social media in the context of setting up communications systems, platforms, and spaces. Essentially, I had found a theme that was like

finding a “needle in a hay stack.” So, while this leadership may be on the periphery rather than in positions of high betweenness important leadership of this is;

Rachel had this to say about curator who supports her and the work she does in her network:

She is very introverted, and very much prefers a much more back of the house role and operational work, such as our social media posts, and it is her skill set for sure . . . but also effectively manages people who aren't on track in a pretty efficient way.

These network guardians or curators are the network leadership supporting the network weavers behind the scenes. Because their work is behind the scenes, it is not surprising to me that none of the individuals mentioned in my roles set interviews came up with high betweenness scores. However, as a network practitioner I would suggest that this is an important network role, especially during the pandemic when we all retreated to technological connections. I do not think it can be overstated how substantial to the transition these big picture people were, especially those who were able to set up virtual communication platforms and provide access and training, essentially enabling the work of the networks to continue.

Summary of my Findings Curating and Network Guardianship

The take away from this is that although the individuals with high betweenness are important to the function and growth of the network, the whole network matters and in fact there may be hidden gems of importance, such as these network guardians and technology stewards (Holley 2012) working behind the scenes. This is a topic that would benefit from further research.

Power and Networked Leadership

When it comes to power in a network, it would seem that balance is a key, but to deny or ignore forms of power is likely not to be effective. To acknowledge power and work with it seems a better strategy. There is no recipe or model about how to attain his balance, as no two

networks will be the same, other than to suggest an approach that is purposefully open, flexible, and creative, conscious of imbalances and intentional with the facilitation of power. This seems to be how the networks I studied handled various forms of power. Though talking about power in organizations rather than in networks, I believe that what the authors in *Leadership, Not Leaders: On the Study of Leadership as Practices and Interactions* have to say about how power aptly describes how power plays out in these three food systems networks. That is to say that there are "power relationships" rather than a one way dynamic, "simple analyses of how individual managers exercise power may be replaced by far more detailed accounts of how people produce and reproduce power relations in organizations when 'doing leadership'" (Crevani et al. 2009, 84). Here are some examples of how those power relationships turned up in my data.

As discussed in Chapter IV, power was a robust theme that presented in several forms; influence, potential capacity to change systems, economic power, shared power, and authority. Influence was by far the top coded power theme in my research. That finding is pretty straight forward, meaning influence is just what it sounds like, a person in the network with personal influence and or connections to power. Influence was also voiced as legitimate power. This finding is important because real power and influence can create large scale change.

However, the most interesting finding was the potential to change systems. It was also the second highest scoring theme, and interestingly this was a theme I added part way through interviews based on the large number of memos that showed variations of this theme. The reason it was not an original theme in my codebook is because although potential to change systems is talked about in both networks and network literature, it more often associated with an outcome of power rather than powerful in the potentiality that notion holds for network members. The potential to change systems is also not discussed as a focus of dialog or even training, which it

perhaps should be. What I found was that viewing power in the ways I just mentioned could be important to the internal health and well-being of a network. To further explain, in subsequent interviews I continued to hear themes such as vision, commitment, and dedication in enthusiastic dialogue associated with systemic change. Believing in the potential to change systems appears to support everyday optimism and hope in these local and regional food systems networks, and may be a driving factor in their success. Here are some quotes that support that notion.

Rick shared:

Things are tough for a lot of people right now, but slowly one accomplishment at a time we are getting there, and I think it is seeing these little successes is what gives everyone hope and feeling like there is light at the end of the tunnel so to say.

Timothy shares the impact that Helen has on individuals in the network believing in the potential to change systems:

She just has this constantly upbeat way about her, and each small success becomes a celebration. I think being buoyed up with that optimism and hopefulness, well that has a huge impact on the rest of us.

Now I want to just briefly discuss the other power themes; economic power, shared power, and authority. It is interesting that they were mentioned and that they were mentioned frequently, almost as often as shared power. I found this surprising because the existing literature on networks and other forms of democratic or horizontal leadership generally emphasizes the importance of shared power or does not talk about power at all. In my experience, the importance of economic power and natural or traditional authority is not generally a focus of this literature or is approached as a negative. My findings contradict this view. My findings suggest that the individuals in these food networks understand the benefits of connections and relationships with both natural and traditional authority and economic power. For example, the natural authority that Rachel has was expressed in this quote:

What I admire about Rachel is that she's a really strong leader. She knows what needs to be done. And she is very competent, so she doesn't second guess herself. She gives people jobs. She makes sure they know how to do it, do it well, and expects they will. Yeah, I love that about her she can come into a situation and take control whether it is on the farm or organizing. (Noah)

However, a more traditional authority also seemed to be appreciated in these local/regional food networks, especially in how it can afford access to economic power. Some power of this sort seemed to be held by individuals in these networks and was used to access resources for the network as a whole.

You know when you think what having a connection to the town hall does in terms of education and awareness, oh and funding. We are just really lucky to have her, as a hub and spoke. (Kellie)

Laurie had this to say:

A lot of the city and county leadership is old guard, you know, all the folks who hold elected positions are pretty much exclusively old boys club to some degree. We need to work on getting younger women or at least enlightened old boys in these offices. Our organizations, agencies, and social movements need this leverage. Yeah, I want to see that, a regionally shift in politics needs to happen.

In the section below, I will discuss the connection in regard to the meaning of power, response to power, collective power, and how these types or aspects of power are important for a network to flourish and be effective.

Summary on Power

My research suggests that beyond the bounds of the network it is important for local and regional food networks to consider the use of and response to power, and to understand that affecting change within a local food system is only possible if, despite possible differences, it includes the public, political, and bureaucratic spheres (Buchan et al. 2018). This can be a hard pill to swallow for the revolutionary food activists that frequently make up a good deal of the membership of these networks.

Buchan and colleagues assert that being an effective change agent is less to do with hierarchical power or positional authority and more to do with the ability to influence through a network (Buchan et al. 2018). Other research (Graber 2009; Holley 2012; Sitrin 2012) says it is generally shared or horizontal power that is what is associated with the ideal power dynamic created within communities of mutual self-interests or self-organized networks. However, my findings suggest that the most effective leaders of change are those who can harness power to build diverse local food system networks that then facilitate the growth of relationships and build bridges beyond the boundaries of the network and across communities. I think the bottom line, supported by the literature, is that there are ways in which networks offer alternatives to traditional power structures, both in how power operates within them and the ability to influence beyond the bounds of the network (Buchan et al. 2018; Holley 2012). This involves understanding the power structures within the network as well as those of potential accomplices and adversaries in the community at large. Meehan and Reinelt (2012, 7) do a great job explaining the importance of what they call "being intentional about power." This includes an awareness of any hidden power dynamics in the network, "real power," as well the suggestion of "exploring how to take advantage of those dynamics." What I heard surrounding intentionality in regard to power was often in conjunction with a sustained focus on funds or support for a goal or initiative, one that had a common purpose and meaning for the network. People seem to experience this as someone, a "leader," or a group being intentional or deliberate about the access to power. For example, being intentional about power was described in these ways:

Rachel in talking about Joanne and others:

I know we can be uncomfortable around money, so I appreciate that they always have a plan, a 10-steps ahead plan . . . with other groups I have seen a lack of consciousness slows down strategic planning and time, and talent are wasted.

I shared this quote from Noah in Chapter IV, but will share it here again. He is talking about Joanne as well, and is aware of her intentional cultivating of funders:

When you talk about our network, she is our tentacles out into the larger world. Yeah. You know beyond local funders, and resources, the other side of the country.

The use of many types of power is important to local food networks. My research suggests that individual network members are keenly aware of these dynamics, and conversations and trainings about power could lead to network health and better leveraging of existing resources to support the work of these local/regional food networks.

Conclusion

My research suggests that the nature of leadership in emergent local and regional food networks that provides the foundation for these networks to strengthen and scale,is one in which:

- Human centeredness is a foundation for leadership practice.
- Leadership practices co-occur with connecting.
- There is an understanding of and access to various types of power.

Limitations of My Research

This study is limited in a number of important ways, both in terms of methodology and population. One limitation of my dissertation, and potential weakness of my study, is that my analysis of the network is limited by the time stamp of the mapping portion of the research. Networks are continuously evolving and restructuring, hence my analysis is just a snapshot. Additionally, though significant efforts have been made to include all members of these networks, some may not be represented in the study due to communication platforms the study relied on due to COVID, as well as inability to connect with some individuals due to the rural nature of the farming profession, religious, or cultural reasons.

Also, the rural and predominately white nature of the local/regional food networks of the study may provide a particular cultural and racial bias to the findings. Certainly, the perspectives of urban food systems networks and those of greater ethnic and racial diversity would add greatly to the study. In addition, the networks I chose to study were all emergent, healthy, or well-established local/regional food networks. A future exploration of food systems networks that have collapsed would be valuable in confirming my further identifying essential leadership practices. As would studies of self-organized non-food systems networks.

Finally, my study explored the merged leadership practices and values of three different local/regional food networks with slightly different focuses (a grower's collaborative, a food policy network, and food security network). A comparison study between those three networks, three networks with aligned missions (for example three grower's collaboratives), or an analysis or comparison of a greater number of additional local/regional food networks would add to the knowledge we have on leadership practices and values in local/regional food networks.

Implications for Network Leadership Practice

Although my study aligns with previous work, what I have discovered is significant because it provides much needed empirical research on leadership practices in networks. It is also unique in the methodology that was used. My findings, while certainly not exhaustive, contribute to both network practice and the work of social network and LAP scholars. Human Centeredness as the Foundation for Leadership as Practice has implications for specific leadership practices, as does understanding the importance of the significant co-occurring practices. Finally acknowledging the presence of and understanding why accessing the various types of power are important to local and regional food networks. Presently individuals "in the middle of things" in these local/regional food networks may not even realize the position of

influence that they are in. These local/regional food systems would benefit from those persons in positions of influence understanding and carrying on with these important practices with the leadership around them in their networks. This involves getting on with building relationships, weaving and connecting, supporting, collaborating and cultivating and the other practices, and practicing with a clear understanding of the importance of all forms of power. This may seem counter to the concept of self-organized networks, however, having left the activist world years ago in frustration because of continuous disorganization and inability to be strategic, I believe that this conscious approach is a critical factor and these "food systems leaders" are in a position to influence the sustenance and success of their networks. To some it may seem that to impose organizational style interventions on these complex networks, typified by nonlinear, emergent change; unpredictability; autocatalytic behavior; and dynamic movement (Uhl Bien 2008) is to lose the beauty of what self-organization and democratic process is all about. It could be seen that to interfere with this complex interplay of many interacting forces is to meddle with what creates the shift that is essential to a successful large-scale change. However, I would argue I am not alone in my thinking about the need to conduct trainings, organize communities of practice, and just generally be organized about the facilitative process and structure in local and regional food systems networks.

Recommendations for Local and Regional Food Systems Networks

The work of June Holley, *The Network Weaver Handbook*, which I have extensively quoted throughout this dissertation, is an excellent example of a how to guide for network leadership (now supported by data). Also, the work of Claire Reinelt, Deborah Meehan (Meehan and Reinelt 2012) and the Leadership Learning Community, as well as many others (Bennet, Segerberg, and Walker 2014; Holley 2012; Kadushin 2012; Kanter 2009; Krebs and Holley

2005; Raelin 2011; 2016, 2020; Renting et al. 2012; Strasser et al. 2019;, Wheatley and Frieze 2011) whose ideas, literature, and trainings provide a guide for the leadership practices that can help us to build healthy and vibrant local/regional food networks. It is my hope that what I have discovered not only contributes to their work, but helps to substantiate their theories.

Based on the theory of the network practitioners and LAP scholars that I have cited throughout this study, and validated by the results of my research, my recommendation for network practitioners, network funders, and to all those that are organizing and investing their time in local/regional food systems are as follows:

Prioritize understanding practices, values and power dynamics.

These self-organized local/regional food systems networks would be best served by prioritizing the time to understand the importance of human centeredness, leadership practices, and the power dynamics that my research suggests are important to building more effective and innovative local/regional food networks.

Know where and who the influencers and potential barriers are.

My study findings suggest that the research methods I used (SNA), or similar strategies, can be used to identify those in positions of power in their networks and ensure they understand the likely impact that human centeredness and core practices have on the health, well-being, and improved outcomes for their networks.

Additional Recommendations for Future Research

I have mentioned areas for further exploration above in my section on limitations and throughout the last chapters. Two additional areas well worth future research to gain a better understanding are:

Additional research should be conducted on the significance of community and sense of place and/or placed-based values for those who dedicate themselves to local and regional food

systems work. My initial data suggests that the intentionality of putting values, relationships, and community/place as a priority may be key to better understanding of local and regional food networks and contribute to the sustainability and scaling of food systems networks. This is definitely an area worthy of further research.

The demographics I was able to extrapolate from my two food systems network projects illumined the large number of women in these networks. This along with the number of women who are now involved in local food production suggest the need for studies that research the significance and impact these women have in local and regional agriculture and food systems networks

Closing Thoughts

In putting the final words to the page my thoughts have drifted back to activist culture and the very reasons I began this dissertation journey. I recall my frustration and experience with disorganized organizing. My annoyance at watching movements fail to progress, or collapse altogether, knowing ultimately what is at stake if we do not get it right. In Chapter I I wrote:

> Humanity currently faces an onslaught of intertwined crises; political, economic, social and ecological…The work undertaken in this thesis is based on the understanding that we can shift and improve this paradigm, together, by building relationships with those who are committed to a similar set of values, both in our communities and globally. Specifically, we can work to gain accomplices[7] by bridging differences with those who have the most "skin in the game.

With COVID and mounting global weather events, I would say in just the four and one-half years I have been working on this PhD we have gone even further, some scientists say beyond the tipping point. Certainly, changing the ways in which we grow food and provide food to humanity, or even the scale of production will not change outcomes until we deconstruct the

scaffolding that keeps the profit-based food system in place, and all the other systems of oppression and control that our society is entrenched in.

I have lived and grown food in a diversity of climates and communities around the world, and while our local and regional food movements are flawed as a result of being modeled on the dominant market-based system, local and regional food networks, the intent is just. These local and regional food systems are organized by food citizens that support the production, distribution, and consumption that takes place within their communities with their hearts, minds, sweat, and even sometimes blood. These are such hopeful food spaces, and these people and communities hold tremendous potentiality for a shift from a profit narrative to one of social innovation and transformative change, one that values people and planet, and an emerging story of a new society. I will leave you with this last message . . . It really is not about the food. Food is just the medium for action, though certainly a very important one. It is about the citizens, consumers, producers, and entrepreneurs . . . these glorious human beings and their relationships with each other, and that is where large-scale systems change begins.

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Appendix A

Table A.1- Leadership Roles in Networks, *Network Weaver Handbook* by June Holley (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

Building the Network	CONNECTOR CATALYST Connects People Gets network building started	NETWORK GUARDIAN Helps put in place all systems needed For networks: communications, training, support, resources
Action	SELF-ORGANIZED PROJECT COORDINATOR Helps coordinate Self-organized projects	NETWORK FACILITATOR Helps convene people to set up a more explicit and focused network

Table A.2.- Organizational ~ Network Leadership, *Network Weaver Handbook* by June Holley (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

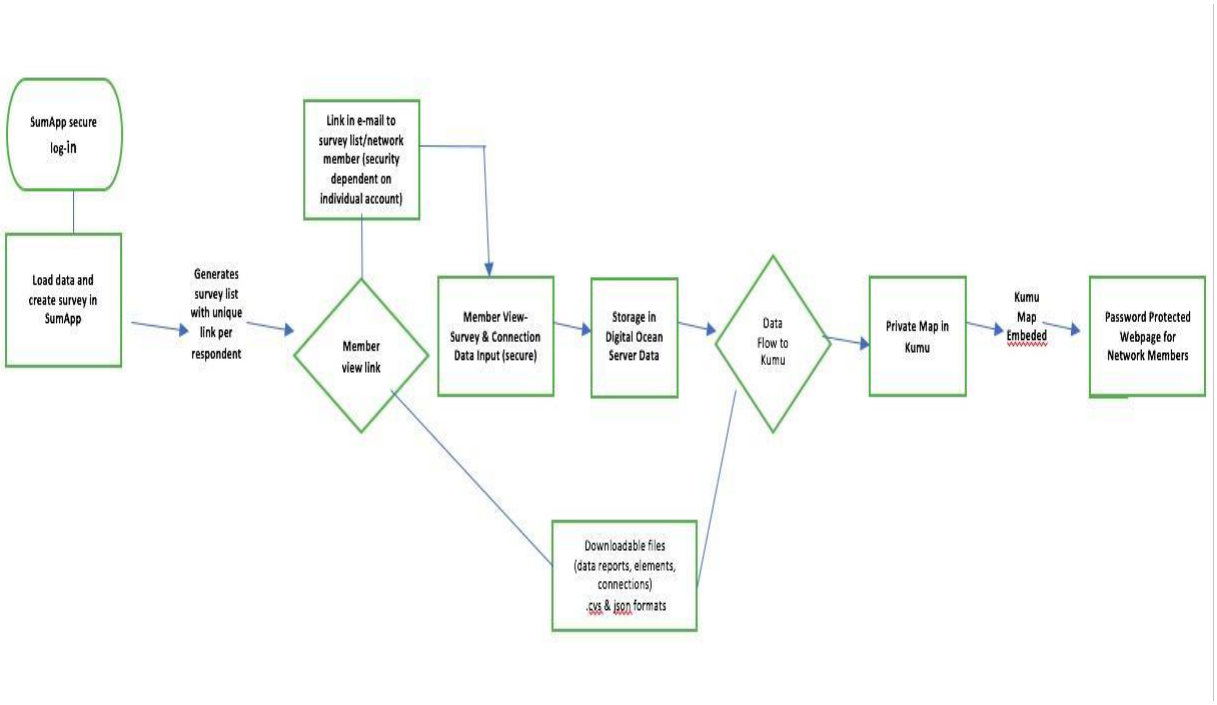
Organizational	**Network**
Individual	Collaborative
Leader Broadcasts	Leadership engages
Provides services	Supports self-organizing
Exercising power	Sharing power
Planned	Emergent
Hierarchal	Relational
Centralized decision making	Transparency and Process
Individual claim or blame	Group reflection/learning

Table A.3 – The four "aspects" found in "healthy" networks, *Network Weaver Handbook* by June Holley (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

Network Aspect or "Role"	**Characteristics**
Relationship Network	● Connecting People ● Building Trust ● Bridging New People into the Network
Intentional Network	● Focusing on an opportunity, problem or issue ● Engaging people to develop strategies and/or actions in this area
Action Network	● Encouraging people to take initiative ● Clustering people interested in the same project ● Fostering collaboration
Support Network	● Setting up communication systems and platforms ● Helping people use social media and the social web ● Restructuring resources to support networks and collaboration ● Support Network Weavers

Appendix B: sumApp and Kumu Network Mapping Flow

Figure B.1- sumApp and Kumu network mapping flow



Appendix C: sumApp and Kumu Software Brief

C.1 Sum App and Kum Software Brief

SumApp is somewhat more user friendly and uncomplicated compared to some of the other mapping options, though there are software glitches that are still being worked out. Sum-app allows the researcher to interact with the survey participants in a simple and straightforward way. The participant is invited through e-mail to the survey through a personalized individual link and then after reading the disclosure answers a survey that contains demographic questions. The person may also post a picture of themselves and a short bio so their connections can more easily identify them. The next step is for the participant to, via the connections tab, visit a page where they identify people they know, click on them and answer a set of questions about the nature of the relationship they have with that person. The SumApp software uses the information collected in the relationship questions, and the information from your connections to calculate the metrics and then exports the data in the correct format for visualization of the network map.

A major difference between sumApp and other network mapping software, and the one that convinced me to use sumApp is the interactive aspect of the embedded survey. Participants follow an individualized link to input information, and also identify their relationships, and the strength of those relationships to others in the network. I designed my sumApp survey questions in order to not only launch the network mapping relationship process, but also so I could learn who controls the flow of information and has influence. During the second phase of my research this information will also be used to select interviewees. The interviews will help me to determine the presence or absence of traits or characteristics that may align with the literature on networked leadership, network mindset, and leadership-as-practice.

Kumu

A great feature of Sum-app, is that it creates a real time interface file, JSON file, that feeds directly into Kumu, that is why it is my preferred online network visualization platform. This means the map's visualization is updated in real time and participants having the link to the Kumu map, may watch the network weaving unfold as they participate in the mapping exercise. Data from the sumApp questionnaire were used to produce a map using Kumu software. Data were exported from the collector to the mapping software to create a visual display of the relationships in the network. This information exported from sumApp was used to analyze the hubs, clusters and connections within the maps.

Originally, I was not sure what software I wanted to use for mapping my project. I did quite a bit of research on different sites that rated the programs, and talked with other researchers. I was steered toward Gelphi, Polinode, and Pajek, but after trying them, I found that Kumu was the best choice for me for several reasons. Primarily because I had already decided to use sumApp and the data sets are designed to export directly into Kumu without needing to do any data manipulations or edits. I chose to use the stakeholder template because I felt it would work best for mapping the people and organizations involved in the collaborative, and the relationships between. As connections are made the elements float around, finding their final position automatically. I was also impressed with the level of knowledge that can be gained about the relationships network while still preserving the level of privacy each individual participant desires.

Appendix D: Theoretical Coding Table

Table D. 1
Theoretical Coding Table
Key:
Red—Not present in literature, added while Memoing
Purple—Not Present in Interviews
Green—Top Themes

Theme Category	Theme	Sub- Theme
"Leadership"	**Action Oriented (37)**	Constructing and Deconstructing Boundaries Scanning (identifying resources) Acts on Opportunity (5) Act Independently (3) Agency (8) Encouraging People to take Initiative/Action (6) Clustering People Coordinating & Engaging (5) Initiating Activities Circulating Ideas and Practices (12) Communicating (10) Spark Plug (2) Boots on the Ground (15)
	Collaborative (22)	Fostering Collaboration (14) Network Guardianship (9)
	Connecting (40)	Stepping Forward (14) Weaving/Building (13)
	Cultivating (36)	Capacity (6) Engaging (5) Common Practice/Purpose (6) People/Signaling Programs/Projects (5) Bridging Divides (6) Supportive of Self-Organizing Nurturing Emergent Leadership (16) Spreading Vision & Values (7)
	Curating (21)	Supporting Network Wide Learning (7), Classes (2), Peer to Peer Learning (6), COP's (1) Building Collective Intelligence (4)
	Passion (15)	Faith/Religious (3) Heart (5) Personal (1)
	Relational (39)	Promoting a Shared Identity (3) Collect and Share Stories (7)

		Bridging New People into the Network (7) Bridging Divides (5) Giving people a sense of inclusion (1) Group Reflection and Learning (4)
	Supportive (38)	Provides Resources (9) Stabilizing (2) Expert Mentor (16) Setting up Communication Systems, Platforms, Spaces (4) Monitoring (1) Designing & Adapting (4) Helping People use Technology, Social Media (7) Restructuring Resources to Support the Network (7) Supporting Network Weavers (14)
	Intentional (19)	Engaging people to develop strategies and actions (7) Focus on opportunity, problem or issue (4) Inspiring/consciously (7)
	"Other" Leadership	Expert (4) Flexible (5) Ability to adjust quickly (6) Intelligent (6) Intuitive (1) Knowledgeable (7) Listener (1) Mediator (4) Nimble (4) Nurturing (2) Organized (1) Outspoken (2) Resourceful (9) Responsive (1) Risk Taker (2)
"Values/Beliefs"	Trust (11)	Reliability (1) Truth Confidence (2) Faith (1)
	Transparency (5)	Disclosure (1) Open Exchange (3) Honesty (5)
	Open (4)	Free Unrestricted Transparency (5)
	Respect (10)	Appreciative (5)

		High Regard Admiration (1) Honor Humility (3)
	Generosity (14)	Kind (5) Caring (9) Unselfish (1) Sharing (3) Giving (3)
	Other Values	Sense of Place (6) Friendship (1) Community (31) Peer learning (5) Quality (2)
"Power"	Shared Power (16)	Connecting /connector (4) Collaboration (3) Interdependence (2) Mutual Support (4) Non-Zero-Sum Relationships (2)
	Authority (14)	Traditional Authority (3) Government (2) Reward Coercive (1) Seeking Power (3)
	Economic Power (16)	Assets (4) Connections to Capital (6)
	Influence (30)	Expert/Information (4) Charisma (3) Personal Influence (7) Connection to Power (4)
	Potential Capacity to Change Systems (18)	Commitment/Dedication (9) Vision (4)

Interesting to note that Shared Power in the "Power" category includes Connecting & Collaborating which is also part of the "Leadership" category.