

# 11 Planning for Whom? Toward Culturally Inclusive Food Systems in Metro Vancouver

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## Introduction

Food system planning involves envisioning and implementing structures and processes that influence the food supply chain. Planning is embedded in formal governance structures, people's organizations, social movements, and the private sector, at multiple scales, including municipal, regional, national, and multinational levels. Food policy councils (FPCs), as regional organizations that aim to influence food system planning, began to emerge in North America and across the globe in the 1980s (McCullagh and Santo 2012). They seek to address citizen disempowerment in the food system (Lang 1999) and the absence of food and agriculture in municipal policy and planning (Pothukuchi and Kaufman 1999). They have the potential to contribute to strategic food system planning by building alliances between diverse stakeholders, conducting system-level research and consultation to address a broad range of concerns related to public health, social justice, and ecological integrity (McRae and Donahue 2013). Therefore, many FPCs aim to transform urban areas into sites of "food citizenship," where people can actively partake in shaping the food system (Lang 1999; Harper et al. 2009).

Many FPCs have been successful at bringing together diverse food system stakeholders (consumers, farmers, policymakers, scholars, food industry representatives), forming coalitions to increase the strength of alternative food initiatives (Levkoe and Wakefield 2014). However, many alternative food initiatives themselves, including FPCs, have been criticized for not effectively or equitably engaging members from diverse racial, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds (Horst 2017; McCullagh and Santo 2012). Research on

FPCs in North America has also identified shortcomings in advancing racial justice. For example, a study of three FPCs in the Mid-Atlantic found representation of underrepresented groups, including racialized groups, was not being achieved (Boden and Hoover 2018). In that study, group members felt that “the blinding effects of ideological homogeneity” within their mostly white groups made it difficult to put food justice into practice (Boden and Hoover 2018, 10). Similarly, research on food planning in Washington State identified that while the Puget Sound Regional Food Policy Council strives to enhance democratic participatory decision making in the food system, it “has not yet succeeded in attracting, engaging and retaining diverse members,” referring to both racial and geographic diversity (Horst 2017, 60). These examples point to the difficulty that many FPCs face in achieving their aim of equitably representing citizen-driven food system change.

On the other hand, some FPCs are taking explicit measures to achieve racial justice. For example, the Los Angeles Food Policy Council (LAFPC) website calls attention to what they call “food apartheid” in the city and uses municipal policy change to address environmental disparities in healthy food access for low-income communities and communities of color (LAFPC 2019). In another example, the Oakland Food Policy Council (OFPC) vision states, “We center racial equity in our radical approach to food justice” (OFPC 2019).

This chapter explores the significance of cultural inclusion in FPCs through the lens of critical race theory and a politics of difference (Young 1990). We examine the context of Metro Vancouver, a region characterized by multiple waves of immigration from Europe and Asia beginning in the late 1800s. Immigration continues to play a strong role in shaping the region, characterized as one of the most racially, culturally, and ethnically diverse regions in Canada. Given this context of immigration that unsettles binaries of white and other, we examine the politics of cultural inclusion in food systems to capture the ways in which racialized settlers are both implicated and marginalized within the context of settler colonialism. Through the politics of difference, Young calls attention to the oppressive consequences that ignoring difference has for individuals who do not fit into the “neutral standard” (Young 1990, 165) created by implicit dominant norms. In Canada, these norms are historically informed by British and French settler colonization and white cultural superiority (Thobani 2007). By making dominant norms explicit and promoting participation from differently

positioned individuals in group decision-making processes, Young (1990) suggests that governance can move toward processes that are more representative and produce more just outcomes.

Critical race theory provides a framework to analyze the influence of race, as a construct that is invented and reinvented by society to preserve power, on the outcomes of people who are racialized differently (Delgado, Stefancic, and Harris 2012). It makes explicit that “White, wealthy, and masculine epistemologies” have dominated Western history, shaped spatial relationships, and ignored or erased the history of marginalized groups (Slocum 2011, 304). The concept of race and processes of racialization have far-reaching impacts on individuals, cultural practices, and the food system (Slocum 2011). In order to plan for a more just food system, the experiences and expertise of individuals from minority groups must be acknowledged and considered.

In Canada, different processes of racialization inform the exclusion of Indigenous peoples and historical and current immigrants of Asian, African, and Latinx descent based on their otherness in relation to the “exalted” characteristics of those European settlers who “belong” to the colonial nation-state (Thobani 2007). Furthermore, the prominence of race-neutral discourse within multicultural policies has the potential to further the inequality faced by racialized groups by treating race as a social factor not warranting explicit attention (Li 2001). Examples of this exclusion in the Canadian food system include; the institutional exploitation of Indigenous people from their food sources and the repression of traditional food knowledge by the Canadian government (Coté 2016), which has contributed to the higher prevalence of food insecurity (Tarasuk, Mitchell, and Dachner 2016); historical exclusion of Chinese Canadian and other racialized farmers from land ownership (Lim 2015); the labor precariousness of migrant food workers today (Otero and Preibisch 2015); and the lack of support for visible minority communities in alternative food initiatives (Gibb and Wittman 2013).

### **Food Policy and Planning in Metro Vancouver**

Considering this framework, this chapter asks: How are leaders and members of FPCs in Metro Vancouver currently recognizing difference within their municipality and supporting participation of diverse racial, ethnic,

and cultural groups? Metro Vancouver is the third-largest metropolitan area in Canada, with over 2.4 million people. The region is the second most culturally and ethnically diverse area in Canada, with over one million people (48%) identifying as members of a visible minority group<sup>1</sup> (Statistics Canada 2016). It is also home to 23% of BC's Indigenous population, including 12 local First Nations (Metro Vancouver 2018). Metro Vancouver is distinct from urban settings in the United States, where food justice has been practiced and studied more extensively, because of the narrative and policy approach of "multiculturalism" in Canada (Bottez 2011) and the racial and socioeconomic diversity of immigrant groups, including recent waves of affluent Chinese and other East and South Asian immigrants (Statistics Canada 2016). In this context, immigrants' experience of racialization cannot be understood through black/white and correlated poor/affluent binaries that often frame understandings of who belongs in North America. These binaries do not adequately describe the experience of racialization for diverse racial and ethnic groups in Canada or the United States (Alcoff 2003). This chapter will consider the positionality of immigrants within racial dynamics in this region more broadly by investigating how culture, race, and ethnicity inform outcomes of inclusion in food policy.

This study utilized qualitative methods, including participant observation, interviews with key stakeholders, and document analysis, to understand processes and practices toward cultural inclusion in three Metro Vancouver FPCs. We attended FPC meetings and interviewed FPC members, municipal staff, and nonprofit organization staff and members. We also reviewed the language regarding cultural inclusion in municipal and FPC documents, including Food Strategies, Food Charters, Terms of Reference, Municipal Food Systems Assessments, and the FPC websites.

## Two Approaches to Cultural Inclusion

Our engagement with Metro Vancouver FPCs identified two broad approaches to cultural inclusion (color-blind and racial justice approaches) that were often employed by FPC members. A color-blind approach assumes that all people have equal opportunity and capacity to participate in FPCs. In utilizing this approach, some FPCs do not actively recognize implicit group bias or make special efforts to accommodate individual or group differences, or engage in governance processes that utilize specific strategies to

assess whether FPC discourses and practices are exclusionary. This approach can fail to acknowledge the influence that structural oppression may have in determining the likelihood that individuals within nondominant racial, cultural, and ethnic groups will participate in FPCs. By not being attentive to difference, this approach can perpetuate social inequality by reinforcing a white spatial imaginary of the local food system (Lipsitz 2011).

In contrast, a racial justice approach makes difference explicit by naming implicit group norms, identifying power relations, and making specific efforts to include individuals from diverse racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds to address structural oppressions in the food system (Slocum 2006). This approach acknowledges whiteness as a set of structural privileges that is reinforced culturally through politics and practice (Guthman 2008) and strives to incorporate new strategies to involve members of nondominant racial, cultural, and ethnic groups in decision making.

In the following sections, we provide a brief description of several FPCs in Metro Vancouver, outline their goals for cultural inclusion, and then identify their diverse approaches toward these goals. We find that documentation, meeting discussions, and participants' viewpoints do not fit neatly into color-blind or racial justice categories. In conclusion, we offer insights for those within the alternative food movement to consider as they strive for cultural inclusivity.

### **Vancouver Food Policy Council**

The Vancouver Food Policy Council (VFPC) is a 21-member civic agency whose members are city appointed and represent various sectors of the food system. The VFPC has five working groups that focus on specific food policy areas (food waste, development, children and youth, urban agriculture, and food justice). As an official civic agency, the VFPC submits an annual work plan and report of accomplishments to the city council, holds public meetings, and publishes meeting minutes online. The VFPC is rooted in a framework of environmental sustainability, guided by municipal goals outlined in the Greenest City Action Plan (City of Vancouver 2012). In 2016, the VFPC began to actively incorporate more of a sociocultural lens in its work, with leadership from the Food Justice Working Group (FJWG).

Cultural inclusion is implicated in the VFPC's Terms of Reference (VFPC n.d.), which states that its goal is to act as a "bridge between citizens and

civic officials” for topics regarding the food system. The Food Charter (City of Vancouver 2007) and Food Strategy (City of Vancouver 2013) identify as goals to celebrate the diverse food cultures in Vancouver, ensure that residents have access to culturally appropriate food, and enable participation in food system activities that reflect the city’s ethnocultural diversity. One example of a way that FPCs in general can further a color-blind approach can be found in the definition of what resources are important features of the local food system. In this instance, the Vancouver Food Strategy defines a list of food assets, or “resources, facilities, services, or spaces that are available to Vancouver residents and are used to support the local food system” (City of Vancouver 2013, 23). The list features elements associated with urban agriculture (community gardens, urban farms) and local food consumption (food networks, farmers markets, street food vendors) (City of Vancouver 2013, 24). Many of these spaces are very recent additions to the Vancouver food landscape, emerging from the environmental and sustainable food movements in the 1990s, and are primarily white spaces (Gibb and Wittman 2013; Seto 2011).

Some participants identified this list of spaces as symptomatic of a white spatial imaginary of Vancouver. One Chinese Canadian participant, for example, reflected on how the VFPC’s list of food assets includes “feel good” places in the landscape of the food system, such as community gardens, but not the places that are feeding people, such as the produce wholesale district. Another Chinese Canadian participant described the current list as “whitewashed” because the food places that are valued by other cultural groups are not included, providing an example of a café that is an important gathering space for elderly Chinese people in the Downtown Eastside but is excluded from the list. By overlooking cultural food assets, the VFPC employed a color-blind approach to formulating and implementing their vision for the food system.

Another color-blind approach expressed in policy and programming efforts was the prioritization of nutrition-based perspectives over cultural perspectives. Access to healthy and culturally appropriate food is a core goal of all FPCs in this study. Interviewees indicated, however, that the healthiness of food from a conventional nutritional science perspective often took precedence over cultural diets and food practices. For example, this white participant explained how she experiences the tension between healthy foods and cultural foods in her work as a dietitian: “Speaking about cultural

food is definitely on everybody's radar. So it has come out in terms of when nutritious food can overcome cultural foods, such as brown rice versus white rice. White rice is much more cultural, however, brown rice prevents high blood sugars, chronic disease, and heart disease.... And to be frank about this one, I'm on the [side] of choosing the brown rice because that's my nutrition space."

In this nutrition-forward standpoint, white rice is not considered healthy despite its being a staple in many food cultures. Without representation of other cultural ways of understanding and relating to food, the nutrition perspective based on a construct of "health" in food and the "neutral" rationality of a dominant version of science biased toward Western culture will continue to guide FPCs.

Of the FPCs in this study, the VFPC is most deeply embedded in a municipal governance structure. Participants identified an environment of color-blind professionalism that is reinforced by membership selection processes, attitudes toward community engagement, and meeting structure. One white participant described the leadership positions held by FPC members, which allow them to speak for their own and other communit(ies):

A lot of the reason why the council ... [is] diverse, or from different facets of the food system, is that a lot of us are on the pulse of what's happening in Vancouver, in BC, at the national level in the food system and food policy. Therefore, we're on the pulse of things that may not be affecting everyone but they may be affecting one particular cultural group in Vancouver. So I mean [a Chinese Canadian cultural leader] was very present but if they would not have been there ... to point out the loss of Chinese cultural heritage in [Downtown Vancouver] and the food assets there, I think one of us would have known and brought this to the table.

In this excerpt, this participant indicates that because the council is comprised of individuals with experience in many areas of the food system (production, distribution, retail, access, and waste), they are "on the pulse" of the food system and can speak on behalf of the communities that they represent (or aim to represent). Furthermore, this participant asserts that the presence of a Chinese Canadian cultural leader in the group was not essential to the FPC addressing the priorities of that cultural group.

Participants also used professionalism to redirect the work required to further a more culturally inclusive agenda to a subgroup of diversity experts and cultural community organizations. In this case, the VFPC delegated the responsibility of cultural inclusion to a group of members, the Food Justice

Working Group (FJWG), which is comprised of activists of different ethnocultural and racial backgrounds who pursue antioppression and antiracism interventions in their professional and personal lives. However, FJWG members recounted that advancement toward racial justice is constrained by a lack of shared understanding, interest, and action from the FPC as a whole. The following excerpts, the first two from FJWG members and the latter two from other VFPC members, reflect the divergent viewpoints on the action necessary to put cultural inclusion goals into practice:

[The first step is] being able to name that race and culture is not being addressed and that [race] has historically and continues to segregate and reinforce a Western base of food practice.—Chinese Canadian, male, FJWG

It gets back to ... what it means to be white and privileged and speak out about racism. ... And how do we work on inclusion together and start to pick up on some nuance? Like the things that I can say or do that my colleagues who come from communities of colour, who don't carry white privilege, or have been exhausted by saying over and over, can't? I think that's the next level where we recognize that power and privilege exists in our movement but for those of us that have power and privilege, what do we do with that?—White female, FJWG

You know, it would be great to have a cheat sheet for people for which [cultural inclusion] is not really [their] expertise. I'm well versed in the social aspect of food systems but that's not what I do on a day to day basis. It's not my background. This being said, I recognize the value in having a little simple cheat sheet like, "Here are five ways you can think about [inclusion] a bit more."—White female

I think that the failure is that we don't have enough resources to advance the diversity and inclusion and representation as best we can ... but if [cultural inclusion] had its own set of activities then we could really advance on diversity and inclusion through various community groups.—White male

In the first two excerpts, FJWG members assert that current members, who hold power and privilege within the movement, are responsible for being able to talk about race, understand how it operates within the food system, and critically engage in their work and learn how to use their power to be more culturally inclusive. In the second set of excerpts, FPC members acknowledge the importance of cultural inclusion but do not see themselves in a leadership role in the ongoing work required to advance that priority. In the third excerpt, the FPC member suggests that cultural inclusivity can be achieved through following guidelines in a simple template. This positions cultural inclusion as something that can be quickly taken care of through a "cheat sheet" rather than something that involves personal and

group reflexivity to recognize and unlearn oppressive tendencies and challenge power imbalances. In the fourth excerpt, the FPC member reflects on how with more resources they could advance diversity and inclusion by using cultural community groups to do their inclusion activities. In this way, both latter participants are outsourcing the work of cultural inclusion.

A standard meeting format is one of the structures that facilitates the partitioning of responsibility among FPC members. Subgroups are allocated most of the meeting time to summarize their project progress and report on the following steps. As a result, some participants felt that there was inadequate time for the FJWG to engage the rest of the group in nuanced conversations about privilege and develop a shared sense of responsibility in cultural inclusion work.

Despite the divergent approaches to cultural inclusion held by group members, the VFPC has made strides to offset color-blind professionalism within the council and challenge power hierarchies through racial justice approaches. For example, members referred to efforts to build relationships with and recognize the food system work of organizations led by visible minority community members, such as sponsoring an event organized by Indigenous leaders to protect wild salmon habitat in British Columbia, endorsing the work of the Hua Foundation on the loss of cultural food assets in Chinatown (see Ho and Chen 2017), and supporting a study of the cultural food retail environment in the city of Vancouver (see But and Bencio 2017).

In summary, within this food policy space, some members are actively working toward cultural inclusion with racial justice approaches, while other members simultaneously employ color-blind perspectives. These color-blind perspectives have been shown to deflect conversations that may address power relations and contribute to an internal tension between color-blindness and racial justice.

### **Richmond Food Security Action Team**

Richmond is the most ethnically diverse municipality in this study, with 76% of the population identifying as a visible minority from over 150 ethnic origins (Statistics Canada 2016). The first FPC formed in 2002, when the Richmond Poverty Response Committee created the Richmond Food Security Action Team (RFSAT), a group of representatives from local

government, the health authority, and nonprofit organizations, chaired by the Richmond Food Security Society (RFSS).

The RFSAT's 2014 Terms of Reference contain multiple goals for representation, such as "to collaborate with community partners and individuals," "to provide shared leadership...with community members," and to "foster relationships between diverse stakeholders." The Richmond Food Charter (2016) development process (2014–2016), which was spearheaded by RFSAT members, made specific efforts to include cultural groups beyond those who were already involved (e.g., foodies, environmentalists, and food philanthropists/charitable food agencies or health agencies). Leaders described their motivation to develop a Food Charter as a starting point to involve a greater diversity of voices in food system planning. An FPC member describes the effort: "We ended up doing 26 different focus groups...and we tried to get engagement in terms of a wide variety of people from the community. So I remember doing groups with Chinese people, South Asian people, with Somali people. ... [Our city] is just a very diverse community."

This engagement strategy offered an opportunity for cultural groups to provide input on a local food policy document. However, RFSAT members also discussed limitations of this engagement, including the inability of focus group participants to inform agenda setting or provide feedback.

RFSAT disbanded in 2016, and since that time the main voice for food policy work in Richmond has been expressed through Richmond Food Security Society and has primarily involved advocacy for community gardens and farmland protection. At the time of this study, RFSS was in conversation with the city of Richmond, Vancouver Coastal Health, and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to form a municipal advisory committee for food security issues. This shifting governance structure of Richmond's local food policy efforts is not uncommon for FPCs and is an example of the ongoing, and sometimes uneven or sporadic, relationship building that occurs between grassroots leadership and grant or government support.

Since RFSAT disbanded, cultural community engagement in food policy and programming has been less explicit. While RFSS's organizational goals are to "identify and understand the diverse audiences that we serve and adapt our programs to reflect these demographics" (RFSS 2017), interviews indicated a color-blind approach to cultural inclusion work in their programming efforts. For example, one white RFSS staff member explained,

None of our programs are exclusive, they are open to everybody. We don't even ask what people's nationality is, or their gender, we don't really care. We want everyone who is interested in our work to be involved. ... We just haven't had capacity to be that targeted in our program offerings and I am not sure it would be the right approach for us. We certainly will make every effort to not exclude anybody for financial reasons, for cultural reasons.

This participant aims to include everyone through a color-blind approach that assumes equality of access and that communications and outreach will reach the diverse populations within the municipality. This participant dismisses a targeted approach both because of a lack of capacity and because they are not convinced it would make a difference.

Another white former RFSAT member felt that measuring cultural inclusion by asking participants about their race, culture, or ethnicity was inappropriate from a privacy standpoint. This participant was not in favor of tracking the ethnic background of participants because questions of identity are "sensitive" and could be "very problematic." They attributed this to not wanting to threaten participant comfort by asking questions of identity and to legal privacy concerns with the organization storing sensitive personal information. While these data storage concerns are relevant, this participant's insistence on not measuring inclusion may inhibit policy and programming analysis aimed at achieving culturally inclusive outcomes that would benefit from such data.

According to participants, changes in leadership capacity and a lack of explicit efforts to maintain relationships with these cultural community members because of color-blind ideologies mean a racial justice approach has not been sustained. As one white female city planner and former RFSAT member explained, food security and diversity work often relies on unpaid labor and gets put off to the side:

Because our work in food security is ad hoc, or off to the side a little bit, it's the same in relation to diversity. So it's not to say that we aren't doing anything but what we end up doing might be just, sort of ad hoc and off the side of our desk.

Because the core group of food system planning leaders in Richmond were white professionals, it seemed easier for them to put cultural inclusion "off to the side" and continue their work. This speaks to the importance of capacity, knowledge, and representation of policy leaders to challenge white spatial imaginaries within food system work.

### North Shore Table Matters

Table Matters is a network of North Shore residents guided by a 14-member steering committee that includes representatives from three municipalities, the school district, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and other community members. The Table Matters network “supports food policy and community development projects that build sustainable food systems and make healthy food accessible for everyone living on the North Shore” (Table Matters n.d.). Their work is guided by the North Shore Food Charter (Table Matters 2013) and coordinated by a paid staff person. Their work reflects an environmental emphasis; for example, coordinating a carbon footprint diet challenge and food waste reduction challenge. Table Matters advocates for and develops food security policy and supports community members who wish to present local food system issues to the city council.

The three municipalities represented by North Shore Table Matters—West Vancouver, district of North Vancouver, and city of North Vancouver—are located on the unceded territory of three First Nations (Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh). The Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh reserves are located in multiple places across the community. There is also a high level of ethnocultural diversity within the region: 36.2% of community residents are recent immigrants, including Filipino, Indian, and Chinese (Statistics Canada 2016). North Shore Table Matters’s guiding principles, outlined by the North Shore Community Food Charter, refer to the importance of cultural inclusion in regard to a celebration of diversity: “Food Culture & Education: Our community becomes proficient in food literacy and celebrates all food cultures.” A white female member described the Food Charter development process as “grassroots” and “very low-barrier” (e.g., in the evenings, free food) but went on to reflect on the cultural inclusion of the process: “I am trying to think about cultural diversity... You know I think I don’t think that there’s been a lot of direct outreach to specific communities beyond the First Nations.” This member recognized the contradiction between the group’s goal to “celebrate all food cultures” and their historical failure to include cultural groups and was keen to be more inclusive moving forward: “I think that what we need to do first is go and talk to [people from various cultural groups] and be like, ‘What does [the food system] mean to you? What would you like us to be for you?’”

Table Matters members also discussed past efforts that the group has made to support and consult with organizations that work more directly with immigrants and First Nations. During one meeting, the group discussed organizing a reconciliation workshop for the steering committee and a desire to have First Nations members represented on the FPC.

However, there was also tension between a desire by some members to “efficiently move ahead” on group objectives and established timelines and taking the time to build relationships with cultural and Indigenous groups. In this example, a white female member reflects on how the ideal timeline for creating a Food Action Plan conflicted with the amount of time it takes to build relationships with a local First Nations community:

In speaking with one of the people who I am in contact with at the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, she has talked to me about how much time this is going to take and she’s really trying to facilitate the connections with the right people. And I said to her, you know, this is going to be really challenging because this [action plan development] process isn’t going to slow down. It’s going to keep on going.

This tension between continuing to move ahead on objectives with current core supporters and pausing to transition processes and adjust timelines to be more inclusive of cultural groups demonstrates how conflicting group priorities can impact outcomes of inclusion.

Members of this FPC recognized that their past efforts haven’t been very culturally inclusive, and they expressed interest in change. At the time of this study, their cultural inclusion efforts focused on engagement with members of the three First Nations within the region. Members expressed a desire to recognize settler colonial positionalities in an effort to meaningfully incorporate First Nations perspectives into FPC work. These efforts to listen to traditional knowledge holders indicate an initial application of racial justice approaches in their work. As members build competence through this reflexive work, they may begin to prioritize relationships over timelines and understand the context for cultural inclusion in their community as more expansive than the current First Nations/settler binary in order to answer the question posed by the member earlier, “What would you like us to be for you?,” in a way that considers other racialized immigrant groups within their community as well.

## Conclusion

This project assessed how FPCs in Metro Vancouver put cultural inclusivity goals into practice by identifying two approaches operating simultaneously within these organizations: a color-blind approach and a racial justice approach. We suggest that color-blind approaches limit FPCs' ability to achieve cultural inclusivity by defining the food system through a dominant white perspective (e.g., food assets and nutritious food), claiming to be inclusive of "everyone" while reinforcing this perspective. The approach is categorized by minimal efforts to include structurally marginalized groups and conducting processes in spaces and formats that privilege professional (read: primarily white) voices. The color-blind approach paradoxically contributes to the maintenance of a white/other binary and a racial imaginary that cannot be separated from the category of "immigrant." In contrast, racial justice approaches, recognizing difference, sought to develop alliances among FPC members, develop social learning, and challenge unequal power relations to reciprocally engage with cultural groups.

Many FPC members were quick to refer to time, resource, personal, and structural constraints that kept them from achieving their group's goals for cultural inclusion. However, this research has shown that FPCs cannot achieve cultural inclusion simply by overcoming these barriers. In this context, members who are forging a path toward cultural inclusion through racial justice approaches must be persistent and resilient to challenge norms of exclusivity and demonstrate the importance of considering member positionality, valuing cultural difference, and moving toward representation that is more equal. In order for cultural diversity to shift from being "off to the side" to being central to FPC work, cultural community members need to be valued as creators and contributors, not just receivers, of food system change efforts.

Members of FPCs focusing on racial justice approaches in Metro Vancouver suggest that to achieve a more socially just food system, current FPC members must be open to acknowledging what they do not know, learning from and alongside members of cultural communities, and restructuring FPC processes to be more inclusive. Conversations with FPC members resulted in the identification of several principles for FPCs to advance culturally inclusive outcomes:

- Transparency
  - Outline cultural inclusion goals, including how to achieve and assess.
  - Make modes of participation (formal membership) and decision making public.
- Reflexivity
  - Understand how positionality shapes priorities (Lyson 2014).
  - Actively attend to the roles of race, power, and structural oppression and their relation with cultural inclusion (Slocum and Cadieux 2015).
- Social/Emotional Practice
  - Embed a compassionate, healing-centered approach to planning practice (Lyles, White, and Lavelle 2017).
  - Engage with dissent, ensuring counternarratives and alternative viewpoints are recognized and included (Clark et al. 2017).
- Accessibility
  - Acknowledge and cultivate different institutional arenas as nodes of a broader food policy network.
  - Actively seek out and build relationships with cultural knowledge holders, leaders, and issues.

Our study has highlighted areas where food justice practice is both supported and hindered by FPCs' approaches to inclusivity. We echo calls by others (Cadieux and Slocum 2017) for those advancing food justice, including FPCs, to be explicit about how their practices constitute racial justice and social change for equity. Further participatory and action research is needed to identify emergent and iterative approaches employed by FPCs to achieve visions of inclusivity and racial justice.

The achievement of equitable and sustainable food systems necessitates the participation of racial, cultural, and ethnic minority groups to challenge the dominance of white spatial imaginaries. In a culturally pluralistic society such as Canada, approaches to participation must pay attention to difference, including the unique rights of and the injustices faced by racial, cultural, and ethnic minority groups, in order to accommodate the range of voices that have a stake in food system change.

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## Note

1. Visible minority is the term that has been employed by the government of Canada to refer to “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour” and includes Chinese, South Asian, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Southeast Asian, Arab, West Asian, Japanese, Korean, other visible minorities and multiple visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2015). It includes some people with mixed European and non-European origin. Notably, the term visible minority does not include Aboriginal groups. This term has been critiqued for subtly implying race without actually naming it (Li, 2001).

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