Lead Agencies of US Food Policy Councils

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Adria Arko

Masters of Public Policy Candidate

California Polytechnic State University

San Luis Obispo, California

Abstract:

Over the last thirty years, food policy councils (FPCs) have emerged at an increasing rate across the United States in response to a lack in collaboration between different food system sectors and the various government agencies with partial oversight. FPCs serve as a forum for food system issues, cultivate collaboration between various food system sector, to evaluate and influence policy, and to support or initiate programs in their communities. The majority of these councils rely on at least lead organization for various forms of support. This research proposed to study (1) what organizations are serving as lead agencies, (2) the relationships between FPCs and these leading agencies, including the resources or assistance they provide, (3) what the implications of the relationships are on issue prioritization and perceived effectiveness of the FPCs. This was the first study to specifically analyze the lead agencies. Lead agencies do not have much influence over council issue prioritization or perceived effectiveness, but do provide other methods of assistance. This study added to the existing research on food policy councils and establishes future areas of research.

Introduction:

> "Few other systems touch people's daily lives in such an intimate way and thereby provide such a strong motivation and opportunity for citizenship… Food, like no other commodity, allows for a political awakening… draws on and helps nurture authentic relationships… has the potential to generate active citizenship… [and] suggests both belonging and participating, at all levels of relationship."
>
> -Welsh and MacRae, 1998, pg. 240-241

The process of getting food from the farm to the consumer is a complicated network involving many industries and interests. Even on a small local scale, getting food from farms to consumers in our society often involves many different industries and resources. Together all these industries, including relevant government agencies, businesses, and non-profits, create a food system. The different sectors of the food system include production (plant and animal agriculture), processing (transformation and packaging), distribution (transporting, storing, marketing), consumption (purchasing, preparing, eating), and waste recovery (discarding, composting, gleaning) (Harper, Shattuck, Holt-Gimenez, Alkon, & Lambrick, 2009), not to mention the environmental, social, and economic issues associated with the above industries (Dahlberg, 1994).

Despite the food system's increasing complexity due to industrialization and globalization, there is no US governmental agency or department that evaluates or creates policies for the food system as a whole (Dahlberg, 1994). Policies and programs tend to focus attention to one sector in this network without considering the implications on other sectors, failing to address the connectivity between all sectors of the food system. Recognizing the absence of an appropriate governmental body overseeing food systems, food policy councils (FPCs) have developed to serve as a coalition and forum for food systems issues. In their design, food policy councils, at the local, regional, and state levels, should be an opportunity for members of the various food system sectors, to come together to discuss relevant issues, barriers and challenges caused by policies, and collaborate to develop more effective solutions. Food policy councils typically serve four functions; to serve as a forum for food system issues, to cultivate collaboration between various sectors of the food system, to evaluate and influence policy, and to support or initiate programs that address issues identified by the coalition (Harper, et al., 2009). As a unique coalition with diverse representation, they participate in the policy arena and serve as a resource for legislators.

Support and interest in food policy councils has grown since the 1980's, particularly in the last decade (Schiff, 2008). The first council was started in Knoxville in 1982 (Scherb, et al., 2012; Clancy, Hammer, & Lippoldt, 2007) and in the following decade, several food policy councils developed at local and regional levels across North America (Clancy, Hammer, & Lippoldt, 2007; Borron, 2003). As of 2013, there are over 196 FPCs in the United States, with a nine percent increase from 2012 to 2013 (Center for Livable Future, 2014). The growth of these councils is a reflection of the heightened

attention to food systems issues and the potential of FPCs to supporting more efficient and sustainable food system policies.

Research on food policy councils is lacking given their recent growth in number and activity across the United States (Scherb, et al., 2012). More research is needed to better understand how they participate in the policy arena, and if and how they can be more effective. One of the barriers in understanding their activities is due to the variances in structure and implementation processes. As FPCs are still fairly recent, especially their growth in popularity, many past studies have attempted to understand organizational structure and focus areas. These studies have largely been small case studies, interviewing only a select group of FPCs, based on location, size, or achievements.

Food policy councils can be formed through top-down management or bottom-up mobilization (Harper, et al., 2009; Scherb, et al., 2012), meaning they can start from legislation, executive orders, grassroots organizing, or by a non-profit organization (Harper, et al., 2009; Schiff, 2008). Food policy councils can be formed through one method, but housed in another system; a FPC created through grassroots organization may come to be adopted by local government (Harper, et al., 2009). Food policy council structures may differ, but most groups rely on at least one organization for support (Hahn, et al., 1991), although no research has specifically analyzed these relationships.

One area of research that will be essential in understanding the role that FPCs have in policy formation is to understand how they are impacted by the agencies that initiated or facilitated their formation. This research proposes to study (1) what organizations are serving as lead agencies, (2) the relationships between FPCs and these leading agencies, including the resources or assistance they provide, (3) what the implications of the

relationships are on issue prioritization and perceived effectiveness of the FPCs. As an increasing number of food policy councils are started across the country and their political activity grows, better understanding the relationships between these councils and their lead agencies will be valuable for evaluating their potential in the food system policy arena. This research will provide the necessary data to begin to formulate theories of how FPCs are influenced by host or initiating agencies, why and how these relationships develop, and the implications the influence has on a council's issue prioritization and their effectiveness.

Literature Review:

As noted by several researchers, studying coalitions is notoriously challenging due to their distinctive structures (Kegler, McLeroy, & Malek, 1998; Kegler, Rigler, & Honeycutt, 2010; Berkowitz, 2001; Chavis, 2001). Their uniqueness as a reflection of the individual communities they represent is both why they are so beneficial and difficult to capture (Kegler, Rigler, & Honeycutt, 2010). Much of the existing research, as you will see, on food policy councils and community coalitions are largely based on case studies. According to Kegler et al. (2010), case studies are a reasonable method for beginning to understand the various ways coalitions can operate and impact their communities. However, after decades of research, it is time to build upon the existing case study research and gather data on the entire FPC community, of which there have only been a few studies.

The literature review first explores food systems, around which food policy councils have formed. Then, an introduction to food policy councils and a brief history is

explained, followed by literature on issue prioritization and FPC factors influencing issue prioritization. The literature on community coalitions is then evaluated, which although largely based on health initiatives, are the most closely paralleled groups to food policy councils.

Food Systems:

Food system scholars have been calling for a common language to unify researchers, practitioners, community members, and social movements in food system work (Campell, 2004). Campbell (2004) used a stakeholder analysis based on previous literature to categorize the food system players, and identify their inter-organizational conflicts. She found that all stakeholders can be categorized into two major groups: conventional and alternative agriculture proponents, which both consist of several subgroups. Tensions exist within these groups and subgroups, with differing values, time frames, resources, interests and goals (Campell, 2004). The conventional food system includes corporations, consumers, and the emergency food movement, while stakeholders of the alternative food system include community food security advocates, the sustainable agriculture movement, the environmental justice movement, food citizens, and food system bridgers, or planners (Campell, 2004). Some of the main tensions that exist are globalization versus localization, urban and rural divisions, farm intensification, and market concentrations (Campell, 2004). These conflicts are driven by differing social, and environmental issues, and include numerous stakeholder groups, complex technical and scientific issues, and deeply set values (Campell, 2004). Food policy councils, although designed to include all food system sectors, are often considered part of the alternative

agriculture movement because they are evaluating and attempting to improve the status quo (Hassanein, 2003).

Members of the alternative food system are also sometimes referred to as the agro-food movement (Hassanein, 2003), which is a diverse grouping of interests, which attempt to create a food democracy through consensus building, and evolving discourse. Food democracy, as defined by Lang (2000), means that all members of a food system have equal and effective opportunities for gaining knowledge about and participating in shaping the system. It is a method for making choices when values and interests are in conflict (Lang, 2000), and according to Hassanein (2003) it serves as a valuable method for political practice, because participation is a crucial feature of democracy (Hassanein, 2003). Levkoe (2006) describes food democracy as "the idea of public decision-making and increased access and collected benefit from the food system as a whole (Levkoe, 2006, pg. 90)".

Although these diverse groups are collectively creating the same movement of increasing food democracy, they all have different priorities, and according to several researchers, there is no one unifying focus of the agro-food movement (Hassanein, 2003), although Levkoe (2006) would argue that a unifying characteristic is the desire to be seen as a citizen in the food system, rather than simply a consumer (Levkoe, 2006). The diversity of interests that this movement contains is one feature that defines it as a "new social movement," which is a theory that claims that these movements are distinguished from "old" social movements by the "struggle to create new social identifies, to open up democratic spaces for autonomous social action in civil society, and to reinterpret norms, and develop new institutions (Hassanein, 2003, p. 80)". Hassanein states that the agro-

food movement is dynamic, diverse, multidimensional, collaborating to create and implement different strategies, engage in various forms of action, and experience a variety of both obstacles and opportunities (Hassanein, 2003). The increasing attention to food democracy, through the agro-food movement, requires acknowledgement that there are points of resistance in the current food system (Hassanein, 2003; Hamilton, 2011), and food policy councils serve as a definitive example of an attempt to practice food democracy and create a more sustainable food system (Hassanein, 2003).

Food Policy Councils:

Food policy councils are a somewhat recent development in addressing food system issues and a method of encouraging food democracy. The first food policy council was started in Knoxville in 1982 (Thomas, 2013; Scherb, et al., 2012; Clancy, Hammer, & Lippoldt, 2007) and in the following decade, food policy councils developed across North America, including Onondaga County, NY, Charleston, SC, Philadelphia, PA, Hartford, CT and Toronto (Clancy, Hammer, & Lippoldt, 2007; Borron, 2003). The development of food policy councils has grown exponentially across the United States, from 50 in 2000 to 196 in 2013 (Scherb, et al., 2012; Thomas, 2013; Center for Livable Future, 2014). Fifteen percent of FPCs are statewide, 44 percent are regional or countywide, and 38 percent are locally focused (Sauer, 2012). A recent national study by Scherb et al. (2012), found that almost half of the FPCs surveyed had been in existence for three or fewer years. The growth of these councils is a reflection of the heightened attention to food systems issues and the potential usefulness of FPCs in supporting sustainable food system development (Clancy, Hammer, & Lippoldt, 2007; Hassanein, 2003).

Given the recent growth in FPCs, the lack of research is surprising and inevitably impacts our understanding of their role in the policy arena. Many of the past studies have focused on understanding FPC organizational structure and focal activity areas. These studies have largely been small case studies (e.g. Dahlberg, 1994; Boron, 2003; Schiff, 2008; Clancy, Hammer, & Lippoldt, 2007; DiLisio, 2011), interviewing just three or four groups per study. Dahlberg (1994) examined five FPCs for factors that influence successes, failures, and effectiveness, and found that financial support and staff is critical to the councils, as well as a diverse membership, and institutionalization. Boron (2003) wrote case studies on several food policy councils to evaluate the possibility of implementing a council in Lane County, Oregon. Clancy (2007), interviewed two state FPC leaders and six regional FPC leaders, to build upon Dahlberg's findings of successes and failures of FPCs, and found that funding, staff, diverse membership, and support from government were identified as key factors of successful FPCs. Schiff (2008) found, through a grounded theory approach with 13 FPCs, that they focused more on programs that policy, because of tensions and difficulties implementing policy. Harper et al., (2009) surveyed active members of 48 FPCs and found that they are most successful when building off of previously existing momentum in the community, when a need for change has already been identified by the community, and that "the strength of FPCs relies in their ability to be locally relevant (Harper, et al., 2009, pg. 6)". DiLisio et al. (2011) looked at the experiences of four food policy councils, to create an overview of their functions, relationships with their local planning departments, and perceived lessons learned; in their conclusion they state how the information in these case studies may not resonate will all FPCs. The most recent study, by Scherb et al (2012), was the first

national survey of FPCs across the United States, which collected data on the level of

engagement in policy work (Scherb, et al., 2012). Scherb et al. (2012) noted the lack of

existing research on FPCs and the need to increased evaluation of their processes,

activities, and community impacts.

Although the existing studies have created a foundation for further research, and

have helped educate people about FPCs, they have not contributed greatly to

understanding how FPCs function or how they prioritize their goals across multiple

contexts, either because the number of FPCs has increased so much since the study was

conducted, or because they cannot be extrapolated to all councils. Though the existing

literature is sparse, the factors influencing issue prioritization of FPCs were examined, as

well as what, if any, impact the lead agencies have, and other factors that might influence

prioritized issues or council efficacy.

Issue Prioritization:

Nelson (2011) noted that there has been insufficient attention paid to how interest

groups prioritize policy issues (where prioritization is the amount of attention and effort

given to a policy issue by an interest group). Although, Nelson focused mostly on

priorities for lobbying, he found that groups prioritized issues for several reasons: because

they perceived threats that might develop further without lobbying against them, they had

consensus in their advocacy community and these issues were important to their members,

the effect of outside events, they can only work on issues that they can gain traction on,

and to fit into a policy window (Nelson, 2011). Although not all food policy councils

participate in lobbying, or even in policy, these notions of impacts on prioritization can be applied to coalitions and FPCs.

In terms of priority setting specific to fund allocation, coalitions tend to give inadequate consideration to which decisions have the most potential (Barnett, n.d.; Kreuter, Lezin, & Young, 2000). Making these decisions can be difficult while balancing the desires of all members. As Kreuter et al. (2000) also notes, of high importance to the survival of coalitions, is that the mission of the group match that of the members (Kreuter, Lezin, & Young, 2000). Although narrow focus tends to be most effective for coalitions, because it is more likely that the group will yield results, and thus maintain a satisfied and interested membership base, too narrow of a focus can be problematic. These small goals are usually focused on a 'quick win' but can be essentially useless in achieving outcomes (Kreuter, Lezin, & Young, 2000).

Additionally, goal displacement can occur when a secondary goal replaces the coalitions primary objective (Alexander, 1976). This can be the result of a variety of factors, including group dominance, goal vagueness, challenges to leadership, and changes of external circumstances (Alexander, 1976). According to Alexander (1976), goal displacement results from two factors, the first of which is an initial organizational goal, while the other is the organization's structure, membership, and/or leaders. Goal setting by organizations should include consideration of available resources, approval and cooperation of the community or members (Alexander, 1976).

Surveys of FPCs have found that their main objectives are to advocate for policies that improve the food system, to develop programs to promote food system health, to create strategies that will widely effect the food system, to research and analyze the

existing food system, to communicate information about the food system to the community, and to cultivate partnerships within the food system sectors (DiLisio, 2011; Harper, et al., 2009). Within these approaches, food policy councils focus on influencing institutional purchasing policies, improving access to local and/or healthy food, promoting agriculture, and supporting community gardens (Scherb, et al., 2012). FPCs are mainly engaging local, institutional, and county level policies (Scherb, et al., 2012), and three fourths of FPCs work to educate the public on food policy issues (Scherb, et al., 2012).

Agenda-setting in Food Policy Councils:

There are a number of different influencing factors that effect goals of FPCs: the design or structure of the coalition (Harper, et al., 2009; DiLisio, 2011; Hassanein, 2003; Borron, 2003); relationships with the government (Harper, et al., 2009; Borron, 2003; Clancy, Hammer, & Lippoldt, 2007; Dahlberg, 1994; Milne, Iyer, & Gooding-Williams, 1996; Scherb, et al., 2012); membership and leadership (Borron, 2003; Harper, et al., 2009; Schiff, 2008; Scherb, et al., 2012); local context (rural or urban) and geographical scope (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999; Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000; Snavely & Tracy, 2000); and tools, barriers or resources (Harper, et al., 2009; Dahlberg, 1994; Clancy, Hammer, & Lippoldt, 2007). Although these previous studies have evaluated goals of FPCs, no research has looked at the FPCs issue prioritization process.

Formation:

Food policy councils can be formed through top-down management or bottom-up mobilization (Harper, et al., 2009; Cherny & Clark, 2009; Clancy, Hammer, & Lippoldt,

2007; Scherb, et al., 2012), meaning they can start from legislation, executive orders, grassroots organizing, or by a non-profit organization (Harper, et al., 2009; Schiff, 2008). Most FPCs are founded from non-profit organizations and grassroots networking on a local (over 50 percent) or regional (80 percent) scale, but most state level FPCs are founded by government action (over 60 percent), although about 10 percent are independent of the founding government agency (Harper, et al., 2009). For example, Connecticut, North Carolina and Utah state FPCs are housed in the state's Departments of Agriculture, whereas Michigan and New Mexico state FPCs are largely independent (Clancy, Hammer, & Lippoldt, 2007).

It is important to note that FPCs can be formed through one method, but housed in another system; an FPC can be created through a government action, but not be a government agency (Harper, et al., 2009). Although FPCs may not be housed under their initiating agency, most rely on at least one host or foster organization or department for support (DiLisio, 2011; Clancy, Hammer, & Lippoldt, 2007; Borron, 2003).

Structure:

Clancy states that councils can depend greatly on either a group or an individual (Clancy, Hammer, & Lippoldt, 2007), and that too much dependence, resulting in loss of entity, identity, or goals, can occur (Borron, 2003; Alexander, 1976; Clancy, Hammer, & Lippoldt, 2007). Clearly, the lack of understanding of the roles lead agencies play creates a need for further research of the effects that these individuals or organizations can have on FPCs, and their ability to influence how the counicl allocates their resources.

Food policy councils vary in size and structure. Their structure depends on where the council is housed: governmental agency, citizen advisory board to government, citizen advisory board, non-profit organization, or independent group (Harper, et al., 2009; Scherb, et al., 2012). Regional values, size and demographics of the community, and political context can be the largest elements of the council that the members must work with in context setting of an FPC (Dahlberg, 1994). All these factors, the membership and the lead agency, determine the structure of the FPC.

Food policy councils range in size (Borron, 2003; Harper, Shattuck, Holt-Gimenez, Alkon, & Lambrick, 2009) and leadership. While some groups are informal without hierarchy, others function as highly organized, with chairs, co-chairs, working groups, and bylaws (Borron, 2003; Harper, et al., 2009; Scherb, Palmer, Frattaroli, & Pollack, 2012; Schiff, 2008). The variability in council organization has made it difficult for studies to generalize the structure of FPCs, but provides an opportunity for investigation of which structures are most effective and why.
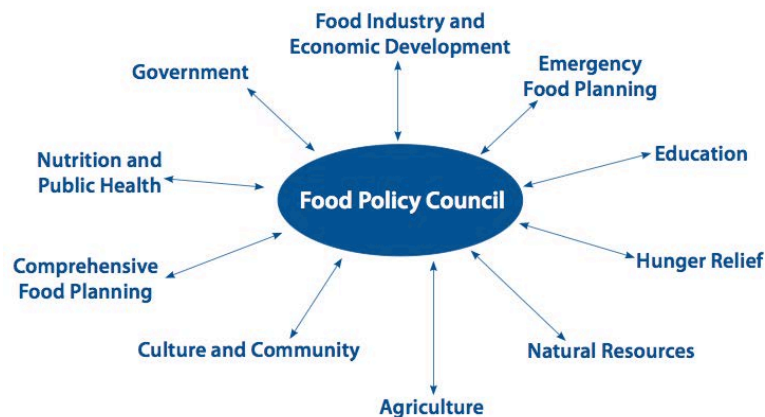
<u>Membership:</u>

FPCs provide a space and opportunity for education and collaboration between sectors that may otherwise not engage (Hassanein, 2003). As FPCs are spaces created for coordination between food system sectors on important issues (Feenstra, 1997; Hassanein, 2003; Harper, et al., 2009; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006), FPC membership has a large impact on organizational goals.

FPCs can be divided into those that have government representation and those that do not. Government representation on coalitions does not reflect how the council was

formed or the relationship it has on local government (Harper, et al., 2009; Borron, 2003; Scherb, et al., 2012; Schiff, 2008). There is no consensus on whether government representation is better, only that maintaining a good relationship with the local government is beneficial (Clancy, Hammer, & Lippoldt, 2007; Borron, 2003; DiLisio, 2011; Milne, Iyer, & Gooding-Williams, 1996; Snavely & Tracy, 2000; Harper, et al., 2009). Government representation can provide useful resources and help to establish a good working relationship with the local government (Harper, et al., 2009; Borron, 2003; Clancy, Hammer, & Lippoldt, 2007), but can also hamper the council's ability to work on or advocate for policies because of government affiliation (Scherb, et al., 2012; Snavely & Tracy, 2000; Milne, Iyer, & Gooding-Williams, 1996).

The same can be said for representation from a strong organization, as it can be difficult to clarify when the council is being represented, or an individual or organization with overlapping opinions (Clancy, Hammer, & Lippoldt, 2007). Although some of the smaller case studies have evaluated benefits or issues associated with governmental representation, a gap in the literature remains as to the effects that the host or initiating agency of FPCs has on their issue prioritization.

Fig. 1: Food policy council food system representation (Lane County Food Policy Council, 2013).

In general, more diverse representation seems to be preferred for FPCs (Borron, 2003; Hassanein, 2003; Hahn, et al., 1991), but others found diversity in membership can cause challenges like competition (Holyhoke, 2009), and complication of interests and therefore goals (Dahlberg, 1994; Scherb, et al., 2012). Coalition membership can also be a strategy of achieving goals by increasing or decreasing membership, thus, increasing or decreasing food system representation diversity (Hahn, et al., 1991; DiLisio, 2011; Milne, Iyer, & Gooding-Williams, 1996; Nownes & Neeley, 1996).

A group's membership process can be either formal or informal; members can be nominated, appointed, selected through an application process, informally chosen through a self-selection process, or open to all (DiLisio, 2011). Through many of these formal processes, membership is limited, which could restrict membership diversity and thus, representations of the food system.

Contextual Factors:

Far less research has been done comparing organizations goals in urban or rural settings. Pothukuchi and Kaufman, both scholars of regional planning, have studied the lack of food systems considerations in urban planning. There has been a compartmentalization of rural and urban issues, and food policy councils are opportunities to call for further study and action (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999; Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000; Dahlberg, 1994; Harper, et al., 2009). Food policy councils are an external group that will be able to fill the void of food systems planning until the government creates agencies to do so (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999; Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000). In the most recent national survey of food policy councils, it seems that

there is a delineation in issue priorities of urban and rural councils, where urban councils focus more of urban agriculture, and rural organizations tend to focus on farm conservation and preservation (Scherb, et al., 2012), although there are a number of issues that both give attention to (Scherb, et al., 2012; Harper, et al., 2009). Whether an organization is rural or urban does not reflect the type of leadership they have (Snavely & Tracy, 2000).

Community Coalitions:

Community coalitions, which are a type of coalition in the family of community-based cooperative activities (Berkowitz, 2001), are defined as a group of representatives of diverse organizations within a community who agree to work together in achieving a common goal, and have become popular for groups working to improve communities at the local level (Zakocs & Edwards, 2006; Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002; Berkowitz, 2001). Butterfoss, Goodman, and Wandersman (1993) define these community coalitions as interorganizational, cooperative, and synergistic working alliances. They emphasize (a) representation of various community groups, (b) attention to multiple issues in the community, (c) local citizen participation, and (d) bottom-up decision making (Berkowitz, 2001). Berkowitz (2001) states that community coalitions differ from other types of community groups because through their grassroots functioning, they show concern (implicitly or explicitly) with diversity, social justice, and personal empowerment (Berkowitz, 2001; Chavis, 2001).

Community coalitions encourage collaboration between stakeholder members to seek solutions for their community, which could not be achieved by a single group acting

alone (Zakocs & Edwards, 2006; Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002; Chavis, 2001; Hassanein, 2003). They are valuable tools for consensus building between diverse organizations to address community issues (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002; Chavis, 2001), and by involving representatives of the community these coalitions ensure that changes are community appropriate and culturally sensitive (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002). Another significant function of community coalitions is to enhance coordination of existing (Gray & Wood, 1991) services and activities of individual member organizations (Wells, Ward, Feinberg, & Alexander, 2008). Much like food policy councils, however, it has been noted by many scholars that there is a lack of research on community coalitions, and that most of the existing research have been small case studies, of just a single coalition (Berkowitz, 2001; Kegler, McLeroy, & Malek, 1998).

Formation:

      There are a number of theories as to how and why coalitions develop. Resource dependence theory assumes that collaborative coalitions form so that organizations can access more resources and reduce uncertainty in their actions (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002; Gray & Wood, 1991). Political science posits that it is for the negotiation of potential conflicts and power distribution that exist within coalitions (Gray & Wood, 1991). Butterfoss and Kegler (2002) state that coalitions form in response to an opportunity (funding or policy window), voluntarily to share resources, or to share networks (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002). Theories of community coalition developed from community development, which was a term designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for and by the whole community (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002). Regardless of how

they develop, coalitions often develop in the policy arena, involving a variety of stakeholders (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002).

Fig. 2: Community Coalition Action Theory. (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002)
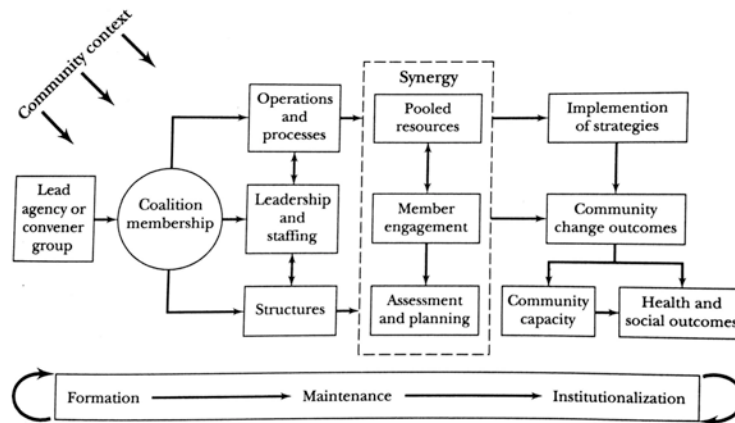
Butterfoss and Kegler (2002) developed the Community Coalition Action Theory (Fig. 2) to apply to coalitions that are multipurpose, long term and formal (Butterfoss, Goodman, & Wandersman, 1993). In the first stages, a lead agency or convener group develops the coalition by bringing together core organizations who recruit the initial membership groups. The coalition then develops leaders, and sometimes staff, who create operations and procedures, and coalition structure. Members pool resources and information, actively engage in the coalition, and assess the issues, before implementing their strategies to effect community change. This process of formation, maintenance, and institutionalization repeats itself as new members join the coalition with new information (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002; Kegler, Rigler, & Honeycutt, 2010). Many agree that effective coalitions will develop over a period of time (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002).

Leadership:

As stated by Community Coalition Action Theory, coalitions are often formed by a lead or convening agency (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002; Kegler, Rigler, & Honeycutt, 2010). This initiating organization has a vision for community mobilization around a specific area of concern. They often have the responsibility to host the first meetings, and recruit either all members or a core group of members (Kegler, Rigler, & Honeycutt, 2010; Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002). Additionally, they may provide space for the meetings, staff, a coalition leader, and financial support (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002). Often, these leaders organize the development of the coalition, its structure, and processes[1] that guides decision-making, communication, and conflict resolution (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002; Kegler, Rigler, & Honeycutt, 2010). Butterfoss and Kegler state that effective coalition leadership should come not from a single person, but from a group of committed leaders, which can take the form of a working group or steering committee that is responsible for guiding the direction of the group (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002).

In some cases, coalitions can be started by a researcher or community initiatives (Mansergh, et al., 1996), often through access to external funding, or a mandate (Berkowitz, 2001). According to past research, these coalitions are similar to those started by a lead agency in terms of coalition efficiency, efficacy, benefits, and collaboration, but tend to be more effective than lead agencies (Mansergh, et al., 1996).

Chavis (2001) identified a paradox within community coalitions in relation to the lead agency; the dependence-interdependence of the coalition is problematic in that the

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[1] Community coalition processes are communication, decision-making, conflict resolution, and generally, how business is conducted within the coalition (Kegler, Rigler, & Honeycutt, 2010). Community coalition structure is how the group is organized, including levels of leadership, formalization, and written operating procedures (Kegler, Rigler, & Honeycutt, 2010).

lead agency emphasizes the independence of the coalition, while the coalition is very dependent on the lead agency for resources, expectations, and regulations (Chavis, 2001). Chavis (2001) notes that often the structure of community coalitions is given a major institution oversight and power over the coalition members. Those that fund community coalitions often are expecting the participation of a diverse range of organizational representation, but a government agency or human service leader tends to dominate the coalition, either in number of representation, or power, or both (Chavis, 2001). This happens because they are expected to be more organized, knowledgeable, or connected within the sector, and can create a coalition where smaller groups do not have the same influence (Chavis, 2001). Another paradox exists between leadership and coalitions; community coalitions are viewed as a means to accomplish specific community goals, with diverse community representation; however, they also viewed as a method to achieve a specific goal that has been determined by the funder of the community coalition (Chavis, 2001).

Membership:

Just as there are varying theories for the establishment of community coalitions, previous theories have identified three motivations for why individual members join coalitions (Wells, et al., 2008; Clark & Wilson, 1961; Knoke, 1990). The first motivation is interpersonal, including a developed sense of group identification, establishing status within the coalition (Clark & Wilson, 1961), and enjoyment of participation through leadership and organization (Perlman, 1976). The second type of membership is instrumental, which relates to the benefits members achieve only through participation

within the coalition (Knoke, 1990; Wells, et al., 2008); these benefits could be monetary (Clark & Wilson, 1961; Wells, et al., 2008), access to better information (Pretsby, et al., 1990), and increased organization legitimacy (Pretsby, et al., 1990; Wells, et al., 2008). A third reason is normative goals, like increasing the well-being of the community which often relates to the mission of the coalition (Chinman & Wandersman, 1999; Wells, et al., 2008; Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002). There are a number of potential influences that leaders can utilize as incentives for membership participation, such as helping organizations or individuals make new contacts, helping agencies facilitate achievement of their goals through coalition activities, and demonstrating the impact on the community (Wells, et al., 2008).

According to Butterfoss and Kegler (2002), community coalition members join for the opportunity of involvement without sole responsibility, to develop community support, maximize the power of members through collective action, facilitate relationship building between member organizations, and build cohesiveness around an issue (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002). Additional theories suggest that coalitions form because the benefits outweigh the costs of joining; such as serving as an effective means to share knowledge, strategies, and ideas for implementing change (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002). There can also be costs that member organizations feel, such as loss of autonomy, loss of ability to control group decisions, increased conflicts in decision making, potential loss of resources, like time, status, and money, and delays in problem solving (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002). For these reasons, coalitions can be difficult to organize and operate due to the range of stakeholder values (Zakocs & Edwards, 2006) and costs associated with membership (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002). However, researchers and coalition members

agree that in order to accomplish goals and to be successful, coalitions should recruit new members at each stage, to increase the coalition's impact in the community (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002; Kreuter, Lezin, & Young, 2000; Kaye & Wolff, 1995; Butterfoss, et al., 1998).

In general, membership should be reflective of the community, which should include a variety of societal roles (Zakocs & Edwards, 2006), and should also be diverse in age range, ethnicity, and economic group (Foster-Fishman, et al., 2001), so that needs of the community are accurately represented. This encourages membership capacity, by increasing knowledge, skills, network structure, and access to resources (Foster-Fishman, et al., 2001). Also associated with effectiveness is membership inclusivity of the coalition, to foster a sense of power sharing (Foster-Fishman, et al., 2001). However, as Kreuter et al. (2000) notes, there is a difference between substantive representation (members are selected by and are accountable to different interests of a group) and descriptive representation (representatives mirror social or demographic groups, but are not accountable to those groups); coalitions often struggle to achieve the former (Kreuter, Lezin, & Young, 2000). Although in some instances coalitions have interested individuals as members, most of the members represent organizations (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002). A study by Kegler et al. (2010) found that when coalition members sought to expand their membership, they often invited individuals or representatives from existing relationships, and thus, often similar views. Additionally, community members that worked long hours or multiple jobs were not able to participate in coalitions, and people with lower education levels were less inclined to become coalition members (Kegler, Rigler, & Honeycutt, 2010).

Researchers have found that some paradoxes exist within community coalitions and their membership. One paradox is of mixed loyalties, where coalition members are asked to commit to both the coalition and their organizations (Chavis, 2001). Another is that of autonomy versus accountability, where coalition must have autonomy to take action independently, but also accountability at varying levels within the member groups (Chavis, 2001). A paradox also exists with unity versus diversity, where diverse represented interests are expected to act in unity, but coalition members do not share identical interests, although they can be compatible; differing self-interests and levels of power within the coalition can work against developing unity (Chavis, 2001). Additionally, scarce resources can cause a paradox, where members with limited time and resources are expected to commit to both the coalition and their organizations, and member organizations are often asked to contribute more than they receive. Community coalitions are often voluntary, but members are expected to contribute time and resources. Given that these are voluntary positions, groups tend to only spend 4-8 hours a month, and Chavis points out that little can be accomplished on that schedule (Chavis, 2001). As a result, coalitions tend to focus their time and resources on impactful activities without requiring too much from members (Chavis, 2001). All of these paradoxes impact the activities of coalition members and how they prioritize the issues they work on.

Contextual Factors:

Zakocs and Edwards (2006) found through a literature review of community coalition effectiveness, that issues such as membership recruitment, identification of leaders and lead agencies, resource generation, establishing coalition decision making procedures, building membership capacity, encouraging consensus, and establishing

mechanisms for institutionalizing coalitions, all impact a coalitions operations and their ability to be sustained (Zakocs & Edwards, 2006). Other aspects of the coalition, like group size, membership diversity, decision-making, and leadership, can greatly effect the operations of a community coalition (Zakocs & Edwards, 2006).

Many of the studies that review coalition effectiveness have been anecdotal, and as a result, there are few theories of coalition effectiveness (Zakocs & Edwards, 2006). Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson and Allen developed a framework that identifies the core competencies needed within a community coalition for success, based on past literature, which they call collaborative capacity (the conditions needed for a coalition to promote effective collaboration and create sustainable community changes (Foster-Fishman, et al., 2001)); their review showed that coalitions need collaborative capacity among members, within the member relationships, in the organizational structure, and their programs (Foster-Fishman, et al., 2001).

As stated before, coalitions are reflections of their community, both in their membership and collective goals (Kegler, Rigler, & Honeycutt, 2010). A research study examining the impact of contextual factors found that constructs of community coalition formation, like lead agency selection, staffing and leadership, coalition membership, process and structure, are impacted by history of collaboration, politics and history, norms and values, demographics and economic conditions, and geography of the community. Contextual factors with most impact were history of collaboration, geography, and demographics on membership, leadership and staffing (Kegler, Rigler, & Honeycutt, 2010).

Hypothesis:

As noted in the literature review, the research on both community coalitions and food policy councils is still relatively new and limited in the scope of their studies. Additionally, there has not been much research on coalition issue prioritization. The prior research on FPCs and community coalitions has been largely conducted through small case studies, which often represent just a small collection of groups and are not representative of the entire FPC community. Few large studies have been done on FPCs, and those that have, have not gone far beyond their structure and policy or programmatic activities. What we can identify, however, is the clear need for (1) more research on FPCs, and (2) understanding of the relationship and reliance on host and initiating agencies.

Based on the prior research of FPCs and community coalitions, my research hypothesis is that lead agencies of food policy councils provide resources and leadership, and thus, influence issue prioritization, and that councils that receive more assistance and resources from their lead agencies will perceived themselves to be more effective. Although it is not assumed that the influence over issue priorities is intentional, it is important to understand the basis of those relationships and bring awareness to any imbalance in the council that limits their scope of action or effectiveness, so that the food policy council truly is a representation of the communities food system and practices food democracy within its activities.

Research Methods:

This study, distributed online, was conducted using a mostly quantitative survey, with inclusion of open-ended questions to allow respondents the opportunity to elaborate

on their answers. As mentioned previously, prior research on FPCs has largely been conducted through small case study analysis. While there are benefits to that method of research, and it allows for insight into actions of select FPCs, a survey allowed for the collection data across the entire FPC community.

Data Collection:

Data was collected through an online survey (questions are included below this section). The survey asked respondents for:

- General council information
- Formation of council
- Host and Initiating agencies, their involvement and resources provided
- Council membership
- How membership is determined
- Issue priorities and the process for determining priorities
- How conflicts over priorities are resolved
- Their reflections on their local FPC effectiveness.

The online survey included both closed and open-ended questions. Due to the unique activities and structures of FPCs reflected by community concerns, it was important to allow respondents an opportunity to elaborate or clarify responses. Data was collected from questions that required selection of response that best described council, check all responses that apply to council, option to select "other" and provide a unique response, and open-ended questions. Two of the questions included on the survey ask for the type of agency (governmental, non-profit, business, other) that founded the coalition,

and that hosts the coalition. The survey then asked for the name of the organization. Instead of asking the respondents outright if there are paralleled values, missions, or goals of those agencies to determine if there is influence over the setting of issue priorities, the name of the agencies allowed for the researcher to evaluate the agency through research of mission and value statements on their websites. This protected the respondent from having to analyze if the lead agency has more power, and thus shielded the council from potential straining of relationships.

In addition to collection of data for evaluation of the research hypothesis, the information collected from this survey can be used to track the development of FPCs across the United States. The survey provides data on the number of active FPCs, their structure, membership, issue prioritization, and perceived effectiveness. Given that there have only been a few national surveys of FPCs in the last decade this research will allow for further tracking of their development and issue prioritization.

Variables:

FPC issue prioritization was measured by asking the respondents to rate the top three issues that their council focuses the most time and resources on, membership representation on the council by sector, how goals or issues are determined by the group, and if one group has more representation than the others, and if there has ever been a disagreement over issue priorities and how it was resolved. Additionally, participants were asked to rank, on a Likert scale of 5, their perceived effectiveness at reaching goals, making decisions that are reflective of the desires of all members of the FPC, and of the community. Data collected on the perceived effectiveness of prioritizing the best issues

for the community and coalition members allowed an added facet onto the matching of issue priorities with lead agencies. Without that data, a matched issue priority might appear to be a major influence by one of the leading agencies, when it has become a prioritized issues because the members felt it was needed by the community. Initiating and host agency data was collected by responses to questions about the lead agencies' current involvement with the council, the name of the agencies to determine their mission and goals, and the resources they provide.

Fig. 3: Data collected by survey

Survey-Data Collection			
General Information	**Lead Agencies (I.V.)**	**Issue Prioritization (D.V.)**	**Perceived Effectiveness (D.V.)**
•Council name •Location •Geographic scope •Year founded •Connection to government	•How council was initiated •Initiating agency involvement •If there is different host agency •Name of lead agencies •Assistance/resources provided by lead agencies •FPC funding source	•Top 3 issue priorities (ranked) •Process of establishing priorities •Membership determination process •Resolution of disagreement over issue priorities •Food system sectors represented •Sector with most representation	•Perceived effectivess at: •Reaching goals •Representing needs of community •Including all members in priority setting

Surveys from past FPC studies served as a basis for the questions developed for this study, although when no previous examples were available, questions were developed by the researched. All survey and interview questions were reviewed by two research advisors to ensure that there were no leading or loaded questions, or jargon. The California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo Human Subjects Committee approved the survey.

Subjects:

An online survey was sent via e-mail to all existing food policy councils in the United States, as listed on the Center for a Livable Future website, which created a directory of all North American FPCs in 2013. The survey was only sent to FPCs in the United States. Interestingly, two FPCs of which I know to exist were not included in this directory, so the accuracy is uncertain. However, this was the most recent and extensive list available. To maintain consistency within the study, the two councils were not invited to participate. The online survey, created using SurveyGizmo, was sent to 289 primary and secondary (when available) contacts listed for each council, representing 196 FPCs. A follow-up e-mail was sent ten days after the initial e-mail. The survey was available for 25 days.

Included in the cover letter of both the first and second e-mails was a request to send the survey on to other coalition members, with a preference of obtaining at least three responses from each FPC. Multiple respondents were desired from each coalition to allow for a variety of opinions and not only one reflection, which could potentially have be from a member from a lead agency. The names of respondents and councils were kept confidential, and the respondents were informed as such.

Given the time and financial resources available for this research, the quantitative survey approach was the most effective method to gather the most appropriate data; the basic information necessary to evaluate the types of FPCs, their lead agencies, the assistance they provide to the councils, and any implications of those relationships. There are, however, some limitations of the research design. The results of the survey were

largely unknown when it was designed, and the survey results may have provided data that was complicated to analyze. If that were the case, the feeling was that it would have just added to the understanding that FPCs are unique, and would assist in future research designs. Additionally, because the dispersion of the survey to all council members required action on the part of the contacts listed on the FPC directory, the anticipated response amounts may not have been reached.

Data Management Plan:

Data was collected through an online survey sent via email to the food policy council main contacts. In the cover letter, it will request that the respondent either forward the survey to other members of the council, or share other members' contact information with the researcher. According to the Center for a Livable Future list, there are 196 FPCs (Center for Livable Future, 2014). The response rate was expected to be between 70 and 117 FPCs (40 to 65 percent) and 120 to 250 survey responses[2]. Surveys included a consent letter, ensuring that their information will be kept confidential during and after the study.

Data was be coded by responses and key phrases and concepts. All respondents from individual FPCs were grouped using mode average responses. Data was analyzed by measures of central tendency and Chi-squared analysis using SPSS, as well as analysis of open comments.

During the period of data collection and analysis, data was kept secure electronically. Upon the completion of the study, the data will be kept secure in both

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[2] The most recent national survey of FPCs (Scherb, et al., 2012) received a response rate of 61 percent.

electronic and printed forms. Data from the survey and the interviews will not be shared with future researchers, as the consent letter for participants does not include that as a possibility.

Analysis:

Responses:

      As previously stated, the online survey was sent to a total of 289 food policy council contacts across the United States, representing 196 FPCs. A total of 172 responses were received. Partial responses were removed, resulting in a total of 131 complete individual responses representing 92 FPCs. The response rate was 47 percent for FPCs and 59.5 percent for total responses (including partial responses). These results fall within the expected response rate range of between 120 – 250 survey responses representing 70-117 FPCs.

Fig. 4: Number of Respondents:	
1	66
2	18
3+	8
Total FPCs	92

      Although it was requested that contacts shared the survey with council members, with a hope to receive at least three responses from each council, only twenty-six FPCs had multiple members respond to the survey. As seen in Figure 4, only eight of the councils had three or more respondents. The research plan was to create average FPC responses to create a dataset of FPC councils, not individual members. Given that only a small portion of the councils had the requested number of respondents, all FPCs with less than three responses were retained. Averages for the FPC responses were created using the mode average for each response. One significant result of this research was the inconsistency in responses from representatives of the same FPCs; this was noted as a

potential concern in the research methods. This created some difficulty in compiling average responses for FPCs, and in some cases, answers to questions had to be omitted from the averaged FPC response because of the inconsistency. This will be discussed in greater detail later. For the remainder of the results section, unless stated otherwise, the research results are those of the 92 councils with averaged FPC responses.

General Food Policy Council Information:

Of the 92 food policy councils, the largest percentage (35.2 percent, n=32) represented a county in geographic scope, and the minority represented an entire state (12.1 percent, n=11). Four of the FPC respondents selected 'other,' and then specified that they represented both a city and a county (n=2), a town (n=1), or that they were still in development and it was too early to state (n=1). Figure 5 compares the most recent geographic scope results with those of the latest FPC national survey by Scherb, et al.

Fig. 5: Compared Geographic Scope Results

		Scherb, et al. (2012)	Arko (2014)
Geographic Scope	City	32%	19.80%
	County	43%	35.20%
	Region	23%	28.60%
	State	18%	12.10%

Most of the food policy councils were established within the last five years (n=53), with the majority between three and five years old (n=39.) The oldest food policy council was started in 1982, and the most recent was established in 2014. When given the option to provide additional comments, 21 respondents representing 18 food policy councils mentioned that they were or felt very new. Figure 6 shows the years that FPCs formed.

Fig. 6: Year FPCs formed

Fig. 6: Year FPCs formed
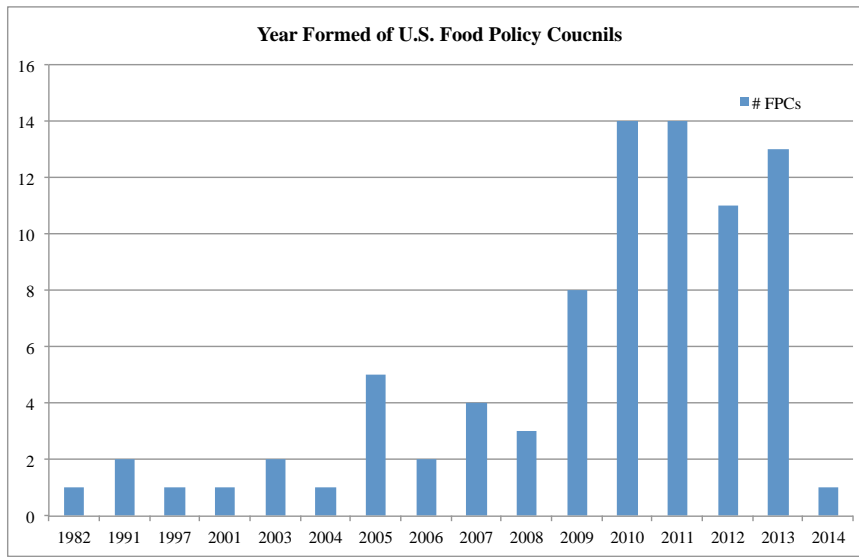
Types of Initiating Agencies:

The greatest percentage of food policy councils are initiated through non-profit organizations (n=32), followed by government programs (n=26), and then closely followed by grassroots efforts (n=24). Ten respondents chose 'other,' specifying a collaborative effort between two or all three methods. Nearly 86 percent of initiating agencies of food policy councils are still involved in the group (n=79), and initiating agencies of only 13 FPCs are no longer involved in the council.

Fig. 7: FPC initiating method and geographic scope

		Initiated through:		
		Government	Non-Profit	Grassroots
Geographic Scope of FPC	City	7 (38.9%)	4 (22.2%)	5 (27.8%)
	County	9 (28.1%)	12 (37.5%)	9 (28.1%)
	Region	3 (11.5%)	12 (46.2%)	7 (26.9%)
	State	6 (54.5%)	4 (36.4%)	1 (9.1%)

These results (Figure 7) show that FPCs representing a city are more often to be initiated through government programs, although by only a slightly higher amount. County and regional FPCs are more likely to be initiated by

non-profit agencies, and state FPCs are more likely to be initiated by government programs, which parallels the previous findings.

Respondents provided the name of the initiating agencies of their FPC. Independent online research of the organization's websites was conducted to identify agency type. As Figure 8 shows, the majority of the initiating agencies are non-profit organizations (59 percent), followed by government (35 percent), and then education (6 percent). The online research also conducted to identify key words and values through evaluation of mission and value statements; multiple key words were recorded for many organizations. It was found that the majority of initiating agencies focus on health (n=32), local food (n=24), and community (n=23), as seen in Figure 8.

Types of Host Agencies:

The majority of food policy councils do not have a host agency that is different than the organization that initiated the council's development. Thirty-one food policy councils (33.7 percent) reported that y have a different host agency, whereas fifty-nine FPCs (64.1 percent) do not. Two FPCs said they 'did not know.'

Unlike initiating agencies, there is nearly an even divide between type of host agency: 46 percent are government agencies and 48 percent are non-profit organizations. Two respondents with host agencies marked "other (representing 6 percent)," and specified that they were hosted by a church (n=1), or in transition between organizations (n=1). Through an online review of the 31 host organizations' mission and value statements, it was found that the highest number of organizations have focal areas of community (n=12), environment/sustainability (n=10), and health (n=8), with the least

number of organizations focused on farmland preservation (n=0), food access/hunger (n=1), consumers (n=1), and social services (n=1), as seen in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Issue Priorities of Lead Agencies
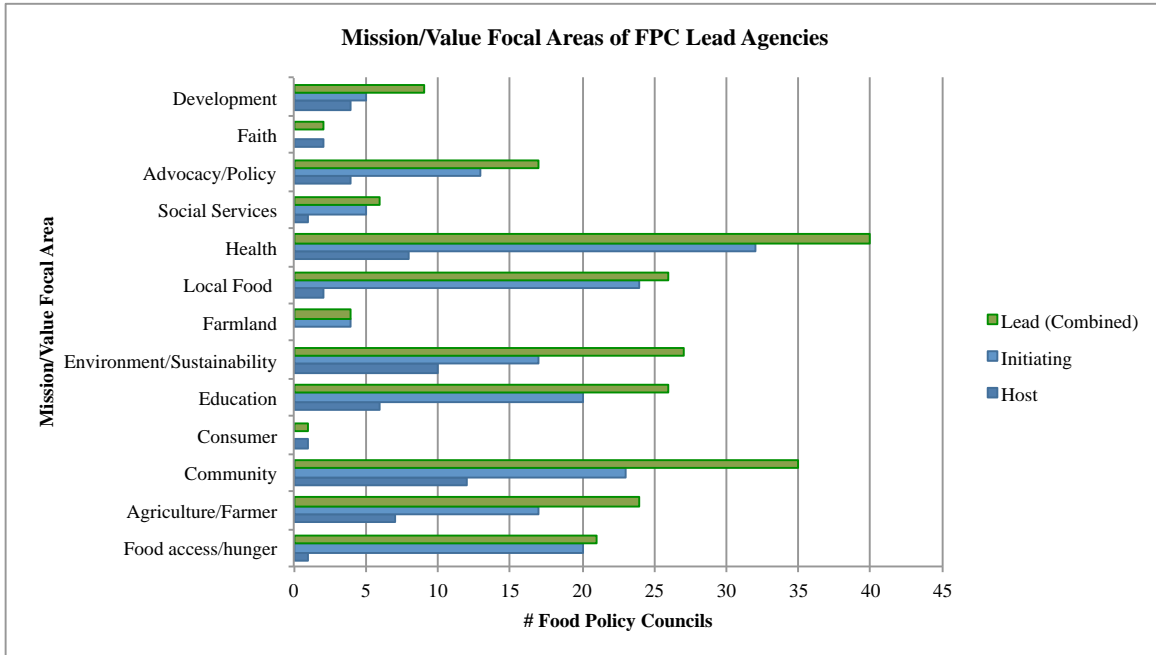
When the data of initiating and host agencies was combined, to represent lead agencies, we see that they are most likely to focus on health (n=40) and community (n=35), and least likely to be focused on consumers (n=1), be a faith-based organization (n=2), or focused on farmland preservation (n=4). Figure 8 shows this in more detail. These results are interesting because of the parallel structure of food policy councils to community coalitions, which, as discussed in the literature review, are largely focused on health initiatives. This research seems to suggest that the structure of community coalitions in combating community health issues is being replicated to focus on health related food issues within communities.

**Assistance Provided by Lead Agencies:**

Respondents were asked what forms of assistance were provided by lead agencies. Results show that initiating agencies assisted the most by facilitating meetings (58.5 percent, n=48), providing the meeting place/scheduling the meetings (51.8 percent, n=44), or providing guidance and/or support for development (48.1 percent, n=39). Initiating agencies are least likely to assist with setting the meeting agenda (26.2 percent, n=22), providing funding (27.7 percent, n=23), or acting as the coalition leader (27.9 percent, n=24) (Figure 9).   Respondents who marked "other" specified that their initiating agencies assist by hosting the website (n=2), informal and formal communications (n=3), providing office space (n=1), participating on steering committee (n=1) or as an appointed member (n=1), supervising AmeriCorps member (n=1), appoints members (n=1), fiscal sponsorship (n=1), and working to find a role for initiating agency (n=1).

Host agencies that are different than the initiating agencies of FPCs are most likely to be involved in the council by being a coalition member (54.8 percent, n=17), providing access to resources (51.6 percent, n=16), and providing staff (46.7 percent, n=14). These host agencies are least likely to provide guidance on council development (25 percent, n=8), set the agenda (28.1 percent, n=9), provide funding (28.1 percent, n=9), or take on a role as the coalition leader (28.1 percent, n=9), as shown in Figure 9. Respondents that marked "other" specified that their host agencies provide office space (n=2) or fiscal sponsorship (n=5).

Figure 9 shows the number of FPCs that reported receiving assistance types from initiating agencies, host agencies, and from one or both lead agencies. Based on these results, you can see that FPCs are most likely to receive assistance with provision of meeting places/scheduling meetings (60.9 percent, n=56), meeting facilitation (58.7

percent, n=54), or staff support (50 percent, n=46), and least likely to receive assistance with setting the meeting agenda (30.4 percent, n=28). The fact that these lead agencies are not taking on a leadership role reflects that these coalitions are functioning as independent groups, and not relying too heavily on other agencies for issues, agenda setting, or leadership.

Figure 9: Assistance Provided by Lead Agencies to FPCs
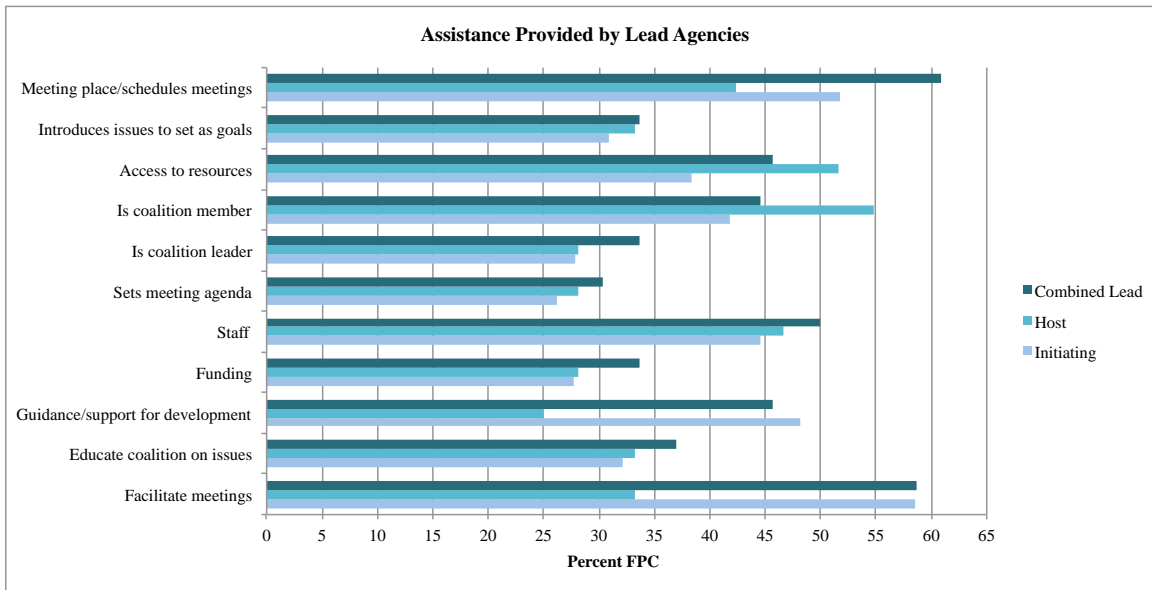
Funding:

One important resource for any group is access to funding. This research shows that over 68 percent of FPCs have a funding source (n=63), whether through financial support from lead agencies or procured independently; twenty-nine or 31.5 percent do not have any funding. As seen in Figure 10, nearly half of food policy councils receive funding through a grant (48.8 percent, n=39). The least amount of councils receives funding through multiple agencies (13 percent, n=12); based on the open-ended responses, this funding may come from council membership fees.

Councils with little or no funding are struggling, as one council member explained, "It is really hard to prioritize and take action with such limited funds…It's more often frustrating than rewarding." Another group specified in the comments that the council can only function on an ad hoc basis because of a lack of funding. Another respondent said, "As a grassroots coalition, without any financial support from a host organization or government agency, we are struggling to maintain energy and momentum of volunteers involved with the work."

Fig.10

Food Policy Council Funding Sources
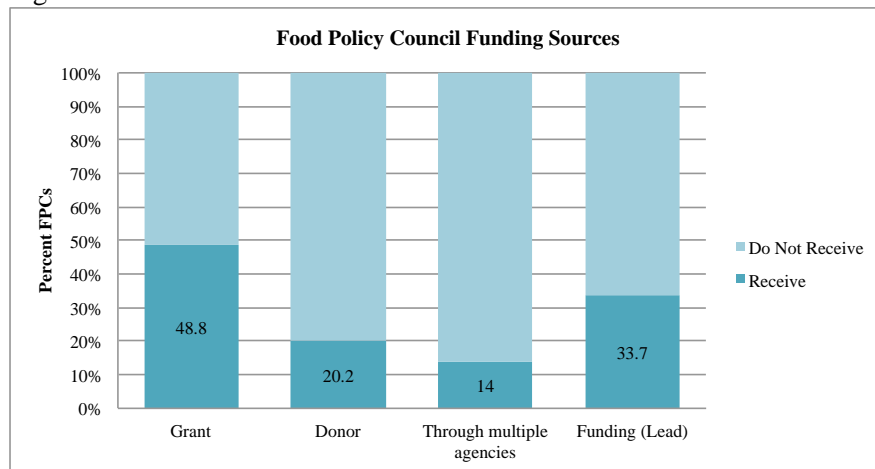
Independently Procured Resources:

Food policy councils were also asked to report resources they were able to procure independent of their lead agencies. As previously stated, councils are most likely to receiving funding through a grant (n=39), and least likely to hire an independent consultant for assistance (n=6) (Figure 11). Respondents that marked "other" specified that their county pays for costs, funding through membership fees, an AmeriCorps position, volunteer time, and that resources are project specific. One council specified that they receive one thousand dollars a year from the mayor's office.

Figure 11: Independently Procured Resources of Food Policy Councils
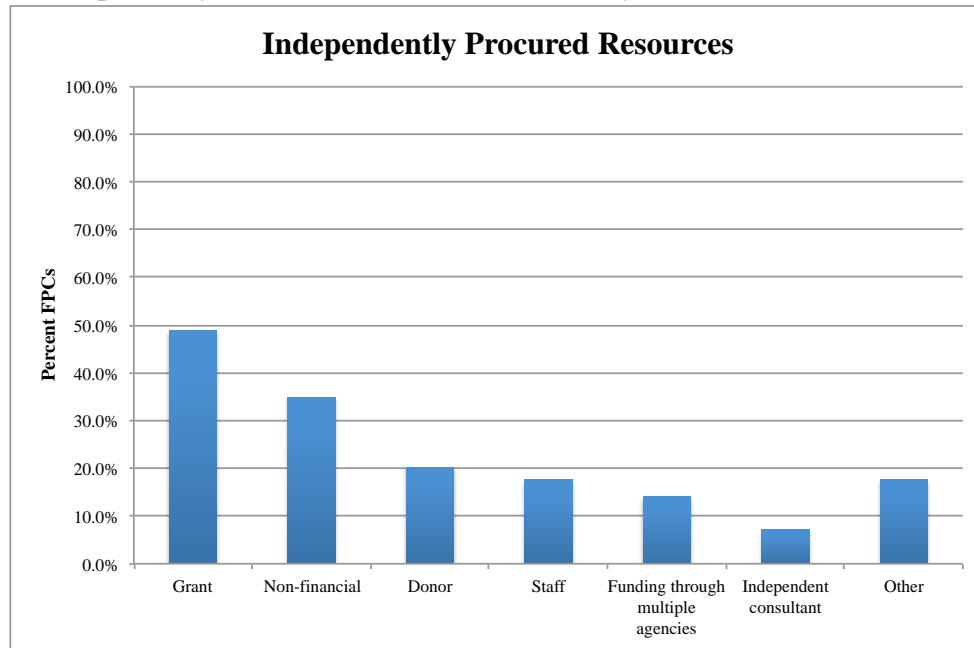
Membership:

Respondents were asked how the membership of their councils was determined. The highest percentage of FPCs has open membership structures (see Figure 12). Respondents that selected "other" specified that their council's membership was: dependent on parts of council (n=5), where any member of the community can join the council, but committee membership is determined through another process (n=3) members are screened or selected by lead agency director (n=2), membership is available for organizations working on key food issues (n=2), there is a fee based membership (n=1), or the council is still in development (n=2).

Fig. 12: Food Policy Council Membership Process
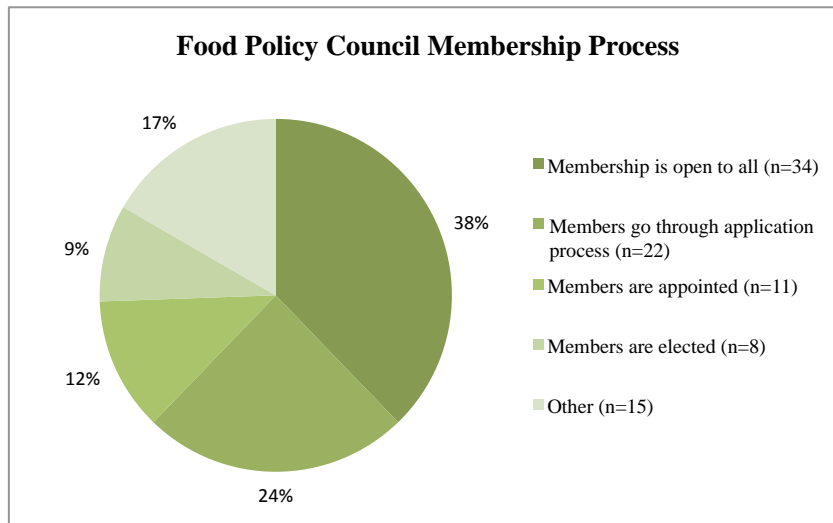
In looking at the five sectors of the food system (production plant and animal agriculture, processing (transformation and packaging), distribution (transporting, storing, marketing), consumption (purchasing, preparing, eating), and waste (discarding, composting, gleaning)), most groups have members representing the production sector (85.4 percent, n=76), and waste is the least likely sector to be represented (23.6 percent, n=21). It is important to note that 'consumer' is not at 100 percent, because technically, all members of the food policy council are consumers. The reason for this is a reflection of the variances in council structures; if a member is representing an organization rather than themselves, consumers will only be represented if an organization specifically focuses on consumer interest.

Fig. 13: Membership Representation on FPCs

Food Policy Council Membership Representation
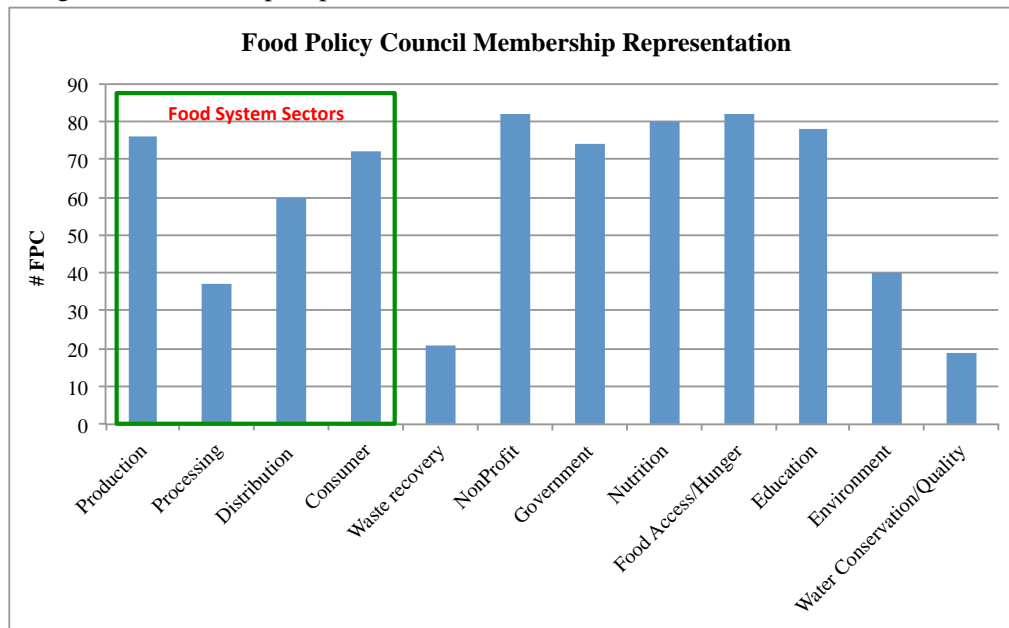
Additionally, food policy council members were asked about other groups that may be represented on their council. The majority of FPCs have representatives of non-profit organizations (88 percent, n=81) and food access/hunger groups (82.6 percent, n=76), while the least amount of FPCs include representatives from water conservation/quality groups (n=21). Figure 13 shows the group representation in more detail. Respondents that marked "other" specified public health (n=11), economic development (n=6), transportation (n=4), extension services (n=3), farmers' markets (n=3), land trusts (n=2), academia (n=2), school food service (n=1), air quality (n=1), chef (n=1), religious groups (n=1), social justice (n=1), tribes (n=1), emergency food providers (n=1), hospitality (n=1), soil health (n=1), students (n=1), retail (n=1), union organizing (n=1), urban planning (n=1), urban agriculture (n=1), smart development (n=1), social services (n=1), consumer protection (n=1), low-income (n=1). Although it is an assumption, I believe that other councils also include the above mentioned "other" categories, but did not list them because they felt they were included in one or more of the

five food system sectors, i.e., farmers' markets as part of the distribution food system

sector.

As Figure 14 shows, few FPCs have representatives from the five food system

sectors (13.79 percent). Between two and four food system sectors represented on their

councils, with only 12 of the 87 FPCs that answered this question having representation

from all five food system sectors, and five representing only one. One caveat is that only mode responses for councils were used to

Fig. 14: Number of Food System Sectors Represented on FPCs

		Number FPCs
Number of Food System Sectors	1	5
	2	26
	3	23
	4	21
	5	12

create the grouped FPC responses, and in some instances, only one respondent marked

certain sectors as represented, and thus, it is not reflected in the averaged response.

Additionally, it is very possible that many groups on the council represent multiple

sectors, but it was not reflected in the responses; for example a farmer that sells at a

farmers' market would be a producer and distributor.

There were not enough reponses to meet the minimum cell requirement of five to

run a Chi-Square test to analyze statistical significance between membership process and

the number of food system sectors represented. Figure 15 shows the breakdown of

membership process and representation on the council. As seen in the chart, there is no

relationship. Only slightly more councils with an open membership structures have greater

food system sector representation. Councils with elected members seem to have less

Fig. 15: Membership Process and Food System Sector Diversity

		Food System Sectors Represented		
		1-2	3	4-5
Membership Process	Open to all	12	7	15
	Members are elected	2	4	1
	Application Process	7	4	9
	Appointed	3	3	5

representation more frequently. Councils with an application process and appointed members both have slightly higher occurances of greater food system sector diversity. As noted in the review of literature, selective membership processes can lead to decreased membership diversity. However, the differences here are so minor that no conclusive relationship can be determined.

Fig. 16: Groups with More Representation

Is there one sector/group that has more representation than others?
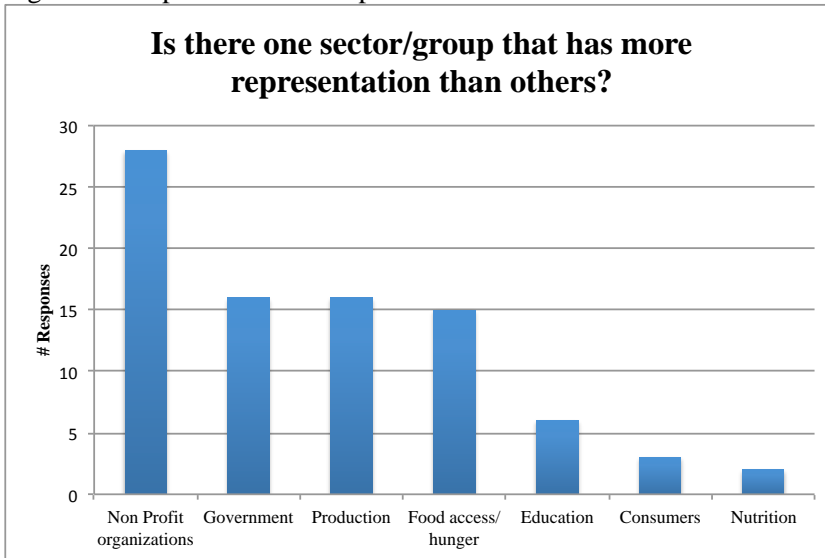
Councils were also asked if they felt that one group had more representation than any other on the council. Responses for this were varied, and the results for individual responses are reflected in Figure 16. Twenty-eight councils thought that non-profit organizations had the most representation on their local council. It is important to note that the non-profit agencies on the councils can represent a number of different sectors within the food system. A few groups selected 'other,' specifying activists (n=1), economic development (n=1), local food systems/production (n=1), and residents (n=1).

Interestingly, of the 28 councils that felt non-profit organizations had more representation than other groups, 19 were also initiated or hosted by a non-profit organization (67.8 percent). Nine of the 16 councils (56.25 percent) that said government had more representation had a government agency serving as a lead agency. This may

show that an impact on membership. No other relationships were found between councils with more representation and focus of lead agencies; for example, only two of the fifteen councils who felt food access/hunger issues were heavily represented in the membership had lead agencies that focused on food access or hunger issues.

Prioritized Issues of Food Policy Councils:

Food policy councils were asked to prioritize their council's top three issue priorities, based on the amount of time, energy, and resources spent on the issues. Interestingly, several of the councils' member responses did not match on how they ranked the priorities of the council. In that case, only issues that the council members agreed upon as priorities were reflected in the averaged responses. If one issue was ranked between two people, for example, as first priority and third priority, it was marked it as second priority.

Figure 17 shows the priorities ranked by first, second and third, and total FPCs that priorities the issue. Thirty-eight out of 74 FPCs have prioritized food access/hunger as the top priority of their council, which is more than half of all councils (51.35 percent). As the graph shows, no other issue is ranked as highly as food access/hunger. As a second top priority, hunger/access, community gardens and school gardens all have ten councils that marked the issue as a second priority. This is fairly similar to previous research; Scherb et al. (2012) found that FPCs frequently focus on institutional purchasing policies, improving access to local and/or healthy food, promoting agriculture, and community gardens (Scherb, Palmer, Frattaroli, & Pollack, 2012).

Fig.17: Issue Priorities of Food Policy Councils
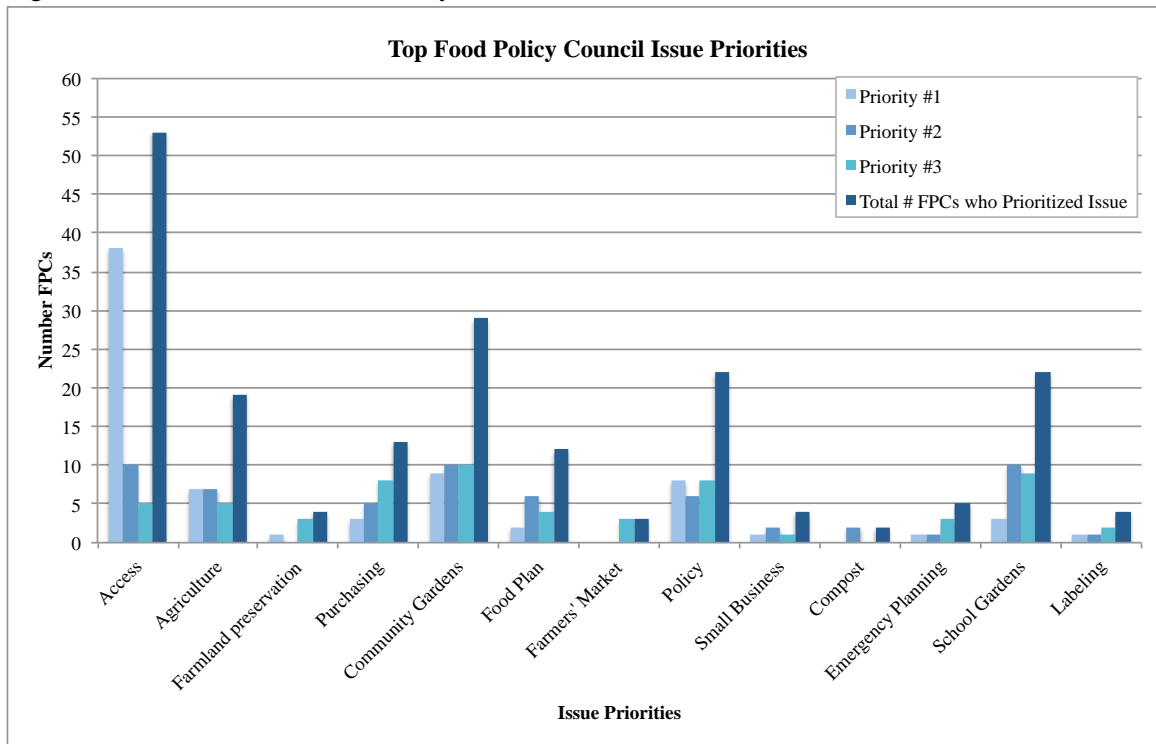
Of the 26 multi-response FPCs, three priorities could be identified for only three food policy councils, and only one of the councils (with two member respondents) matched completely on the issue priorities. Other responses within councils were too inconsistent, so only one or two priorities could be identified. This introduces an interesting issue that these councils are experiencing and will be discussed later. It is interesting to note that only two councils listed compost as a priority, and waste recovery was the sector with the least amount of representation on the food policy councils.

Respondents were asked what process their respective councils used to set priorities and goals; respondents were able to check all answers that applied to their council. As Figure 18 shows, food policy councils set priorities most often through group discussion (58.3 percent, n=49). Only one group said that the facilitating organization, or lead agency, makes decisions for the group. Respondents that selected 'other' specified:

Fig. 18: Issue Prioritization Process

FPC Issue Prioritization Process
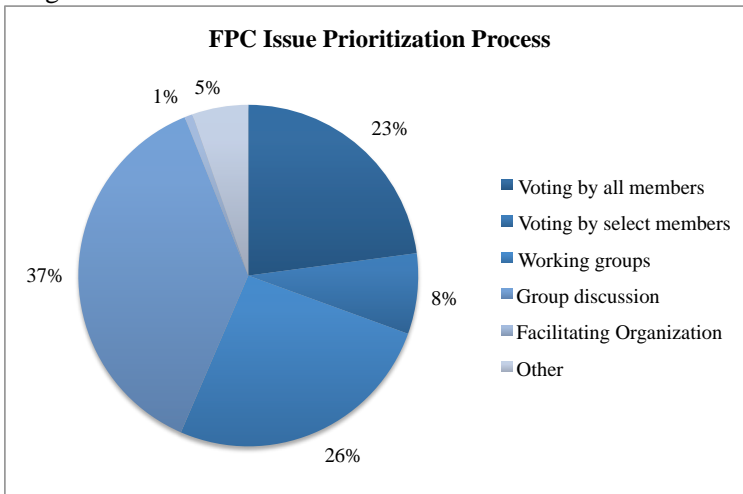
consensus (n=2), consensus with voting as fallback (n=1), following the energy of the local community (n=1), an advisory committee (n=1), discussed annually through a work plan development meeting and then voted on by all members (n=1), and that it is dependent on what projects council members decide to work on (n=1).

Respondents were asked if there had ever been disagreements between members when prioritizing issues. Only about 42 percent of councils indicated that there had been disagreement over prioritizing issues. As a follow-up, respondents were asked how the issues were resolved (not all respondents chose to elaborate). Many of the respondents mentioned consensus building (n=10) and majority voting (n=7). Other respondents mentioned discussion (n=5), the use of a scoring or ranking system (n=2), sharing of points of view (n=2), compromise (n=3), issues were prioritized based on the availability of resources and people to work on them (n=5), hiring of a strategic planner (n=1), and development of working groups (n=2). There were three other interesting responses that respondents mentioned; most of the disagreements stemmed from issues over whether the group is focused on policy or education, most of the disagreements occurred over process issues, like who is considered a member, and lastly, that issues and disagreements resulted from a lack of clarity of the role of the council.

Potential relationships between process of establishing issue priorities and whether council experiences disagreements were analyzed, as shown in Figure 19. These relationships were not found to be statistically significant using a chi-square test at the .05

Fig. 19: Issue Prioritization Process and Disagreements
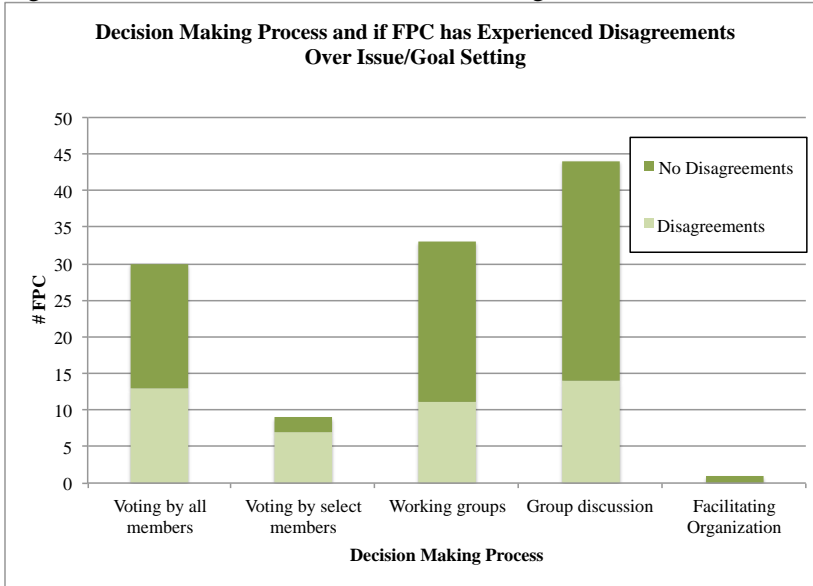
level, except for groups with voting by only select members are more likely to have disagreements, 77.8 percent more likely to have disagreements with select group voting (n=81, p=.013, df=1, but 1 cell did not meet minimum expected count of 5). There is a slight relationship between decision-making and disagreements, as seen in Figure 22. Almost 70 percent of food policy councils that utilize group discussion for issue prioritization do not have disagreements over issue priorities. These results also show that two thirds of councils that rely on working groups (n=22) do not have disagreements over issue priorities of the entire council. Although only a small number of FPCs rely on voting of select members for goal setting, the results show that they are more likely to encounter disagreements within the council on the direction of the group as a whole. It is also interesting to note that the one council that relies on their lead agency to set the issue priorities of the council does not feel that the group experiences disagreement over the goals set.

Fig. 20:

Lead Agency Impact on Issue Priorities of FPCs

		Food Access	Agriculture	Farmland Preservation	Purchasing	Community Gardens	Food Plan	Farmers' Market	Policy	Small Business	Compost	Emergency Planning	School Gardens	Labeling
							FPC Issue Priorities							
Lead Agency Focus	Food Access/Hunger	1			1	1		1		1				
	Agriculture/Farmer	6	4	1	1	3		2	4	1			2	
	Community	15	3	3	1	7	2	5	9		1	3	8	1
	Consumer	1					1						1	
	Education	9	4	1	5	6	1	3	4		1	2	2	
	Environment/Sustainability	13	4	3	3	8	3	2	8	2	1	1	3	
	Farmland	6	2		2	4			2		2			
	Local Food/Farm-to-Table	23	8	8	5	12	1		12	1	1		2	1
	Government	15	5	2	3	6	10	4	13	1	1	1	3	1
	Health	19	2	1	2	15	11	4	15			5	7	
	Social Services	7			1	2	3	3	2			2	2	
	Advocacy/Policy	12		1	5	7	1	1	3	1		1	6	1
	Faith	1							1			1	2	
	Development	2			3		2		3				2	2

KEY	
	HIGHEST Lead agency focus
	HIGHEST FPC Issue priority

One of the research hypotheses was that the areas lead agencies focused on would influence what the FPCs chose as issue priorities, however, as you can see from Figure 20, lead agency focus does not impact issues priorities. For example, even though food access was the most common issue priority, only one of the FPCs who identified food access as a priority has a lead agency focused on food access/hunger.[3] The blue highlighted boxes, which show the highest occurring issue priority for the lead agency focus, shows that most groups focus on food access, except for the faith based organizations.

Additionally, as seen in Figure 21, groups with more representation did not have an impact on the issue priorities that councils chose[4]. Nine of the 15 councils with more representation from food access/hunger groups selected food access as a top issue priority, which is more than any other issue priority. However, food access/hunger is by far the

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[3] Note that the reason that there are more counts for each issue priority is because lead agencies' missions included more than one key term or focal area.

[4] Please note that the reason the sum does not match the number of groups that selected these groups as having more representation is because each council has between one and three top issues.

most common issue priority, so one cannot extrapolate influence from that relationship.

For example, councils with more production representation also prioritized food access

(n=7), where as only four councils with more representation from production are focused

on agriculture.

Fig. 21:

Impact of group with more representation on FPC issue priorities

		Food Access	Agriculture	Farmland Preservation	Purchasing	Community Gardens	Food Plan	Farmers' Market	Policy	Small Business	Compost	Emergency Planning	School Gardens	Labeling
						FPC Issue Priorities								
Group with more representation	Production	7	4	1	4	2	1		5	2	1		4	1
	Consumers	1	1											
	Non Profit Organizations	15	4	1	4	11	4	3	8	1	1	3	7	
	Food Access/Hunger	9			2	6	1	2	2	1		2	3	
	Government	8	5		3	3	2	1	2				2	
	Education	2	1		1		1		2				1	

KEY	HIGHEST Group with more representation
	HIGHEST FPC Issue priority

Government Affiliation:

Respondents were asked to share how the council was affiliated with or had

collaborated with the local government; respondents were able to select all responses that

Fig. 22: FPC Relationship with Government

Government Relations

	#	Valid %
Government agency	1	1.1
Hosted by gov't agency	15	19
Officially recognized council by gov't	39	45.9
Charter created in collaboration with gov't	12	14.5
Documents created by your coalition were in collaboration with gov't	18	22
Gov't officials represented on council	26	31.7
Gov't employees represented on council	46	56.8
Council presents to gov't	36	44.4
You do not work with gov't in any capacity	3	3.4

applied to their council. The majority of food policy councils have government employees sitting on their councils (56.8 percent, n=46) and almost 46 percent are

officially recognized by their local government (n=39). Only three councils (3.4 percent) said that they do not work with their local government in any capacity. Figure 22 shows this in greater detail. Based on these results, it would appear that most food policy councils are affiliated or collaborating with their local government in some capacity, whether that is their participation on the council, or communicating their work to their local officials.

There were two interesting comments in regards to government representation on the council. One council explained that there was a conflict with the "role that Public Health… should play in a 'grassroots' council." Another respondent said that representatives from state agencies were often concerned about the council's stance on certain issues that did not match with the agencies' agenda.

Perceived Effectiveness:

Respondents were asked to rate how effective they perceived their council to be at reaching predetermined goals, representing the needs of the community, and including all coalition member interests. The charts below show the results for perceived effectiveness for individual responses and grouped FPC responses (Figure 23). The results are largely similar; most respondents feel their councils have been somewhat effective or effective, with few respondents selecting very effective or not effective. In both cases, there is a fairly even divide between feelings of effectiveness and ineffectiveness in respect to reaching predetermined goals, and representing the community, however, in terms of including all coalition members, both tests show that respondents and FPCs consider they are slightly more effective at this than not.

Fig. 23: FPC Members' Percieved Effectiveness of Council

Perceived Effectiveness of Food Policy Councils

		Averaged FPC Responses					Individual Responses				
		1 - Not effective	2	3 - Do not know	4	5 - Very effective	1 - Not effective	2	3 - Do not know	4	5 - Very effective
How effective has your council been at…	...Reaching predetermined goals	4	31	9	30	7	9	44	14	44	7
		35			37		53			51	
	...Representing the community	2	36	5	26	9	3	54	8	40	12
		38			35		57			52	
	...Including all coalition member interests	1	26	8	33	9	1	43	11	49	13
		27			42		44			62	

I hypothesized that councils with more resources would perceive themselves to be more effective; this was not the case. As seen in Figure 24, only a slightly higher number of councils with funding consider themselves to be effective at achieving goals and including all members of the group, and, in terms of perceived effectiveness of representing the community, there is a near even split between effectiveness and ineffectiveness. Furthermore, FPCs that selected between 1-5 assistance measures provided by their initiating agencies tend to feel they are more effective than those receiving between 6-11 measures of assistance, however the differences are very slight (Figure 25). Additionally, councils receiving less assistance have a slightly higher occurrence of reporting feelings of effectiveness when representing the community and including all members, but only by a few more councils. The differences are so small that none of these relationships can be considered conclusive, however, they do indicate that increased resources or assistance from lead agencies

Fig. 24: Perceived Effectiveness of FPCs with Funding

Impacts of Funding on Perceived Effectiveness			Funding	
			No	Yes
Effectiveness:	Achieving Goals:	Effective	6	25
		Not Effective	4	19
	Representing Community:	Effective	5	23
		Not Effective	5	22
	Including All Members:	Effective	7	25
		Not Effective	3	18

does not impact how effective they perceive themselves to be, and thus, we can reject that

hypothesis.

Fig. 25: Perceived Effectiveness of FPCs with More or Less Assistance from Lead Agencies

Impacts of Amount Assistance Provided By Lead Agencies on Perceived Effectiveness

			Initiating Agency Assistance		Host Agency Assistance	
			1-5	6-11	1-5	6-11
Effectiveness:	Achieving Goals:	Effective	12	9	7	4
		Not Effective	13	12	3	3
	Representing Community:	Effective	14	11	6	1
		Not Effective	11	11	4	6
	Including All Members:	Effective	15	12	5	6
		Not Effective	8	10	4	0

Using a Chi-square test at the .05 significance level, a statistically significant

relationship was found between lead agencies that increased access to resources and

perceived effectiveness of reaching goals (n=54, p=.05, df=1), and with effectiveness of

representing needs of community (n=55, p=.042, df=1). When lead agencies increase

access to resources, FPCs perceive themselves to be more effective at representing the

needs of the community (65.4 percent, n=17) and reaching goals (73.1 percent, n=19).

This is interesting because it was assumed that councils that received the most assistance

and resources from their lead agencies would consider themselves more effective,

however, this data shows that that is not the case. Lead agencies that increase access to

resources, not necessarily provide them, do allow FPCs to be more effective.

Discussion:

During the initial stages of research it was hypothesized that food policy councils

would be dependent on their lead agencies for resources and guidance, and that this

dependent relationship would have implications for the council's issue priorities by

reflecting those of the lead agency. It was not assumed that this was an intentional influence on the part of the lead agencies- only that by providing guidance, leadership, resources, and ideas, the issue priorities would start to mirror those of the lead agency. Through the analysis, it became clear that the lead agencies, although involved on the council, have far less influence on the actions and processes of the council than expected. Although the great majority of lead agencies are involved in the councils, few of them have the leadership roles or power within the group to set the agenda, establish goals, choose membership, or make final calls on actions. In fact, lead agencies mostly provide support to councils by providing meeting space, scheduling, and facilitating the meetings. This is most likely because they have the staff capacity to do so. Less than a third of lead agencies are introducing goals or setting the meeting agenda. Although setting the meeting agenda could potentially reflect a control over goals, we know this is not the case because results showed that most groups rely on voting or discussion which includes all council members to set issue priorities and goals. Furthermore, the analysis showed that many groups have open membership structures, which do not exclude those that can participate in the goal setting process. Overall, most food policy councils' processes and structures were designed to support democratic and consensus based decision-making.

It was also hypothesized that councils with lead agencies that provided the most assistance and resources would perceive themselves to be more effective at progressing towards meeting goals and representing the community. However, this was not the case. There was no clear relationship between effectiveness and funding availability or increased assistance from lead agencies. Food policy councils are relatively evenly divided on perceived efficacy of accomplishing goals and representing their communities.

Upon first glance this may seem that FPCs are not active enough, I believe the reason they do not feel their have been as effective is because so many of them are still relatively new, and are still working towards creating impacts in their communities' food systems. Furthermore, the goals they have created and the change they would like to see take place may be great and more long range. The majority of FPCs perceive themselves to be effective at including all coalition member interests, this further shows an inclusive structure, and is reflective of the ideas of food democracy that is inherent in the values of food policy councils.

It was surprising to find that most FPCs receive funding from a grant and not from their lead agencies[5]. Nearly half of FPCs receive funding from a grant. This could be due to an increase in grant funds specifically for the purpose of FPC development or continued work. One such grant is the USDA Community Food Project grant that specifies that awardees utilize or build collaboration between multiple stakeholder groups in order to address health and hunger issues (National Institute of Food and Agriculture, 2009). While it is positive to note that these results reflect increased grant funds available for the development or continued work of these councils, it also means that the funding is temporary, and often conditional, requiring specific outcomes or deliverables, which directs attention and resources of groups away from other community issues that may arise. Grant applications require much time and energy, and unless FPC staff or staff of a member organization is devoted to grant writing, energy and resources are removed from the work of the council to seek future funding.

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[5] A caveat is that although the question clearly asked about independently procured resources, it is possible that although the grant was awarded to the council, they may have received assistance from other sources in writing and applying for the grant.

It takes available resources to access additional resources, and it appears as though councils are functioning on few. Based on comments, councils indicated that resources are project specific and that they were heavily dependent on the volunteer support of the members, which can limit the progress a group makes towards its goals, which reflects the findings of Chavis (2001), who stated that little can be accomplished of groups whose membership is made of volunteers with only a few spare hours a month (as noted in the literature review).

Would these councils function more efficiently, or be more effective if they had continued support and did not have to worry about finances or other resources? One respondent explained how their FPC had initially been "housed in a government agency, then outsourced to nonprofits, which staffed it on a rotating basis, then handed it off to a community member facilitator... Though [they] continue to have some representation from [their] nonprofit members, [their] lack of formal structure has resulted in some loss of momentum." Without a concrete structure, it is hard to get members to commit time and energy to the council, and without proven success councils do not feel they have capacity to take on larger projects and have a more definitive role in the community (Scherb, Palmer, Frattaroli, & Pollack, 2012).

Without the assistance of the lead agencies in providing access to resources and helping to organize the council meetings, where would these councils be? Without solicitation, respondents mentioned the importance of good leadership and lack of leadership on their councils in the open comments. One FPC member felt that their council had been lacking good leadership until recently and that, with the adoption of a new leader, the council was more directed and active. Another person said that they had

only had interim leaders for a long time, which impacted the capacity of the group. Further research should study the leaders of the councils; who is filling the leadership role if not lead agencies? Is it possible to have strong leadership in a coalition without over-influencing issue priorities? There are some established consultants who specialize in the development and facilitation of food policy councils, such as Mark Winne[6] and Ag Innovations Network, which is an organization that has assisted in the development of several Food System Alliances (which are similar to FPCs) throughout California (Ag Innovations Network, 2014). I intend to explore the role of consultants in the initiating and developmental stages of food policy councils as a next step in this research.

Another significant finding was that most FPCs membership does not encompass all sectors of the food system, although experience suggests this is common. The food system in a geographic scope is subjective because not all councils are covering an area that has all five sectors of the food system, for example, production agriculture being represented in a city. That being said, the representation of waste recovery was surprisingly low, as it is no less important than any other food system sector. Most surprising was the number of groups that had between one and three food system sectors.[7] The analysis showed that many groups have open membership structures, but there was no relationship between membership process and number of sectors represented on the council. The low food system sector representation could be because many of these councils are reliant on volunteer time, have poor outreach, or lack of interest by potential

[6] Mark Winne is a consultant for food system groups. He specializes in providing assistance to groups that are developing and/or operating food policy councils and networks (Winne, 2014).
[7] A caveat here is that, as mentioned before, the mode response was used to create grouped council responses. In some instances, a member of a council would select one membership group, but the other member/s would not, so it is not reflected in the averaged group response. This inconsistency could be a result of being unfamiliar with other members of the council, or simply being a new member to the council.

members.   Food policy councils in theory are coalitions of representatives from all members of the food system, but many coalitions do not have diverse food system representation; further research should be done to discover the reasons for this, if only to clarify the results found in this analysis.

Lastly, the most remarkable finding was the inconsistency between council members' responses. As mentioned in the analysis, at least two responses were received from 26 councils. Nineteen councils had at least one identifiable priority, meaning that of the three priorities, there was only one match, and which were not always ranked the same. Only three councils had near perfect matches on all issue priorities. These results show a need for increased cohesiveness between members, and sense of direction for the councils. Is this an issue of leadership, and not properly communicating goals and values? Perhaps some of the respondents were new to the council. Two of the three groups that were well matched in their responses were established in the last two years. Perhaps since they were so new, they regularly revisited their goals or were in the process of establishing them. Perhaps older groups do not do this enough. This inconsistency was not only for issue priorities; it was extended to membership, membership process, and effectiveness of the group.

In addition to building upon the existing body of FPC research to better understand the role of these councils in the policy arena, this study has established many more areas that need to be researched further, such as membership diversity, leadership, a more detailed analysis of FPC resources and funding, and how to develop group cohesiveness. To build upon my findings, I intend to interview members of the FPCs that perceived themselves as both effective and not effective, as well as respondents from councils that

were both consistent and inconsistent in reporting issue priorities, to create "lessons learned" on how to increase effectiveness, representation, leadership and group cohesiveness. As the FPC community continues to grow it is important to better understand the ways in which these councils can become more effective at creating collaboration between the various members of the food system and improve policies and programs. Understanding the role of lead agencies is just a facet of how these councils are structured and operate. As these FPCs continue develop and restructure examples of successful structures will assist them in becoming stronger units for change.

Conclusion:

Food policy councils are making progressive impacts in their communities: increasing access to fresh produce in neighborhood markets, increasing market opportunities for local producers, conducting food system assessments, creating regulation roadmaps and conducting policy analysis, and much more. They are creating visions and plans for the future state of their community food system. These groups are increasing collaboration between community members, educating local officials on the needs of their community and partnering with government and NGOs to create healthier food systems. The food system is complex, regardless of the scope. Significant changes cannot be expected to take place without the development of the councils to become more permanent and reliable fixtures in the community, where a range stakeholder groups can collaborate to create change.

Since this research began, California Assemblyman John Perez introduced a bill to establish a Farm to Fork Office within the California Department of Food and Agriculture

(AB 2413) (California Legislature, 2014). Should be bill pass, the office will, among other things, "work with the agricultural industry, direct marketing organizations, food policy councils, public health groups, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, academic institutions, district agricultural associations, county, state, and federal agencies, and other organizations involved in promoting food access to increase the amount of agricultural products available to underserved communities and schools in this state (California Legislature, 2014, pg. 99)." Increasingly, food policy councils are being recognized and relied upon by government agencies and other organizations. As opportunities for partnership and reliance on FPCs increases, assisting in the concurrent development of their capacity is important. There are many areas of future research which will help to establish a set of practices that council can utilize to create the most impact and influence within their communities.

Appendix:

<u>Survey Questions:</u>

1. Name of Coalition:

2. Location:

3. What is the geographic scope of the coalition:
- ☐ City
- ☐ County
- ☐ Region
- ☐ State
- ☐ Other

4. What year was the coalition founded?

5. Was the coalition initiated through:
- ☐ Government program
- ☐ Non-profit agency
- ☐ Grassroots
- ☐ Other:

5a. What is the name of the initiating organization or agency?

5b. Is the initiating agency still involved in the coalition?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

5c: How is the initiating agency still involved in the coalition? (check all that apply)
- ☐ Facilitate meeting
- ☐ Educate coalition members on current issues
- ☐ Provide guidance/support for coalition development
- ☐ Funding
- ☐ Sets the agenda
- ☐ Coalition leader
- ☐ Coalition member
- ☐ Access to resources
- ☐ Issues to discuss or set as goals
- ☐ Provides meeting place
- ☐ Coordinates meetings
- ☐ Other:

6. Sometimes, food policy councils are hosted by organizations that are different from the initiating agency. Is your coalition housed under another organization or agency?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

6a. If yes, is the host organization or agency a:
- ☐ Non-profit [name?]
- ☐ Governmental organization[name?]
- ☐ Business[name?]
- ☐ Other:

6b: What is the name of the host organization or agency?

6c: How is the host organization or agency still involved in the coalition? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Facilitate meeting
- ☐ Educate coalition members on current issues
- ☐ Provide guidance/support for coalition development
- ☐ Funding
- ☐ Sets the agenda
- ☐ Coalition leader
- ☐ Coalition member
- ☐ Access to resources
- ☐ Issues to discuss or set as goals
- ☐ Provides meeting place
- ☐ Coordinates meetings
- ☐ Other:

7. How many members are on the coalition?

7a. How is membership determined?

- ☐ Open to all
- ☐ Members are elected
- ☐ Members go through an application process
- ☐ Other:

7b. Please check all sectors that are represented on the coalition:

- ☐ Production (agriculture, ranch, fisher, etc.)
- ☐ Processing
- ☐ Distribution (restaurant, grocer, etc.)
- ☐ Consumers
- ☐ Waste recovery
- ☐ Non-profit organizations
- ☐ Nutrition
- ☐ Food access/hunger
- ☐ Government
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Environment
- ☐ Water conservation and/or quality
- ☐ Other:

7c. Is there one sector mentioned above that has greater representation than others?

- ☐ Production (agriculture, ranch, fisher, etc.)
- ☐ Processing
- ☐ Distribution (restaurant, grocer, etc.)
- ☐ Consumers
- ☐ Waste recovery
- ☐ Non-profit organizations
- ☐ Nutrition
- ☐ Food access/hunger
- ☐ Government
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Environment
- ☐ Water conservation and/or quality
- ☐ Other:

8. Please check all resources that your council has received independent of any host or initiating agency:

☐ funding through grant
☐ funding through donor
☐ funding through multiple agencies
☐ staff
☐ independent consultant
☐ non-financial donations (food, supplies, etc.)

9. Please rank the coalition's top 3 issue priorities (where the most time and energy is spent on issue #1)

☐ Food accessibility
☐ Agriculture
☐ Farm land conservation
☐ Institutional purchasing
☐ Animals
☐ Community gardens/urban agriculture
☐ Food planning
☐ Farmers markets
☐ Policy analysis
☐ Small business support
☐ Composting
☐ Emergency food supply
☐ School gardens or lunch programs
☐ Genetically modified organisms
☐ Local food labeling or promotion
☐ Other:

9: Please elaborate on the projects the coalition is doing for the top 3 issue priorities stated above.

10. How are goals/issue priorities set by the coalition?

☐ Voting by all members
☐ Voting by select members
☐ Working groups
☐ Group discussion
☐ Facilitating organization (If so, what organization do they represent?)
☐ Other:

11. Has there ever been disagreement about issue priorities?

☐ No
☐ Yes

11a. If Yes, please briefly describe and discuss resolution.

12: Which of the following best describes the coalition? (check all that apply)

☐ It is a government agency
☐ It is hosted by a government agency
☐ It is a recognized council by the government
☐ Your charter was created in collaboration with a government agency
☐ Documents created by your coalition have been in collaboration with a government agency
☐ You have government officials represented on your coalition
☐ You have government employees represented on your coalition
☐ You present to government agencies
☐ You do not work with government agencies
☐ Other:

13: How effective do you believe the coalition has been at (where 1 is not effective, and 5 is very effective, and 3 is do not know):

-reaching predetermined goals: 1 2 3 4 5

-representing the needs of the community: 1 2 3 4 5

-making   decisions   that   reflect   desires   of   all   coalition   representatives: 1   2   3   4   5

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