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Fertile Ground for a Social Movement: Social Capital in Direct Agriculture Marketing

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Fertile Ground for a Social Movement:
Social Capital in Direct Agriculture Marketing

by:

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
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College of Arts and Sciences
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Abstract

Building from existing literature on anthropology of food, political economy of food and consumption, and social movement theory, I examine the direct agriculture network of Tampa Bay Florida through a mixed-method ethnography. The research consisted of one year of field-work, with 6 months and over 100 hours of active participant observation, open-ended interviews with eight local producers, and short surveys with 100 market patrons. This thesis is an analysis of the results of this rigorous qualitative and quantitative work and, perhaps more importantly, an account of my own personal struggles in joining the direct agriculture network and my ultimate commitment to the movement. This report documents one student’s transition from a researcher to an activist, finally settling in a local place that occupies both worlds in an effort to help increase the accessibility of others who wish to join the movement; an equal access based not only on economic capital, but also social and cultural capital in order to sustain an alternative food social movement.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Towards An Anthropology of Local Food

*People ask me: Why do you write about food, and eating and drinking? Why don’t you write about the struggle for power and security, and about love, the way others do? They ask it accusingly, as if I were somehow gross, unfaithful to the honor of my craft. The easiest answer is to say that, like most other humans, I am hungry. But there is more than that. It seems to me that our three basic needs: for food and security and love, are so mixed and mingled and entwined that we cannot straightly think of one without the other.*


Food satisfies more than physical hunger; food fulfills a need for love, community, and belonging. Fisher’s quote above eloquently underscores this point. Anthropologists have extensively studied these properties and their social and biological purpose by analyzing the production, distribution, and consumption of food (Levi-Strauss 1997[1966], Mintz 1986, Harris 1998, Pottier 1999, Mintz and Du Bois 2002). In the words of Roland Barthes, “No doubt food is, anthropologically speaking (though very much in the abstract), the first need” (Barthes 1997: 21). This first need has multiple physical and cultural (abstracted) derivations.

Even in biologically necessary actions, such as those related to food production and consumption, the *social meaning* behind the specific choices is one of the primary
ways in which humans are distinctive in the animal kingdom. As written in the opening of Farb and Armelagos’ Consuming Passions (1980), “All animals feed but humans alone eat” (3). This distinction is maintained through cultural norms; “[p]eople have to eat, but culture teaches us what, when, and how” (Kottak 2008:45). As with most culturally determined (read: all) behaviors, food habits are learned, resulting from a social order that is dynamic, yet rigid - even when the rules change (for a myriad of reasons), those changes are systematic and culturally situated (Harris 1998, Douglas 1966, Kottak 2008).

The cultural significance and biological necessity of food make it both a reflection of and an opportunity to instill cultural change. Though these changes have varying levels of success at changing the hegemony of a group or creating a paradigm shift, food procurement patterns both reflect cultural processes and are a potential tool with which to create and understand larger cultural change and development (Allen et. al 2003, Goodman 2004). As such, a critique of food as cultural material object provides a rich opportunity to examine many levels of theory and practice in regards to political power, social exchange, and individual identity. This thesis assesses the social significance of food as an instrument to measure and create social change influenced by social movement theory and analyzes the capacity for social change through a political economy critique of small-scale food systems and alternative food networks.

This research closely examines the sustainability of direct sales in small-scale agricultural networks of Tampa Bay, Florida. However, the phenomenon of direct sales is just one facet of a larger local food movement in the US, which falls into even larger global trends of ethical sourcing and reflexive consumption. Alternative consumption trends – from the big picture to the local milieu - are a direct response to the process of an
increasingly globalized capitalist system of consumption, where food is one among many consumer goods with complex distribution patterns, distanced sources, and alienated possessions. Alternative food trends in particular are also a response to modern industrialized agriculture, whose methods and practices have been questioned primarily on ethical grounds (Goodman 2004, Barrientos and Dolan 2006).

Alternative systems of ethical sourcing and reflexive consumption operate within a market system that has progressed since the early 20th century in the US and Western Europe driven by an economic theory of supply and demand wherein an over supply of food and other goods since the industrial revolution has tipped the scale in favor of the consumer (Hall et al 2008). In the present market system of the west, consumer choice and consumer demand drive market changes. While behaviors associated with alternative markets do not actively challenge the social order in the traditional modes described by social movement theory, the desire to change the system from within nevertheless reflects a changing political and social dynamic.

A thorough exploration of changing food behavior throughout human history is certainly beyond the scope of this report, though a brief synopsis will provide some background. Patterns of food behavior related to its production, distribution, and consumption have evolved in a reciprocal relationship with environmental, economic and social landscapes. In most of human history, food has been necessarily local, first dependent on foraging and later on horticulture and agriculture, when distribution of the product was still limited due to lack of technology in preservation and transportation (Wilk 2006, Kottak 2008). This resulted in large sedentary communities intimately tied to their food, their land, and each other (Kottak 2008). In this geographically bounded
process, eating entailed an intentional provisioning pattern beginning with an acquisition of resources such as land, labor, seed, water, livestock, and time in order to grow agricultural products, or products that are used in economic exchanges, before being transferred to an edible product akin to Levi-Strauss’s “culinary triangle” (1997[1966]).

The industrial revolution expanded these networks and created distribution systems in the West in which more and more hands controlled multiple level of exchanges between producer and consumer as capitalism transformed the lives and culture of Europe (Mintz 2006). Subsequent advances in preservation and transportation of perishable goods allowed the development of urban cities as food could be transported from rural communities to dense urban centers, and people found other means for support, a greater reliance on economic resources and less on the ecological resources for their agricultural livelihood (Wilk 2006).

The rural/urban divide that emerged from the industrial revolution created large populations of people in urban centers alienated from their food sources (Mintz 2006). Globalization has only intensified this separation, as food distribution has become a complex web of rural products transported to urban centers domestically and globally (Kneen 1995). This process turns food into a commodity, creating products that are removed entirely from the labor and resources that are invested in their production, allowing their value to be diminished as it turns from use-value to exchange-value\(^1\). The resulting fetishized food commodity is sterilized, marketed, and distributed with little regard to the social, economic, and environmental costs of production, nor the connection to the health (basic use-value) of the individual consuming the product. Furthermore, individuals and communities are ultimately alienated from each other as the human labor
is left unacknowledged. The separation of the product/commodity from the economic, social, and environmental cost of production allows for the maintenance of an unsustainable system, as those who participant lack the awareness of the cost and therefore are not motivated to change the system (Buttel 2006).

The shift from self-sufficiency in terms of communities growing and eating their own food to a global interdependence of complex food systems crossing land and sea has given rise to the expanding political and social power and meaning of food provisioning. Individuals as well as communities are increasingly defined through their food production and consumption behaviors. Moreover, sustainable agriculture is being utilized as a key component of economic growth – the sustainability of which is impossible without the input and support of local farmers in the regions affected (Altieri and Nicholls 2008).

Meanwhile, the value of foodstuffs (completely removed from their labor/resources and marketed as commodities) is being controlled by outside parties through certifications of specialty commodities and regulated through multiple layers of governance. Individuals in the North display status through their distinction of taste and purchasing power in a performance of eating and consuming food products, much like any commodity. This complex political and social arena mixed with the biological necessity and environmental impacts of its production and consumption make food an even greater avenue for social change as producers and consumers struggle to take power, display status, and save their social and environmental communities.

Social change is currently manifested in many forms in the North and the South. For instance, agricultural cooperatives are being created in the Caribbean to create
economically and socially equitable conditions for the production of products such as coffee and chocolate. These specialty products are then certified to be Fair Trade, creating a product that has greater social and economic value among consumers in the global North, such as the US and Europe. The consumer demand for ethical products has created the opportunity for more power among producers. Though the producers’ power in these systems is under review, the opportunity is there to instill sustainable change driven by a niche market (Dowdall 2010).

Ethical consumers in alternative markets are more engaged with the food system, aware of the cost, and motivated to create change. Ethical consumption is rising in popularity, parallel to larger social movements related to conservation and social change that emerged in the latter half of the 20th century (Barrientos and Dolan 2006, Bevington 2009). Anthropology is uniquely suited to contribute to a discussion of social movements in general and ethical food consumption in particular because the field’s and its scholars’ understanding of the social meaning of food, both currently and historically, in addition to its biological purpose. In essence, anthropologists are able to analyze exactly “what, when, and how” food meets the “first need” – and every need thereafter.

One of the first examples of an anthropological analysis of the power of food for social change is Margaret Mead’s (1970) “The Changing Significance of Food,” in which she points out the contradictions of the modern food system and commercial agriculture including the overabundance of food with so many starving, the intentional production of food without nourishment, the lack of conservation in a environmentally dependent industry, and the increasing reliance on cash crops rather than nutritious foods. She concludes by saying:
What we do about food is therefore far more crucial, both for our generation, our own American children, and children everywhere, and also for the quality of our responsible action in every field. [...] Divorced from its primary function of feeding people, treated simply as a commercial commodity, food loses this primary significance. (Mead 1970: 181)

Ultimately, Mead argues, we must control our population, cherish our land, and care for our people. Her call for change and her acknowledgement of the capacity for change were a reflection of her social consciousness, though she never clearly took a stand on the role of social science to create change.

More recently, a greater acceptance of applied social science has blurred the line between research and activism, allowing scholars to not only comment on the need for change, but also suggest ways in which to instill and maintain change, perhaps even actively creating that change. In regards to agriculture and food consumption, this is perhaps most clearly shown in sociologist Thomas A. Lyson’s (2000) idea of “civic agriculture,” a term used to describe the return of locally-oriented eating through an engagement with a local community’s economic and social development and a morally derived base for community building. Anthropologist Laura DeLind (2002) has further analyzed this concept, emphasizing the power of civic agriculture to highlight the shortcomings of commercial, industrial agriculture and provide a potential for change. Furthermore, she states: “It extends an invitation for academics, activists, and practitioners alike to rethink conventional and universalizing categories (e.g., consumer, producer, commodity, private profit) and to explore more closely and less partially the
role agriculture can play in the lives, bodies, and minds of real people,” highlighting the virtuous purpose of civic agriculture in practice and theory (217). This call for action on behalf of academics, activists, and practitioners, shows the future of food justice studies and social movement theory in the anthropology of food.

Civic agriculture is just one solution among many to create more ethically conscious consumers, powerful producers, and sustainable social and environmental changes. However, market based social change movements such as civic agriculture and direct marketing still operate within a market-based system that potentially maintains inequitable power distributions and continues the commoditification of food as a marketable product. For instance, “local” becomes a brand and the farmer himself a product to be commodified without an inherent connection to the social change goals of such consumption. A successful alternative brand can potentially simply become an empty commodity; “there is nothing inherent in this rather discrete and often shallow use of the term ‘‘local’’ that protects shorelines, forests, ethnicity, labor, residents, or soils” (DeLind 2007: 129).

While market-based social change does not inherently sustain the environmental and social goals of alternative movements, a political economy posits that if the (physical and social) distance between a producer and a consumer diminishes, than the capital invested (economic, environmental, or social) in production are more apparent to the consumer, or perhaps even shared with the consumer, therefore leading to a more conscientious consumption pattern. However, this connection is weak and not guaranteed.
Small communities are not inherently more environmentally sustainable or ethically conscious; this shows the (perhaps unrealistic) idealism of alternative food movements but does not definitively detract from their potential to create a better system. Therefore, local food in many ways owes its current success to the trend of ethical consumption – while this connection to sustained ethical consumption and a successful brand is not inherent, it can be encouraged through high consumer awareness and formal or informal social regulation. More effort must be made to continue to build that connection and maintain the ethics of the movement while also promoting the brand of the product(s) and the producer(s).

The research presented here builds from these scholarly and socially based critiques by analyzing a new local food trend that has the potential to address these concerns in a more sustainable way through a market based approach. A study of sustainable change requires concerned researchers, like Margaret Mead, who can raise awareness about social disparities, and researching activists, like Laura DeLind, who are passionate yet critical about how to create a more equitable future for social and environmental communities. I approach my work with a balance of research and activism as I explore the local food community in Tampa Bay and provide suggestions and participate in steps to support an alternative system.

**Direct Sales and Small-scale Agriculture in the US**

In this study, I focus on direct agriculture marketing as one alternative to global forces of change driving modern food production in the US. Direct sales, defined by the USDA as “agriculture products sold directly to individuals for human consumption,” have increased in all regions across the country and, moreover, have been a key sector of
larger agricultural growth in each region (see figure 1: USDA 2007a). Participants in this movement attempt to establish local economies, wherein consumers purchase food items directly from the producer. In the US, this subset of the local food movement manifests in many forms, including but not limited to farmers’ markets, farm stands, and farm membership programs.

Figure 1: Direct sales are an important component of agriculture growth in the last decade.

**Farmers’ Markets**

The agrarian dream of American farming portrays farmers markets as small-scale farmers selling their harvest directly to local consumers. However, the authenticity of this imagery has been questioned because of the romanticized notion of open-air markets, the false superiority of the farmer-as-vendor compared to a farmer hiring vendors, and the unrealistic ideal of farmers having the time and energy vend themselves. (Smithers and Joseph 2009, McCullen 2011). In many cases local farmers are not the ones vending their produce at these open-air markets, due to many circumstances from lack of time to a lack
of desire to vend. As a result, some communities have even gone so far as to certify the farmer-as-vender, such as the California Federation of Certified Farmers’ Markets (CFM 2009). The organization certifies not only the source of the produce sold (it must be local) but also the vendors (they must be farmers) (CFM 2012).

The need for this certification may be unwarranted. Furthermore, the implications of such regulations in food and social systems are not yet fully understood. The trust instilled both in governmental or third party certifications and social relations with farmers converge at these points of direct sale across the country. Currently there is no certification process for the locality of the produce or the farming behaviors of the vendors at open-air markets in Tampa Bay, though there is always the possibility of such a process occurring in the future. Despite questions of authenticity, definitions of local produce, or other regulations of farmers markets, the national count of farmers markets have exponentially increased since 1994 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Farmers Markets in the US, as tracked by the USDA, have increased dramatically since 1994.
Farm Stands

An alternative to the farmers’ market system is the direct sale on-site at the farm, which is the preferred method for small-scale farmers in this study. Farm stands at the ends of driveways or in barns ensure the freshest products available for the consumer, with the least expenditures on behalf of the farmer, but have their own barriers for both parties. Farm stands are often out of the way, on side roads with low community awareness and hard to market (see Figures 3a-c). Local producers rely heavily on Internet traffic, but while some sites such as LocalHarvest are making such information more readily available, the onus is still on the consumer to seek out and find these sources. However, the distance for the consumer to travel is being decreased due to emerging technologies and inventive solutions in urban agriculture that allow food to be cultivating in the city. Furthermore, these new farming capabilities challenge existing notions of the ‘authentic’ farmer in traditional agrarian narratives while guaranteeing food transparency by allowing those even in the most densely populated areas to buy directly from the farmer and even become growers themselves.

Figures 3a, 3b, and 3c: Roadside stands market through signage on the side of the road, postings of which may or may not be supported by public ordinances.
Farm Membership

The third option is a farm membership program, termed community supported agriculture (CSA). This system creates a more substantial relationship between producer and consumer, though still keeping those roles distinct. In this system, a community member becomes a CSA member through a lump sum payment at the beginning of the season. This fee becomes an investment in the farm, whereby farmer and member share the economic risk of the season. The relationship is mutually beneficial, as the farmer secures an investment in the crop and essentially has already sold the harvest while the member, the consumer, has the benefits of receiving fresh produce on a weekly or biweekly basis (see Figure 4) based on prior agreements and fees, from a farmer he/she knows well. Often members are required or otherwise encouraged to work a few hours at the farm in order to help the farmer, gain more knowledge about the food, and experience food production hands on. While most CSAs stick to a growing season, several CSAs operate yearly, though there is always a high and low season in the harvest. The CSA system merges social and economic systems and was first invented in Japan in the 1960s before being brought to the US in the 1980s (Van En 1995). Despite its young age, the system has gained momentum in the US and was included in the USDA census data in 2007, when over 12,000 farms in the US reported using CSA as a marketing strategy (USDA 2007a).
**Figure 4**: A sample share for a CSA member at a Tampa Bay area farm.

**Theoretical Framework and Research Aims**

Utilizing ethnographic methods to document multiple levels of the direct agricultural market in the Tampa Bay and the larger Central Florida area, I seek to understand the growth of direct sales in this region by framing its development and maintenance through a political economic critique. Through in-depth interviews with regional producers (farmers and a market manager), short surveys with consumers at a local open-air market and immersing participant observation, I examine the role of resources and value in creating social change through a market system to understand the inequality along multiple means including social, cultural, environmental, and economic dimensions. The broad question that frames this research is how a theory, such as political economy, helps to inform critiques and solutions that are sustainable and applicable to real world solutions. In my preliminary work in the field, I quickly realized
the need for social and cultural capital in order to fully participate in the local food movement of Tampa Bay, where the local food movement is still young but growing.

I focus on social capital to emphasize the connection between participants in these alternative networks – both between producers and consumer and between individuals within each sector of the food chain. While many of these alternatives food systems focus on environmental benefits of ascribing to an alternative diet – be it local, organic, fair trade, or other - alternatives that focus on production ignore the economic and social inequalities that continue to be propagated by a market based approach to alternative food systems (Watts, Ilbery and Maye 2005). Therefore building social networks and focusing on the social ties that bind alternative food and direct sales will highlight the opportunity for alternative systems such as direct sales to contribute to issues in food justice. Food sovereignty should not only address food access, but also access to fresh food that contributes to the sustainable growth of environments, communities, and individuals. I argue for the market-based approach in created social change, if it is done with the highest moral concerns and in an informed ethical way that addresses economic, social, and environmental inequality. Similar to other ethical alternatives, such as Fair Trade coffee or Forest Stewardship Council Certification, alternatives are not inherently transformative (Taylor 2005). “Nevertheless, they represent innovative schemes which can demonstrate the viability of alternative logics and practices in the economy” (Taylor 2005:144).

As this analysis suggests, a high level of social networking and shared cultural knowledge is a requirement for a just local food system, one that addresses multiple environmental, economic, and social concerns, and is sustainable on all levels. The more
nuanced research questions that will be address in the rest of this paper thus are focused on social capital and socially determined value of local products and seek to situate these social issues into the local setting of Tampa Bay Florida.

RQ1:  What value is attributed to local food and direct sales; who has the power to ascribe this value, and in what ways (and by whom) is value controlled or regulated?

RQ2:  What resources are required to integrate successfully into the direct sales movement, either as a producer or a consumer, and how do movement participants obtain them?

RQ3:  What are defined boundaries of the local food movement, who has the authority to define such boundaries, and what issues/opportunities does this present to activists?

In this research, I critically examine issues in marketing local food to the mass consumer market, identify the opportunities for advancing the local food movement, and assess the role of direct agriculture marketing in enhancing the role of the sustainability of social change that is presented in alternative food systems. Applying political economic theory to the study of social movements, I examine the role of social resources and value in creating social change through a market system to understand the inequality along multiple means including social, cultural, environmental, and economic dimensions. Ultimately, I challenge the ability for a market-based approach to social change to innately be enacted equitably or justly in an entire community, but am optimistic that it can at least play a role in the future of sustainable alternative networks that combine market-based and community-based social change.
Thesis Overview

This paper is framed in three stages: background, findings, and applications. The introduction gave a broad overview of the movement, its manifestations and larger aims, goals, and historical background. A theoretical background discussing the literature on the anthropology of food, social movement theory, and the political economy of food and consumption will frame the work by establishing a theoretical foundation and identifying ways this research contributes to the existing body of literature. A more concise background will introduce the reader to the research setting and the researcher, followed by an introduction to the methodology of the research presented. The findings are grouped thematically along grounded themes that emerged from the ethnographic fieldwork related to social capital in the direct sales movement. The application examines how these issues currently play out in the political environment and shared social spaces and the considerations for the future of the local food movement. I conclude by outlining the many limitations of this work and provide suggestions for future research. I include appendixes to provide additional supportive documentation relevant to this discussion as well as evidence of rigorous and ethical research through IRB documentation.
Chapter 2: Literature Review:

New Social Movement Theory and Political Economic Critique

Applied to Alternative Food Networks

*Being different in something so basic and taboo-laden as food might lead to being different in many things. [...] If dietary rebels seemed a bit self-righteous, perhaps it was from their renewed sense of moral purity and political consistency. Unlike sporadic antiwar protests, dietary rightness could be lived 365 days a year, three times a day.*


This chapter will further explore the topics of anthropology of food, political economy, and social movement theory in order to set a theoretical framework for the methods and findings. Food as a resource and a commodity presents a unique opportunity to study the economic, social, and environmental cost of production and consumption. While the current food system in the US has distribution chains that hide the inevitable cost of production from the consumer, food activists are attempting to expose those costs and consumers are becoming more aware of how their individual consumption practices are linked to larger economic, social, and environmental issues. However, participation in an alternative food system that acknowledges and attempted to minimize the cost of production requires a high economic and social cost on behalf of the consumer.
Some US consumers are becoming aware of these costs and attempting to rectify the issues through a social movement of alternative food provisioning, one option of which is direct sales marketing. The critical theory of political economy highlights both the costs of production (only some of which are directly addressed in the current state of the local food movement in the US) while also bringing attention to the opportunities and limitation of the movement to create sustainable change. Through a theoretical critique with an applied perspective, researchers can help (or become) activists for a more equitable social future.

Distanced from the source of production, food in the global industrial agriculture system becomes an increased source of political, social, and economic control due to the ease with which interested parties both within and out of the chain of production can manipulate the value of food commodified (Kneen 1995). The social life of food has been thoroughly documented in the anthropology of food (Levi-Strauss 1969[1965], Harris 1998, Counihan and Van Esterik 1997). Furthermore, food and its distribution has been a long-term source of power (Mintz 1986).

In a political economy framework, the social life of food is derived from its value as it is transformed from a use value to an exchange value (Marx 2007[1867], Appadurai 1986) and food becomes a fetishized material object (Appadurai 1986, Lockie 2009). Food in the US and the expanding North can be viewed in the terms of the anthropology of consumption (Miller 1995, Carrier & Heyman 1997), yet food is still occupies a unique intersection between mass consumption and direct environmental consequences.

In the words of Marvin Harris, “Nobody eats everything” (Harris 1998:237). Yet, people are told what to eat based on their society and cultural environment (Levi-Strauss
1969[1965]), though individuals have a significant amount of agency in the process today, as culture boundaries become more permeable and individualized (Lockie 2009, Miller 2010). Social movement theory examines many instances in which groups respond to processes of globalization, industrialization, and institutionalization in many fields.

In food movements, participants are also reacting to the environmental effects of large-scale modern agriculture and the ethical implication of large scale factory farming, animal welfare, and the fate of the small farmer. A pervasive alienation from the production of food in this industrialized system has separated us from these environmental, ethical, and economic costs, though the emergence of a counter-culture that is moving away from this hegemony is worthy of anthropological investigation (Mintz & Du Bois 2002:105).

The Re-emergence of the Local

Today re-emerging local exchange systems create outlets for personal agency and renewed political control as consumers “vote with their dollars” (Foer 2009). This is a popular phrase in alternative food movements and many other social movements that are tied to the market system. Participants are taught that purchasing power is a way to enact on political power in the industrial age. If you buy more local products, the thinking goes, the higher demand will garner the attention of the producer who will then increase supply. However, this perspective is heavily biased to an economic framework and assumes an endless supply of resources/capital by ignoring the many other environmental, cultural, social, and political circumstances that affect market-based systems, in food or other commodities. Furthermore, there is little to significantly support
this reverse connection between demand and supply in regards to the food industry in the US.

However, these alternative market systems are providing effective ways for people to form collectives and provide a new option for producers and consumers (Allen 2004). The success of this collective trend is statistically evidenced by production and consumption patterns captured in the USDA census data and colloquially supported by the rise of alternative food movements in popular American discourse and media, both of which provide opportunities to track cultural change (Reed 2012).

Direct Sales in the Market System

As you saw in figure 2, direct sales have increased across the country since 1997 (USDA 2007a). According the USDA, direct sales are identified as the “value of agricultural products sold directly to individuals for human consumption” (USDA 1997, 2007a). The majority of direct sales came from small farms, which the USDA defines as farms with sales less than $250,000. However, the majority of direct sales were also completed by farms small in size at less than 50 acres – the only size that was reported to have increased between 1997-2007 were farms 1-9 acres (+13%), and farms 10-49 acres (+17%). A vast majority (93.3%) of farms participating in direct sales were also family farms (USDA 2007b). These direct sales are most prominent in the Northeast, Pacific Northwest, and California (USDA 2007b). Nationally, Florida is a small player, only accounting for 2% of direct selling farms and 16% of direct sales revenue, but direct sales in the State of Florida are still on the rise, with 28% more farms bringing in 57% more revenue from 2002 to 2007 (USDA 2007a).
Direct Sales Discourse in Popular Media

The ethics of food are starting to dominate popular media in print and video. In the last decade, investigative journalist Michael Pollan and revolutionary farmer Joel Salatin were becoming household names while the documentary Food Inc. (2008) was winning an Oscar. The recent Time Magazine (2012) special edition, “What to Eat Now: Your Guide to Good Healthy Food” lists “The Local Revolution” first on its cover, with the feature article “Local Food Grows Up” citing urban gardening in Brooklyn, Chipotle’s commitment to buying local, and Wegman’s supermarket starting a 10-acre farm as local food triumphs (Wolverson 2012). “Innovations like these could make local food – now a mere 1% of all we eat – a larger part of the American diet” (Wolverson 2012:95). These quick fixes and journals/farmers-turned-celebrity spokespeople create populations of die-hard “locavores” as their words are taken as doctrine.

Something in the movement’s marketing material, slogans, or calls to action is working, as shown by the increased popularity of local food consumption in the US. These are all based on a need to disengage from the industrial, alienated food system. In the established capitalism market-based system that exist in the US, and the importance of consumption in identity construction, shared consumerism may be the best way to establish a shared identity and experience on which to build a platform for social change (Kloppenberg et al 1996:38). The market reacts to consumer trends, evidences by Costco selling organic goods (Dimitri and Oberholtzer 2010) and Walmart going local (Clifford 2010).

Thus, both popular American discourse and newly popular business strategies reflect possible shifts in Americans’ consumption practices to more ethical and reflexive
consumption or at least the growth of a subculture that becomes large enough to form a key target segment in the consumer audience. Locally sourcing, now a top trend in the restaurant business for the past several years, is being pushed even further as businesses compete to be the ‘most local,’ going so far as to grow on-site and building processing plants for local meat (Thorn 2012).

**Alternative Food as a Social Movement**

Social movement theory has traditionally focused on social movements, such as the Civil Rights movement, that focus on equalizing the “other” by presenting the “other” as humanized, worthy of empathy, or “within the moral domain” (Eyerman 2006:200). However, the ways in which scholars analyze the success and pattern of social movements can be applied to the current alternative food movements, as well. The most relevant theory in this literature is New Social Movement (NSM) theory, originally debated in sociology but relevant to an anthropological understanding of emergent and grounded social change that exists in a cultural flux of meaning, identity, and behaviors. Anthropologists are drawn to NSM due to the inclusion of a cultural component and a focus on collective identity – cultural practice is used as a force for public change (Edelman 2001). The framing of a social movement in NSM literature cites collective identity, public performances, and emotion as creating group belongingness that relies on empathy and a moral understand of the “other” (Binford and Snow 2000).

New Social Movement (NSM) theory uses “movement” as a noun and a verb. Movements literally “move” people, compelled often by morals, empathy, and rituals (Alexander et al. 2006). In order to create social change, social movements depend on a “form of acting in public, a political performance which involve[s] representation in
dramatic form” (Eyerman 2006: 193). Movements define collectives (sub-cultures) in larger culture groups by establishing boundaries defined by solidarity, common purpose, and shared memory. The new cultural practices of the counter-culture are presented as morally superior to the current hegemony and are marketed to the large publics through collective performance rituals that display sacred group belongingness and encourage others to join (Eyerman 2006, Gieson 2006). In that act of performance, the movement frames itself as distinct from a larger cultural group, and becomes part of the individual collective memory and personal narrative of movement participants (Benford & Snow 2000). Emotions are intrinsically tied to this personal relatedness and often are empowering to an individual in the movement (Goodwin et al 2000, Polletta & Jasper 2001, Eyerman 2006).

Global social movements, such as anti-globalization and environmentalism, use similar tactics of framings and rituals, performing for a global audience while representing an increasingly abstract “other” (either ‘victims of global capitalism’ or ‘mother nature/planet earth’) (Benford & Snow 2000). Symbols and coded images are often used in these more abstract social movements (Eyerman 2006). Alternative food movements use a combination of the methods discussed above with a varying degree of abstracted others. Animals are humanized in animal welfare rights debates in agriculture, supported local economies becomes a moral code in local food marketing, distanced farmers are highlighted for empathy in Fair Trade discourses, and the heavily abstracted ‘environment’ is brought under a moral code similarly to global conservation movements (Paoliasso & Maloney 2000, Grimes 2005). Collective identity in local food has borders that are enforced and reinforced by perceived authenticity (Hall et al 2008, Guthman
Emotions are built on trust between producers and consumers (Sassatelli & Scott 2001). Ethics drive people to buy products with labels such as “no-hormones,” “antibiotic-free,” and “animal welfare approved” – only some of which are regulated and legitimized.

The level of public performance varies, however, in direct sales marketing. While consumption studies argues all consumption patterns are public performances, social movements that operate in the market system (with the “vote with your dollars” motif) are slightly more subversive than the social movements traditionally studied in social movement theory. Yet, even those alternative food provisioning movements that are intentionally isolating from the market system, such as community gardens, cooperatives, and homesteads, are performative in their absence (Kloppenberg et al, 1996). Other outlets for social change in the food system, such as fair trade and the organic movement, align more closely with traditional social movements, using methods of protests such as picketing\textsuperscript{i} and fighting for policy changes.\textsuperscript{ii}

Direct sales operate somewhere in between changing the larger food market system and completely abstaining from that system, in both regards following the collective behaviors analyzed by NSM theory. Collective identity is encouraged by asking community members to support their local farmer beyond a question of product quality (Winter 2003, Smither & Joseph 2009). The collective identity of a community and its environment then requires the interactions with those members (human and non-human) to fall under a moral code of society, thus arguing for animal welfare, abstaining from agricultural chemicals that damage the environment, and protecting future generations (Wolf et al. 2005, Wilk 2006, Foer 2009, McWilliams 2009, Hayes-Conroy
& Martin 2010). At least in theory, direct sales bring that “other” (and the incurred costs on those others) into your consciousness. The assumption is if the consumer not only sees the cost of production, but self-identifies those who incur those costs as belonging to the same group as himself, then his consumption practices will be more reflexive and ethical (Smithers & Joseph 2009).

The success of these social movements in market systems is controversial because the marketing strategy of branding challenges ideas of authenticity in social movements. While branding builds from ideas of association and belonging to the movement, the brand may overshadow the original social aims of the movement. In other words, the success of the alternative foods motivates big business to adopt the brand of alternative (e.g. green, small-scale, local) without necessarily adopting alternative or sustainable practices that align with movement goals (McWilliams 2009). The veil of branding, termed “greenwashing,” still hides production practices and the consumer cannot tell if the social change is achieved or just preformed (Dahl 2010, Morawicki 2012).

Organics, for instance, has been increasingly adopted by big agribusiness, elbowing out the small-scale farmers in a rush to secure a niche market. Big business has also cornered the material goods around the organic movement, such as organic fertilizer, thus making organic methods less of a possibility for the average small-scale farmer but positioning the products in a higher price point to earn a higher profit. Since organic methods are better for the health of the agricultural product and the environment, this structure further intensifies food and environmental injustice comparable to the injustice explored in political ecology (Robbins 2004). A similar political injustice is emerging in
local food, meaning local food and direct sales can either follow the same fate of organics or learn from that movement’s development and ultimately its institutionalization.

The commercialization and mass consumerism of local food and the alternative food movement faces criticism both outside the movement (McWilliams 2009) as well as from within (DeLind 2011). Tensions lie in the sustainability of these trends concerning the value of the original social goals and the authenticity of the social change, as the market system takes the reins of the local food social movement. The adoption of social movement emotions and branding in the larger market system shifts the power and the locus of control from those who initiated the movement to those who potentially profit from the movement trends. The initiators are the “critical communities” in social movements, and operate essentially as think tanks of innovation that create ideas and solutions then diffused into social movements through intentional and unintentional social networking (Rochen 1998). While traditional social movements discussed in NSM literature frame these social networks in terms of an individuals social capital, wherein movements move through a web interpersonal relationships and intimate connections created through public performances, market-based social change creates social networks through advertising campaigns and branding initiatives. Rochen argues these groups are external, while Matthew Reed, in a discussion of the organic movements, argues “most movements now contain them internally, often in institutional form” (Rochen 1998, Reed 2012:21). The distinctions between internal/external and institutional/crowd-sourced are important ones, as they may challenge the authenticity and success of the social change valued by movement participants, but also may potentially propel the movement forward (Allen 2004, Belasco 2005).
In the local food movement, the critical communities are internal and external: the “locavore,” who is committed to the 100-mile diet, the institution certifying the “California Grown Farmers’ Market,” or the “Fresh from Florida” campaign run by the Florida Department of Agriculture that is defining what local means. These groups straddle the line between internal and external, individual and institutional, therefore are a meeting ground between Rochen’s outside think tanks and Reed internal institutions. Business strategists and mass consumers push the envelope with varying levels of authentic commitment to the local food movement’s goals for social change. This expansion makes the movement too big for one critical community, but also gives the movement the power to change the hegemony of the current large-scale food system through multiple loci of control (Allen 2004, Belasco 2005).

A key part of the local food movement and direct agricultural networks that distinguish them from larger alternative food movements such as fair trade and organic is the physical reconnection of the consumer to the producer and the place of production (Eaton 2008). The concepts of a regional identity and other local constructs are often utilized in direct agriculture marketing schemes beyond markets, building from the affective value of knowing a source and then trusting the product. This is largely directed by consumer desires of place-making that is associated with increased quality, though may not necessitate that quality (Wilk 2006, Brunori 2007, Trubek and Bowen 2008).

This trust in a product and a person creates a social network of interpersonal relationships that serve to support an economic system of food provisioning. It results from an emphasis on ethical consumption through knowledge of the production. In light of social movement theory, the performance of this knowledge is perhaps more important
than the actual knowledge itself. Such conscientious consumption is a luxury, however, that can only be obtained through the use of a surplus of social, cultural, and economic capital on the part of the producer and the consumer. All are critical in an understanding of alternative food sourcing as a social movement, with an emphasis on equity that is explained best through a political economy critique of the market-based food system.

**Political Economy as Applied Critique**

While New Social Movement theory helps to explain how social change occurs, the critical lens of political economy can be used to analyse why social change is needed and to what end that change is needed. Political economy shows the inequalities present, while social movement theory analyzes how a change is achieved. In terms of direct sales of food, the focus of consumption studies unites these theoretical frameworks to change the food system in a market-based approach.

Political economy is a large theoretical field that spans across multiple disciplines. Generally, political economy examines “the allocation of scarce resources not only among competing ends, but also among competing people” (Boyce 2002:7). These resources can be physical (e.g. labor, land, and raw goods) or abstract (e.g. knowledge, authority, and social networks). Historically, political economy had a production-centered bias with an emphasis on acquiring capital (resources) for modes of production in order to gain power and produce more capital. However, in the anthropological study of mass consumption (that is, consumption of Western goods mediated by the mass production made capable through the industrial revolution, see Miller 1995), a political economy critique highlights the culturally determined symbolic value of objects acquired for the purpose of displaying status in a sea of similar objects with an emphasis on an
individual’s choice and access in the acquisition of material objects. Moreover, the accessibility of such objects is limited by the resources (social, environmental, and economic) that one possesses. The allocation of resources identified by Boyce, therefore, should be considered in regards to not only modes of production, but also patterns of consumption that are still determined based on competing ends and competing people – inequality exists along the entire spectrum of the chain of production (Carrier and Heyman 1997).

The study of food in particular crosses not only disciplinary lines but draws from a wide spectrum of political economic critiques. Political economy of the environment, the field in which James Boyce falls, is potentially useful in the study of food due to the unequal distribution of environmental degradation regarding pesticide use and other unsustainable agriculture practices. Political economy of obesity is also a new topic that brings health and nutrition to the forefront of food justice (Winston 2004). These approaches are all tangentially related to the research here and are addressed in the local food movement with varying degrees of success. For instance, the local food movement began with the moral aim of saving natural resources and environmental capital. Over time, proponents of the movement began touting the health benefits of this new diet, as well as the support for local economies. Equal access on all fronts is still being addressed in the movement as a whole and is a critical focus of my work. By analyzing the social inequalities in addition to the high economic barrier for participation that is already well known, I hope to contribute to this push for equality based on access economic, social, and environmental resources on behalf of producers and consumers.
The critical lens of political economy can help contribute to an understanding of the future of the local food movement as a social movement nationally and locally that is linked to market exchange, though conclusions in this field may be useful to social movement theory more broadly. For instance, social movements of all types must take into account inequality along many aspects of ‘capital’ (economic, environmental, social, and cultural), with each dimension presenting unique barriers, issues, and potential solutions for equality. In a social movement that heralds sustainability as an ultimate goal and moral motivation, it is especially pertinent to take into account all facets of potential inequality, as true sustainability must also be achieved on similar multiple levels: economic, social, cultural, and environmental.

The change driven by consumer demand is two-fold and covers a change in agriculture production practices as well as food consumption choices. While political economy has been traditionally attributed only to the sphere of production (Marx 2007[1867]), consumption studies in food and other fields have tried to imbue the consumer with political power with a strong reliance on the link to the cultural capital of taste, though even these debates are ultimately production-centered (Bourdieu 1977, Carrier and Heyman 1997, Goodman and Dupris 2002). The production of a product (in this case a food item) remains the focus because the value to the consumer is the knowledge of production practices and the connection with the producer. However, a political economic critique can highlight the unequal access of cultural knowledge (resource) that is dependent on social networking (capital). It is not easy to find producers, or de-alienated yourself from your food. The common phrase of “know your farmer, know your food,” on which direct sales is built becomes a tagline with no
direction on how to exactly go about it, nor with a clear demarcation of how much one needs to know in order to pass the bar and be a conscientious consumer. This knowing is often derived from one’s social circle.

Social circles are important in social change, as an application of social movement theory suggests that people are often recruited into a new movement through friends or family, so the adoption of local food procurement behaviors are dependent on existing social relations (Reed 2012). It follows that inclusion is dependent on one being surrounded by those who may have a propensity to be conscientious consumers. Multiple barriers and benefits to consumers buying directly from local farmers have been identified in the literature, including personal or one’s family’s health and well-being, environmental stewardship, community health, and personal knowledge (Cone & Myhre 2000).

Furthermore, these behaviors exist in a world of governance and regulation. The availability of economic choice is strongly affected by policies of the state, which have far-reaching social and economic consequences. An alternative food provisioning system can only be successful if the sociopolitical landscape supports the small farmer, allows the creation of local markets, and gives the opportunity for ALL consumers to purchase local goods freely and easily.

**Conclusion**

The future of direct sales and the local food movement is currently being determined not only by these political and social factors, but also by the agency of those most dedicated to the cause on national and local scales. This research applies a political economy critique to NSM theory in order to show how varying levels of capital
accessible to communities and individuals in a cultural setting affect an individual’s ability or desire to be included or excluded from a social movement such as direct sales marketing. The inequality inherent in a cultural group further affects a social movement, such as direct sales marketing, that is dependent on participation in a market system.

An anthropological contribution to the existing literature will connect social movement theory and political economic critique while providing a deeper understand of the sociocultural opportunities and implications of a direct sales system through engaged ethnographic methods. Through my own analysis of evolving dynamics in the currently direct sales movement in Central Florida, I seek to apply critical social theory to engaged social action in a young and growing local food community, thereby helping the progression of alternative food provisioning as well as contributing to the growing body of literature on the potential of alternative food systems for social change.
Chapter 3: Background:

Situating the Research in Geographic Place and Personal Space

The mission of the market is to be the ‘heart’ of St. Petersburg – the place, more than anywhere else, that people feel a strong sense of joyful connectedness and creative community. While great food, interesting crafts, and lively music are all wonderful elements of the market, this spirit of community is what really defines the market experience.

Market overview: www.saturdaymorningmarket.com

Embedded ethnographic work is complex and messy. As with most research endeavors, a researcher enters the work blindly, no matter the effort and care made towards preparation and preliminary research. Participant observation, by its very nature, is particularly susceptible to discoveries that can alter a project irreversibly. In this way, this research project is typical of an anthropological foray, despite it being conducted in my own backyard. The work, then, is a result of my own transformation from an observing student to a participating community member, from an academic to an activist, in a way not unlike the progression of the discipline as a whole over the last century or so. I began with the goal of documenting, progressed to a desire to fight for change, and now through the process of academic reflection, have undergone a theoretical shift that makes me appreciate the many facets of engaged work. This chapter frames this work as
a case study, personalizing the results to my own story and the particular social environment of Tampa Bay Florida.

I will start by introducing the research setting. This will situate the research in Tampa, Florida, a city in the Southeastern United States that is not usually associated with alternative food movements often identified with more environmentally conscientious regions in the Northeast or Northwest, exemplified by the metropolitan areas of Boston, New York, Chicago, or San Francisco. While Florida is a large agricultural economy, the local food movement is young and still growing. The history of the local food movement in Tampa Bay was not a focus of this work, so there are many unanswered questions regarding how the local food community reached this point. Providing historical context would undoubtedly only strengthen this work and is an aim of future research.

**Situating Local Food in Florida**

Local food in Florida is a small but growing movement. Florida is a thriving agricultural state that is dominated by big industrial agriculture. Florida was ranked worst state in the US for local food by Strolling of the Heifer’s 2012 Locavore Index and ranked above Texas for second worst in the same index in 2013 (Strolling 2013). These rankings ranked all 50 states and DC based on the availability of farmers’ markets, CSA, and food hubs per capita. However, between 2002-2007, Florida had an increase of small farms, family farms, and direct sales (see Table 1), all characteristics of a growing local food system, indicating a progression of local food in the state despite the lack of local food outlets compared to other states.
Table 1: USDA Agricultural Census Data Highlights for the State of Florida (USDA 2007a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farms by size 1-9 acres</td>
<td>10,267</td>
<td>12,184</td>
<td>18.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farms by size 10-29 acres</td>
<td>18,360</td>
<td>20,680</td>
<td>12.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farms by type: family/individual</td>
<td>37,119</td>
<td>39,792</td>
<td>7.20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value of agricultural products sold</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>directly to individuals for human</td>
<td>2,470 farms</td>
<td>3,181 farms</td>
<td>28.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consumption</td>
<td>($4,990/farm)</td>
<td>($6,087/farm)</td>
<td>(21.98%/farm)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Currently, local food in Florida is institutionalized in two ways: an official top-down state government driven approach and a more community-based organization. The most prominent of the two is the Fresh from Florida campaign run by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. This state-level marketing effort began with the purpose of branding Florida products primarily for export; while it is now helping brand Florida products within state lines, it is still skewed to the larger farms and primarily used to distinguish products on the retail shelf. There is less support for the small farm in the way of promotion, as some farmers in the Tampa Bay region need to promote in places other than the store shelf and reach potential customers through other means (namely the internet) Some farms do use the label at farm stands and open air markets (see Figure 5).
Figure 5: A Tampa Bay area organic farm promotes its locality by displaying the state-regulated branding label, "Fresh from Florida."

The second "local food" state-level institution is The Florida Association of Community Farmers’ Markets, a membership organization that, despite members’ best efforts, has been largely unsustainable in their Buy Local Florida campaign for regional farmers’ markets. Lofty goals presented final report published in 2008 have yet to be seen come to fruition; the website for the campaign is still in development (FACFM 2008, www.buylocalflorida.com 2013). Fresh from Florida logo can be seen at farms and farmers’ markets, though is mostly used in supermarkets all over the State of Florida and across the US. I have not yet determined the availability or saturation of the Buy Local campaign, or found any evidence in Tampa Bay of its dissemination.

These state level institutions define “local” as grown within the state of Florida (Gail Eggeman 2012, personal communication, FDASC 2013). The term “local” is highly contentious, with boundaries ranging from the 100-mile radius, the county line, a region within the state, the state line, a region of the country, or the country of origin. The most popular definition of “local”, perhaps the easiest to regulate and supply, is the state-line
local boundary. The problems of such state determined definition is shown in Strolling’s ranking referenced above. The organization accessed farmers’ markets, CSAs, and food hubs per state capita, and yet did not take into consideration distribution across the state - for instance, in urban centers where the local food movement is gaining the most momentum. Larger states like Florida and Texas have wide expanses of land without an organized farmers’ market or CSA, and yet these are not ‘local food’ deserts. Instead, direct sales are carried out in farm stands or community networks that are not captured in these numbers. For these reasons, “Local” is hard to define unambiguously.

Within the state of Florida, small scale, locally based organizations that are better able to handle local issues do exist in pockets, perhaps the most successful per capita being the college town of Gainesville, where the University of Florida is located. Larger cities in the more southern regions of the state, including Tampa Bay, Miami and Orlando, have small but growing local food communities. The best example in all these cities of an organized food group is the local branches of Slow Food USA. These smaller scale local organizations are not institutionalized regulators of local food, like those that exist in California, but rather provide some local support for cultivating local food. Several restaurants in major cities of Florida – and the US – are opening that claim to source locally when possible, though how each company or organization defines local is hard to determine (see Appendix A for a list of locally sourcing restaurants in Tampa Bay).

The growing season for the southern portion of Florida is November – May. New growing systems, such as hydroponics\textsuperscript{xiv} and aquaponics\textsuperscript{xv} (see figure 6), combined with traditional farming adaptations, such as greenhouses and hoop houses (Conner et al.
2009), can extend the growing season, and many vegetables, such as eggplant and okra, do survive the Florida heat. Even with the greatest care and service, the summer heat is grueling and many farms are not in operation, resulting in a sharp decrease of open markets during this period. Florida still has a long and fruitful season comparatively, and the bounty can be found at markets across the state.

Figure 6: A hydroponic growing system that uses liquid nutrients. Another option is to link the piping to a fish tank and turned into an aquaponic system, where fish meal is used to fertilize the water used in the growing system.

Situating Local Food in Tampa Bay

Tampa Bay is comprised of several city centers. This research focuses on the City of Tampa and Saint Petersburg, though farmers were interviewed from across Central Florida. There are several small boutiques and specialty stores, in addition to several restaurants, that are cropping up throughout the Bay area that source locally (see
Appendix A). The most visible way for consumers to buy locally, and one of the only ways to attempt to buy direct in the urban centers, is at an open-air market. There are dozens across the Bay area of varying sizes and with varying success rates. However, the majority of vendors at these unregulated markets are resellers. The vendors at farmers’ markets who are local farmers are restricted not by state-level definitions of local, but rather by their own capacity to commute no more than roughly two hours, if at all. The majority of farmers who sell at market only service one venue, while the majority of local farmers in the region abstain completely from the market sector and sell entirely on-site at their farm, or to local distributors.

The politics of “buying local” manifest in Tampa Bay with great tension, primarily due to a low supply of local – however one defines it - farmers who can go to market. Without an organization or institution campaigning for local food in a focused way, there is not agreed upon definition of local. Local farmers are then limited more by their capacity to go to market and supply product directly to the consumer, rather than limits of politicalized geographical boundaries. Those who are most dedicated to the local food lifestyle buy directly from farmers on site at the farm or join a CSA, therefore the local boundary is determined by the consumers’ ability to travel and transport the fresh food produce or meat home, rather than a social rule dictating whether the product is “local enough.”

The local organization that has the strongest public voice in “buying local” campaign is “Keep Saint Petersburg Local,” “a non-profit organization, affiliated with the American Independent Business Alliance, working to build a thriving local economy and a unique community […] by nurturing connections for and acting as the voice of locally-
owned, independent businesses and by raising awareness of the importance of buying local” (Keep Saint Petersburg Local 2013). The organization’s emphasis on business means restaurants (that may or may not source locally) benefit more than farmers directly from the organization’s efforts. However, the campaign is very prominent in the City of Saint Petersburg, has supported the Saturday Morning Market, and has increased public awareness of buying locally, therefore the local food movement has benefitted tangentially, if not directly. Notably, this further emphasizes the complex network in which direct sales is entangled – not only in the local food movement, but also in larger social movements with similar foci.

The number of markets and the consumer demand for more far outweigh the supply of produce by small-scale farmers. New markets are opening on a rolling basis throughout the Bay area – at least three new open-air markets opened just in the last year, though there is no indication that local farmers are becoming be able to sell at markets. Distributors, sometimes incorporating produce from small-scale farmers in the region, fill these gaps. If the product is grown in state lines, resellers can mark it as local, without clearly identifying the farm from which it was sourced and still using distribution methods that typify the modern industrial system, thus acting against some of the benefits suggested by the local food movement. Resellers are often not clearly distinguished from farmers-as-vendors at Tampa Bay area farmers’ markets.

The majority of the open-air markets (it is important to note they are not called ‘farmers’ markets’) in the Tampa Bay area are more properly termed ‘hybrid markets.’ Local crafters and artists often outnumber produce vendors and are joined by vendors selling boutique soaps, lotions, pastas, chocolates, and other local, organic, or natural
premium products. In addition, hybrid markets are big destinations for lunch because of
the smorgasbord of prepared snacks, meals, breads, and other baked goods. Tables and
chairs are set up in front of live music and bowls of water are left out for well-behaved
dogs.

There are dozens of open-air markets, fresh markets, and community markets all
over Tampa Bay. Nearly all markets are set up either downtown or at city centers over
the weekend, to draw visitors to shopping districts. Several of them are operated under
one entity, “Tampa Bay Markets,” and are held at high-end open-air shopping centers in
the Bay area. In addition to the farmers’ markets, there are a handful of CSAs open to the
public, widely ranging in acreage and membership base and dotted through both the
urban and rural regions of Tampa Bay.

The direct agriculture networking system is further complicated by a series of
local food adapters beyond the open-air markets who are trying to create new niche
markets, business models, and marketing strategies. These brick and mortar
establishments open along major roads and adopt a motif of a farm stand but are actually
resell outlets that may or may not source locally. Sometimes these small stores open in
food deserts to bring fresh food to urban centers on a more regular basis than an open-air
market, therefore have their own very legitimate ethical considerations and fulfill real
community needs. However, they do operate in competition with local food and create a
marketing landscape in which the consumer is not able to distinguish farmer from
reseller.

To add to the complex local food sourcing movement, buying clubs and produce
delivery companies are increasing in popularity, often with more of a focus on organic
than local, and bending to the need of the consumer for healthy eating to be convenient. This can potentially confuse consumers who wish to buy organic and local, and can compete with local producers who use organic methods but may not be certified organic, thus excluding them from these clubs. Buying clubs operate in neighborhoods where a small group of people source from farmers or local distributors and then arrange a pick up location close to home for other community members to purchase those items. Produce delivery companies deliver fresh food (local, organic, or conventional depending on the company) to a consumer’s door. These arrangements help make healthy eating – defined in a variety of ways – convenient and potentially cheaper to the consumer by using a distribution method of wholesale and bring the product to the consumer. In these systems, the produces’ benefits are dictated by the practices of the company or community organizers, and vary with each organization.

Local eating is now becoming popular in restaurants across the country, and Tampa Bay is no exception. “Sourcing locally when possible” is a caveat of many local restaurants, who are jumping on the bandwagon with elite “foodie” menus and valet parking in the trendiest parts of town. In these instances, consumers believe they are supporting local food and local farmers, but there is much more to the story.

These examples show the many levels of local food in Tampa Bay, with power of market control fluctuating between producers, consumers, and distributors in each system. Some systems are limited by the supply of specific production practices, while others are driven by consumer demand. These all operate within a capitalist market system, but differing levels of adherence to the modern industrialized agriculture market system – most notably in the role of distributor. Direct sales, the focus of this research, is
the ideal system of the original local food goals, however as the market system has adopted the local food trend, the movement has begun to compromise local food ideals for the sake of a successfully marketable brand. The contradictions and compromises of trying to stay true to the locavore ideal while being economically successful have been met with varying levels of success and acceptance by those within the local food movement, but have also expanded the movement to be more appealing to the mass consumer. The contradictions of these compromises, and how to stay true to the locavore ideal while operating within a sustainable market system, became the emerging focus of this work as those contradictions came to light.

**Situating the Researcher**

This research is a result of a slowly growing but now deeply engaging investment in the local food community in Tampa Bay, Florida. My experience began in January 2012. For four months, I visited numerous farms and farmers’ markets for an internship with RealTimeFarms.com, a crowd-sourced online food guide that wants to increase food transparency by documenting the food web regionally, nationally, and internationally (RTF 2012). Their motto, “know your farmer, know your food,” shows the importance of the tie between social systems and consumption patterns, while their food web, allowing you to trace food from farm to plate, highlights the political and economic realities of the modern food system (see Figure 7).
During that time, I also began volunteering at a local CSA, inspired by a colleague completing his own thesis work at the farm and empowered by the food-centered internship experience. A little luck and an outgoing personality landed me a position running the information booth and small market stand for the farm within weeks. I soon found myself firmly indoctrinated into the local food culture as I managed my new role as a point of contact for the farm for visitors and members. Since August 2012, I have served as the event coordinator for this CSA, organizing and promoting educational and outreach events both on and off site. This position has given me the perspective of an insider and afforded me the social capital to speak knowledgably to my informants about farm operations and local food politics. I still volunteer on the farm team as much as possible to keep learning how to grow produce and care for food, farmers, and others.

As I began the research for this thesis work, I became a more active local food consumer. I drove two hours to buy local pork, scoured the markets to find the local farmer in a sea of resellers, juggled two part time jobs and school while still trying to eat healthy and local; these are experiences that can only be lived – their everydayness
making them hard to communicate but even more important to understand (Giard et al 1998). I tell my own story along with those of my informants to provide context, close the gaps between strange and familiar, and to share the narrative experience of a newcomer in this rapidly growing, but still hard to traverse, field of a social movement.

Through all these lived experiences, my personal goals, and thus my research aims, changed. Rather than simply asking people questions about their lives, their motivations, and their behaviors, I began to converse with community members, compare experiences, debate opinions, and share behaviors. Just as breaking bread brings communities together, our communal speaking of food, cultivating it, and eating it strengthened my bond with the community. In time, the line between them and me became blurry, then non-existent.

Originally, I sought to establish a definition of authenticity in local food and examine how social systems were utilized to achieve an authentic branding of farms, farmers, and farmers’ markets. Through the course of this research, I realized the local food market system in Tampa is not clearly defined itself, nor is there a unified community within this market system; indeed, there are larger dynamics at play in the realm of social networking, governmental regulation, and the economic system. Authentic representation – which is still an issue that is being hammered out in this loosely bound community - is just one part of how the movement is sustained, boundaries are maintained, and movement participants operate within the group. Furthermore, as I spoke with farmers and visited markets in the region, I soon realized that the various players have different abilities, accesses, priorities, and opportunities. I noticed the many
sources of inequity that allow some citizens (producers and consumer) to participate in direct agriculture sales, while excluding others from joining this alternative system.

As a result, I am now focusing my work on local food justice, defined through a political economy critique. Questions of authenticity are dependent on these varying levels of power as movement participants struggle to define and control the future of the movement. What is defined as authentic cannot be captured in real time, as this contentious political sphere is continuously challenging. Consumers and producers are constantly changing those definitions in their personal lives and in the market place. Therefore, these power relations are critical to understand the future of the movement. As authenticity and branding change in this dynamic movement, the power struggle remains constant and it is through understanding these power relations and, as this paper discusses, an individual’s access to resources such as social capital that we can begin to understand the path this movement will take, and guide it along that path to an increased level of equity for all of those who wish to participate in the local food movement.

By reframing the focus to address food justice, my research questions broadened as I completed my fieldwork. I found myself transitioning from a researcher to an activist, struggling to maintain a balanced approach and remain conscious of my dual role as citizen and researcher. The longer I worked in the field, literally and figuratively, the more I felt committed to the cause and wanted to fight for my informants: the local farmers and market managers struggling to put food on their own tables and make a difference in their communities. My research became less about answering specific academic questions and more about finding real-world solutions using theoretical
Throughout the process, I sought to remain critical even as I engaged in an activist role.

**Situating the Research Methods**

My embodied experiences of chasing chickens, being chased by pigs, pulling weeds, and baking in the sun have filled my field notes like a diary. Most jarring to me, however, as I delved deeper into the local food community, was how much there was to learn about something already so intimate to my life: food. As I tried to navigate the field myself, I learned exactly what it was like to try to buy direct, eat local, and follow strict dietary guidelines. I tried to eat only what I bought directly from farmers for a week in order to further enlighten my work. All I learned was the impossibility of that task in Central Florida, even in the peak of season. Elements of my research border on the type of autoethnographic methods that are becoming more popular in food studies, particularly on topics such as fasting (Black 2012), cooking (Brady 2011) and eating (Chez 2011), yet slightly beyond the reflexive ethnography well established in the broader field of anthropology due to the embodied nature of the work, including my role as an active member of the local food system in my position at a local CSA (Marcus and Fischer 1999, Foley 2002, Davies 2008).

Through the course of this work, I began as a researcher and became an activist - going even farther than Sol Tax’s (1958) action anthropology, in which the researcher is but an educated voice for the community, whose members control the reigns with the researchers advice (Rylko-Bauer 2006). In activist anthropology, the researcher is not merely an advocate but an active player in the fight. Though controversial, this method has many supporters, perhaps most prominently in environmental anthropology.
(Berglund 1998, Brosius 1999). “At the end of the day, activist scholars must embrace
two quite distinct sets of objectives and forms of accountability, and they must negotiate
the often considerable tensions between them” (Hale 2008:105).

Perhaps the best example of activist anthropology in the subfield of the
anthropology of food is Laura DeLind’s work on local food systems and civic agriculture
– topics she studied for years while also establishing her own CSA (DeLind 1999, 2000,
2006, DeLind & Bingen 2008). She is a valued scholar and respected activist who
embraced both worlds in her work. When she makes claims such as, “as the local food
movement grows more popular, the public-at-large is not being asked to re-connect to
context—to the soil, to work (and labor), to history, or to place—but to self-interest and
personal appetite,” she shows her theoretical critique as well as her commitment to the
values of the movement and her passion for its success (DeLind 2011:279). Her scholarly
critiques help progress the movement, while her activist methods provide a path for
young researchers to follow, though it is not an easy route. The difficulties make the
work all the more important to practice.
I try to pick a cucumber, jerking my hand back at the unexpected prick of the surprisingly rough skin. Cucumbers are thorny? In this work, I am constantly reminded of how little I actually know about things I experience and consume every day. “Where did you find the help?” I hear an apprentice joke to the farm manager. “And when is she coming back?” The young apprentices here are jovial and carefree, but dedicated to their jobs. The drudgery of daily tasks is tempered by the ease in their performance, taking time to joke and laugh, communing over the chores of planting, weeding, and harvesting. The truth is, I love to get my hands dirty as often as possible during these visits and help out as much as possible in remedial tasks. The learning curve is steep, but every little bit helps.

The story above describes my early experiences ‘down on the farm,’ highlighting the disjunction between the average consumer (myself at the beginning of this work) and the engaged consumer (myself at the end of this research), and the value not only of “paying back” an informant by lending a hand, but also the value inherent in an embodied approach to research, a trend in the field already well established by the turn of the last century as noted by Turner (2000): “In relation to ethnographic fieldwork, it is now widely accepted that the anthropologist can no longer be seen as an observer recording
social facts and processes but must be seen as an active, situated, participant in the
collection of accounts and representations” (51). My knowledge is thus situated in the
following section, leading into a discussion of embodied experiences in activist
anthropology.

My research methods include a mixed methods approach with transparent
sampling methods and a “convenience sample,” often utilizing snowball sampling
(Bernard 2006). I collected qualitative and quantitative data from producers and
consumers in the direct sales community of Tampa Bay, Florida while also joining the
movement myself. In this chapter, a brief background on my chosen methodology will be
followed by an explanation of my data collection and analysis methods.

**Research Design**

The research for this thesis was conducted following IRB approval in August
2012 and continued through the peak of the growing season until March 2013 (See
Appendix A). Methods included eight (8) open-ended interviews with farmers and a
market manager, intercept surveys of 100 market patrons, participant observations at
markets, fairs, and farms, and embodied experiences in the field and at outreach events.
The informants were divided, both in collection and analysis, by their position in the
chain of production (i.e. producers vs. consumers), in order to define the social
movement as an economic exchange and to understand the unique barriers, benefits,
motivations, and access presented at each stage. The design of the research, limited in
time and breadth, created the unintentional dimension of producer participants being the
critical community and deeply committed to, or at least actively participating in, the local
food and direct sales movement, with consumer participants less committed to, or at least less actively involved in, the movement.

In addition to a mixed methods approach, this research also stretches across multiple levels in the chain of food production. The role in this chain is highlighted in the findings, as the main purpose of this new local food movement is to decrease the distance between producers and consumers. However, each of the groups has varying roles in the movement and unique roles. For this reason, I have maintained my sample as two distinct populations: Producers and Consumers. The data collection discussion will follow this divide; in each section I will discuss recruitment, describe the sample recruited, and then expand on the methods used in that population. Lastly, a discussion of participant observation shows how I tried to bridge the distance in an active and critical engagement with each population.

**Data Collection: Producers**

**Recruitment**

Building from relationships established in my preliminary work in the local food community, I recruited farmers with whom I had built a rapport through site visits and on-going communication. I specifically targeted people who had expressed interest in being socially and politically active in the local food community and increasing communication in the region to build a stronger social network. This intentionally targeted sampling isolated farmers that were receptive to being interviewed, had personally invested interests and agendas, and were comfortable disclosing to me their business strategies, personal beliefs, and political and social relations with other members of the local food community.
My inclusion variables were farmers at small-scale (defined by the USDA as less that $250,000 in annual sales), family farms with less than five paid staffers and who sold products they harvested directly to individuals for human consumption. The CSA where I work was excluded from this research because, while it sells produce directly to individuals, it is an independently operated 501c3 non-profit farm and educational center; therefore the business operations of the farm are not profit-oriented and are run by a board of directors, rather than an individual owner or family, and the focus is split between agricultural endeavors and agricultural education. This farm also hires multiple staff members on a rotating basis. The CSA also operated a small weekly market, where I conducted some participant observation with approval from the Executive Director.

Selected farmers were recruited through email and introduced to the research (its methods, aims, and outcomes) through a digital recruitment letter (see Appendix A). One farmer who was emailed did not respond to the initial email or a follow up email. All other farmers who were recruited agreed to participate, though a series of scheduling conflicts prevented another from participating. A total of seven farmers from five farms and participated.

Market managers were recruited in the same manner but with far less success. Since I had no existing relationships with market managers, I recruited market managers from the largest markets within an hour drive of my home. Five managers were contacted who operated roughly nine markets; four managers did not respond to initial or follow-up emails. One market manager participated. A total of eight producers took part in the study.
After agreeing to take part in the research, participants were emailed a copy of the informed consent for their review, which was also reviewed in person before the interview began. From the beginning, I offered to volunteer at the farm and the market as a thank you for participating, though participants were not otherwise compensated for their time. One farm accepted this offer; I harvested a few items and helped set up the market stand. I also returned the favor in other exchanges, either by sharing photos I took at the farm, or helping at outreach events, for two other farms.

**Sample**

A total of seven farmers from five farms and one market manager were interviewed using open-ended interviews (Bernard 2006); at two farms I interviewed each partner of a married couple who owned and operated the farm. The farmers ranged widely in age but all had been farming for less than ten years. One farmer was a recent college graduate and the other six had careers prior to establishing farms. The same six came from farming families, though not all were raised on farms, and were the primary owners/operators of the farms. The young college graduate, who was a hired staff member at a farm, was the only participant with formal training in farming, holding a bachelors in horticulture sciences specializing in organic crop production, though most participants held a bachelor’s degree of some kind. The youngest participant was the only participant without children; only one participant had a child, an 18-year-old daughter, who was interested in farming.

The farms, as determined by the inclusion variables, were all small-scale farms operated by an individual or a married couple. They were all 20 acres or less and had been in operation less than ten years. Of the five farms, two were hydroponic produce
farms, two were animal husbandry farms, and one grew produce hydroponically and traditionally in addition to raising animals. I did not collect sales information, but the acreage suggests that they fit into the USDA guideline of a small-scale farm (less than $250,000 annual sales). While diverse in crop production and production practices, all the farms I visited were small-scale family farms with only a few hired hands, if at all.

The market manager that participated in this research has been very active in the local food movement. She has been involved with the market since its establishment in the 1990s and has been the manager for several years. She also is active in various other local food organizations in the area and is exploring options of establishing a food hub in the area.

*In depth, Open-ended Interviews.*

I developed the interview guide based on my research questions concerning barriers/benefits of participation, requirements for integration, the role of governmental regulation, and the future of the movement (see Appendix B for a sample interview guide). The interviews were designed to last about an hour, in order to maximize the depth of the interview while not requiring too much on the part of the informant, as they were not compensated for their time.

*Data Collection: Consumers*

*Recruitment*

The market managed by one of my participants was used for consumer surveying, with her approval. No other markets were recruited for consumer survey data collection due to their lack of response to prior invitations to participate. Market patrons were recruited in person at the market at exit locations. Inclusion criteria were adult (visually
determined to be 18+) patrons who were exiting the market visibly carry produce. Since only patrons who were *visibly* carry produce were intercepted for the survey, the survey was skewed to those using clear plastic bags. Patrons carrying reusable bags were only approached if produce (usually large greens) were visible from the top of the bag, or if the shopper was seen putting produce into a bag. Recruitment was held on four Saturdays through February and March and at multiple times throughout the day in order to gain a more diverse sample. A total of 154 patrons were approached with 100 agreeing to participate.

*Sample*

No descriptive information was collected from the survey participants. The market where I conducted the surveys is a year-round hybrid market that was founded in 2002. It is the largest one-day-a-week fresh market in the Southeast, with an estimated 8,000 – 10,000 visitors per week.

*Intercept Surveys.*

Surveys were conducted at the market in order to gain information on individual motivations of market patrons buying produce, how individuals learn about the market and decide which vendors to shop once they are at the market, how patrons perceive the market as a whole, and whether produce is the primary reason for attending the market as a means to answer all four research questions (see Appendix C).

Surveys, that included multiple choice, yes/no, and open-ended questions, were given orally by the researcher and averaged less than five minutes to complete. No identifying information was collected other than the zip code of the participant for the market’s informational purposes. The survey was developed through discussions with the
market manager and other members of the board and was approved by the market board before data collection began. I was the sole data collector in this process and I wore a nametag with the market’s logo identifying me as a market representative and a USF student. No participant was compensated for his/her time.

**Data Collection: Producing, Consuming (Participant Observation; Observation Participation)**

Participant observation further added to this mixed methods approach. In this methodology, I am most influenced by the work of and Bernard (2006) who emphasizes the purpose of participant observation that “puts you where the action is and lets you collect data” (344). Even with full immersion, it is necessary to take a break to “intellectualize” the material (Bernard 2006:382, see also Schensul et al. 1999:92). My immersion as a member of the group was tempered by attempting to join multiple populations (producers and consumers) at once, as well as the unique changes of doing anthropology at home, within a community in which I already live, work, and attend school. But my work was extensive. In addition to the four days of data collection at the market, totaling about 20 hours, I also spent an additional 15 hours at the market interacting with the market volunteers, vendors, and patrons, taking photographs, and alternating between operating as a market volunteer and a market patron. I spent nearly 60 hours at the smaller market held on the farm where I work. No survey data was collected here due to low traffic with less than 1,000 patrons a week, but I interacted with the vendors (many of whom attended both markets), CSA members, and market patrons as a farm representative. I spent another 20 hours on site at farms and with farmers at outreach events beyond the interviewed time. This adds to a total of 110 hours spent
doing participant observation, with field notes being taken at the end of each day or the
day following time in the field. Notes were not taken during the experience in order to
truly engage with the community and the mobility of the tasks, though photos were taken
at every site. An analysis of a farm’s and market’s web presence also proved useful, as
this was the first impression of most potential customers at the farm and the market.

Beyond formal data collection, the deepest understanding in this research emerged from fully engaging with and becoming part of the community I was studying. As the work progressed, I found myself identifying less as a researcher, or observer, and more as an activist, or participant. At some point that cannot be discretely defined, my experience became more like the embodied experience of sociologist Loic Wacquan (2010), who coined the term ‘observant participation’ in regards to learning boxing. This goes beyond learning by doing, as Bernard (2006) describes participating observers, as it moves “to the point that the researcher’s own *habitus* aligns to the field” (Mears 2013:21).

Beyond clearly body-centered activities such as boxing and modeling, this level of embodiment can be adopted in the very physical labor required along the entire food production cycle (production, distribution/procurement, and consumption). As briefly depicted in the opening paragraph of this chapter, my time seeding, weeding, plowing, harvesting, and washing, as well as laughing, teasing, sweating, and sharing, has changed me from a city girl to something a least a little closer to a urban farmer, or at least a conscientious consumer with a little more social capital to play around in this new *habitus*.
Data Analysis

Following the pattern of the above section, I will discuss data analysis in three parts: producers, consumers, and myself as a participant in both roles.

Producers

Interview data was transcribed from audio recordings taking during the interviews with participants’ consent. I coded the transcripts with a focus on the four main themes of my research questions that grew out of my long-term involvement in the community. Material concerning each main theme: introduction to and navigation within the movement, social and cultural capital of participants in the movement, governmental regulation and support, and the future of the movement diversification and equity, was identified in the transcripts, with relevant sections then pulled out of each transcript and collated by theme.

These themes were coded using inductive reasoning in order to include all the data present. An excerpt from the codebook can be found in Appendix D. I was the only researcher on this project, and therefore the only analyst, so no inter-rater reliability can be tested. The rigor of the research is increased, though, due to my experience in the field, the expertise lent through active participation in the movement, and my knowledge of the material gained by personally conducting, transcribing, and thoroughly reading all data collected in this study.

Consumers

Quantitative survey data was input into SPSS and analyzed for descriptive statistics to gather information on rate of occurrences for each option in multiple choice and yes/no questions. Percentages, for instance, let us know how many produce
purchasers where motivated to visit the market primarily for produce-buying purposes. The population was divided along multiple variables, such as date and time of day, to identify any significant differences among these populations.

Qualitative survey data was entered into excel in order to organize it was the rest of the survey data. The qualitative material provided in questions regarding why specific purchase decisions were made were transferred to a word processor and coded for main themes. Themes were influenced by key benefits promoted by multiple markets’ promotional materials and in the literature on farmers’ markets.

*Participant Observation*

Participant observation served to supplement the data collected through other means. I perused my field notes carefully, with relevant material pulled to further support the findings, though this material was not coded and its inclusion in this report is not all-inclusive. I use embodied experiences and personal anecdotes in the findings to personalize the arguments and provide richer data for the material systematic collected and analyzed through more formal means.

*Data Handling*

The data from all methods are presented in the following chapters, framed by the four main themes of this report, identified in proceeding chapters and referred to again here, concluding with a discussion chapter identifying limitations of the study and suggestions for further study. In order to ensure confidentiality, a number identifies individuals in each population further. Since only one market manager was interviewed, she was categorized with producers for most of the themes in order to maintain anonymity of the data by not isolating the insight and opinions that participants shared.
with me, though sometimes her position as a manager is cited in order to highlight the unique challenges of this role. Due to the small community of local food and farmers in the Tampa Bay area, using names, even just first names, would unjustly identify my participants and may compromise my continued work, academic and activist, in the community. Consumers were assigned numbers from recruitment determined by order of survey completion and no further identifying information was obtained.
Chapter 4: Findings:

Navigating a Movement

“Only document farmers - people who are traceable. Our system can’t handle anything more complicated yet,” my supervisor tells me. I just got a new gig working for an online food guide and my job is to go to markets and find farmers. I thought this would be an enjoyable way to spend an afternoon, but there are more caveats than I imagined.

“How will I know?” I ask, perplexed. I thought all of those produce vendors at the markets were farmers.

“After a while you’ll be able to tell. But start with just asking them where the food comes from. If the answer is vague, you know they aren’t the farmer.”

You mean, I need to talk to them? I think but don’t dare ask. As a young anthropologist, you wouldn’t believe the fear I still have of talking to strangers. But after a while, I was in fact able to make an educated guess one way or another...

It is Not Easy Being Green

As a shiny-new member of the local food movement and an outsider of the direct agricultural network, I found my cultural capital as a graduate student and the education gained in coursework and literature reviews meant nothing in this community. No matter how much I knew about the political economy of food or the authenticity of local
farmers’ markets based on research conducted by others, I still struggled to identify local vendors at the markets I visited and had to learn how to play by the rules of this new social circle. As shown in the opening vignette, there is a clearly a definition of right and wrong, inclusion and exclusion, in direct sales networks. This chapter outlines the benefits and, more importantly, the challenges for consumers and producers of committing to a local food economy and buying/selling direct from producer to consumer. While some have charged local food as being accessible only to high-status community with disposable incomes, there is more than just economic capital at stake (Guthman 2008). A lack of access to valuable resources related to social networking and cultural knowledge also present barriers for participation, insurmountable to many.

The power of capital lies in its unequal distribution (Bourdieu 2008). The simple economic formula of supply and demand can be ascribed to any type of capital; the value lies in the low supply and the exclusivity of access to surplus. Systems of direct sales and local food, while operating through alternative networks, are still largely economically based, with food still having a monetary value and exchange. However, much more rides on the sustainability of this economic system. Social capital is shared capital among group members and is maintained by symbolic or material exchange between those members (Bourdieu 2008). Social capital “thus depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural, or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected” (Bourdieu 2008:51). Social capital relies on group solidarity and close personal relationship between community members (Kay 2005, Bourdieu 2008, Glowacki-Dudka et al. 2012).
Bourdieu (2008) defines cultural capital in the embodied state as the “dispositions of the mind and body” (47). Thus, cultural capital is the recognition, authority, power, or status associated with proper knowledge, in this case of food sourcing and preparation, that is required to operate successfully in a community. In the local food system, where the knowledge is gained through interactions with others in addition to Internet research (the primary source of information for the modern consumer), the cultural capital of an individual in the community is largely dependent on his/her social capital in the group.

In direct sales, and the local food movement more broadly, social and cultural capital are imperative for full and accurate adoption of the behavior. It is not just enough to shop at an open-air market, one must purchase from a farmer-as-vendor. Within the local food movement on the national level, the authenticity of buying local at a Wal-mart is debated; many argue one must have a relationship with the grower, while others emphasize the diminished food even if direct sales cannot be achieved. The requirements for direct sales and cultivating relationships involved time, knowledge, and a social network through which a person can gain access and correctly identify others (producers and consumers) in the movement. In my work, this value of the more ambiguous forms of capital was hard to identify and even harder to access. The movement and the critical community lack the group social capital, thus making it even more difficult for new members to tap into the network, since the network is loosely maintained and lacks group cohesion. Assessing the movement’s social capital in the first step, followed by increasing its access by new members. Consumers and producers each have their own barriers, benefits, and boundaries of inclusion. However, all sides agree the pinnacle of “knowing your food” and gaining the social and cultural capital required is to visit the
farm – visit the site of production as the ultimate attempt to de-alienate yourself from your producer (or your consumer) and participate in the movement authentically, ethically, and completely. This behavior holds its own set of barrier and benefits. Governmental regulation is attempting to supersede the need of the on-site farm visit by legitimizing authenticity and trying to become the trusted authority with a stamp of approval. While some consumers and producers value this regulation, others question its authority and the use of Foucauldian monitoring by an outside party. This chapter outlines each of these issues related to social capital and authority in the social movement of direct sales, backed by ethnographic material from producers and consumers, with the conclusion that nothing can replace the farm visit and a critique of the unequal opportunities to engaged in that most desired behavior.

Assessing and Accessing Social Capital

The local food movement in the Tampa Bay area has moderate group cohesion, similar to the findings of Glowacki-Dudka et al. (2012) in East Central Illinois. In my observations, vendors at markets knew each other well though were not necessarily friendly, and market managers from various markets were acquaintances, and even friends in some instances. Small groups of consumers exist within the broader Tampa Bay area, such as the community of a CSA, which are well established. Even in the broader area, most producers could name or otherwise identify nearly all of the producers (and their animals) in the region, especially the meat producers who frequent the same processors:
I'm at the processors to see when they get dropped off. I know the pig’s name. I’m like “look at that, that’s Patty Duke.” I know where she was born and she was sold to this farm and this farm... (Producer 8)

The social dimensions of markets solidify connections between producers and consumers, as well as between various consumers/community members (Smithers and Joseph 2009); processing plants and other social spaces with regular rates of interaction between members of a small local community with shared interests could potentially increase the social networking within a community of producers. However, there is a high degree of distrust between some farmers, at markets and at processing plants, and producers are not connected socially to each other on a substantial level. As in other regions in the US, the local farmers’ market itself it not necessarily a center for social change and political activism. “As evidenced by the respondents, not all members practiced ‘transparency’, not all shared the same philosophies and goals about the movement” (Glowacki-Dudka et al. 2012:9).

Glowacki-Dudka et al. conclude an increase in the vertical social capital of the local food community, or networking between producers, would help unite the movement as a whole. This idealized goal can only be attempted, however, by having a unified vision, shared values, and shared goals (Glowaski-Dudka 2012). This idea of a shared vision will be discussed further later in this manuscript. The current chapter discusses the individual social and cultural capital required to successfully join the movement in the community in Tampa Bay.

Individuals within the local food movement have widely variant levels of social capital, shown by the wide variance in the farmers’ market base size and span and
consumers’ wide spectrum of knowledge on local food in the survey data. However, individuals have a great deal of agency in this process, as long as they have the extra time (often afforded by high economic capital) and motivation to put in the work. While Bourdieu (2008) attributes the acquisition of cultural capital to free time, this can be true of social capital, as well. As with any type of investment, a small deficiency of resources can be overcome if the motivation is there to invest solely in one purpose (healthy eating) at the loss of other investments of time and money.

We have a pair that has been with us for five years now and they come all the way from [an hour away]. They started with a friend and they were rotating – making the trip every other week at least. And that friend dropped out and I thought for sure we would lose them, too, and they’re like: heck no. It’s important to them. It’s worth it. Other people don’t want to come from [20 minutes away]. It’s too far, because there’s a Wal-mart a whole lot closer. Some people think and they want to and they mean well – to eat better and to stick to those commitments, but they aren’t willing to do the work, I guess. (Producer 6)

Certainly some individuals do not have any resources to spare, no matter how they shift around their investments. In terms of food, a commodity that is still a basic sustenance linked to health and wellbeing, some say you have to make it work.

Either grow it yourself, buy from somebody that can trust is going to grow it right, or put yourself out there in front of the market and be prepared to pay your doctor. Your stuff is going to put you in the hospital because of the GMOS, the growth regulators, the antibiotics they are putting into
these animals because they are such a mass operation they have to do it.

(Producer 5)

When I began the preliminary work for this project in January 2012, I had a very low rate of social capital in the field. I did not know anyone in the community and relied heavily on web searches and the advice of my supervisor on the online food guide. This translated to a low cultural capital (knowledge, reputation, authority, or other power associated with high prestige) and was difficult to overcome, as is often the case in preliminary fieldwork (Schensul et al. 1999). As I worked my way into the community, building relationships with members – producers, consumers, market managers, buying club owners, and activists – I gained social capital. I utilized these connections to recruit participants for this study and recently used the connections I have made to attend a Slow Food Southeastern Region meeting in Atlanta, Georgia.

While I do not have the elite status of a producer (who controls the supply), or a market manager (with the power of distribution), I have earned a certain reputation among members outside of the local food community as being embedded in the culture. This has turned into my becoming the contact person to whom my friends refer their friends, manifesting itself into people I do not even know emailing me, “I hear you’re pretty deep into the local food stuff, and I’m thinking of moving into the area. Can we meet for coffee next time I visit? You probably know the best spots!” (anonymous, personal communication).

I now have a high cultural capital (at least in terms of local food knowledge) in my broader social network, due to the affiliation and social capital of being entrenched in this alternative social system. Cultural capital within the community, however, is
measured by what you know about growing food (identifying what is in season locally, knowing agricultural zones\textsuperscript{x}, what can or cannot be grown in Florida at all) in addition to where to find local food.

In order to successfully buy directly from producers, you need to be able to navigate the direct agricultural network. For consumers, this includes finding local producers, being able to distinguish them from resellers and distributors, having the time to invest in researching farmers and driving to farms, as well as understanding governmental rules and regulations regarding direct sales. Only once you navigate that political ground of a social network and cultural knowledge can you even begin the equally difficult process of eating (sourcing, cooking and preparing) a seasonally based diet. The social capital creates the access or opportunity for the cultural capital to then be built.

Farmers, managers, and activists who want to join this economic network must also have the social and cultural capital to commit to this lifestyle. In addition to marketing and promoting what is essentially a small business, utilizing social media and personal social networking to build a client base and a reputation, selling food directly requires a command of governmental protocol that is not taught in business school, including a delicate balance of navigating loopholes and relying on personal relationships to avoid governmental surveillance while still keeping to the letter of the law. The growing popularity of the local movement also creates new challenges as core farmers, farms, and markets attempt to break through the noise of those trying to take advantage of the newest trends (Leitch 2008).
Consumers in the Network

The local food movement draws people who are educated about the negative environmental, social, and economic affects of the modern food system, often rallied by the documentaries, investigative journalism, or popular books previously mentioned. As one farmer noted, “every time some new movie gets released I say, ‘oh good, can’t wait for the phone to ring tomorrow’ and it does” (Producer 6). The information that consumers receive, however, can be contradictory. People feel overwhelmed by the amount of information in the media concerning food production, food safety, governmental regulation, and, most importantly, what to do about it. As previously mentioned, there are many options for changing the modern, global food system; direct sales are just one route. Even along this route many options, as CSAs, multiple farmers’ markets, co-ops, and buying clubs, compete for the small (though growing) market share.

Many producers I interviewed identified resellers, who some tellingly called “leeches,” as the largest competition to a local farmer. While buying clubs, co-ops, and other farmers can be competition, resellers proved most threatening to producers, both at the markets and at roadside stands, as depicted in the following excerpts:

And a lot of people at these markets are resellers. I would say 90% of them are resellers. (Producer 2)

The vendors in the farmers’ market – 95% of them aren’t growing the stuff. They are going down to the produce market and they are buying it and bringing it up and everybody thinks “oh, that’s great – you have a
fresh ripe tomato. I’m buying local” because they’re in a farmers’ market and it’s two blocks away. (Producer 5)

[A reseller] was bringing stuff in from all around. And she was telling me she was having asparagus growing. And I told her, “Honey, you can’t do that.” We argued back and forth for a long time. [...] She would take off the rubber band that said “Peru” and put some cute raffia with a bow on it. So finally I took a picture of the sign, because it’s illegal to do stuff like that, I took a picture of the [...] Locally Grown Asparagus. (Producer 7)

They’re not collecting sales tax, not paying income tax, permit fees. They aren’t paying any insurance. [...] The amount of permitted and insurances and things that we have to purchase every year is in the thousands of dollars. I mean, again, the guy on the side of the road, he's not paying that. So of course our prices are going to be a little higher. [...] But when they understand what I'm telling them... For instance, I get $3 for a watermelon, ”Well they guy down the street is charging 2." And I say, "Yeah, when you get a bad watermelon and you go back the next day or fuss at him about it, he’s gone. When you come back the next day and fuss about it to me, I'll give you another one." (Producer 2)

One producer went so far as to leave a small event after the arrival of a reseller: I packed my stuff up and left. I don’t want to be associated with him. I don’t want to be next to him. (Producer 8)
This producer felt her own reputation as a producer would be threatened by being one of two vendors, when the other was a reseller. This feeling of infringement comes from a fear that consumers would not be able to tell the difference between the two. Producers feel the need to monitor the inclusion variables of who can sell in order to level the playing field as they vie for this small market share.

In this consumer sector, in which products are engorged with added value, it may seem impossible to distinguish between authentic and inauthentic value (Dare et al. 2013). It is difficult enough to even define those terms, but when I use to term “authentic” in this paper, I define it as an accurate representation of local food and direct sales. The authentic vendor is one who grows the food, or at least can accurately tell you who grows it and under what conditions/methods, in order to ensure the locality of the product. Often their image is embellished in order to better market themselves as farmers; this does not necessarily detract from the authenticity of the farmer-as-vendor (though does question the level of fetishism that remains even at farmers’ markets – see McCullen 2011). The authenticity is determined by the underlying aligned with facts, regardless of embellishment for consumption. The lack of authenticity does not derive from the commodification of the produce, but rather from a false presentation of a core identity, in this case the locality of the food item. As long as food is held in an economic system, even in a direct-sales scenario, it will always be a commodity.

The aim to de-fetishize food or de-alienate a consumer from the product is an impossible goal to reach; the appearance of the attempt is valuable in that it gives the consumer and the producer the social and cultural capital gained by trying to change the system. As previously discussed, the mantra of “know your farmer, know your food” is
as much a performance as it is a true desire to “know your food;” as much as creating a relationship as it is about learning agricultural practices. The performance is still a requirement for the social movement to progress, and is desired by consumers, as explained by this informant:

*If you buy from grower you meet them, talk to them, if they're a friendly vendor then it's more than just a buy/sell - it's a personal relationship.*

(Consumer 50)

The appearance of control that is achieved through these personal interactions is a performance to help propel the social movement, but is also a performance to ones self that translates to an agency over ones health, the environment, and the community. The agency afforded through knowledge and social capital is the important quality of this exchange. Knowledge of local food results in even more cultural capital due to the increased effort of acquiring it.

This control as performance is most clearly shown when a consumer displays a desire for knowing by shopping at a farm stand or by asking a vendor “Is this local?” without taking the further steps of finding out how that food was grown (e.g. Were pesticides used? Can you prove it is local? Are there fair working conditions? Is this a family farm?) to identity the sustainability of the food production. In order words, locality is just the beginning of the story, and even that is often branded with questionable authority and authenticity.

When first visiting farmers’ markets, motivated by wanting to eat locally, I was under the same false impression that all the produce sold was locally grown and sold by vendors. Much effort is made on the part of resellers and producers alike to create an
appearance, both in personal attire and booth presentation, of the “agrarian dream” (McCullen 2011). The exchange I had below with a local farmer discussing what a market manager asked her to do to her image shows just how far markets go to look the part:

- And, you know, you gotta do this with your booth and you gotta be prettier and it’s gotta be cuter, and braid your hair and all this other stuff. And I’m like, “Really? Have you seen these hands? Braiding is not going to happen.”

Did they really tell you to braid your hair?

- Oh, I hope they were kidding. But, you know, you need more color in your booth and stuff like that. (Producer 8)

This imagery, adopted by both producers and resellers, makes farmers’ markets a sea of tents and tables with cardboard labels and chalkboard signs – a sea of produce where heirloom tomatoes are lined up with fresh pineapples and Plant City strawberries. With some produce, like Ruskin tomatoes and Plant City strawberries where Florida town names are incorporated into signage as if identifying a breed, it is especially hard to discern the small-scale from the commercial, when they are all technically local, though with varying degrees of transparency.

For the producer quoted above, her hands (the ones that cannot braid) identified her as a grower. She went on to advise me: “just look at a farmers hands whenever you buy something” (Producer 8) This was echoed by another producer, after explaining his careful pruning of tomatoes, “that’s why I have these stains on my hands. They never get clean after that” (Producer 4). Other producers had various tips:
You start looking and seeing produce boxes, those boxes are coming from somewhere. You aren’t going to go out and buy produce boxes. I mean, you can, but it’s a situation where guys aren’t going to go buy that stuff.

(Producer 5)

If it’s all perfect, that’s your clue. You know, it’s only some humungous farm that’s putting out the perfect looking cucumber because the rest becomes other stuff. But when you’re growing it and that’s it, that’s all there is, you’re going to get funny looking cucumbers. (Producer 6).

Some markets have begun to distinguish growers from resellers through spatial orientation at the market (see Figure 8). The market manager I interviewed is driven by a passion for food transparency, though it is not a term she uses. “I just want clean food,” she tells me. This motivates her to research every farm allowed at the market with farm visits and close personal inspections.

People lie to me and I’ve learned enough. It’s the hard way kind of thing.

So I go and do what I can. I go to [local events] and listen to farmers talk and, you know, try to educate myself that way. (Market Manager)

This inspection process operates outside of the awareness of the market patron, but helps to meet the manager’s own personal values and where she hopes to see the local food movement go. At the market, she tries to educate her patrons and is looking into ways to further this goal.
Currently, market patrons have a low awareness of what is local and who are growers versus resellers. Of the 100 patrons I surveyed, local sourcing (buying local produce) was cited as often as supporting local business (family-operated resellers) in motivations for buying produce at the market. Many patrons, when asked why he or she purchased produce at the market, simply said, “support local,” almost as a mantra with no further description or explanation. Some patrons were aware of their lack of knowledge, saying:

*There is an illusion of it being fresher.* (Consumer 30)

*I come hoping it’s local, not all of it is.* (Consumer 49)

*I like to think it’s local.* (Consumer 52)

*It’s fresh, cheap, and local-ish.* (Consumer 77)

The deeper question of whether or not this is even a concern of the average market patron is beyond the scope of this project. For those patrons that are concerned,
the path to the necessary knowledge is not an easy one. It requires a social capital built by establishing a relationship with farmers, visiting the farm, having friends in the movement who can help you identify the authentic from the inauthentic, and creating a community with shared values and trust. This allows for the access and education that translates to a cultural capital based on an accurate understanding of authenticity in local food, the ability to identify seasonal and local products, and the ability to cook and properly consume local products (or any fresh goods, see Sutton 2006 for commentary on embodied learning in regards to food preparation). This education is another focus of my key informants.

Understanding locality and properly eating local, seasonal produce is a big barrier to the ‘eat local’ diet, and is being addressed by many of my informants, as shown by these quotes that emphasis the importance of educating the consumer:

[People] are like “I thought you had vegetables.” “Well,” I say, “They are just in the ground still. They are still growing.” So it’s always a process of education, most of the time. Or “how come you don’t have oranges?” People who are used to grocery stories. [...] people don’t understand it. Even North Florida has a different growing season from here. (Producer 7)

Sometimes we get members right off the bat are used to putting food up or eating seasonally, more along those lines. More often than not, no, but these last few have had that mindset already, which is kind of neat. The core members have also learned that when they’re getting a huge bag of broccoli wash it and put it up – freeze it or whatever. Do something with
it. So that in June when you want broccoli you have broccoli and it is as
good as going to the grocery store. You can eat the way you’re used to
eating. So those that learn do that, because otherwise what happens is
you’ve got a bunch of broccoli in your fridge and you’re sick of eating it.
[...] and that’s in their welcome packet – how to put up. How to freeze
vegetables and all that. And I put out recipes all the time. I’m big on that
one. I’ll tell them as we start doing something new, I’ll tell them it’s good
hot or cold – like arugula. Or when you give them radishes, “ok, don’t
forget, the greens are good too.” So I’m always sharing that kind of stuff
with them, too. (Producer 6)

Some of our members will come in and tell us, “I found a new recipe on
the internet and it was fabulous!” and we say, “ok, thanks, send it to us,
we’ll share it.” So the rest of our members get it. So it’s a pretty neat
thing, the CSA, because it is a sharing experience. (Producer 5)

Other farmers just want people to know where food comes from more generally,
providing an opportunity for city kids who are so removed from any food source that they
only associate food with grocery stores. What was once a normal knowledge base for
children is now an exclusive right to the elite few that have the opportunity to visit a
farm, any farm:

We’re here to educate. We do teach a lot, especially the kids, we focus on
the kids coming and experiencing this and telling them their strawberries
don’t really come from the back room of a grocery store. They start at a
farm. And it’s amazing how many kids don’t know that. Or they don’t know
"what part of the plant they eat. Just things that we take for granted that everybody knows, they don't know. So we do everything we can to educate them. (Producer 2)

This work with children in the local community of Tampa Bay is often done through schools, so these educational efforts also serve to strengthen networks and the total social capital of the community. Similar efforts are underway at other local farms, including the CSA where I work which has a strong educational component in its mission.

Consumers are motivated to join a direct sales marketing system for many reasons. However, a serious barrier to participation is knowledge of how, what, when and where to achieve the desired behavior of buying local. Social systems can help ease the transition, but mass consumers are relatively passive in this endeavor, as convenience is favored over health and wellbeing. Those are the fringes of joining the movement, displaying through specific buying behaviors, are pulled over by producers who are active in the larger community, constantly branch out their networks, and make the transition easy.

Producers in the Network

Increasing the vertical social capital among farmers – increasing social support up and down from the state level to the market level – is the biggest room for growth in creating better group cohesion in the local food movement of Tampa Bay, as identified by Glowacki-Dupka et al. (2012). As I will discuss further, there is little social support for small-scale farmers in their communities or from the governmental sector. To make up for this difference, farmers must build their own individual social networks. Those I
interview had mixed reactions to building a network of local farmers. Some producers support a pooling of resources, with at least a local directory to help consumers find other local, non-competing local products:

There are other little farms and we'll mention other little places we know and people send people there. But there's no cohesiveness about all of us getting together. [...] I think you lose if you don't get together everybody like-minded, like we are, because people ask me if there's any place I know where they can get fresh pig or fresh slaughter, and even that, we don't know. (Producer 3)

Other informants do not see the need to establish a stronger connection with other producers:

We're just too busy. I just don't need socialize it. We have a hard time socializing even with our own family. (Producer 6)

This is clearly a wide spectrum and there is room for compromise in working toward a goal of increasing social structure (and social capital) while not requiring more work on individuals who are already spread thin with regards to monetary and non-monetary resources. The biggest barrier to establishing such a network is a lack of a community or governmental leader to organize such an initiative. A wider sample needs be surveyed, as well, to test the readiness of the community and the feasibility of such a project.

Most of the farmers I spoke with did not feel threatened by other (“real”) farmers in the region, though many warned against people breaking into the business. “You don’t get rich being a farmer,” was such a ubiquitous comment in my interviews I cannot
ascribe it to one or two individuals. All farmers recommended diversifying as much as possible, including branching into agritourism and education, making value-added products such as jams, salsas, or preserved foods to add to your inventory, and growing a wide variety of produce/animals. Each of these options has its own limits in terms of access and capacity, some of which have been identified by Glowackie-Dupka et al. (2012).

There is little disagreement that the benefits of the social connection between producer and consumer are as important to the producers as it is to the consumers. For example, people shared the following:

_I was just by myself with tomatoes, going crazy pretty much. And then the market [started]. Now it finally means something to me. If I wasn’t doing the market, it would be very different for me to keep doing this because you gotta to get some sort of appreciation or see some kind of feedback on all your labor when you’re working in a greenhouse by yourself for a long time._ (Producer 4)

_I would love to do a party or a BBQ or something with all of our CSA members, because I think of them that way, like family, because I have that interaction with them._ (Producer 6)

Attending markets is not a viable option for most local producers who are on their own tending to the farm, such as this pig farmer discussed:

_If you’re not there all the time you can’t build a customer base. I don’t have a big enough herd to be there all the time – I have too big of a herd to be there all the time._ (Producer 8).
Two of the producers with whom I spoke built market stands on their farm to sell produce directly to consumers, strengthening that social connection even further by bringing consumers to the place of production (discussed further in the next section). Producers who sell online, on the other hand, must develop creative substitutes in their virtual interactions:

*I put pig pictures in my emails and stuff. [...] I think that has to be kind of a comforting way, a friendly way, rather than writing back in black ink and answering his questions directly. That is what I would want anyhow - to see a little bit of excitement about what you're doing - even if it's pigs’ smileys. So if it's over online then that's how I meet them. [...] most everybody is over the computer.* (Producer 1)

Though she doesn’t sell at markets, this producer insists on delivering all of her meat personally in order to guarantee a satisfied customer.

The translation of this social capital gained through strong personal relations into cultural capital based on reputation and authority does not follow as clearly for producers as it does for consumers. Producers, though they hold the power of supply (labor, land, and material/product), have a lot more to prove in an alternative economic system that is driven by reflexive (i.e. critical) consumption (Goodman and DuPuis 2002). The social capital gained by the direct sale can help give a producer the cultural capital of a good reputation (which then translates into economic capital of increased sales):

*I’m seeing that also with a lot of customers that come back. A lot of them*

*I’ve built that connection with them and I’m like talking to them and*
getting buddy-buddy and once I make that connection then they come back a lot. There’s a lot of return customers. (Producer 4)

This only works if a farmer can ‘properly’ operate under the social paradigms of direct sales, selling to the right people in the right way that will help the producer gain the trust of consumers and then recognition by word-of-mouth, the primary marketing tool for small-scale farmers. “Our customers are our best salespeople, without a doubt” (Producer 2).

When discussing how she recruits new CSA members, Producer 6 highlights the importance of successful long-term social and economic exchanges informed by her experience in the corporate world and her business training:

We have other customers that have been customers of ours [...] over the years and then they learn that we’re doing the CSA thing and they’re like, “Ok, sign me up.” They go, “We’ve been doing business with you for years, I don’t need a trial. Give me the contract. [...] We know how you guys do business.” (Producer 6)

She also recognized the benefits of a stronger social movement and the social capital of local food as it becomes more popular: “Word of mouth. That’s it. It’s funny because all these other things do it for us” (Producer 6). The ‘other things’ she is referencing are the media coverage of food safety scares, the food documentaries uncovering the perils of factory farming, and the health food trends such as the ‘eat kale’ movement. ‘Other things’ could also include the increase of farmers’ market and the popularity of CSAs nationwide, leading those who move to a new town to purposively
look for these food sources. As the reputation of local food increases, it drums up business for all who are associated with it.

Other businesses are more intentional in their marketing efforts, pushing the phenomenon of word-of-mouth further by tapping into the social capital of the large health and agriculture community. The resulting broader market base presents new outlets through which to market local food, not only farmers’ markets, but healthy living expos, state fairs, and gardening expos, such as this family farm:

> We try to do things in our marketing that takes us off our beaten path. So that people will learn about us. [...] People would never have ventured to [our road] now know about us and do come over. [...] So that's all part of our marketing plan, is to do things that are not on our beaten path because you never know. You can't do everything but you just pick and choose and see what works the best. (Producer 2)

The opportunity to venture off the beaten path and still target a niche market is only afforded due to the increasing acceptance and interest in local food as a healthy option (the high social and cultural capital of the movement).

The journey to build cultural capital is still not easy for those who are marketing their labor as a farmer, rather than their material supply of products. For this small farmer who does have the land or economic surplus to own a farm, he must wield his cultural capital gained by a college degree and a knowledge of social media in order to build his authority as a farmer and gain the recognition of other farmers (not an easy task in a community with low vertical social capital, or group cohesion), as he finds new ways to show his skills:
I made a bunch of other videos about my rabbits, and time lapses and things. I was doing it more because a lot of farm it’s hard to put on a resume things you’ve done unless you have pictures. So that’s why I started doing a log on my blog of what I’m doing, projects and things, to legitimize a little bit. So I can show people. “Well I was raising rabbits in my backyard.” That’s something you don’t want to just put on your resume, but if it’s a blog, “How to raise rabbits” then it looks legitimate.

(Producer 4)

Overall, these efforts build the social capital of the broader alternative social group, as well as individuals within the movement. In many ways it is the responsibility of the producers in this network to build business through social networking and consumer education. The producers, then, must be accessible to consumers and encourage on-going social interaction.

**On-site Farm Visits: Bringing consumer to producer**

The aim to reconnect consumers to producers, thus de-alienating the product from the producer, is achieved to some extent at farmers’ markets as long as the product is associated and the social and economic benefits are shared with the producer. The highest accolades in this fight to reconnect, though, are given to farm visits. Farm visits are encouraged and completed by those most committed to the movement and the alternative economy. These visits, in which the production place becomes a social space, serves to educate the consumer, de-fetishize the product, and increase the vertical social capital of the community.
The farm visit could be an entertaining and educational way to pass an afternoon. Farms attract a variety of people with a variety of goals that may or may not be related to research regarding food choice, as experienced by this farmer:

*That’s why we started charging for it, because it takes time. We’ve got some families that are just looking for something to do over the weekend and their kids have never seen a cow. We’ve got some that the kids start doing something in school and it sparks a talk at the dinner table and they start researching farms.* (Producer 6).

This can be an opportunity to make a connection, as these producers understand:

*I’ll tell them “You can come visit any time. You can have a tour, see how we do things. I can answer any questions.” [...] Often we have people who do a tour and buy a pet rabbit for the kids, or buy some eggs at least.* (Producer 6)

*Our hope is, when the kids come with the school, we teach them about the farm and all that stuff, and then hopefully the kids will get their parents to come so the kids can actually teach their parents about the farm.* (Producer 2)

The main purpose of the farm tour is to create a deeper connection between the consumer and the produce(r). According to one producer who runs a small CSA, “99% of the members take a tour” (Producer 5). The CSA member is the most dedicated of direct agricultural sales consumers, shown by the weekly commitment to visit the farm and pick up the share. The long-term relationship between the producer and the consumer at the site of production, wherein the farm is not only a production place but also a social place,
is really the ultimate goal for supporters of the local food movement, as shown by the words of another producer, who does not operate a CSA but has a strong community focus in his farm operations:

_We had this picnic area set up. People can come by whether they want to buy a vegetable or not, they can come use the picnic area. We don't ever charge for that. I will say there are not many people who take advantage of it, but they can and we encourage it. We've had a few birthday parties. We want this to be their farm as well as our farm. It's really how we present ourselves._ (Producer 2)

More than just building community, farm visits allow the most invested consumers to “know their food” as much as possible without growing it themselves (see Figure 9). These visits require the surplus in time and money for travel, the knowledge of finding farms, and the accessibility of reaching them, but there is a high pay-off in the opportunities for knowledge that are presented to optimize food transparency:

_You don't even have to guess what's in season when you come here. It's right there._ (Producer 3)

_We say, "come on, we'll go out there and show you how to pick the lettuce." "Oh, i don't want to pick it" "Well, you're gonna because they next time I might not be here and you'll need to know how to do it." And then they love it and they're back and they're bringing their friends._ (Producer 2)
The farm visits, much like the farmers’ markets, can be maximized for investigative purposes if you know what to look for, such as animal behavior that is indicative of past practices:

*At a grass-fed beef farm, take a bag of grain with ya. If all the cows come running, then they are not grass-fed.* (Producer 8)

Animal farms can be tricky, though, as depicted by the backlash of farm visits for one of the pig farmers I interviewed:

*I've had a couple of instances of private buyers who want to commit to buying local and stay here quite a while. And then they're ready to leave and I ask "what do you think?" and they say "I just love your pigs. I don’t think we can eat them."* (Producer 1)

All the farmers I interviewed encouraged farm visits, for better or for worse, though not all customers took advantage of this opportunity, and some community members who visited did not become customers. The owners of one farm in particular organized many community events at the farm, in an effort to promote themselves, but also to build community and to provide community members a shared social space to connect (serving much the same purpose as markets). The dual purpose of the local food movement – increasing healthy food access while also promoted community – shows the diversity in the movement’s aims. The next chapter outlines the role of labeling as a poor substitute for this social experience.
Figure 9: Part agritourism and part direct sales, you-pick systems allow consumers to have the freshest food possible short of growing it themselves while provided an unique experience for non-farming citizens.

**Stamps of Approval from Outside the Network**

Strong social capital depends on trust (Coleman 1990). But trust is a complex social issue, and cannot be simply defined even by Merriam-Webster. Among the multiple definitions are “assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something” and “dependence on something future or contingent.” These both imply a gap in knowledge, now or in the future, in which hope or belief is relied upon to predict a future outcome. Trust means a belief that I can predict the future based on what I know or believe about you. In food, the importance of trust has led in this country to high food standards in food safety, with designated bodies in the USDA and the FDA to secured the future of our food, where predictability can be quite low in the absence of these institutions. However, these controls are only required as an exceptionally increasing division of labor creates a global food system in which we rely on a “chain of strangers” to grow our food (Kjaernes and Torjusen 2012).
In small-scale alternative food systems, the trust in a farmer and the decommidification of the product by having the opportunity to visit the farm has superseded the trust that the common consumer in the US puts into governmental regulation. However, there are still many small-scale farmers who are certified by the USDA for organic foodstuffs, and many third-party label to verify everything from “naturally grown” to “humanly raised” and even “locally grown.” At farmers’ markets, the authority of governmental regulation and third party certification overlaps and intersects with the social capital of small-scale farmers.

One farm represented in my sample is USDA Certified Organic and another is Animal Welfare Approved (AWA), but I discussed food labels and certification with all 8 interview participants. The difference between third party and governmental regulated was only acknowledged by the farmer who is certified by AWA, while all farmers had something to say about USDA certified Organic, a topic that was prominent in the survey data, as well. Their opinions are presented here, specifically in regards to why they are not certified and their thoughts on governmental regulation. The following chapter then explores what this may mean as the movement becomes larger.

Role of Regulation

Regulations exist for many reasons related to safely and equality. In food sales, those rules not only save lives but, with equal enforcement, give those who are following the rules a fair shot at the market. My informants discussed it this way:

Well every one of those rules is invented because x amount of people died.

It’s just like stop signs, stoplights and stuff. There’s a reason for this stuff.

If those aren’t in place, then there’s nothing to stop someone from picking
up a piece of road kill, cutting it up, putting it in a cooler, and selling it out off their pick up truck. […] I know farmers that are killing their own hogs on farms, scalding it, cleaning it up, and giving it other guys, who are selling it. It drives me crazy because when they get caught, the rest of us go under a microscope. (Producer 8)

What I would like to see regulated is the roadside stands that pop up on the weekend And of course they set up on the weekend. They know the government inspectors aren't going to work. The laws are seven day a week laws. Why aren't the inspectors worked seven days a week? Granted you can't expect someone to work seven days a week, but one weekend a month? Rotate it around so that these people won't do it. But you know, it's not a level playing field as far as I'm concerned. (Producer 2)

In local food and other small-scale operations, these rules are hard to enforce and direct sales can easily fly under the radar of governmental regulation. The cottage law in the State of Florida allows some breathing room for small farmers to add value-added products, while the politics of dairy being sold for “pet consumption only” requires a degree of insider knowledge to discern. The following discussion is divided between USDA, or state level regulation, and Animal Welfare Approved, or third party regulation.

**USDA**

The United States Department of Agriculture has many missions including, but not limited to, agriculture, health and nutrition, food security, and environmental conservation. At issue here is the perception of the certification process of USDA-certified meat and USDA Certified Organic, rather than the logistics of certification
When speaking strictly about health standards, USDA is a trusted regulator to check for food-borne illnesses and food safety, as this farmer argues:

*If I’m at the farmers’ market and that stuff didn’t go through USDA processing, if we don’t have authorization that animal is fit for human consumption... So, the way they have those laws set, I’m actually okay with. I take it to the USDA processor. [...] It’s all sealed in plastic, no air can get to it – air is the biggest thing with any kind of contamination – and everybody’s happy. [...] I sort [the meat] into bags and I get it into [customers’] freezers. I get it out of my hands. I don’t want the responsibility. We’ve got liability here with live animals. I don’t need liability with raw meat. [...] I’m not a food service person. I’m a farmer.*

*Those two are pretty far removed. (Producer 8)*

Certified Organic, however, is a step above simple food safety. The USDA label, which is regulated by independent agents, is meant to guarantee the food is grown using organic methods. However, there is controversy on how those standards are set and how effective they are at their goals:

*That label is become meaningless more and more anyway, you know? Every time Monsanto decides they need a little more chemical to grow their organic tomatoes, they get it approved. And all of a sudden its OMRI approved. Well, bull, you know? It’s still a bad chemical. That’s all there is to it. [...] So why should we spend the time and the money investing in that when it really doesn’t mean anything anyway?” And it*
doesn’t! You can just be a member of that little group by paying your fees, essentially. (Producer 6)

Now there are so many ways to get around what "organic" means that people aren't trusting that label like they used to. (Producer 1)

As can be seen in the quote above, there is a great level of distrust when it comes to the organic label, with farmers believing any entity with enough money can buy off the government to get on the list – to have either their agricultural treatment products certified or their foodstuffs/prepared foods One informant told me, “I think the government hijacked the certification” (producer 7). Many others, both among those I interviewed and more colloquially in my participant observation, claimed they used methods “beyond organic,” implying the organic label does not go far enough to be all natural or pesticide free. Others implied or outright stated the treatment products (pesticides, fertilizers, feed, etc.) approved by the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) contained too many chemicals to be trusted or used for sustainable agriculture. However, while some claim the organic label does not go far enough, others believe the regulations go too far in limiting the use of some GM crops that are conducive to more sustainable agricultural methods, as discussed by this informant:

At first I was pretty on board with [organic] and then I was like, “oh wow there is a lot of ridiculous bullshit.” Some of these things are ridiculous. [I knew a man] doing a lot of genetic modification work, but he was doing it for drought resistance and really cool things. I was like “this stuff has a lot of potential.” It not dangerous. It can be used for a lot. I can’t believe organic is just outright canning this, when it’s not really using chemicals.
It could be more sustainable. That among so many of their other little regulations. But in the end, I do like buying organic, because I do know there is a lot of chemicals in agriculture and even in organic, when you buy produce, you still don’t know exactly how is was being handled. There’s so many people that handle a product before it reaches to the end.

(Producer 4)

When looking at the history of the organic movement, the aims of the organic supports were much larger than what the government now regulates (DeLind 2000, Reed 2012). The movement began by arguing for more sustainable practices throughout the food chain: using less pesticides in production, focusing on small-scale family farms, decreasing the food miles and inflated prices of distribution that cut the farmer out of the profit, and reflexive consumption of eating locally, eating less, and eating healthy (Reed 2012). Currently, the organic label only regulated production practices – namely the use of pesticides, allowed big agricultural companies to profit from the market trend. While some who critique this transition blame those big agricultural companies and their lobbying power, the National Organic Program has always been technology-centric with a narrow focus on production, rather than taking into consideration the larger production cycle and the social and environmental consequences of poorly managed distribution and consumption, in addition to production (DeLind 2000). This is most likely contributed to the regulation practices already in place through the USDA and the FDA, and the greater ease in regulating that sector rather than the rest of the food chain of production.

Animal Welfare Approved (AWA)
Third party certifications, such as AWA, are trying to fill in the gaps created by the organic label and address the concerns of federally regulated certifications that are diminished in order to be executed on a large-scale national basis and potentially in affected by lobbying and public discretions. The Animal Welfare Institute, a non-profit 501c3 charitable organization provides farmers across the country with the free Animal Welfare Approved certification program. Free audits test the treatment of animals, what they are fed, housing conditions, and how they are processed. The program also provides free promotional materials to approved farms, increasing their own program while supporting the marketing of those in their group. “You have to earn the label,” one farmer told me when speaking of AWA. “You can’t just buy it” (Producer 1).

For this AWA farmer, the recognition means a lot, due to the stringent codes that are in place for this label, and the lack of economic obligation on the part of the certifying agent to let people pass:

*For something like to say you're doing an outstanding job. For me it's more of a personal thing than really putting that sticker on my meat. I know what we do is above and beyond what they ask. It's the best recognition I could get for raising pigs. [...] More people are seeing it because now they are getting it in into retail stores [...] so I think consumers are picking it up. But it's sort of weaving its way around. I think there are two other things, so I think it's a little confusing to them sometimes but I think the more they see it out in the public, the more they understand and those big factory farms are always in the news for inhumane treatment. People pay more attention, I think, to humanely*
raised, regardless if it's AWA, i don't know the other ones. But it's the 
humanely raised part they see. And it does mean a lot. (Producer 1)

This label gives her personal fulfillment and a certain amount of capital in this
niche market. The label may or may not actually drive in business, but the media
surrounding factory farming does give labels such as AWA a boost.

**Changing Cultural Capital of Certification**

As discussed in the last chapter, many local farmers are gaining recognition and
support from the larger social movement of buying local and buying directly from
farmers. For those who have certifications, they gain further recognition for being
affiliated with trusted labels:

> Usually when you get family famers they want to the best and they want to
> have the best labels, so they are trying - whether it's AWA or something
> else - they are trying to get that notoriety. (Producer 1)

That trust, however, is being questioned especially in regards to organic
certification. These are just two labels (Organic and AWA) in a sea of food certifications
that need a guidebook to decipher (see Figure 10). These labels may just be marketing
ploys, though the increase in the types of food labels indicates their success. Food labels
and certifications that some consumers put faith in, the producers I interview question:

> There are so many different ways that you can use organic or other things
> - like free-range - if you were to really read what "free-range" means and
> what people have as free-range, there is so much of a variation that I think
> when stuff like that starts happening, you lose trust in it. You have to
because they're just finding another way around something that started off as true and good. (Producer 1)

Well, the new catch phrase is “totally natural” and that could mean so much. And it means using chemical fertilizers and sprays and things, because it’s a natural thing…. (laughs) they consider it natural. That’s what you have to do naturally in order to make a plant grow. (Producer 5).

So many [consumers] are just falling for snake oil, and paying a lot of money for it. You can’t just force Publix to force ConAgra to take the crates off the pigs and start labeling GMOs because they are just going to find another way semantically around it. We’ve got too many words in our language. They’ll use every one. (Producer 8)

The words lack meaning, whether they are regulated or not, as consumers do not take the time to find the difference. The labels that are regulated are drowned in questions of control, with debates surrounding who in the movement or what institution has the authority to determine such standards.

Figure 10: Food labeling guide published by AWA. For the full guide, visit animalwelfareapproved.org
Labels that are not regulated can easily become buzzwords for parasites to the movement that do not buy in to the social values and therefore “do not have the same moral fiber” (Producer 8). Much like the resellers who are creating noise for local farmers at a market, words that are not regulated are compromising the efforts of small-scale farmers who are trying to do things in an ethical manner:

[A reseller’s] website says, “humanely raised, no antibiotics” No this no this. I’m like “you lying little bastard” it drives me crazy. Is that everyone? Is it national? Am I the only one complaining? When [that reseller is] around, I take down my signs. That’s all I need is for them to go “Oh ‘GMO-free’ – oh, there’s a new word to use.”

While some producers yield to consumers’ desires, arguing for Organic certification and all the branding that requires, others only want to deal with informed consumers that do not care about certification, as captured in the conflicting opinions below. The first farmer has conflicting feelings about the Organic label, but ultimately goes through the process and promotes it to get a portion of that market share. The second farmer believes strongly in the transparency of the farm’s growing methods, and does not want to be open to more governmental regulation.

There’s so many ways it can get contaminated. Which makes the risk of organic versus conventional is probably the same. They are going through the same stuff. I don’t actually put much faith in it, but I like to support it still because if it succeeds, then it also helps me. I don’t talk about the organic stuff as much because it’s not something I care about as much. But I don’t know, you have to give the customer what they want. They
want wholesome, organic, meaning that it’s clean, meaning that it’s sustainable, being that it’s local, green, all those buzzwords. (Producer 4)

*We feel like government is in our life enough as it is, [...] I’ll tell [customers] “You can come visit any time. You can have a tour, see how we do things. I can answer any questions. If that’s not good enough for you, you can go elsewhere.”* (Producer 6)

The difference between these two opinions just might lie in individual social capital, highlighting the difference between selling at market and selling on site at the farm. The first farmers sells at market with a farm that is closed to the public, while the second farmer holds farm tours and uses agritourism as another profit sector and a way to create a relationship with local consumers.

Laura DeLind has written extensively on the certification process and posits that they “are restrictive as well as enabling. While they can function as a form of interest-group insurance and assurance, they also insert themselves between individuals and direct experience and responsibility. They substitute for, indeed, they become a surrogate for personal awareness and judgment” (DeLind 2000:199).

The role of certification as a substitute for a discerning eye is important to consider in the future of the social movement of direct sales. On one hand, consumers desire certification because of the convenience and shortcut it affords in ethical consumption. A certifying body does the research for the consumer and, if that body is deemed trustworthy, the consumer does not need to follow up or do any additional research, while still satisfying the desire to be ethical and informed consumers. However, the ease in the purchasing behavior of buying labels (which actually is not that easy)
detracts from the social power of the alternative buying behavior. The easier the behavior is, the less effective the social change will be as it does not challenge the status quo to the same extent. The label acts as a cheap substitute to the personal relationship between the consumer and the producer, and, ultimately, consumers, their food, and their community. However, the average consumer is still attracted to the labels because there is such a high barrier in doing the research on one’s own. The shortcut afforded by the certification process would be less alluring if the longer path – cultivating relationship with local farmers and truly knowing where you food comes from – was a less arduous one. This longer path would be much shorter and easier to traverse (figuratively and literally) if there was greater social capital (social networking, open farms, local farmers at market) in the local food community.

**Authority of Social Capital**

*We don’t need to be certified organic. They don’t care.* (Producer 6)

Certification is not needed when you know the person producing your food. Certification (governmental or third-party) fill gaps in knowledge of the food system – gaps that are bridged more completely and more sustainably through a strong social network between consumers and producers. This is most ideally achieved through the farm visit. Though it can be achieved in part by having farmers at market, only by seeing the food, meeting the farmer in their natural setting, and establishing that relationship in a new social space, can trust be sustained, closing the gap of knowledge that certification fills in the modern food system. This requires a certain level of agency on the part of the consumer and a willingness on the part of the farmer to be open to the social interactions, as these producers discuss:
I don’t think government regulation is going to fix that. I think people coming out and actually investing that amount of time is going to make the difference. (Producer 8)

I know we're not able to this with a nation this size, but the best case scenario would be for the consumer to come to the farm and to see where to stuff is grown and how it's grown and choose stuff that way. The closer you can get to the plant, the better everyone is going to be.

But the third party certification.... more regulation is not the answer. (Producer 2)

And I’ll look you right in the eye and say “Hey, think about it. [organic] really doesn’t mean anything anyway.” (Producer 6)

The answer to the barriers of social connections between producers, consumers and among individuals in these groups is an increase in the social capital of those who care – expanding the movement while still monitoring the borders. While the needs are clear, the solutions are not. Many individuals within the local food movement on national and more explicitly on the local level have different opinions on how to meet the needs of building a stronger social network in the local food community. The future of the local food movement – locally as well as nationally – remains unclear. There is no doubt that a strong social network and shared cultural knowledge are the keys to success for Tampa Bay, as evidenced by the successes in other regions. However, the concept of a strong social network has differing definitions among individuals in the movement as they struggle to expand the network and strengthen its ties with varying emphasis on quality versus quantity of those connections and the social support they create.
Chapter 6: Conclusion and Application:

The Future of Local Food

The sun is shining. The breeze is cool and light. And the Mayor is giving out free hugs. It’s not a bad day to be at Market. It’s Free Hugs Day next week, January 21st. the Mayor and several volunteers are celebrating today, giving out free hugs in order to “spread happiness around the ’burg,” according to the Mayor, who kicked off the event at the market this morning. I take advantage of the opportunity to wrap my arm around the Tampa Bay Rays’ mascot. I’m not a baseball fan, but his blue fur that’s as bright as the crystal clear Florida sky is irresistible. Looking past the PR-stunt of it all, it’s nice to seeing strangers coming together for warm embraces. Isn’t this why we are here? Isn’t that our goal for local food? The market brings people together every week, social mixing encouraged by the joyful live music, colorful signs, and water bowls put out for the pups. But with the important political guests and encouraged physical connections, today just seems a little more special.

As alternative food movements become marketable trends, the core community struggles to define the social values and morals that define the movement. Activist researcher Laura DeLind (2011) argues the popularity of local food is turning the movement into a brand and self-interest, thus losing the benefit of community empowerment. She and Jim Bingen (2008) caution against a fixation on Lyson’s (2004)
notion of civic agriculture, or supporting alternative food networks as a means of political resistance, arguing that political action manifested through a market system has “unintended, if not contradictory, consequences. First, it is important to recognize that the market, of itself, does not encourage social equity or democratic participation, but best serves those who are both able and willing to profit and to consume” (DeLind & Bingen 2008:128, emphasis added). This research is one step towards identifying those inequalities and while the market does not encourage social equity, I argue that it is still possible to achieve a more equitable system through active management of that market system and increasing available social capital in order to increase the opportunities for interested parties to participate in this alternative market system.

While the market is not free and is in fact is bound by particular codes of conduct more stringent than the capitalist market system, we can take steps to increase access and social equity within the capitalist model. It is too extreme to try to operate completely outside of the market; that goal is too idealistic to be sustainable. There are steps activists can take to further define the movement while still expanding boundaries of what is considered local by movement participants (in retail outlets, supermarkets, farmers markets, farm stands, co-ops etc.), thereby increasing its take of the national food market share and ensuring the sustainability of the trends. This requires dedication and compromise on the part of those involved in the local operations of the movement as well as open minds of those yet to join. The Tampa Bay circuit still has a long way to go in these efforts.

Tensions of boundary maintenance dominate as those most committed to the movement, and in the case of producers dependent on it, try to define inclusion and
exclusion variables and present a clear identity to existing and potential consumers. The social environment in the Tampa Bay area is especially tenuous, as there is a low level of social support for the movement outside of the consumer base in the public and private sectors. Furthermore, the consumers who do desire local products (including myself at the beginning of this project) are often not educated on how to identify local goods and mistakenly believe any commodities bought at an open air market are local. Therefore there is a more of a demand for open air markets by consumers performing conscientious consumption rather than a demand by conscious and educated consumers who set a bar of authentically local products, however that is defined by local activists. This results in a low supply of local farmers and a high number of consumers who are trying to participate but have low awareness of the intricacies of inclusion and the social standards of long-term movement participants. The open air market described in the vignette at the opening of this chapter is just one way in which comprises can be made that uphold the values of the national local food movement while making the movement viable and sustainable on the local level in this young local food community of Tampa Bay.

Weak social environment

Currently, the vast majority of agricultural land in Central Florida is used for commercial agriculture. There is a huge demand for open-air markets, especially in the City of Tampa, but not enough local farmers to support them. The research conducted thus far has not been able to completely explore this phenomenon, though multiple markets have opened since I began work in the region – many without any local farmers as vendors at the market. There is little social support from public institutions, governmental programs at the national, state, or regional level, or non-profit for
promoting local farmers or educating consumers. Most local farmers sell to brokers or on-site, due to a low capacity to leave the farm due to low staff, low product yields, or unpredictable sales at market not justifying the extra cost. The market I surveyed charges farmers half the vendor fee and provides the first 2 weeks free to test that capacity, and yet of the 200+ vendors at the market, only 15 are local farmers.

While the popular media coverage, as mentioned in previous chapters, aides in promoting local farmers tangentially, there is little local support in the State of Florida for small-scale farms. This only exacerbates problems with social capital in these local groups.

Whereas in other states, the state will make signs on the major roads saying, "farm - 2 miles." Vermont does that. They support their local farms. So, unless you can afford billboard, which of course we can't... But there are things that the state of Florida could do to help local farmers and they don't do them. Because they aren't in tune. (Producer 2)

**Diversify to Survive**

Without the support of viable outlets and strong local food marketing, the best step producers can take as expressed by the community members I interviewed, is to diversify (see Figure 11). In an unpredictable market place with a weak social support, diversity allows a producer to be less susceptible to the risk of a niche market. This means augment the produce you are selling: sell the farm, not just the products - market buying at the farm as the embodied experience it truly is:

*We're selling that you're using all of your sensory. Like I keep saying, what else is life about?* (Producer 3)
Diversifying can also include growing a variety of products (produce and animals) and incorporate value added products (jams, jellies, preserved foods) while staying true to the small-scale:

_We grew as our market grew. And that’s important for people to know. You can’t go out here and think just because I put in three acres of broccoli I’m going to sell three acres of broccoli. That’s just not going to happen. […] A lot of farmers, they have a tendency to put all their eggs in one basket, instead of being diversified. That’s why we do so much of what we do. We are diversified. […] Something is always moving to give us a weekly income or a monthly income._ (Producer 5)

_It’s only sustainable if you’re doing the value added stuff. The world I’m seeing right now of having to produce in order to get paid, it’s just not sustainable._ (Producer 4).

_We made a conscious effort to start adding and improving and becoming more community involved._ (Producer 2)

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Figure 11: This farmer operates a small, local, family farm that sells produce at multiple local markets and operate a you-pick system at their farm.
This can also mean selling the equipment, as with this hydroponic farmer, who also sells hydroponic systems:

*Everyone is always trying to look for the better mousetrap. Especially when it comes to gardening. And what we like to tell people is that we've figured it out. We've dumbed it down. There is nothing easier than the few steps that you have to take. [...] we have the best mouse trap. We know we do, We have seven years to prove it. That's another thing. People can invent stuff, but they've never actually done it. We are the farmer.*

(Producer 3)

**Monitoring the Borders**

The lack of sustainable local farms and the popularity of open-air markets have created an opportunity for others to fulfill the consumer demand. “Shagsters” or resellers are filling the roles that could (and perhaps should) be filled by local farmers (Producer 8). “But if the real farmers did call it out, doesn’t that kill our market?” (Producer 8). In the words of the market manager, “without resellers, I don’t have a market!” so the social and cultural capital needed to distinguish resellers from farmers is a requirement if a consumer desires to eat locally at an open-air market. I have discussed tips from the core community to look at hands, look for boxes, and know what is seasonal. But the question I present here concerns the inclusion variables of the movement. Buying directly from the farm is the ultimate goal of the local consumer, but many barriers limit the accessibility of this buying behavior in the lived reality of producers and consumers. This creates a gray area between the farmer-as-vendor and the reseller sourcing from a wholesale company and selling at an open-air market.
Co-ops and buying clubs are one possible solution to this dilemma. These operations seek to bring the farmer to the consumer in an accessible and easy way for all involved. As one local buying club manager described to me, he does all the legwork to increase fresh food access in the city. The farms from which he sources are identified on his website, including another small-scale distributor who also tracks her sources. Organized workdays bring interested consumers to the farm, without the obligatory work hours often required by CSAs, and provide volunteer hands to the farmer for particularly laborious tasks, such as weeding or harvesting. The buying club operator charges a small premium for the delivery service, without cutting the profit margin for the producer. The group events also strengthen group solidarity between consumers, who gain social capital by being part of clearly defined group with shared values — the necessary conditions for a thriving social movement (Benford & Snow 2000, Polletta & Jasper 2001, Eyerman 2006).

In order to enhance, rather than threaten, the small-scale producers, the important elements are to not impede on their profit margins, to respect their work, and to keep them connected to their products. In this way, food can be an inalienable object, perhaps not as extreme as Annette Weiner’s (1992) “inalienable possessions” that cannot be exchanged in any way, but still with more symbolic and social power than is currently attributed to food as commodity. The connection between producer and consumer manifested in the complete knowledge of the product by the consumer (in which the product cannot be alienated from the producer) is the key for success of the local food movement from the standpoint of political economy. In the local food movement, where consumers “know where their food comes from,” citizens attempt to de-fetishize food
products, thus learning to respect the food for what is it and the labor that goes into it. But in the end, consumers still want accessible food that is easy, convenient, and cheap as well as ethical. Thus it is the responsibility of those most passionate and most committed – producers as well as consumers - to the social movement of local food to monitor those boundaries of ethical versus convenient, constantly renegotiating the core values, and reassessing what matters while appealing to the mass consumer in order to remain viable in the global market system. Activists, whose job is to propel the movement forward, must take all sides into consideration but also, and perhaps most importantly, push those boundaries and expand what is deemed acceptable without compromising what really matters.

**Making Compromises**

Protecting the values of the critical community (those most dedicated to the movement at a local level) involves a compromise of more peripheral values (as determined by the critical community) – appealing to the mass consumer while staying true to the core community. The movement can be expanded to encourage people to grow their own food, also building the social capital and resources for the local diet:

> We want people to grow their own food. That's our main goal, to make people understand how easy it is to grow their own food and to have a backyard garden [...] We do a lot of events throughout the year. We do classes. Just about everything we do is free. We've done canning classes. We've done preserving classes. We've done gardening courses. Integrated pest management classes. (Producer 3)
A lot of times we're have people that come every 2-3 days for a head of lettuce and finally, I'm like, "Why don't you just get some equipment and do it yourself?" "Oh, I can't do that" "Yes you can!" (Producer 2)

The biggest compromises are in the definition of acceptable food. While some think hydroponics is unnatural due to the chemically-derived liquid nutrients and lack of dirt, or aquaponics is unclean due to the incorporation of fish to add nutrients to the produce, others embrace these new niche markets.

*Hydroponics is the farm of the future. It uses significantly less water, less land, and produces cleaner food.* (Producer 2)

*It’s hydroponic, no chemicals, no dirt, you don’t even need to wash it.* (Producer 4).

*I think the new aquaponic group, that whole niche, is pushing some of that movement forward, which is good for us. The more all these other people market, they’re doing it for us.* (Producer 6)

Expanding what is acceptable as clean also means expanding those boundaries of what is local, including specialty items that can’t be found locally.

*We had maple syrup one season. So I try to be local but if there’s some product we can get here. We all use spices and coffee and stuff, so there’s that, too. We’re going to build a bread oven and this year I have a mill couple for two months with heritage wheat.* (Producer 7)

While there is room for compromise, and this may help further the movement, there is disagreement on whether the compromises are worth it.
People devoted to the local food movement argue for the ideal local, clean, small-scale traceable food. I overheard a market patron complain once the labeling of a coffee company was “too corporate,” while market managers are telling people to look professional. The tension here is between the authentic local items, with their rustic, agrarian, homemade feel, marketing to the core community, versus the clean packaging and colorful booths aim at the larger audience. Similar to the organic movement as described by Matthew Reed (2012), this tension between business savvy and idealism is more of a spectrum than a clearly defined difference of motivations of producers, distributors and consumers. This spectrum encompasses some players who are “deeply embedded in the movement, moving with it and playing an active role in it, to those on the outer reaches of the continuum who have seen a chance to make a profit. However, that such a spectrum exists points to the salience of the movement’s strategy of using business” (Reed 2012:28).

That business strategy does work, as can be seen by the success of the organic movement in the mass retailer sector (despite its controversy). And it is promising for local food as well, which serves a niche not yet filled by industrial agriculture:

Well, [restaurants and consumers] are looking for that specialty item – that item that they can’t normally get. Heirloom tomatoes or something like that. And that’s why they’re coming to us, because we have that.

(Producer 4)

But this is a work in progress. As one farmer told me, “we’ve been in this seven years and there was nothing seven years ago” (Producer 3).
**Educating Consumers**

The tensions among those devoted to the movement arise from the marketing of the movement, the product available, and those who profit. If we expand the market to include those who are authentic and inauthentic, we can build a momentum in which consumers start paying attention. Once we have their attention, we can educate them to become “reflexive consumers” (Goodman and DuPris 2002) or take responsibility of their consumption (Lockie 2009). The political and social strength by a large mass of reflexive consumers will, in time, weed out the imposters. A viable market share can only be sustained through making compromises, getting the masses on our side, and ultimately strengthening the movement from within. For local food to become a true social movement, with the political and social change that implies, the market system is only the first step to gain ethical and moral buy-in from the average consumer, who can then transition to a reflexive consumer.

The focus of the critical community is on continued education. This has been a main theme tied to social capital, cultural capital, and access, but is told most succinctly in this quote from the market manager:

*There’s not enough yet. Yet. So she was giving me all kinds of hell about the produce resellers. And I said we keep them separate. I try to educate.*

*This is all about educating.* (Producer 7)

Her hybrid market is perhaps the best example of where the local food movement is right now. It is located at a busy city center, gathering people from all over town and all over the Bay area. I only interviewed those who had bought produce, but 40% had primary reasons for visiting the market other than buying produce and 13% did not even
intend to buy produce before the arrived to the market. Those who did not have the intent to buy produce where motivated by the convenience of entertainment and grocery shopping, or the allure of the “pretty produce” (Consumer 47). “It just looked so good. The strawberries were huge” (Consumer 12). A vast majority, 67%, were long time patrons, though 10% of those patrons still did not intend on buying produce and 40% were motivated to visit the market primarily for other reasons, such as the social outing, the prepared foods, or the live music.

The biggest justification for an expanding market is similar to other sustainability efforts of identifying sustainability along a spectrum. A behavior is not discretely “sustainable” or “unsustainable,” but rather “more sustainable” or “less sustainable.” Change can only be achieved through increments of improvement – increments that require renewed support each time. While we cannot yet achieve the goal of the truly authentic agrarian dream, with the farmer-as-vendor that California has been able to certify, the Florida local food movement can be more local, fresher, and cleaner than the industrial options of Publix and Walmart.

The prices are better than organic at Publix.
- Consumer 33, purchased from a local farmer

It’s better than Publix. I can talk to the vendors.
- Consumer 63, purchases from a reseller

I can’t bring my dog into Publix.
- Consumer 41, purchased from a farmer

The patrons at this hybrid market are not the die-hard critical community. They purchase produce at the market because it is convenient, entertaining, and dog friendly.
An employee at a local branch of the Whole Foods told me when discussing the controversy of the corporate hand in the social movement, “We are marketing to people who wouldn’t step into [a local small health food store]. We are bringing in people who are comfortable in a large supermarket and trying to change their minds little by little. We’re on your side” (personal communication, October 2012). His defensiveness shows the tensions within the movement and the risks taken by those who wish to expand the movement to make it viable.

**Social Capital and Movement Sustainability**

Overall, those who wish to sustain a local food movement in Tampa Bay need to increase the social capital available to movement participants – meaning the social network that those new to the movement can tap into quickly and easily. In order to be a viable movement, the social capital of the movement needs to increase at the regional level, as well as the access to that capital for the average consumer. Instead of knowledge being sourced through social networking and individual research, activists and consumers alike should pool their resources and make this knowledge equitable for all consumers both firmly entrenched in the movement and wishing to be a part. This communal approach may detract from the cultural capital one holds within the group (such as knowing where to find the best goats milk or how to make the best kale chips) but a movement that encourages this unequal distribution of wealth – be it economic, social, or cultural – is not a sustainable movement.

The exclusivity of high individual capital is detrimental to an expanded movement as those new to the community struggle to find the knowledge to fully participate. Local farmers in Tampa Bay struggle to clearly demarcate themselves from
resellers and local products sold in big box stores. In order to remain viable, local farmers
diversity by growing more products, making value-added products, and delving into
agritourism endeavors, all while trying to educate current and potential consumers to
recognize the value of local food. In this way, producers in Tampa Bay are carrying the
burden of marketing themselves and marketing the local food movement. Meanwhile,
consumers trying to be locally are not actually consuming local products (with varying
levels of awareness of this gap).

Activists and academics on a local level can contribute to the sustainability of the
national local food movement by taking on some of the burden of educating consumers
and supporting producers through a stronger social network with a focus on shared
cultural knowledge. The movement can be promoted through a market system approach
without diluting its social ideals. Limiting the movement to idealistic lofty goals of
changing the food system one-handedly alienates many consumers and impedes their
joining, creating unequal access to these alternative food networks and unfairly
privileging those with social, cultural, and economic power (Allen 2010). Only by
expanding and strengthening the network in order to appeal to other interests can an
alternative movement be sustained (Allen 2010). More work needs to be done on how to
promote change in an equitable manner. This study highlights the need for such research
to explore social and cultural differences in addition to economic distribution of wealth.
Chapter 7: Discussion: Summary, Limitations, and Future Research.

*With this kind of promotional politics, where consumers are envisaged as international political activists by virtue of market choice, there can be no guaranteed ideological outcomes.* – Alison Leitch (2008)

**Summary**

This thesis has been a summation of 18 months of lived experiences in the local food community of Tampa Bay, Florida. Even though this encapsulates fieldwork in my own backyard, I was still very much an outsider at the onset of this work. However, “going native” in my own region means the fieldwork does not have an endpoint. This work is just the beginning of an ongoing commitment to the local food movement in Tampa Bay; while these findings have not yet manifested into an activist application to the movement on a local level, I plan on using these findings as formative research for a social marketing plan promoting local food and direct sales. The plan will be formed in collaboration with community members, including the informants for this work as well as other members of the critical community.

The market-based approach to social change has its limitations. The rise of niche markets of alternative food to popular market shares may or may not be indicative of real social change (Shaw and Black 2010). Furthermore, the connection between the social and environmental implications of consumption may have less clout than the social power of a market trend. However, as the area of consumption studies shows,
consumption is a signifier of identity and social psychology indicates that past behaviors predict future behaviors. Having consumers literally “buying into” an alternative network such as direct sales may actually affect their future beliefs about alternative networks through a correction of cognitive dissonance or can otherwise convince them to maintain past behaviors, thus supporting the alternative food system even if they do not yet fully believe in the ethical goals, until they do support the social goals. It is important to note, though, the cognitive shift is less likely to be achieved if the consumer believes the purchase decision was just based on an economic decision and not a moral one (Thogerson 2004).

The practical marketing applications of social science theory and research are a union of social movement theory and political economy as explored in the thesis as well as the social psychology and business marketing perspectives used in social marketing work. Social marketing used marketing strategies in order to encourage behaviors for the public good (McKenzie-Mohr 2011). The critical community of the social movement in this case defines the “good behavior”, while the “public” is understood through the anthropological investigation in the political economy framework, and the “strategies” for behavior change are suggested by social movement theory and anthropology of consumption. Social marketing for the environment builds from the assumption that individual actions contribute to the public good of a group. Anthropological research helps to better understand those individuals and their social and cultural environments, while also defining publics and behaviors appropriate to those communities.

While there are “no guaranteed ideological outcomes,” that does not detract from the need to work towards an ideal and be optimistic for its attainment. However, this
should indeed by tempered by a realistic approach in appealing to the hearts and minds of other producers and consumers. Political action enacted through a market system achieves a high locust of control (“I can do ___”), an individual sense of responsibility (“My doing ___ will affect others”), and clear normative behaviors (“I see many other people doing ___”), qualities associated with adopting pro-environmental behaviors (Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002). The excerpt below from an interview with a local producer shows a high locust of control, an individual sense of responsibility, and an ideal for a normative behavior:

*I’ll farm until pigs aren’t in confinement anymore. With every one that we produce, there’s one less that has to go through confinement. That’s my theory, but it’s really expensive. I have a really expensive ideal set. I’ve got to work on that.* (Producer 8).

The farmer above recognizes the idealism and rarity of her dream, but this does not mean she will stop working to achieve her goal because she believes that through her practices she can take a step to achieve (and market) change.

The future of the local food movement in Tampa Bay is unclear, but as other regions in the United States have shown, there is potential if activists remain cognizant of the citizens with whom they are attempted to connect and the sociopolitical environment in which they are attempting to do so. In the words of Rebecca Zarger, as quoted in a recent article in the Tampa Bay Times on local food in Tampa Bay, "Tampa has gone a long way towards developing a local-food culture and valuing farm-to-table restaurants and eating,[…] It's a kind of grassroots movement that has taken place in many other urban areas in the U.S. and this seems to be a time for Tampa to really think critically
about where we get our food and what the impacts of those choices are" (Johnston 2013). To this end, local food activists also need to think critically about how to entice the mass consumer and promote the local farmer while minimizing the competing markets that aim to take advantage of the local trends while not necessarily abiding to the social movement’s goals.

This thesis is a step in achieving that goal by suggesting gaps in the current social capital of local food in Tampa and providing suggestions to move forward in a manner that creates a sustainable and just alternative market while engaging social change through a market based approach, namely by creating a stronger social network and maintaining easy equitable access to the network to every community member. My suggestions are just one route this movement can take; in the dynamics of a social movement, there are no guarantees and playing the capitalism game increases this risk

Limitations

Limitations in this work derive primarily from the small scope of the project and its position as an initial study of a burgeoning social system. The exploratory nature of this research intentionally creates a small sample size and intentional sampling methods. Furthermore, the sampling methods causes a lack of diversity in the interviewed participants, an over-emphasis on producers, and a small sourcing approach for gathering consumer data. My focus explicitly on the relationship between producers and consumers excluded food hubs, buying clubs, and co-ops from study, though I tangentially experienced them in my work; these concepts will certainly play a prominent role as local food progresses. Community gardening, home gardening, guerilla gardening xxvi, and
forests of food are also effective ways to work outside of the market-based food system entirely and ensure the consumer of locally grown produce.

**Contributions and Future Research**

This project is the beginning of a career of activist research in small-scale food systems. This research adds to a body of literature that recognizes alternative food as a social movement (Guthman 2008, Lockie 2009, Reed 2012), criticizes definitions of “local food” (Weiss 2002, Winter 2003, DeLind 2006), and muses on the future of the local food movement (Hinrichs 2003, DeLind & Bingen 2008, Follett 2009), especially in regards to equitable access to alternative food provisioning (Hinrichs 2000, Guthman 2008, McCullen 2011). To move beyond mere speculation, more research needs to be conducted at cities and towns, large and small, across the nation and abroad, to figure out what works, what does not work, and why. There is much we can learn from the small-scale solutions of individuals and groups all over the world; while no one study can be generalized, we can learn much from the stories of others’ struggles. The best suggestion for future research is to build on the reputation and legitimization of activist research among activists and researchers (Hale 2008), learning from those who come before us (DeLind 1999), learning from ourselves. In future research, we all need to teach and learn from those with us on the frontline and those rising up in the ranks, changing one heart – mind, mouth, and body – at a time, until there are no more ranks to be climbed.

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1 Use value is derived from the basic properties of the product, in this case the biological need, the energy/calories gained from food, and to sate of hunger. Exchange value is derived from the trading or bartering of the product and is dependent on the social value or the perceived value of an item by other people. (What need does it fulfill versus what can I get for it?)

2 Agro-centric development does not escape this top-down power driven module. See the debate around WTO’s answer to address food insecurity: Gonzalez, C. G. (2002). Institutionalizing Inequality: The WTO Agreement on Agriculture, Food Security, and Developing Countries. *Columbia Journal of Environmental*
in a relatively wide spectrum of growing times and type temperature, rainfall, humidity, and wind. There are 3 zones (8, 9, and 10) in the Tampa Bay area, resulting over an hour. All themes were discussed with all participants and time was not a factor. 


Studies have shown despite an cursory acknowledgement of the economic awareness on behalf of the consumer, there is low actual acceptance of that economic risk on behalf of the consumer. See Laura DeLind 1999 Close Encounters of a CSA

“This item represents the value of agricultural products produced and sold directly to individuals for human consumption from roadside stands, farmers’ markets, pick-your-own sites, etc. It excludes non-edible products such as nursery crops, cut flowers, and wool but includes livestock sales. Sales of agricultural products by vertically integrated operations through their own processing and marketing operations were excluded” (USDA 2007:B-25).

The 1997 data reported here was retrieved from 2002 and 2007 census reports, which showed an increase in the original data to correct for coverage bias (see Appendix A of USDA 2007 Census).

Direct sales to individual for human consumption increased from 2,479 farms with $12 million in sales in 2002 to 3,181 farms with $19 million in sales in 2007 (USDA 2007).

The term “locavore”, the Oxford Word of the Year in 2007 (Oxford 2007), was first coined by Jessica Prentice in 2005 in the San Francisco Bay area, and necessitates one only eat food grown or produced within a 100-mile radius of one’s residence. Other regions use the term “localvores”.

For a reflection on his own influence to food marketing, see Michael Pollan’s video discussing his new book “Food Rules: An Eater’s Manual:


See the activities of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and their Campaign for Fair Food.: [http://www.ciw-online.org/](http://www.ciw-online.org/)


Hydroponics is growing in popularity among urban farmers. Towers are used to better utilize space and water. Soil is replaced with small bundles of perlite or coconut fibers that suspend the roots in a direct flow of cycling water. This agriculture method has a high installation fee, but uses fewer resources.

Aquaponics is an innovative combination of hydroponics and traditional aquaculture. Fish are cultivated along with foodstuffs. The fish waste, often from tilapia, is used as a fertilizer in the flowing water in the hydroponic system. This symbiotic relationship creates a sustainable and often quite profitable agricultural enterprise.

The CSA remains anonymous due to my on-going work with the organization.

“The USDA’s working definition of a regional food hub is ‘…a business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution and marketing of source-identified food products, primarily from local and regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail and institutional demand’” (USDA 2013).

The shortest interview was 45 minutes and the longest 90 minutes, with the average interview being just over an hour. All themes were discussed with all participants and time was not a factor.

See Gupta and Furguson 1997 for a discussion on defining “the field.”

The USDA has ranked 10 growing zones across the US related to geographic variables such as temperature, rainfall, humidity, and wind. There are 3 zones (8, 9, and 10) in the Tampa Bay area, resulting in a relatively wide spectrum of growing times and types of viable local produce.
Buying clubs and co-ops operate as small-scale distributors, sourcing locally with varying success, and provide small defined groups of people with a reliable influx of fresh, ideally local, foods. They are a step up from resellers, where the product is nearly completely alienated from its source, in that more effort is made to keep products identified to the farm from which they are sourced. They target people who desire to consumer local products and, therefore, can be a real competition for farm stands and CSAs, but lack the social and entertainment dimension of farmers’ markets.


State of Florida Cottage law allows individuals to sell up to $15,000 worth of processed foods without regulation. See www.freshfromflorida.com/fs/ for more information.

For information on certification standards, visit the USDA website at www.usda.org

OMRI: Organic Materials Review Institute is an independent certifying agent for products the meet National Organic Program in the USDA.

Guerilla gardening is the act of illicit gardening in public spaces, or planting produce on public land without the permission of public officials.

Foods forests utilize permaculture methods of cultivation in that a symbiotic ecosystem is created that can maintain itself without further human intervention. For more information see: http://permaculturenews.org/2011/10/21/why-food-forests/. For an application of forests of food for international food security see a discussion by the Committee on World Food Security here: http://blog.cifor.org/15824/qa-committee-on-world-food-security-chair-urges-use-of-forest-foods-in-diets/#.UaEJ_GT70jE
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Appendices
Appendix A: Recruitment letter

I am writing you to let you know about a research study that you have the option to take part in through the University of South Florida (USF). I am contacting you because you are part of the direct agriculture food network in the Tampa Bay area.

Purpose

The purpose of this research project, “Social Systems in Direct Agriculture Marketing,” to understand the food perceptions and beliefs of food producers, farmers markets vendors/patrons and community supported agriculture (CSA) members in the Tampa Bay region. The research is being conducted by Elizabeth Murray from the University of South Florida (USF) as part of a fulfillment for a Master’s Degree in Applied Anthropology. You are invited to participate in this research project because you are a food producer, market vendor/patron or CSA member in the Tampa Bay area.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you decide to participate in this research study, you may withdrawal at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you withdrawal, you will not be penalized. This research has been approved by the USF IRB, study #8481.

Procedure

To quality for this study, persons must be of consenting age (18-64 years of age), be a food producer, market vender, or market patron, and fluent in English. If you take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in a 60-minute interview about your food preferences, growing/cooking habits, perceptions of food systems, and beliefs about food regulations. The interview will be recorded if you agree, but no identifying information will be stored on the tape. Some brief demographic questions will be asked,
which you can choose not to provide. All information in the interview will be confidential.

Outcomes

The research proposed seeks to gain a broader understanding of local food movements related to the perceptions and behaviors of food producers and consumers. First and foremost, this is designed to benefit you and other participants and the larger population involved in direct agriculture marketing. I may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not include your name. I will not publish anything that would let people know who you are. The results will be made available to all participants.

Please respond to this email if you are interested in participating, at which point I will make sure you qualify for the study and send you more detailed information, including a consent form. If you have any questions, please email me at murraye@mail.usf.edu or call me at 703-399-9561. If I have not heard from you in 2 weeks, I will call you to answer any questions you may have. Again, taking part in research is voluntary.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Murray

M.A. Student in Applied Anthropology

University of South Florida

murraye@mail.usf.edu
Appendix B: Sample Interview Guide

Please tell me the story of your farm. It’s history and origin.

What are your growing practices?

Do you have any certifications (organic, natural, GMO-free, etc)?

Why do you grow that way?

What are your thoughts on the USDA certified organic (AWA certified) regulations?

In what ways do you sell directly to your consumers? Does this influence your growing practices? If so, how?

What drew you to food production? Why did you start? Why do you keep doing it?

What does food production mean to you?

Could you describe to me your relationship with your community? How do you define local?

What does food transparency mean to you?

What does “real food” mean to you?

Do you have a marketing plan, or do you advertise in any way? If so, could you describe to me your methods and why you choose to market yourself in that way?

Where do you hope your farm will be in 10 years?
Appendix C: Consumer Survey

Elizabeth Murray, USF – Applied Anthropology

DATE:

Participant # ___     Location: ________________________________

What is your zip code? _______________

How did you hear about the market? FRIEND/FAMILY     AD     WALK-BY
        LONG TIME PATRON     OTHER: ____________________________

Did you intend to buy produce today?      YES     NO

Was that your primary reason for visiting the market today?      YES     NO

If yes, why do you shop here? If not, what prompted you to make a purchase?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What vendor did you shop? _______________

Why did you select that vendor?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Appendix D: Producer 6 Coded Transcript Excerpt

Motivation/Movement (WHY?)

Government reg and support (WHAT, HOW?)

Hybridity, market (WHAT, WHERE)

Social capital (WHAT, WHO)

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Producer: People come in and ask “have you got any goats” And I say “No, we got sheep we got lamb.” I sell lamb. Sheep are good because they are social. And “Do you have any eggs” Well, we went back into the chicken business and we have 300 head of chicken and we supply eggs to our CSA members. _We didn’t originally get into it to be into a CSA operation_. When we first started, we had a lot of people who winter down here. Italians love rabbit – they are the largest eaters of rabbits. They use it for the sauces and all kinds of stuff. The come down here and they’re looking for that stuff. _They aren’t here long enough to put in a garden, so that stemmed into the vegetable side of it_. Because they always said “well, what else do you have? What else do you have? And they all come in with $100 bills. So, that’s what kind of stemmed into everything else we do. _It was one of those things that we grew as our market grew_. And that’s important for people to know. Unless you want to deal with wholesalers. Then it becomes a major problem.

Me: And why don’t you want to deal with wholesalers?
Producer: There’s so much regulation and government and all that crap. There’s just too much trouble. It’s like we’re back into the corporate world. You know? Forget it. I like dealing casually, comfortably, one on one, face to face. We know our customers. They are return customers. They’re not a number to us. They are a name. We know their kids, we know that this one just turned 21 and the name of the baby that was just born. And I like that. That’s the way I want to live. I don’t want to deal with regulation and boxes of broccoli and palettes and all that crap. I don’t even want to go there. And labor is another one. You start dealing with everything that size, you’re into a labor that starts eating into your profits. You may have a good year, then you may have a bad year, you’re hurting. That’s why we diversify. If the rabbits aren’t selling this week, the chickens are, and if the chickens aren’t selling, then the pigs are, and the cows are, and so on and so forth. It doesn’t mean it doesn’t get tight, but it is a situation where you have a continuous turnover.

Me: And the cap is still 25 people?

Producer: Yes, that’s the still cap. We just gained access again to another 5 acres of land we had been leasing out. So we are hoping to expand more with that. Because where we are at with everything we have and as wicked and this summer’s growing season was, We just barely took care of what we had already. If we had had 50 or something, we would’ve been screwed. They would’ve been screwed. Our account got down to 11, 12, 13 or something at our lowest, and I was glad. We were pulling brochures in because we could barely keep those people happy. And a lot of them smiled
through it. We’ll see when they renew. But, you know, it was really wicked. So that field now will give us enough ground to increase safely. Because, again, we’re not like a big grocery that doesn’t give a hoot whether you walk out of the store with that bread in your hand that you wanted. It matters if you walk out of here without something you wanted, you know? And so, in order to stay up with the quality, not just with our product and our service and what people can expect from us. It’s like our customers say, We don’t need to be certified organic. They don’t care. And besides, that label is become meaningless more and more anyway, you know? Every time Monsanto decides they need a little more chemical to grow their organic tomatoes, they get it approved. And all of a sudden it’s OMRI approved. Well, bull, you know? It’s still a bad chemical. That’s all there is to it. But the movement that we try to do is bring somebody what they want at a fair price, quality that they expect, to keep them coming back year after year.

Me: So why did you decide to start a CSA?

Producer: We kind of grew in to it. Again. We started growing a little bit more with reduction. We put the white pots in and the first idea we had was rent a pot. We could put x amount of plants in a pot, and x amount of pots in a stack, and what you do is you rent that pot for the growing season and we’ll plant it and take care of it. You come out and pick it. You decide what you want in it. Yeah, squash, broccoli, whatever you want in it. We plant it and carry on. It was great in theory. Some of the pots did well and some didn’t. And so you’re stuck moving stuff around because you want to make people happy, even though that’s part of the risk. People will say they understand the risk, but
they won’t accept the risk. Everybody understands “yeah, that’s what happens” And that’s what supporting your local farmer is all about – sharing in the risk and dada, dada, but when they go away with an empty bag…. (laughs)

Me: So how do you talk to them about that? Is that something you talk about at the beginning when they sign up?

Producer: we try to make them understand that. There are times they walk away with three bags, and we say “remember this when things are slim” During the summer time is our real challenge. It’s too hot to grow a lot of things and so on and so forth. But, if we didn’t have the rain last year we would’ve overcome that problem without a hitch. They would’ve still had three or four big bags before they walked out of here. And that’s some of the complaints that we’ve gotten from people – it’s too much stuff. “We can’t eat it all, we end up through some of it away” And then they feel like they are throwing their money away because they already paid for it. And typically our people are sustainably minded anyway, so they don’t want to be throwing food away or wasting it. So that’s even their mindset already, let alone the cost value of it. But yeah, that’s been the complaint. But those who have stayed with us, it’s not an issue with. With our core group, they’ve seen the full year. Sometimes it’s the newbies or the trial people that only see one little window and depending on when they signed up, that’s what they see. And then at the same time, the older members. Sometimes we get members right off the bat are used to putting food up or eating seasonally, more along those lines. More often than not, no, but these last few have had that mindset already, which is kind of neat. The core
members have also learned that when they’re getting a huge bag of broccoli wash it and put it up – freeze it or whatever. Do something with it. So that in June when you want broccoli you have broccoli and it is as good as going to the grocery store. You can eat the way you’re used to eating. So those that learn do that, because otherwise what happens is you’ve got a bunch of broccoli in your fridge and you’re sick of eating it. And that’s all you remember, you know?

Me: So do you teach people how to freeze it?

Producer: Yes, and that’s in their welcome packet – how to put up. How to freeze vegetables and all that. And I put out recipes all the time. I’m big on that one. I’ll tell them as we start doing something new, I’ll tell them it’s good hot or cold – like arugula. Or when you give them radishes “ok, don’t forget, the greens are good too.” So I’m always sharing that kind of stuff with them too. And it’s not just about you coming in here and buying stuff and fixing it the way you like to fix it. The thing about CSA is you’ve got to be willing to try different dishes and you’ve got to be willing to cook. If you don’t want to cook and you want it all done for you, then the CSA is not going to work for you. And a lot of it is Moms having teenagers. Teenagers say they want to go to McDonalds. But some of the members we have have teenage kids and they have educated them, or let them watch these movies that are coming out about the GMOs and the chemicals and some of them are smart enough that it clicks and they aren’t willing to be part of the core group saying “I couldn’t eat squash or I couldn’t eat beans.” They are willing to accept that and Mom and Dad say this is the way it is. This is what’s for dinner tonight and this
is what we are sitting at the table for. They are coming back to some of those older values of sitting around the dinner table. Not everyone running of “well, I got practice over here, I got practice over there” “Well, we’ll stop on McDonalds you can eat on the way home and then you gotta do your homework” So that changes with some of our members. But the ones we have problems with – with our trial – we do a trial because we felt we wanted to make sure people understand how it works. Sometimes our trial members don’t flip over. They do the 13 weeks and that’s it. It could be for multiple reasons. Most of the time they’ll catch up on these episodes and the get all about the “yeah I can eat seasonal and I can do the 100 mile radius” and all that and then in real application, the drive is too much. We have a pair that have been with us for five years now and they come all the way from Palm Harbor. They started with a friend and they were rotating – making the trip every other week at least. And that friend dropped out and I thought for sure we would lose them, too, and they’re like: heck no. It’s important to them. It’s worth it. Other people don’t want to come from Hernando Beach. It’s too far, because there’s a Wal-mart a whole lot closer. Some people think and they want to and they mean well – to eat better and to stick to those commitments, but they aren’t willing to do the work, I guess. So it’s really one of those things that if you want to do a CSA and you want to buy from a CSA, you have to be committed to it. You have to be committed to the idea of doing it. And our core group is. And every time there’s a scare, our phone rings off the hook and we put up four or five new members and we always tell them… we had one member who automatically came in and gave up money for a full year. They never did a tour. They just said “I saw you online and that’s really neat and here it is. It’s what I want” and they’re just tickled to death every time they come in. And we have other
customers that have been customers of ours for rabbits over the years and then they learn
that we’re doing the CSA thing and they’re like “ok, sign me up.” The go “we’ve been
doing business with you for years, I don’t need a trial. Give me the contract.” They go
“We know how you guys do business.” Sometimes, you know, the ones that do a trial or do
a buy annual or whatever, sometimes some things happen where one of them gets laid
off, or they need to move or something, that type of thing, so that has a lot to do it. That’s
mostly why we’ve lost, if they haven’t renewed for the most part it’s a job change and
moving. And there’s been a lot of that in this economy. In fact, the last ones really miss
us. They found a CSA up there, but they said “its not like you guys”. Well we’ve had
other ones that say “we had belonged to a CSA.” Even a local one here and they said
“you give more than they do and it’s so much better and it’s year round. It’s not just a
seasonal thing.” I don’t know anybody else that’s year round. And it’s crazy because if
you’re committed to eating like that, you need to eat year round. You don’t stop eating,
you know? So I don’t get that one. I understand the farmers side of it – it’s a little bit
harder to provide. Is it worth it? It’s something you need to be smart about. It took us a bit
to get the rhythm.
### Appendix E: Codebook Matrix For Regulation Theme

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<th>Theme</th>
<th>Pro</th>
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<td>Organic</td>
<td>organic sells and you can get five times the price when you label something organic. It doesn't matter what you charge for it. (producer 2)</td>
<td>We don’t need to be certified organic. They don’t care. And besides, that label is become meaningless more and more anyway, you know? (Producer 6)</td>
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<td>You can tell them no it's not certified organic they don't care. We feel like we use less pesticide. We can't be certified organic because of the nutrients we use. Not that there's anything wrong with the nutrients. In some ways we think the they are better than organic nutrients. But, again, they just don't know what to do with us.</td>
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<td>But in the end, I do like buying organic, because I do know there is a lot of chemicals in agriculture and even in organic, when you buy produce, you still don’t know exactly how is was being handled. There’s so many people that handle a product before it reaches to the end.</td>
<td>This organic trend is nothing more than a marketing thing and its been so overblown and abused. It's not even funny. It's really kind of sad. (Producer 2)</td>
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<td>-Have you gotten any sort of</td>
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can get contaminated. Which makes the risk of organic versus conventional is probably the same. They are going through the same stuff. I don’t actually put much faith in it, but I like to support it still because if it succeeds, then it also helps me. (producer 4)

-I don’t talk about the organic stuff as much because it’s not something I care about as much. But I don’t know, you have to give the customer what they want.

And what do you think they want? They want feedback from customers wanting organic? -No, once we explain to them what we do and how we do it, that's enough. (producer 2)

Especially since I was at a university and I was being educated on GMOs and stuff. One of my favorite professors was doing a lot of genetic modification work, but he was doing it for drought resistance and really cool things. I was like “this stuff has a lot of potential”. It not dangerous. It can be used for a lot. I can’t believe organic is just outright canning this, when it’s not really using chemicals. It could be more sustainable. That among so many other their little regulations (producer 4).

There’s so many ways it can get contaminated. Which makes the
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<th>wholesome, organic, meaning that it’s clean, meaning that it’s sustainable, being that it’s local, green, all those buzzwords. (Producer 4)</th>
<th>risk of organic versus conventional is probably the same. They are going through the same stuff. I don’t actually put much faith in it, but I like to support it still because if it succeeds, then it also helps me. (Producer 4)</th>
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<td>I think the government hijacked the certification because you know some of the products in OMRI - the stuff you can put on organic, the government says its ok – I’m not so sure. (producer 7)</td>
<td>they might sell organic as Costco or Wal-mart, but it’s industrial and has all it’s own problems. So to me that’s the cut off. So when you’re talking small-farm, generally it’s going to be sustainable grown. (producer 7)</td>
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<td>Now there are so many ways to get around what &quot;organic&quot; means that</td>
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people aren't trusting that label like they used to, (producer 1)

But that’s when the breaking point was. I went through a full explanation of the whole summer and in it I said, when they babies were weaned we were giving them the formula stuff. Then we were giving them oatmeal and if they were taking some of that then we’d put eggs in it, and the graduate them up to the fish.

Those pigs survived. And it was the eggs that they [AWA] went completely insane for. And I’m like, these chickens are raised with these pigs. They aren’t going to get salmonella from something they live with, you know? Or if they do, they would’ve gotten it anyway. They aren’t going to get it from eating the egg. It the chickens were AWA at the time – I was certified for them, too. So I was
Some people make you feel like you're some crazy lady out there with the pigs. But that was the only time. I mean, you have family and friends say "you know, if I were a pig and reincarnation was a possibility, I would want to come back here." And you always think it's a little bit of a joke, you? But to have something like AWA to recognize that what you do is an outstanding thing for the pigs. That was the best recognition ever that you pretty insulted by that. (Producer 8)

I spent two years trumpeting AWA – ra ra ra. Most of the people who are AWA approved in the state either heard about them through me or through somebody else that I had referred. They really – they're really set up more for making big farms humanely certified. The reason they don't want you feeding the pigs egg isn't so much about. It's not about the pigs health. If they allow the feeding of eggs then the big farms they are certifying would be allowed to give hatchery waste, which is the little rooster chicks. They don't want that happen. The reason they don't want the pigs eating fish meal is because most of the fish being harvested out of the ocean is fishmeal for livestock and its very unsustainable. But what I use is the tails and backs of stuff that is
could get. And they are considered the most stringent of the animal welfare things for the ASPCA. So you know? For something like to say you're doing an outstanding job. For me it's more of a personal thing than really putting that sticker on my meat. I know what we do is above and beyond what they ask. It's the best recognition i could get for raising pigs. (producer 1)

I think they might get more applicants because you don't have to pay for an auditor whereas you do harvested right here. (producer 8)
with some of the others ones. But it always allows AWA to be more cut and dry on what they can accept and what they do not. So it's free to you, but you to follow their rules to the T. You might get a slap on the wrist once, but like I said, too many people want to get in it, but they aren't going to make a variation. it is what it is. You follow these rules. Like it or not - if you don't like it, you don't need to be in it. So I really think that gives them a little bit of a higher standard. Because if you are paying somebody to come audit
it, they are more likely to take in more people they might let slide by, because they are paying. AWA can be more picky and choosey about who they take. (producer 1)

If I’m at the farmers market and that stuff didn’t go through USDA processing, if we don’t have authorization that animal is fit for human consumption, 320 people might get sick. That’s a huge difference.

So, the way they have those laws set, I’m actually okay with. I take it to the USDA processor. I leave there, it is kyrovacced. It’s all sealed in plastic, no air

USDA is more of a rule-pusher.

They aren't inhumane, but they don't think about the humane aspect of it. They go by rules, and what is ... pathogens or everything they can pick up in the facility. (producer 1)
can get to it – air is the biggest thing with any kind of contamination – and everybody’s happy.

(producer 8)

Custom is anything that’s adultered. I’ve gotten in the habit – I send the animal USDA and then I bring the bellies and the hams and the things the customers want smoked and I take them to the custom guy and I have them do that process for them. But it’s still be processed through USDA, so even though the package has been opened, there only one shot at contamination,
which would be at the custom facility, which is still inspected. The health department still does inspections on those places. (producer 8)

the USDA has been awesome. You call them and they answer the phone. They explain things to you. It’s hard to understand. (producer 8)

Marketing/Sales

organic sells and you can get five times the price when you label something organic. It doesn't matter what you charge for it. (producer 2)

I don’t talk about

she built a processing plant for her rabbits, which is the appropriate for chickens so she went ahead and went through all the loops and the jumping through all that to get legal to process chickens and she really stuck her neck out and it was really expensive. I always tell everybody to go to [her].

When you have someone that’s gone
the organic stuff as much because it’s not something I care about as much. But I don’t know, you have to give the customer what they want. (producer 4)

I take it to the USDA processor. I leave there, it is kryovaced. It’s all sealed in plastic, no air can get to it – air is the biggest thing with any kind of contamination – and everybody’s happy. (producer 8)

Through all that and you’ve got a chicken in a bag, and the chicken in the bag is 5 bucks a pound, or 3 bucks a pound, or 87 dollars a pound, and then you’ve got the bottom buck over here raising chickens. They decided to kill some chickens. They put up a cone in a tree. They went online and got one of those tumblers, and here is your chicken in the bag, and they’re gonna charge 5 dollars a pound. She’s got hundreds of thousands of dollars in a facility. Yeah, hers can be sold legally, because it’s not something I care about, but it’s hard. We go through all this nonsense to feed these guys absolutely perfect diet so people are eating healthy and then you’ve got brokers that are going two brokers deep. They don’t know where their meat is coming from. (producer 8)

Every time Monsanto decides they need a little more chemical to grow their organic tomatoes, they get it
years. When I was in construction – I worked industrial construction, which is scary. The going gag is “how many steps up the ladder are we allowed to go up this week?” Because they change it all the time. You can go up to the second from the top rung without having to tie off. But there’s always these new rules. Well every one of those rules is invented because x amount of people died. It’s just like stop signs, stop lights and stuff. There’s a reason for this stuff. If those aren’t in place, then there’s nothing to stop someone approved. And all of a sudden its OMRI approved. (Producer 6)

Certifications are just a way to get around. There's a lot of people of there who just figure out how the system works. (Producer 3)

I think the government hijacked the certification because you know some of the products in OMRI - the stuff you can put on organic, the government says its ok – I’m not so sure. (producer 7)
from picking up a piece of roadkill, cutting it up, putting it in a cooler, and selling it out off their pick up truck. (producer 8)

FACFM, years ago, decided that what was local in Florida was the whole state of Florida and a little bit of South Georgia. (producer 7)

| Governance | What I would like to see regulated is the road side stands that pop up on the weekend. They're not collecting sales tax, not paying income tax, permit fees. They are paying any There’s so much regulation and government and all that crap. There’s just too much trouble. It’s like we’re back into the corporate world. You know? Forget it. (Producer 6) I think that any oversight any big brother should be reduced because it's amazing how much inspections we
insurances. That's a real bug in my butt. That really irritated me. Drastically. Those roadside vendors that set up. And of course they set up on the weekend. They know the government inspectors aren't going to work. The laws are seven day a week laws. Why aren't the inspectors worked seven days a week. Granted you can't expect someone to work seven days a week, but one weekend a month? Rotate it around so that these people won't do it. But you know, it's not a level playing field as far as I'm concerned.

have to go through (Producer 2)

The best case scenario. I know we're not able to this with a nation this size, but the best case scenario would be for the consumer to come to the farm and to see where to stuff is grown and how it's grown and choose stuff that way. The closer you can get to the plant, the better everyone is going to be. But the third party certification.... more regulation is not the answer.

(Producer 2)

The problem is that everyone of them has a different inspector and I think I counted one that there was 11 to 13 inspectors that come for this little farm. Fire inspector for a building that won't burn. Because it's metal. And he wanted exits, but there's no walls. I'm not saying that no regulation should happen. But it's just amazing to me.

Going in I would have never suspected
(producer 2) those laws – I don’t think they’re heavy handed. I really don’t.

(producer 8) there would be this much regulation.

(Producer 2) I know farmers that are killing their own hogs on farms, scalding it, cleaning it up, and giving it to our (?) guys, who are selling it. It drive me crazy because when they get caught, the rest of us go under a microscope. There’s a guy selling cheese, and it’s raw, “only for pet consumption” [air quotes]. That’s the loophole. That’s the loophole we all need to work in. He’s selling samples! In public! [buries face in hands and shakes head] And that they can get those samples is published. They published it in an article. He standing there with a knife with a piece of cheese on it. Oh my god. He’s shipping across state lines. We haven’t had a bust in Florida for like 10 years. It’s people like that that are going to make one. (producer 8)
Education

-Do a lot of people know what hydroponic means when you first talk to them about it?

-Not really. But a lot of people don't know what organic means either. They think they do, but they don't. So we're here to educate.

(Producer 2).

Labeling

What labels do you look for when you're shopping?

On milk and eggs I look for the hormone stuff. Fair trade I don’t care about. There’s so many labels. Usually the only ones I care about are milk, eggs.

Why is that?

the new catch phrase is “totally natural” and that could mean so much. And it means using chemical fertilizers and sprays and things, because it’s a natural thing…. (laughs) they consider it natural. That’s what you have to do naturally in order to make a plant grow. (Producer 5)

they are selling big huge old sows that have been pushed with meds
Uh, mainly because I’ve taken care of animals and I just, I don’t know, it makes me a little uncomfortable.
And my professors. I figured they knew more about organics than me. All of them said you should buy organic milk.
That’s one of the only things. Like you can get hormones and stuff from the milk so that’s one thing you should buy organic. And that like the only thing I saw even my organic professors promoting, so I figured I’d trust them on that one.
(producer 4)

because they are these purebreds. That’s what’s being sold as hormone free, antibiotic free, and all that. You’re better off eating confinement meat than an old sow that’s been pushed, because they’re give them oxytosin, they’ll give them antibiotics after every birth, and all this stuff. That doesn’t go away. That stays in the fat.

(Producer 8)
When [the reseller is] there, we usually have to take our signs down. That’s all I need is for them to go “Oh ‘GMO-free’ – oh, there’s a new word to use.” (producer 8)

they might sell organic as Costco or Wal-mart, but it’s industrial and has all its own problems. So to me that’s the cut off. So when you’re talking small-farm, generally it’s going
FACFM, years ago, decided that what was local in Florida was the whole state of Florida and a little bit of South Georgia. (producer 7)

For me, AWA is nearly as good as it gets. You can always get more labels or certifications, but for me, right now, AWA is the best I can get. I only one of 6 farmers in Florida who can put that on their meat.

Unfortunately, there is also the organic label. Now there are so many ways to get around what "organic" means that people aren't trusting that label like they used to, so for me it's plain simple, USDA - everyone knows what that means with health standards.

AWA is the humane thing. It means the pigs was fed the right stuff and treated the right way until its destination, which is obviously meat packages, but for me that is the best I can have hoped for.

Do you think those labels - AWA and USDA - are more
trustworthy than organic? It is because, like I said, there are so many different ways that you can use organic or other things - like free-range - if you were to really read what "free-range" means and what people have as free-range, there is so much of a variation that I think when stuff like that starts happening, you lose trust in it. You have to because they're just finding another way around something that started off as true and good and that can't happen with AWA because they have strict standards for humanely raised that are cut and dry. There are no variations in how you can humanely raise them under their guidelines.

(producer 1)

SNAP It also falls back on these road stand vendors. They aren't taking SNAP. So it I've asked for signage to put up front. I don't know how these folks get their benefits, but couldn't the state of Florida say "local farms accept it" Or
would help level the playing field, for thing that we face. (Producer 2)

Even the SNAP or EBT program, of course, they need to feed their family because they are underemployed or whatever. They won't give us any promotional material. They won't promote us. We take EBT and SNAP and what better place is there to buy than this place (producer 3)

Well, they have another program too for farmers market and I told the person who runs give them a list. Couldn't they do just a little bit? And maybe those folks won't come because they like the fake flavors. (producer 3)
the farmers market up here that they will install a wireless EBT terminal at the market, and I said "This is a great way to let customers know and then maybe you'll get other customers that will be using their SNAP cards and that never happened. And I don't know if any of the markets have taken advantage of it. Because the state will, at no charge, get that done for you. Do you know the percentage of people that are on SNAP? Its a incredible number of people. (Producer 3)
Appendix F: Key Informant Quotations Organized by Producer

**Producer 1:** Female pig farmer, AWA certified, was a nurse before returning to family farming on her father’s land. No hired help. Sales to restaurants directly and is adamant about delivering all orders. Also does pick-ups on-site with pre-ordering on website or delivers directly to consumers.

I put pig pictures in my emails and stuff. [...] I think that has to be kind of a comforting way, a friendly way, rather than writing back in black ink and answering his questions directly. That is what I would want anyhow - to see a little bit of excitement about what you're doing - even if it's pigs’ smilies. So if it's over online then that's how I meet them. [...] most everybody is over the computer.

I've had a couple of instances of private buyers who want to commit to buying local and stay here quite a while. And then they're ready to leave and I ask "what do you think?" and they say "I just love your pigs. I don’t think we can eat them."

Now there are so many ways to get around what "organic" means that people aren't trusting that label like they used to.

You have to earn the label. You can’t just buy it.

For something like to say you're doing an outstanding job. For me it's more of a personal thing than really putting that sticker on my meat. I know what we do is above
and beyond what they ask. It's the best recognition I could get for raising pigs. [...] More people are seeing it because now they are getting it into retail stores [...] so I think consumers are picking it up. But it's sort of weaving its way around. I think there are two other things, so I think it's a little confusing to them sometimes but I think the more they see it out in the public, the more they understand and those big factory farms are always in the news for inhumane treatment. People pay more attention, I think, to humanely raised, regardless if it's AWA, I don't know the other ones. But it's the humanely raised part they see. And it does mean a lot.

Usually when you get family famers they want to the best and they want to have the best labels, so they are trying - whether it's AWA or something else - they are trying to get that notoriety.

There are so many different ways that you can use organic or other things - like free-range - if you were to really read what "free-range" means and what people have as free-range, there is so much of a variation that I think when stuff like that starts happening, you lose trust in it. You have to because they're just finding another way around something that started off as true and good.

**Producer 2:** Male hydroponic farmer, married to producer 3, no certifications, accepts EBT/SNAP, operates a you-pick and sells on site at the farm. They used to sell as a local Wednesday market before it closed down. No hired help, other than temporary vendors when market was in operation. Relies on strong family and volunteer support at open house events.
And a lot of people at these markets are resellers. I would say 90% of them are resellers.

They’re not collecting sales tax, not paying income tax, permit fees. They aren’t paying any insurance. […] The amount of permitted and insurances and things that we have to purchase every year is in the thousands of dollars. I mean, again, the guy on the side of the road, he's not paying that. So of course our prices are going to be a little higher. […] But when they understand what I'm telling them... For instance, I get $3 for a watermelon, "Well they guy down the street is charging 2." And I say, "Yeah, when you get a bad watermelon and you go back the next day or fuss at him about it, he’s gone. When you come back the next day and fuss about it to me, I'll give you another one."

We're here to educate. We do teach a lot, especially the kids, we focus on the kids coming and experiencing this and telling them their strawberries don't really come from the back room of a grocery store. They start at a farm. And it's amazing how many kids don't know that. Or they don't know what part of the plant they eat. Just things that we take for granted that everybody knows, they don't know. So we do everything we can to educate them.

Our customers are our best salespeople, without a doubt.
We try to do things in our marketing that takes us off our beaten path. So that people will learn about us. […] People would never have ventured to [our road] now know about us and do come over. […] So that's all part of our marketing plan, is to do things that are not on our beaten path because you never know. You can't do everything but you just pick and choose and see what works the best.

Our hope is, when the kids come with the school, we teach them about the farm and all that stuff, and then hopefully the kids will get their parents to come so the kids can actually teach their parents about the farm.

We had this picnic area set up. People can come by whether they want to buy a vegetable or not, they can come use the picnic area. We don't ever charge for that. I will say there are not many people who take advantage of it, but they can and we encourage it. We've had a few birthday parties. We want this to be their farm as well as our farm. It's really how we present ourselves.

We say, "come on, we'll go out there and show you how to pick the lettuce." "Oh, i don't want to pick it" "Well, you're gonna because they next time I might not be here and you'll need to know how to do it." And then they love it and they're back and they're bringing their friends.

What I would like to see regulated is the roadside stands that pop up on the weekend. And of course they set up on the weekend. They know the government inspectors aren't going to work. The laws are seven day a week laws. Why aren't the
inspectors worked seven days a week? Granted you can't expect someone to work seven days a week, but one weekend a month? Rotate it around so that these people won't do it. But you know, it's not a level playing field as far as I'm concerned.

I know we're not able to this with a nation this size, but the best case scenario would be for the consumer to come to the farm and to see where to stuff is grown and how it's grown and choose stuff that way. The closer you can get to the plant, the better everyone is going to be. But the third party certification.... more regulation is not the answer.

Whereas in other states, the state will make signs on the major roads saying, "farm - 2 miles." Vermont does that. They support their local farms. So, unless you can afford billboard, which of course we can't... But there are things that the state of Florida could do to help local farmers and they don't do them. Because they aren't in tune.

We made a conscious effort to start adding and improving and becoming more community involved.

A lot of times we're have people that come every 2-3 days for a head of lettuce and finally, I'm like, "Why don't you just get some equipment and do it yourself?" "Oh, I can't do that" "Yes you can!"

Hydroponics is the farm of the future. It uses significantly less water, less land, and produces cleaner food.
**Producer 3:** Female hydroponic farmer. Married to Producer 2.

There are other little farms and we'll mention other little places we know and people send people there. But there's no cohesiveness about all of us getting together. [...] I think you lose if you don't get together everybody like-minded, like we are, because people ask me if there's any place I know where they can get fresh pig or fresh slaughter, and even that, we don't know.

You don't even have to guess what's in season when you come here. It's right there.

We're selling that you're using all of your sensory. Like I keep saying, what else is life about?

Everyone is always trying to look for the better mousetrap. Especially when it comes to gardening. And what we like to tell people is that we've figured it out. We've dumbed it down. There is nothing easier than the few steps that you have to take. [...] we have the best mouse trap. We know we do, We have seven years to prove it. That's another thing. People can invent stuff, but they've never actually done it. We are the farmer.

We want people to grow their own food. That's our main goal, to make people understand how easy it is to grow their own food and to have a backyard garden [...] We
do a lot of events throughout the year. We do classes. Just about everything we do is free. We've done canning classes. We've done preserving classes. We've done gardening courses. Integrated pest management classes.

we've been in this seven years and there was nothing seven years ago.

Producer 4: Not a farm owner, young male farm worker, received a bachelor’s in horticulture science from University of Florida, with a concentration in organic management. Works at an organically certified hydroponic farm that sells to local restaurants directly and with a broker, as well as at market.

That’s why I have these stains on my hands. They never get clean after that.

I’m seeing that also with a lot of customers that come back. A lot of them I’ve built that connection with them and I’m like talking to them and getting buddy-buddy and once I make that connection then they come back a lot. There’s a lot of return customers.

I made a bunch of other videos about my rabbits, and time lapes and things. I was doing it more because a lot of farm it’s hard to put on a resume things you’ve done unless you have pictures. So that’s why I started doing a log on my blog of what I’m doing, projects and things, to legitimize a little bit. So I can show people. “Well I was raising rabbits in my backyard.” That’s something you don’t want to just put on your resume, but if it’s a blog, “How to raise rabbits” then it looks legitimate.
At first I was pretty on board with [organic] and then I was like “oh wow there is a lot of ridiculous bullshit” some of these things are ridiculous. [I knew a man] doing a lot of genetic modification work, but he was doing it for drought resistance and really cool things. I was like “this stuff has a lot of potential”. It not dangerous. It can be used for a lot. I can’t believe organic is just outright canning this, when it’s not really using chemicals. It could be more sustainable. That among so many of their other little regulations. But in the end, I do like buying organic, because I do know there is a lot of chemicals in agriculture and even in organic, when you buy produce, you still don’t know exactly how is was being handled. There’s so many people that handle a product before it reaches to the end.

There’s so many ways it can get contaminated. Which makes the risk of organic versus conventional is probably the same. They are going through the same stuff. I don’t actually put much faith in it, but I like to support it still because if it succeeds, then it also helps me. I don’t talk about the organic stuff as much because it’s not something I care about as much. But I don’t know, you have to give the customer what they want. They want wholesome, organic, meaning that it’s clean, meaning that it’s sustainable, being that it’s local, green, all those buzzwords.

It’s only sustainable if you’re doing the value added stuff. The world I’m seeing right now of having to produce in order to get paid, it’s just not sustainable.

It’s hydroponic, no chemicals, no dirt, you don’t even need to wash it.
Well, [restaurants and consumers] are looking for that specialty item – that item that they can’t normally get. Heirloom tomatoes or something like that. And that’s why they’re coming to us, because we have that.

**Producer 5:** Male farmer married to Producer 6, operates a CSA and farm stand, uses vertical gardening, greenhouse gardening, and tradition in ground methods for produce and raising many types of animals, no certifications, does not use pesticides. Currently one additional full time farm worker and two part time workers.

Either grow it yourself, buy from somebody that can trust is going to grow it right, or put yourself out there in front of the market and be prepared to pay your doctor. Your stuff is going to put you in the hospital because of the GMOS, the growth regulators, the antibiotics they are putting into these animals because they are such a mass operation they have to do it.

The vendors in the farmers’ market – 95% of them aren’t growing the stuff. They are going down to the produce market and they are buying it and bringing it up and everybody thinks “oh, that’s great – you have a fresh ripe tomato. I’m buying local” because they’re in a farmers’ market and it’s two blocks away.
You start looking and seeing produce boxes, those boxes are coming from somewhere. You aren’t going to go out and buy produce boxes. I mean, you can, but it’s a situation where guys aren’t going to go buy that stuff.

Some of our members will come in and tell us, “I found a new recipe on the internet and it was fabulous!” and we say, “ok, thanks, send it to us, we’ll share it.” So the rest of our members get it. So it’s a pretty neat thing, the CSA, because it is a sharing experience.

99% of the members take a tour.

Well, the new catch phrase is “totally natural” and that could mean so much. And it means using chemical fertilizers and sprays and things, because it’s a natural thing…. (laughs) they consider it natural. That’s what you have to do naturally in order to make a plant grow.

We grew as our market grew. And that’s important for people to know. You can’t go out here and think just because I put in three acres of broccoli I’m going to sell three acres of broccoli. That’s just not going to happen. […] A lot of farmers, they have a tendency to put all their eggs in one basket, instead of being diversified. That’s why we do so much of what we do. We are diversified. […] Something is always moving to give us a weekly income or a monthly income.
**Producer 6:** Female farmer, married to Producer 5. Runs a scholarship help and grant writing business off and on parallel to farm operations.

We have a pair that has been with us for five years now and they come all the way from [an hour away]. They started with a friend and they were rotating – making the trip every other week at least. And that friend dropped out and I thought for sure we would lose them, too, and they’re like: heck no. It’s important to them. It’s worth it. Other people don’t want to come from [20 minutes away]. It’s too far, because there’s a Walmart a whole lot closer. Some people think and they want to and they mean well – to eat better and to stick to those commitments, but they aren’t willing to do the work, I guess.

Every time some new movie gets released I say, ‘oh good, can’t wait for the phone to ring tomorrow’ and it does.

If it’s all perfect, that’s your clue. You know, it’s only some humungous farm that’s putting out the perfect looking cucumber because the rest becomes other stuff. But when you’re growing it and that’s it, that’s all there is, you’re going to get funny looking cucumbers.

Sometimes we get members right off the bat are used to putting food up or eating seasonally, more along those lines. More often than not, no, but these last few have had that mindset already, which is kind of neat. The core members have also learned that when they’re getting a huge bag of broccoli wash it and put it up – freeze it or whatever.
Do something with it. So that in June when you want broccoli you have broccoli and it is as good as going to the grocery store. You can eat the way you’re used to eating. So those that learn do that, because otherwise what happens is you’ve got a bunch of broccoli in your fridge and you’re sick of eating it. […] and that’s in their welcome packet – how to put up. How to freeze vegetables and all that. And I put out recipes all the time. I’m big on that one. I’ll tell them as we start doing something new, I’ll tell them it’s good hot or cold – like arugula. Or when you give them radishes, “ok, don’t forget, the greens are good too.” So I’m always sharing that kind of stuff with them, too.

We’re just too busy. I just don’t need socialize it. We have a hard time socializing even with our own family.

I would love to do a party or a BBQ or something with all of our CSA members, because I think of them that way, like family, because I have that interaction with them.

We have other customers that have been customers of ours […] over the years and then they learn that we’re doing the CSA thing and they’re like, “Ok, sign me up.” They go, “We’ve been doing business with you for years, I don’t need a trial. Give me the contract. […] We know how you guys do business.”

That’s why we started charging for it, because it takes time. We’ve got some families that are just looking for something to do over the weekend and their kids have
never seen a cow. We’ve got some that the kids start doing something in school and it sparks a talk at the dinner table and they start researching farms.

I’ll tell them “You can come visit any time. You can have a tour, see how we do things. I can answer any questions.” […] Often we have people who do a tour and buy a pet rabbit for the kids, or buy some eggs at least.

Every time Monsanto decides they need a little more chemical to grow their organic tomatoes, they get it approved. And all of a sudden its OMRI approved. Well, bull, you know? It’s still a bad chemical. That’s all there is to it. […] . So why should we spend the time and the money investing in that when it really doesn’t mean anything anyway?” And it doesn’t! You can just be a member of that little group by paying your fees, essentially.

We feel like government is in our life enough as it is, […] I’ll tell em “You can come visit any time. You can have a tour, see how we do things. I can answer any questions. If that’s not good enough for you, you can go elsewhere.”

We don’t need to be certified organic. They don’t care.

And I’ll look you right in the eye and say “Hey, think about it. [organic] really doesn’t mean anything anyway.”
I think the new aquaponic group, that whole niche, is pushing some of that movement forward, which is good for us. The more all these other people market, they’re doing it for us.

**Producer 7:** Female market manager that has been active in the local food movement for over 10 years. Heavily involved in local Slow Food Chapter and looking to establish a food hub in the region.

[A reseller] was bringing stuff in from all around. And she was telling me she was having asparagus growing. And I told her, “Honey, you can’t do that.” We argued back and forth for a long time. [...] She would take off the rubber band that said “Peru” and put some cute raffia with a bow on it. So finally I took a picture of the sign, because it’s illegal to do stuff like that, I took a picture of the [...] Locally Grown Asparagus.

[People] are like “I thought you had vegetables.” “Well,” I say, “They are just in the ground still. They are still growing.” So it’s always a process of education, most of the time. Or “how come you don’t have oranges?” People who are used to grocery stories. [...] people don’t understand it. Even North Florida has a different growing season from here.

I think the government hijacked the certification.
We had maple syrup one season. So I try to be local but if there’s some product we can get here. We all use spices and coffee and stuff, so there’s that, too. We’re going to build a bread oven and this year I have a mill couple for two months with heritage wheat.

There’s not enough yet. Yet. So she was giving me all kinds of hell about the produce resellers. And I said we keep them separate. I try to educate. This is all about educating.

**Producer 8:** Female pig farmer. Was AWA certified, but no longer. Sells to consumers on site at farm through pre-ordering on website. Uses broker to sell to local restaurants but personally delivers product to several restaurants in the Tampa area. No hired help.

I’m at the processors to see when they get dropped off. I know the pig’s name. I’m like “look at that, that’s Patty Duke.” I know where she was born and she was sold to this farm and this farm…

I packed my stuff up and left. I don’t want to be associated with him. I don’t want to be next to him.
- You gotta be prettier and it’s gotta be cuter, and braid your hair and all this other stuff. And I’m like, “Really? Have you seen these hands? Braiding is not going to happen.”

*Did they really tell you to braid your hair?*

- Oh, I hope they were kidding. But, you know, you need more color in your booth and stuff like that.

If you’re not there all the time you can’t build a customer base. I don’t have a big enough herd to be there all the time – I have too big of a herd to be there all the time.

At a grass-fed beef farm, take a bag of grain with ya. If all the cows come running, then they are not grass-fed.

Well every one of those rules is invented because x amount of people died. It’s just like stop signs, stoplights and stuff. There’s a reason for this stuff. If those aren’t in place, then there’s nothing to stop someone from picking up a piece of road kill, cutting it up, putting it in a cooler, and selling it out off their pick up truck. […] I know farmers that are killing their own hogs on farms, scalding it, cleaning it up, and giving it other guys, who are selling it. It drives me crazy because when they get caught, the rest of us go under a microscope.

If I’m at the farmers’ market and that stuff didn’t go through USDA processing, if we don’t have authorization that animal is fit for human consumption… So, the way they have those laws set, I’m actually okay with. I take it to the USDA processor. […] It’s all
sealed in plastic, no air can get to it – air is the biggest thing with any kind of contamination – and everybody’s happy. […] I sort [the meat] into bags and I get it into [customers’] freezers. I get it out of my hands. I don’t want the responsibility. We’ve got liability here with live animals. I don’t need liability with raw meat. […] I’m not a food service person. I’m a farmer. Those two are pretty far removed.

So many [consumers] are just falling for snake oil, and paying a lot of money for it.

You can’t just force Publix to force ConAgra to take the crates off the pigs and start labeling GMOs because they are just going to find another way semantically around it. We’ve got too many words in our language. They’ll use every one.

I don’t think government regulation is going to fix that. I think people coming out and actually investing that amount of time is going to make the difference.

I’ll farm until pigs aren’t in confinement anymore. With every one that we produce, there’s one less that has to go through confinement. That’s my theory, but it’s really expensive. I have a really expensive ideal set. I’ve got to work on that.