



Building Food Democracy: Exploring Civic Food Networks and Newly Emerging Forms of Food Citizenship

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[Paper first received, 25 November 2012; in final form, 29 November 2012]

Abstract. In recent years new types of consumer–producer cooperation in food networks have emerged in which consumers play an active role in the operation and thereby clearly go beyond food provisioning as such. Examples include consumer co-ops and solidarity buying groups of local and organic food, community-supported agriculture and collective urban gardening initiatives. These initiatives raise important new questions that cannot be adequately resolved within existing theoretical perspectives based on concepts such as ‘alternative food networks’, ‘short food supply chains’ or ‘local food systems’. This article explores possible new analytical frameworks for the study of contemporary dynamics in food networks and develops the concept of ‘civic food networks’ as an overarching concept to explore contemporary dynamics and sources of innovation within agri-food networks. Building on the empirical diversity of initiatives, this introduction to the Special Issue argues that the role of civil society as a governance mechanism for agri-food networks has increased in significance compared to market and state actors. Moreover, expressions of ‘food citizenship’ are reshaping the relation between food practices and the market as well as with public institutions in ways that go beyond material and economic exchange and that contribute to a ‘moralization’ (or even ‘civilization’) of food economies.

Introduction to an Emergent Phenomenon

Within the last decade, a growing body of literature has documented the emergence of new types of producer–consumer cooperation in food networks that run parallel and partly in opposition to dominant globalization and concentration trends in food markets. These new consumer–producer relations have been studied from various theoretical perspectives using different conceptual headings such as alternative food networks (AFNs) (Allen et al., 2003; Renting et al., 2003; Sage, 2003; Whatmore et al., 2003; Goodman, 2004), short food supply chains (SFSCs) (Renting et al., 2003; Ilbery

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and Maye, 2005) and localized agri-food systems (SYAL) (Muchnik, 2010) or local food systems (LFS) (Hinrichs, 2000; Fonte, 2008; Karner, 2010). While studies initially focused primarily on the role of producers and the potential contribution of such networks to sustainable rural development and farm diversification, more recent contributions have analysed AFNs from the perspective of sustainable consumption, as social movements or as attempts to articulate alternative economic spaces and transform profoundly the structures and organization of agri-food systems (Leyshon et al., 2003; Seyfang, 2006; Lamine et al., 2012).

In recent years particular new types of AFNs have emerged and developed strongly, i.e. initiatives in which citizens play an active role in the initiation and operation of new forms of consumer–producer relations. These go clearly beyond direct-selling and marketing activities operated and initiated by producers, since citizen–consumers are the main driving force and initiators, and the emergent networks embody new forms of engagement with food that in many cases go clearly beyond food provisioning itself. Clear examples of such initiatives are consumer co-operatives and buying groups of local and organic food that have spread rapidly in recent years, especially in countries such as France (under the heading *Associations pour le maintien d’une agriculture paysanne*, ‘Associations for the Maintenance of Peasant Agriculture’, AMAP) (Lamine, 2005; Chiffolleau, 2009), Italy (there known as *Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale*, ‘Solidarity Purchasing Groups’, GAS) (Brunori et al., 2011; Lamine et al., 2012) and Spain (referred to as *Grupos Autogestionados de Consumo*, agro-ecological consumption groups, GAKs) (Soler et al., 2010). Similar initiatives are also reported in other countries across Europe (see Little et al., 2010; Balázs, this issue), as well as in other parts of the world (North and South America, Australia, Far Eastern Countries) (Parker, 2005; Jarosz, 2008; Flora and Bregendahl, this issue; Lamine et al., this issue). Other examples of initiatives that suggest new forms of engagement with food are adoption and solidarity schemes of citizens for the mobilization of land, financial capital and other key resources to support the development of local and organic food production in their localities. In some cases, these initiatives see citizen–consumers directly involved in food production activities, such as in community-based urban gardening and ‘grow it yourself’ initiatives, in which groups collectively engage with food production for home consumption in the direct urban environment (Müller, 2007; Jehlicka and Smith, 2011; Veen et al., this issue).

These new types of initiatives are of special analytical interest because they potentially represent a shift in the role of consumers from passive end-users and mere buyers of food products towards more proactive ‘citizen–consumers’ (Soper, 2007; Johnston, 2008) who intend to regain control over the ways in which their food is produced and provided. At the same time, however, initiatives often signify a crucial shift on the producer side – from farming as merely the selling of raw materials to the food industry to an activity that revalues and reincorporates various elements of food provisioning in a wider social and political meaning. As part of these newly emerging networks, citizen–consumers, in collaboration with ‘citizen–producers’, actively reshape their relations with different stages of the food system and start revaluing the (social, cultural, environmental) meanings of food beyond mere commodity and object of economic transaction.

These newly emerging food networks are also of interest because they point at potentially important changes that are occurring in the role and weight of different governance mechanisms in the context of agri-food systems. While agri-food

governance approaches and debates traditionally have focused almost exclusively on the role of market forces and government policies in the structuring of agri-food systems, the emergence of new food networks in which citizens play a key role in the operation and in which voluntary, associational principles and participatory forms of self-management are paramount suggests the need for a reevaluation of the role of civil society-driven governance mechanisms as a source of innovation and transformation of agri-food systems (Renting, 2008; Wiskerke, 2010). As we will indicate in more detail below, both market- and government-based governance are experiencing in the current situation profound, multiple crises, which undermines the capacity of both mechanisms to steer and influence agri-food system dynamics. By contrast, a considerable part of the contemporary dynamics in agri-food systems seems to be rooted in civil society-based initiatives.

It is too early to say to what extent these new types of food networks are signs of a more fundamental and long-lasting transition in the governance and organization of agri-food systems. In any case, they do suggest that existing frameworks and approaches are insufficient to understand the underlying relevant dynamics and potentials for the future development of agri-food systems. One important shortcoming is exactly that existing conventional approaches take into account insufficiently the role of citizens and governance mechanisms rooted in civil society. The unit of analysis of short food supply chains (SFSCs) and local food systems (LFS/SYAL) approaches generally corresponds to the food supply chain (even though sometimes related concepts such as *filière*, commodity system, or system of provisioning are used), which all run from the point of food production to the point of sale only and are thus unable to address relevant influences that originate from changing consumption practices.

Also, the concept of alternative food networks (AFNs) is increasingly unsatisfactory in order to understand the contemporary dynamics of food systems and the emergence of the aforementioned new, civil society-driven food networks. The main shortcoming of the AFN concept is that it has no clear normative content of its own, since it is ultimately defined in terms of its distinction from 'mainstream' food networks. Renting et al. defined AFNs as 'a broad embracing term to cover newly emerging networks of producers, consumers, and other actors that embody alternatives to the more standardised industrial mode of food supply' (2003, p. 394), while Tregear speaks of 'forms of food provisioning with characteristics deemed to be different from, perhaps counteractive to, mainstream modes which dominate in developed countries' (2011, p. 419). Whatmore et al. furthermore indicate that the social reality to which the AFN-debate referred is constructed through,

'non identical collective nouns [which] consolidate a multiplicity of food networks from organics and fair trade to regional and artisanal products... What they share in common is their constitution as/of food markets that redistribute value through the network against the logic of bulk commodity production; that reconvene "trust" between food producers and consumers; and that articulate new forms of political association and market governance' (2003, p. 389).

It therefore should not be a surprise that while the term AFN was useful initially as a delimitation for an explorative analysis of the newly emerging phenomenon of counter-hegemonic food networks since the 1990s, it has proven less adequate for

more detailed analyses and in addressing recent tendencies (see also Holloway et al., 2007; Tregear, 2011).

Moreover, as various authors have correctly pointed out, the distinction between alternative and conventional is problematic since it is not static and often delimitations between alternative and mainstream are dynamic over time (as indicated, for example, in debates on 'conventionalization' of organics and fair-trade products, see Jaffee and Howard, 2010). Therefore food network dynamics can be better studied sometimes in terms of 'hybrid' networks that combine elements of alternative and mainstream food networks as part of ongoing, incomplete transition processes (Sonrino and Marsden, 2006; Lamine et al., 2012). Finally, AFN approaches have been criticized for a lack of attention to questions of social inclusion and justice, both with respect to the type of farmers involved and to concerns that produce mainly reaches middle-class consumers (Goodman, 2004; Johnston, 2008).

These shortcomings of commonly applied concepts suggest that there is a need to explore alternative theoretical perspectives for the study of contemporary food system dynamics. What is needed especially are conceptual approaches that address more clearly the renewed role in such dynamics of citizens, consumers, producers and civil society, the distinctive nature and characteristics of social and economic relations embodied in newly emerging food networks, and their potential to generate genuine food system transformations. In this article, we propose the concept of 'civic food networks' (CFNs) as a possible alternative and complementary analytical concept. The ideas presented here, and in the collection of articles in this Special Issue more generally, are a reflection of debates and presentations that were held during a series of thematic Working Group sessions organized at relevant international conferences in 2011 and 2012¹ around the topic of new forms of citizen engagement in food networks.

While the concept of 'civic food networks' (CFNs) is intended not necessarily to fully substitute for existing analytical terms, but rather to act as a complementary category to concepts such as 'short food supply chains' and 'local(ized) food systems', there are several relevant considerations in proposing this new analytical approach:

- CFNs refer to new relationships that are developing between consumers and producers, who engaged together in new forms of food citizenship;
- CFNs refer to wider networks than those narrowly engaged in food production–distribution–consumption practices, and may also include new forms of cooperation between different local actors, who (for different reasons) are interested and engaged in new approaches to food matters.
- CFNs are an expression of processes of change in the agri-food governance mechanisms, showing the increasing importance of the role of civil society (and to some extent local and regional administrations) compared to market forces and the (national) state.
- CFNs correspond to a considerable degree to and coincide with changing relations between agri-food networks and urban–rural relations. Often cities are the starting point for food-system innovations associated with CFNs, including (peri-)urban forms of agriculture and gardening, thereby somehow 'inverting' traditional rural–urban relations and shifting the starting point and locus of innovation of food networks from production/countryside to consumption/city.
- CFNs often embody different discourses, new knowledge and new symbolic frameworks, which are developed and shared through interaction amongst in-

volved actors and which underpin new preferences and practices. Such discourses and frameworks emanating from CFNs have introduced important new 'traditions' and references in agri-food system dynamics (again often urban based), such as permaculture, 'grow it yourself', etc.

- CFNs in many cases develop and build upon linkages with other new social movements and conceptual innovations related to different societal and economic spheres, such as de-growth, transition town movements, solidarity economy districts, place-based development, ecofeminism, etc. In this regard, the development of new thinking and alternative practices around food often seems to represent an accessible area of experimentation, with the capacity to foster the further development of new discourses and forms of citizenship.

'Civic Food Networks' and 'Food Citizenship' as Explorative Concepts to Study Contemporary Food Network Innovations

In this section, we elaborate further the concept of 'civic food networks' and discuss a number of theoretical approaches in the literature that may contribute to its operationalization. Especially relevant in this respect are the concepts of 'food democracy', 'food sovereignty' and 'food citizenship'.

The concept of 'food democracy' was introduced by Tim Lang in the 1990s in response to the increasing corporate control of and lack of consumer participation in the food system (see also Lang and Heasman, 2004). Lang advocated the need to democratize the food system and to look at 'food as a locus of the democratic process', which is essentially a call to enhance the role of citizens in the management and control of the food system. In this sense, the rise of CFNs corresponds to citizen's attempts for 'building food democracy'. The food democracy concept has been further elaborated by Hassanein, who indicates that 'food democracy ideally means that all members of an agro-food system have equal and effective opportunities for participation in shaping that system, as well as knowledge about the relevant alternative ways of designing and operating the system' (2003, p. 83). Hassanein's conception thereby goes clearly beyond food democracy as only a rights-based concept and stresses active citizenship. Suggesting that 'people can and should be actively participating in shaping the food system, rather than remaining passive spectators on the sidelines' (2003, p. 79), Hassanein is very much in line with the approach proposed in this article. The call for a pragmatic focus in the elaboration of food democracy, i.e. 'the achievement of what is presently possible coupled with ongoing inquiry by an active and informed citizenry' (Hassanein, 2003, p. 85), is also at the heart of what we consider as CFNs.

The concept of 'food sovereignty', which was developed in a bottom-up manner by the international farmers' movement Via Campesina from 1996 onwards (Wittmann et al., 2010), in our opinion goes largely in the same direction as the food democracy concept, even though it has perhaps a stronger rights-based focus and is also more clearly defined from a producer perspective. It should also be recognized that since its broad, initial definition as 'the right of people to determine their own food and agricultural policies' (Patel, 2009, p. 682) the food sovereignty concept has evolved strongly. For example, Pimbert suggests that it 'is perhaps best understood as a process that seeks to expand the realm of democracy and regenerate a diversity of locally autonomous food systems' and that this transformative learning process 'implies a fundamentally new conception of citizenship: economic, political, social

and cultural' (2009, p. 2). Also, Wittmann indicates that food sovereignty implies new forms of 'agrarian citizenship' as 'a model of rural action that 'protects against both state abuses and the greed of the market' by encompassing the role of civil society and of democratic communication' (2009, p. 808).

While the use of the 'citizenship' concept in relation to food and agriculture in Europe has been relatively uncommon, in the United States and Canada there is a considerable literature referring to 'food citizenship'. Much of this appears to go back to the work of the sociologist Lyson, who in the late 1990s under the heading 'civic agriculture' introduced a strongly community-based conception of a localized and multifunctional agriculture defined as 'a locally organized system of agriculture and food production characterized by networks of producers who are bound together by place' (2005, p. 92). In addition, Lyson made explicit reference to citizenship by indicating that civic agriculture 'has the potential to transform individuals from passive consumers into active food citizens' (2005, p. 97). 'Food citizenship' was subsequently also described by Wilkins as 'the practice of engaging in food-related behaviours that support, rather than threaten, the development of a democratic, socially and economically just, and environmentally sustainable food system' (2005, p. 271).

Independently from this, the concept of 'food citizenship' was also introduced in Canada as early as 1998 as part of the initial development of the Toronto Food Policy Council and inspired by the early ideas of Tim Lang on food democracy. Welsh and MacRae indicate that the concept of 'food citizenship' was used to emphasize 'the need to move beyond food as a commodity and people as consumers' (1998, p. 237) as a critique of corporate control and the loss of food skills ('deskilling') within the public. In their analysis, four dimensions to this process of diminishing food citizenship are mentioned: 1. corporate control over the food chain; 2. providing consumers with limited product information; 3. manipulation of the supermarket environment; and 4. emphasizing processed and convenience foods – which demand less skill of shoppers and eaters – over less-processed ones.

These concepts, and especially the concept of 'food citizenship', are considered helpful in understanding the emergence of CFNs and provide an interesting normative model of potential dynamics and social innovations they might embody. Moreover, it seems to be appropriate to map, explore and better understand the actual contemporary dynamics and innovations in agri-food networks. Hence, our approach is based principally upon and delimited by an empirical definition. On the basis of a historical analysis of recent trends in the development of governance mechanisms of agri-food systems, we argue that civil society-based forms of governance are of growing importance in understanding the dynamics and innovations within contemporary food systems. This is in line with observations of Lang and Heasman who observed that 'the challenge for governance is how the state and institutions can engage with the people – hence the emergence of "stakeholders" or civil society' (2004, p. 262), even though they also remark that civil society engagement has 'yet to convert... into a firm position in terms of delivery and actively shaping overall policy integration' (ibid.). We contend that this tendency towards the growing importance of civil society-based governance has been consolidated, and in recent years has been reinforced and accelerated by the multiple political and economic crisis that is also affecting agri-food system development.

These changes can be understood and visualized by applying the 'governance triangle' (see Figures 1 and 2), which distinguishes the state, market and civil society as basic institutional mechanisms that may give 'structure' to collective human

behaviour within society (Rhodes, 1997; Renting, 2008; Wiskerke, 2010). While the *state* corresponds mainly to public regulation to structure collective action, the *market* makes use mainly of market-regulation mechanisms, such as prices and rules for market liberalization or privatization, as a means to govern market partners' actions. With respect to *civil society*, governance mechanisms refer mainly to active citizen's participation, self-organization and democratic control.

When applying the governance triangle to agri-food systems,² it becomes clear that debates about agri-food governance have focused principally on market regulation and state intervention as the main governance mechanisms in the last decades, while much less attention was given to the role of civil society in structuring agri-food systems. This bias reflects, on the one hand, that as a result of neo-liberal policy especially in recent decades food production was considered merely an economic activity and food a tradable commodity, not that much different from other products and economic sectors, for which (perhaps with the exception of acute shortages and emergencies) price mechanisms should play a central role in the organization of markets. On the other hand, agriculture, food and rural development are policy fields for which state intervention was considered an accepted phenomenon early on, if not with respect to markets than certainly for improving farm structures, technical efficiency, food safety control or guaranteeing food security and, especially in Europe, also social and environmental concerns. The centrality of market and state regulation in debates on agri-food governance is well illustrated by discussions within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO) on trade liberalization and the legitimacy of government support to agriculture and related debates on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European Union.

In the heyday of the agricultural modernization project (ca. 1960–1985) the governance of agri-food systems was to a considerable extent state driven. In order to augment production levels and – certainly in the European context – guarantee basic food self-sufficiency, the state was accorded a key role by means of policy incentives and public extension and advisory services. The state not only attempted to shape infrastructural conditions and improve farm structures or management practices, but also intervened in commodity markets through subsidies and price setting. Indirectly, agri-food policies aimed to enable a diversification of the economy by providing cheap food for growing urban populations. Beyond securing minimum safety standards, however, the state hardly intervened in food-quality issues.

From the 1990s onwards, a gradual rebalancing occurred of the weight and particular role of public and market regulation within agri-food governance. On the one hand, in this period we see the rise of neo-liberal economic approaches that, in the context of the WTO (and previously the GATT), increasingly put pressure on governments to gradually abolish market intervention and state support of agricultural prices. The successive CAP reforms from the 1980s onwards were an expression of this. On the other hand, the reforms implied a redefinition of the role of public policy in agri-food governance. In a context of growing societal discontent and public concern over the negative environmental and social side effects of mainstream agriculture, various policy measures and regulations (e.g. agri-environment measures, food-quality schemes) were introduced to improve the public image of agriculture and reinstall the confidence in the quality and safety of their food. This tendency was reinforced by food-related health scares and animal disease outbreaks in the 1990s, resulting in additional food-safety measures and health and consumer protection policies.

While market and public regulation were thus considered to be key governance mechanisms, this has not been the case for civil society. Indirect control by representative democratic institutions was generally considered a sufficient level of citizen involvement and only for professional organizations and interest groups (farmers' unions, industry lobby groups, and consumer groups) was a stronger involvement in policymaking considered necessary and appropriate. With regard to markets and consumption, hand in hand with overall trends in the agri-food system, the involvement and role of civil society was reduced to that of (individualized) passive buyers and end users of food products and recipients of promotional marketing messages. In many respects the same goes for farmers who were largely considered (individualized) recipients of state regulations and price-takers in the market (see Figure 1).

For a long time, this combination of governance mechanisms was successful in meeting its goals (raising productivity, providing cheap food, generating regional economic development) and, thus, in stabilizing the productivist food regime (Friedmann and McMichael, 1989). However, this model is now confronted increasingly with multiple crises, which in turn are resulting in growing social and economic tensions (see Figure 1). On the one hand, markets are dominated increasingly by a small number of concentrated market parties in retail and processing, thus undermining the bargaining power and influence of producers and consumers; at the same time, market liberalization and privatization have facilitated the emergence of a global 'market empire' (Hardt and Negri, 2000; Ploeg, 2008) beyond the control of national sovereign states and dominated by private corporate interests. On the other hand, public regulation is undergoing continuous policy reforms and a shift in levels of policy intervention, which debilitates its effectiveness. While the national state has increasingly withdrawn from traditional agricultural and rural policies, new potential roles and responsibilities for governments are emerging at local and regional levels (e.g. support of localized food systems and multifunctional forms of agriculture in the framework of rural development measures). However, this policy shift

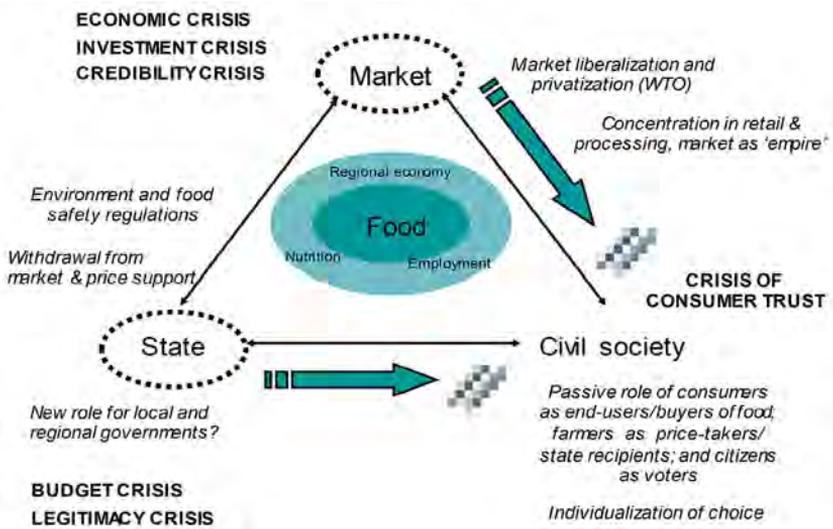


Figure 1. Dominant agri-food governance mechanisms and the current, multiple crises.

is implemented in highly incomplete and contradictory ways, amongst others as a consequence of opposition from vested interests groups in conventional agriculture (Marsden and Sonnino, 2008).

This results in a rupture of relations between civil society and market and state governance, exemplified in a lack of consumer trust in the quality and safety of food products and a breakdown in citizen's support (consumer and producers alike) for agri-food policy measures. Moreover, this breakdown in relevant linkages appears to be further aggravated and accelerated by the current financial, economic and political crises that wider society is undergoing and that is also affecting agri-food systems. For example, innovations in state governance are severely conditioned by the budget crisis that undermines the possibilities for funding of policy innovations (or that cuts down on existing funds). Moreover, the legitimacy crisis of the representative democratic system (as expressed e.g. by the 'Occupy' protest movements in various countries, see Pabst, 2011) undermines its credibility to come up with real answers to the crisis of the agri-food system.

Similarly, market governance mechanisms and their potential to create dynamism and transitions in the agri-food system are undermined increasingly by the financial and economic crises. The investment crisis makes it more and more difficult for socially committed entrepreneurs (either in production or processing and retailing) to obtain credit and access markets, while the economic crisis puts further pressure on prices and makes it more difficult to compete in markets with differentiated quality products with higher prices. Also, tendencies towards the watering down and conventionalization of quality standards in the face of market pressure may undermine the credibility of market-based innovations of the food system.

As Figure 2 shows, CFNs can be understood against this background as an expression of the revitalized role of civil society-based governance mechanisms and, more generally, of a rebalancing of the role and relative weight of different types of governance mechanisms. While civil society was accorded initially a minor and

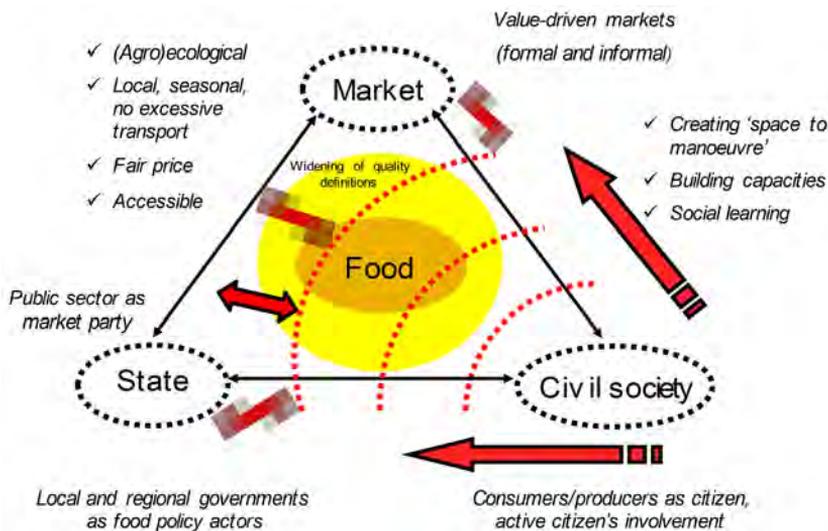


Figure 2. Civil society-based governance mechanisms as source of dynamism and innovation.

secondary role within agri-food governance, by means of CFNs citizens are increasingly reclaiming influence on the organization and operation of food production, distribution and consumption systems, and by doing so generating new forms of citizen engagement with food. In a context of profound crises of market and state governance, civil society-based initiatives become an important source of innovation through social learning, the building of new capacities and by creating 'space to manoeuvre' for organizing food production, distribution and consumption differently.

The regeneration of civic governance mechanisms not only results in changes towards more active roles for consumers as citizens, it also redefines the roles of 'citizen-producers' within food systems, and it also redirects the nature of agri-food networks as a whole. As such, not only does growing citizen engagement lead to different social and economic relations between producers and consumers, but CFNs also appear to embody specific production and distribution models that in sustainability performance and food-quality definitions are clearly distinct from conventional food systems. While CFNs present a considerable diversity, shared characteristics include: promoting (agro-)ecological production methods (though not necessarily with formal organic certification); favouring local and seasonal foods, thereby avoiding unnecessary 'food miles' and excessive energy consumption; offering fair remuneration to producers and other persons involved in different stages of the food system; and providing access to quality food for all income levels and not only for wealthy citizens. What is striking is the integrated nature of criteria applied, often combining ecological, social and other ethical concerns with food quality, as well as the fact that informal, flexible forms of coordination and control systems based on direct relations and mutual trust are preferred to formal arrangements.

Innovations emerging from social-learning processes and new forms of organization within CFNs may in turn form the basis for (re-)creating linkages with state and market parties, and thus lay the basis for new configurations of agri-food governance mechanisms. When the growth of CFNs results in the availability of new, alternative forms of organization of food provisioning, this opens up new interfaces and space of negotiation with market parties and public administrations (indicated by the row of double-sided arrows in Figure 2). These interfaces and negotiations may (and in initial phases often will) be full of tensions and contradictions, but in the medium and long run may also lead to new alliances, rules, institutional arrangements and organizational models for sustainable agri-food systems. Examples of such possible organizational innovations for which CFNs often play a key role as source of dynamism are urban and territorial food strategies (Renting, 2008; Lamine et al., 2012; Derkzen and Morgan, 2012), in which local and regional governments together with civil society groups define concrete plans of action for improving agri-food systems at the local level and governments take up a role as market party by creating demand for local, sustainable food through public food-procurement schemes (Morgan and Sonnino, 2008). For the civil society-market axis, CFNs provide examples of innovations by alternative systems of food provisioning, especially short food supply chains or forms of social or solidarity economy (Leyshon et al., 2003; Gibson-Graham, 2006), in which material and financial exchanges in markets are increasingly subject to value-based, ethical considerations.

Towards a Mapping of Different Forms and Mechanisms of Food Citizenship

The study of the newly emerging reality of CFNs is confronted with a considerable number of methodological and conceptual complications. Generally speaking only fragmented information is available, especially on the basis of Internet sources and (field) expert knowledge, and only in exceptional cases (semi-)official data are published. For example, Flora and Bregendahl (this issue) refer to the national database of the Robyn Van En Center for CSA resources in the USA, which presently includes more than 1,650 CSAs all over the United States. In Italy, the only 'official' data about solidarity buying groups at national level is provided by the national network, which lists currently somewhat more than 900 groups (RETEGAS, 2012), while experts estimate a total of about 2,000 when including non-registered groups (Lamine et al., 2012). For France the interregional platform MIRAMAP in its most recent survey of November 2011 counted 1,600 AMAP groups delivering regularly 66,000 product boxes to 270 000 consumers (MIRAMAP, 2011). For many other countries even such 'informed guesses' are not available. Moreover, in many cases the study of CFNs involves the uncovering of 'hidden realities' outside the formalized agri-food system, and sometimes even people who do not want to be registered for ideological considerations. Hence, to a considerable extent 'blind spots' remain and available figures are often underestimated.

In many respects, the described situation calls for what the Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos has called a 'sociology of absences and emergences' (Santos, 2003). As he indicates, dominant conceptions of social and economic organizational forms often implicitly ignore possible alternative organizational models and to a certain extent it is in the interest of hegemonic groups to disqualify these as 'non-existent' or 'non-viable'. He proposes therefore a new epistemological approach to address the presence and development of alternative experiences.

'Whereas the goal of the sociology of absences is to identify and valorize social experiences available in the world – although declared non-existent by hegemonic rationality – the sociology of emergences aims to identify and enlarge the signs of possible future experiences, under the guise of tendencies and latencies, that are actively ignored by hegemonic rationality and knowledge' (Santos, 2003, p. 241).

The sociology of emergences 'consists in undertaking a symbolic enlargement of knowledge, practices and agents in order to identify therein the tendencies of the future (the not yet) upon which it is possible to intervene so as to maximise the probability of hope vis-à-vis the probability of frustration' (ibid.).

Following this perspective, CFNs present highly diverse forms of civic engagement in food networks and in their transformative potential within agri-food systems and, more generally, food practices and culture. In fact, CFNs take various avenues through which food is co-generated (in its material and immaterial 'quality') and transacted between producers and consumers; different types of arrangements are used to share production risks and to finance investments; the connection between producers and consumers can have a variety of contractual or informal constructions. Moreover, CFNs show different capacities to act as agents of change, at a local level (e.g. relations with public institutions and local communities) and, more generally, at the level of public opinion, culture, discourses, marketing strategies, political agendas, etc.

Without any intention of classifying CFNs, we could organize this variety of expressions of food citizenship with reference to two areas of action. The first is characterized by active involvement into *(re-)constructing alternative systems of food provisioning*, which may result from a very close interaction and mutual influence between producers and consumers or even a physical identity of both roles. The second is civic engagement into *shaping public opinion, culture, institutions and policies by communication, lobbying and political activism*. In terms of different governance mechanisms visualized in the previous section, the first area corresponds to the (re-)building of linkages between civil society and markets, while the second includes the creation of new connections between civil society and (local) public institutions.

Both of these areas of action entail processes of social learning, primarily interesting consumers and producers but increasingly also other actors and public institutions. Through these processes skills are regained and a new awareness and different attitudes towards food develop. Another important process is that of the re-appropriation of the social and recreational function of food. Overcoming the individualized dimension shaped by the modernization of the agri-food system, civic food practices appear increasingly to be able to produce relational goods, by allowing the exchange of meanings and values and sharing the enjoyment of food production and consumption as social and identity-reinforcing activities.

In the following sections we explore some of the manifestations of these new expressions of food citizenship, and draw upon examples from articles included in this Special Issue.

Engagement in Reconstructing Food Practices: From Closer Consumer–Producer Relations...

A common feature of the close, more or less formalized relationships established between consumers and producers is the capacity to extend beyond economic exchange and to include social and political motivations and benefits for both sides. An outstanding example of this is ‘community-supported agriculture’ (CSA) (Parker, 2005; Flora and Bregendahl, this issue). Within this relationship, consumers are committed to sustaining farm activities, both financially and otherwise, e.g. by paying in advance, sharing production risks, and in some cases contributing to tasks on the farm or even becoming co-owner of the farm land and resources. Similar experiences are currently spreading rapidly in southern Europe, including the already mentioned Solidarity Purchasing Groups (GAS) in Italy and Associations for the Maintenance of Peasant Agriculture, AMAP) in France (Lamine et al., this issue). Examples in other countries which work in a similar way are food co-ops in Germany and the UK (Little et al., 2010), Groupes d’Achat Solidaires de l’Agriculture Paysanne (solidarity purchasing groups for peasant agriculture, GASAP) and food teams in Belgium, Agriculture Contractuelle de Proximité (proximity contract agriculture, ACP) in Switzerland, and agro-ecological consumption groups or cooperatives in Spain (Soler et al., 2010).

The close negotiations between producers and consumers on production and product standards in these CFNs imply a co-evolution of practices that, depending on the degree of consumer involvement in production activities and of producer involvement in distribution and marketing, can be termed ‘co-production’ or ‘consumption’. *Co-production* within agri-food networks can be defined as the influence of consumers on production activities in more or less formalized arrangements. In

many cases, this interrelation takes the form of a real negotiation and agreement on the production patterns and on their ethical standards (Brunori et al., 2011). While co-producers involve themselves in production activities, *co-sumption* refers to civic engagement through the conscious choice of products only. Co-sumers thus remain in the role of consumers who impact through purchasing decisions without closer relationships, even though their decisions are informed by increased knowledge of food production processes and a reskilling of consumers. Some examples of CFNs appear at first sight to be farmer-driven forms of direct marketing, but a closer look reveals a key role for consumers. Examples are box schemes that are initiated by consumers together with farmers and even farmers' markets (often perceived as clear example of producer-led direct marketing) which in the case of Prague in the Czech Republic were only organized after demands and campaigns from civil society (Zagata, this issue).

... to the Identity of Producer and Consumer

The rich variety of forms of citizens engagement in food provisioning within CFNs make clear that the traditional distinction between 'producers' and 'consumers' is becoming increasingly obsolete, and following Veen et al. (this issue) we may rather speak of a sliding scale of 'producer-ship'. In some cases citizen engagement in food production takes the form of a real re-appropriation, as is the case with 'grow it yourself' initiatives that received attention in the context of 'urban agriculture'. Two articles in this collection (Psarikidou and Szeszynski, this issue; Veen et al., this issue), but also a growing body of literature on urban gardening, testify that the forms and motivations of those who grow their own food vary greatly. As a study in the city of Munich shows, forms may range from individual allotments to collective fields as well as pedagogic and therapeutic gardens or intercultural and neighbourhood gardens (Haide, 2009). Some growers mainly appear to be interested in self-fulfilment, reconnecting with nature and meeting other like-minded people (Veen et al., this issue; also Vogl et al., 2003). More than a conscious action aimed at changing the overall food system, many individual and collective experiences appear to be opportunities for deskilled citizens to regain knowledge about food growing. From a perspective of societal change, however, they represent a meaningful reconstruction of capacities.

In other experiences, especially in Germany and Austria, community gardens have become popular sites for social integration of different groups, e.g. in the context of neighbourhood gardens, intergenerational gardens or intercultural gardens. Social integration is the main driver, but some authors also attribute a political role to community gardens in reclaiming public space and providing subsistence production and autonomy (Müller, 2007). Along similar lines several initiatives aim to provide access to land to those who want to grow food and do not have land, especially young and unemployed people from an urban background. Examples include *Selbsternte* ('self harvest'), Vogl et al., 2003) in Austria, *Landshare* in the UK, *Terre de liens* ('land of connections') in France or *Toma la Tierra* ('take the land') in Spain. Some offer their services freely or as community service (like *Landshare*), while others are more business oriented and closer to direct-marketing schemes (like *Selbsternte*). Others again consider themselves more clearly as political movements (like *Terre de liens* and *Toma la Tierra*) and have a clear agenda linked to current debates on de-growth and reclaiming the commons.

These CFNs in which consumers increasingly assume a production role, and identity differences between consumers and producers diminish, call for a theoretical reflection. Some insights are offered by the concept of *pro-sumption*, a term originally coined by Toffler (1980) to indicate that in a post-industrial society the distinction between production and consumption becomes increasingly blurred. Since then the concept has been used to describe, on the one hand, the increasing agency of consumers, for example by Zwick et al. who argue that 'the recruitment of consumers into productive co-creation relationships hinges on accommodating consumers' needs for recognition, freedom, and agency' (2008, p. 185). Ritzer and Jurgenson (2010), on the other hand, use the concept to denounce the progressive, forced integration of consumers into production processes, e.g. mandatory self-service in the fast-food industry and the increasing outsourcing of tasks to end consumers. We use the term here to refer to the active involvement of consumers in food production, as a deliberate choice to increase their agency and engagement in the agri-food system.

Empowerment by citizen's engagement in food growing is not necessarily related to self-sufficiency in food production. Although always present, food production is reported to be a secondary motivation to most European cases of urban gardening (Jehlicka and Smith, 2011; Veen et al., this issue). Similarly, in Japan the Tanada system of collective rice terrace cultivation appears more of a sociocultural activity than a source of staple food (Kieninger et al., 2011). In the United States, on the other hand, urban gardens are especially mushrooming in the 'food deserts' of inner cities (Blanchard and Matthews, 2007; Corrigan, 2011). Here community gardens do have an importance for guaranteeing access to healthy food for socially disadvantaged parts of the population, a role which also applies for many urban-agriculture initiatives in the countries of the Global South (Dubbeling et al., 2010).

Political Engagement in the Food System

The concept of CFNs is not limited to relations of market exchange and to the provision of food per se. In line with the governance triangle in Figure 2, new configurations of food citizenship can be observed along the axis between civil society and the state, corresponding to governments at various levels. Through the sharing of societal goals beyond just economic exchange, CFNs are able increasingly to act as agents of change, exerting pressure on the food system in several ways. They may do so by pointing out contradictions and limitations of the mainstream food system and thus fostering new public awareness around food issues and the introduction of new questions on political agendas. Others put pressure on the regulatory system by engaging in the redefinition of rules or by undertaking demonstrative protest actions. CFNs may exert power by active participation in community organizations, local food movements, or local institutions. Examples in this issue are the local food policy councils in Hungary (Balázs, this issue) and Manchester in the UK (Psarikidou and Szerszynski, this issue) and organic food procurement to public schools in France and Brazil (Lamine et al., this issue).

The growing public concern over food and the increased awareness that food models and practices need to change profoundly result at least partly from pressure by civil society groups. They have successfully created a new discourse on food and food practices by forging linkages with other social movements. This creates pressure for suitable food policies and changes in regulatory frameworks aimed at creating more favourable conditions for small-scale farming systems, organic farming

and innovative food-provisioning initiatives. Proposals often demand deregulation and adjustment of existing rules, e.g. in the case of food-hygiene rules, regulations for public procurement tenders or organic certification, topics on which pressure from grass-roots organizations have stimulated a debate and the search for alternatives.

The proactive role of civil society towards public and institutional spaces has fostered new forms of interaction and encouraged new types of policy initiatives. As Psarikidou and Szerszynski (this issue) indicate, the boundaries between citizen-led and institutional initiatives are often not clear cut. Institutional frameworks are needed often to nourish community activities and provide a milieu in which food citizenship can thrive. Sometimes motivations behind institutional support appear to be ambiguous, as is increasingly the case with urban-gardening food-provisioning initiatives that attract attention from public administrations and offers for public support. Some authors consider the growing interest and support from local institutions critically as a potential expression of a neo-liberal model of urban development, in which private, voluntary gardeners take over services formerly provided by public management (Rosol, 2012).

The mobilization of civil society also assumes forms of opposition and protest. This is the case when growing dissatisfaction with legal institutions provokes demonstrative protests or acts of resistance, such as land occupations ('reclaiming the fields') or support for political protest campaigns. Some groups aim to raise awareness about consumerism and its consequences, focusing on the large amounts of food waste inherent in modern food-retail and consumption patterns. Radical critics of this 'throw-away society' have started to live deliberately on the 'waste' of supermarkets, and movements like 'freeganism' and activities like 'dumpster diving' are expressions of this position, which might be called 'no-sumption'. Freeganism combines concepts of free and shared resources (food, clothing, housing, etc.) with veganism (abstaining from the use of animal products) and certain forms use it as a public political statement to denounce the unequal access to food (Petina and Amos, 2011). A similar approach is followed by Food Not Bombs, an international movement sharing free vegan or vegetarian food in over 1,000 cities over the world to protest against war, poverty and environmental destruction 'expressing a commitment to the fact that food is a right and not a privilege' (Heynen, 2010). Other groups, like the German movement *Tafel* (i.e. 'table'), donate products removed from supermarket shelves prior to their expiry date as charity to marginalized people – a more conventional practice often considered ambivalent as it might foster social exclusion instead of battling it (Lorenz, 2012).

Future Conceptual Challenges and Opportunities

Civic food networks as an emergent phenomenon is rapidly gaining momentum and relevance, both as a space for experimentation and as a breeding ground for alternative ways to organize food provisioning and potentially as a countervailing power to the dominant agro-industrial food system. Being a movement rooted in communities and principally defining local answers to global problems, its expressions show a great variation. Heterogeneity and embeddedness are strong points and essential characteristics, but also pose conceptual and methodological challenges for research.

A conceptual framework taking the civic nature of new agri-food networks as a starting point needs to go beyond the terminology of 'consumer' and 'producer', which intrinsically defines and limits citizen's agency with respect to food by assuming that it forms part of a material and economic transaction. While 'economy' will continue to be an important dimension of agri-food systems, it is increasingly problematic and falls short in explaining the motivations and driving forces of social actors. New civic food experiences suggest that several basic assumptions, which were taken for granted for long, need to be reconsidered. For example, economic actors were seen as opposing parties, while within CFNs new forms of collaboration and sharing emerge as key features.

Citizen's actions related to food, from this perspective, should be defined as expressions of a common area of agency (shaped by consumers and producers) representing shared goals at community level and embodying a gradual shift from utilitarian-private visions to economic models based on solidarity and the defence of common goods. These lessons embodied in CFNs coincide with a wider tendency that aims to bring ethical considerations back into the economy and 'put economy in its place' again, both in theory and practice. To some extent we are seeing a 'moralization' (or even 'civilization') of economies, resulting in an 'ethical foodscape' (Goodman et al., 2010) of which emerging civic food initiatives form part. Against the background of this new common area of agency, concepts of food citizenship, food democracy and food sovereignty find new evidence and force in an alliance around new food discourses and practices.

The study of CFNs is also challenged to adequately address the reshaping of relations between market forces, public policies and the role of civil society within the governance of agri-food systems. Within a context of market and state governance in profound crisis, civil society-based governance mechanisms emerge as important sources of dynamism and innovation. These dynamics of change have a common denominator in the mobilization of processes of social learning, needed to develop new attitudes and capacities for tackling food matters, at both a practical and cultural-political level. While the renewed role of civil society thus opens opportunities for system transformation, there is also reason for caution. The dangers of instrumentalization by the dominant regime should be seriously addressed (Rosol, 2012) and require a better understanding of the contradictions between opposition and cooperation with public institutions from the perspective of CFNs.

In line with these considerations, the articles brought together in this Special Issue are a first attempt to better document and understand the emergent phenomenon of CFNs. They cover highly different geographical and sociocultural settings in Europe and the Americas and show that in all these contexts civil society is (re-)emerging as an important driver of food system change. Taken together, the various examples, without being exhaustive, also represent a large variety of expressions of food citizenship. While the contributions build on different conceptual approaches, and thus valorize the important previous work done under headings such as 'short food supply chains', 'alternative food networks' or 'local food systems', they all take on board the key focus upon civil society and citizen's agency for understanding contemporary food-system dynamics. Building on this first attempt of stocktaking, a next step should be to develop further conceptual and methodological avenues to fully grasp the innovative potentials embodied in CFNs.

Notes

1. These included the XXIV European Society for Rural Sociology Congress (22–25 August 2011, Chania, Greece); the International Conference on Multifunctional Agriculture and Urban-Rural Relations: Agriculture in an Urbanizing Society (1–4 April 2012, Wageningen, Netherlands); the 9th European IFSA Symposium (1–4 July 2012, Aarhus, Denmark); and the XIII World Congress of Rural Sociology (29 July–4 August 2012, Lisbon, Portugal).
2. This analysis is based mainly on the European situation, but is likely to apply to agri-food systems in the developed world. Its applicability to countries in the South is still to be further assessed, but also there civil society appears increasingly to be a key driving force of food system dynamics (e.g. see Lamine et al., this issue).

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The Moral Economy of Civic Food Networks in Manchester

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[Paper first received, 3 September 2012; in final form, 16 October 2012]

Abstract. In recent years, diverse organizations and actors in and around cities have been articulating visions of a more sustainable and democratic urban agri-food system. By utilizing or supporting alternative methods of production, distribution and consumption, a range of municipal, charitable and grass-roots initiatives have experimented with new relationships between producers and consumers, and between people, food and soil. This article provides an analysis of ‘civic food networks’ in the city of Manchester using the idea of the ‘moral economy’ and its various conceptualizations, both within and beyond agri-food studies. We argue that contemporary alternative agri-food economic practices constitute a moral economy organized around relations of solidarity and justice with proximate and distant others, and ethical concern for land and for the global environment. We explore the particular characteristics of the moral economy of these networks. We focus in particular on the complex character of moral sentiments in modern life, in which face-to-face and mediated relations are experienced in terms of different styles of morality and solidarity. We thus suggest a reconceptualization of civic food networks as a moral economy, explore the way it is conditioned by the character of morality in modern societies, and explore its potential to contribute to a wider societal transformation of the agri-food system.

Introduction

Recently, diverse organizations and actors from different backgrounds in and around cities have advanced, and frequently prefigured, visions of a more sustainable and democratic urban agri-food system (Koc et al., 1999; Lang, 1999; Murdoch et al., 2000). By utilizing or supporting alternative methods of production, distribu-

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tion and consumption, a diversity of municipal, charitable and grass-roots initiatives have been constructing new relationships between producers and consumers, and between people, food and soil. The term 'alternative agri-food networks' (AAFNs) has been coined to describe such initiatives, and concepts such as re-localization, re-spatialization, re-socialization and reconnection have been used to depict the socio-spatial and socio-material dimensions embodied in these alternatively sustainable agri-food practices (Renting et al., 2003; Levidow and Psarikidou, 2011; Psarikidou and Szerszynski, 2012).

A number of studies have examined the dense set of social meanings and functions of food. Concepts such as social embeddedness (e.g. Hinrichs, 2000), economic geographies of regard (e.g. Lee, 2000), the ethics of care (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005; Kneafsey et al., 2008), the place of caring, resistance and hope (e.g. Murdoch and Miele, 1999; Murdoch et al., 2000), the ethics of organic (e.g. Clarke et al., 2008), the moral economies of food (e.g. Jackson et al., 2006; Morgan et al., 2006; Trentmann, 2007), ethical foodscapes (Goodman et al., 2010) and moral taskscapes (Psarikidou and Szerszynski, 2012) have all been used to depict the social and ethical dimensions of AAFNs. Driven by a growing moral questioning, mistrust amongst consumers and a pressure towards 'requalification' (Murdoch et al., 2000; Murdoch and Miele, 2004) with regard to the conventional food system and its products (Gronow and Ward, 2001),¹ AAFNs have also been described as humanizing trade relations between producers and consumers (Raynolds, 2004) and as 'enabl[ing] relationships of aid and trust between producer and consumer, eliding the faceless intermediaries hidden within commodity chains and industrial foods' (Allen et al., 2003, p. 64). They have also been approached as new forms of political association and market governance (Whatmore et al., 2003) that could open up a potential for a greater democratization of agri-food processes (Lang, 1999).

Inspired by this academic work, we aim to explore the ways in which food can come to serve as 'an expression of cumulative moral sentiment' (Little et al., 2010, p. 1800). In particular, drawing on ongoing research (see Psarikidou, 2012), as well as research carried out for the EU FAAN Project,² we aim to provide an analysis of civic food networks in the city of Manchester, employing the political economic discourse of the 'moral economy' and its various theoretical articulations both within and beyond agri-food studies (Thompson, 1971; Sayer, 2000). After exploring the different conceptualizations of the term, and the distinctive character of morality in modern societies, we discuss the particular moral-economic characteristics of the civic food networks of the city of Manchester. We will argue that contemporary alternative agri-food economic practices constitute a moral economy organized around relations of solidarity and justice with proximate and distant others, concern for land and for the global environment, social inclusion of the disadvantaged, and the reskilling of everyday life, thus going beyond a narrow understanding of economic value (Gibson-Graham, 1996, 2006; Graeber, 2001). However, we also aim to identify the ways in which the moral economy of these networks is conditioned by the character of morality in modern societies, and argue for the former's potential to contribute to a wider societal transformation of the agri-food system.

Conceptualizing the Moral Economy: Agri-food Studies and Beyond

Throughout human history, economic activity has been an integral part of human societies. But, as far as is known, until the modern period economic conduct was

not differentiated from other social functions. A low division of labour, reciprocal solidarity and redistribution of surpluses among community members were all features of a community-governed economic order that was embedded in institutions, traditions and norms (Polanyi, 1957; Booth, 1994). As Booth describes (1994), in this traditional 'moral economy' the human interchange with nature was so submerged in social relations, the securing of livelihood so embedded in non-economic institutions, and economic systems so intermingled with the non-economic, that economic activities could not be separated from the wider moral universe of action. However, it has been argued that, with the advent of industrialization and the emergence of capitalist relations of production, there occurred a shift from a moral economy to a demoralized economic order. According to Polanyi (1957), this was a 'great transformation', which involved an increasing disembeddedness of economic relations from social relations and the replacement of the primacy of the collective with individualism (ibid.; Weber, 1978). 'Economics' evolved into an independent science investigating law-like phenomena (Booth, 1994), and economic actors were conceptualised as *Homo oeconomicus* (Booth, 1994), 'rational', calculative actors, whose only desire was the pursuit of material gain and the maximisation of their utility (Stehr et al., 2006). Money prevailed as a universal equivalent that, according to Simmel (1990), encouraged the commoditization of all aspects of social life and, especially, according to Marx (1978), the commoditization of objects and human labour and the reduction of their value to monetary value.

However, E.P. Thompson and James Scott were among the first to describe moral economies that existed in parallel and in tension with this new, market-led capitalist economic order. The moral economy of the eighteenth-century English crowd described by Thompson (1971) was primarily a response to the basic needs of the local community, and especially of the poor in times of scarcity.³ Thompson argues that the frequent bread and food riots of that period were spontaneous reactions against the growing practice amongst merchants of raising their prices in times of dearth, and were attempts to preserve the traditional, paternalistic moral economy of feudal society against the rising logic of the market. In Scott's (1976) analysis of the moral economy that lies behind peasant rebellions in twentieth-century southeast Asia, he uses concepts such as 'subsistence ethic', 'safety-first', 'risk-aversion', 'crisis security' and 'family security', 'equal distribution of hunger' and 'the survival of the weakest' to describe the peasants' common definition of social and economic justice. Seeking to minimize the subjective probability of a future maximum loss, these moral economies seem to preclude a narrow focus on market price and profit (Wolf, 1969; Scott, 1976). Based on the traditional rights and obligations that regulated exchange relations within a village community,⁴ it reinforced a particular normative order of village egalitarianism grounded in relationships of reciprocity and moral solidarity. Even in the cases of patron–patronage, landlord–tenant relationships, as part of the norm of reciprocity and of peasants' social right to subsistence, the landlord was expected to meet specific paternalist obligations that would guarantee the community's minimal social rights with regard to existential dilemmas arising from economic uncertainty.

Such studies set up a clear contrast between the moral economies of traditional, agrarian societies, and the relatively demoralized modern capitalist economy. However, in his attempt to 'humanize' economics, Andrew Sayer (2000) draws on Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*,⁵ and William Booth's more recent understanding of all economies as moral economies (1994),⁶ to argue for a re-conceptualization of

the moral economy. Sayer argues that, like other activities, economic activities are structured by moral dispositions and norms – but that these dispositions and norms are also compromised, overridden or reinforced by economic pressures (Sayer, 2000, p.2). Despite the general criticism of capitalism as the main force displacing moral and traditional norms in structuring society, for Sayer (2006) some form of moral valuation is always present or at least latent within economic relations. He thus suggests that all contemporary economies – even capitalist ones – can be considered as moral economies, as they are inevitably embedded in moral judgements and claims that could be mobilized to justify or criticize different social and economic practices. In this way, value is not only reduced to monetary value and price. Following the anthropological understanding of value and commodities of Mauss (1967) and Appadurai (1994), values in economic relations reflect the meaning or importance that a society ascribes to any object that someone can acquire in exchange for something else. In other words, values can embrace various social and cultural dimensions depending on the different monetary forms and contexts in which they are deployed (Zelizer, 1989; Dodd, 1998; Graeber, 2001). Thus, as North describes, money is no more than a ‘discourse, a social construction’ that can actually take different, better forms that can ‘value people’s work and effort before profitability’ (2007, p. xii).

So what are the characteristics of the moral economy of contemporary civic food networks? In particular, how do the forms of morality that arise in modern society differ from those of the traditional, agrarian cultures described by Thompson and Scott, and how does this affect the character of contemporary moral economies?

Morality and Modern Society

Morality is a crucial feature of human – and particularly social – existence; nevertheless, despite a small but growing literature in the sociology and anthropology of morality (e.g. Hitlin and Vaisey, 2010; Fassin, 2012), there is not even a broad agreement on how to study and theorize morality as an empirical phenomenon. However, drawing on a range of sources in sociology and anthropology, both classical and contemporary, it is possible to broadly summarize the distinctive features of the morality of specifically *modern* societies. First, modern morality is more pluralistic than that of traditional societies. In *The Division of Labour in Society* (1964), Durkheim argued that in pre-modern societies, with their low division of labour and little mutual dependency, members of society are bound together by a ‘collective conscience’ of shared beliefs and values, periodically revived through ritual. In contrast, in modern urbanized society, with its developed division of labour, urbanization, geographical mobility and social and cultural diversity, collective conscience is weak, and behaviour is regulated more through the moral sentiments and reasoning of individual subjects. Furthermore, in modern complex societies different social groups have different habituses (Bourdieu, 1986) and structures of feeling (Williams, 1977), producing divergent moral reactions to ‘objectively’ similar life situations. In their daily lives, individuals also typically move through different contexts, spaces and social networks (such as home and work, private and public), in which different moral codes apply. The modern self thus finds itself potentially drawing on a number of different ‘sources’ (Taylor, 1989) and ‘styles’ (Tipton, 1982) in trying to make moral sense of any given situation.

Second, however, a key modern moral style is one that is individualized and rational. Durkheim’s account of the ‘organic solidarity’ characteristic of societies with

a high division of labour describes it as involving a 'cooler' version of ethics, one predicated on rationally justifiable moral codes (Durkheim, 1964). With its roots in the Protestant reformation and the Enlightenment, Charles Taylor (1989) describes this current of modern morality as an ethics of 'disengaged reason', a post-conventional ethical style that tends to manifest as austere ethics of autonomy, duty, responsibility and self-restraint, focusing on obligations to concrete individuals rather than invoking wider ideas of collectivity.

Third, however, in modern society, such rational moral styles are joined by more 'expressivist' ones. Taylor sees this particular ethical orientation, one that focuses on emotion, creativity and ideas of inner and outer nature, as having arisen in reaction to the limitations of the ethics of disengaged reason. The resulting ethics of benevolence, compassion and individual self-realization have their roots in eighteenth-century Pietism with its emphasis on sensibility and emotion (Campbell, 1987), and in nineteenth-century romanticism with its valorization of the individual in communion with a wild but benign nature and its notion of 'natural', unforced morality (Taylor, 1989). Such moral styles became more widespread after the 1960s, due to an expressivist reaction amongst the young against the dominant moral culture of modern urban society, with its utilitarian and duty-based moralities and its compartmentalization of private and public (Tipton, 1982).

Fourth, despite the complexity of contemporary society and the individualized nature of its morality, more solidaristic moral styles based on social similarity still persist in modern complex societies, and can even be generated by modern conditions. Studies of urban community in the mid-twentieth century revealed the existence of working- and middle-class 'urban villages' with strong bonds and shared norms within major cities in the USA and UK (Young and Willmott, 1957; Gans, 1967). In more recent decades, Michel Maffesoli and Kevin Hetherington described what they saw as a decline of individualism in modern urban life, and a growth of new elective sociations consisting of people with shared beliefs and lifestyles and strong affectual bonds – what Eugen Schmalenbach called 'Bünde' (Hetherington, 1994) and Maffesoli 'neo-tribes' (Maffesoli, 1996).

Fifth, modern conditions can also give rise to new forms of generalized felt solidarity for humankind, in the absence of any specific relations of similitude. Durkheim himself suggested the possibility of the creation of new kinds of more culturally thick versions of organic solidarity among socially diverse individuals, based on the recognition or even 'worship' of what they still had in common: their humanity. Durkheim called the latter 'the cult of man' or 'the religion of humanity', describing it as 'the only remaining bond among members of a single human group... that they are all men' [sic] (Durkheim, 1951). In the late twentieth century the mediated character of contemporary society created more favourable conditions for feelings of communion with distant others and humanity as a whole, through images such as those of the earth from space or the 'family of man', and mediated events such as sporting events, natural disasters and political ceremonial (Franklin et al., 2000; Szerszynski and Urry, 2002).

Sixth, in modern society such solidaristic moral sentiments across social and cultural difference have also found institutionalized expression at the contractual or state level (see Prainsack and Buyx, 2011); for example, in the form of charitable and campaigning organizations within civil society. Recent studies have also used the concept of contractual solidarity as a way of understanding the emergence of the modern welfare state, with its emphasis on the interdependency of the individual

and the social whole, and the legal organization and enforcement of solidarity, by the state (Bayertz, 1999; Houtepen and Meulen, 2000; Meulen et al., 2010). This could be described as a modern, bureaucratic version of the landlords' paternalist obligation to protect the community's minimal social rights with regard to existential dilemmas (Thompson, 1971; Scott, 1976) – but one that focuses not on personal obligations but the regulation of population-level, statistical phenomena (Foucault, 2003).

Seventh, in modern society, morality can also take the form of a project for societal or individual transformation. Medieval society was organized around an organic metaphor, in which morality and politics focused on the conservative task of preserving the 'body politic'. But the Reformation – particularly Puritanism – introduced the idea that morality could take the form of a purposive and programmatic attempt to reform society according to what were understood as objective moral criteria (Walzer, 1968). While collective projects to transform society according to a moral vision persist as an important feature of contemporary morality, under late-modern conditions this 'project' orientation can as often manifest at the personal level, with 'self-reflexive' individuals (Giddens, 1990) choosing by which codes and patterns they live their lives (Heelas, 1996).

In the analysis section, we will show how such features of modern morality can help us understand the distinctiveness of contemporary agri-food moral economies. Using material from interviews with citizens operating at different levels of the alternative foodscape of Manchester (see 'The Networks' section), participant observation of various trading and community food-growing practices, and internet sources, we analyse the meanings attributed to different agri-food practices by a specific body of people. In developing our analysis, we collected evidence stemming from examples of discourses and practices and categorized them according to our literature review of different moral discourses of modernity. By isolating these ideal types of discourse, we show how actors employ a range of moral styles to describe and justify their involvement in different alternative agri-food practices, suggesting that civic food networks can serve as sites for the cultivation of new moral discourses and sentiments which have the potential to effect a wider transformation of agri-food practices.

The Moral Economy of Civic Food Networks in Manchester

Background

With expanding urban populations in many parts of the world, a growing concern about food insecurity, poverty, and malnutrition has resulted in alternative agri-food strategies in and around many cities (FAO, 2007). In relatively affluent settings like the UK, issues such as the environmental and health impacts of industrial agriculture and the global trade in foodstuffs has helped to stimulate citizens' interest in alternative systems of food production, distribution and consumption. Furthermore, civic food networks have benefited from a cultural reaction in parts of society against the way that the conventional food system excises the direct experience and understanding of food origin, quality, and preparation – a manifestation of modernity's wider tendency toward the deskilling of everyday life and the 'sequestration of experience' in relation to external nature (Giddens, 1991).

Our analysis, based on ongoing research, as well as research carried out in 2008–2009, focuses on Manchester, one of the UK's largest cities.⁷ The traditional economic

dependence on industrialization and commerce,⁸ as well as the current shift of the regional economic strategy toward finance, the knowledge economy and the creative industries, have significantly slowed agricultural development in the region. Significant inequalities and social exclusion are also apparent from indicators such as those relating to employment, education and health; many of the city's residents – particularly women, disabled people, black and minority ethnic communities, young and older people – are described as excluded from a reasonable quality of life (Manchester City Council, 2011a).⁹ As for the agri-food sector, very few residents of Manchester are currently employed in agriculture; food retailing prevails as the most important part of the food chain in the Manchester economy, and many residents are also employed by large food-manufacturing companies (Food Futures, 2007). But many of the specific challenges faced by Manchester relate directly or indirectly to the contemporary agri-food system and, as we shall see, have given birth to a number of civic networks that operate in a diverse range of spaces across the city and that in different ways use food as a focus in their responses to these urban challenges.

The Networks

The networks under investigation consist of urban agri-food initiatives where citizens are the driving force in the development of new forms of production–consumption relations and active engagement with food. Taking different forms such as voluntary associations, cooperatives, charities and non-profit organizations, and employing alternative methods of production and distribution, these initiatives enact the local community's aspirations for a more environmentally sustainable agri-food system.¹⁰ They also perform collectively the space of the city and the agency of an active food citizenship in different ways – through moralized and embodied interactions with food, with the land, and with humans and non-humans both proximate and distant (Psarikidou and Szerszynski, 2012).

In practice, it is difficult to draw a clear dichotomy between institution-led and citizen-led initiatives. The active engagement of consumers and citizens is often the outcome of a co-production between public institutions, non-profit or charitable organizations and the public, as the first two help to create the conditions under which 'food citizen' agency can flourish. For example:

- Manchester Food Futures (MFF) is a local authority strategic partnership, and has a central role in coordinating and supporting 'bottom-up' sustainable agri-food initiatives. Following its Community Strategy of 'making Manchester more sustainable' by 2015 (Food Futures, 2007), MFF is providing and supporting opportunities for residents and local organizations to get involved in projects, training, activities and events around sustainable food.
- The Kindling Trust is a not-for-profit social enterprise with charitable aims. With the objective of practising and demonstrating 'sustainable production, living and activism', it has developed a series of projects in collaboration with other groups and individuals with the goal of creating a sustainable local food system in Manchester (Kindling Trust, 2012).
- Unicorn Grocery is a workers' cooperative grocery store. It donates 5% of its turnover to projects consistent with its principles, and has also been instrumental for encouraging cooperative relations among local food businesses and co-

operatives, as well as among citizens interested in food (Unicorn, 2009; interview AL080908).

- The Association for Manchester Allotments Societies (AMAS) supports the city's local allotment societies – which in turn allocate allotments of land to individuals for the growing of food – and its horticultural societies.

Around these initiatives has coalesced a wider network of new and existing 'bottom-up' local food initiatives that operate in different parts of the chain, and that together constitute a wider moral economy of food in the city. Thus, rather than focusing solely on citizen-led, civic food networks, in this article we explore a selection of interconnected initiatives that operate at three different levels: 1. citizens as consumers, 2. citizens as producers, and 3. producers and traders as citizens – all of which, as will be shown below, exhibit an engagement with local food motivated by principles beyond material needs and personal interest and objectives:

- a. Citizens as consumers:
 - Herbie Van, a mobile greengrocery set up by the independent charity Manchester Environmental Resource Centre (MERCi) and funded by MFF, providing affordable, fresh produce in areas of Manchester with low levels of social and physical mobility or access to fresh food (MERCi, 2012; Interview MB160109);
 - Dig Food, a family-based organic non-certified box scheme specializing in good quality, locally sourced, organic produce.
- b. Citizens as producers:
 - Healthy Eating Local Food Partnership (HeLF), a social enterprise initiated by the community voluntary sector and funded by MFF that engages mental health service users, young people, and the community in healthy, local, food-growing, cooking and retailing activities and thus provides work-based learning opportunities, and 'moving-on' services, which help people to join mainstream society (interview RP190808);
 - Manchester Permaculture Network (MPN), a grass-roots initiative set up by local community members interested in principles of permaculture that supports several community food-growing programmes;
 - Action for Sustainable Living (AFSL), a charitable organization, and the Sustainable Neighborhoods Action Group, a pool of individuals and network groups in the community, both promoting sustainable living including local food and food growing (interview HSK020908).
- c. Producers and traders as citizens:
 - Unicorn Grocery, which sells local, organic, and fair-trade food. Owned and run by its workforce, it aims to provide fair employment conditions to its members and people with learning disabilities;
 - Glebelands Market Garden, a small cooperative run by former Unicorn workers that provides fresh, local produce to local businesses such as Unicorn and Dig Food.

Approaching Civic Food Networks in Manchester through a Moral Economy Lens

The alternative agri-food initiatives in Manchester, we will argue, constitute as a whole a contemporary moral-economic order. These initiatives are of course not to-

tally isolated from the contemporary economic system: money, in many of its different forms and applications, plays an important role in the initiatives. For example, the Herbie mobile grocers, Unicorn workers' cooperative, Glebelands market garden, Dig Food vegetable box scheme, and HeLF vegetable bag scheme all use money as a medium of exchange and common unit of measurement between non-equivalent commodities. However, money also plays a different role that goes beyond the calculative rationality of contemporary economies (Ostrom, 1990, 2009). Money is perceived not only as a medium of exchange but also as a medium with a liberatory potential, one that transforms the agri-food space into a social space for the agency of active 'food citizens' characterized by a more complex motivational structure (ibid.; North, 2007).

On our visit to Glebelands market garden, we spoke with one of the owners of the cooperative. According to them, their initiative's engagement with the mainstream currency system not only contributes to the satisfaction of their basic survival needs, but also works as a means for the articulation and accomplishment of personal aspirations and moral obligations with regard to the creation of a more sustainable agri-food system. Their engagement in the cash economy thereby takes on different meanings. As they said:

'We earn our living... we make a living so this makes a business... We also have a relatively clean conscience about that. It's interesting, one of the few jobs with which he has no serious ethical problems' (interview AL160109).

Thus, returning to the idea of the Greek agora, the situated market is simultaneously a space for diverse forms of sociality – for personal relations, the reproduction of community and the exchange of knowledge and opinion, but also for political action. Going beyond a capitalocentric understanding of the economic (Gibson-Graham, 1996), it displays a level of social cooperation, solidarity, mutual aid and trust among producers, retailers and consumers, suggesting the social embedding of economic relations into a complex web of social relations and a wider set of non-economic values characteristic of the pre-capitalist agri-food moral economies discussed by Polanyi (1957), Thompson (1971) and Scott (1976).

We visited MERCi and spoke with the Herbie Van coordinator. For her, the Herbie Van constitutes a social space for the development of various links and social relations among members of the local community. It thus contributes to the creation of a more humanized local trade system that is embedded in more proximal relationships and a feeling of common belonging between agri-food practitioners and consumers:

'Some of our customers don't see another person for a whole week and when they come on the van and they have a chat with the driver on the van... it's more for people's mental well-being that they actually have someone to talk to and it's a regular face, it's not just whichever person is on the check-out looking miserable because they don't want to be there' (interview MB160109).

However, this moral economy also has a number of distinctive features that mark it out from traditional, agrarian moral economies. First, in contrast to the strong 'conscience collective' of pre-capitalist agri-food societies, the civic food networks in Manchester are characterized by relations of difference. Sometimes this simply takes the form of cooperative relations among people from different backgrounds

and lifestyles coming together – for example, in community gardens, where, while participating in an array of agri-food activities such as digging, planting and mulch matting, participants exchange personal experiences and knowledge about plants, fruits and vegetables, and ways of food preparation. But sometimes it takes the form of stronger relations of mutual dependence, as producers, retailers and consumers with different knowledge, skills, personal interests and aspirations nevertheless form mutual relations of social solidarity and reciprocity, aid and trust. For example, in the cases of Glebelands market garden, Unicorn and Dig Food, producers and retailers develop cooperative relations based on a division of labour, knowledge and skills. In the cases of Unicorn, Dig Food and the Herbie Van, traders and consumers participate in transactions that are monetary but based on feelings of trust towards each other and care towards spatially or socially distant others.¹¹

The latter became prevalent in an interview with a local consumer who also worked for the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Pool initiative. His description underlined the ethical scope and moral visions embedded in his engagement with the alternative agri-food sector. For him, an additional social value becomes an important element in his justification of engagement with the conventional, monetary economic relations of exchange. Engagement in the cash economy becomes a means for not only the survival of the local practitioners, but also the social benefit of the overall local society:

‘I buy my fruit and veg from these guys, they are earning money, they live in my town, that money has gone from me in my town to them in my town and they are getting their food, they are getting their supplies... from local businesses, not big multinationals... the money is staying around me and is making my area better and the people that have money in my area will spend it in my area and the area gets better and then people want to live there and they don’t want to fight in the streets because there’s more to do’ (interview MT160109).

Second, following Tipton (1982) and Taylor (1989), we can see that civic food networks in Manchester manifest a diversification of moral styles. For example, some practices follow a consequentialist logic, in that their moral evaluation stems from the impact of their agri-food practices on proximate and distant others. However, for many citizens involved in these practices, their engagement goes beyond that logic; it is mainly expressive, a reflection of their personal moral codes, regardless of the potential real outcomes of their practices. Citizens do not act as rational individuals governed by self-interest or abstract moral codes of self-restraint, but follow an expressivist ethic based on the valorization of nature and being true to oneself. The latter was evident during our discussion with one of the key members of the Manchester Permaculture Network, who is involved in the organization of community food-growing projects in Manchester. According to her description, her involvement in permaculture methods of production is a way in which she can align her practice with her personal philosophy. As she said:

‘Working with nature is fundamental to me, not man controlling nature, that’s why we have gone so wrong on this planet... it’s a philosophical and even a spiritual thing in some ways... it’s [permaculture] also the potential to do with realizing that our relationship with food, like our relationship with nature, should be one of give and take, that we don’t only want to control what we eat’ (interview JM260808).

Third, citizens' engagement in alternative agri-food initiatives is not always simply a matter of personal lifestyle choices and moral styles and codes, but it can also be the occasion for the construction of new 'communities of affect' – elective socializations with a strong sense of belonging and shared, unwritten moral rules and norms (Horton, 2003). People involved in shared practices such as veganism, permaculture and allotment-keeping exhibit a more solidaristic style of morality, suggesting a postmodern form of mechanical solidarity through which individuals develop a collective experience of their individuality within post-traditional, affectual communities of shared practice (Hetherington, 1994; Maffesoli, 1996). Our interview with the AMAS coordinator provided us with an account of the multiple ways food and related agri-food practices can acquire a wider social and cultural meaning. According to his description, they become the context for the construction of new social relationships and development of common understanding and interests between previously distant social groups:

'Our vision is to have mass community places. You get into your own growing and come to your allotment and chat to people. We want them to be social places. It's about making them happy, it's about their social aspects' (interview KW180808).

Fourth, operating in a context of multiple moral codes, styles and evaluations, the civic food networks of Manchester also seem to open up space for the emergence of kinds of solidarity that go beyond relationships of similarity. Here we apply to the domain of food the work of Prainsack and Buyx (2011), who distinguish three 'tiers' of solidarity practices: the interpersonal level, based on the individual's recognition of their similarity with individual fellow human beings in need of assistance; the group level, characterized by actions of normalized, collective commitment towards one another; and the contractual or legal level of institutionalized solidarity operating at state and interstate level (2011, pp. 47–49). Thus, at the interpersonal level, traders and consumers engage in various agri-food practices that manifest the existence of new kinds of more culturally thick versions of imagined relations of solidarity with spatially or culturally distant others. In the case of the Herbie Van, HeLF partnership and Unicorn co-op, concepts such as 'fair price' and 'fair trade' are used to express and organize the socio-cultural and ethical dimensions related to monetary economic transactions between producers, traders and consumers. For example, with a specific focus on 'local fair trade', the HeLF's partnership's Recipe for Success underlines the way that the commodity carries a different value that is related to the principle of social justice – not only towards distant producers, but also towards members of the local community:

'Since community food projects, and local growers suffer, within the current economic climate, a Local Fairtrade premium can be added to prices of local produce, that are produced ethically and sustainable. A small premium percentage can make a big difference to the profit margins of a food enterprise... To this end a system of Local Fairtrade is recommended, meaning that local suppliers are preferred, and ethical prices are paid. There is an underlying principle of cooperation in all aspects of the project' (HeLF, 2007).

Grounded in principles of social justice, social solidarity, inclusion and fairness towards local and distant farmers, as well as vulnerable parts of the global and local

population, these initiatives actively contribute to the attachment of a wider socio-political value to the commodity through a version of Durkheim's 'religion of humanity' (Durkheim, 1951; Mauss, 1967). Based on the individual's internalization, realization and recognition of the dignity of humankind, agri-food actors actively participate in the establishment of a socially just market system, and enact a global citizenship around food, based on the creation of post-national 'imagined communities in anonymity' (Anderson, 1983).

Fifth, however, Manchester's ethical foodscape also exhibits manifestations of a more formal, institutionalized kind of solidarity, practised at an institutional level. For example, Manchester Food Futures has been central in engaging these initiatives in such a type of solidarity, mobilizing the resources and authority of local government to address issues of food inequality. In a way that echoes the structural hierarchies and dependencies of traditional agri-food moral economies, it can be seen as a new type of paternalism based on a municipal, bureaucratic socialization of risk. As discussed above, following its Community Strategy of 'making Manchester more sustainable' by 2015, Manchester Food Futures has been important in enhancing the future viability of several agri-food initiatives under investigation. However, according to the programme manager of Manchester Food Futures, social phenomena such as poverty, unequal distribution of goods and access to services, social exclusion and injustices, social and health inequalities, as well as environmental issues are also central to the moral justification of its economic strategy:

'Within the city, we have poor health statistics, low life expectancies, cancers, heart diseases... Getting people to eat a healthier diet would be a key aim of ours. [But it's also] about the protection of the local and global environment. We encourage more people to grow food, thus you don't have [greenhouse] gas emissions related to large-scale food production. And it's also about improving the local environment, its physical appearance' (interview CR090908).

Thus, by providing support and funding to various citizen-led agri-food initiatives, particularly those working with the more vulnerable parts of the population, MFF's paternalism is not only expressed in relation to the agri-food system, but it also becomes an expression of a wider project for socio-economic transformation. While this operationalizes norms characteristic of peasant agri-food moral economies such as 'the survival of the weakest' and the 'minimization of the subjective probability of the threat to starvation', it does so according to a bio-political logic of intervention into population-level phenomena with the aim to affect city-wide measures such as food poverty and carbon footprint. In all these ways, it suggests a re-conceptualization of traditional notions of 'family food security' in terms of a 'local food security' or 'community food security' discourse that incorporates concern for social and natural environments at various spatial scales.

Sixth, based on the above, it is clear that the moral economy of AAFNs does not just try to defend or restore a normative social order, but follows a transformative logic that aims to realize a normative vision involving different social relationships with and through food. In the terms of Manuel Castells, the participants do not simply have a 'resistant identity', one which tries to preserve existing moralized relations around food, but also a collective 'project identity' (Castells, 1997). In various cases, despite the heterogeneity in the practitioners' habituses, values and beliefs, the agri-food practitioners' participation in various alternative agri-food economic activities

can be seen as constituting joint political action against the market-economic logic that dominates the agri-food system. Thus, as part of the 'post-traditional morality' of the self-reflexive individual, the alternative agri-food practices can be perceived as political actions aiming at reclaiming control over the local food system, reskilling citizens, creating moral bonds with the land and ecologies, extending 'food democracy' and diminishing socio-economic inequalities. The development of Unicorn's alternative currency systems and the community gardens' informal networks of exchange are indicative of such a direction. The latter was also manifest in the interview with one of the AFSL coordinators, who is also a member of the Manchester Permaculture Network. As she explained, in various cases of community food-growing projects, the Allotments Act's strict regulations on the use of produce have also been crucial in encouraging citizens' engagement in alternative, non-monetary informal networks of exchange:

'If you have an overabundance of produce, you are not allowed to sell anything that's grown on an allotment. This is good in one way because it encourages people to think outside the box about what they can do to store vegetables or work in a more public community-spirited way and swap things' (interview HSK020909).

Thus, while, on the one hand, they could be seen as examples of group solidarity manifested in their collective commitment to work with and assist others linked by means of a shared situation or cost,¹² by going beyond the conventions of the mainstream market economy, these initiatives also become manifestations of the agri-food practitioners' aspirations for community governance and expressions of an emancipatory politics for citizen control and self-determination in relation to food. They provide the basis for the construction of proactive movements that aim not only at personal transformation, but at wider societal change that could lead to a more self-governed and community-oriented agri-food economic system. Fitting in with the concept of niches in transition theory, AAFNs can be considered as carriers of alternative techno-economic paradigms of production, distribution and consumption capable of providing solutions to crises in new political economic and environmental contexts and of strengthening social change 'from below' (Geels, 2004; Wiskerke and Ploeg, 2004; Schot and Geels, 2008). By redefining their identity and modifying their socio-technical environment, the actors involved in the agri-food initiatives challenge the dominant food regime by creating a public space where food is thought of, known about, produced and consumed according to different innovation pathways, norms and rules (Brunori et al., 2010). Thus, despite their relatively marginal role in Manchester's foodscape and their currently small-scale impact, their creation of 'utopic spaces' where ideas of the good society can be put into practice (Hetherington, 1994) suggests that they have the potential to effect a broader transformation of the agri-food landscape.

Conclusions

Our investigation of civic food networks in Manchester suggests a different way of approaching and rethinking them by employing a moral economy lens. It encourages us to think of the centrality of the moral economy in understanding their role in the contemporary agri-food system, but also to take into account the distinctive character of morality in contemporary society. As seen in our analysis, individuals

engaged in alternative agri-food practices employ different moral styles and codes depending on the different contexts, situations and social networks in which they exist and operate. In many cases, going beyond a consequentialist logic associated with an ethics of disengaged reason, they manifest a more 'expressivist' moral style based on an ethics of benevolence, compassion and self-realization, as well as a more affectual, solidaristic one, opening up some space for the expression of diverse relations of solidarity – a cooler version of 'organic solidarity', but also a more culturally thick version of it that can variously operate as an individual or collective project at an interpersonal, group or institutional level.

Thus, despite their similarities with pre-capitalist agri-food moral economies, civic food networks also seem to variously constitute part of a distinctively contemporary moral economic order. Based on the above, as well as inspired by Gibson-Graham's (1996) approach to the economy as a heterogeneous zone of cohabitation and contestation among multiple economic forms that all play important roles in the configuration of the contemporary economic system, the moral economy could be considered as a 'diverse moral-economic landscape', which, following Boltanski and Thévenot's analysis of the co-existence of different moralities in a plural world (1999), is ultimately dependent on the various moral styles and codes which constitute economic agents' moral 'worlds of justification' (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1999).¹³ The moral economy of the civic food networks in Manchester could be seen as part of this diverse moral agri-food economic landscape, but in a way that challenges the mainstream capitalocentric approach to it by going beyond the contemporary dominance of narrow understandings of market exchange (see Gibson-Graham, 1996, 2006).

As also discussed in our analysis, various individuals in Manchester – producers, traders and consumers – have employed different agri-food practices that constitute a reflection of their personal moral order, the 'order of worth' that can justify their choices and practices (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1999). Despite the apparent differences in their habituses, knowledge backgrounds, experiences, structures of feelings and moral styles and codes, citizens appeared to switch between different moral codes and styles, but also collectively construct their own communities of choice and practice linked to their common aspirations for a wider socio-economic transformation. However, their participation in AAFNs is not only a symbolic act of individual self-definition. Although, as part of the contemporary highly individuated society, contemporary self-reflexive individuals (Giddens, 1990) develop their own projects for personal transformation through which they negotiate what they value, how they organize their priorities, and choose by which codes and patterns they live their lives (Heelas, 1996), they also go beyond individuality. As shown, they develop new collective projects based on an ethics of solidarity amongst each other, as well as towards spatially and socially distant, human and non-human others.

In this context, the moral economy of civic food networks can be seen as a space that enables the emergence of new active food citizens, who, through their engagement with food, become active participants in not only shaping (cf. Hassanein, 2003), but also changing the agri-food system, and potentially increasing their future capacity to democratize it by determining agri-food policies and practices locally, regionally, nationally and globally (see Lang 1999). However, as shown by our analysis, the term 'citizens' seems to not only refer to consumers and the way they can be transformed into active agents involved in various consumption and production practices (Baker, 2004; Winson, 1993; Welsh and MacRae, 1998; DeLind, 2002; Wekerle, 2004). The category of 'citizens' also incorporates the wider spectrum of

agri-food agents – producers, traders, consumers and others – for whom this engagement becomes a reflection of their personal moral world and the life choices, as well as their visions for wider socio-economic change within the agri-food system and beyond. It becomes a project through which they aim not only to express their opposition and resistance to the dominant agri-food system, but also to construct projects of collective identity around the vision of a more autonomous, community-oriented agri-food economic system.

In all these different ways, an analysis of the moral economy of civic food networks and its embeddedness in the multiple morality of contemporary societies and individuals helps us develop a better understanding of the characteristics of the agents engaged in alternative agri-food practices. Going beyond a ‘cooler’ version of ethics of individualized and disengaged reason, they are not just rational enlightened, disembedded individuals acting according to information and an abstract ethics of justice. Grounded in the multiple morality of contemporary individuals, the contemporary ‘food citizens’ need to be approached as the more complex, embedded actors who shift between different modes of ethicality and solidarity as they move across the urban ethical foodscape.

Thus, the moral economy of civic food networks can provide a better understanding of the role of citizens in the making of the contemporary alternative agri-food landscape. It urges us to approach civic food networks as a moral economy whose potential to go beyond a marginalized niche and contribute to a wider socio-economic transformation within and beyond the agri-food system cannot be understood without taking into consideration the character of contemporary morality and the multiple and complex moral nature of the contemporary individual.

Notes

1. Recent work on the moral economy of the agri-food system also includes Busch’s work on the normative dimensions of grades and standards (Busch, 2000) and Thompson’s work on the ethics of sustainable agriculture (Thompson, 1996).
2. <<http://www.faanweb.eu>>.
3. For example, as Scott described, ‘millers and – to a greater degree – bakers were considered as servants of the community, working not for a profit but for a fair allowance’ (1976, p.83).
4. As Scott (1976) underlines, tradition has a central role in conferring the legitimacy of reciprocal relations because it promises a higher level of performance according to expectations and because it is more durable and culturally sanctioned than less institutionalized forms of security.
5. Smith did not treat economic efficiency as an absolute value, leading to inevitable improvement. Instead, he stressed the necessity of certain limitations provided by an inherent moral order and the moral regulation of social life (Evensky, 1993).
6. Booth claims that in a society that recognizes deep inequalities among its members, economic relations will be refashioned so as to bring them into harmony with the community, since all communities aim at some good for which wealth has an instrumental role to play (1994, pp. 662–663).
7. According to national statistics from 2011, Manchester has a population of 503,000 people. It is a metropolitan borough of Greater Manchester, currently the third most populous county in England with 2.2 million people.
8. Historically, Manchester grew rapidly during the nineteenth century due to the expansion of the textile industry and related manufacturing.
9. According to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation of 2011, Manchester is ranked as the second most deprived local authority in England in terms of income deprivation, third in terms of employment deprivation and fifth in terms of the extent of deprivation throughout the city (Manchester City Council, 2011b).
10. For example, with regard to climate change, peak oil, food miles, food insecurity, food deserts and urban regeneration.

11. This dimension was evident in their active support of overseas producers through their trading and consumption practices.
12. This dimension is evident in the cases of mutual assistance, self-help support and seed swapping among allotment holders and community gardeners.
13. Boltanski and Thevenot (1999) claimed that we live in a plural world where actions can be justified in multiple ways depending on the people's worlds of justification. They identified six worlds of justification – domestic, industrial, civic, market, fame and inspiration – according to which different groups of people justify their actions to others.

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Collaborative Community-supported Agriculture: Balancing Community Capitals for Producers and Consumers

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[Paper first received, 31 August 2012; in final form, 13 November 2012]

Abstract. Sustainability for local food producers requires a balance of supply (from producers) with demand (from consumers) in the face of volatile weather and prices. Community-supported agriculture (CSA) attempts to achieve that balance through communication and commitments between producers and consumers, which depend on relationships and trust. These relationships and the trust they can generate are multidimensional and complex. We use the community capitals framework, looking at expectations and benefits in terms of natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial and built stocks and flows of assets, as the analytical tool to examine the expectations and realizations of past and current producers and consumers in collaborative CSAs (cCSAs), a particular kind of CSAs that require more relationships than single farmer CSAs. Producers and consumers who receive multiple 'goods' from the cCSAs are more likely to continue their associations. cCSAs can be organized in a variety of ways that develop more than economic benefits for producers and consumers, including social capital, cultural capital, human capital, and political capital, as well as providing a wider range and stability of foods. Surveying producers and consumers – past and present – from three of the four cCSAs in the US state of Iowa, which is dominated by industrial agriculture, we found that those who participated based on satisfying multiple capitals were more likely to maintain participation over time and were more satisfied with the experience. Producers and consumers, who defined the cCSA experience as social and political, as well as economic, were more likely to maintain and expand their participation. Producers that started out in collaborative CSAs and defined their activities based on multiple capitals often used the experience as a business incubator to begin individual CSAs and to expand the variety of food produced. cCSA structures that evolve to maximize multiple capitals for individual producers and consumers proved most sustainable and demonstrate the interactive nature of successful structures for on-going farmer–consumer relationships.

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Introduction

Community-supported agriculture (CSA) is an increasingly popular short value chain that links local food to local eaters. As agriculture becomes more consolidated and less diversified, consumer concerns about its multiple negative impacts increase. Alternative food networks (AFN) address those concerns through new, short food supply chains for diverse fruits, vegetables and proteins. CSA is such a supply chain. CSAs were originally organized as consumer investment opportunities, whereby members have a contract with the producer(s) to pay a predetermined fee and receive a portion of the harvest. The upfront provision of operating costs is an investment by the consumer in the enterprise and is an agreement to share the risks as well as the benefits of farming food for the local market. However, the organizational structures are flexible, as producers and consumers seek to maximize the multiple benefits of CSAs (Galt et al., 2011) and there is no single organizational model.

Alternative food networks attempt to create holistic, multidimensional relationships among producers and consumers. The community capitals framework (CCF) provides a holistic framework for assessing the multiple dimensions of these networks (Flora et al., 2004; Flora and Flora, 2013). Figure 1 shows the seven capitals, which all intersect and influence each other, and influence the outcome of sustainability: economic security, ecosystem health, and social inclusion. The framework is useful to determine the benefits expected and received by both consumers and producers.

Collaborative CSAs (cCSAs) are created when two or more producers work together to serve a common set of customers. They can be organized by groups of producers, consumers, or by both working together to set up, coordinate and administer provisioning, distribution, recruitment and payments. cCSAs generally have a board of directors and staff to carry out the complex functions of getting the products from the farmers to the consumers in the most direct manner possible. Administrators of cCSAs recruit more growers when needed and handle communication with consumers.

By allocating and sharing the responsibility of production and delivery, multiple producers can specialize, diversify, and collectively have the redundancy within the organization to supply their consumers with a diverse offering on a regular basis during the season. Perry and Franzblau (2010) state the advantages for producers in cCSAs include the upfront payment, guaranteed markets, direct link to consumers, control over pricing, specialized crop production, convenience, low risk for participation for new or small growers, community building among growers, and a safety net. For consumers they argue that cCSAs offer benefits such as healthy food, safe food, competitive pricing, buying local, reconnecting to the land, decreased risk for members, and convenience. The major difference in benefit for members over a single CSA appears to be decreased risk.

We show how a quantitative study of producers and consumers in cCSAs influenced the evolution of a modified cCSA organization attempting to maximize multiple capital benefits for both consumers and producers in order to enhance the benefits for each group.

CSA resists the dominant socio-technical regime and embeds agriculture in the local (Cone and Myhre, 2000; Carolan, 2011). It strives to establish economically viable, ecologically sound and socially just relationships in the process of food production. The vision is to create a system of agriculture that: supports local and regional food production and consumption; promotes land stewardship (natural capital); builds

community (social capital); educates consumers about food systems and the food they eat (cultural capital); shares risk between consumers and growers (financial capital); and adds value to grower knowledge (human capital), labour and products. By becoming shareholders, consumers are expected to change their relationships with farmers, with the land, and with their communities. CSAs are expected to change the characteristics of agricultural products, the production and consumption of which requires support from new relationships, new technologies, new value chains, and new policies. CSA is an example of system transition initiated by innovative actors through change at the local level.

Literature Review

CSAs have grown in number and number of members per CSA in the US since introduced from Europe in the mid-1980s (DeMuth, 1993; Woods et al., 2009). State and civil society actors have invested in supporting CSAs through help with start-up funding, networking opportunities, research and an array of Cooperative Extension publications that share ideas on how to build a CSA, including multi-farm or cCSAs (Perry and Franzblau, 2010). The CSA database at the Robyn Van En Center at Wilson College in 2012 contained a national database that now includes more than 1,650 CSA farms compared to 902 in 2002. CSAs began in Iowa in 1995 and expanded quickly (Wells and Gradwell, 2001; Tegtmeier and Duffy, 2005). In 2004, there were at least 38 CSA operations in Iowa, according to the Robyn Van En Center for CSA Resources, as reported in Tegtmeier and Duffy (2005). Several cCSAs were organized in Iowa in 1997 by groups of producers and groups of consumers.

There is a growing body of literature on CSA in the United States that suggests the strength of that form of alternative food system (AFS) in building sustainable communities. The majority of these studies are either case studies (Farnsworth et al., 1996; DeLind and Ferguson, 1999; Wells and Gradwell, 2001; Tegtmeier and Duffy, 2005; Andreatta et al., 2008; Carolan, 2011; Charles, 2011; Reeve et al., 2011; Chen, 2012; Hayden and Buck, 2012) or regional (Cooley and Lass, 1998; Cone and Myhre, 2000; O'Hara and Stagl, 2001; Perez et al., 2003; Bregendahl and Flora, 2006; Ostrom, 2007; Brehm and Eisenhauer, 2008; Macias, 2008; Woods et al., 2009; Galt et al., 2011) in approach. This study combines a regional and case-study approach, demonstrating how systematic statewide research is used to restructure a single cCSA. Such research recognizes the contextual and relational nature of CSAs and the process of the evolution of context-appropriate structures. These studies also show their limitations (Perry and Franzblau, 2010, p. 24).

There were two nationwide surveys of CSAs conducted in 1999 (Lass et al., 2003a) and 2001 (Lass et al., 2003b). Schnell (2007) used the 1997 Census of Agriculture conducted by the National Agricultural Statistical Service to analyse the distribution of CSAs at that time. He found them to be in rapidly growing, heavily urbanized or suburbanized areas and in areas with more, but smaller farms and not in areas with a high poverty rate.

While CSAs are concentrated in New England and the megalopolis region of the Northeast, the upper Midwest, particularly Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa, and the West Coast have substantial numbers of CSAs as well. Of those states, Iowa has the largest concentration of industrial agriculture and the largest farms. Iowa is the number one producer of corn for grain, as well as the number one producer of animal products that utilize corn: hogs and eggs. Iowa has the largest ethanol facilities

capacity in the US, nearly twice that of Nebraska, which ranks second (Nebraska Energy Office, 2012). In response to this demand for industrial inputs, corn prices have risen in the last decade and so have the acres planted with corn. Federal policy covers any risk in corn production through subsidized crop insurance, as well as guarantees profit through a series of direct payments and loan guarantees. Moreover, if a farmer grows vegetables for market on any land that has been part of the farm's base corn acres, that farm loses access to those subsidies and supports. The price of land exceeds by far its ability to cover land cost, even over a period of 20 years. To grow vegetables for local sale is thus not tempting for large-scale farmers, but it does provide a mechanism for small farmers to enter a new market with new products, although access to land is problematic.

Community Capitals Framework

AFNs have multiple goals in terms of the contributions to the individuals involved and to the community in which they are located. In focus groups with consumers in four counties in Washington State, Selfa et al. (2008) found that consumers looked for a balance of attributes, not all with precise definitions, from their CSAs and other AFN sources (2008, pp. 271–272). The Community capitals framework has proven useful for holistic analysis leading to action to improve communities and organizations (Emery and Flora, 2006; Fey et al., 2006; Flora et al., 2007, 2009; Flora, 2011; Rasmussen et al., 2011; Flora and Flora, 2013). Inquiry about each capital (which must be specified for the context) forces a 360 degree examination of potential assets that can improve long-term resiliency of the organization or community.

Place matters. Each place offers unique conditions of soil, hydrology, precipitation and temperatures (*natural capital*). For producers and for consumers, natural capital in the quality and freshness of the produce and care of the environment were important reasons for participation in AFNs (Cooley and Lass, 1998; O'Hara and Stagl, 2001; Bougherara et al., 2009).

Place also provides ways of seeing and doing that link the seen with the unseen and limit what is thought possible to change (*cultural capital*). Place-based food reinforces localism. Winter (2003) suggests the preference for local over organic is part of a defensive localism, particularly in non-urban setting, such as most of Iowa. Lang (1999, p. 218) makes a similar point: 'food is both, a symptom and a symbol of how we organize ourselves and our societies. It is both, a vignette and a microcosm of wider social realities'. Hayden and Buck (2012), using ethnographic methodology, look at the degree to which CSAs create tactile space, as discussed by Carolan (2007, 2011) and contribute to environmental ethics.

CSAs can make a contribution to *human capital* through enhancing health and knowledge, both formal and tacit (Carolan, 2011). The contribution of CSAs to human health is found by several studies as a motivator for consumer (O'Hara and Stagl, 2001).

A large selling point of CSA is increasing *social capital*, both bridging (within the group) and bonding (to others that are from different groups). Indeed, literature suggests that it is this capital that attracts and keeps members in CSAs. For example, Selfa et al. (2008) found organic was less important to consumers than local and relationships. O'Hara and Stagl (2001) found consumers have a high preference for personal interaction when buying food products. Ostrom (2007) found that CSAs returned a sense of agency to local communities.

CSAs can generate *political capital*, which is based on the norms and values of the organizations and which become standards, enforced by rules and regulations. 'A key concept of early CSA organizers was to assert local control over a food system that was growing increasingly consolidated and remote' (Adam, 2006, p. 3). Lang (1999) argues that CSAs contribute to the concept of food democracy (or food citizenship), recognizing that consumers can identify the interests of others (food workers, other consumers, future generations, and other species). CSA consumers generally view themselves as more politically active and progressive than others (O'Hara and Stagl, 2001), validating on an individual level what Schnell (2007) concluded using an ecological analysis. Hinrichs (2000) found CSA re-embeds market relationships within civil society.

For producers, the CSA generates *financial capital* in terms of the money that members invest prior to planting, while members count on savings on fresh fruits and vegetables. Case studies of farms participating in CSAs show that this provides an important segment of farm income and leads to other farm enterprise opportunities (Reeve et al., 2011). Many farmers who engage in alternative networks such as farmers markets (FMs) and CSA find these activities insufficient to sustain their incomes; hence, they rely on external systems to retain their viability, e.g. by drawing on state support or cross-subsidy from other (mainstream) activities. Even where positive multiplier effects can be identified, evidence suggests that launches of AFNs in a region may incur detrimental impacts on other economic activities. Thus, although Brown and Miller (2008) conclude positively about the overall net gains of FMs to local economies, they report losses to several businesses sectors, as a result of consumer expenditure dropping in local grocery stores (Tregear, 2011). Data from a 1999 nationwide CSA survey (Lass et al., 2003a) and a 2001 nationwide CSA survey (Lass et al., 2003b) show that CSA farms surveyed are faced with challenging financial situations. But these farmers felt the CSA operation still helped improving their financial situation. A majority of the farmers surveyed felt the CSA improved their ability to meet farm costs, increasing their own compensation.

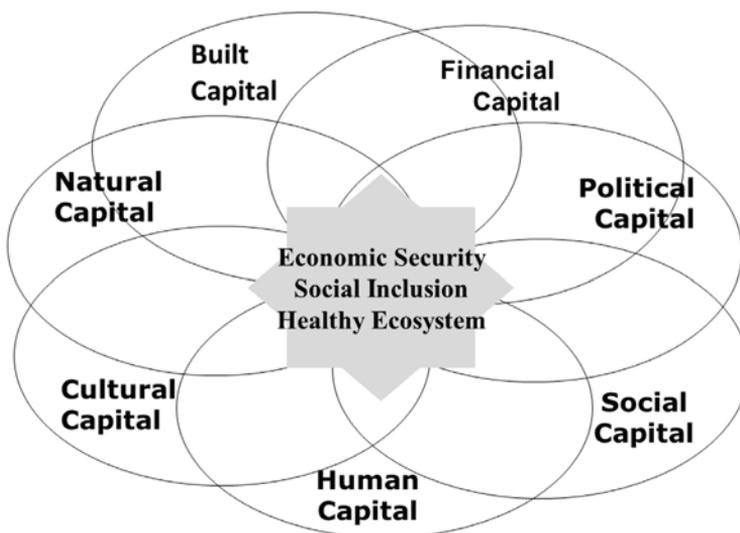


Figure 1. Community capitals framework.

A lack of financial capital limits participation of low-income consumers. Macias (2008), in a study of different types of AFNs in Vermont, found that the CSA initiative failed to attract economically disadvantaged participants until specific actions were put in place to reach them. In her account of community food movements in New York, Slocum (2006) critiques the internal relationships she observes, arguing that these movements perpetuated rather than overturned historically iniquitous social inequalities. A number of efforts have been launched to utilize cCSAs for poverty reduction, particularly through linkage with inner-city churches, schools, and childcare centers (Andreatt et al., 2008), including one led by Rainbow Organic Farms in Kansas City Kansas and Missouri. Woods et al. (2009) found that over 40% of CSAs surveyed donate excess product to a food bank. Grown Locally, a community farming cooperative in north east Iowa that offers a CSA option, developed collective GAP certification that allows them to market food to schools in the area, particularly those serving low-income students.

CSAs utilize and create *built capital* in terms of storage and packing sheds, small irrigation systems, pick-up places (that transform churches, community centres and parking lots for the times of delivery) and may influence the kinds of cooking and storage equipment members purchase to best utilize abundant harvests. These capitals overlap in their manifestations. As they are a non-linear system, a change in one capital occasions changes in others. Relationships are not static, but processes. Civic agriculture is a dynamic, evolving experiment in food democracy. Thus the CCF is a useful tool for comparative AFN studies (Campbell et al., 2012).

Methodology

This study was designed in 2004 collaboratively by the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, the Iowa Network for Community Agriculture, and the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture to learn how cCSAs could become even more successful, particularly by decreasing turnover in members and producers (Bregendahl and Flora, 2006). We contacted the four cCSAs in Iowa at the time, and three agreed to share their lists of current and past members and current and past producers with us.

Three of Iowa's four cCSAs participated in the study. In 2005 each participating cCSA served urban or peri-urban college towns and surrounding areas. Two of the three were started and administered by producers. One was started and administered by consumers. We received 26 usable producer surveys, which represent an overall producer response rate of 70% and 189 usable member surveys, representing an overall member response rate of 46%.

As the organizations were very interested in increasing their stability, we surveyed current and past producers and citizen/investors. We defined a producer as anyone who provided products to the cCSA, even value added products. Thus, participation was not limited to only those who were cultivating crops or raising livestock. Of the 26 who responded, 11.5% were not actually farming but rather were entrepreneurs adding value to locally grown products (e.g. bakers).

Nearly two in three (61.5%) of the responding producers are currently participating in a cCSA. The average length of time producers cooperated with other producers to provide products to members of the cCSA was four years. Producers furnished vegetables and fruit, flowers, dairy products, bread, cakes, grains, poultry, fish, pork, lamb and eggs.

Using a five-point Likert scale, we asked producers and ex-producers on the extent to which they agreed that participating as a producer in cCSA helped them experience 52 specific benefit items. We asked members and ex-members the extent to which they experienced 49 benefit items during the last growing season they were a member. A follow-up interview was conducted by telephone with a representative from Farm to Folk, one of the cCSA study farms, in 2012.

cCSAs and Community Capitals

Producer Expectations

In their study of CSA operators, Tegtmeier and Duffy (2005) asked respondents why they had decided to start their CSA operation. The top six reasons offered had to do with increased social capital (closer relationships with consumers and stronger ties to community) and financial capital (assured markets and income, guaranteed prices, and sources of capital). Farmers in the study were also asked to assess categories of values that encouraged them to participate in alternative agricultural pursuits. The authors concluded that,

‘the social and environmental aspects of CSA are stronger motivating factors than the possible market advantages of the model. Although assured markets and guaranteed prices do appear to be fairly strong motivating factors, these farmers do not seem to be drawn to CSA by an assured income or to make a living’ (Tegtmeier and Duffy, 2005, p. 10).

While it is somewhat discouraging for producers trying to make a living solely from CSA, we found that each producer has a range of motivations that compel them to participate. When we asked producers an open-ended question on why they chose to participate in collaborative CSA, most of the reasons they provided (they could list multiple ones) had to do with financial advantages.

- Financial capital: 76% cited financial reasons for joining, including income they received from product sales, access to markets, and shared risk and responsibility with other producers.
- Social capital: 40% of producers cited social reasons for joining, including the importance of developing relationships with growers and consumers.
- Cultural capital: 24% referenced cultural reasons for joining. In this regard, producers said their involvement allowed them to live out their philosophical values, beliefs, commitments and convictions.
- Human capital: 24% said they joined to increase human capital – both their own and others’. In terms of their own, some producers joined to learn from other producers and to reduce their management and production responsibilities. Producers also joined to increase the human capital of others by improving human health, mainly through the production and provision of healthy food.
- Natural capital: 12% joined for environmental reasons to reduce use of chemical or food miles to ship products to market.
- Political capital: interestingly, none of the producers identified overt political reasons for joining.

In cCSAs, financial expectations are closely linked with social ties that are perceived to translate into economic gains for the business. However, producers cited few en-

vironmental reasons for joining. Something else noticeably absent was articulation of explicit political motivations for joining in terms of gaining access to elected officials or influencing policy. DeLind and Ferguson (1999) found in their study that members do not join CSAs to further a specific political agenda. Instead, participation provides members an opportunity to express their values in deeply personal, but not necessarily public ways. Like members, it is possible that producers similarly do not view CSA as a political platform, but rather a chance to make a modest living while fulfilling a set of social and cultural values that are inextricably bound to personal politics.

Producer Benefits

Expectations are one thing; the benefits producers receive may be quite another. In this section, we use the community capitals framework to analyse the benefits producers reportedly received as a result of participating in collaborative CSA.

Producer Benefits According to the Community Capitals Framework

The items that we used to examine the financial capital, measure the extent to which producers report they were not only able to increase their assets and financial wealth, but also diversify and stabilize their income. While the capital model (Flora and Flora, 2013) distinguishes built capital from financial capital, we only had two items to measure built capital. Unable to create a separate scale, we felt justified in combining those items with financial capital rather than leaving them out of the analysis.

We created scales by computing means for six community capitals based on our theoretical framework (see Box 1). However, relying on the theoretical framework alone creates some challenges, since several measures could fit into more than one category. Therefore, we subjected our scales to tests of reliability to determine whether they legitimately 'belonged' together as a single concept. All were found reliable using Cronbach's alpha.

According to descriptive statistics (using means), producers reported the greatest benefits in natural capital, followed by social, cultural, human, political and financial/built capital. In a separate analysis of built capital, 11.5% of reporting producers said participation enabled them to acquire farm equipment such as tractors, tillers, tools, irrigation equipment, etc.

Producers reaped the greatest benefits in terms of contributing to environmental health, developing social relationships, and sharing cultural values. Human capital, political capital, and financial capital benefits were experienced to a lesser degree.

Individual versus Collective Benefits

Producers reported receiving benefits as individuals and for the community. We divided benefits into two categories and created two scales: self-oriented benefits (e.g. learning farming techniques, diversifying farm income, making connections with other producers, etc.) and others-oriented benefits (e.g. sharing information, helping others connect to the land, increasing biodiversity, etc.). We included 26 items for the self-oriented benefit scale (alpha = .8987) and 22 items for the others-oriented benefit scale (alpha = .9563).

A comparison of means showed a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) in the individual versus collective benefits that producers report from participating in cCSAs. Producers are more likely to agree they experience collective benefits com-

pared individual benefits. Ideally, alternative food systems should reward the individual as much as the collective to ensure that producers have adequate incentives to participate or at the very least, food systems that redistribute the risk accordingly. If the collective benefits are greater than individual producer benefits, then the collective should at the very minimum be taking on a proportionate share of the risk. Food systems that are ultimately unsustainable are characterized by arrangements in which producers experience a modest share of benefits but take on the greatest share of the risk – the hallmark of modern, industrialized agriculture (Heffernan, 2000).

Producer Expectations, Benefits and Decision-making

Comparing the actual benefits that producers report receiving (based on quantitative analysis) with their expectations for benefits (based on qualitative analysis) reveals some notable contradictions that might explain why some producers choose to withdraw from collaborative CSAs. Although 76% of producers were motivated to join cCSAs for financial reasons (among others), financial benefits ranked last among benefits received. On the other hand, while few producers report they were motivated to join for environmental reasons, they reported significant benefits to the environment.

Not all of the data were contradictory, however. Producers report social, cultural, and human capital benefits equivalent to their expectations. In terms of political capital, no producers overtly acknowledged political motivations for joining nor did they report political capital benefits. This finding raises several questions. Were the items we used adequate for measuring political capital? *If so*, who are producer advocates? Who links them with local food system advocacy coalitions, government officials, and policymakers? Producers themselves may not be in a position to invest into the political aspects of local food systems work, because they have more pressing struggles meeting production, marketing, and management responsibilities.

The discrepancy between financial expectations and the financial benefits received might explain why cCSAs in Iowa have experienced some turnover in producers. Nearly two in five (38.5%) of producers responding to the study are no longer participating in cCSAs. Of those who are no longer involved, half cited financial reasons, such as 'the money was not worth it' and 'it was not economically feasible'. Other reasons included health problems (human capital), lack of communication (social capital), coordination time required (human capital/financial capital regarding opportunity costs), and moving from the area.

Participation in cCSAs proved to be a learning experience for most producers. It provided lessons in the economics of farming, marketing, cooperation and control. While one producer chose to leave local food system production, most stayed on although not necessarily with the collaborative model. Several started their own individual CSAs. In terms of community development, this is beneficial as new businesses are spawned from the collaborative CSA effort.

Consumer/Investors

Cone and Myhre (2000) documented why people join CSA. Building on their work, our goal was 1. to identify the benefits members receive as a result of joining, and 2. to determine the relationship between the benefits members experience and their behaviours in patronizing collaborative CSA and single proprietor-owned CSA.

Box 1. Capital scale items, producers.

Participating as a producer in collaborative CSA helped you...

Financial/Built

Buy land or a farmstead. Acquire other farm assets. Access new markets.

Gain new consumers for your non-CSA farm products.

Increase your household income.

Stabilize your household income through pre-season contracts with members. Diversify farm income.

Reduce or share risks associated with farming.

Provide income-generating activities for household children/minors.

Cultural Capital

Live your philosophical, spiritual, or ethical values.

Help CSA members connect with each other or other community members through farm or CSA-hosted events, festivals, potlucks, etc.

Stay connected to the land.

Build a sense of shared identity with other producers.

Maintain a sense of shared identity with members of the community around local or organic foods or farm products.

Help CSA members connect with the land through farm tours, garden tours, work opportunities, etc.

Participate in an important social movement.

Human Capital

Reduce time spent gaining access to markets.

Reduce time spent performing farm duties by increasing access to CSA member or volunteer workers.

Reduce time spent managing farm business aspects like billing, managing accounts, etc.

Reduce time spent communicating with CSA members.

Reduce time spent distributing farm products to CSA members.

Make good use of your agricultural skills.

Put into practice your knowledge of environmentally friendly farming or animal husbandry techniques.

Increase your knowledge of environmentally friendly farming or animal husbandry techniques.

Share your knowledge of environmentally friendly farming or animal husbandry techniques with other producers and groups.

Be a part of educating the community about local food systems and the realities of farming.

Access knowledge of more experienced producers.

Offer local residents access to healthy and nutritious foods.

Social Capital

Make professional connections with other producers. Make personal connections with other producers. Build trust among CSA members.

Establish a broader network of relationships in the community.

Strengthen relationships in the community.

Build relationships with members of different cultural or ethnic groups.

Political Capital

Counteract the effects of industrialized agriculture on a community or regional scale.

Develop or maintain advocacy coalitions that support healthy local or regional communities.

Develop relationships with local government.

Develop relationships with county or regional government.

Develop relationships with state or federal government.

Develop relationships with local food system advocates.

Natural Capital

Increase biodiversity (by growing heirloom varieties, raising heritage animals, or cultivating something other than row crops).

Reduce chemical inputs into the environment.

Reduce food miles to get your farm products to market.

Improve the appearance of the landscape.

Improve soil health.

Improve water quality.

Improve animal welfare.

Improve wildlife habitat.

Member Benefits

Community Capital Member Benefits

For analysis, we created scales (again, by computing means), a process guided by our theoretical framework of the community capitals (Flora et al., 2004). We tested each score for reliability to determine whether they belonged together as a single concept. A total of three items were removed. The items used for each capital are shown in Box 2.

- Financial/built capital measures. We originally included six items in the financial capital scale, which measured two general dimensions: financial benefits that accrue to individual households (such as saving money on produce) and financial benefits that accrue to the community (see items below). We found that if we included the two items that included individual financial benefits, the reliability coefficient decreased (suggesting the scale was not reliable); therefore, we removed them. What we have is a scale that measures the economic benefits members experience not for themselves, but as members of a community.
- Cultural capital measures. Our measures of cultural capital centre on the way in which members develop a strong sense of identity to the land, farming, food, and a set of specific values.
- Human capital measures. We used 14 items to measure human capital benefits, which centred on two dimensions of human capital: that of health and learning.
- Social capital measures. The social capital scale was created from items measuring the extent to which members report they are connected with producers, other CSA members, and the community.
- Political capital measures. The scale for political capital addresses the extent to which members agreed that they participated in 'small' agriculture as a form of protest against 'big' agriculture and the extent to which they formed politically strategic social connections with players who can potentially influence food, agricultural, and community development policies.
- Natural capital measures. Due to the small scale of participating CSA operations and the objectives of this study, we did not link CSA production practices with concrete, measurable impacts on the environment but instead focused on members' awareness about the impact their food decisions have on the environment. For this, we gathered information about the impact member participation has on natural capital.

Ranking Community Capital Benefits

Once the scales for each community capital were constructed, we compared the means to determine whether there were statistical differences in the types of benefits members report receiving from participating in collaborative CSA. Descriptive statistics show members ranked financial/built capital benefits the highest (the lower the score, the greater the benefit), followed by natural, human, social, cultural and political capital. Inferential statistics comparing these means corroborate these results and show they are indeed different. Thus, there are six different layers of benefits for members listed in order from most to least:

1. financial/built;
2. natural;

Box 2. Capital scale items, members.

Participating as a member in a collaborative CSA provided these benefits

Financial

- I helped support the local economy.
- I helped create or save local jobs.
- I helped support local farmers.
- I helped support small farmers.

Cultural

- I supported local agriculture.
- I supported the farming tradition in the area.
- I lived my philosophical, spiritual, and ethical values.
- I developed a personal connection to the food I eat.
- I developed a personal connection to the place I live.
- I accessed specialty or ethnic produce.
- I accessed heirloom varieties or heritage species.
- I took part in farm-based festivals, tours, or events.
- I developed a connection to the land.
- I participated in an important social movement.

Human

- I had access to healthy and nutritious foods.
- I had access to a source of safe food.
- I had access to organically grown or raised farm products.
- I had access to food that is not genetically modified.
- I had access to fresh, tasty food.
- I shared my food preparation knowledge with other CSA members.
- I learned more about who is growing my food.
- I learned more about where my food is grown.
- I learned more about how my food is grown.
- I learned more about local foods and farming.
- I learned more about the realities of agriculture.
- I learned about food storage or preparation techniques from other CSA members.
- I learned about food storage or preparation techniques from producers.
- I learned more about some of the issues associated with environmentally friendly farming or animal production methods.

Social

- I shared my connection to the land with others.
- I joined others to support alternative agriculture.
- I connected with local producers.
- I helped build community around local food.
- I felt part of the community.

Political

- I helped support alternative forms of agriculture.
- I helped counteract industrialized agriculture on a community or regional scale.
- I developed relationships with local food system advocates.
- I helped develop or maintain advocacy coalitions that support healthy communities.
- I developed relationships with government or policy makers.

Natural

- I helped reduce food miles.
- I supported agriculture that reduces chemical inputs.
- I supported agriculture that improves water quality.
- I supported agriculture that creates healthy soil.
- I supported agriculture that improves animal welfare.
- I supported agriculture that increases biodiversity.
- I supported agriculture that improves wildlife habitat.
- I supported agriculture that improves landscape appearance.

3. human;
4. social;
5. cultural;
6. political.

As expected, natural capital ranked near the top. However, much to our surprise, financial capital topped natural capital by ranking first. The measures we included relate to financial benefits for the community, not for themselves as individuals. Political capital appeared at the bottom. A probable explanation for this is that members do not explicitly link their consumption patterns to specific political outcomes, which is underpinned by results DeLind and Ferguson (1999) found among CSA members they studied.

Individual versus Collective Benefits

The issue of individual versus collective benefits that emerged from the analysis of producers prompted us to revisit this issue for members. Are members of cCSA also reaping different individual and collective benefits?

Two scales for benefits were 1. individual or self-oriented, and 2. collective or others-oriented. A total of 21 items were included in the scale measuring collective benefits (the reliability coefficient was .9249) and 27 items were included in the scale measuring individual benefits (reliability coefficient was .9113). When we compared the means for these two scales, we found that overall, cCSA members were more likely to report collective benefits of cCSA participation versus individual benefits ($p = .000$).

Member Retention

The coordinators of the three cCSAs reported retention rates of 80%, 69% and 59%. To put this into perspective, according to Docter and Hildebrand (1998) it is not unusual for many CSAs to have a high turnover rate and lose between 25% and 70% of their members each season. For starting CSAs, a retention rate of 50% is typical while a successful CSA should aim for a retention rate between 75% and 80% by the time it enters its fifth or sixth season.

Nearly half (45.5%) of member respondents participate no longer in cCSAs. The top reasons for attrition have to do with coordination issues (members could indicate more than one reason): Coordinating member's summer schedules with weekly deliveries, coordinating the appropriate amount of produce distributed to members throughout the season, and the more convenient role farmers' markets. Nearly one in three (31%) cited cost as a factor. Poor food quality, lack of food preparation knowledge, and lack of social connection were cited less frequently as reasons for attrition.

Types and breadth of community capital benefits were the best predictors of length of participation. Current members are more likely to agree that they derive collective or community oriented financial benefits from participating ($p = .027$) than former members. Current members are also more likely to report that they experience social ($p = .001$), human ($p = .002$), and cultural ($p = .026$) benefits than former members. However, current and former members do not differ in terms of the natural and political benefits they derive from participating. We found that members

who experienced greater levels of social capital benefits were more likely to stay (chi-square = 12.174; $p < .05$).

Using logistic regression to predict likelihood to stay, we found that *diversity* of member capital benefits is statistically important in predicting retention (chi-square = 8.526; $p < .05$). As benefits in the number of community capital categories increases by one, members are 1.5 times more likely to stay. In summary, the more diverse the benefits are for members, the more likely they will continue participating in cCSAs. For example, a member who reports benefits in cultural capital (e.g. by living ethical, spiritual and philosophical values), financial capital (e.g. helping support the local economy) and human capital (e.g. accessing a source of healthy and nutritious food) is more likely to stay than someone who reports benefits in only one type of capital.

Current members experienced both more individual benefits and more collective benefits than did former members. Thus, it appears that retention weighs heavily on both individual and collectively oriented benefits.

Applying the Knowledge Generated

By the end of the 2005 growing season, one of the cCSAs participating in this study had dissolved. There were several reasons for this, the most culpable of which was tension among producers and an inability to resolve differences, in part because producers were differentially invested and the organization lacked strong, clear leadership.

Producers were reluctant to invest their time in what appeared to be a sinking ship. With no primary producers willing or able to invest the time in rebuilding failing relationships, coordinators became the champions for a new organization backed by significant member interest when the old one fell apart. To overcome some of the producer tensions and accountability issues, the new structure was designed to allow producers to make decisions about their own operations, but not the new organization. In consultation with interested local growers, coordinators reorganized the CSA as a hybrid CSA-buying club model, where members can choose from several CSA shares, each produced by a separate producer, or they can choose to buy specific items if demand warrants delivery. Rather than simply managing logistics, the coordinators are using the social capital they developed within the old structures to act as 'relationship investors' who are on the ground every week talking with members. The coordinators are representing producers. As a result, the new organization is not a direct market in the strictest sense except that members do have access to producers during delivery and at other times, should they so choose. This arrangement succeeded because coordinators effectively meet the communication needs of both producers and members in a way helpful and beneficial to both groups. The coordinators have designed the fee structure to sustain their role to originate from producer fees, through a percentage of most produce sold, and flat consumer fees to use the service. Two part-time seasonal positions were created in the process.

The Magic Beanstalk cCSA utilized the knowledge generated to address member attrition and increase the economic diversity of participants. Over the winter of 2005–2006, the Magic Bean Stalk coordinators worked together to revamp Magic Beanstalk to make it more flexible for the consumer members and to offer better marketing of the locally produced food and fiber produce. As a successor Farm to Folk was launched in 2006. By 2012, it operated year round with 16 different farms

participating in subscription and à la carte provisioning. Total sales in the 2011 calendar year were \$122,042, with \$107,397 going to farmers. Almost all the participating farmers have developed additional alternative short marketing chains, from selling through local stores, farmers markets, and local restaurants. Other CSA farmers in the state also sell as a cooperative to school districts. In 2011 and 2012 there were 274 active members, including those purchasing CSA shares and those with à la carte accounts. Many were new, as there is still turn over, but not as high as in the predecessor cCSA. There are many more options now for CSA shares and other local foods, and many of the spin-off CSAs were once affiliated with Farm to Folk.

Another way producers are innovatively supporting inclusivity is by combining structures that cater for different kinds of food needs. They hybrid CSA-buying club structure that emerged from the collapse of one of the cCSAs makes it possible for a variety of people to participate. In addition to CSA shares, single items can be ordered from a list posted online every week, functioning somewhat like an electronic farmers' market. In this way, members can regulate what and how much they receive. If the enrolment for 2006 is any indication, this hybrid structure seems to appeal to all kinds of eaters – those who want to experience the surprise and adventure of CSA membership and those who want more control over what and how much local food their household receives. Coordinators and producers hope this system will be more inclusive of families who want to support local food systems but, for various reasons, do not find participation in CSA viable.

In their promotion, Farm to Folk stresses their commitment to providing our producers with fair compensation for their labour. A 10% fee on sales from the farms remunerates the coordinator. With so many university people in the area, the coordinator calculates that asking for an upfront payment, that members can use up as their schedules allow, will be more viable (Henderson and Van En, 2007).

Conclusions

The cCSA is one way to shorten value chains in AFNs. They require a great deal of coordination, transparency and communication to ensure that they maximize the capitals generated for producers and consumers. As suggested by past studies of CSAs, both producers and consumers sought and gained multiple benefits from participation. The greater the number of capitals gained from participation, the greater the retention of producers and consumers. The revised cCSA with its à la carte options helped to respond to one of the complaints to CSA defectors: too much of an unwanted product and not enough of another or not enough variety offered. And it did so while building the capitals the literature has shown to be particularly important for CSA members: social capital through a common pick-up point, regular newsletters, and CSA events for sharing; cultural capital through sharing recipes for unfamiliar produce; human capital through increased knowledge about the growing process and better health by eating more fresh fruits and vegetables. The impact on natural capital was effected through the short distance from the producer to consumer and the more sustainable practices used.

We found a surprising commitment to the collective capitals produced by participation in cCSAs by both producers and consumers. The recognition of contributing to the greater good in terms of creating a healthy ecosystem, social inclusion and economic security increased perseverance for members as well as producers.

Producers who participate and remain participating find a balance of social, cultural and natural capitals, despite perceived low levels of financial and built capital. Consumer/investors who remain as members also find multiple capital benefits from their participation. In contrast to producers, consumers who remained longer with the cCSAs defined political capital as a major product generated through their membership. cCSAs that involve consumers as well as producers in their governance are able to achieve 'new forms of political association and market governance' (Whatmore et al., 2003, p. 389). By making participation more flexible and by offering subsidized memberships, cCSAs such as Farm to Folk are attempting to address the equity issues surrounding the initial upfront payment and to adapt to the shifting schedules of their consumers.

Collaborative CSAs are dynamic organizations with flexible boundaries and dynamic relationships that form and reform over time, as shown by Galt et al. (2011). Through a systematic, participatory research methodology, Farm to Folk was able to better direct re-articulations between producers and consumer/investors through food.

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'We Want Farmers' Markets!' Case Study of Emerging Civic Food Networks in the Czech Republic

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[Paper first received, 3 September 2012; in final form, 5 November 2012]

Abstract. The purpose of the article is to provide an empirical insight into non-conventional food initiatives in the Czech Republic, as representative of a post-Socialist country in Central/Eastern Europe, and more specifically to provide an answer to the questions of how the citizen-driven food networks in the Czech Republic evolve and what forms they take. The article presents detailed findings from a case study of farmers' markets, which have been spreading all over the country since 2010 as a result of the strong, new engagement of consumer groups that first stood up for farmers' markets in Prague, and later in other large cities. The case study employs different data collection techniques in order to describe and explore the initiative. Primary data for the study have been collected through semi-standardized interviews with organizers of the farmers' markets, engaged farmers and local stakeholders, in order to understand the factors that have enabled this initiative to grow and challenge the dominant food networks. The study explores critically the active role of consumers in the transition of the current food networks, the mechanisms of the transitional process and the transformative potential of the initiative with regard to the sustainability of food production.

Introduction

In line with other developed countries, the Czech Republic is experiencing changes in the field of food production and consumption. Due to the globalization and Europeanization processes, these changes are similar in many ways, yet different in others. This article focuses on changes in the agri-food regime in the Czech Republic, which are driven by the activities of consumers who are engaged in initiatives conceptualized as civic food networks.

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Particular attention is paid to the farmers' markets (FMs) that have developed recently into a unique form, viewed in this study as an example of consumer-driven initiatives contributing to transition processes. FMs as such existed in the Czech Republic before 1989 (i.e. during the Communist regime) and throughout the 1990s formed a distribution channel that functioned in parallel with shop sales. However, the transformative potential of this alternative, related to its capacity to change the current system of food production and consumption into a more sustainable model, was marginal. Most of the former markets (in better cases) simply included the direct sales of selected products and, in worse cases, only resellers were present to offer conventional products without any additional value. At the beginning of 2010, a new wave of FMs emerged to change this practice fundamentally. These new FMs were founded due to the 1. initiative of non-governmental organizations (often cooperating with municipalities) that 2. came up with their own conception of the market and negotiated purposefully with selected food suppliers, who 3. offered products very different from conventional (industrialized) goods. Such features are delivering radical changes to the previous food marketing practices in the Czech Republic. Within the Czech context the emergence of the FM was a break point. Markets quickly became popular and spread all over the country. Considering the fact that none of the previously existing initiatives within the alternative food networks had made such rapid progress, it is important to answer the questions 'how did it happen and what factors enabled FMs – radically different from the dominant practice – to become so successful?'

A specific goal of this article is to describe the emergent transition of and explain the role of civic food networks, which are considered here as the main driving force for the change processes. In this type of initiative, as was generally pointed out by Renting, the groups of consumers engaged in the organization of the new FMs are stepping over their role and entering into very new relationships with producers (Renting, this issue). The emergence of the FMs stems from the collective actions of the more or less formalised groups that, for this purpose, often collaborate with representatives of the local administration. The FM as a concept is accentuating the process-based quality of products (pointing out their origin and the methods of food production) and aims at being different from the products distributed through conventional marketing channels (such as supermarkets). The studied initiative has its origin in an urban rather than a rural setting. Due to this, the networks of producers, consumers and other actors are no longer formed 'from farm to fork', as in the case of the standard short food supply chains, but rather 'from fork to farm', since the new shape of the food network is created more by consumers. Such a situation also requires a new approach of researchers: if we want to understand the dynamics of such a network, as was pointed out by Oosterveer (2012), it is crucial to start the study with the 'empowered', engaged and demanding consumers and their preferences. Regarding the focus of this article, it is possible to modify this requirement by looking at the empowered, engaged groups of consumers, who display their actorship collectively through civic society organizations (most often civic associations or non-profit organizations).

The phenomenon of the FMs is studied in this work with the use of the transition theory that has been traditionally applied for understanding socio-technical transitions (Geels and Schot, 2010; Darnhofer, 2011). The study includes a case of an emerging transition or 'transition in the making' (Elzen et al., 2011), rather than a completed transition, which are long-term processes spanning several decades

(Darnhofer, 2011). For this purpose, the multilevel perspective was utilized, which is assumed to capture the development processes and identify factors that facilitate the success of the initiative. The first section defines the key concepts of the transition theory, such as niche, regime and landscape factors. Subsequently, development of the alternative initiative in the Czech Republic is described, from the diachronic and synchronic perspectives. First, the development of the niche initiatives over time (diachronic analysis) is discussed, with regard to the engagement of consumers and their cooperation with farmers. Thereafter follows a detailed investigation into the origin, form, logic and governance model of FMs at the present time (synchronic analysis). Finally, the implications of the initiative and the main findings based on the presented case study are discussed.

Theoretical Framework

The case study presented in the text was conducted in relation to the exploration of the transitional process occurring in the agri-food regime. This work has applied the concepts of transitional theory as created in the last decade in Europe (Grin et al., 2010) and used for the analysis of food production (Spaargaren et al., 2012). The theory of transition is utilized for understanding the change processes that occur within a specific context (time and space), thereby focusing on the actors taking part in the processes. These actors may share their stakes, or their interests may be contradictory. According to Elzen et al. (2008) the gist of transition is the innovation of the existing system that is represented by a specific framework of rules, approaches, social relations and technological infrastructure, known in sum as the regime. A regime can be put under pressure due to inner forces or due to the changes that have their origins in the external setting. The long-term external factors that shape the functions of the regime are conceptualized as landscape factors. A key role in the study of the transition process is played by innovation, which appears as novelties, creating what is known as niches. Niches are usually regarded as the 'seeds of change'. These three concepts (regime, landscape factors and niche) create the intertwined layers of the multilevel perspective model.

The first applications of the transition theory (conducted by Schot et al., 1994; Geels, 2002) were strongly inspired by systemic theory. Social actions and behaviour were seen as one of the dimensions of the socio-technical regime and as such were not given primary attention. This has been criticized by Spaargaren et al. (2012), who strived to build a theory that would be more 'agency inclusive'. Inspired by the theory of structuration, he proposes to use 'practices' as the unit of analysis instead of 'systems', in order to enhance the fact that 'transitions are (wo)man-made phenomena, although not under the circumstances of their choice and without any guarantee with respect to the outcomes' (Spaargaren et al., 2012, p. 9). This approach acknowledges that the technological infrastructure, cultural patterns and empowered social relations, as well as other social structures, form inevitable limits for the agency of actors. However, at the same time, it states that the processes that are created by the actions of agents shall be given appropriate analytical weight.

The main dilemma of this modified theory is thus included in the question of how not to overlook the central role of the social actors in the transition process and, at the same time, to acknowledge the complexity and multidimensional character of the processes that develop simultaneously as a result of the social and technological co-evolution. In order to capture the transition process that occurs at different

levels and on a different scale, a research tool called MLP (multilevel perspective) was developed (Kemp, 1994; Kemp et al., 2001; Geels, 2005). This tool draws on the above-mentioned elements of the model to include the niche, regime and landscape factors based on 'nested hierarchy' (Geels, 2002, p. 1261). In order to accentuate the importance of the social actions in the transition process, it is possible to characterize the three levels with regard to their extent of institutionalization, as proposed by Spaargaren et al. (2012). The extent of institutionalization is responsible for the stability of social interactions over time. The innovations (less-institutionalized solutions) attempt to change the organizational principles that are included in the regime level (representing a relatively more institutionalized system).

From this point of view, innovation in the area of food production and consumption can be seen as an advent of changes that can (but may not) be expressed in the existing regime. Ideas that are included in an alternative initiative are new, often radically different and therefore unknown to the actors that operate in the established setting. The niche in this way responds to regime weaknesses and demonstrates new possibilities for future development. It is obvious that not all innovations are able to become embedded in the regime and bring about changes that are introduced to the market. This suggests that one of the key points of the analysis are the processes through which practices at niche level interact with those at regime level, and shape the course of system innovation (Smith, 2007) by creating an anchorage of the alternative initiative in the regime (Elzen et al., 2008).

Analysis of the transition process is most often focused on the innovations (i.e. the niche level), and the ways in which the niche interacts with the regime – for example, see empirical applications by Raven et al. (2010) or Spaargaren et al. (2012). Analogically, other studies focus on the level of regime, its established practices, procedures and technologies that are conducted by engaged regime actors. The main challenge is to explain how inner institutions of the regime, based on mutual ties and, in many cases, also on a strong lock-in mechanism, preserve stability and prevent changes in the system. The conceptual focus of the FMs in this study is not on the internal processes of the niche level (construction of novelties), but rather on the interactions between the niche and the regime, which will help us to understand how innovation is becoming embedded in the regime structure, how it gains momentum and delivers eventual changes in the existing practices within food production and consumption.

Methods Used

The case study on FMs was conducted as a part of the FarmPath project. The data were collected during winter 2011 and spring 2012. It included an extensive document study and semi-standardized interviews with organizers of the FMs and representatives of other engaged groups. The selection of the people interviewed was based on purposive sampling, which is typical of the qualitative research approach. The members interviewed represented different groups of actors who played key roles in the development of the initiative. Major attention was paid to the organizers of the FMs (key collective actors of the emerging civic food networks), policymakers (facilitating development of the initiative) and farmers (innovating food production practices). Altogether, 16 interviews were conducted (seven farmers' market organizers, seven farmers, and two representatives of the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture). In accordance with general recommendations (see Berg, 2007, p. 95), the interviews included a set of predetermined questions asked in

a systematic and consistent order, related to the organization of the FMs, the goals of the initiative and their outcomes. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and then analysed qualitatively with the use of nVivo software.

Description of the Incumbent Regime and the Landscape Factors

Unconventional food initiatives establish niches that experiment with innovative approaches. In order to understand how these novelties challenge the dominant practices, it is important to describe the logic and content of the incumbent regime they want to break into. The dominant food production and consumption regime is represented in the Czech Republic by large retail chain stores owned by transnational corporations. Over time, the established regime has created a powerful lock-in mechanism that prevents change and, to some extent, also the development of unconventional initiatives.

The main reason for this situation were the technological and societal trends reaching back to the early 1990s. With economic transformation, the previously established retail sector collapsed. Due to the growing consumer demand, the market was quickly penetrated by new foreign companies. The first supermarket was opened in 1991 by Ahold (Fuchs et al., 2005), retail store networks rapidly expanded and soon resulted in tough competition among retailers. In 1993, the market share of the 10 major retail companies was 7%, in 1999 it was almost 33%, and currently it reaches approximately 66% (Skála, 2007). The vast majority of food purchases are made in the stores of these large retail chains. It is estimated that hypermarkets are the main shopping points for 43% of Czech households, supermarkets take up about 15% and discount stores 25% (Incoma, 2011a). These purchasing patterns are in accordance with the high penetration of hypermarkets in the Czech Republic. According to the new statistics, there are 268 hypermarkets in the Czech Republic (i.e. 26 hypermarkets per 1 million inhabitants), connected to areas inhabited by 90% of the total population of the country (iDNES, 2012). It is estimated that, by the end of the year 2012, the number of hypermarkets in the Czech Republic will reach 300, which ranks the Czech Republic among the countries with the most dense networks of hypermarkets in Europe. This situation clearly illustrates the dominance of the industrial regime in the Czech Republic, which, at the same time, has hindered the development of alternative food initiatives.

The powerful position of the large retail chain stores was supported by ineffectual regulation in the past and a generally weak institutional framework that has its origin in the liberal era of the early 1990s. The new purchasing opportunities created by these stores in that period were often seen as a symbol of economic growth and affluence. The position and role of supermarkets, as well as the impacts on food supply chains, were not critically reflected in either public or academic discourses. The first critical opinions were formulated by the antiglobalization movement in the late 1990s, which discussed the growing economic power of corporations (Kozeluh, 2010), and the Czech government has passed only recently the 'Act on Significant Market Power and its Abuse' (Act No. 395/2009 of 9 September 2009), which is intended to limit the position of transnational corporations and to reduce the pressure put on their trading partners (mainly the producers and processors).

Despite the fact that there are no studies to evaluate systematically how Czech consumers view the quality of the food offered by supermarkets, public discourse reveals that consumers are becoming more concerned about this issue, particularly

after several scandals that undermined their trust in food quality. In addition, a recent comparison with other countries has revealed that supermarkets in the Czech Republic can 'afford' to sell food products of a lower quality at higher prices than in foreign branches of the stores (Pospěchová, 2011). It would be an exaggeration to state that such incidents could result in a significant outflow of consumers from supermarkets, undermining the dominance of the incumbent regime actors, but it is very likely that the negative experience has made Czech consumers more sensitive to the issue of food quality and attracted their attention to the alternatives they had overlooked before.

Despite the stability of the incumbent regime, its development has also been affected by external forces, conceptualized as landscape factors. One of the most important has been the rising awareness of consumers about the process-based qualities of food products, as already described in Western European countries (Holt and Reed, 2006). Fierce competition among the retail chain stores, together with the industrial logic of production, put constant pressure on the food quality offered in supermarkets. Only recently, have the large retail chain stores in the Czech Republic started to differentiate between food products and introduced their own premium brands of food products. This strategy can be seen as a response to the Czech consumers' turn towards quality (Murdoch and Miele, 2004), which essentially followed the patterns already known from Western Europe. However, the incumbent regime, due to its intrinsic logic, was able only partially to satisfy the new kind of market demand and through this has created an opportunity for the new development of alternative food initiatives.

Establishing Alternatives to the Existing Regime

During the last decade, several models of non-conventional food initiatives have appeared in the Czech Republic that match widely known examples of the alternative food networks (Renting et al., 2003; Venn, et al. 2006). All of these initiatives reconfigure innovatively the relationships between producers and consumers (Marsden et al., 2000), and respond directly to the weaknesses of the incumbent regime of food production. The development of these initiatives in the Czech Republic was gradual, yet most of them did not complete the pre-developmental phase and did not become engaged in the potential take-off phase to break through. Regarding the transition process, it is still interesting to explore what kind of initiatives emerged, how they functioned and what aspects of the regime they aimed to innovate. Key aspects of the initiative are summarized in Table 1.

Organic Certification Scheme

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the organic sector has developed systematically. Due to the absence of a tradition of organic farming in Communist Czechoslovakia, the sector was built 'from top to bottom' on a formalized basis. The decisive element for the development of this sector were the subsidies introduced in 1998 (Brozova, 2011), which resulted in the rapid growth of the land registered in the organic system (MZe, 2011). However, the fast growth of the organic sector opened up two issues. First, it appeared that support of this kind led directly to the increase in the number of organic farmers and the proportion of organically farmed land in the Czech

Table 1. Key features of the alternative food initiatives in the Czech Republic.

	Start	Geographical scale	Innovated aspects of the incumbent regime	Involvement of consumers in development of the initiative
Organic certification scheme	1990	National	Reducing environmental impacts, alternative food quality	Very Low
Farm gate sales	1990s	National	Face-to-face interaction, alternative food quality	Low
Box schemes/home deliveries	2008	Regional (several regions)	Alternative food quality, localization of production	Medium
New farmers' markets	~2009	National	Face-to-face interaction, alternative food quality, localization of production	High
Community-supported agriculture (CSA)	~2009	Regional (several regions)	Alternative food quality, social responsibility, localization of production	High
Community gardens/Urban gardening	~2011	Local (large cities: Prague, Brno)	Social networking, localization of production	Very High

Republic, but did not bring more organic food to the customers (MZe, 2010). The reason for this situation was the lack of certified organic processing facilities and also the low consumer demand for organic food that remained beyond consumer interest. The second issue was concerned with the actual transformative potential of the organic initiative in the Czech context. One could assume that many of the farms joining the organic scheme were motivated mainly by economic reasons, without many ties to the organic ideology, which potentially threatened the stability of the newly established organic sector. Empirical investigations produced evidence that Czech organic farmers take various approaches to organic practice and only a portion of them can be regarded as those who purposefully contribute to the shift of the agricultural regime towards a more sustainable mode (Zagata, 2009, 2010).

Regarding the size of the sector, the organic certification scheme is among the most significant alternative initiatives. The scheme represents a typical example of the extended short food supply chain (Renting et al., 2003). Development of the initiative is shaped mostly by the formal institutional framework, which made the initiative grow out of the niche. The organic sector initiative is mentioned in the overview due to the fact that it represents a starting point for other alternative initiatives. Due to the historical context, the organic sector in the Czech Republic has been designed from 'top to bottom' and the role of consumers in this initiative has been relatively small.

Farm Gate Sales

In spite of the fact that it is not possible to estimate exactly the size of this distribution channel, it can be assumed that direct sales have been developing simultaneously with other examples of the alternative initiatives. According to the figures of the Association of Private Farming, the main items distributed through direct sales

are fruit and vegetables, grains, dairy products, live animals, meat and selected processed products, such as must and dried fruits (SMA, 2011). Generally, it is estimated that this marketing model does not have a high market share. The main reason for this situation is the high concentration and specialization of the primary sector (low number of enterprises that process products on farms) and also the strict hygienic rules that require high investments from potential, direct-selling food producers.

Recently, the professional organization associating small and middle-sized farms has put a lot of effort into weakening the power of the 'hygienic-bureaucratic regime' (Marsden, 2006) in order to enable farmers to additionally process, valorize and sell their production directly. It is assumed that direct sales were also very important for the development of the organic sector in its early stages (1998–2005), when inadequately developed distribution channels for organic products made interested consumers approach farmers directly. With the growth of the organic sector, certified products started to be distributed by specialized shops and, later on (in 2007–2008), also by supermarkets. Current statistics show that about 5% of organic products is sold on farms and the vast majority – almost 70% – is already distributed by large retail chain stores (Hrabalová, 2010).

Box Schemes and Home Deliveries

Starting in 2008, a new initiative appeared in the Czech Republic that was already more based on the engagement of consumer-citizens. This initiative was again related to the organic sector. The Ministry of Agriculture published a guidebook that describes how to start up and manage a box scheme for the distribution of organic products (Vaclavik, 2008). The inclination towards organic sectors stemmed from the engagement of organic consumer groups and environmental organizations. In 2010, a new Internet portal was created to assist with creating box communities (Biospotřebitel, 2010). At that time, the official list of participating subjects included 31 organizations. It is noteworthy that almost half of these subjects (45%) were the farmers themselves, who most probably used this channel for widening their direct-marketing opportunities. The remaining proportion of organizers was represented by individual traders (25%) and informal consumer groups (25%) – called 'biokluby' (organic clubs). The enlisted groups of consumers were often related to various civic organizations, which included the support for sustainable production and consumption among their activities.

In comparison to the above-mentioned initiatives, box schemes are based on a much higher involvement of consumers and the initiative itself includes a wider range of actors. Box schemes gained a new impetus after the success of the FMs in 2010. Recently, a new interactive portal was established (<<http://www.bedyanky.cz>>, accessed 25 August 2012). The main innovation is the fact that the portal allows users not only to draw information about participating producers from prepared lists, but also to form their own new networks. These networks (groups) are called 'cooperatives' and can be established by producers as well as consumers. A detailed inspection of the currently existing groups shows that there are about 100 active cooperatives, offering more than 300 sites all over the country where food is traded. Approximately one third of these co-ops are operated by farmers and two thirds of the groups are managed by consumers. If one compares these figures with the situation in 2008 (see above), one notes that the proportion of farmers in the scheme has slightly decreased, while the activity of consumers in the scheme has increased.

New Farmers' Markets

The new FM emerged in 2010. Regarding the previous development of the alternative initiative, this was a breakthrough event. FMs were initiated and driven by the activities of civic groups (sometimes in collaboration with local public administration), whereby they put into practice their concepts of local food production and consumption. The markets gained a mass character and the original model (based on collaboration of civic groups and local farmers) was replicated in different regions all over the Czech Republic. The success of the FMs opened up a new window of opportunity for other unconventional initiatives that arose from the new concerns of consumers about food quality. The emergence of the FMs represents a unique phenomenon and it is analysed in detail as a case of the emerging transition driven by the civic participation of consumers.

Community-supported Agriculture

In 2009–2010, a free association (including approximately 50 consumers and 4 farmers) was established in an attempt to launch a project based on the work of the French AMAP movement (Valeska, 2012). The project attracted attention after 2011 and gained new momentum. Organizers of this initiative aim purposefully to promote cooperation with farmers and create a relationship that is based on a partnership. At this time, several experimental groups can be found in large cities that put into practice community-supported agriculture in Prague, Brno and also in Northern Moravia (Fiserova, 2012; Malikova, 2012). These projects are run solely by civic associations (active in the environmental movement), drawing inspiration from Western Europe (Frankova, 2012). Despite the relatively high level of attention attracted by these projects, the number of participating actors remains fairly low, which limits the transformative potential of this initiative in the Czech context.

Community Gardens/Urban Gardening

In Spring 2012, the Czech media referred to the very first urban garden project located in the centre of Prague as Prazelenina. Looking at the size and scope of this project, it is obvious that the goals are of a social and cultural nature. At approximately the same time, another project, a community garden, was launched in the semi-urban area of Prague (Kom Pot, 2012). This project is run by a civic organization that rented the land that is now offered for growing vegetables to interested members of the association. It is estimated that the selected plot of land could be used by up to 50 families. As one may realize, this initiative, which is again new in the Czech context, shifts the role of the consumer even further. The project relies not only on engaged consumers cooperating with producers, but here the consumers are at the same time those who are producing the food. The consumers are in this way becoming 'prosumers' (more by Schermer, 2011).

Emerging Transition

Origins of the Farmers' Market Initiative

The FMs emerge as a new unconventional initiative that has been driven by the civic sector. Unlike previous initiatives, FMs have increased on a massive scale. In this

way, the initiative represents a radical departure from the previous practices and it is important and interesting to explore in detail how it has emerged and why this initiative has become much more successful than the others.

The beginning of the new FMs described in this study dates back to 2009–2010. The initiative has been driven from its inception by groups of consumers. Some organizers of the new FMs already had some experience from other previous unconventional initiatives (included in the overview above), most of them came from cities without any previous direct professional relationship to agriculture. The very first new FM was organized in autumn 2009 on the outskirts of Prague; however, it was recognized only by local residents. The market was established by a pair of organizers who approached selected farmers and advertised the opening of the market to local people. Their concepts of the market were relatively strict: they only allowed the sales of vegetables and fruit produced in the Czech Republic, regional food products, Czech food of distinguished quality, quality meat products (produced without mechanically separated meat), Czech fish and Czech flowers (<http://www.ceskyfarmarskytrh.cz/pro-trhovce>, accessed 10 September 2012). The market was held in an urban district of Prague with about 2,500 inhabitants. Such a setting was, on the one hand, advantageous to the organization of the market at this early stage and, on the other hand, the market did not extend beyond its local character.

Between 2009 and 2010, civic associations increased their pressure on local authorities to establish markets in central districts of Prague. In February 2010, a new Facebook community was set up, entitled 'We want Farmers' Markets in Prague!', with the goal of establishing a FM to allow customers to 'buy fresh food directly from Czech farmers'. In March 2010, one of the large FMs was held in Prague. According to the experience of the organizers, it was very difficult at that time to find farmers to participate in the market. There was no evidence that the concept would work and success of the project was uncertain, as was mentioned by the directly involved organizers:

'Nobody knew how many people would show up, nobody knew whether people would be interested... But they [Council of the Prague District] said, "OK, we will provide some funds to give it one trial run and then we will see". But farmers did not believe it, they thought that nobody would buy [farmers' food products], they were sceptical because of the higher prices of their products and consumers who were used to going to supermarkets... They thought it would not work, so we had to cajole them... and the rental for them was free' (interview 2 – FM organizer).

Contrary to expectations, the newly set up FM was extremely popular – it was visited by 15 000 people in one day. This unique experience changed the minds of farmers and consumers, as well as of the local authorities. It became evident that the sale of food – different from the offers of the incumbent regime – has enormous potential, which opened up an opportunity for a take-off of the initiative. Shortly afterwards, new FMs at another three sites in the city centre were opened. Those markets were also organized by civic associations together with the local council. Other city districts of Prague followed suit, supporting the creation of their own FMs, which they also managed. According to one of the organizers, the feasibility study for launching FMs in Prague had already been created in 2007; however, the technological concept of the market was not able to be anchored until 2010, when organizers received

political support for the project within the framework of the political elections that were held in autumn 2010 (FM organizer 4).

From spring to autumn 2010, FMs were being established, using the original model: the key organizer of the market was either a civic association or a municipality that approached selected farmers and negotiated with them about sales. The well-promoted markets were attended by thousands of consumers. The FM concept proved its economic viability and the initiative created a technological anchorage in the regime: it was possible to buy fresh food not only in supermarkets, but also at the new FMs that had become popular. Concerning the economic size of the initiative, it was estimated that the total turnover of the FMs in 2010 was about CZK 1 billion and, in 2011, the turnover doubled (finance.cz, 2011).

FMs were at first set up in large cities and later (in the next season of 2011) also in smaller towns. In some regions, market organizers managed to set up entire networks of FMs operated by one organizer in several towns. Some pioneer organizers of the FMs shared their knowledge and selectively assisted with organizing markets in other regions (interviews 1, 2, 5). Despite the obvious competition between some organizers, a network of actors, who made the initiative visible to consumers, was gradually established. At the end of 2011, FMs of this kind existed in more than 200 towns all over the Czech Republic, with about 40 markets being located in Prague. The growth of the initiative has resulted in a range of various forms of the FM, which poses the question: What should a FM be like? More specifically: How must the market be organized in order to meet its original purpose and goal?

Established Concept of a Farmers' Market

The FMs that were established in 2010 had an organized character. This means that the markets were not created spontaneously by farmers, but were a concept created by progressive representatives of the civic sector and/or representatives of municipalities. Some organizers stated that the FM is a 'marketing brand' (interview 2), as it has its specific propositions offered to customers. The common goal of the organizers was to set up an alternative marketing channel that would enable the distribution of non-conventional food products, different from the quality provided by the industrial regime. The difference between the quality of the FM and the conventional regime was an oft-mentioned theme among FM organizers:

'Everything is shiny in the supermarket, but after 10 years, people decided that they would also like something different... they started to understand that there is no point to shopping at [retail chain stores] Tesco, Albert, Lidl' (interview 2 – FM organizer).

'We do it because we want to offer people an alternative, so they don't have to buy food only in supermarkets' (interview 5 – FM organizer).

'Food at the farmers' market must be 100% local [i.e. Czech] and cannot be available in a retail chain store... I mean supermarkets and hypermarkets' (interview 1 – FM organizer).

The organizers of the markets are key actors in the initiative, because they design the structure of the markets, create networks with producers, invite them to the markets, set quality standards and also control them, promote the events and approach customers. This fact has also been recognized from the farmers' perspective, as one of

them stated that 'it is in the hands of the organizers' (interview 14). With the boom of FMs, a discussion was sparked as to whether there should be some universal standards for the organizers. In 2011, the Ministry of Agriculture coordinated a discussion with representatives of the markets about this issue. Their discussion resulted in a set of codified rules (Codex of Farmers' Markets). The Codex explicitly articulates support for small and middle-sized farmers, repeats the definition of quality based on fresh and local food and states that the sellers on the markets should be those who produce the given food. The latter point was intended to prevent resellers, who cannot provide an authentic relationship between the food producer and consumer. The rules included in the Codex were prepared by the major representatives of the sector (including about 10 subjects), who in this created a significant institutional anchorage of the initiative. Despite the fact that all the organizers address consumers who are concerned about alternative food quality, the actual designs of the FMs in reality vary in many aspects.

The design of the markets and their structure is usually derived from the personal values of individuals or groups that are in charge of organizing the FMs. Despite the fact that these forms have not been mapped systematically to produce an exact classification of the markets, it is possible to identify qualitatively a few traits that they have in common. The vast majority of the markets aim to offer fresh food, which entails mainly seasonal vegetables and fruit produced in the Czech Republic. In this aspect the niche challenges the industrial regime, which does not cooperate with small producers. The processed food offered at markets is supposed to have an additional value in terms of quality ingredients and specialized (artisan, not industrialized) production methods. Specific definitions are applied to meat quality. Farmers are not usually required to offer meat of organic quality, but it again needs to be different from the conventional production. Therefore meat from slow-growing breeds of chickens or special cattle breeds such as Angus are on offer at markets (interview 1).

One of these aspects concerns the relationship between producer and consumer. A major innovation of the FMs is that they create an authentic relationship that does not exist within the industrial regime of production. A FM requires small producers who are able to provide quality food, different from the industrial regime. At the same time, it is assumed that consumers will have the opportunity of meeting the farmers face to face, as was pointed out by the FM organizers:

'People do not want to buy indifferent goods, the food that will just feed you. Farmers' markets give them a history, you can see the people who produced the food, and you know that in two weeks you will see them again and you can tell them whether it tasted good or not... But when you go to [retail chain store] Billa then what do you do?' (interview 5 – FM organizer).

'We have our own certification that guarantees the farmer was approved, his goods have a clear origin and I can be sure that this is not a reseller... At the same time, we keep to the rule that the vast majority of food must be Czech' (interview 4 – FM organizer).

However, a producer's work does not always allow him/her to carry out the farm work and, at the same time, to attend the markets. This creates the problematic question of how to provide consumers with authentic contact with producers. Some organizers thus allow producers not to be present at the market, as long as it is possible for them to be substituted by another knowledgeable person, despite the risk that

this practice could destroy the friendly working relationship between producer and consumer.

The gist of the innovation provided by the FMs is the alternative food quality. However, 'quality' is a contested term. Some organizers accentuate product-based quality, a wide assortment (including products from abroad) and new experiences for consumers. Promotions of these markets often include recipes for new meals and culinary specialities, because consumers 'are mostly interested in the taste of the products' (interview 2). Other FMs put more emphasis on the process-based quality of products, their origin and the impacts of their production on humans and the environment, since 'quality food does not mean that it looks good and tastes good, but it also matters how it was produced and processed' (interview 1).

The mass popularity of the FMs in the Czech Republic relies apparently on the product-based food quality or the process-based qualities different from organic methods, because a lot of consumers would be 'discouraged by organics' (interview 8), because they view them as 'terribly expensive' (interview 2) and 'did not find their way to them' (interview 4). The main emphasis is thus placed on those qualities embedded in food that are in opposition to the dominant regime. In the Czech context, this mainly includes the notion of local and fresh food products with a transparent origin, i.e. the motives that mobilized consumers in the beginning of the initiative. The interpretation of what counts as 'local' is flexible. For most organizers, 'local' means 'Czech'. This gives them enough flexibility to offer a wide range of products that are beyond the production capacities of regional producers, but still distinguish the farmers' market products from the globalized food sold in supermarkets.

Another important aspect is related to the venues of the FMs. The first markets were established in city centres. In many cases, these events helped to revive public spaces. With the growth of the initiative that occurred, there was pressure to organize markets in other venues as well. An antipode to the FMs organized in city centres became the market set up in supermarket car parks. The organizers of these markets argued that not all cities had a suitable public space in the city centre and, since it was among their goals to provide convenient purchasing to consumers, they decided to organize the markets differently (interview 5). This step away from the general point of view illustrates a symbiotic interaction between the niche and the regime. Conventional food stores in this way had a chance to profit from the niche, as well as the FM organizers who could address mainstream customers arriving to do their shopping at the supermarket. Organizers of the FMs who used this strategy functioned within the initiative as hybrid actors (engaged in the niche as well as the regime networks) and efficiently anchored the initiative in the regime structures.

The new FMs in the Czech Republic are organized by three categories of actors – NGOs, municipalities and private organizations. After the technological anchorage of the initiative and its institutionalization among Czech consumers, the concept of the FM proved its economic viability. In the most attractive areas, tough competition started about who would organize these markets. Especially in Prague, where the markets were at first established by civic organizations, some projects are currently being put under pressure by local councils who have the ambition to take over these markets. Anchoring of the initiative in the regime thus affects not only the regime structure, but also the alternative initiative itself. However, so far there is no systematic evidence whether and how markets differ among different groups of organizers and whether the original goals could in this way somehow be undermined. It is possible to hypothesize that the projects that are carried out by civic associations (that

use the FMs for the practical realization of their ideas about sustainable production and consumption) will have the greater transformative potential.

Governance Model of the Initiative and Regulatory Environment

The described initiative has been driven from its beginning by the activities of civic organizations. This holds for the markets organized in Prague in 2009 and 2010. The other FMs that were part of the boom, which began in the following season, were often organized together with municipalities. Their engagement, however, was mostly related to the selection of the site, technical aspects of the markets, hygienic conditions and financial aspects. Simply speaking, the representatives of municipalities were more concerned about the management of the public space, rather than about the food issues (interviews 8, 10).

In the second stages of development, the involvement of the public administration has increased. This holds mainly for the FMs established in towns in 2011. Many of the organizers used financial support from the revolving fund of the Ministry of Environment for their activities. According to the interviewed representative of the policymakers, the Ministry provided about CZK 10 million and, in this way, supported approximately 100 new FMs (interview 3). The number of markets in the Czech Republic has doubled. It is worth noting that the official requirements for establishing the markets were relatively loosely defined. Organizers were obliged to set up a new market without any specification about its structure, the number of farmers or products on offer. The strategic documents related to this grant scheme state that the priority of the programme is the support of a healthy lifestyle and financial assistance to the new market organizers, rather than of specific groups of farmers or specific production standards, such as organic.

Regarding the governance aspects of the initiative, it is interesting to consider the role of the farmers, who represent the third pillar next to the civic organizations and the public administration (Renting, this issue). The engagement of farmers in the initiative was conditioned by de-routinization of their practices and attitudes towards the direct marketing of food. In this way, civic organizations played a crucial role. They managed to connect 'sceptical' farmers with 'demanding' consumers and proved in practice that there is a great potential for such alternative cooperation, as was directly pointed out by a farmer, who used the opportunity to enlarge his business through product innovation and direct sales:

'They learned... I remember talking with [farmers] three years ago, who wanted to do something, or had an opportunity to start a business on farms. They kept asking what they could do... now they see that it works, they see that it is possible to produce, that it is possible to sell' (interview 14 – Farmer).

The success of the FMs has also set up important learning processes that strengthen and enlarge the niche networks. This occurs among the engaged organizers (civic organizations and municipalities) who often share their good practices and experience and learn from each other. However, an important shift in thinking has also occurred on the side of consumers after discovering that direct food marketing represents a convenient opportunity for buying food outside of the conventional regime. Consequently, farmers have started to develop new alternative marketing channels that go beyond FMs. One of the key questions about the governance of the initiative is

related to the future. The FMs established in 2009–2010 relied on the central role of civic associations. In the subsequent stages, the actorship of the initiative has become more diverse. Apart from the efforts of some municipalities to gain more control over successful FMs, one can see that the positive experience with the markets has provided a new impetus to farmers' activities and new consumer groups. These newly empowered groups contribute to the development of the new food networks, such as farmers' shops, CSA groups and new cooperatives operating box schemes.

Discussion and Conclusions

The overview of the alternative initiatives points to an increasing role of consumers in the emerging transitions of the agri-food regime in the Czech Republic. The examples of the initiatives that have emerged in the last decade show that consumers are entering into new relationships with farmers. The FMs established in 2010 brought about a radical change in the course of alternative initiatives. The emergence of FMs has been related to internal pressure of the regime on one side, and to new opportunities on the other side. The dominating industrial regime of production was not able to respond to the new demands of Czech consumers related to the turn towards quality, which resulted in a rapid development of the initiative and successful anchorage of the FM.

Development of the initiative followed patterns that were described in Western Europe about a decade ago. Holloway et al. (2000) studied FMs in the UK, which started in Bath in 1997 as the re-establishment of an old tradition that had almost vanished in the post-war era. The first FMs were also associated with a tremendous atmosphere of enthusiasm, since the markets managed to respond to an increased awareness among certain groups of consumers of new food quality aspects. According to the authors, the FM in that time created 'an alternative space which offers a challenge to the dominance of the supermarket-productivist agriculture nexus' (Holloway and Kneafsey, 2000, p. 293). In this sense, the Czech case does not produce many novel empirical findings.

What is particularly interesting in the Czech context is the role of civic organizations, which (together with other agencies such as city councils) acted as the catalyst for the development of this alternative initiative. An important role in the development of the civic food networks in the Czech Republic was played by innovators who did not come from the countryside nor were directly linked to agriculture, whereas consumer engagement produced an alternative food network that was clearly absent from the Czech Republic. The FMs draw on other initiatives that have emerged before them. A major part of the FMs' success is based on their ability to carry products that were not offered by the incumbent regime. The institutionalization of the FM was facilitated by the specific notion of food quality, which, on one hand, was sufficiently different to challenge the quality provided by conventional retailers but, on the other hand, was not too radical to fail to attract wider social groups of consumers and producers. This point is evident with regard to the ambivalent relationship of FMs with organic products.

For many actors engaged in food initiatives, organic farming provides a common framework for defining quality. This is obvious in the case of the box schemes and community-supported agriculture. In the case of the FMs the relationship is less clear. The mainstream of the FM initiative is focused on food quality, which does not necessarily correspond to certified organic production. This finding suggests that

the organic movement in the Czech Republic, due to its specific post-Socialist context, is not strong enough to exert more influence on the transition of the regime. The current FM initiative thus relies on a particular network of actors who are not necessarily proponents of the organic sector. Such an emphasis on product-based food quality, instead of the process-based qualities, however, questions the transformative potential of the initiative.

The main effect of the FM in the Czech context is the institutionalization of the practices that evidently contribute to changes in the agri-food regime, which may potentially, in the distant or near future, scale up. The FM has managed to de-routinize the practices of food producers, move the issue of food quality into public discourse and facilitate the establishment of new links between urban consumers and the countryside. Since the FM represents an emerging transition, it is not clear whether it will succeed in the long term. Increasing its role in the transition process will most likely rely on its ability to include additional definitions of food qualities and advocate them in interaction with the dominant regime.

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Motivations, Reflexivity and Food Provisioning in Alternative Food Networks: Case Studies in Two Medium-sized Towns in the Netherlands

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[Paper first received, 16 February 2012; in final form, 11 October 2012]

Abstract. Grow your own is emerging as a trendy urban activity. Becoming involved in ‘farming’ inside the city is framed in the media, on the Internet and in policy discourse as an emergent food movement. In this article we look at food provisioning practices inside cities and situate these in the literature on alternative food networks, responding to two of Treager’s main critiques. We use the concept of ‘food provisioning practices’ to overcome the critique of producer–consumer dichotomy since the concept treats people holistically as people undertaking activities. Rather than assuming that involvement in AFNs does or should represent a radical political act for any of its participants, we disentangle the multiple beliefs and motivations – including the most mundane – of the actors involved in two cases. We find that, because people are required to be actively involved in the production of their food, participants of both cases are neither only producers nor only consumers; they are both. The gardens show a ‘sliding scale of producership’. Our research also shows that, although reflexive motivations are present, many participants are unwilling to frame their involvement as political, nor do all participants see themselves as part of a movement. Hence, although personal choices may become political, we have to be careful not to ascribe attributes to participants that they themselves do not formulate. Moreover, we found that mundane motivations are important as well, and that political articulations do not predict actual involvement perfectly. This means therefore, unlike what Watts et al. argue, that reflexivity is not necessarily connected to the strength of the network.

Introduction

Grow your own is emerging as a trendy urban activity (Corrigan, 2011).¹ Allotment garden associations have been around for decades, but recently the diversity of growing activities has expanded, including community gardens, city farms, and rooftop farms. Also, the market for balcony growing cushions, soil-filled window curtains

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and vermiculture compost boxes is booming.² Growing activities inside or at the fringe of cities are collected under the heading of 'urban agriculture'. However, it is not only the urban location that is implied with the current use of this term. On a symbolic level, practices of urban agriculture are thought to communicate strategies of 'doing things differently'.³ In the media, on the Internet and in policy discourse, becoming involved in 'farming' inside the city is framed as an emergent food movement.⁴

In this article we look at urban food-growing practices and situate these within the debate on alternative food networks (AFNs). These practices function as a mirror to reflect on the nature of alternative food networks. It also helps us to respond to two of Tregear's (2011) main critiques on the AFN debate. Tregear found four deadlock arguments that cease to be productive in bringing this body of knowledge further. She argues that the AFN literature has an over-reliance on 'fuzzy concepts': key concepts are insufficiently clear and consistent. There is also a tendency to make assumptions about inherent qualities of AFNs, i.e. that local food is inherently healthier or safer. Third, there is insufficient acknowledgement of the problems of marketplace trading: buyer–seller interactions are surrounded by beneficial claims. Finally, there is a lack of consumer perspectives (Tregear, 2011). Besides these critiques Tregear notices that, although AFNs can be beneficial, they can also be problematic or adverse. There may be problems with how they interact with and impact on wider systems and economies, with how actors internal to AFNs relate to each other and, notably, with personal values and motivations of AFN actors; motivations to be involved in AFNs are not necessarily radically different from or in opposition to those associated with mainstream food systems (Tregear, 2011).

We closely studied two cases of food production within the city: a shared allotment garden and a 'harvest it yourself' garden. These cases have features similar to but also crucially different from the main body of AFNs thus far described, most notably the fact that the people that eat the food grown take part in growing it. Hence, we focus specifically on consumer perspectives, moving beyond the producer–consumer dichotomy. Moreover, we study people's motivations for being involved in 'urban agriculture', including the extent to which these are embedded in strategies of doing things differently. Our cases show that growing food within the city is not necessarily politically motivated and that political motivations do not always lead to actions.

Beyond the Producer–Consumer Dichotomy

Alternative Food Networks

To date the debate on alternative food production and consumption has focused largely on the market, where new producer–consumer relations are crafted and contested. Examples of AFNs are farmers' markets, box schemes and community-supported agriculture. Being mainly producer-oriented, a consistent criticism is that the consumer perspective has been largely neglected (Goodman and DuPuis, 2002; Winter, 2003; Holloway et al., 2007; Cox et al., 2008; Eden et al., 2008; Tregear, 2011). Even where work has been done on consumption, this often concerned 'the sign and "imaginaries" of marketing and advertising' and not on how products 'are bought and eaten' (Eden et al., 2008, pp. 1046). Indeed, the AFN literature assumes a separation between 'producer' and 'consumer', who are being reconnected in 'physical

and topological space through shorter supply chains' (Eden et al., 2008, pp. 1046). The market is assumed to be a necessary means for trading goods between producer and consumer (Tregear, 2011), so that 'food networks' cannot escape commodification (cf. Hinrichs, 2000). They operate within the rules of the market economy – not as an alternative but as a differentiation. This orientation on the producer requires the construct of 'consumer'; it presumes both a market where the producer offers their goods and an exchange value for which the consumer receives the goods.

Tregear identifies this dual construct of producer and consumer as a deadlock conceptualization:

'The term "consumer" has been applied to denote actors who are typically the recipients of outputs from food systems, as distinct from those invested occupationally in production... it may be argued that this term conveys a rather reductive view of such actors [and] in the future such actors should be researched more holistically as "people", in all their complexity, ambiguity and multiple social contexts' (2011, p. 9).

Thus, we need a different view on the producer–consumer dichotomy and a different orientation when studying food networks, also because of the constant evolution and increasing heterogeneity of AFNs. The number of networks where the distinction between consumer and producer is obscure or irrelevant is increasing, especially within cities. Therefore, rather than investigating market-based producer–consumer constructions, we follow Tregear (2011) and study people, their actions and their decisions with regard to food. We use the concept of 'food provisioning practices' as this includes all activities related to eating:

'Food provisioning is a construct that extends food choice research by examining the sociocultural and environmental context in which food consumption actually occurs... It includes a breadth of complex activities, including the acquisition, preparation, production, consumption and disposal of food, where technical skills (e.g. growing, shopping, meal planning, food preparation, cooking) and resources are tacitly coordinated by a primary food provider within the social context and demands of household members, as well as the broader environment in which they live' (McIntyre and Rondeau, 2011, pp. 117–118).

The concept of food provisioning practices enables us to overcome the producer–consumer dichotomy, as it does not confine people to either one of these categories but treats them holistically as people undertaking activities. Food growing is one such activity that people may undertake as part of their food provisioning practices. Hence, urban food-growing spaces such as neighbourhood gardens or allotments are places where the boundary between consumer and producer is vague and/or irrelevant – people can be both at the same time.

Food Growing within Cities

Urban food growing is no new phenomenon (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999; Berg et al., 2010), but for a long time productive gardens did not receive the positive attention they receive now. Until recently food production and cities were not seen as a fit spatially and mentally. Largely ignored in the industrialized West (Kortright and Wakefield, 2011), 'urban agriculture' was seen as a significant food provision-

ing activity in urban centres in the Global South (Mougeot, 2000), contributing to food security of poor households. However, while a significant activity inside these cities, it was not treated as such but rather as unsuitable for a city and was seen as the 'antithesis of modernisation' (Hampway et al., 2007, p. 557). Allotment gardens were tolerated rather than championed and neither their production aspect nor their share in food provisioning practices were taken seriously.

However, the value of food production inside cities is being reframed. 'Urban agriculture' symbolizes the mental shift towards a revaluation of the growing aspect of productive city gardens.⁵ These include newer activities as bee- and chicken-keeping and balcony gardening, as well as the exchange, networking and learning around it. Hence, the term 'urban agriculture' signals activities 'that are somehow different from the mainstream' (Tregeear, 2011, p. 5). This difference makes it worthwhile to study food-growing activities in cities as part of the debate on AFNs. However, keeping Tregeear's critique in mind, we have to prevent reifying the inherent 'goodness' as well as the inherent 'politicalness' of this new trend in its reframing process.

The concept of 'urban agriculture' knows many definitions (Moustier and Danso, 2006; Thornton et al., 2010; Hodgson et al., 2011), with differences regarding the activities it entails, what is being produced, the place where the activities occur, who is involved, and whether the activities are public or not. Moreover, the word 'agriculture' may invoke connotations to farming or producers. Not only does this implicitly bring back the producer-consumer dichotomy, it does not resonate with how urban gardeners see themselves either. Apparently, 'urban agriculture' is the next 'fuzzy concept' at the horizon. For both reasons we do not use the term 'urban agriculture' but deconstruct it by looking more closely at what happens in urban food-growing spaces, exploring urban food growing as part of people's wider food-provisioning practices. By studying two food-growing initiatives and the food-provisioning practices present, we can better grasp different degrees of involvement in AFNs, thus bridging the gap between producer and consumer. Moreover, those instances where the consumer is to some extent producer as well have received little attention in the literature so far (Kortright and Wakefield, 2011).

Personal Values and Motivations of Urban Residents

The second critical point of Tregeear's (2011) review is the way in which the AFN literature deals with personal values and motivations of actors involved. Are these really 'radically different from, or in opposition to those associated with mainstream food systems' (Tregeear, 2011, p. 423)? There is a tendency to see food production and consumption practices that can be marked 'alternative' as morally superior to 'unreflexive' practices, and as a critique of industrialized food (Guthman, 2003). If a higher morality is the assumption behind the label 'alternative', then studies are prone to be biased towards finding authenticity amongst its participants. Therefore the 'alternative' label has been questioned as problematic (Guthman, 2003; Holloway et al., 2007; Eden et al., 2008). Both consumers and producers have been prone to the critique that their practices are not necessarily representing a deeper morality beyond making a difference in the market. For instance, Hinrichs (2000) argues that farmers' markets do not challenge the commodification of food. Others have argued that the local branding of 'typical' or farm-direct products is better understood in terms of strategic niche marketing (Watts et al., 2005; Qazi and Selfa, 2005; Cox et al., 2008; Jarosz, 2008).

Instrumental economic versus more highly regarded reasons to participate can also be found in Watts et al.'s (2005) distinction between stronger and weaker forms of AFNs, which they base upon AFNs' engagement with and potential for subordination by conventional food chains. They argue that there are differences between alternative *food* networks and alternative food *networks*. In the former, the networks are 'weaker'; the use of labels to communicate the product's speciality – such as PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) or PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) designated products – is founded on the same logic of competing in markets as any other product of the food industry. Such foods then become vulnerable to subordination. Hence, Watts et al. argue that AFNs focusing on quality labelled food 'can be considered as niche market foods whose production does not challenge the current trend towards standardised and globalised food production' (2005, p. 30). Alternative food *networks* on the other hand, focus on the networks around food, minimizing their involvement with conventional food chains. They create alternative networks, either vertical or horizontal, in which trust plays an important role. This means that stronger alternatives can be built by revalorizing short food-supply chains. These are potentially alternative spatially (shorter distances and reaching food deserts), socially (traceability, personal interaction and community integration), and regarding their produce (a wider range, including little processed foods). Foremost, however, these networks operate outside the norms of capitalist evaluation since they may be run by people 'whose commitment goes beyond "making a living"' (Watts et al., 2005, p. 33).

The problem with identifying stronger and weaker alternatives is that this judgement, based on the importance of network relations over market relations, inscribes these 'stronger' networks with a high/higher morality for producers (Watts et al., 2005) and – although not mentioned in their article – their customers, on whose ability to see this deeper morality the network is founded. Tregear argues that such conceptualisation leads towards 'screening for authenticity' by researchers (2011, p. 6) and an 'either/or' situation where instrumental economic reasons and other reasons mutually exclude each other. The way out of this seems to reside in unpacking idealized ideas on what reflexivity is and the connection between reflexivity and political activism, which is often implicitly made. Reflexivity itself can degenerate into a fuzzy concept if not defined explicitly. DuPuis defines the reflexive consumer as someone who 'listens to and evaluates claims made by groups organized around a particular food issue, such as GE [genetically engineered] foods, and evaluates his or her own activities based on what he or she feels is the legitimacy of these claims' (2000, p. 289). Hence, the reflexive consumer is someone who thinks about what they buy and eat, making conscious decisions about their food behaviour. Or, in the words of Guthman, 'the reflexive consumer pays attention to how food is made' (2003, p. 46). Still, reflexivity itself may also involve 'false consciousness' – the tendency to be moved by advertisements or status purchases (DuPuis, 2000). Moreover, the fact that the reflexive consumer makes conscious choices does not mean that these are always the 'best' choices (e.g. most environmentally sound). Furthermore, the convention theory approach showed how different conventions can lead to trade-offs between green and more 'mundane' domestic conventions (Evans, 2011), indicating that reflexive behaviour is situation specific and contingent. Therefore, there are many things that the reflexive consumer is not: he or she is not necessarily a social activist, nor necessarily committed to a particular point of view or ascribing to the ideologies of social movements around food (DuPuis, 2000). This means that

even though people may have reflexive thoughts about why they make certain decisions, if they do not link these to their own political goals we cannot assume that this reflexivity is political. As Starr argues 'the meaning people are making when they make shopping (or farming) decisions *might* be political' (2010, p. 480, emphasis added), but this needs to be asked. Hence, rather than assuming that involvement in AFNs is or should represent a political act (Tregear, 2011) for any of its participants, we need to carefully disentangle the multiple beliefs and motivations of the actors involved - including the most mundane.

Methods

We used case studies to look at the motivations of people involved in urban food growing and the extent to which these can be considered political. Cases were selected by scoring a range of little-studied Dutch urban food-growing initiatives on several characteristics (i.e. participation, ownership). We selected two cases with divergent characteristics: Witte Vlieg and Bioakker. Witte Vlieg is a group of eight people who farm a plot of 2,300 m² together. Each individual works one morning per week on the plot; the produce is shared amongst each other. Bioakker is run by an entrepreneur, farming a plot of 6,000 m². Members harvest the vegetables themselves and pay for them on the Internet.

Several research methods were used to study the two cases. By combining their results, findings could be compared and tested, thus becoming more valid. Participant observations were used to understand the dynamics of the gardens and to get to know participants. From November 2010 until December 2011 both gardens were visited regularly. One of the authors spent 10 mornings working with the gardeners of Witte Vlieg. In addition she participated in the three social activities organized during the fieldwork time. Bioakker was visited seven times. Reports were made of all individual visits. Participant observation was supplemented by a questionnaire (Bioakker) and semi-structured interviews (both cases). The questionnaire was used to shed more light on the motivations of people involved in the garden and their harvesting behaviour. The semi-structured interviews made it possible to delve deeper into the findings and to unravel the various different motivations for being involved.

The members of Bioakker (144 in total)⁶ received an email with a link to an online questionnaire, preceded by an announcement of the entrepreneur. Sixty-one participants filled out the questionnaire (42%). Respondents were asked whether they could be approached for further research; 12 of those who answered positively were interviewed. However, as the entrepreneur felt that this sample did not include enough members who harvest little, he suggested two other respondents. One of these agreed, leading to a total of 14 interviews, including the entrepreneur. Eight current and two former participants of Witte Vlieg were interviewed, again including the initiator of the garden. All interviews⁷ were recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were analysed in an iterative process, reading back and forth through the material. Field-visit reports and additional documents (leaflets, websites, and emails) were screened for information about motivations and critical understandings of the industrialized food system. Table 1 gives an overview of some characteristics of the cases and the methods used to study them.

Table 1. Characteristics of the cases.

Characteristic	Witte Vlieg	Bioakker
City	Assen (± 65.000 inhabitants)	Zutphen (± 47.000 inhabitants)
Size (m ²)	2,300	6,000
Amount of members	±8	±144
Starting year	1995	2009
Farming style	Organic, manual work	Organic, vegan
Organizational system	Members pay €20 to €35 annually and agree to work in the garden one morning a week. Harvest is shared.	People become a member by paying €100. They subtract the value of their harvest from their 'account'.
Important values	Sharing of work and labour, anyone can join	Organic food for all, responsibility, trust
Questionnaire	–	61 respondents
Semi-structured interviews	8 current and 2 former participants (including initiator)	13 current participants

Witte Vlieg: Food Growing as Provisioning Activity

Witte Vlieg is a group of eight people who garden a plot of 2,300 m² together, situated on an allotment complex in the city of Assen. The garden started in 1995; only the initiator, Gary,⁸ has been part of the group since the beginning. He started the garden based on anarchist principles. In those days he was associated with a 'leftist anarchist squatting community' (personal communication).⁹ The garden was to be a production site for people on a minimum income only, like himself. Working according to 'cooperative principles', such as voluntary membership and democratic management, was the most important feature of the garden at the time – organic production methods fitted this ideology. The garden had, however, never a big appeal to people with low incomes. Therefore, soon after the start, any new member who wanted to participate could join. Nowadays people on a minimum income are hardly represented and the garden no longer targets a specific group.

For all current participants growing food is one of the weekly activities in their wider pattern of food-provisioning practices. Participants have the (informal) obligation to work in the garden either Tuesday or Saturday mornings. People stick to the schedule and only stay away occasionally, after notifying Gary, who is informally in charge. This means that acquiring their weekly supply of vegetables costs each of them half a day's time and labour – apart from the activity of shopping for additional products elsewhere. Hence, the people producing the vegetables are also the ones consuming them. With the exception of one participant, who joined the garden to meet others in an informal setting, all participants and their families eat three to five meals a week from one morning's work. Clearly, it is impossible to distinguish between producers and consumers in this case.

Gardening at Witte Vlieg is organic and almost all the work is done by hand. In theory, most participants are responsible for one of the six vegetable beds, although in practice this responsibility is little felt or acted upon. Each gardening morning the garden is evaluated, mainly by Gary. He decides what work is required and assigns tasks accordingly. Harvesting is done collectively at the end of the morning; harvested produce is laid out in heaps around an improvised coffee space. The vegetables are divided equally amongst those present, according to taste. There is no system to keep track of who takes what. People take what they like and need for

a few meals. In times of abundance people harvest more; vegetables are frozen for winter or given away.

The garden shows minimal relation to market logic. In its starting phase there was a detailed registration system for hours worked and harvest taken, but this is no longer needed. Participants pay a small annual fee to cover expenses such as seeds and tools, which is kept as low as possible. A few times per year small plants and vegetables are sold at local markets. Sometimes vegetables are sold – a local household receives a weekly food box – but excess harvest is given to a food bank as well. In some years expenses exceed income, which is registered as a loan from Gary. Currently the garden is in debt because in the last season some larger investments had to be made while income was low due to limited opportunities to sell on markets. Therefore the gardeners decided to raise the annual contribution and participants are free to give a €50 loan to the garden so that Gary is not the only one responsible. Interestingly, it was the participants themselves who brought this up; they felt uncomfortable with the situation.

Participants' Motivations

There are a few reasons why participants joined Witte Vlieg. First of all, the social component of this garden is vital (see Table 2). For all participants it is important that the gardening is carried out collectively. It is about gardening together, meeting others and relating to people from various backgrounds. Working together is more fun, and easier – work is continued when one is away and to some it is a solution for their limited knowledge about gardening. Also, most respondents mentioned that because the group is a mix of characters, the group itself is interesting as well. Second, participants like the activity of gardening. Interviews show that the garden is foremost a hobby; people like gardening as a leisure-time activity.

There are several things to be said about whether or not the motivations of the participants can be seen as reflexive. We defined reflexivity as making conscious decisions about food behaviour. There are three signs of reflexivity in the explanations people gave in the interviews. First of all, although the garden is clearly a hobby, it does fit a lifestyle in which ideas and concerns about the environment and sustainability are important. People gave evidence of environmental awareness; almost all respondents mentioned aspects of environmentally conscious behaviour, such as recycling waste or cycling.

Table 2. Why did you join the garden?

I like to work in a group	9
– More fun/social contacts	9
– Easier	4
I like the food	6
– Organic	5
– Healthy	1
I like gardening	4
I like eating food I grew myself	3
I like making an effort for my food	2
Gives me something useful to do	1

Notes: n=9; more than one answer possible.

'I have a car, of course, and I live in a house, and when I am out of petrol I go to the petrol station, but I would really like to have an electric car... I want to act decently in many aspects of my life. Keep the earth as it is... In my work, you know, paper with paper, plastic with plastic... They are little things, but...' (WV4).

'I try to do things for the environment, use the car as little as possible, everything by bike, separating my waste. And well, the energy here, we don't heat our house very much. Those are the things we do' (WV2).

The social activities that are organized occasionally reveal an orientation towards an environmentally conscious lifestyle too. For instance, members went away for the weekend to prune trees in the garden of a befriended activist leading an 'environmental information centre'. During another excursion organic farmers with close producer–consumer linkages were visited. The second point of reflexivity is that the organic produce coming from the garden is an important reason for people to join the initiative. The garden is situated in the corner of a traditional allotment complex where people have individual plots and where spraying and other conventional methods are allowed and indeed regarded as normal. (Organic production and consumption has been a small niche in the Netherlands until its recent rapid market increase; in 2010 organics accounted for only 1.7% of total sales; Ministerie van Economische Zaken, Landbouw en Innovatie, 2011.) Hence, organic gardening principles signal beliefs that divert from mainstream gardening and agriculture. Many of the participants – though not all – buy organic products in the shops as well.

'We have been going to the organic shop since I was twenty. So yes, that's our lifestyle I think, well, it has always been' (WV1).

'We started to buy more organics. That is because Albert Heijn [major supermarket] has many green brands now and it has just gotten more reasonable priced... We eat only a little meat, because we want it organic' (WV7).

Third, there is reflexivity about where food comes from and the environmental consequences of this. Participants showed a particular reluctance to buy products that are flown in from afar, relating this to the concept of food miles and seasonality.

'I have to say that I have stricter principles than my wife. I have the tendency to, well, when I see that the beans are from Ethiopia, then I think what nonsense, we won't buy them' (WV5).

'Yes, I think that vegetables determine [the meal] more because they depend on the season. I really think that, I feel that one should eat with the seasons. So that is what determines my meal... Beans from Egypt and so on, I don't think that's such a good idea' (WV8).

Hence, the participants grow food for a combination of reasons: some more mundane and personal, such as hobby and leisure time, some stemming from an environmental awareness that is expressed in activities to reduce one's own impact on the world. The question is whether these personal actions towards a reduced impact are also part of political 'acts of resistance' against the industrial food system, as Cox et al. (2008) found in their study. Political discussions were not part of the working days and problems in the food system were not debated generally; even when visiting organic farms these issues did not come up. Moreover, although peo-

ple spoke negatively and worriedly about the industrial food system when asked in interviews, they were reluctant to state that they are part of any countermovement:

'It is just a little against the current... I do not think like a movement, you know, but I think it is good to make the point'

'You do not see it as a movement?'

'No. No, I do not feel that' (WV5).

The participants of Witte Vlieg joined the garden because it fits their beliefs about what is a good thing to do. Motivations are part of reflexive lifestyles but also firmly rooted in searching social and leisure time. This is interesting particularly since the garden started from anarchist principles. According to Gary, and one of the participants who used to be a member of the anarchist community, those principles are still valid:

'It is still something that fits my anarchist ideas. By the way, I do not consider Witte Vlieg a pure anarchist project, just something that, as a supporter of anarchism, it is just logical that you would join' (WV5).

However, when asked in private, the other gardeners involved do not subscribe to or recognize these principles, nor are these ideas debated at all during working days. It is interesting to see that despite its anarchist starting principles, both individual political motivations and collective political identities are hardly articulated in this garden.

Bioakker: Food Harvesting as Provisioning Activity

Bioakker is an organic 'harvest it yourself' garden of 6,000 m² in Zutphen. The garden is run by John, an entrepreneur. John does not live on a farm in the traditional sense of the word; he is an urban resident farming three plots in Zutphen and nearby towns, of which Bioakker is one. John uses the other plots to produce organic vegetables that he sells on the local market twice a week. One of John's main goals is to make organic vegetables available and affordable to everyone. The garden's vegetables are therefore relatively cheap – at approximately half the price that John sells them for on the market. Bioakker is organic and vegan: John does not use any manure on his lands. He feels that plant seeds contain everything a plant needs and that using manure is inefficient as cows take the most valuable parts from the plants they eat. Moreover, manure contains antibiotics and bacteria that are not good for people's health, and he feels that keeping cattle goes against animal welfare and nature itself. Manure is therefore 'one of the most traditional fairy tales from the history of agriculture' (personal communication).

There is a certain market logic to Bioakker. People become a member of the garden by paying an initial amount of €100. They can then harvest anytime they want and choose from whatever is being grown. Members pay for their harvest by subtracting the value of what they have taken from their initial payment. Product prices are published on the website. Leftovers of the market are also sold at the garden, but then members determine their own price. Nevertheless, Bioakker is far from a 'normal' market initiative. First of all, there is no control over whether members pay for everything harvested; the system relies heavily on trust. Second, Bioakker is not a general market initiative for John either. Although it is part of how he makes his living, it is not merely a strategy to market his produce. John is led by strong ideal-

istic motivations, wanting to give everyone, also those with limited resources, the opportunity to eat organically. He even gave some people a free membership; they can harvest produce without paying for it.

Members of Bioakker are invited to help with the work in the garden, on a voluntary basis. Most members do not volunteer, or do so in very limited way (see Table 3). This implies that the consumers of the food grown at Bioakker are not the same people as the producers of that food, as was the case at Witte Vlieg. John is the main producer, as he is responsible for all the work in the garden; he plans the vegetables to be grown, plants, weeds and waters. He organizes social activities and is the contact person when someone else wants to organize an event. He sends emails to all members about what is ready to be harvested and is available for questions. Finally, the fact that members pay him for the vegetables they harvest enhances his producer status, even if the payments are made out of sight (on the Internet). This does not mean that there is a producer–consumer distinction in the traditional sense of the word. Although members do not maintain the garden, they are engaged in food production; they harvest the vegetables themselves. Harvesting involves making an effort as it requires visiting the garden, looking for the vegetables, deciding what is good to harvest, digging the soil or picking the produce from plants, maybe getting dirty if it has been raining. Making people harvest their own produce is a conscious strategy of John’s; he aims not only to make organic food available, but also to encourage people to take responsibility.

Bioakker plays various roles and has different degrees of importance in people’s food-provisioning practices. There are large differences between people regarding the number of times they harvest (see Table 4) and thus the amount of vegetables they eat from the garden. Most members also get vegetables from John’s market stall, in organic shops or from the supermarket. Hence, the degree to which Bioakker is part of people’s food provisioning strategies differs between members.

Participants’ Motivations

We found that there are roughly two to three reasons why people decided to join Bioakker (see Table 5). The first is that they enjoy the vegetables; people feel that

Table 3. Different volunteering behaviour.

Amount of times people volunteer	Respondents in questionnaire (%)
Several times a month	3%
Once a month	5%
Occasionally	30%
Never	60%

Note: n=61.

Table 4. Different harvesting behaviour.

Amount of times people harvest	Respondents in questionnaire (%)
Once a week or more	47%
Two to three times a month	23%
Once a month	11%
Less than once a month or never	18%

Notes: n=61; important to mention here is that according to John, there are far more people that do not harvest regularly than our figures show. It is possible that this is due to people harvesting less not filling out our questionnaire.

Table 5. Why did you join Bioakker?

Organic food is better for the environment	38
I like the initiative	36
It is nice to harvest one's own food	25
I want to support a sustainable project	22
The food is cheaper than in the supermarket	15
The products are more healthy	14
Other reasons	29

Notes: n=61; more than one answer possible; answers suggested; other reasons include, amongst others, good way to show children about food growing; nice to help in the garden; gain knowledge on gardening; garden offers different products than supermarket.

organic food is better for the environment (38 respondents) and more healthy (14 respondents), and that the food is cheaper (15 respondents). The second reason for people to join is that they 'like the initiative' (36 respondents) and they 'want to support a sustainable project' (22 respondents). Respondents feel sympathy towards the project and want to contribute to it. They like John, appreciate his courage and ideals, and want to support him in making the project work:

'He told me about the initiative. He also organized an information evening, and I thought that was so nice. Especially the fact that he was going to do that with so much faith, and the whole system is so much based on trust. You can just go there, take what you want, weigh it at home and pay over the Internet. I think that's special, that someone has the courage to do this with so much faith. So that was the most important reason, that I like him and I thought, that's really nice' (BA4).

A third reason for people to become a member is that they like harvesting; the hobby aspect is important here too. The next question is what these motivations reveal about the extent to which members' motivations can be seen as reflexive, as conscious decisions about food behaviour. We recognize similar signs of reflexivity as in Witte Vlieg. First, although the garden is also a hobby, being a member fits a particular lifestyle. A certain commitment to sustainability can be recognized; people use a bicycle, recycle waste and try to save energy.

'I have always been somewhat environmentally conscious. When I was 21, I was ringing doorbells with leaflets on environmentally conscious house-keeping. I was a member of Milieudefensie [Friends of the Earth Netherlands]' (BA5).

'We do not use the car that much. We don't do that. We do many things by bicycle, to the annoyance of our children because sometimes they say "mum, do we have to take the bike again?" Yes, you have to... Furthermore, I use organic cleaning agents as much as possible. All the time, actually' (BA9).

Second, an important reason for people to become a member is because the food is organic. All respondents buy organic food products, either at the market (at John's and other stalls) or in the supermarket or health shop. As we stated before, buying organic signals beliefs that divert from mainstream gardening and agriculture.¹⁰ Some respondents find it also important that John doesn't use animal manure.

'I think the way he practices agriculture is very special and I can learn a lot from it. Because he doesn't use any manure and he says give to the earth and take from the earth. You know, what is left we dig it under and that just results in good things. I think that is very inspiring' (BA2).

A third testimony of reflexivity is people's concern with where the food they buy comes from. They are conscious about food miles, prefer to eat local and seasonal food and are well informed about the trade-offs in certain aspects of sustainability.

'You eat what is there and you do not think I want Egyptian beans today and so I go to the shop and look for Egyptian beans. And they are from Egypt and they take longer and they have a different... No. You eat what the season gives you, which in fact, that's how nature meant it to be. Those are the things that are good at that moment' (BA2).

'I think it is just insane when something is grown here, that I would buy it from North Groningen [part of the Netherlands]. Then I think that makes no sense. Or you hear that cattle go from here to Spain and are being slaughtered there... So I think it is important that people are a bit more conscious about what they are doing with the earth, with the environment, I think it is important to think about that together and to be a bit conscious about that. What kind of mess are you making of the earth? Can my grandchild also enjoy the earth in thirty years' time?' (BA4).

Hence, being involved in food growing by harvesting food is done for mundane and personal reasons, on the one hand, and environmental awareness, on the other. The respondents have negative feelings about the conventional food system and try to make a contribution to 'a better world'.

'It is something that I can do, in my own little circle. There is a lot in the world that I think could be better, but I do not have control over that. This I do control, in some way' (BA1).

'I think that by your own behaviour, by what you do, by your own acts, that's where it starts. So you can also be an example, or make a statement. In the past I may have pointed the finger and this and that and you have to this and that. Now I feel okay, I am just doing positive things myself, with my own behaviour. I can speak about it enthusiastically and then people have to make their own choices' (BA6).

Participants are thus making individual decisions to support 'a good cause'. For part of the participants, however, supporting a good cause is similar to donating money to NGOs; taking part in Bioakker is for some members not connected to going to the garden to harvest. These members feel that they are doing something good by supporting the garden financially, but do not translate this into their food-provisioning practices. Many of them know John personally and want to support him in his ideals. Although that sounds promising, this is actually problematic as it undermines the idea of the garden. John has to make sure that there is always enough produce to be harvested; when people do not harvest regularly, the vegetables waste in the field. John can partly overcome this problem by selling at the market, but members that do not use their payment also leave him in debt with them. Members are not always aware of this problem. Consider the answer from the interviewee who did not harvest regularly when asked whether she felt part of a countermovement:

'I rather feel that I support John, because he is an idealist and gets things done' (BA13).

An informal conversation with another member who did not participate in the harvest showed the same reasoning. He felt that he had contributed his share – financially. However, as Bioakker is not a charity but a garden that requires people to be actively engaged in the production of their food, it is not enough. The garden only functions if people take their contribution further and make the effort to harvest; the system only works if people treat it as the non-conventional system it is:

'You can be nice and sweet to your clients, to people that are positive towards you, but in the end this can cost you your business. John should make that clearer to the members. For me it's not a problem if he would say "you have to spend your €100 within a year, if you can't, you lose it" ... He should encourage people to harvest more, you know, I have to go harvesting or I lose my money. This way he cannot keep it up' (BA6).

Interestingly, this failure to commit to the harvesting system seems to be connected to the hobby aspect we mentioned earlier. We found that 38% of all questionnaire respondents like harvesting, while only 17% of the people that 'know John very well' like harvesting. Many people in this last group do not harvest regularly. Hence, there is a group of people that became a member because they know John, but as they do not like harvesting they find it hard to live up to their membership.

Like John, some members are involved in the local exchange trading system or the local transition towns division. These can be seen as expressions of social movements supporting an alternative lifestyle. Although not necessarily involving food, the initiatives claim to build or be involved in an alternative economy or society, referring to particular alternative ideologies such as local resilience. However, while there is a small group of participants that know each other through these networks, Bioakker itself hardly mobilizes people beyond vegetables. Harvesting does usually not result in meeting others and no meetings are organized to discuss or run the garden.

Discussion and Conclusions

Beyond the Producer–Consumer Dichotomy

Participants of both cases are required to be (more or less) actively involved in the production of their food. They are therefore neither only producers nor only consumers; they are both at the same time. Even in the case of Bioakker, where an entrepreneur runs the garden, he can be seen as facilitator rather than as sole producer of the garden. It is therefore not useful to draw a clear cut between producers and consumers, rather, there seems to be a 'sliding scale of producership'. We saw that participants of Witte Vlieg are more involved in food production than members of Bioakker. Even in the latter case, however, people have variant producing roles: some members harvest regularly and help out as volunteers, others harvest occasionally and are not involved in other ways. In that sense Bioakker is similar to a CSA farm, where the person picking up their weekly food basket is involved differently than someone who spends two mornings a week packing boxes. Hence, the debate in the AFN literature on producer or consumer bias needs to move beyond these catego-

ries, as 'producer' and 'consumer' are no straightforward terms in any case. Furthermore, these categories link to concepts such as 'market' and 'economic exchange', whereas much of the AFN literature is about aspects beyond the instrumental economic logic of buying and selling. Implicitly, the categories of 'producer' and 'consumer' lock us into this economic logic, indicating that judgments of 'good' and 'better' involve everything beyond pure economic instrumentality (beyond making a living, as argued by Watts et al., 2005). Witte Vlieg showed that the economic logic is not necessarily present in food growing. There is an economic system around Bioakker, but this does not relate to why some people harvest and others do not.

With current developments of citizens organizing themselves in solidarity purchasing groups all over Europe, the term food provisioning can be used to analyse the meaning of the various activities that these networks undertake and that are not making sense from the producer–consumer dichotomy point of view. For the future, it would be useful to study different ways of food provisioning, with which we have made a start in this article. Using and further elaborating on the concept of food provisioning is a useful starting point to tackle Tregear's critique on the producer–consumer dichotomy in the AFN literature.

Participants' Motivations

A second point that Tregear (2011) recognized as being problematic in the AFN literature is the limited knowledge about personal values and motivations of the people involved in AFNs. This includes knowledge about the extent to which these motivations are embedded in strategies of doing things differently, in reference both to ideas on political consumerism (Micheletti, 2003; Sefang, 2006) and to food movements (Hassanein, 2003; Johnston et al., 2009). Our research shows that reflexive motivations – mainly environmental – are indeed present. Respondents are involved in the gardens as part of a wider set of choices to contribute to a 'better world'. The gardens fit their belief systems of what is right to do, and in that sense being involved in it is a moral choice. However, this involvement can be seen as a private activity. Considering this, being part of the garden is no political statement, it is a personal decision to make a small change. Such decisions can be seen as 'everyday acts of resistance', as described in the anarchist literature. Conscious differentiation towards what is seen as 'mainstream' is integrated in everyday life, thereby changing society (Pickerill and Chatterton, 2006; Gordon, 2007). Even though this may seem to fit easily with theories on political consumerism, where personal choices become political, we have to be careful not to ascribe attributes to participants that they themselves do not formulate. We found that participants are not willing or at least very reluctant to frame their practices as political. Similarly, people were reluctant to frame their behaviour in terms of 'a countermovement'. There is a difference between the two gardens in this respect, however. Respondents of Witte Vlieg did not recognize themselves as part of a countermovement at all; at Bioakker the situation is more diverse as part of the participants were involved in alternative economy movements. However, while environmental reflexivity was articulated more strongly in political terms at Bioakker, members did not always manage to act upon their concerns.

This brings us to our next point: besides our conclusion that reflexive motivations are present – but that only a small number of participants frames these *politically* – the cases also reveal that being motivated to contribute to 'a better world' is not enough to be actively involved in the gardens. Hence, people's motivations are not

only and consistently about doing things differently. We found that in both cases simply enjoying gardening – or harvesting – is an important condition for successful involvement. For the participants of Witte Vlieg the pleasure of gardening is the most important reason to be involved. Also, members of Bioakker who did not enjoy harvesting had more difficulty visiting the garden regularly than members who did enjoy it. We conclude, therefore, that there are various motivations present at the same time, which are difficult to disentangle, and that political articulation is not necessarily connected to the success of an initiative. People may be politically motivated but not act upon it. People may join an initiative for hobby reasons with little reflexive thoughts. Practical motivations play a role too. Is there enough time to cycle to the garden? Will it rain today? (On the competing demands of day-to-day living, see Evans, 2011.) This is something that needs further study. What is clear is that motivations are complex, and that they need careful unpacking in order to fully understand them.

As public attention for ‘urban agriculture’ is rising, it is useful to deconstruct the initiatives of growing food in the city, in order to understand what these new phenomena are about. In contrast to most AFN cases so far, the initiatives of growing food in cities often have a different involvement with the market economy compared to farmers’ markets or other short supply chains. Since our entire society seems to be entrenched in the market economy nowadays, the absence of the market logic in these initiatives leads to perceptions of such spaces being (politically motivated) alternatives. But again, caution is needed. Witte Vlieg is being maintained by all participants equally without the use of a payment system, and the food producing commitment of the participants is strong – much stronger than that of the participants of Bioakker. However, in the way it is framed by some participants, Bioakker is more clearly a form of resistance. Respondents framed their involvement more strongly as acts of everyday resistance than participants of Witte Vlieg, and John is more overt in his statements than Gary. This means that while producers and consumers are being criticized about not necessarily representing a deeper morality, the opposite is also true: those that do represent this deeper morality do not always get to the action (of harvesting in this case), even when their reasons to be involved (in Bioakker) are articulated politically.

Less market involvement resonates with the findings of Watts et al. (2005) on food networks. We argue, however, that the ‘network’ is much more pragmatic than suggested by their analysis. Watts et al.’s distinction in weak and strong AFNs suggests that strong networks are in some way more reflexive, because they resist incorporation into the conventional food system. This is not in line with our findings; reflexivity is only one of the reasons for people to be involved, and may be stronger for some participants than for others. We explained that people have more mundane reasons to join these gardens as well, which is in fact an important driver behind these networks. Hence, even when reflexivity is present, political articulation of these reflexive motivations is not straightforward nor necessarily connected to the strength of the network. Therefore, we should be careful with the analytical category of ‘political consumer’.

Incorporating urban food-growing initiatives within the AFN literature broadens our vision on AFNs and what they are. The presented initiatives bridge the gap between producer and consumer and give more insights in participants’ motivations. That way we can make a start with tackling Tregear’s deadlock arguments, taking the literature further.

Notes

1. See <<http://farmingthecity.net>>, <<http://cityfarmer.org>> and similar websites.
2. <http://realitytimes.com/rtpages/20110805_rooftop.htm>, <http://www3.telus.net/public/a6a47567/roofgarden_thesis.pdf>.
3. In June 2011, *VNGMagazine* (a magazine for Dutch municipalities) writes: 'Eetbaar Rotterdam, Food and the City, Foodscape Schilderswijk: new-style allotment garden conquers the city using funky names. "Stadslandbouw", or urban agriculture because the mania started in the US, is not only seen as an alternative for "green to watch", but also as a way to counter the alienation from food, for social cohesion and many other things', <<http://www.vngmagazine.nl/archief/2576/stadslandbouw-nieuwe-rage-waait-over-uit-verenigde-staten>>. In August 2011, *Binnenlandsbestuur* (Internal Affairs) writes: 'A harvest-your-own garden in the urban park, allotments in the public gardens. More and more municipalities make space for "urban agriculture", the production of vegetables and fruit in allotments, parks and backyards for consumption by inhabitants', <<http://www.binnenlandsbestuur.nl/ruimte-en-milieu/nieuws/nieuws/nieuwe-trend-in-openbaar-groen-stadslandbouw.1638603.lynkx>>.
4. See contributions in the *New York Times* <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/10/magazine/10FOB-WWLN-t.html>>, and the *Huffingtonpost* <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marcus-samuels/son/how-food-politics-can-aff_b_1165169.html>. The search engine for newspapers Lexus Nexus delivers 316 entries for 'stadslandbouw' (urban agriculture), of which 182 in 2011.
5. See notes 3 and 4.
6. All the members at the time of the survey, except for 2 members with unknown email addresses.
7. Except for one; this respondent did not want the interview to be recorded. Notes were made instead.
8. All names have been changed.
9. All quotes from the case studies – emails, interviews, texts from websites – are our own translations.
10. Zutphen is a rather alternative and anthroposophical town, where many people buy organic; organic shops are more numerous than in other towns of this size.

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The Civic and Social Dimensions of Food Production and Distribution in Alternative Food Networks in France and Southern Brazil

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[Paper first received, 7 September 2012; in final form, 22 October 2012]

Abstract. This article offers comparative insight into alternative food networks, based on French and Brazilian case studies. Looking at a series of initiatives, such as producer–consumer networks (Ecovida in Southern Brazil, AMAP in France), collective producer shops, farmers’ markets, and school provisioning schemes, we analyse the modes of coordination and decision-making that are articulated and the roles of the different actors involved. We show that the growing role of consumers and producers in these food networks, not only as individuals but also as citizens often involved in civil society organizations, can directly influence changes in public policy and the forms of agriculture practised, thereby leading to a better integration of the civic and social dimensions of food production and distribution. In both countries alternative food networks have strongly contributed to the legitimization of agro-ecology, although this is framed significantly by national specificities surrounding the institutionalization of ecological agriculture. In France this process focuses on organic agriculture, while it is more diverse in Brazil. Finally, we show that civic food networks’ influence on public policy partly relies on the alliances these networks are able to develop amongst themselves and with more institutional actors. We conclude with a discussion about food democracy.

Introduction

In the social sciences, alternative food networks have given rise to a growing literature in which countries of the South are still under-represented, despite historical evidence of such initiatives over many decades. In Brazil since the early 1980s, ‘family farmers’ have developed marketing systems, often with the support of religious and civil organizations, agricultural extension agents and NGOs, linking producers and consumers, based on principles of trust and equity (Brandenburg, 2002). In 2010, these alternative food networks (farmers’ markets, box schemes or direct delivery systems) channeled half of the certified organic production within the Bra-

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zilian domestic market (Blanc and Kledal, 2012). In France, some forms of direct sales have been maintained over time, such as open markets and roadside stalls, despite a sharp increase in the market share for food by supermarkets (75%). Meanwhile, in the wake of growing concern about food provenance and modes of production, partly induced by various food safety crises in the 1990s, other types of food networks have developed, such as box schemes run by producers and consumers, collective producer shops, and farmers' markets. As in Brazil, even though they are not restricted to organic products and farmers, these alternative food networks now channel a significant share of organic production, of which 'only' about 45% is sold through supermarkets against the 75% mentioned above regarding food in general (Agence Bio, 2010).

In both countries, one of the specificities of these 'new' or developing alternative food networks is that most of them directly involve producers, consumers and sometimes other actors, whereas more 'conventional'¹ food chains are dominated generally by downstream economic actors (wholesalers, processors, retailers). Therefore, not only do these alternative food networks establish direct links between producers and consumers, in contrast with the distance that characterizes the 'conventional' food system, they may also facilitate the redistribution of power across the food chain.

This is one of the main issues addressed by a large part of the English-speaking literature so far: apart from the changes they allow on a local scale and through direct interactions between producers and consumers, how can these alternative food networks (AFNs) induce structural change on a larger scale (Goodman and Watts, 1997; Allen et al., 2003; Dupuis and Goodman, 2005; Feagan, 2007)? These authors have also highlighted AFNs' limits in overcoming social inequalities among farmers and consumers or between them. More recently, some analysts have suggested moving past the notion of *alternative* food networks, defined by their opposition to mainstream criteria, regulations and values, and are proposing instead the concept of *civic* food networks (Renting et al., this issue). This notion, and others such as 'food democracy' (Hassanein, 2003; Wilkins, 2005) or 'civic agriculture' (Lyson, 2004), highlights the crucial role of civil society. The diversity of work within the English-speaking literature also reflects the diversity of theoretical angles adopted to investigate these issues: political economy, ecological modernization, actor-network theory, and transition theories (Lockie and Kitto, 2000; Ploeg et al., 2000; also for a review, see Deverre and Lamine, 2010).

In France, part of the literature devoted to alternative food networks has studied their impact on farmers' and consumers' economic and social well-being. More specifically, it has considered the way these networks address both producers' and consumers' uncertainties (Lamine, 2005), as well as the links they develop not only between producers and consumers but also among producers (Chiffolleau, 2009). The possibility of structural change on a wider scale has also been investigated, through the analysis of the ways in which alternative food movements use consumption to make citizens more active in the negotiation of economic regulation. This is orchestrated through consumer education, through engagement in forms of trade that offer alternatives to the conventional market and, finally, through mobilization in protest campaigns (Dubuisson-Quellier et al., 2011). It has also been demonstrated that at the local level of 'territorial agri-food systems,'² the broader ecologization of agri-food practices requires an exploration of the possible complementarities of alternative and conventional systems (Lamine et al., 2012). Finally, other authors have

considered how AFNs might constitute a means for civil society to influence public policy through different modes of action (Cardona, 2012), some of which we also identify in our case studies.

In Brazil, social movements opposing agricultural intensification and modernization have been described as playing a major role in the initial phase of the development of organic and agro-ecological agriculture (Brandenburg, 2002). Recently, AFNs have mainly been studied in association with the notions of food sovereignty and food security, two concepts that emerged against the backdrop of a food crisis from 2008 onwards. The notion of food sovereignty involves the right to food and the autonomy of social actors in their strategies and politics of production, distribution and consumption, respecting cultural diversity and emphasizing the importance of family (or peasant) farming (Maluf, 2004; Ploeg, 2008; Wilkinson, 2008; Rosset and Martinez-Torres, 2012).

In this article, we analyse the consequences of the growing role of consumers and producers in these food networks not only as individuals, but also as citizens often involved in civil society organizations. How does this influence 'the' broader agri-food system? Does it lead to a better integration of the civic and social dimensions of food production and distribution?

In the first section, we present a series of Brazilian and French initiatives such as producer–consumer networks (Ecovida in Southern Brazil, AMAPs in France), collective producer shops, farmers' markets, and school provisioning schemes, and explain why and to what extent we can consider them as not only *alternative* but also *civic* food networks.

In the second section, we analyse the modes of coordination and decision-making articulated, and the roles of the different actors involved.

In the third section, we investigate how these civic food networks influence public policy at different levels and show that this influence partly relies on the alliances that these food networks are able to develop among themselves and with more institutional actors. Finally, we conclude with a discussion about food democracy.

Case Studies

In each country, four main types of initiative have been taken into consideration: producer–consumer networks, collective producer shops, farmers' markets, and school provisioning schemes. We chose them from a range of diverse initiatives in the regions under study in such a way as to provide a contrast and insight into this diversity.

The data we gathered over a 10-year period during previous research projects on these different initiatives in the South of France (Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur and Rhône Alpes regions) and Southern Brazil (Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina and Parana states) consist of qualitative interviews and direct observation as well as the documentation that had been issued by these networks since their emergence. Based on these data, we studied the characteristics and trajectories of these initiatives (see Table 1), as well as the modes of coordination they use (see the next section). In both countries, these AFNs emerged or developed in a context of institutionalization of organic agriculture and differentiation within this sector (Bellon et al., 2011). Therefore, we specify in Table 1 whether they involve only organic producers or 'family farmers' or 'peasants' as well.

Table 1. Main characteristics of the four types of initiatives.

	Short description	Date of emergence	Initiators	Number of producers and consumers involved	References
Farmers' markets	France Weekly farmers' market in Marseille and Aubenas <i>Organic farmers (Aubenas) and/or 'peasants' (Marseille)</i>	2002 and 2010	Partnership between the farmers and the municipality through Confédération paysanne (farmers' union) in Marseille	Marseille: about 30 Aubenas: about 10	Lamine, 2012
	Brazil Weekly farmers' market in Curitiba-Paraná <i>Organic and family farms</i>	1995	Partnership between the AOPA (Organic Producers Association of Paraná) and the municipality of Curitiba + with ACOPA (Organic Consumers Association) from 2000 on	Curitiba: about 45 producers, 3 farmers' markets About 1500 consumers/week	IPARDES/IAPAR, 2007; < http://www.eco-vida.org.br >
Collective producer shops	France Producer-run shop La Musette, Aubenas Compulsory presence e.g., ½ day per week <i>Organic farmers and/or 'peasants'</i>	1997	Producers with a teacher in an alternative agricultural training programme		Lamine, 2012; < http://www.terredenvies.fr >
	Brazil Consumer cooperatives (Rio Grande Sul) <i>Organic and family farms</i>	1999	Consumers and producers	Producers (30) Consumers (200/cooperative)	Souza, 2008
Box schemes	France AMAP CSA type box scheme <i>Organic farmers (with a recent trend towards agro-ecology)</i>	2001	Consumers, sometimes producers	About 300 in PACA + Rhône Alpes regions About 30 families and 3–10 producers in each	Lamine, 2005; < http://miramap.org >
	Brazil Isolated initiatives spurred by individual producers, producer or consumer organizations, and private businesses	2000	Producers	About 20 producers, 400 consumers (Curitiba-Paraná)	IPARDES/IAPAR, 2007

The comparative analysis was performed as part of the Franco-Brazilian research project AEFB (Agro-Ecology in France and Brazil) aimed at studying the trajectories of agro-ecology. During a post-doctoral stay, 20 interviews with key French actors involved in alternative food networks were held by the Brazilian researchers, which

Table 1 (continued)

	Short description	Date of emergence	Initiators	Number of producers and consumers involved	References
School provisioning	Producer meetings organized by a local canteen in order to plan production and deliveries	2008	School central kitchen	About 10 producers, approximately 3,800 pupils in Aubenas	Lamine, 2012
France	<i>Organic and local farmers</i>				
Brazil	PNAE – (National School Feeding Programme): 30% of the budget for food bought directly from <i>family farmers</i> Food Acquisition Programme (PAA) <i>Family farming</i>	2009/2003	Ministry of Social Development (MDS) and Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA)	6 million students in Southern Brazil (potential) 30 000 family farmers in Southern Brazil (deliveries for PAA and PNAE)	Souza and Chmielewska, 2011

afforded us a symmetrical point of view. These interviews were analysed by the three authors together.³

In France, the four types of initiative are led by different networks, even though we will see later that these networks form alliances to support a broader 'alternative system', whereas in Brazil they were initiated by a large network, Ecovida.

Ecovida emerged in 1998 as a network of organizations, farmers and consumers involved in ecological agriculture in Southern Brazil. The basic unit of the Ecovida Network is the 'nucleos', i.e. a group of ecological family farmers (either formally or informally organized), consumer cooperatives and organizations, NGOs, small processors and ecological product retailers (farm shops, farmers' markets, box schemes), as well as advisors and institutions involved in agro-ecology.

In Southern Brazil (Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina and Parana states), the Ecovida Network is composed of 23 regional 'nucleos', counting 300 farmers' groups (nearly 3,500 families), 170 municipalities, 145 local markets, 30 NGOs, 10 consumer organizations and 24 rural institutions (Perez-Cassarino, 2012). The network functions with defined principles and aims to generally strengthen agro-ecology; to generate and share information with its participants; to support legal mechanisms of credibility; and to create proper mechanisms of guarantee (Santos and Fonseca, 2004).

In France, open air *markets* have always existed in large and small towns alike, and have remained an important outlet for local fresh products, as well as a significant social tradition in local communities. Over time, they began to involve fewer producers and more retailers, fewer local products and more processed and/or non-local ones. More recently, different alternative farmers' organizations (both organic and not) have started to launch farmers' markets where generally only farmers can sell their products and where traceability as well as direct links are enhanced (Chiffoleau, 2009). The two weekly markets we refer to here are of very different significance: the first one takes place in a city of 850 000 inhabitants, Marseille, and

involves around 30 producers, both organic and not, while the second one counts about 10 producers and is a much smaller organic market in the small town of Aubenas (13 000 inhabitants).

In Southern Brazil, the ecological markets (*feiras ecológicas*) are weekly markets where family farmers sell their own products. Three kinds of market have been identified according to the mode of production and forms of certification involved: ecological markets with only certified producers, ecological markets with only agro-ecological farmers, part of whom are certified, and finally mixed markets with both ecological and conventional farmers.

The certified ecological markets are located in big cities like Curitiba (1.7 million inhabitants), where a large number of 'conscious' consumers can be found. However, from 2005 onwards, most of the producers shifted from third party certification towards participatory guarantee systems. In middle-sized cities (100 000–500 000 inhabitants) we found more mixed markets whereas smaller towns (fewer than 100 000 inhabitants) had more ecological markets with agro-ecological farmers who are not necessarily certified. This distribution suggests that in small towns the ties between producers and consumers are stronger, which reduces the need for certification.

The second type of initiative that we considered in both countries is *collective farm or consumer shops*. In the French Rhône-Alpes region, the first collective farm shops (Points de Vente Collectifs) emerged in the late 1970s, and today there are 56 of them. Farmers run these shops collectively: they bring in their products, they have to be present for about half a day every week (or every two weeks, depending on the number of producers), which affords them direct contact with customers, and a percentage of their sales goes towards collective costs (the shop itself, sometimes an employee, etc.). The shop we studied was created in the late 1990s by a few farmers and a local agricultural school teacher. Most of the initial farmers were neo-rural, even though there is now greater diversity in the social origin of the farmers involved (Lamine, 2012).

In Southern Brazil, similar initiatives were launched by ecological consumer cooperatives made up of producer and consumer organizations with strong support from religious and ecological social movements. The two cooperatives we studied, Coopet (Cooperativa dos Consumidores de Produtos Ecológicos de Três Cachoeiras) and Ecotorres (Cooperativa de Consumidores de Produtos Ecológicos de Torres), were created in 1999 in Rio Grande do Sul. Consumer members have to make a financial contribution in order to cover organizational costs (and receive a 10% discount on their purchases) and are expected to participate in their respective cooperative meetings. The shops display more than 100 ecological products from ecological farmers' groups (nearly 30 producers; see Souza, 2008). The products have to respect seasonality and most are certified through the Ecovida participative guarantee system and follow the principles of agro-ecology (see next section).

The third type of initiative we studied is *box schemes*. In both countries, box schemes have been developed for several decades by various food chain actors (cooperatives, wholesalers, Internet sellers) or by social organizations working towards social integration. In France, we studied a specific box scheme network, the Associations pour le Maintien d'une Agriculture Paysanne (AMAP), quite similar to the US community-supported agriculture model. It was started in the early 2000s and by 2012 comprised about 1,600 local consumer groups (roughly 270 000 consumers). These consumers enter into medium-term contracts (often 6 months) with one or more producers who undertake to supply them with a weekly box of fresh organic

farm produce. The aim of this reciprocal commitment is to ensure the viability of the farms concerned, and to establish an equitable relationship between producers and consumers. Consumers also commit to taking responsibility for certain tasks such as weekly deliveries. In other work, we have shown how this system allowed for a potential negotiation of the marketing as well as production systems, within certain limits of course (Lamine, 2005).

In Southern Brazil, box schemes (*cestas*) are mostly isolated initiatives taken by individual producers, producer or consumer organizations, and private businesses (through the Internet). There is a wide diversity of box schemes and most of them, in contrast with AMAPs in France, are home delivered and allow consumers to choose in advance what they want to get in their box (from a range of fruits and vegetables as well as other products, most of the time), even though some products might not be available due to seasonality. The producers are responsible for managing orders and deliveries. With these boxes, consumers usually get good prices and appreciate the ease of access through the Internet.

Finally the last type of alternative food network we will refer to is *school provisioning schemes*. In France, parents, consumers and civil society organizations as well as local authorities in charge of educational institutions are increasingly advocating for more organic and/or more local food in children's meals. Depending on the size of the school kitchens and their organizational and institutional characteristics, various types of initiatives have emerged, some initiated by mainstream food chain operators (who deliver ready meals to schools), others directly by the schools and their cooks, often with the help of organic or farmers' networks (Maréchal, 2008; Le Velly and Brechet, 2011). In the case that we studied, in Aubenais, the manager of the middle-size city's central school kitchen⁴ set up a partnership with a group of local organic producers, through which crops are collectively planned in order to guarantee sufficient quantities for the school kitchen and a satisfactory outlet for the farmers. At this stage of the planning, both parties' commitment is informal even though the orders and transactions are of course official.

In Brazil, the marketing of food products on the 'institutional market' began in 2003 with the Food Acquisition Programme (Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos, PAA) and was reinforced in 2009 by the National School Feeding Programme (Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar - PNAE). The PAA seeks to provide food for low-income families in situations of food and nutritional insecurity. It is also intended to protect local communities' traditional ways of life and the regional food culture, and to promote agro-ecology. Ecological food products are bought from family farmers or farmers' organizations by government social welfare agencies and public schools. Certified ecological products receive a 30% premium compared to conventional products, in order to promote nutritional quality as well as the environmentally friendly aspects of products. In order not to put small farms at a disadvantage, from 2012 onwards, each farm will be allowed to sell a maximum of USD12 000 per annum to these two programmes.

Even though we have presented these four types of initiative separately, our fieldwork experience shows that they tend to reinforce each other and that together they (in general) strengthen producer-consumer and rural-urban ties, as well as the links between the different social movements in a given region and its territorial agri-food system. It may seem striking to find such similar types of initiatives in such different historical and geographical contexts. The international circulation of alternative ideas and stakeholders might partly explain this (as well as the fact that some of

these stakeholders may participate in the same international movements, such as Via Campesina), although this would necessitate a specific analysis that was not our focus here. Nevertheless, these French and Brazilian cases present some differences that need to be taken into account. While these AFNs seem quite similar today – and might often fit into the same international trends or debates – they have very different historical roots. Many of the pioneer Brazilian alternatives emerged in the 1970s as part of the movement to counter the modernization process supported by the dictatorial regime (with its well-known effects of land concentration, family farmer exclusion and intensification of rural–urban migration) and were supported by religious or civil organizations. Recent movements, however, more similar to their French counterparts, were more often formed by consumer or farmer initiatives and are supported by NGOs as well as public institutions (e.g. Ministry of Agrarian Development, extension services).

While the sociological make-up of consumers in the French and Brazilian cases may be comparable (middle-class consumers, except of course regarding public programmes for low income families), the set-up is rather different with respect to the farmers involved in these initiatives. In France, AFNs are often launched by neo-peasants, most of whom have a higher level of education and/or an urban background. This might facilitate interaction with consumers (even though more rooted farmers may also initiate alternative networks or join in). In Brazil, on the other hand, although many initiatives were also launched by neo-peasants or urban professionals with rural origins, most of them concern family farms and landless farmers, the MST (landless people's movement) being one of the main actors within current alternative movements.

Despite these particularities, the different AFNs present common features, both between themselves and between the two countries. As shown in various studies, they afford farmers a better standard of living and strengthen the social ties between farmers and consumers as well as among farmers. They also lead to an acknowledgement of the interdependencies between producers and consumers and to a requalification of both producers and consumers, in contrast with the 'deskilling' induced by mainstream systems and operators (Jaffe and Gertler, 2006). These AFNs often offer original technical advice and knowledge acquisition methods, in the sense that they favour direct exchange between producers, and often have experienced producers acting as counselors for less experienced ones.

What we wish to highlight here is the political significance of the impact of these networks. First, they allow, to a varying extent, for the redefinition of the socio-productive organization: production, distribution, and partly food habits and diets are redefined together, especially in the cases of box schemes and school provisioning schemes (Brunori et al., 2011). Second, as we will see in more detail in the next section, they develop regulations (through certification rules, or charters) that take into consideration not only agricultural practices but also social practices and social issues, and leverage a different and broader understanding of quality than that used in the mainstream market (Noe and Alroe, 2011), one that is also the fruit of greater negotiation between stakeholders. They represent, in a way, a political proposal to strengthen the role of rural areas' social actors.

For these reasons, looking at these four types of initiative chosen to represent the diversity of AFNs in the regions under study, we consider it appropriate to talk of civic food networks, as suggested by Renting et al. (this issue). We use this notion to acknowledge the growing role of consumers and producers not only as *individu-*

als but also as *citizens* often involved in civil society organizations promoting the public interest. From this perspective, food production and consumption practices are redefined as expressions of citizenship – that is, activities that speak not only of individual preferences, but also of moral rights and responsibilities (Lockie, 2009).

In the following sections we explore the civic nature of AFNs from two angles. First, we analyse the modes of coordination and decision-making articulated in order to determine whether food democracy is in some way present *within* these systems through the distribution of decision-making power among the different stakeholders. We then investigate these AFNs' impact on a larger scale – that is, *beyond* their members and participants – by considering their influence on public policy at different levels.

Modes of Coordination and Decision-making *within* these Networks: Towards Food Democracy?

In order to explore how decision-making power is shared and how a form of food democracy may be experimented with in these different systems, we studied and compared the *modes of coordination and commitment* that all the AFNs adopt, by considering different factors, in both countries (see Table 2):

- Who are the different actors directly involved in the systems?
- How is quality understood and negotiated?
- How is farm production planned in order to adjust offer and demand?
- How are rules codified?

In conventional systems, downstream food-chain actors are dominant (Schermer et al., 2011), marketing rules are based on classical quality criteria, and there are generally no lasting contracts (which means part of the production may be lost when the market is saturated).

By contrast, in the four types of initiative studied here, producers are directly involved in the definition of quality and the codification of rules, sometimes with consumers and/or other organizations, and voluntary ways of adjusting offer and demand are established.

In all cases, there is a relative freedom from classical market quality criteria (aspect, size, etc.), while other criteria are promoted (localness, freshness, seasonality). In most cases producers have direct access to consumers' expectations through their presence at the markets or shops or box deliveries. In collective producer shops and school provisioning schemes, producers coordinate themselves by collectively planning production in order to adjust their offer. In the case of box schemes, this production planning also involves consumers with at least precise insight into consumers' demand through the long-term contracts established with each of them, and in some cases negotiations on this planning between producers and consumers. In these different AFNs, rules are codified in diverse ways: market charters or rules, AMAP written long-term contracts, etc. The construction of trust between producers and consumers as well as the requalification process mentioned above rely on these and other devices, such as weekly leaflets, visits to the farms, etc. These devices are crucial for creating not only norms but also symbols and identification to common values and ethics (Callon et al., 2007). These rules not only include marketing rules and quality criteria, as in the case of classical transactions, but might also encompass ethical and social dimensions such as equity, producers' wellbeing or income. Re-

Table 2. Modes of coordination in the four types of initiatives.

	Who is involved	Definition of quality	Production planning	Codification of rules
Farmers' markets	Producers Market organizers (civil society organizations, municipalities, farmers' organizations)	Direct access to consumers' expectations (and to producers' constraints) through the presence of producers	Individual production planning	France: Market rules or charters Brazil: Participatory certification
Collective producer shops	Producers	Direct access to consumers' expectations (and to producers' constraints) through the presence of producers (in turn) in the shop	Collective production planning among producers (e.g. for vegetables)	France: General guidelines at regional level, + shop rules Brazil: Rules of the cooperative
Box schemes	Producers and consumers	Direct access to consumer expectations (and to producer constraints) through weekly encounters, regular farm visits, meetings, weekly leaflets, etc.	Production planning with consumers and sometimes among producers	France: written long-term contract between each consumer and producer(s) Brazil: Participatory certification
School provisioning	Producers, school kitchen, public authorities	Links between producers and consumers (pupils) are mediated through schools' cooks and staff, and also through educational projects	Collective crop planning (producers + school), adjustment of the classical quality criteria	France: more or less formal agreements Brazil: PNAE (National School Feeding Programme) guidelines and contracts with farmers' groups

garding the mode of production, some systems rely on existing modes of qualification (such as official organic certification in the case of organic farmers' markets and of some of the AMAP networks in France) and so-called expert systems (Giddens, 1990), while most rely on or even establish original forms of qualification, which we will analyse below.

In the case of both the Brazilian Ecovida and the French AMAPs, the study of the dynamics underpinning these initiatives over a long period of time (about 10 years for each) shows how their protagonists have progressively adapted their modes of coordination in order to better integrate ethical concerns. This evolution has led to the elaboration or adoption of Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS), which imply that all stakeholders involved participate in and are jointly responsible for guaranteeing product quality (Zanasi et al., 2009).

Let us consider the case of the French AMAPs, where we can identify, over a 10-year period, a double dynamic leading from informally debated ethical issues towards ethical commissions and then, in some places, formalized PGS; from organic farming towards agro-ecology. In the PACA region, an agreement system was set up

at the start of the movement in order to determine which farms could or could not be part of the network, based on the values and principles developed in the network charter. This was based on a committee composed of consumers and experienced producers. The objective was to establish a 'road map' for each farm, in cooperation with the farmer, setting out the future stages towards organic certification.

From 2003 onwards, some of the producers and consumers began to contest this principle of compulsory conversion to certified organic agriculture, and advocated instead principles of trust, reciprocal commitment and transparency, afforded by the direct producer-to-consumer relationship. Some network leaders even conceded that producers could sometimes use chemical inputs where no other solution was available, if this was known to consumers. In these debates, which we analysed from 2003 to 2006 (Lamine, 2011), even those in favour of third-party organic certification recognized that it did not integrate social and human dimensions, regarding both farmers' and farm workers' well-being, and farmer-consumer relationships. Therefore, from 2007 onwards, many AMAPs and their networks began to shift towards another vision of certification, based on participative processes.

The analysis of the networks' debates also reveals another trend over the last decade: the shift from organic farming *sensu stricto* (as defined by the legislation) towards agro-ecology. Of course this shift is strongly linked to the shift towards participatory certification in the sense that the latter is an alternative to certified organic farming, partly motivated by the critique of the legal definition of organic farming. AMAP stakeholders, as in many other alternative food networks, claim to offer a better integration of the civic and social dimensions of food production and distribution. However, while some consider that these dimensions are not incompatible with the legal definition and certification – and indeed the historical trajectory of organic farming in France and other countries shows their importance – others prefer to turn to an alternative form of agriculture and of certification. This shift fits into a wider phenomenon at international level, whereby social movements are placing greater emphasis on agro-ecology and food sovereignty (Rosset and Martinez-Torres, 2012).

This double trend towards participatory certification and agro-ecology over the last decade can also be identified in the case of Brazil, although in a very different institutional context.

While French organic legislation dates back to 1980 and has referred to third party certification since European harmonization (Council Regulation (EEC) 2092/91, OJ, L198, 22 July 1991, pp. 1–101), the Brazilian legislation is more recent (Dec. 6.323/2007 (Decreto do Executivo) 27.12.2007) and distinguishes between three kinds of certification: 1. third-party certification, as well as 2. participatory certification, and 3. certification through social control. The latter option concerns only direct sales from producers to consumers, where organic products can be sold without certification through a social control process on the basis of existing 'social control organizations' (Organização de Controle Social, OCS). This organization can be any formal or informal group of family farmers within which relationships of organization, commitment and trust are supposedly strong.

In Brazil, the Ecovida network has been a pioneer in experimentation with and the definition of participatory certification. Within the Ecovida network, each nucleus establishes an ethical council composed of producers, consumers and technicians. Its functions include inspection, monitoring, evaluation and advice to farmers. The certification process relies on the evaluation carried out by this ethical council, based on farm visits. A conversion plan towards ecological farming is defined by the farmer

and the regional nucleus considering the specific environmental and socio-economic characteristics of each farm. Each visit ends with a discussion with the farmer about the outcome, which makes farmers feel involved rather than only controlled (Zanasi et al., 2009).

In the case of Ecovida, agro-ecological principles have been advocated from the beginning of the movement, whereas in the French AMAPs, as we saw, they emerged later on in a context of differentiation within French organic agriculture networks (Bellon et al., 2011).

The comparison between the French AMAPs and Brazilian Ecovida networks reveals many commonalities. We have focused here on two aspects, i.e. the shift towards participative certification based on similar elements (ethical councils, farm conversion plans, farm visits that are more interactive than classical control, etc.), and the importance of agro-ecology. If we take a more thorough look at each network's charters or guidelines, we find generally quite similar values and principles: exclusion of chemical inputs (and GMOs), a focus on farm self-sufficiency and diversification, on farmers' and farm workers' working conditions and income, and on producer/consumer links and information and knowledge exchange through producer and consumer meetings. Of course, each network also presents its own specificities influenced by the cultural and social context. For example, in the case of Ecovida the importance of the involvement of the farmer's family (through food processing or other activities on the farm) is emphasized (Zanasi et al., 2009), while in the case of AMAPs consumer commitment and voluntary work are a greater focus (Lamine, 2005).

The discourses of the four types of initiative that we have studied in both countries (farmers' markets, collective shops, box schemes and school provisioning) convey a strong focus on the civic and social dimensions of food production and distribution. Here, we have focused on the way this is expressed in the specific modes of coordination they develop, but we could also mention other significant common features such as the notion of fair price, based on the objective of sustainable livelihood for producers and financial affordability for consumers, and more generally a common anchorage in economic solidarity.

Based on the analysis of the modes of coordination of these alternative networks, can we talk of *food democracy*? To answer this question, let us consider the definition suggested by Hassanein in her discussion about food democracy: 'Food democracy ideally means that all members of an agro-food system have equal and effective opportunities for participation in shaping that system, as well as knowledge about the relevant alternative ways of designing and operating the system' (Hassanein, 2003). Does this definition apply to our case studies?

If we consider these initiatives as specific agri-food systems, producers and consumers (directly in the case of box schemes, much more indirectly in other cases), as well as possible intermediaries (such as the kitchen manager in the school provisioning case), *participate in shaping the system* together. All these members of the agri-food system share the decision-making power, they gain more autonomy, and are less dependent on distant actors (market, certification, etc.). Participatory certification (as advocated and adopted by the Ecovida network and some of the AMAP networks) makes this possible as it implies that all stakeholders participate in and are jointly responsible for ensuring the quality of the final product and the integration of the production, distribution and consumption stages into the certification process (Zanasi et al., 2009).

Nevertheless, we would not argue that all the stakeholders have *equal and effective opportunities for participation*. Within these networks, we showed that consumer participation in shaping the system is often limited and, in the case of AMAPs, varies widely from one group to another. The exclusion of producers who would face too many technical or relational difficulties has also been noted (Dubuisson-Quellier et al., 2012). Moreover, not all consumers and producers can access these alternative networks; we can also talk of the exclusion of social groups as well as territories.

Finally, Hassanein's definition of food democracy highlights a significant feature that relates to actors' knowledge and learning, also studied by other authors (Stasart and Claeys, 2010; Brunori et al., 2011). The different initiatives studied here actually try to enhance and facilitate collective learning and capacity building (Marsden, 2012), by resorting to existing advisory systems such as rural extension in Brazil, to the creation of a proper system like in some of the French AMAPs networks, or to farmer-to-farmer horizontal sharing and learning processes (Rosset and Martinez-Torres, 2012).

The Broader Impact of Civic Food Networks: Influence on Public Policy

In the previous section we considered the existence of some kind of food democracy *within* these systems through the distribution of decision-making power among the different stakeholders. At a broader level, what impact do they have on the agri-food system – that is, *beyond* their members and participants?

There are different ways in which AFNs and civil society organizations seek to influence the agri-food system. Looking at consumption, they can initiate forms of alternative trade to bypass the conventional market (as in the cases studied above), focus on consumers' education and, finally, call for mobilization in protest campaigns (Dubuisson-Quellier et al., 2011). Based on an ethnographic analysis in earlier work, of local projects linked to agricultural and food issues, we have highlighted how civil society may more or less directly influence the evolution of agricultural practices towards organic and low-input agriculture (mainly through local environmental and/or consumer organizations) (Cardona and Lamine, 2010). We have identified similar modes of action: in some cases, civil society organizations initiate their own projects and either develop marketing outlets facilitating farms' transitions towards organic farming, such as box schemes, or buy agricultural land in order to facilitate the establishment of organic farmers. In other cases, they directly take over a mission from public institutions, such as the implementation of agri-environmental measures or food catering in the case of school provisioning (food hubs or platforms centralizing local organic or low-input products). Finally, civil society organizations may also urge public authorities to address environmental and food issues (Cardona, 2012).

In other words, civic food networks can either build their own systems outside the 'mainstream' agri-food system or try to influence the dominant agri-food system through public policy, as well as by exerting pressure on economic actors.

In the Brazilian and French cases that we studied here, how do the stakeholders in civic food networks (consumers, producers or sometimes other actors) seek to get involved in public debates and influence public policy? In order to explore this issue, we have considered their impact at both local and national levels.

At the local level, first, studying the dynamics of AFNs over time, i.e. the trajectories of both the networks and their leaders and members, makes it possible to assess their involvement in local debates and policies. In the case of France, their involve-

ment is mainly centred around urbanization and land issues (preservation of agricultural land from urbanization, farmers' access to land), water quality, agricultural practices, and school food provisioning (Cardona and Lamine, 2010).

In Brazil, these different types of alternative food networks have also tried to get involved in public debates and influence public policy concerning rural development. They have advocated for environmentally sustainable production models, family farming and local economy, and mobilized around landscape issues, food access for people facing food insecurity, education for food and nutritional security and change in food habits.

Examples of municipalities in Brazil demonstrate the importance of local cohesion and social interaction for these policies to be successful. The results observed are: a change in the level of consumption spurred by students' acceptance of healthier and more appropriate food, a revitalization with new market prospects for family farming, and the fostering of production practices considered less harmful to the environment (Triches and Schneider, 2010).

At the national level, the growing success of AFNs in France reveals their influence on agricultural policies and institutions, as public institutions gradually come to recognize their role and devote more financial support to alternative producer-consumer networks, as well as more competencies within advisory services and agricultural institutions. We could even talk of an emerging process of institutionalization of alternative food networks, since although they stem from grass-roots initiatives, they are often considered by policymakers as a tool for rural development that could justify public support.

While there is also growing recognition of alternative producer-consumer networks and agro-ecology in Brazil, the main developments we wish to highlight are, first, the focus on family farming in the national food programme and, second, the influence of civic food networks on the construction of norms. The Food Acquisition Programme (PAA, established in 2003) is entirely devoted to family farming while the National School Feeding Programme (PNAE, 2009) devotes 30% of its budget to food bought directly from family farmers, involving a total of approximately 100 000s family farmers in Brazil. Brazil faces significant challenges for reconciling agricultural production practices and food and nutritional security concerns, particularly in relation to environmental matters and their impact on food safety. Regulating related practices and consolidating the incentives and support programmes for agro-ecological models are therefore important requirements. The food and nutritional security arena reinforces this process, since it is clearly oriented towards supporting family farming as the model for ensuring food sovereignty. This also highlights further aspects of food production systems, such as the promotion of agro-ecological production systems as a model for the development of the 2011 National Food and Nutritional Security Plan (Souza and Chmielewska, 2011).

In Brazil, civic food networks have also had a strong influence on the elaboration of organic law oriented towards the recognition of both agro-ecology and participatory certification, legally recognized as an alternative to third-party certification systems (Bertoncello et al., 2008). In France, while organic movements have also influenced the laws enforcing a stricter interpretation of certain organic principles (e.g. farm autonomy), agro-ecological principles are so far not legally recognized, even though they are increasingly present within agricultural institutions (Bellon et al., 2011).

Both in France and Brazil, civic food networks appear as sites and networks of experimentation and of political positioning to advocate a transition towards more sustainable forms of production and consumption. However, comparing the French and Brazilian cases shows that civil society's strong and growing demand for agro-ecology influences public policy in different ways depending on the country's history and its institutionalized forms of ecological agriculture. In France these have long focused on organic agriculture (since the 1980s), while in Brazil they are more diverse.

The influence that civic food networks have on public policy and the agri-food system is owed in part to the alliances they are able to develop. AFNs such as collective farmers' marketing initiatives attempt to counteract producers' loss of control over food supply chains by creating alliances and cooperation with other categories of societal and market actors (Schermer et al., 2012) and establishing new social networks of farmers that go beyond the agricultural sector (Cardona, 2012).

In her discussion on food democracy, Hassanein (2003) distinguished three kinds of alliances: within movements, among allied movements, and between movements and their opponents. In our case studies we observe such alliances with allied movements, environmentalists, consumer organizations, and, in Brazil, with women's or workers' movements.

In order to better assess not only the diversity of civic food networks but also the alliances that allow them to influence the agri-food system beyond their own stakeholders, we have suggested the notion of territorial agri-food systems (Lamine et al., 2012).⁵ However, these alliances are not only local, and we have to acknowledge the fact that civic food network stakeholders are often interested, if not involved, in debates and social movements at international level. The role played by the international circulation of concepts (such as food sovereignty or agro-ecology) and people, structured by formal networks and places of debates such as Via Campesina or FAO, and facilitated by informal debates especially on the Internet, deserves further investigation (Rosset and Martinez-Torres, 2012).

Finally, alliances with opponents are also decisive. In our cases, these 'opponents' – often not perceived as such by the stakeholders – might be institutional actors or private actors in the food chain, such as supermarkets or classical farmers' cooperatives. Based on the analysis of farmers' and AFNs' trajectories at local level, we have pointed out, against the classical dichotomy between conventional and alternative food systems, the possible complementarities between alternative and conventional systems (Lamine et al., 2012).

Conclusions

In this article, we have analysed the civic nature of a series of French and Brazilian alternative food networks and investigated the changes these *civic* food networks can induce both from within and further afield. In order to take into account the diversity of these networks, we chose four contrasting types ranging from the community-supported agriculture type box schemes (which are often presented as a kind of ideal and radical form of alternative food system but actually would reach a very limited part of the general population) to more institutional initiatives such as public food programmes (which can reach millions of pupils or families even though the requested volumes can make it difficult to involve small farms). We have also considered more 'classical' farmers' markets and collective producer shops (or

consumer cooperatives), two historical forms of food networks that are somewhat experiencing a revival in the current context.

We have shown that some kind of food democracy is at stake *within* these civic food networks through the modes of coordination and decision-making that are articulated and the way decision-making power is shared among the different participants. We then analysed the impact of these civic food networks on the scale of the agri-food system – that is, *beyond* their participants. We therefore focused on the analysis of their influence on public policy and regulations at different levels, in order to demonstrate the role they have been playing in the legitimization of both participatory certification and agro-ecology. This broader influence could also be investigated by focusing on the way these networks suggest concepts and ideas that progressively spread to debates on food and agricultural issues or even frame them.

Of course this does not mean that power relationships between the social actors of the food chain would disappear in such civic food networks. In some (although rare) box schemes we observed producers who felt like they were being strongly directed by consumers even though they still benefited from being less dependent on downstream actors, such as middlemen and retailers. Another significant limit pertains to the relocalization of food production and consumption. Not only is this relocalization not necessarily a guarantee of equity and fairness (Dupuis and Goodman, 2005), it can take place only where producers and consumers have the available social skills to initiate such networks, which might leave many urban and rural territories by the wayside. The risks of social and territorial inequity should probably be addressed through comparative studies in different types of contexts and regions. Moreover, arguing that food citizenship intrinsically has to be local circumscribes the scope and scale of active citizenship (Lockie, 2009). Finally, this relocalization is limited by the available food production within a given region – even though the most radical movements advocate the adaptation of diets. Ecovida suggests an interesting way of overcoming this limitation, through a system of food routes allowing for the exchange and circulation of products between producers (and the network's sale points such as farmers' markets, box schemes, cooperatives or school provisioning) of different small regions of Southern Brazil.

The last point we would like to raise relates to governance. We have shown that the effective influence of these civic food networks on the broader agri-food system depends on the alliances they are able to build with similar movements but also with institutions and even with mainstream economic actors in some cases. Original forms of governance can facilitate these alliances, as in the case of the French SCIC (Société Coopérative d'Intérêt Collectif), a new legal status for cooperatives, which allows them to involve not only producers, consumers and employees but also local authorities and civil society organizations in their governance and management (Lamine, 2012). Further research should investigate how civic food networks adopt forms of 'reflexive governance' that encourage actors to scrutinize and reconsider their underlying assumptions, institutional arrangements and practices, and to acknowledge alternative understandings and framings of the problems at hand (Marsden, 2012).

Notes

1. The classical opposition between conventional and alternative actors and food systems has been contested by many authors (see Tovey, 2009). We show that it makes sense to distinguish them on the basis

- of the analysis of power and decision-making relationships, even though in our fieldwork we find many 'hybrid' forms of food networks (Lamine et al., 2012). More precisely, we define this alternative-ness through what these alternative food networks contest – that is, global deregulation, globalization and/or the degradation of agro-ecosystems – as well as through what they enhance and the values they defend: a redistribution of value through the network and a common construction of trust and decision-making by the different stakeholders, i.e., most often, producers and consumers (Lamine, 2005).
2. At the level of small regions, the territorial agri-food system encompasses all the social actors involved in producing, transforming, retailing and consuming food, i.e. farmers, intermediaries, agricultural institutions, local authorities, civil society organizations, etc. We suggested this notion in order to consider and assess the interdependencies between these different components and their evolution.
 3. 'L'agroécologie en France et au Brésil: entre réseaux scientifiques, mouvements sociaux et politiques publiques', research project supported by the Capes-Cofecub programme and coordinated by A. Brandenburg and JP. Billaud, 2011–2014.
 4. In France, elementary schools are under the remit of municipalities whereas secondary schools (collèges) are under the remit of the Départements, and high schools (lycées) under that of the Regions. In all cases, the meals can be prepared by the school's own kitchen, by a 'central kitchen' – publicly run, which delivers for example to all the schools in a given town, or, as is most often the case, by an external provider.
 5. See note 2.

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Local Food System Development in Hungary

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[Paper first received, 4 September 2012; in final form, 29 October 2012]

Abstract. This article examines local food system (LFS) development pathways in the context of recent regulatory reforms in Hungary implemented to promote local product sales and short food supply chains (SFSCs). Taking a SFSC approach, two case studies demonstrate how new types of local food systems initiated by non-farmers attempt to shorten the distance between consumers and producers. The findings are based on qualitative key informant interviews and a consumer attitude survey data that seek to identify how LFSs promote or enact sustainable food supply and how consumers perceive the nature of the relationships between consumers and producers. The results from the ‘Gödöllő Local Food Council’ and the ‘Szekszárd local food system’ show various specificities and challenges of new types of emerging urban civic food networks. The article concludes by pointing to critical factors and tools for developing LFSs, as well as reflecting on the role of original research to facilitate change for a more sustainable food system.

Introduction

In the context of an increasingly globalized food system, recent critical assessments in sustainability science noted that only a sharp decrease in per capita consumption and resource use by the wealthy and developed world could successfully contribute to a more sustainable and equitable world (MEA, 2005; IFPRI, 2009; Rockström et al., 2009; Government Office for Science, 2011; SCAR, 2011; United Nations, 2011). When policymakers, researchers and CSOs analyse, plan and implement tangible sustainability strategies or policies they increasingly express societal concerns about the ways in which global forces and disproportionate consumption patterns are shaping

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our food system. Agri-food scholars record a recent trend in food governance emphases from the national to the regional and local level (Renting et al., 2003; Donald et al., 2010). Often referred to as local food systems (LFSs), these complex socio-ecological systems produce, process and retail food within a defined geographical area and thus provide multiple benefits, desirable socio-economic and environmental impacts (Karner et al., 2010). Most empirical evidence on LFSs has originated from EU-funded comparative research projects (SUS-CHAIN, COFAMI, FAAN)¹ and recorded a great diversity of schemes, variations within and between EU countries (Roep and Wiskerke, 2006; Knickel et al., 2008; Karner et al., 2010; Schermer et al., 2010). The post-socialist contexts of LFSs in Central and Eastern European countries and the difficulties of rebuilding cooperation are rarely discussed (Bodorkós and Kelemen, 2007; Karner et al., 2010; Megyesi et al., 2010; Tisenkopfs et al., 2011).

As an emerging European sector, LFSs bring together supportive constituencies of the state (public sector, regular army, local and regional authorities, municipalities), the market (producer and supply chain-led initiatives) and civil society (civic groups, consumers and NGOs). Built as a collaborative effort to shape self-reliant food economies LFSs integrate production, processing, distribution and consumption with the explicit aim to enhance the well-being (economic, environmental and social health) of a particular locality (Feenstra, 2002). Through local processing and selling, an increasing proportion of total added value is captured by small-scale quality farmers; moreover, LFSs often contribute to local employment and economic regeneration (Karner et al., 2010). As a main benefit LFSs encourage proximate relations between food producers and consumers – ‘between farm and fork’ – and may also promote more environmentally sustainable modes of production and consumption (Renting et al., 2003). LFSs often rely on collective organization and human labour at the local level: social cooperation, proximate social relations between producers and consumers (Holloway et al., 2007). In this regard, local quality has become the key aspect of contemporary agri-food systems; even supermarkets promote increasingly their products as ‘local’, while through consumer–producer proximity LFSs strengthen value-laden, trust-based quality attributes of food (Karner et al., 2010).

In this article, I draw on case-study research conducted within two regional projects in Hungary in 2010 to understand various ways in which local food communities implement sustainability.² The mixed methods approach consisted of secondary data analysis of the principal national policy processes of relevance to LFSs, along with primary data collection from key informant interviews with the relevant stakeholders, consumer surveys at both regional and national scales, group discussions with consumers and local actors. The two localities, as real focal points around which alternatives were shaped and conceptualized, serve as illustrative examples of transition pathways within the current institutional setting. The article is structured as follows: after outlining the theoretical–conceptual frameworks that shaped the analysis, I look first at the legal–institutional contexts and draw on available national level data and studies to show what these mean for consumer attitudes. Second, I will present the research focus in the local context of the case-study areas, showing results from surveys on consumer attitudes towards local food. Finally, I will discuss these findings pointing to success factors, critical processes and a ‘tool-box’ strategy for developing local food systems.

LFSs: An Ideal and a Pathway towards Sustainability

Agri-food systems are being reconsidered by policymakers, scholars and CSOs in recent decades especially in the light of environmental and safety issues arising from the current commodity-driven, industrialized, conventional, intensive and 'productivist' systems of food provision (Wright and Middendorf, 2007). New initiatives created rapidly expanding arenas in the food economy and counterbalanced the worsening trend of poor diets through multifaceted LFSs, innovative networks and processes. Due to the reinventions of various food traditions, rediscovery and revitalization of food cultures, we are witnessing a growing demand for local and regional food met by new alternative practices. These proliferations of academic and applied research as well as the mushrooming of diverse initiatives to develop LFSs present a double challenge for empirical researchers. There are several attempts in the literature to categorize approaches and overlapping, partly interchangeable conceptualizations referred to as 'alternative', 'local', 'locally-based', 'civic', 'community' food networks, enterprises, initiatives and systems, short food supply chains (SFSCs) (Balázs, 2009). LFSs are conceptualized mainly as links between farmers and consumers. For the sake of operationalization, this research uses the analytical concept of SFSCs as defined by Marsden et al. (2000) to emphasize spatial-social proximity in LFSs. To gain an empirical understanding of the nature of relationships between producers and consumers, different theoretical frameworks of the SFSC perspective are introduced below. However, for carrying out the empirical research and for communicating with the non-professional stakeholders in the case studies the much broader and normative term of LFSs was used.

Theories of sustainable consumption emphasize interpretative frames and conceptualizations that highlight different socio-economic and environmental impacts of LFSs (Jackson, 2006). Relocalization as a main type of such interpretative frame refers to the social-spatial proximity of producers and consumers leading to collective action for reducing environmental and social problems in 'food relocalization initiatives' (Fonte, 2008). At the same time, a locality gains social and spatial meaning by creating specificity and uniqueness. In a collaborative effort to foster local well-being, create more inclusive communities, build trust by shortening the distance of producers and consumers, new revitalized local(ly specific) forms of agricultural knowledge arise (Renting et al., 2003; Holloway et al., 2007; Karner et al., 2010). Relocalization strategies can be traced in initiatives that practically bring consumers closer to the origins of their food and involve more direct contact between farmers and the end users of their products. Direct involvement in food production, processing, distribution, and consumption implies proximate relations, smaller-scale production, and also a much wider product range (Watts et al., 2005). Another interpretative frame – *reconnecting* – emphasizes the knowledge sharing, solidarity and the social consequences of food purchasing (Eden et al., 2008a, 2008b). Reconnection can be the basis of improvements in social capital and provide a sense of community, even turn back the conventionalization of organic agriculture (Fonte and Grando, 2006) and may foster a new moral economy by revitalizing linkages between agriculture and society (Hartwick, 1998; Marsden, 2000; Ilbery and Maye, 2005). *Localism* (or regionalism), as an interpretative frame, concentrates on the counter-hegemonic tendencies in LFSs, and how they fight against food system globalization (Winter, 2003). LFSs may impose resistance and counter-pressure to conventional globalizing food systems by actively searching for possible ways (convivial venues, arenas, infrastructures) to counter the anomies of global agri-food networks (Goodman and

DuPuis, 2002). LFSs are also referred to as *knowledge systems* and, when successful, are frequently conceptualized as fruitful interactions of local-lay and expert codified-scientific knowledge. This revitalization of traditional local knowledge also contributes to the development of managerial/commercial and technical skills (Fonte and Grando, 2006; Knickel et al., 2008). *Intermediaries* in new urban–rural relations LFS leaders are developing knowledge for planning new projects, understanding policy, handling regulations, gaining sources, providing support, marketing skills and reaching consumers, deciding in economic and administrative issues and transmitting rural goods and services to urban consumers (Kovách and Kristóf, 2009). As a form of *social innovation*, LFSs nurture social learning and create social spaces of producers and consumers where there is an on-going experience-based learning process (Renting et al., 2003). LFSs often profit from technological innovations improving the bargaining power and commercial performance of farmers (Marsden and Smith, 2005) coupled with a more differentiated product range and interlinkage with economic and tourism activities in the region (Roep and Wiskerke, 2006). Recent research also recognized urban food strategies and procurement practices as central constituents of LFS development (e.g. Sonnino, 2009).

These theoretical frameworks highlight normally the somewhat idealistic social functions, ethical–political goals and desirable impacts of LFSs. The following case studies and consumer surveys show how consumers perceive LFSs and derive their understanding of food, farming and sales. First, I briefly present the cultural and institutional context, including relevant policies on local food initiatives and what they mean for LFSs development and consumer attitudes.

Cultural Context: Institutional Support and Consumer Trends

In Hungary, local food culture remained strong even after the Socialist regime. It built normally on persisting local markets and remnants of informal economies through family households that maintained traditional agriculture practices. In marginal areas, local livelihoods and economies could survive only with support, such as through the alliance of civic food networks, agri-environmental schemes or Leader programmes. Alternative food supply systems (farmers' markets, farm-gate sales, pick-your-own, local food festivals, food trails) already have a significant role in Hungary whereas specific forms (food box delivery, buying groups, CSAs and community gardens) are usually initiated by urban intellectuals in urban and peri-urban areas with rudimentary success. The local food movement is initiated by the alliance of civic food networks whose primary aim is to ease the enormous amount of legislation that must be met by LFSs (Szabadkai, 2010).

Policy Framework Transformed to Help LFS Development

Several EU-funded research projects have emphasized already the role of policy frameworks to facilitate the development of LFSs through financial support, public support (exemptions to food safety regulations), support for labelling, promotion, collective marketing (Karner et al., 2010; Schermer et al., 2010). In Hungary, CAP implementation after the 2004 EU accession advocated an agro-industrial policy framework for international economic competitiveness and mass production (mostly by foreign investors) through subsidy criteria, and thus it marginalized disproportional

tionately 80% of 220 000 registered professional small-scale agricultural farms from subsidizing their farm investments. Several green NGOs and farmers organizations, such as the National Association of Hungarian Farmers' Societies and Cooperatives (Magyar Gazdakörök és Gazdaszövetkezetek Országos Szövetsége, MAGOSZ), had criticized this rural development policy on the procedural and substantial level, namely for presenting small-scale farming as weakness of agriculture and providing less support to local/regional markets, as well as for arranging flawed stakeholder participation during the rural development policy planning (Balázs et al., 2009). The legislation on small-scale trading applied high tax/fiscal, commercial and social insurance costs and thus marginalized the marketing of processed foods by small farmers between 2004 and 2006. Hygiene and food safety rules did not take advantage of the flexibility principle offered by the EU Regulation 852/2004 (European Parliament and Council Regulation (EC) 852/2004, *OJ*, L 139, 30 April 2004, pp. 1–54, para. 16), which enable the continued use of traditional methods at any stage from farm to fork. This unpreparedness of the government in managing the European Fund for Rural Development hit smallholders and food processors particularly hard, especially in the dairy and the meat sectors (Csatári and Farkas, 2008; Karner et al., 2010), which still limits the capacity for local food system development. In these circumstances, multinational food retailers could easily block small-scale food producers and processors to enter into LFSs (Balázs, 2009).

After the change of government in 2010, the institutional context has been transformed completely to be in line with ethnocentric–protectionist political agenda(s). The policy reform initiative channelled by the local food movement in Hungary reached a window of opportunity when it met with strong desire from the political establishment to develop SFSCs/LFSs at the national and local community level. This resulted in an increasingly important policy process of the *New Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy 2020* (Ministry of Rural Development Hungary, 2012). This foresight policy document, also referred to as 'The Constitution of Rural Hungary', covers the agro-economy, rural development, environmental protection and food economy and aims to strengthen the integrity of landscapes, people, good quality food, safe food supplies and sustainable natural resource management. It claims a proportionately much higher allocation of resources for the development of LFSs/SFSCs than any previous high-level policy document. Moreover, it promotes the development of local food systems as a primary tool of local economic development. More broadly, the strategy acknowledges that social functions of food and agriculture extend beyond rural development policy and to health, environment and national security (Darányi Ignác Plan, 2012). Further institutional support and technical assistance for LFS development at the national level is provided by the Hungarian National Rural Network (HNRN) as part of the European Network for Rural Development. As the main driving actor to promote LFSs in Hungary, the network helps local food market organizers and initiatives with technical assistance, collective marketing and training to develop knowledge for brand development and provide demonstration cases for good practices.

Three new regulations also offer an impetus to LFSs at the national level.

1. In a series of amendments the *decree for small producers* finally regulated all issues relating to small-scale production, manufacturing, hygiene, trade, control and certification. The original, 2006 regulation on small-scale producers was created to ease food-hygiene conditions but only for natural persons producing and selling products in small quantities. The 2010 amendment to the regulation

- increased the quantities for selling and allowed small-scale producers living in any part of the country to sell their products in the capital (Szabadkai, 2010).
2. The *Public Procurement Act*, which previously hampered local sourcing through the prevalence of the lowest price principle, has also been recently amended (Act CVIII of 2011 on Public Procurement). Farm products such as cold food-stuff and raw cooking materials, fresh and processed vegetables and fruits, milk and dairy products, cereals, bread and bakery products, honey, eggs, horticultural plants are now exempt from the procurement process up to the EU threshold limit (Balázs et al., 2010). As a result much more flexible local food sourcing became possible, yet institutions and staff lack the adequate knowledge and skills to apply the new rules.
 3. The concept of the *local farmers' market* was originally delineated by the Trade Law (Act CLXIV of 2005 on Trade), which gave a full definition of a market where small-scale producers (kistermelő) can sell their produce within the county, or in a 40 km radius of the market, or in Budapest (2§. 5a.). Recently various new government regulations³ redefined the compulsory legal procedures to start a market. Simplified notification process and hygienic restrictions were introduced in 2012 for local farmers' markets for facilitating short food supply chains and direct sales specifically. Still, administrative burdens on small and family farm businesses are very high (with obligations to issue an invoice, pesticide-use logbook, sales logbook, manufacturing data sheet, cold chain, and so on) (Szabadkai, 2010).

What seems clear is that policies gradually turned to short food supply chains for support. The top-down policy processes under the framework of the *New Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy 2020* opened a window of opportunity for long-neglected reform initiatives coming from the alliance of civic food networks. Recently, exemptions and flexibility rules were introduced successfully, according to production method and sales contexts, favouring local food systems and direct marketing.

Consumer Attitudes to Local Food

Several studies already contended that consumers may provide growing public demand for the local food sector with motives ranging from environmental and health consciousness, quality choice, sense of community in local shops and solidarity purchasing for local farmers (Kirwan, 2004; Brunori et al., 2012, Eden et al., 2008a). Today three out of four Hungarian consumers prefer to buy local food, while according to a recent calculation the net yield in the local food sector is two and a half times more than on a national and global level (Szigeti et al., 2009). Normally consumers' food-store choice is determined mostly by the highly concentrated food retail sector. Regionally, food supply is concentrated mostly in Budapest and Pest County. Traditional middle-sized food shops (less than 200 m²) and small food shops (less than 50 m²) are the dominant types, but their numbers are declining (Nielsen, 2012). New technology, such as web-based purchasing also affects how consumers decide to buy food. Recent research by Nielsen indicated that only 8% of Hungarian consumers are planning to buy food over the Internet. However, this number represents a 33% increase in two years, while the global average is 26%, and the European average is 14% (Nielsen, 2012).

A recent national level representative survey initiated by the Association of Conscious Consumers (<http://tudatosvasarlo.hu>) and planned by the author was looking at food consumption patterns and the public perception of supermarkets vs. local food (Medián, 2012). The omnibus survey was carried out by the Medián public opinion and market research institute through 1,200 personal interviews in July 2012. The main lesson that can be learned from food store choice is ambivalent: Hungarians most often buy food either in local, small food shops or in supermarkets – both retail venues are frequented by seven out of 10 people. Hypermarkets and farmers' markets are visited by every second adult to buy food, while two fifths (37%) prefer discount shops. Strangely, only a minority, 13%, buy food directly from farmers on a regular basis. Clearly, this difference between the high proportion of people willing to buy local food and the low proportion of people buying food at local markets, or farmers' markets could be explained by the restricted physical or financial access to local produce that stops consumers from buying what they would like to buy.

The findings on buying food also reveal marked differences between urban and rural social groups. Local food shops or direct sales from farmers are most frequent in the villages. In Budapest, consumers typically prefer supermarkets, hypermarkets and farmers markets, at the same time. People over 60 years of age only rarely go to super- and hypermarkets or discount shops. The 9% who only buy food from supermarkets and hypermarkets are typically younger than 40, and one third of them belong to the highest income category (household income per person in the top quintile).

As main constituents of product quality, freshness and price are well considered by most respondents. However, awareness of the social consequences of purchasing behaviour plays much less of a role than expected. Three out of four respondents found it important that their buying could help the livelihood of farmers, while only 55% considered the livelihood of farmers overseas important. Here education and income can explain these differences somewhat: the price of the product is important particularly in the lower education categories while chemical free and healthy alongside seasonal products are preferred by people with a diploma.

The social effect of buying behaviour on local producers is considered important by the most educated while the global effects of buying behaviour are solely considered by the highest income groups. Paying an extra 10% for any political–ethical reason is not really preferred by the population. Whereas more than half of the respondents would be willing to pay an extra 10% for good quality and healthy products, solidarity purchasing (improving the livelihood of local food producers) would reach only 37%, while solidarity with producers in other parts of the world reached only 18%. All in all, paying extra to improve the livelihoods of small farmers is only acceptable in Budapest, to people with a diploma and in the highest income quintile.

A much wider agreement was detected in the statements about the social consequences of food purchasing. Seventy-eight per cent of respondents agreed (absolutely or rather) that 'local producers who sell to supermarkets can get into trouble'. Two-thirds of respondents agreed with the statement that 'with food purchases we do a lot for the livelihood of small-scale producers in distant, poor countries'. Such value statements are accepted above the average by respondents from the capital while only the most educated support the statement that 'distant and poor countries who sell their produce to supermarkets due to unfavourable conditions can get into trouble'.

Thus, with regard to attitudes to local food, consumers are keen to support LFSs/SFSCs for environmental and ethical reasons. Solidarity with local producers is also significant and local produce is associated mostly with higher quality. Hence, the following case studies focus on the nature of farmer–consumer relationships in LFSs as well as how food supply, quality and produce are perceived in the given locality. The case-study areas will be presented through the trajectory of the initiative, organization, activities, plans and local policies that shape the initiative. These findings are derived from qualitative interviews with local stakeholders and consumer attitude survey data that seek to identify how LFSs construct and use local values as a quality attribute to promote and enact sustainable food consumption.⁴

Choice of Case Studies

In the choice of case studies it is important to point at some commonalities (see Appendix 1). Both cases represent a collective endeavour in a certain well-defined locality, led by citizen groups who suffered from limited access to fresh local food. Both civic networks aim for revitalized agricultural knowledge and a flourishing local food sector, while finding ways in which fresh, vital, healthy, specialty, quality food products can become accessible to wider social groups. Also in both cases, local farmers are encouraged to take an active role in helping the initiatives. LFSs promote local food as a form of regional branding, and attempt to involve local farmers with quality products in their supply chains. Hence, the organizational form of initiatives best fit to the goals of their members. All these lead us to consider how the truly urban intellectual food groups in Szekszárd and Gödöllő have handled consumer awareness and demand for local food, while engaging meaningfully with local farmers and encouraging them out of their historically passive farming roles.

Gödöllő Local Food Council – G7

Case Study Area

Gödöllő is located 30 kilometres north-east of Budapest in the country of Pest with a population of 33 575. Formerly an important Hungarian agricultural community (including the agricultural-oriented Szent István University), now a home for a highly mobile population: two-fifths of local inhabitants find their workplaces outside Gödöllő, primarily in Budapest, while 8,000 people employed in Gödöllő come from outside the area, which exceeds the number of local workers. In a socio-demographic sense the region (Gödöllő Hills) has a growing population, which is strongly connected to the closeness of the capital, Budapest. Due to industrial investments, the employment structure in the region lost its previous agrarian character over the last 40 years. Already in the 1960s industry became the region's decisive sector, after which the service sector started to dominate from the 1970s onwards. The former agrarian traditions were finally lost in the 1980s, a decade of population decline. Today the fully urbanite region is practically part of the suburbia around Budapest, where the main territorial challenge is maintenance of the former agricultural landscape and the conservation of small-scale farming (IVS Gödöllő, 2007; Molnár, 2009).

Trajectory of the Initiative

A local food network has operated in the region for years but awareness of the importance of consuming local and organic food has risen only recently. In the local farmers' market several organic and local growers operate stalls. In these circumstances the Local Food Council (Gödöllői Helyi Élelmiszer Tanács, or 'G7') was established in 2010 with the aim to provide the necessary human infrastructure to reconnect local producers and consumers through festivals, local food markets, gastronomic events and cookery schools, organize community-supported agriculture, explore buying groups to organize bulk orders, develop local food infrastructure, distribution, and an order-delivery system. As a civic network it intends to integrate every local stakeholder from the territory to promote healthy and sustainable lifestyles.

Organization

G7 members include various local stakeholders, ranging from researchers, civic groups, through entrepreneurs, to citizens cooperation. Organizations are represented through green civic groups (Green Dependent Sustainable Solutions Association, Open Garden Foundation) responsible for awareness raising and education in sustainable food production and consumption or even operating a producer-consumer network for a sustainable local food system distributing organic produce. University researchers (from Szent István University) take part in specific professional programmes and are responsible for the facilitation of the LFS. Solier Café (a meeting place in town offering coffee, confectionery and locally sourced food) is represented in the network by its owner and almost acts as the engine of all activities. Gödölye Social Enterprise integrates the local organic food chain from farm to fork while local community groups (such as the Waldorf Schools, working on principles of anthroposophy) bring in the culture of voluntarism. The main operative member, the Gödöllő Agribusiness Centre Public Benefit Company, is owned by the Szent István University, and the largest agri-food companies of Hungary provide public benefit services for agri-food development and rural communities.

Activities

This broadly open social partnership in the public and private sector anchors joint activities for the benefit of the local community, creating a common platform for shaping the foodscape around Gödöllő. In a self-reflexive workshop the leader of the G7 noted that the groups' aim was to 'learn from the experiments of internal and external others and constantly build networks among these diverse individuals who have skilful access to institutional resources in the public, voluntary and entrepreneur sectors'. These diverse stakeholder aims are channelled through three specific working groups: one concentrating on produce and quality issues, another on locally based marketing and event organization, and a third on local food culture and public food procurement. The network currently uses a blog for its members to communicate, which works as a platform for interaction around healthy lifestyle, where environmentally friendly, regional, organic and vegetarian food issues are promoted. Currently the G7 is developing a database of local food producers in order to match fair-priced, quality, healthy, seasonal produce with local consumer

needs. The LFS is promoting local events: cookery schools, cooking competitions, festivals for local food, harvest festival, gastronomic programmes, or fine dining.

Plans

The collaboration is nurturing the relationships between farmers, processors, restaurants, consumers by promoting local food and direct relations. Through various events, the LFS develops the local food culture by taste-education programmes and several local food schemes (festivals, local food markets, gastronomic events, cookery schools, CSA, buying groups, local food infrastructures, distribution, community gardening projects). A further aim is to develop urban and community gardening projects in the city by bringing together the necessary stakeholders and providing necessary infrastructures to local residents without access to land. Members interested in a school-garden initiative planned the region wide project to teach about sustainable lifestyles and eating. Finally as the ultimate distance aim, the LFS started a competition with children to rethink how school canteens can lead the transformation of public food procurement.

Policies

Local policies also have a crucial role in facilitating local sustainability transitions. The city council has developed various strategic documents concerning housing, employment, town development, tourism, waste management, environmental protection, transport and culture. It is exactly in this context that the G7 initiative would like to shape the direction of the local food system according to the network economy – from the local through to the regional towards the national and global (export-oriented) level. G7 rapidly managed to reach out to the local municipality after a consultation with the mayor who gave the special mandate to G7 by asking their help in shaping the ecotown concept adopted by the municipality in 2006 from a local food focus. G7 planned to organize a series of stakeholder forums to develop a sustainable food strategy with the acknowledgment of the local municipality to complete the ecotown policy with a solid strategy on local food. With the special mandate to integrate local food in urban policy and planning, G7 gained a role in shaping urban food strategy and the procurement practices.

Szekszárd Local Food System

Case Study Area

Szekszárd, with a population of 33 720, is the smallest county (Tolna) capital in Hungary. Connecting the Transdanubian Hills and the Great Hungarian Plain, it has a peculiar transitional character with series of small hills and valleys. Even if Szekszárd is the seat of the county and the micro-region, its geographical potential for bridging external ties (being 50 km from Budapest and 50 km from Croatia) was not fully realized (Szekszárd MJV IVS, 2007). Szekszárd is famous for its meat and milk factories, and for many decades experienced the difficulties of extensive Socialist industrialization, which also facilitated its rapid urbanization. After the political transitions, only the service industries, trade and tourism sector managed to survive. Today,

consumers will find seven conventional farmers' markets in Tolna county. Szekszárd preserved in part the continuity of its food tradition since small-scale farmers recreated their food heritage. Recent research also noted that lost opportunities in local economic regeneration are unmistakably rooted in the lack of institutionalized cooperation between local municipalities and local businesses (Kabai et al., 2012).

Trajectory of the Initiative

The Szekszárd LFS was developed by Eco-Sensus Non-profit Ltd, comprising food producers and experts in the Szekszárd wine region, extending to 26 settlements around 20 km of the town. The geographical boundaries delimiting the LFS followed the boundaries of the famous Szekszárd wine region. The main aim of the LFS has been to bring local consumers closer to agriculture, by creating a point of sale and a community-based enterprise for local food. Moreover, the LFS showcases agricultural product diversity, ranging from salami, flour, honey, through to paprika, sunflower oil, jams and cheese in a region principally famous for its red wine. As a main aim of the LFS, the abundance and full range of local food supply needs to be present in a community-based local food shop, where programmes help create a culture of local food identity and a new sense of community with the local farmers. In an effort to enhance democratic access to local food heritage, and to make local food knowledge accessible to lower income consumers, the LFS started regional branding in the community-based local food shop and started to present basic and seasonal products that can be found in the region presently accessible only to the connoisseurs. A further aim is to help local producers in their direct sales by further developing their marketing skills.

Organization

This partnership was formed by urban intellectuals, who had strong personal ties to the region as well as many professional contacts outside the region. The main engine of the organization is an agricultural economist with solid theoretical and practical experience and with farming and processing experience in the family. His intermediary role enabled the LFS to develop new knowledge for planning such a complex project on urban–rural relations, effectively consulting with and gaining support from policymakers, authorities, and local stakeholders. Through several meetings in 2010 with stakeholders from the territory, the leader of the initiative managed to focus the LFS's objective to create a localized food system by building stronger connections between local farming and food supply sectors. As a main tool for shortening the distance towards consumers, a new purchasing infrastructure development and systemic mapping of the desirable elements of a local agri-food landscape were planned.

Activities

From the first survey on local food issues, it became clear that access to local products is very limited, so from the very beginning the LFS organized awareness-raising campaigns for local consumers about the quality and multiple benefits of local products. As a key message, the local food marketing campaign underlined environ-

mental benefits of buying local foods (transport cost savings, fewer emissions). As a result, local consumers buy and eat more local produce. During a second cycle, local consumers and producers started to develop together a directory of local food producers and recipes of regional dishes, quality gastronomic products. A new type of local food trademark was developed for food rooted in the region. As a further step they started a local community food shop that is serving as a point of sale for locally produced food and that, by promoting local quality products, can also be used for further awareness raising about local food issues and re-socialization of consumers.

Plans

The key feature of the LFS is to transform the agro-economic image of the region and to strengthen ecologically sound, small-scale production. The LFS aims to create benefits on both sides: for the producers it provides a stable market through a community-based shop, for the consumers it offers the best available, ecologically sound, quality food from the region. From the very beginning these plans faced a paradox. On the one hand, the LFS encourages more sustainable consumption patterns and initiates a consumer–producer reconnection through campaigns (or knowledge fixes such as the local food label) whereas, on the other hand, local consumer demand for local food cannot be easily served from local produce. In these circumstances, the LFS first turned to event-based communication and a behaviour-change campaign to raise awareness about the environmental impact of local food purchase, and later started to initiate a complex project to create a sense of community with the farmers. This aspect was clearly pointed out by the leader of the local food shop:

‘These products are handled only here in our locality. Consumers are more and more attracted by important production-related information. If channelled through this local speciality food shop a constant and valuable point of information and sale could be established, a convivial place for exchange on the produce origin, process methods, serving tips.’

Policies

The initiative gained substantive support at the seed phase from the European Regional Development Fund for campaigning about sustainable food consumption and production, for developing the necessary local food infrastructures and schemes, and for organizing collective marketing and quality assurance of local quality products. Later, institutional support at the local level was provided by the Hungarian National Rural Network in the form of short-term technical assistance and advice on good practices, training to develop knowledge for further development.

Discussion: Farmers and Consumers

Since LSFs are conceptualized mainly as links between farmers and consumers (Feenstra, 2002; Renting et al., 2003; Holloway et al., 2007), in the following I will discuss original research data collected on both farmers and consumers in their LFS contexts.

The willingness and capability of farmers to join LFSs is very much context dependent. In the G7 case, actors have been gathering positive feedback when recruiting farmers to the LFS for off-farm sales. Clearly, for many producers the seasonality determines which supply channel they rely on. Farmers' markets offer the most convenient off-farm sale opportunity; although for many small-scale producers stall fees are too high, and, indeed, older farmers do not like the convivial arenas of farmers' markets. In these circumstances, small-scale farmers often gain autonomy by selling their produce directly on-farm. Some farmers cannot extend the season by processing, do not want or are not capable of extending their activities with marketing. Very often older producers work completely alone, and are unable to find a farm successor. Still, they normally appreciate the G7 initiative and want to keep a weak tie to the LFS.

In Szekszárd, a supplier-side survey preceded the development of a local vendors' network, which helped reconnection of actors in various supply chains in the 26 settlements. The database of 200 local farmers became the raw material of an exemplary guidebook in which the LFS is presented through the local food producers' profiles and their quality products. However, the benefits of the local quality certification system are hard to communicate to farmers. As the leader of the shop described:

'It is tough here with some growers and winemakers. We need to explain that we do not need the leftovers from the local market. I remind them regularly of the values of our locality, which they keep forgetting when they are negotiating with players in the conventional agri-food system. We challenge well-established relationships and attempt to send a signal about how they can support their locality.'

Thus, local farmers are encouraged to qualify for the local food label based on criteria developed and constantly fine-tuned in a participatory way through local stakeholder workshops. Local farmers are also presented on a special website dedicated to their produce and the local food shop. By introducing the quality label for local farmers, both the supply and the demand side will get the opportunity to take part in a mutual and trust-based relationship around food.

As for consumer preferences, surveys of the G7 are based on a target group-specific, online data gathering (223 respondents) planned by the author in 2010 and organized in Gödöllő and its region about organic farming, veganism, healthy food choices. Responses are indicative of the beliefs of consumers' purchasing behaviour, rather than actual metered data. Consumer attitudes towards food purchasing reflect the most important environmental and health concerns in the target group of the initiative. Origin of food, place of buying and the personal relationship with the producer is decisive for almost every consumer (90%). Many respondents were vegetarians (three times more than the average European proportion) and they rejected convenience food almost unanimously. Some perceive this exclusivity of the LFS as narrowing its focus too much on the healthy diets of the privileged – as one consumer asked in the questionnaire: 'If I am not vegetarian, am I no longer interesting?'

Not surprisingly, the main consumer concerns around buying food were health (50%), environment (33%) and animal welfare (10%). While the survey recorded a general sense of loss of control of the food eaten, three fifths of respondents still believed that they had the opportunity to eat healthy food. The main problem is accessing appropriate food constituents for a fair price, as some respondents noted: 'I

cannot afford what I would like to eat' and 'The price of organics is unreal'. In these circumstances, three quarters of the respondents would be ready to join an initiative that aims to shape the local food system.

Buying fruit and vegetables is mainly (four out of five) happening at the local market, and local smaller shops, whereas only every fifth consumer buys directly from the farmer. One third of the respondents practise food self-provisioning and grow their own produce in their gardens. Four fifths follow seasonal choices. The terms 'organic' and 'outdoor growing' are clear to the customers, but the meaning of other terms such as 'firstlings', 'reform eating', 'natural food' are much more uncertain. Two thirds of respondents are organic buyers and need more information on local farmers and the availability of seasonal food. Finally, when looking at the benefit side, respondents mention the health benefits of local organic food and most often note that (by buying through SFSCs) 'we do not poison ourselves'.

In 2010 the author also planned for the benefit of the Szekszárd LFS a representative consumer survey in Tolna county (n=533) on the main characteristics of local food consumption and the willingness to buy local produce (<<http://www.tolnaitemek.hu>>, accessed 31 July 2012). Sampling and weighing procedures were provided by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. The main finding of the survey is the clear profile of the typical food buyer of the region, who is a middle-aged woman with secondary education residing in one of the middle-sized towns of the county with at least one child and one income earner. Consumers are keen to trust local food although the concept of 'what is local' is unclear. If consumers use the term at all, they rather understand 'locally purchased' instead of 'locally produced' and associate it with safety. Urban consumers prefer local shops, while families with kids prefer farmers' markets. In rural areas a high proportion of food self-provisioning has been traced. One third of the total population of Tolna County consumes predominantly local food. While 98% believes that organic food means meat-free food, one in four consumers buys organic products – typically the younger, more educated, higher income groups. The decisive consumer demand for local food is related to the more educated, younger, urban consumers with families. Food origin is overly important in this locavore⁵ group, and they put their trust in local food as much as that they buy in local shops. Two fifths of them buy organic food, and frequently engage in solidarity purchasing. As for food buying venues, local shops are the most popular (72%), while supermarkets are frequented by only 18%, typically belonging to the older generations, and 10% prefers farmers market. In 2011, a representative survey of 257 respondents was replicated in the concentrated area around Szekszárd (the wine region) to investigate consumer awareness of local food specificities. The findings again point to a remarkable group (47%) of rather urban, better-educated, high-income strata of conscious consumers, who are willing to pay extra for local food.

In summary, the main finding of the nature of consumer–producer relations is that in practice LFSs are socially, spatially, culturally quite clearly delineated. As for the farmers, there is some evidence that LFSs provide viable opportunity for farmers with a unique preference for off-farm sales in proximity. In this sense, increasing demand for quality produce has a role in maintaining locally distinctive, traditional and artisanal skills of producers. In these circumstances, the success of LFS initiatives depends to a large extent on how local producers are capable of catering to place-based consumer demand. Again case studies demonstrate that through sales in proximity small-scale farmers can link with a circle of locally resident customers if

they are concerned about social and environmental values of produce. On the other hand consumer surveys in both case studies demonstrated that practices in relation to local food are quite complex. Even if the concept of local food is misleading for the average consumer, LFSs attract urban, better-educated, high-income groups of conscious consumers, with child and disposable income, who are willing to pay extra for local food. Consumers attracted by LFSs often act in solidarity with producers and mostly support these LFSs for health, environmental and ethical reasons. Local in this context means healthy, better quality, freshness. Overall, there seems to be a strong consumer interest in local produce, but there is also a lack of availability of such produce. Hence, LFSs need to develop in a way to help organizing better physical or financial access to local produce.

Summary and Conclusion

The results presented in this article indicate four very main findings related to the focus of research.

1. A new generation of civic-led LFSs cultivate in Hungary complex local food agendas in urban settings and build on extended collaborative networks of producers–consumers and stakeholders. Similarly to Western-European examples, these food relocalization initiatives are driven and mostly supported by urban customers and promote social and environmental values (Fonte, 2008; Karner et al., 2010). Clearly, the initiatives are centred around non-profit activities and perform collective actions to sustain producers' livelihoods, revitalizing linkages between agriculture and society (Marsden, 2000). Both cases demonstrate that in post-Socialist contexts new emerging types of LFSs develop through meaningful collaboration within the local food sector. As the concept of intermediaries also assumes creating demand for local purchasing, providing logistics, developing labelling schemes, LFSs build up a new social-business model on the ethical principles of sustainability and local cultural heritage. In all these respects, my case study examples belong to the 'second generation' of local food initiatives in Hungary, which benefited from the better regulatory context since 2006, and could take active part in the social debate around food and agriculture. As part of the emerging local food movement in Hungary, both initiatives actively build bridges with the alliance of civic food networks created in the regulatory fights of 2009–2010 (Karner et al., 2010). It is also important to recognize here that both initiatives promote quality criteria related to environmental and health benefits of local food (Winter, 2003).
2. The case studies highlight the distinguished role of urban intellectuals as drivers for LFS. LFS operators are relying on personal, in-kind investments but also are able to gain public funding and community support. Being the engines of the LFSs and well-known figures in their locality with respectable managerial skills, they managed to build strong local community ties to maintain the dynamic internal operation of networks. Through their long-term personal involvement, LFS development has great potential in shaping the culture of socially innovative local cooperation and to further missing values in post-Socialist Hungary, such as integration of various interest groups, building a new sense of community, reinventing local traditions, preserving the value-centred professionalism and community-based character of LFSs.

3. Beyond the complexity and dynamism of the initiatives a concise and generalizable 'toolbox' methodology could be identified for developing LFSs. After systematic mapping of local stakeholders and geographical delimitation, LFSs need to analyse the socio-economic characteristics of local production and consumption. Building place-based agri-food marketing on stakeholder intuition and local contextual knowledge, territorial branding and labelling can be planned. Producer databases and consumer surveys are helpful in finding adequate engagement strategies. Event organization, active communication in the local community develops organizational capabilities, whereas rather solid legal-technical knowledge is necessary for the provision of logistics coupled with non-profit organizational management skills. Furthermore, conscious planning of the LFSs requires constant feedback and evaluation from the extended stakeholder groups. In these respects both initiatives require much more professionalization for future success, and timely institutional support would be essential without disproportionate administrative and financial burdens.
4. As a self-referential lesson, this research also acknowledges the critical role of the researcher and my own research in providing vital support for the development of local food initiatives. While investigating consumer willingness to buy local food or the role of food champions in organizing events, or meeting with stakeholders, the researcher also helps the translation process and knowledge sharing among these and other external actors (producers, consumers, manufacturers, retailers, decision-makers). Research also had a role in identifying local intermediaries who can shape LFS development standards (quality criteria, advertising, logos, labels, and regional trademarks). By taking part in stakeholder workshops, critical researchers might support the fruitful integration of local-lay and expert-scientific knowledge forms but also point to capabilities needed to solve legal, production, management, commercial difficulties in the LFSs. Further research would be required to gain more recognition for LFS's contributions to a sustainable and accessible quality food supply, as well as to point out how traditional skills and different types of knowledge are cultivated to develop LFSs. Practice-oriented research settings could be cooperatively developed with the beneficiaries and performed as a translation process and knowledge-sharing exercise among diverse territorial stakeholders.

Notes

1. SUS-CHAIN (<<http://www.sus-chain.org>>) – Marketing Sustainable Agriculture: an analysis of the potential role of new food supply chains in sustainable rural development; COFAMI (<<http://www.cofami.org>>) – Encouraging Collective Farmers Marketing Initiatives; FAAN (<<http://www.faanweb.eu>>): Facilitating Alternative Agro-food Networks – stakeholder perspectives on research needs.
2. Research questions and analytical approaches of this chapter build on two specific EU projects that shaped the focus of the case studies: the CONVERGE project (Rethinking Globalisation in the light of Contractions and CONVERGence, <<http://www.convergeproject.org>>) looked at policies that simultaneously handle global equity and ecological sustainability, investigated how communities contribute to the goal of global equity and greater social fairness within biophysical planetary boundaries; the FAAN project (Facilitating Alternative Agro-Food Networks: stakeholder perspectives on research needs, <<http://www.faanweb.eu>>) examined the main benefits of LFSs and how various policies and stakeholder strategies strengthen LFSs.
3. For example, see regulation on markets and fairs – 55/2009, regulation on small scale producers – 52/2010, and the hygienic and food safety regulation on local farmers markets – 51/2012.
4. Consumer survey findings in this case-study research are based on 223 respondents from Gödöllő and its region with online access, as well as on representative surveys of 533 and 257 respondents in

Szekszárd. The online methodology is limited in that it provides a perspective only on the habits of existing Internet users, not of the total population of local consumers. In the Gödöllő case, the specific online survey responses of the target group are indicative of the beliefs about consumers purchasing behaviour, rather than actual metered data.

5. A locavore is defined as a person whose diet consists only or principally of locally grown or produced food (Oxford Word Of The Year: Locavore - <http://blog.oup.com/2007/11/locavore/>).

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Appendix

Table A1. Summary description of the case studies.

Details	Szekszárd	Gödöllő
Characteristics of the locality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • medium-sized town, Transdanubian hills with long tradition of growing grapes • severe socio-demographic decline • extensive outskirts (cascade of vineyards) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • medium-sized town with a solid agri-background • unprecedented demographic increase • suburbanization, in- and out-mobility for work
Socio-political vision, strategic orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • localized urban food system focusing on quality products' origin • strong connections between local agricultural and food supply sectors • attribute a place-based identity to products and create new meeting places, access to local products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote healthy and sustainable lifestyle for the peri-urban population • facilitate direct relations of local producers and consumers, a network of local food supply schemes • maintenance of former agricultural landscape and remaining small scale farming with conscious food planning
Data sources, methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • key informants: academics, officials, consumers • target group specific consumer survey, May and Nov 2010 • group discussion: staff and customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interviews: extended network members • survey: 2010 April online questionnaire • workshop: participants of the network
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • centred around a community-based local food shop and quality label 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • network of citizens, organised voluntarily
Social impacts, activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaboration of food producers and experts in the Szekszárd vine region (20 km surrounding) • promotion of environmentally friendly, regional food • directory of local food producers and recipes of regional dishes, quality gastronomic products • introduction of local food quality trademark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working groups: produce and quality, marketing and event organization, food culture and public procurement • blog, email list as a platform for interaction • promotion of environmentally friendly, local, organic, vegetarian food • database of local food producers, match seasonal produce and local consumers' needs



The 2008 Food Crisis as a Critical Event for the Food Sovereignty and Food Justice Movements

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[Paper first received, 7 March 2012; in final form, 6 July 2012]

Abstract. As a reaction to the 2008 food crisis, a diverse group of US-based organizations formed a multi-sectoral coalition to promote food sovereignty. How did the 2008 food crisis unify these diverse groups? How did different groups with different agendas find a common cause in food sovereignty? I draw on social movement theory to explain the formation of the coalition and show how its member groups have sought to strengthen its capacity, formulate a coherent message, and jointly campaign for change in food and agriculture policy. I find that a number of variables explain these processes: heightened threats and expanding opportunities encourage initial joint mobilization, while pre-existing ties and trust, organizational flexibility, and frame alignment help expand the membership and capacity of the coalition.

Introduction

'Food prices at dangerous levels, says World Bank', 'Food prices hit new record highs, says UN food agency', 'Food prices: World Bank warns millions face poverty' – these are just a few of the news stories pertaining to the global food price crisis and its effects on the world's poor published on the BBC news website in early 2011.¹ In 2011 food price levels approached the peak prices of 2008 (World Bank, 2011), when a global food price crisis plunged many of the world's poor into deeper poverty. The 2008 crisis sparked much debate and initiatives in government circles, at international organizations and in the NGO community. The 2011 crisis renewed these debates and made clear that agriculture and food are critical issues that will continue to be on the global policy agenda. This article concentrates on the 2008 global food crisis as a focusing or critical event and on its effect on social movement mobilization and movement building in the United States.

Social movement theorists have examined the impact of critical or focusing events on social movement mobilization. They have argued that these types of events can increase or decrease issue salience, focus public attention on (or shift it away from) specific issues and causes, and facilitate coalition building among social movement organizations (SMOs). Critical or focusing events can thereby expand or limit the resources as well as the political and tactical opportunities available to social movement participants to press their claims and advance their goals. SMOs, however,

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vary in their ability to use critical events to promote their agendas, and some SMOs are more adept than others in doing so due to the nature of their organizational structure and the collective action frames they develop. In other words, organizational and other variables influence the ability of SMOs to seize the opportunities that critical events create and to use these events to press their claims and policy demands (Staggenborg, 1993).

This article applies the relatively small sociological literature on critical events and their significance for social movements to the 2008 food price crisis and the food justice and food sovereignty movements in the United States. As a reaction to the 2008 global food price crisis, a diverse group of SMOs formed the US Working Group on the Food Crisis (Working Group) in the spring of 2008. In 2010 the US Food Sovereignty Alliance (USFSA), a multi-sectoral coalition that grew out of the Working Group, was formed. How did the 2008 food crisis unify the many different groups that established the Working Group? How did different SMOs with different agendas and areas of focus find a common theme and cause in food justice and food sovereignty? How did they form coalitions, bridge their differences, and unify their agendas? How did they engage in a process of movement building? And what are the important issues in the US-based food sovereignty movement? These are the questions that I will explore in this article. I draw on social movement theory to explain the formation of the coalition and show how its member groups have sought to strengthen its capacity, formulate a coherent message, and campaign jointly for change in food and agriculture policy. I find that a number of variables explain these processes: heightened threats and expanding opportunities encourage initial joint mobilization, while pre-existing ties and trust, organizational flexibility, and frame alignment help expand membership and capacity of the coalition.

The findings of this article make two contributions to the literature. First, they improve our understanding of the significance of critical events for social movement mobilization, which is still an understudied topic in the social movement literature. Second, they expand our knowledge of the food sovereignty movement in the United States, a relatively recent movement that has not been fully researched and documented yet.

The remainder of the article is divided into four sections. The first section reviews the literature on focusing or critical events and their significance for social movement organizations and introduces the theoretical framework that will inform the analysis of the food sovereignty movement. The second section introduces the food justice and sovereignty movements and provides an overview of their goals and agendas. The third section describes the meaning and significance of food sovereignty and the food sovereignty movement in the US. The fourth section discusses the effect of the global food crisis on this movement, applying the theoretical arguments reviewed in the first section to food activism in the US since 2008. Much of the information included in the fourth section was collected in interviews with some of the individuals who have been most involved in the Working Group and in the USFSA since the very beginning and are therefore in a particularly good position to offer information about and insights into the movement building process. Finally, the conclusion of the article summarizes the key findings of this research and points to opportunities for further research.

Critical Events and Social Movement Mobilization: A Review of the Relevant Theoretical Literature

A critical event or a focusing event can be described as 'an event that is sudden; relatively uncommon; can be reasonably defined as harmful or revealing the possibility of potential greater future harms; has harms that are concentrated in a particular geographical area or community of interest; and that is known to policy makers and the public simultaneously' (Birkland, 1998, p. 54). Staggenborg distinguishes between six different types of critical events, including large-scale socio-economic and political events, natural disasters and epidemics, and accidents (Staggenborg, 1993). Following much earlier research, Staggenborg explains that large-scale events include events that significantly expand and deepen grievances, and she mentions specifically 'a change in social conditions, such as a food shortage or price increase' (Staggenborg, 1993, p. 323) as an example of this type of critical event. She also explains that large-scale unfavourable and adverse critical events affect mobilization because they can increase issue salience, bring more attention to a social problem, and enhance both a movement's visibility and receptiveness to its cause and agenda.²

These theoretical arguments about the impact of critical events dovetail with arguments about the impact of threats to social movement goals on the formation of coalitions between SMOs. Social movement scholars have found that threats to social movement goals, such as political setbacks, legal setbacks, the prospect of unfavourable policies, circumstances that interfere with reaching their goals, or common opponents or targets create incentives for organizations to form coalitions or alliances (Staggenborg, 1986; McCammon and Campbell, 2002; Van Dyke, 2003). In a study of the literature on coalition formation, McCammon and Van Dyke conclude that the existence of threats is one of the two most important variables that explain coalition formation (the second one being ideological convergence, which is discussed below) (McCammon and Van Dyke, 2010). This is so because threats can sometimes create difficulties and challenges for SMOs that in turn create incentives for them to try different strategies, including coalition work, and to take the risks and incur the costs that coalition work may entail (McCammon and Campbell, 2002). Adverse critical events can be seen as circumstances that encourage coalition work and, as I show below, there have been several developments during and in the aftermath of the 2008 global food crisis that represent threats to the food justice and sovereignty agenda and can help us understand the formation of the Working Group and the USFSA.

Threats, however, can also combine with political opportunities to set the stage for coalition formation (McCammon and Van Dyke, 2010; Reese et al., 2010). As mentioned above, students of social movements have argued that critical events can be seen as one dimension of the political opportunity structure (POS) (Ramos, 2008) and that they can change the opportunities available for mobilization (Staggenborg, 1993). To put this a little differently, critical events can 'open a window of opportunity for alternative policy images to compete for agenda space' (Wood, 2006, p. 433). However, not all groups and SMOs are equally effective in harnessing the opportunities created by a critical event to mobilize and call for policy change, and their ability to use new opportunities for mobilization rests in part on their organizational structure and their capacity to form cohesive coalitions (Staggenborg, 1993; Birkland, 1998). In addition, critical events do not have inherent meanings. Rather, they can be defined and interpreted in different ways, and the meanings that are ascribed to them, i.e. the ways they are framed, have an impact on the policy responses (Wood, 2006). Staggenborg's conclusions in her study of critical events and pro-choice SMOs

sums this up succinctly. She explains that 'we need to study the organizational structures and framing activities that mediate between events and their impacts in order to develop a theory of the role of critical events in social movements' (Staggenborg, 1993, p. 341; for a similar point, see Reese et al., 2010).

Explaining Movement and Coalition Building: Organizational and Cultural Factors

It is helpful to think about organizational capacity and framing in terms of Gerhards and Rucht's conceptualization of meso-mobilization (Gerhards and Rucht, 1992). They explain that micro-mobilization actors can mobilize individuals to participate in a social movement, but these actors themselves are not connected to one another and often do not coordinate their work. To work jointly on issues of common interest or concern, these micro-mobilization groups must be joined together in a cohesive and well-coordinated campaign. Meso-mobilization actors serve that function: they integrate and mobilize micro-mobilization groups around a specific issue or cause, and these groups in turn mobilize individuals around that cause (Gerhards and Rucht, 1992, p. 558). Successful and effective meso-mobilization requires structural/organizational integration, which entails linking groups to one another, finding resources, and planning activities and campaigns, as well as cultural integration, which entails developing joint understandings, definitions and interpretations of the issue around which meso-mobilization (and later micro-mobilization) occurs (Gerhards and Rucht, 1992, p. 558–559). Members of the Working Group and the USFSA, some of whom represent grass-roots groups and other constituencies, can be viewed as micro-mobilization actors, who are coming together in a process of meso-mobilization to form a coalition.

Organizational Integration

In the cases of the two campaigns Gerhards and Rucht study, successful structural and organizational integration was possible for a number of reasons of which I highlight a few. Meso- and micro-mobilization actors had established ties, formed networks, and cooperated on other campaigns prior to their effort to coordinate the protest events Gerhards and Rucht study. Meso-mobilization actors were also organizationally flexible and ideologically diverse, which made for an open meso-mobilization process that could incorporate a diversity of groups. That process also benefited greatly from the professionalism and experience of the organizers who led it and from their effective division of labour (Gerhards and Rucht, 1992, pp. 569–572).

Later research presents findings that echo and are consistent with these arguments about organizational integration. For example, recent research has found that even though pre-existing ties are not necessary or sufficient conditions for coalition work, pre-existing ties between different groups can foster trust and communication as well as support and facilitate coalition formation when threats or ideological convergence are present (McCammon and Van Dyke, 2010, p. 298). More specifically, prior personal contacts, working relationships, and involvement and membership in the same professional networks help individuals develop trust and confidence in the reliability of other coalition members, which in turn can help generate credible com-

mitments and a willingness to jointly work in a coalition, mobilize rapidly, and come to a solid consensus about the objectives and tactics of the coalition (Levi and Murphy, 2006; Corrigan-Brown and Meyer, 2010). We have evidence that the recruitment of individuals and groups to join a coalition and the decisions of groups to become a coalition member rest on past cooperation and significant levels of pre-existing trust (Corrigan-Brown and Meyer, 2010). Similarly, there is also evidence indicating that broad-based coalitions are mobilized when activists tap into a pre-existing social movement infrastructure, networks, and ties that developed in earlier campaigns (Reese et al., 2010).

Cultural Integration

Successful cultural integration requires developing effective collective action frames (Gerhards and Rucht, 1992). To form broad-based coalitions and campaigns that bring together diverse groups, meso-mobilization actors must do 'meaning work' (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 613), and this meaning work entails constructing frames, which are 'action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization' (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 614). Frames have a diagnostic dimension that defines an issue or problem and identifies its cause, a prognostic dimension that proposes a solution to the problem, and a motivational dimension that calls on individuals to participate in social movements to remedy the problem (Gerhards and Rucht, 1992, pp. 579–584; Benford and Snow, 2000, pp. 615–618). Each micro-mobilization actor has its own collective action frame, and a key task for the meso-mobilization process is to develop a master frame that can integrate a large number of these groups. The wider the range of issues or problems included in a master frame, the larger the number of groups whose causes and agendas can be accommodated by the frame and who can therefore be mobilized, as long as the frame remains cohesive and plausible (Gerhards and Rucht, 1992, p. 580). In conjunction with frame bridging, which is a process by which groups link their own frames to a separate but ideologically compatible master frame, developing a compelling master frame is a key part of meso-mobilization (Snow et al., 1986, p. 467; Gerhards and Rucht, 1992, p. 584). Recent research on coalition formation has generated findings that suggest that a common ideology is one of the two most important factors that explain coalition formation, the other factor being the existence of threats (McCammon and Van Dyke, 2010). While master frames in some ways presuppose some basic ideological compatibility, the process of creating a joint frame can help SMOs overcome some of their ideological differences (Staggenborg, 2010, pp. 324–325).

The Food Justice and Food Sovereignty Movements: An Overview

Food sovereignty overlaps with food justice, but goes beyond it. Eric Holt-Giménez describes the food justice movement as progressive and the food sovereignty movement as radical. He explains that 'some actors within the growing global food movement have a radical critique of the corporate food regime, calling for food sovereignty and structural, redistributive reforms including land, water and markets. Others advance a progressive, food justice agenda calling for access to healthy food by marginalized groups defined by race, gender and economic status' (Holt-Giménez

nez, 2010, p. 2). In other words, while the progressive food justice movement often focuses its organizing work on the local level and calls for local change within the parameters of the existing global food regime, the radical food sovereignty movement has a more global orientation, challenges the global food regime, and calls for fundamental change in food and agriculture policy (Holt-Giménez and Shattuck, 2011). However, it is also important to note that the food justice and food sovereignty movements overlap and include many groups that straddle these two camps (Holt-Giménez and Shattuck, 2011), and some of the activists and community leaders involved in food justice work see clear and deep connections between the work that they do and the broader global food sovereignty movement (Schiavoni, 2009). In addition, the two movements are considered as two trends of the civil society-driven food movement and distinguished from the corporate food regime, which is driven by agri-food corporations, G8 governments, and international financial and economic institutions and is essentially neo-liberal even if some of its actors and institutions call for relatively limited reforms (Holt-Giménez and Shattuck, 2011).

The food justice movement's goal is 'to transform where, what, and how food is grown, produced, transported, accessed, and eaten' (Gottlieb and Joshi, 2010, p. 5) and to ensure that the risks and benefits of all aspects of the food system are shared equitably (Gottlieb and Joshi, 2010, p. 6). The concept of food justice also entails 'an ethic of place regarding the land, the air, the water, the plants, the animals, and the environment' (Gottlieb and Joshi, 2010, p. 223).

Food sovereignty was defined in the Declaration of Nyéléni, which was adopted in 2007 by the first global forum on food sovereignty, a gathering of hundreds of representatives of organizations that are part of the food sovereignty movement. The forum defined the concept of food sovereignty as follows:

'Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations.'³

Food sovereignty activists have provided analyses of the 2008 global food crisis. They distinguish between proximate causes and long-term root causes of the crisis (Bello, 2008; Holt-Giménez, 2008; Patel, 2008; Rosset, 2008). Proximate causes of the crisis include agrofuels, which divert some of the agricultural land and agricultural production away from food crops, the increase of the price of oil, which affects both the transportation of food as well as the cost of manufacturing fertilizer, the increase in meat consumption, which diverts some of the world's grain production to industrial feedlots, and droughts.

The long-term causes of the global food crisis have unfolded over a long time, and many of the policy recommendations put forward by food sovereignty activists are based on their analysis of these root causes of the global food system crisis. One of the root causes lies in the structural adjustment programs (SAPs) that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund required a significant number of developing countries to implement in the 1980s and 1990s. As part of these packages of neo-liberal economic reforms, developing countries were asked to reduce their spending, and this entailed a significant reduction in spending on agriculture and the dismantlement of agricultural programmes, such as price supports, marketing boards, technical assistance, and credit (Bello, 2008; Holt-Giménez, 2008; Rosset,

2008). In addition, SAPs entailed an emphasis on growing export crops as opposed to food crops. Food sovereignty activists also point to trade liberalization and NAFTA and WTO requirements that developing countries eliminate trade barriers in the agricultural sector, while countries in the Global North were not required to eliminate their substantial agricultural subsidies for large farms, which had a profound and negative effect on the viability of agriculture in the South and of family farms in the North (Bello, 2008; Holt-Giménez, 2008; Martínez-Torres and Rosset, 2010). Together, these policies resulted in the decline of the agricultural sectors of developing countries and the worsening of food insecurity, culminating in the global food crisis in 2008. Besides the SAPs, international financial institutions, together with some governments, have promoted the deregulation of the food and agricultural sector, which in turn led to growing corporate concentration in these sectors. Corporate concentration has had adverse implications and consequences for producers and farm workers and for poverty reduction efforts (Murphy, 2008).

In addition, food sovereignty activists also point to the green revolution as another long-term cause of the decline in agriculture in the Global South. They explain that input-intensive agriculture, which was promoted during the green revolution, led to the exacerbation of poverty and inequality, diminished soil quality, the loss of agro-biodiversity, and diminished water tables, and for these reasons they oppose the continuation of this model of agriculture and development (Holt-Giménez, 2008; Kerssen, 2009). Activists also point out that this model of agricultural development put control over green revolution seeds in the hands of corporations, which is another issue that activists are concerned about. They argue that the current food system concentrates power and profits in a relatively small number of large agrifood corporations, making them the beneficiaries of the current system and its crises (Bello, 2008; Holt-Giménez, 2008; Murphy, 2008).

Based on the notion of food sovereignty as 'the right of people to determine their own food and agricultural policies' (Schiavoni, 2009, p. 682) and 'the right of democratic control over food and food-producing resources' (Holt-Giménez and Shattuck, 2011, p. 128), food sovereignty activists develop a set of demands and policy recommendations. First, they call for the localization of food production and for excluding agriculture from the global trade regime (Holt-Giménez, 2008; Martínez-Torres and Rosset, 2010).⁴ The food sovereignty paradigm is based on a 'vision of an international agricultural economy composed of diverse national agricultural economies trading with one another but focused primarily on domestic production' (Bello, 2008, p. 454). In addition, the food sovereignty paradigm puts control over land, seed, water, fish stocks, and pastures in the hands of local food producers (as opposed to agri-food corporations) and relies on these producers and their traditional agricultural knowledge and skills to manage these resources and the local food system in socially and environmentally sustainable ways (Martínez-Torres and Rosset, 2010).⁵ This entails fundamental agrarian reform that allows small-scale farmers and peasants to access land, water and other natural resources. It also requires an end to the land grabbing of recent years, i.e. the acquisition of land in the Global South through purchases or long-term leasing agreements by governments, who use it to enhance their food security and insulate themselves from the volatility of commodity prices, and private investors, who are motivated by the demand for agrofuels and high commodity prices to seek investment opportunities in agriculture (La Via Campesina, 2009, pp. 130–133; Food First, 2010).

Second, food sovereignty activists call for policies that enhance food security, create stable food prices as well as food systems that are fair to producers and consumers of food. This goal entails reinstating grain reserves and support programmes, including floor prices, credits, and marketing boards (Holt-Giménez, 2008; Rosset, 2008). It also entails the use of low-input agro-ecological practices that are based on traditional farming knowledge (La Via Campesina, 2009, pp. 182–190; Martínez-Torres and Rosset, 2010) and a return to the model of autonomous, peasant-based and smallholder and family farming, a model that incorporates many of the goals and cornerstones of the food sovereignty paradigm and is described as a form of agricultural production that ‘is socially just, respects the identity and knowledge of communities, prioritizes local and domestic markets and strengthens the autonomy of people and communities’ (La Via Campesina, 2009, p. 182). According to food sovereignty activists, family and peasant farming is productive, sustainable and geared towards food production, unlike large industrial monocultures that are input-intensive and produce crops for export and for agrofuels (Rosset, 2008).

The Food Justice and Food Sovereignty Movements in the United States: An Overview

To understand the food sovereignty movement in the United States, it is important to establish the context within which the USFSA formed. While the US-based food sovereignty movement is part of the global movement and shares the food system analysis and the policy goals described above with many food sovereignty groups around the world, the USFSA brought together groups that had been working on food justice and food sovereignty issues before the 2008 crisis and the formation of the USFSA in 2010 and the effort to connect with the global movement. While some of these groups had an international focus, some focused specifically on food system issues in the US. This section focuses on some of the key issues for the US-based food movement: food deserts and urban agriculture, the racial inequalities that manifest themselves through the food system, and the rights and working conditions of food chain workers. By spotlighting these issues and some of the work that is being done to address them, this section helps to establish the context in which the USFSA coalesced and to describe food sovereignty and its meaning in the US context.

These two examples were chosen because they illustrate one of the important priorities of the food sovereignty movement in the US, namely, the empowerment of communities of colour, the poor, and other communities that are most impacted by the inequalities that manifest themselves in the food system. As Julie Guthman has demonstrated, the alternative food movement in the US, which includes the urban agriculture, local and organic food, and community food security movements, has reflected white cultural histories, which has limited its resonance with people of colour (Guthman, 2008a). For example, the term ‘organic’ has racial connotations, while the enthusiasm surrounding ‘putting your hands in the soil’ or ‘getting your hands dirty’ is ‘insensitive to a racialized history of agrarian land and labor relationships in the US’, especially that ‘farming in the US continues to be based on white land ownership and non-white labor, with its persistent and well-documented injustices of various kinds’ (Guthman, 2008a, p. 435). Guthman also describes the ‘missionary zeal’ and the ‘messianic disposition’ (Guthman, 2008a, p. 436; see also Guthman, 2008b, p. 388) of the alternative food movement and likens the ethos that underlies its efforts to make fresh, healthy food available in poor urban communities and

to educate these communities about farming and healthy diets to that of colonial projects (Guthman, 2008a). These efforts to involve people of colour in the alternative food movement reflect a sense of universal validity of the values and ideals of growing and consuming local, organic and fresh foods that inspire the predominantly white alternative food movement and the desire to convert people of colour to these ideals by educating them about food (Guthman, 2008b). This is problematic as it renders the alternative food movement uninviting to people of colour, whose lack of participation in the movement is then attributed to their lack of knowledge and education about good food, with no attention given to the structural barriers and inequalities that hinder their participation (Guthman, 2008b). The two examples below illustrate efforts to allow poor communities and communities of colour that bear the brunt of food injustices to play a leadership role in transforming the food system, which is a key priority for the USFSA and the food sovereignty movement more generally.

Food Deserts and Urban Agriculture

Food deserts are defined as 'large geographic areas that have no or distant *mainstream* grocery stores', which does not necessarily mean that food is completely unavailable in these areas, but rather that there is often an '*imbalance* of food choice, meaning a heavy concentration of nearby *fringe* food that is high in salt, fat, and sugar' (Gallagher, 2010, p. 3, emphasis in original; see also Gottlieb and Joshi, 2010, pp. 39–43). In other words, food deserts tend to be out of balance in terms of the available food choices, with little access to healthy food options and comparatively easy access to fast-food restaurants, convenience stores, gas stations, liquor stores, and other fringe food outlets, leaving residents with no cars and few other transportation options little choice when it comes to food consumption. Food deserts are a cause for concern because they have less food security and because research has shown that those who live in food deserts have poorer diet-related health outcomes and higher rates of premature deaths (Gallagher, 2006, 2010). As a social issue, this problem is compounded by the fact that in some communities and cities the dearth of healthy food options in food deserts affects certain disadvantaged racial minorities as well as low-income households more strongly as the areas in which they live tend to have the least access to grocery stores and relatively easy access to fast-food restaurants – Chicago is an example (Ahn, 2004; Gallagher, 2006; Gottlieb and Joshi, 2010, pp. 39–43).

An urban agriculture movement has attempted to address these issues in cities and communities across the United States (Gottlieb and Joshi, 2010, pp. 145–149). Urban farming initiatives are part of the larger community food security movement (Ahn, 2004), and through this movement, initiatives centred on food have become a vehicle 'for addressing broader social and economic justice issues' (Ahn, 2004, p. 3), and therein lies the transformative ethos and transformative potential of this movement that makes it an important part of the food sovereignty movement in the United States.

One example that illustrates this very well is the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network (DBCFSN). Like other cities and urban areas in the US, a large number of Detroit's residents live in areas with significant food imbalances, which means that they travel smaller distances to fringe food retailers and longer distances to grocery stores and supermarkets. This impacts diet-related health outcomes as well as the rates of premature illness and deaths in Detroit (Gallagher, 2007). Com-

bined with deindustrialization, depopulation, poor-quality education, the lack of reliable public transportation, and high unemployment, home foreclosure, and poverty rates in the city of Detroit, food insecurity is one of the many social problems that affect the city's residents. These problems are compounded by the fact that African Americans make up a large majority of the city's population today, adding a racial inequality dimension to Detroit's problems (White, 2010a, 2010b, 2011a)

The DBCFSN started in 2006 to accomplish a number of different goals, including developing a food policy for Detroit, launching a food buying co-op, starting an urban farm, and providing youth education (White, 2010a, 2011a). The immediate goal of the DBCFSN has been to enhance the accessibility of fresh, healthy produce to the poor and predominantly African-American population of the city of Detroit. But beyond this immediate goal, the individuals involved in the DBCFSN have also worked to claim their human right to food and to challenge the prevailing food system structures and gain control over the local food movement and the food supply in Detroit. They have done so in a number of different ways. First, they have chosen not to rely on external actors, such as the government, to fulfill their right to food and to provide their communities with a healthy and safe supply of food. Instead, they have sought to gain control over their local food supply and assume responsibility for realizing their human right to food. This is in part because they believe that other actors have not been able or willing to provide them with safe, healthy, and affordable food. Second, they have sought to educate their communities about healthy food choices in culturally suitable and appropriate ways, thereby disseminating information about food to those who otherwise cannot access information about healthy diets, either because it is unavailable or because it is presented in ways that are inaccessible to individuals with low socio-economic status. Third, they have sought to have a voice within the local food security movement that would otherwise be led by white and more affluent individuals who have access to the resources of the broader community food security movement (White, 2010a, 2010b, 2011a).

In other words, for the individuals affiliated with the DBCFSN, 'urban farming is only part of a much larger mission to create structures that end relationships of dependency and educate people about the importance of providing for themselves' (White, 2010b, p. 205). In doing all of these things, the members of the DBCFSN have sought to enhance their capacity for self-determination, for exercising agency, for empowerment and community building, for opposing 'the social, economic, and gendered oppression that complicates the accessibility of healthy food for poor people and the communities of color who have not left the impoverished city' (White, 2011b, p. 25), and for bringing about positive change in their community (White, 2011a, 2011b). In that sense, providing healthy food is a way to address broader issues of self-determination, agency, and control over one's life (White, 2010b, 2011a), and it is these aspects of the DBCFSN that makes it a powerful example of food sovereignty work in the United States. The DBCFSN has developed a national profile and national recognition for its work, and today it has a strong voice and presence not only in the local urban agriculture movement in Detroit, but also in the community food security and food sovereignty movements nationwide.

The Rights of Food Chain Workers

The rights and working conditions of those who work in all of the sectors of the food chain in the US, including food production, food processing, food distribution, and

food retail and service, have been at the centre of efforts to advance food sovereignty. Employment in food chain sectors often comes with low wages, hazardous and exploitative conditions, and few benefits or opportunities for advancement. The result is deep poverty and high rates of work-related illnesses and injuries among food sector workers (Lo and Jacobson, 2011). Because white workers earn higher wages than workers of colour, and because people of colour and immigrants are over-represented in food chain jobs, particularly in the lowest paying sectors and jobs, efforts to improve the situation of food chain workers have a racial justice dimension. And because of the high proportion of immigrant workers in the food sector and their vulnerability to discrimination and abuse, these efforts are also connected to efforts to reform the immigration system in the US (Liu and Apollon, 2011). In addition, some food chain sectors and jobs are exempt from the protection that federal labour laws offer, and therefore some workers in these sectors cannot exercise the right to organize (Smith and Goldberg, 2010; Liu and Apollon, 2011, p. 3). Other workers are unable to exercise their rights because laws designed to protect their rights are not enforced or because their legal status does not allow them to claim their rights (Smith and Goldberg, 2010). Some of the legal exclusions of workers in certain sectors, including the agricultural sector, are historically race-based and target sectors that employed minorities during the era in which key labour laws were adopted, especially in specific regions of the US (Smith and Goldberg, 2010). Examples of these exclusions include the exemption of agricultural and tipped restaurant workers from the standard federal minimum wage (they are entitled to a much lower hourly minimum wage) and the exclusion of agricultural workers from the right to organize and from overtime pay (Smith and Goldberg, 2010, p. 13).

A number of organizations have worked to improve the situation of food chain workers over the past few years, and the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA), a national coalition of food chain worker organizations founded in 2009, is a member of the USFSA. The focal points of the campaigns surrounding the rights of food system workers demonstrate that there is an intentional effort to include and empower the communities that are affected most directly by the injustices of the food system to bring about food system change. The FCWA believes that it is essential to give workers voice and allow them opportunities to play a leadership role in transforming the food system (Lo and Jacobson, 2011). Moreover, the policy goals of the food sovereignty movement include bringing about policy change to improve the working conditions of food chain workers. Policy changes that campaigners and organizers are seeking to include legislation that would require employers to offer paid sick days to employees, and increasing the federal minimum wage as well as the minimum wage for tipped workers. In addition, the FCWA and other campaigns call for the enforcement of equal opportunity and labour laws consistently at all levels of government to prevent wage theft and discrimination against women and people of colour. They also call for harsher penalties for worker exploitation. Food sovereignty campaigns also advocate for the right of food system workers to organize to secure better wages and working conditions, and they call on governmental bodies to consider labour and safety standards in procurement and to require that these standards be met as a condition for eligibility for subsidies and loan programmes (Food Chain Workers Alliance, 2012). In short, the food sovereignty movement seeks to make food system workers agents of the transformation of the food system. It seeks not only to meet the immediate needs of food system workers, but to empower them

with new rights and to allow them to be participants in the movement and to bring about systemic, structural change.

The USFSA

The 2008 food crisis was an important moment for the food sovereignty movement in the US. In addition to drawing attention to the movement's agenda, it sparked the creation of the Working Group (Holt-Giménez and Shattuck, 2011, p. 129), which was formed in 2008 'to bring attention to the underlying causes of the crisis and to promote transformative solutions to fix our broken food system'.⁶ The Working Group's food system work focused on two issues: corporate control and concentration in the food system and rebuilding local food systems.⁷ Membership in the Working Group was broad and diverse and encompassed a wide range of organizations with different mandates and areas of focus.

The work of the Working Group culminated in the US Social Forum in June 2010, when food justice and food sovereignty activists worked to strengthen their movement and form the USFSA, which was officially launched a few months later on World Food Day in October 2010.⁸ The USFSA also has a diverse membership, and many of the members of the Working Group's steering committee are among the USFSA's core members. The purpose of the USFSA is to make the work of the Working Group, which was a loose and ad-hoc coalition, more consistent and better coordinated (interview 1). Finally, another reason the USFSA was founded was a sense among activists that even though the Working Group made progress, the food sovereignty movement was still fragmented and not big enough (interview 3). Most of the members of the Working Group were NGOs; grass-roots groups, people of colour, worker groups, farmer groups and other 'frontline' communities were for the most part absent from the initial 2008 meeting held to establish the Working Group (interviews 8, 10). The USFSA was, therefore, formed in part to give voice to a diversity of groups. The USFSA's clear underlying principles and established decision-making process can ensure that all voices will be heard (interviews 8, 10).

The USFSA is based on the goals and principles of the larger global food sovereignty movement. Its vision and agenda are sketched in its Call to Action⁹ and in the Food Sovereignty PMA Resolution adopted at the US Social Forum in 2010.¹⁰ These documents emphasize rebuilding local and regional food systems that meet the food needs of all and the rights of those who produce food, make food widely available and affordable, are socially just and ecologically sustainable, and are controlled by local stakeholders (as opposed to agri-food business).

The food sovereignty movement in the US is thus a very recent movement. As recently as 2009, one of the individuals most involved with this movement wrote that 'the US is far from having a full-fledged food sovereignty movement' (Schiavoni, 2009, p. 686). This activist, however, also saw the 2008 economic and food crisis as an opportunity to move the food sovereignty agenda forward and saw in the growing food justice and urban farming movements, which share many similarities with the food sovereignty movement, a potential for movement building in the US (Schiavoni, 2009, p. 686).

Analysing the Effect of the Global Food Crisis on Social Movement Activity: Food Sovereignty Activism and Movement Building in the United States

A combination of threats and opportunities set the stage for coalition and movement building among food movement organizations in the US. One important aspect of the international context in 2008 was the global food crisis during which global food prices rose significantly. This crisis was significant for the food sovereignty movement in a number of ways and for a number of reasons. It was an unusually severe global crisis, although there had been more severe crises at the national and regional levels. In addition, different civil society groups had worked on different aspects of the global food system, and the 2008 crisis was an opportune moment for these groups to coalesce and jointly voice their critique of the global food system because the food crisis could make this critique more resonant with the public, the media, and elected officials (interview 1). The broader food movement had been gaining momentum prior to the 2008 food crisis, and the crisis had newsworthy impacts that created a tipping point and momentum, which in turn provided an opportunity for activism (interviews 8, 10). Crises are moments when people have to reassess policy and there is a lot of media attention focused on the crisis, and that was important for advocacy (interview 3).

Beyond the opportunities for activism that the food crisis offered, there were other equally important opportunities that had developed over time and in conjunction with the crisis helped facilitate mobilization and the formation of the USFSA. By 2008, the World Social Forum (WSF) had created a process and framework for civil society groups to articulate compelling critiques of neo-liberal and corporate-led globalization and develop compelling alternatives. The WSF was first held in 2001 to help the alter-globalization movement, for which the WTO protests in Seattle in 1999 was a key galvanizing moment, develop alternatives for the economic paradigm that is currently dominant. The 1999 'Battle of Seattle' had mounted a powerful challenge to and critique of that paradigm, but the alter-globalization movement had no compelling alternative (Smith et al., 2007). The WSF created a process through which global justice activists were able to begin articulating alternatives, and some of the ideas and models that emerged from this process informed the work of the food sovereignty movement. In addition, by 2008 the concept of food sovereignty and the transnational peasant movement *La Via Campesina*, which campaigns for a global food system based on food sovereignty, had gained visibility and recognition (Martinez-Torres and Rosset, 2010). *La Via Campesina* has its roots in the neo-liberal economic reforms and SAPs and the free trade agreements of the 1980s and 1990s. By 2008, it had become a prominent actor in the global justice movement, recognized for its leadership on issues pertaining to food, agriculture, and rural development. It had also established the food sovereignty framework as a compelling alternative to the existing global food system. The analysis and critique of the global food system as well as the proposed alternatives summarized above had already been developed by 2008 (Martinez-Torres and Rosset, 2010).

Moreover, both the WSF and the US Social Forum (USSF) had developed organizational repertoires on which the USFSA was able to draw. The WSF had brought together a diverse range of different civil society groups with different agendas and goals to work together in a horizontal, non-hierarchical space to articulate alternatives to neo-liberalism that restore citizens' democratic control over economic issues and decisions (Smith et al., 2007). In the US, the organizers of the first USSF in 2007 worked to create what has been described as an intentional space (Juris, 2008), a

space that is intentionally designed to have a high degree of racial and class diversity. USSF organizers sought to create this kind of intentional space at the first USSF by reaching out to grass-roots groups and purposefully giving voice and a leadership role to grass-roots organizations and communities that had had little voice historically (Juris, 2008). As I discuss below, the USFSA created organizational structures that are similar to the ones developed by the WSF and the USSF.

In short, much ideological and organizational work had been done that facilitated the formation of the Working Group and the USFSA when the global food crisis of 2008 created an additional impetus for organizing around food sovereignty in the US.

But in addition to these opportunities, there were also significant developments and trends that alarmed civil society groups and represented threats to their goals and agendas. The individuals and groups involved in the Working Group did not agree with the way the media described and interpreted the 2008 food price crisis or with the proposed solutions. The media provided a very simplified analysis and offered little discussion of the underlying causes of the crisis (interview 11). The crisis depiction in the media focused on yield losses as the cause for the crisis and identified new technologies to increase yields and productivity as the appropriate response (interview 11). By contrast, the groups involved in the Working Group believed that the problem was much more complex and that production was not the issue. These groups believed it was important to provide a 'counter-analysis' that made clear that the crisis was not a food crisis but a food *system* crisis (interview 11), which implies the need for structural change in the food system. At the same time, agribusiness and other key actors, such as the World Bank and the Gates Foundation, were starting initiatives and proposing solutions to the food crisis that groups in the Working Group opposed (interviews 10, 11). These solutions included biotechnology and GMOs. In addition, the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development, which was published in 2008 and made clear that 'business as usual is not an option' (interview 11) and called for a significant change in rural agricultural development, received little media coverage (interview 11). For all of these reasons, members of the Working Group were eager to provide an alternative analysis and interpretation of the global food crisis (interviews 4, 10, 11), promote understanding of its root causes, and work to promote a response that does not simply consist of providing food aid (interview 8) or promoting technological solutions (interview 11).

This view of the global food crisis as a catalyst for food sovereignty advocacy is consistent with the literature on threats and critical events reviewed above. Also, beyond the immediate effect of rising prices there were additional threats related to the crisis. These threats, which include land grabs, the expansion of agrofuels, commodity speculation, and the policies of international financial institutions and organizations are among the main causes and/or consequences of the global food crises, and they have become focal points of food sovereignty advocacy, which is also consistent with the literature review above. It is also important to note that coalitions are more likely to form in response to threats emanating from the policies of a common opponent (Van Dyke, 2003), and Van Dyke predicts that international organizations like the WTO, whose purview encompasses issues that affect a number of different constituencies, will continue to inspire cross-movement coalitions and protest activities similar to the protests in Seattle in 1999 (Van Dyke, 2003).

Finally, beside the policies of international institutions like the WTO, the influence that agribusiness was having on the debates surrounding the food crisis and the appropriate responses to it was perceived as a threat. One of the reasons that the members of the Working Group decided to form the USFSA was the realization that Working Group could in no way compete with agribusiness and their lobbying budgets. This in turn led to the recognition that food sovereignty work would have to be organized on a long-term basis through a less ad hoc coalition in order to bring about more fundamental and systemic change and counter the political influence of agribusiness, which is perceived to be very strong (interviews 10, 11).

Given the international context, critical events, opportunities, and threats that bear on food and agriculture, the time was opportune in 2008 for mobilizing around food sovereignty. But were civil society groups involved in the Working Group and later the USFSA able to organizationally and culturally integrate to form a cohesive and effective coalition? And how did they attempt to do so?

Organizational Integration

Organizational integration was feasible for a number of reasons that echo the arguments summarized above. Some of the organizations involved in the Working Group and the USFSA had ties prior to 2008, and many groups were aware of each other's work (interviews 5, 11) and had even cooperated with one another, albeit sometimes on a more ad hoc basis and without coordination across social movement sectors (interviews 1, 2, 6, 9, 10). For example, some groups had worked together on trade issues and the effect of trade on agriculture and food, while others had done joint work pertaining to the farm bill (interview 8). Trust had already been established due to these pre-existing ties, and some individuals already had a working relationship (interviews 4, 5, 7). In other words, joint food sovereignty work 'did not just emerge in 2008' (interview 8). This pre-existing trust allowed coalition members to have confidence that all members were committed to the values and principles of the USFSA (interview 5), and it reassured individuals and groups with limited time and staff that it is worthwhile to devote time to USFSA work and to make it a priority (interviews 7, 10, 11). In addition, some of the individuals involved in the Working Group had many years of experience working on food and agriculture issues, which was one of the reasons that Working Group participants were encouraged to launch the USFSA (interview 2). In sum, there is agreement among the interviewees that pre-existing ties and the trust that they cultivate are very important (interviews 9, 10, 11). For newcomers to the USFSA, developing trust is also very important as it allows new groups to have confidence that there is commitment to their own priorities and concerns (interview 9). This is all consistent with the literature reviewed above.

Equally important is the organizational flexibility of the USFSA and the concerted effort to integrate policy groups, which tend to be based in Washington, D.C. and New York City, as well as grass-roots groups focusing on such issues as urban agriculture, community gardens, and CSAs whose work tends to have a more local orientation. One interviewee reports that collaboration between policy groups and grass-roots groups in the US is relatively rare and has been fraught with tensions in previous campaigns (interview 2). In part for this reason, there has been a conscious effort within the USFSA to reach out to grass-roots groups and incorporate their perspectives and expertise (interview 2). Other interviewees also report that there has been a concerted effort to diversify the USFSA's leadership to include more grass-

roots groups and to widen the USFSA's membership (interviews 3, 5, 7), and that early on in the organizing process the Working Group reached out to urban food justice groups to engage them in a dialogue about systemic change (interview 4).

One interviewee representing a grass-roots group spoke very positively about the early efforts of the Working Group to reach out to grassroots groups and involve them in the process of strategic thinking about building a food sovereignty movement between 2008 and 2010 (interview 5). Other interviewees maintained that one of the main tasks of the USFSA was to incorporate local groups that might not define their work in terms of food sovereignty (interview 7), and that education, outreach, and movement building, and connecting the food sovereignty framework to local struggles has been the strength of the USFSA (interviews 4, 9). Interestingly, two respondents noted that with growing outreach to a broader circle of potential members, trust becomes something that has to be built and earned, and that it can be difficult to build trust among a very diverse coalition that includes groups that have had little preexisting trust and some rifts (interviews 8, 10).

In conjunction with ongoing efforts to expand and diversify the USFSA's membership and leadership through outreach efforts to grass-roots groups, the USFSA has developed decision-making and organizational structures that are flexible and allow for input from all members. For example, before joint positions are formulated there is consultation and discussion to seek input from all coalition members (interview 5). In addition, one interviewee reports that the coalition has organizational flexibility that allows members to be more or less involved in coalition work over time as long as they are firmly committed to the values and principles of the USFSA, which can help smaller grass-roots groups participate in the USFSA (interview 5). Another explains that the USFSA has different membership categories, which can also make it organizationally flexible (interview 9).¹¹ Groups can be general members or core members. General members commit to the mission and principles of the USFSA and to doing food sovereignty work or work related or relevant to food sovereignty. They also commit to support the work of the USFSA and stay connected to other USFSA members and exchange food sovereignty work information with them. In addition to these tasks and responsibilities, core members also make a commitment to provide resources for the joint strategies and campaigns of the USFSA, serve of at least on one of its work teams, and participate in solidarity actions to support other groups in ways that do not fall directly within their agendas or issue areas. Core members also vote for the USFSA's Coordinating Committee members, have the opportunity to serve on this Committee, and participate in the decision-making process of the USFSA. In sum, the two membership categories entail very different levels of involvement in the USFSA and require the commitment of very different levels of staff time and resources, which enhances the USFSA's organizational flexibility and allows groups with different levels of resources to be involved in it (interview 10). Finally, there is awareness that a coalition represents an organizational structure that can help expand the capacity of food sovereignty and food justice SMOs through effective coordination, joint strategizing, pooling resources, and alignment with the transnational food sovereignty movement (interviews 7, 8). In addition, the USFSA was seen as an organizational structure that can help the movement do more proactive work, as opposed to reacting to policies it opposes, and to articulate what it was working for, as opposed to only what it was against (interviews 10, 11). One of the decisions and priorities that emerged out of the first assembly of the USFSA, which was held in November 2011, was a renewed focus on

thinking about the USFSA's structure, leadership, and decision-making process in light of the expected continued expansion of its membership and the USFSA's commitment to consensus decision-making (interview 10). This, again, reflects a sensitivity to organizational issues.

One example that illustrates the organizational flexibility and some of the efforts that were made to develop a strong and diverse coalition and to enhance organizational integration pertains to the initial effort to include a few groups in the coalition that an interviewee describes as 'traditional' and 'not very progressive' (interviews 2, 8, 10, 11). These groups, which operate food banks in the US, had not worked with other key NGOs within the coalition whose agendas focused on international issues, and they were not receptive to the fundamental policy change that many other groups within the coalition advocated. This is in part because they receive donations from corporations and big food retailers, and so could not support the anti-corporate orientation of the members of the Working and Group and the USFSA (interviews 8, 11). In addition, many food banks are based on the charity model, as opposed to the transformative change model of the USFSA. Nevertheless, their involvement in the coalition resulted in a learning process and conversation among all groups, with food bank groups learning more about the need for structural change and policy groups learning more about hunger issues in the United States (interviews 2, 11). Ultimately, however, food banks dropped out of the coalition because they could not support the message of the Working Group and the USFSA (interviews 8, 10, 11). Some dialogue and conversations still continue, especially because WhyHunger, a lead organization among the core groups of the USFSA, has strong ties to the food bank community and the community food movement (interview 10).

Cultural Integration

The organizational integration of a diversity of groups also required and was reinforced by the process of cultural integration. In some ways cultural integration has not been difficult because there has been a broad-based consensus within the Working Group and the USFSA about key issues (interviews 1, 2, 3, 4). Even though the groups are quite diverse, they agree for the most part on fundamental issues, and much like the cases Gerhards and Rucht study, there is clear ideological compatibility even though each group has its own agenda and area of focus. For example, almost all groups are skeptical or critical of corporate-driven globalization and corporate concentration, and all of them share a common understanding of the root causes of the global food crisis and the structural nature of that crisis (interviews 3, 4, 8, 9, 11). When asked about how the USFSA can be cohesive and well-coordinated in light of the diversity of its membership, several interviewees pointed to this basic ideological compatibility, the joint analysis of the food system, and the joint commitment to bringing about systemic change and more democratic control of the food system as the basis of cohesiveness within the USFSA (interviews 8, 9, 11). Beyond this ideological convergence, an effort was made to develop a master frame that can accommodate all the diverse groups while at the same time linking their local struggles to global struggles (interviews 10, 11).

In general, there has been an expansion of the frame to accommodate all groups as more groups join the coalition (interview 2). Interviewees recall a meeting, held in Washington D.C. in 2009, at which the statement 'Ending Poverty by Rebuilding Local Food Economies' was developed as the key message of the food sovereignty

movement (interviews 1, 2, 3, 10, 11).¹² This was the meeting that set the stage for the formation of the USFSA, and based on the experience of the first year of the Working Group's activities, there was an effort to raise funds to bring grass-roots groups representing indigenous groups, farm workers, people of colour, and other communities to the meeting to make the coalition more diverse. These communities had very immediate needs surrounding issues of survival and violence, and poverty is how they experience the problems and shortcomings of the food system. There was a need to make food sovereignty real and relevant for these communities and connect food sovereignty activism to the perspectives and circumstances of grass-roots groups in the US, hence the umbrella statement 'Ending Poverty by Rebuilding Local Food Economies' (interviews 10, 11). This way of framing food sovereignty work in the US created space within the USFSA for grass-roots groups, but some national policy-oriented groups chose to drop out of the USFSA because its work was becoming more grass-roots focused – the national groups that stayed really understood the importance of grass-roots work (interview 10).

Similarly, there was some emphasis on the issue of dismantling racism in the food system in the PMA resolution at the U.S. Social Forum, and a stronger emphasis was added in the final stages of editing the Draft Founding Document of the USFSA, as was the requirement that core members attend training on dismantling racism. This stronger emphasis reflects the input of two organizations, whose niche is racism in the food system: the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network and Growing Food and Justice Initiative – the latter organization holds an annual meeting before which it organizes racism dismantling training that core members attend (interview 10).

This point is particularly interesting as it indicates that there is a process of frame extension taking place to expand the USFSA's membership. Recall that Gerhards and Rucht explain that groups that join a coalition engage in a process of frame bridging to connect their own agendas and frames to a master frame. This process is one example of frame alignment, but there are other frame alignment processes, including frame extension, which refers to SMO efforts to 'promote programs or causes in terms of values and beliefs that may not be especially salient or readily apparent to potential constituents and supporters' and to 'extend the boundaries of its primary framework so as to encompass interests or points of view that are incidental to its primary objectives but of considerable salience to potential adherents' (Snow et al, 1986, p. 472). Frame extension appears to be the frame alignment process that the food sovereignty movement has used to expand its membership. While initially the focus of advocacy and organizing was on the food crisis and hunger, food sovereignty has come to mean different things in different places and to different people and communities. According to one interviewee, this intentional vagueness of the definition of food sovereignty is a strength as it allows the concept to be used as a framework for organizing and advocacy in different places while still allowing the food sovereignty movement as a whole to be cohesive (interview 4). This is very much in line with the approach of the global food sovereignty movement, which also emphasizes and values the diversity of the movement and maintains that 'while it is critical to have a common framework, there is no single path or prescription for achieving food sovereignty. It is the task of individual regions, nations, and communities to determine what food sovereignty means to them based on their own unique set of circumstances' (Schiavoni, 2009, p. 685).

Summary and Conclusions

The starting point for this article is the 2008 global food crisis, a critical event that helped generate momentum around food advocacy. This critical event heightened threats to the food movement's goals and created new opportunities and incentives for SMOs to form coalitions, first the US Working Group on the Food Crisis and later the USFSA, which grew out of the Working Group. I also find that the Working Group and the USFSA have purposefully made concerted efforts to organizationally integrate a range of diverse groups. This research also indicates that accommodating the agendas, priorities, understandings, and perspectives of all members of the coalition has been possible through a master frame that establishes broad parameters for food sovereignty advocacy and serves as a unifying framework while allowing each group to adapt its food sovereignty advocacy work to its agenda and the needs, concerns, and priorities of its constituents. Organizational and cultural integration have by and large unfolded in the ways described in the theoretical social movement literature, and the sensitivity of USFSA to issues of cultural and organizational integration bodes well for the future of the USFSA and its organizational capacity and strength.

There are many opportunities and avenues for further research, especially since the food sovereignty movement is very recent. It will be important and interesting to continue studying the USFSA as its members continue the process of movement building and as its campaigns unfold. Since several interviewees mentioned specific meetings at which key issues pertaining to movement building and campaign planning were discussed, participating as an observer at a few of these meetings may prove very helpful in deepening our understanding the process of movement building. In addition, the first annual assembly of the USFSA was held in November 2011, and three priority areas for 2012 were selected: land rights and land grabs, immigration reform and worker rights, and the rights of nature (interviews 8, 9, 10). Beyond attempting to understand the process of movement and coalition building, the initial focus of the USFSA's work (interview 7), it will be important and useful to see how the substantive foci and priorities are pursued by the members of the USFSA and how they will continue to expand its membership, build a food sovereignty movement in the US, and work on substantive issues at the same time.

Notes

1. 'Food prices at dangerous levels, says World Bank' (15 February 2011); 'Food prices hit new record highs, says UN food agency' (3 March 2011); 'Food prices: World Bank warns millions face poverty' (14 April 2011). All published on the BBC News web site <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>>.
2. Favourable critical events also impact SMOs, but since the global food crisis is an adverse critical event, I focus here only on this type of critical event.
3. The Declaration of Nyéléni is available at <http://www.viacampesina.org/en/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=282&Itemid=38>, accessed 13 June 2011.
4. Localizing food systems is one of the principles of the food sovereignty paradigm listed on the website of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty <<http://www.foodsovereignty.org/FOOTER/Highlights.aspx>>, accessed 19 June 2011.
5. See the overview of food sovereignty principles on the website of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty <<http://www.foodsovereignty.org/FOOTER/Highlights.aspx>>.
6. See the website of the US Working Group on the Food Crisis <<http://usfoodcrisisgroup.org/node/18>>, accessed 17 June 2011.
7. <<http://usfoodcrisisgroup.org/node/18>>, accessed 17 June 2011.
8. See <<http://www.usfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/about>>, accessed 17 June 2011.
9. <<http://www.usfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/about/call-to-action>>, accessed 17 June 2011.

10. <<http://www.usfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/foodsovereignty/pma/food-sovereignty-pma-resolution>>, accessed 17 June 2011.
11. The different membership categories and the responsibilities of members in each category are described in the Draft Founding Document for the US Food Sovereignty Alliance (USFSA), which is available from <https://docs.google.com/a/usfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/viewer?a=v&pid=explorer&chrome=true&srcid=0B_830YDZbpsgZWU0MmRmYWEtNTY4My00MWU0LTg4NmQtMmRjNGU5OTA4NTYy&hl=en_US>, accessed 21 Nov. 2011.
12. This phrase is available on the website of the Working Group and, in slightly different versions, on the USFSA website and other websites. See <<http://usfoodcrisisgroup.org/>; <http://www.usfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/about/call-to-action>; <<http://www.whyhunger.org/news-and-alerts/48-why-reporter/1095-ending-poverty-through-rebuilding-local-food-economies-week-of-actions.html>>; <<http://www.foodfirst.org/en/node/3083>>, all accessed 3 July 2011.

List of Interviews

- Interview 1: Phone interview with staff member of an NGO involved in the US Food Sovereignty Alliance, 30 June 2011.
- Interview 2: Phone interview with David Kane, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, 30 June 2011.
- Interview 3: Phone interview with Stephen Bartlett, Agricultural Missions, 5 July 2011.
- Interview 4: Phone interview with a staff member of an NGO involved in the US Food Sovereignty Alliance, 6 July 2011.
- Interview 5: Phone interview with Rosalinda Guillen, Community to Community Development, 13 September 2011.
- Interview 6: Phone interview with staff member an NGO involved in the US Food Sovereignty Alliance, 13 September 2011.
- Interview 7: Phone interview with Heather Day, Community Alliance for Global Justice, 15 September 2011.
- Interview 8: Phone interview with Maria Aguiar, 21 November 2011.
- Interview 9: Phone interview with Joann Lo, Food Chain Workers Alliance, 21 November 2011.
- Interview 10: Phone interview with Christina Schiavoni, WhyHunger, 23 November 2011.
- Interview 11: Phone interview with Marcia Ishii-Eiteman, Pesticide Action Network North America, 2 December 2011.

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GMO-free America? Mendocino County and the Impact of Local Level Resistance to the Agricultural Biotechnology Paradigm

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[Paper first received, 25 June 2011; in final form, 6 July 2012]

Abstract. In the United States, a supportive regulatory environment for new agricultural biotechnologies is promoting the technology throughout the agricultural system. Sub-national resistance to the technology is burgeoning, however. Specifically, local-level GMO bans are emerging in direct opposition to the national pro-biotechnology development drive. In this article, I investigate the struggles over county-level GMO bans in California, focusing on the first successful ban in Mendocino, one of California's wine counties. Drawing on McCann's (2004) legal mobilization and Bourdieu's (1987) legal 'fields' to conceptualize law as both shaping and being shaped by legal contests, I investigate the extent to which such sub-national tactics are effective in challenging the supportive regulatory environment for agricultural biotechnologies. At its basis, this analysis is concerned with the legacy of such struggles, and their potential for broader social change. This article will further use the case of Mendocino County to reflect on the under-theorized intersection between social movement and legal scholarship.

Introduction

Genetic modification (GM), or genetic engineering (GE), involves the altering or modification of an organism's DNA, most controversially through the introduction of DNA from another organism (in the creation of transgenics).¹ Its use has allowed for the creation of a number of plants with features that could not be obtained through conventional breeding, such as herbicide-resistant crops. Law and regulation play a key role in the successful commercialization of such agricultural biotechnologies in the United States. At the same time, the increasing use of law by citizens and social movements opposed to the social, health, and environmental impacts associated with GM, highlights the importance of law to establishing the place of these technologies in society.

On the one hand, the commercialization of agricultural biotechnologies has required an actively supportive legal and regulatory environment, such as through the expansion of intellectual property rights and the policy of 'substantial equivalence' for regulatory oversight. This regulatory environment has promoted the develop-

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ment, commercialization, and propagation (both nationally and internationally) of agricultural biotechnologies, and has had some significant impacts on the social organization of agriculture. The author has written on this favourable regulatory environment elsewhere (for example, see Pechlaner and Otero, 2008; Pechlaner, 2010, 2012).

On the other hand, a wide range of legal challenges – everything from demands for environmental impact assessments to litigation over the right to label products as GMO-free (genetically modified organism-free) – have been persistently launched by the technology's opponents. This opposition is not limited to the legal field, of course – it is, in fact, quite widespread and diverse (for examples, see Schurman et al., 2003; Mehta, 2006; Schurman and Munro, 2010). However, the technology's reliance on a supportive legal framework could make it more vulnerable to this sort of challenge. The question that remains, and that will be partially addressed here, is to what extent such legal opposition can actually affect the pro-agricultural biotechnology regulatory dynamics in the United States, if at all? That is, if the legal challenges of social movements are a legal success, does this translate necessarily into their being a 'social success', in terms of achieving some measure of social change desired by the social movement?

This article investigates the case of a successful 2004 ballot initiative to ban GMOs from Mendocino County in California, in order to shed some light on the potential for such action to impact the pro-agricultural biotechnology regulatory dynamics in the United States. Unfortunately, there is limited scholarship on the strategic use of California's initiative system by social movements. The initiative system is actually available in 24 states (Manweller, 2005, p. 278 n. 2), and is touted by some as a more democratic political process. Ostensibly, it allows citizens with a particular concern to be able to bring this concern forward to the voting public – provided they can garner the qualifying number of signatures – in the form of a ballot proposition. While the proposition system has faced much critique at the state level – on the premise that it has been captured by well-financed, established interest groups – very little research on this has been conducted at the county level (Adams, 2012, p. 45). The strategic use of county propositions is a promising area of research with respect to mobilization against agricultural biotechnology, however. Mulvaney (2008), for example, notes that because activists have been largely restricted from access to national and international regulatory discussions around biotechnologies, they have responded to this power differential by 'rescaling' their anti-biotechnology activism to arenas where they can exercise more power (2008, p. 149), such as through the creation of GM-free zones. County propositions would fit well in this scenario.

More broadly speaking, the question of the impact of social movement opposition in the legal field is based in two very unsettled theoretical areas. The first regards the impact or consequences of social movements. The second relates more specifically to the potential for legal mobilization as a social movement strategy. I argue that it is exactly the difficulties of assessment of these areas that requires a broadening – rather than a narrowing – of analytical goals.

The initiative to ban GMOs in Mendocino was launched in 2003 by an organic-brew pub owner, Els Cooperrider, in conjunction with the Mendocino Organic Network. Enough signatures were collected to trigger a ballot initiative and a campaign was launched. On 2 March 2004, the ballot initiative to ban the propagation of GMOs passed with 57% support. The text reads:

It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to propagate, cultivate, raise, or grow genetically modified organisms in Mendocino County (Mendocino, CA, Municipal Code, ch. 10A.15, 2012).

Therefore, despite the pro-agricultural biotechnology tenor of the country and even the state of California, Mendocino County instigated the first successful local level ban on the propagation of GMOs in California. On the face of it, the ban would seem to offer some pretty clear conclusions of the effectiveness of law for achieving social movement goals. The consequences of social movements run deeper than face value, however; although our understanding of them is unfortunately poor, both with respect to 'what has changed', and with respect to 'the causal processes that could tie social movements to those changes' (Earl, 2004, p. 508). Guigni (1998, 2008), for example, notes there is much agreement amongst social movement scholars that the effects of social movements have been neglected, somewhat counter-intuitively, given their importance to the motivation for mobilization. When not outright neglecting these effects, the field lacks 'systematic empirical analyses' of the conditions under which they are produced (Guigni, 1998, p. 373).

In part, the difficulties of addressing the consequences of social movements are due to the methodological difficulties of ascribing causal attribution. Guigni (1998) notes that more systematic attempts at analysis have often focused on the 'intended effects' of social movements, and singled out the characteristics of movements that are most conducive to success (e.g. contrasting strongly versus loosely organized movements, and disruptive versus violent protest behaviour). While the contradictory results of such studies may be resolved by new work that acknowledges the importance of environmental context – for example, the role of public opinion and political context (Guigni, 1998, p. 379) – the emphasis on these two factors overlooks the broad range of environmental factors that could contribute to the ability of social movements to elicit social change.

Further, movement consequences are not limited to their intended or policy effects, and include broader consequences such as biographical or cultural outcomes (Guigni, 2008, 2004). Thus, despite the fact that it is through 'altering their broader cultural environment that movements can have their deepest and lasting impact' (Guigni, 2008, p. 1591), the cultural outcomes of social movements are the most neglected (Earl, 2004). One broader effect of social movements can be their impact on further actions for social change. Some of these effects are captured in a small body of literatures – e.g. relating to mobilization outcomes and protest cycles – that track movement–movement interactions, such as spill-over effects between movements, spin-off movements, and the diffusion of tactics or ideologies (Whittier, 2004, p. 532). Whittier focuses on how movements often produce new mobilizations, as one of the 'fundamental outcomes' of social movements is to 'alter the political landscape and thus to alter how other activists see themselves and how they attempt to make change' (p. 548). Not all such outcomes are in a direction desired by activists, of course, as 'movements can generate both allied and opposed movements' (p. 532).

Thus despite the difficulties of causal attribution and of the admirable goal of the systematic study of factors affecting movement outcomes – let alone the difficulties of conceptualizing 'success' or other outcome variables – there are considerable reasons to conclude that the broader impacts of social movement mobilization are the most significant in terms of social change, and that they should receive much more scholarly attention, even if at the initial expense of generalizability.

Taking the Mendocino county action as an example, a number of such broad impacts can be imagined. If a ban on the propagation of GMOs is implemented successfully in one county, for example, other counties and regions could follow with their own bans. At the very least this could impede the uniform spread of GM crops. With the cumulative impact of sufficient local bans, this could impede the commercial production of GMO crops, obstruct the siting of biotechnology-related research stations and test sites, reduce the desirability of investment into new GM developments, sensitize consumers to reject GM crops, and generally weaken the industry. For biotechnologies' proponents, fighting such measures individually 'not only requires significant resources, but it also keeps the public spotlight on opposition' (Roff, 2008, p. 1427). As Greg Guisti from the University of California Cooperative Extension puts it: 'county GMO bans could ultimately serve as an impetus for state regulations' (in Meadows, 2004). In short, it is indeed plausible that county level GMO bans could 'trickle up' to impact the U.S. pro-agricultural biotechnology paradigm.

Given that agricultural biotechnologies flourished in a supportive legal and regulatory environment, the question of social movement impact needs to be further specified to movement mobilization in the legal forum – the study of which has its own particular limitations. McCann (2006), for example, argues that the chronic lack of communication between legal scholars and social movement scholars has left a gap in our understanding of the real ways in which law 'matters' for social movements. He contends that while legal scholars frequently research legal actions initiated by social movements, this work remains focused on the legal action itself and rarely addresses broader mobilization issues. For their part, social movement scholars are more attentive to the 'mix of legal and extralegal social factors' that effect social movement mobilization (McCann, 2006, p. 19), but are less likely to provide 'direct conceptual analysis about how law does or does not matter for the struggles' (p. 17).

In part due to this lack of scholarly communication, such scholarship promotes a false sense of unidirectionality on law and social movement relationships, which fails to accommodate any reciprocity through which changes in the broader society affect legal mobilization and vice versa. Another, related, limitation of such literature is its tendency towards structure/agency polarization, whereby law is either cast as immutable and autonomous or, more critically, as a mere tool for the power elites. In either case, the perception of the utility of litigation as a tactic for social change is often negative (McCann, 2006, p. 18). Given the failure of such literature to investigate the broader contextual picture, it is difficult to assess whether such negativity is reflective of actual limitations of the strategy or whether it is in part a result of a limited focus on end-results.

In sum, the shortcomings of social movement literatures with respect to assessing the consequences of social movement mobilization are exacerbated by the intersection of this literature with legal scholarship. Notably, such scholarship fails to investigate legal conflict in the broader social context, and to assess the use of law as a means of social change within this broader context. Rectifying these shortfalls requires a broadening of the definition of 'law' beyond that of the 'law on the books' in order to assess the reflexive ways in which law and society interact. It also requires a longer time-frame and wider scope for assessing broader impacts of social movements, such as Whittier's movement to movement interaction. McCann's (1994, 2004, 2006) legal mobilization framework, discussed in the following section,

provides a means of attempting this broadening work. The approach 'envisions social disputing or struggles as processes that involve different moments or stages of development and conflict' (2006, p. 24). Such a long-term vision is necessary if the goal of capturing the means through which law and social movements interact and create the potential for social change is to be met.

The interviews for this article were conducted as part of a larger comparative investigation with a similar attempt in Lake County, California, which is itself a part of a larger research project assessing the potential for legal mobilization as a form of resistance to the U.S. pro-agricultural biotechnology paradigm. Given my interest in interviewing key players (both pro- and anti-initiative), interview subjects were selected in a purposive manner. Subjects were identified from local news reports, initiative-related web sites, from key agencies/institutions of relevance, and through identification by others for the significance of their role – the latter required multiple identifications. To date, 21 interviews have been conducted on the Mendocino and Lake County initiatives. Fourteen of these were specific to Mendocino, and included participants in the initiative (either in favour or against), as well as interested parties, such as the agricultural commissioner (past and present) and the president of the Mendocino Wine and Winegrape Commission. The interviews were face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, the majority of which were conducted in the summer of 2009. A few were conducted by telephone in subsequent months. Given these interviews were conducted about activities that occurred over five years prior, there are obvious limitations to subjects' responses. The extended time-frame does allow for a better ability to assess the legacy aspects of the action, however, which is an important aspect of the current research.

The next section of this article will provide further theoretical critique for the article, highlighting McCann's legal mobilization framework as an ordering device for a broader analysis of such initiatives. In the subsequent section, I will discuss systematically the initiative according to this framework, keeping an eye on what it reveals for the prospects of law as a means of social reform. Can law provide a means of 'real substantive empowerment' for those concerned about weak federal agricultural biotechnology regulation or only 'a momentary illusion of change' (McCann, 1994, p. 3)? In my conclusion, I will consider the effectiveness of such broadening of analytical goals for understanding the consequences of social movements.

A note needs to be made here regarding the Mendocino action as a case of social movement action, as opposed to a simple direct democracy campaign. The line can be fuzzy. I agree with Schurman and Munro's (2003) characterization of anti-biotechnology activism as complex and multifaceted: a 'loosely connected bricolage pattern of action', with a wide network of activists engaged in an equally wide variety of 'issues, social concerns and interest groups' (2003, p. 115). Decentralization is thus a defining feature of such activism, with local-level activism having 'cultural and political dynamics' that go far beyond the specific event they undertake (*ibid.*). The initiative to ban GMOs in Mendocino is an action taken clearly in the context of this array of decentralized anti-biotechnology social movement activities. Thus I consider it a social movement action, albeit not one taken by a specific anti-biotechnology social movement organization.

It should further be noted that while most law and social movement scholarship refers specifically to litigation, the Mendocino case-study concerns legal change outside of the courts *per se*, specifically through a ballot initiative. While there are some

obvious and important differences between ballot initiatives and litigation, these differences do not compromise the benefits of the proposed framework for analysis.

Law and Social Movements: Theoretical Perspectives

As noted, much law and social movement scholarship casts the interaction between law and social movements unidirectionally – either analysing how social movements affect legal change or how law constrains social movement action. Such characterizations miss the dynamic and symbiotic nature of the relationship, whereby, as Coglianesse states, ‘changes in society’s values and public opinion can feed back into the legal system and affect the prospects for law reform and enhance the effective implementation of legislation’ (2001, p. 86). McCann (2006) argues that while there have been some efforts made to connect legal and social movement scholarship, even recent efforts are hampered by the polarization between those who view the complementarity of legal tactics and social movement goals, and those who view law as a constraint on them (2006, p. 18).

Another weakness of law and social movement scholarship is that it often succumbs to polarization between structural and subjective accounts of law and society, or what Bourdieu calls formalist versus instrumentalist accounts. Formalists cast law as immutable and constraining, and usually overvalue its neutral and autonomous nature. More critical visions often conceive of law ‘as a tool in the service of dominant groups’ (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 814). Bourdieu provides a means to avoid such pitfalls through his conceptualization of the ‘legal field’, which he casts as largely the product of two factors: ‘the specific power relations which is its structure and which order the competitive struggles’ and ‘the internal logic of juridical functioning which constantly constrains the range of possible actions’ (p. 816). Thus, while the outcome of legal contests is not structurally predetermined, neither is it wholly unpredictable.

In a related vein, McCann suggests that instead of debating ‘instrumental effectiveness’ (2006, p. 19), and other forms of position taking, a more profitable focus would be derived from an assessment of ‘how law matters’ for social movements (*ibid.*). That is, there are multiple ways in which law and social movements interact. How law will or will not matter for movements will depend ‘on the complex, often changing dynamics of the context in which struggles occur’ (2006, p. 35). Pointedly, it is not just by the end result that we can assess the effectiveness of a course of legal action for social change – we must assess not only changes in law, but its implementation and any backlash as well.

Drawing on the insights from the above, in order to capture the relationship between law and social movements, law must be conceptualized more broadly than ‘black letter law’, to include how it functions in social context. This is an important part of understanding the frequent gap between landmark court victories and actual changes in social relations, on the one hand, and the creative ways that social movements sometimes draw power from legal conventions, despite only limited judicial support, on the other (McCann, 1994, pp. 3–4). Understanding the wisdom of taking such an approach, and the practicalities of doing it, are two entirely different matters, however.

McCann (1994, 2006) has dedicated some scholarly attention to this issue, ultimately devising a ‘legal mobilization’ interpretive framework for investigating the means in which social movements interact with the law. While he developed his

framework in the context of his seminal work on wage equity reform, his goal was to develop an analytical approach 'applicable to legal reform activity in a variety of contexts' (1994, p. 5). I take this framework as an ordering device for my investigation into the impact of the Measure H initiative in Mendocino County. This framework outlines four moments, or stages, in the interaction of social movements and the law, which I will briefly outline here.

In the first stage, law is recognized as potentially transformative for social movements, sometimes to the point of law acting motivationally to movement formation. Legal norms and traditions can become important elements in constructing perceptions and claims that ultimately form the basis of a new movement. For example, according to McCann, sustained legal action over wage equity rendered employers vulnerable to challenge, expanded resources available to working women, provided unifying claims of egalitarian rights, and increased workers' ability to advance further claims (McCann, 2006). Legal action can also act to 'discourage, thwart or contain social movement development' (2006, p. 28), however, such as by narrowing the scope of its development or diverting resources from more effective mobilization strategies.

The next moment for law and social movement interaction outlined by McCann is legal mobilization as a form of political pressure – for example, when legal advocacy is used coercively for 'institutional and symbolic leverage against opponents' (2006, p. 29). This tactic can advance movement goals cheaply and effectively, but also risks the social movement having to back up threats with expensive legal action or lose credibility. The effectiveness of this strategy is clearly affected by the social and legal context, such as by favourable legal precedents. McCann's 2006 work distinguishes different components of this moment, but the all-encompassing 'struggle to compel formal changes in official policy' used in his earlier work is most effective here (McCann, 1994).

The third of McCann's stages is 'policy implementation and enforcement'. New laws or policies without effective policy implementation accomplish little. Although implementation is usually crucial to social movement goals, many scholars find legal leveraging towards this end 'limited in significance' (McCann, 2006, p. 32). Nonetheless, it can affect policy implementation. Dominant groups prefer discretionary policy, where symbolic gestures can be more easily substituted for higher cost substantive change. Consequently, social movements often turn to litigation 'specifically to create such formal institutional access... as well as to apply pressure to make that access consequential' (p. 33). This stage is actually another form of the preceding stage, but acts further in time in the relationship between social movements and their opponents.

The last stage involves the 'the legacy of law in / for struggle'. This often neglected issue in law and social movement studies is an assessment of the 'fruits' not only of direct legal action – in this case, the adoption of a ballot initiative – but of those that occur in the broader societal and institutional changes. Similar to McCann, I believe the impact of social movements requires assessment not only of the direct effects, but of the indirect and 'radiating' effects of the use of legal action (Galanter in McCann, 1994, p. 10). Consequently, a very important component of this 'legacy phase', occurs in the aftermath of movement struggles, where backlash and retrenchment become evident.

The Interviews

To put the Mendocino initiative into context, agricultural biotechnology has been adopted rapidly in the United States since its first commercialization in the mid-1990s. While adoption varies by state, key crops such as corn and soybeans were already over 80% genetically modified by 2006 (James, 2006). Genetically modified beets, which were only planted commercially in 2008, were predicted to reach nearly 100% adoption by 2009 (Kilburn, 2009). At the same time, environmental, health and social concerns over the new technology have flourished. These concerns have been bolstered by the US regulatory approach of 'substantial equivalence' and overall regulatory laxity, which has been the source of much criticism and has been highlighted by a number of high-profile contamination incidents. The most notorious of these that occurred prior to Measure H were the contamination of the food chain by unauthorized genetically modified Starlink corn in 2000 and genetically modified LL06 rice in 2006, both of which disrupted international markets (for an excellent treatment of Starlink in the context of regulatory failure, see Bratspies 2002, 2003).

California is at the crux of these tensions because it is both the top agricultural state in the country and has significant pockets of those with more progressive and alternative perspectives. This is further reflected in California's position as top state for organic production. Mendocino County is one such pocket. It is, by some accounts, a 'renegade' county (Brillinger, personal communication, 15 July 2009), and it is frequently characterized as being filled with individuals who moved there to escape urban life, who valued their individuality, alternative lifestyles and right to privacy. It is a characterization compatible with resistance to any perception of bullying by 'corporate America'.

I will now turn to a discussion of the interview data in the context of McCann's suggested stages for analysis. Due to their greater relevance for this case, I will focus on three of the four stages – law and the genesis of social movements, policy implementation and enforcement, and the legacy stage – all the while keeping an eye on where law acted as a constraint and/or a helpmate towards social movement goals.

Law and the Genesis of Social Movements

The first analytical stage relating to the genesis of social movements is particularly interesting for the Mendocino case. First of all, the effort to ban GMOs in Mendocino was not launched by a campaign-savvy, non-governmental organization, but arose from the interests of a limited number of concerned individuals. In fact, it even had a redirecting – if not a risk of thwarting – impact on a pre-existing statewide social movement organization with specifically anti-GM goals. While the campaign galvanized an enormous number of people into action, and by all accounts (even opponents') was wildly effective, this did not translate into any apparent lasting change in the non-profit organization that sparked it, nor did the movement appear to become institutionalized in another form, for example, through a broader movement undertaking similar initiatives. Rather, it appears to have reverted back to a loose consortium of interested individuals. At the same time, rather than the 'movement' shutting down at the campaign's end, the success was passed like a torch to interested parties in other counties, and served to stimulate similar social movement activity there. I will expand on these points each in turn.

In the years prior to the initiative to ban GMOs, Els Cooperrider had been a community activist on various issues, hosted a radio programme, wrote letters to newspapers, and, in her own words, 'became known as pretty much a rabble-rouser in the area' (Cooperrider, personal communication, 26 June 2009). She had even run for county supervisor at one time. Thus she had a wide contact base, something she credits in part for the degree of efficiency with which the campaign was mobilized, and a sufficient degree of political awareness to recognize the potential of a county level ballot initiative.

The Mendocino Organic Network was actually comprised of only four members, including Els, and with the use of \$1,700 in seed money they had raised at farmer's markets their goal was to promote local organic agriculture in some as-yet unspecified manner. The other three members were all on the board of directors of the local food co-op. Dismayed by their inability to get the co-op to label GMOs in the store, they wondered about the prospects of starting a movement to label GMOs. Els had an alternate suggestion:

'Instead of going to all the effort to get a labelling law into effect, which we could only do for Mendocino county, because we couldn't do it for California – no way – I said, and these were my exact words: "why don't we do something to outlaw the damn things?"' (ibid.).

While labelling would be difficult and laborious to implement given that a majority of products were imported into the region, a ban on the propagation of GMOs would be much less unwieldy. Prior to launching the initiative, Els met with the members of the county Board of Supervisors (BOS) and the agricultural commissioner: the former to suggest the BOS pass a GMO ban themselves, thus preventing the need for a ballot initiative (which they declined); and the latter to query him on his position should they pursue the initiative. Some proponents of the initiative found the commissioner to be a less than an enthusiastic supporter of the proposed initiative. According to Cooperrider, the commissioner 'tried to talk her out of it', and even sent a wine-grape expert to further convince her (but 'of course, nobody was going to talk us out of it') (ibid.). Another proponent went so far as to call him the 'opposition's unofficial spokesperson'.² The agricultural commissioner himself spoke of the difficulty of his position, as will be discussed, but at that first meeting the commissioner states that he made it clear that his position was mandated to be one of neutrality:

'I told them I would not be able to oppose it, I would have to remain completely neutral, because that was the way the law was... That was kind of the green light for them (Bengston, personal communication, 29 June 2009).

Consequently, Cooperrider and her supporters consulted on the process of launching a citizen's initiative, and with the assistance of her wide network of contacts, collected the required number of signatures to qualify for a ballot initiative. This is already a significant achievement in a process that is characterized by 'consistent failure' (Manweller, 2005). At this point the campaign began in earnest. While the Mendocino campaign did not originate from a social movement organization it soon attracted the attention of one – Californians for a GE-Free Agriculture (Cal GE-Free, hereafter) – who had the same goals as the Mendocino's activists, but wanted them implemented statewide. Cal GE-Free was initially opposed to the Mendocino initiative on the grounds it would ultimately hamper their broader efforts by stimulating

opposition to banning GE. According to Renata Brillinger, the then director of Cal-GE Free, Cal-GE Free ultimately sought out the organizers of the Mendocino initiative in order that they could 'get to know each other's strategies', and discuss their concerns over the repercussions of pursuing a county-level ban:

'That was one of the things we were concerned about. Having a kind of a bigger picture view, was what would be the consequences or the dangers or the backlash of getting such a thing passed? We assumed, and were proven right, that there would be a preemption attempt and there's been a number of different ways that that's been done, and it had a much more far reaching effect than we anticipated at the time' (Brillinger, personal communication, 16 July 2009).

The Mendocino activists were nonetheless committed to going forward. They were dedicated to their cause. Further, right from the beginning they were committed to the local basis of their campaign and wanted to avoid any perception of outside influence or 'conspiracy theories' that the support of a larger social movement organization would bring. Consequently, Cal-GE Free did not participate in the campaign in any way except to brace themselves for its repercussions. This emphasis on the local would turn out to be one of the most powerful features of the ensuing campaign.

Both proponents and opponents talk about the effective and well-organized manner in which the proponents of the initiative ran their campaign. It certainly was a factor that many of those at the forefront of the action had important skills to offer the campaign: from the development of a highly effective website by a former website designer, to record keeping, communications, fundraising and volunteer coordination, many players were able to effectively fill high-skilled roles. Further, they were sufficiently dedicated to volunteer large amounts of time to the cause. Many activists I spoke to gave up surprising amounts of time, some even setting aside their employment to dedicate a month or more full-time to it. Cooperrider, for example, hired someone to replace her at her brew pub; their communications person worked full-time for the cause for a number of months; Frey Vineyards' family members dedicated not only themselves, but their staff to the cause, to name just a few examples.

Activists make much about the difference in spending between the ban's proponents versus opponents – a difference of almost 7–1 (\$700 000 versus \$120 000) by campaign's end (Somers, 2004) – and the grass-roots, local, volunteer base of the proponents, versus the high-capital, externally based, experts of the opponents. There is very little to suggest this is exaggeration. What little money the campaign had in contrast to the opposition was locally sourced, small denomination (e.g. in the \$100–500 range) and came from a wide number of contributors. This money was mostly used for print and radio ads, signage, postage and related campaign paraphernalia. The campaign contribution statement of the opposition is a story in itself: successive, \$100 000 contributions from Croplife, and large lump payments to lawyers, campaign strategists, ballot initiative strategists, polling companies, and the like, on the expenses side.³

Given the vast differential access to resources between proponents of the ban and their opposition, skilled professionals and money were clearly not the deciding factor, however. Rather, wide-scale ownership of the issue appears to have been of central importance. Ban initiators were both highly organized and dedicated to the grass-roots aspect. The county was divided into regions and, within each region,

coordinators were free to brainstorm their own mobilization tactics targeted to their region. According to Laura Hamburg, who became the proponent's media director, people were 'gravitating to the campaign' and their input was welcomed (personal communication, 26 June 2009). As opposed to the highly controlled opposition, the proponents had 'not one, not six, but 30 spokespeople' (ibid.). By all accounts, it was a highly localized strategy. Meetings were held in the Cooperrider's pub, first weekly, and then daily by the end of the campaign, with between 150–200 local residents involved at any one time (Walsh-Dilley, 2009, p. 102). For many involved it was reportedly 'fun'. Volunteers were engaged and empowered.

In the face of an organized local opposition, this dynamic might have been different, and agricultural producers were the one group where such opposition might be found. The largest agriculture sector in the county, however – the wine-grape sector – was 30% organic. The ordinance actually had the potential to benefit, and at very least would not hamper, these producers. While there were conventional growers who had concerns that the ban would prevent them from reaping future technological benefits, there was little organized local resistance. Further, as noted by the past president of the Mendocino Winegrape and Wine Commission, given the long time frame for investment in grapevines – approximately four years before new vines provide fruit, and years of trials to study the subsequent impact on wine quality – producers are unlikely to rapidly adopt a new wine technology, and thus perhaps less likely to put themselves at stake over the issue (Poulos, personal communication, 18 July 2009).

Given the lack of a local face of opposition and the overwhelming outside interest, sentiments were expressed that 'big business' was trying to crush the wishes of the people. Thus, it very quickly became an issue of 'biodemocracy'. This perception was not helped by a suit launched in December by the California Plant Health Association (representing large agribusiness) over aspects of the wording of the ballot initiative. Once again, this could have proved a serious financial problem for the proponents of the ballot initiative, but they were approached by a lawyer before they even had time to consider how they might handle it. She had heard about the suit and offered to assist them pro bono, on condition she could apply for fees (Cooperrider, personal communication, 26 June 2009). The suit was defeated, allowing the ballots to be printed in time for the March election. The vote was held and won, the lawyer got her fees, and those involved slowly returned to their daily lives.

Implementation and Enforcement

While policy implementation is crucial for the realization of social movement goals, the Mendocino initiative is somewhat more difficult to assess given that there was no genetic modification applications in crops currently grown in the county. Rather, the ban was preventative, with the most likely future applications being genetically modified wine yeast and grapevines. Thus implementation was mainly hypothetical, and, in fact, nothing was done to establish protocols for implementation and enforcement for a number of years after the ban passed. Two things changed this. While activists had approached Bengston, the then agricultural commissioner, regarding the creation of such protocols, he was reportedly uninterested in pursuing the issue. Bengston retired in January 2009 and was replaced by his previous assistant, Tony Linegar, who was reportedly 'more receptive' to the issue. Second, the drive for agrofuels production had created a sufficient market incentive in canola

for at least one producer in the region (but outside county limits) to want to grow genetically modified canola. Thus the key players in Measure H arranged to meet with Linegar to press him on the issue of implementation.

For his part, Linegar had concerns regarding the actual text of the measure – specifically, an erroneous definition of DNA much derided by opponents – and its enforceability. It is plausible that the incorrect definition of DNA could render the ordinance subject to legal challenge, should someone be so inclined. According to Linegar, the ordinance had three ‘gaping’ weaknesses: it did not provide him with any authority to enter property and investigate potential violations; it had no provisions for due process for someone accused of violating the ordinance; and it needed clear indicators for what constituted grounds for investigation (Linegar, personal communication, 24 June 2009). Linegar recommended to the group that they provide him with some suggestions regarding criteria that would constitute grounds for an investigation – for example, a field where crops were thriving in the midst of clearly pesticide-treated weeds could be one such indicator. To date, they had yet to do so but, according to Linegar, what might ultimately be required is a follow-up ordinance to clarify and supplement the original. Whether such clarification will occur in time, and in a manner that will allow for its successful implementation, remains to be seen.

Whatever the practical significance of the ban in regards to implementation, it had clear symbolic and political significance for the state of California, and this ultimately fed back into the implementation issue. For example, not only was the state attentive to Mendocino’s initiative, but it was sufficiently concerned that it was interested in impeding it, or, at the very least, its implementation. This is plainly revealed by then agricultural commissioner Bengston’s description of what he describes as a ‘bizarre’ if not highly unethical, telephone interaction with the staff council for the newly minted Secretary of Food and Agriculture at the time.

‘He proceeded to tell me, he said they’re pretty much against the ban, and they are pretty much against me as an ag. commissioner enforcing the ban, if it should pass. That they weren’t going to allow it. And they said that they were so against the ban, and they were ready to write a letter to the Board of Supervisors telling them that they couldn’t use me to enforce a ban. And I said, well, are you going to write that letter then? And they said, no, well, we’re kind of ready but we don’t want to cross a line with the initiative process’ (Bengston, personal communication, 29 June 2009)

According to Bengston, the attorney was unaware of the many jobs that an agricultural commissioner performs that are similarly not covered by the food and agriculture code, and when he explained the detailed reporting system developed to accommodate such jobs the call soon ended. According to Bengston:

‘I think they realized what a humongous mistake they made, if not acting completely illegally, trying to influence... because what they were doing was exactly trying to influence an initiative and use me as a tool to go back to the board or the county council and not show their hands or get involved at all’ (ibid.).

While the effort to influence the ban in this manner was clearly based on ill-conceived legal advice, in turn based on a poor understanding of the role of agricultural commissioners, it provides a clear view of the state’s level of interest in the initiative.

The state ultimately found a new means of influence once the ban had passed. Ten days after Measure H was successful, a letter was sent to all the agricultural commissioners clarifying the 'appropriate use' of funds for county programme activities – the substance of the letter was clearly directed at Mendocino: 'Other activities that counties cannot perform under the authority of the Food and Agriculture Code, or the direction of the Secretary include enforcement of county ordinances against genetically modified organism' (C DFA, 2004).

While not all of the agricultural commissioner's funding comes from the state, the current California budget crisis reveals nonetheless the weak position of the ordinance. As described by Linegar, budget cuts place the ordinance very low on the implementation totem pole:

'So when the county is looking at cutting programmes there are two things they are looking at: is it mandated by law and is it funded. Really, even though this is a county ordinance, so on that level it's mandated, on a state and federal level it's not. And it's not funded. So when we get to have to cut our budget and there's no funding for this program, it falls way down in our priority list' (Linegar, personal interview, 24 June 2009).

The Legacy

The legacy of Mendocino's Measure H is complex and multifaceted. For one, the measure passed, and that in itself is a legal change that stands at least until the point of challenge. For a process that has a less than 50% success rate for the few initiatives that make it to the ballot stage (Manweller, 2005, p. 278 n. 5), this in itself is a significant achievement. Whether it can withstand challenge is a further question. From my analysis, three further features have emerged which appear key to the legacy of Mendocino: the impact on further movements consistent with the goals of the Mendocino initiative; the ensuing backlash against such initiatives and crystallization of pro-GM positions; and structural/institutional changes, such as the new, state-level liability law. I will deal with these each in turn.

While the mobilization around Measure H appears to have largely been issue specific, this does not mean that it had no influence on further mobilization. Rather, the Mendocino initiative had been closely watched by like-minded people in other California counties, and when it passed it created a momentum of similar mobilizations. The core group that had orchestrated the Mendocino initiative organized a workshop with interested parties from these counties in order to share their strategies and mistakes. Cal GE-Free paid one of the members a small stipend to assist interested counties in their efforts. Consequently, Mendocino's mobilization was inspirationally, and sometimes even practically, influential in subsequent mobilizations, and these make up a part of the legacy of Mendocino. Interestingly, more than one person notes that talks given by Percy Schmeiser – the Saskatchewan canola farmer who was sued by Monsanto for patent infringement – were instrumental in turning a number of conventional farmers to support Measure H. Clearly, the legacy of legal mobilization does not just start with Mendocino, but is itself building on a legacy of anti-GMO mobilization.

Unfortunately for activists, the opposition had also learned from its mistakes, and while a number of counties managed to either get initiatives going or lobbied county supervisors, and a few of them passed, many more did not. Five more bans were

attempted in 2004, of which two passed – in Trinity (supervisor) and Marin (ballot) – in mainly non-agricultural counties. Another was attempted and defeated in 2005. One passed – significantly, in Santa Cruz (supervisor) – in 2006, and another passed in Lake County (supervisor) in 2008, but its legality was put into question by the discovery of pre-existing cultivation of genetically modified crops in the county and approval was postponed. These attempts are presented in Table 1.⁴ While certainly the most common, activity was not limited to the county level. For example, in the same time period, the Californian cities of Arcata, Point Arena and Santa Cruz also approved bans.

Conversations with interested parties, such as with a very involved faculty member at the University of California, Berkeley, suggest these initiatives have largely ‘fizzled out’ (CA1, interview, 17 July 2009);⁵ however, evidence of some ongoing activity can still be found. For example, after Lake County’s unsuccessful ban, the Lake County board of supervisors passed a resolution in 2010 to regulate the growing of genetically modified crops through a registration system (Sweeney, 2010).

With respect to the issue of backlash, Cal GE-Free’s concerns proved to be very well founded. While the tensions around agricultural biotechnology were already well established in California, Mendocino pushed forward the possibility that counties where different values prevailed could chart their own course. This anti-GMO victory had a legacy for the opposition as well, however. In response to the growing voices supporting further such anti-GM mobilizations, opposition to this mobilization also grew, particularly in the central valley counties where large, conventional agriculture operations were already using them in crops such as corn and cotton. A number of these counties proceeded to pass resolutions in support of genetic engineering. Unlike a ban, these resolutions had no practical outcome attached to them, but they represented a strong political message when coming from important agricultural counties such as Fresno (which grossed over \$5 billion in agricultural production value in 2007) (C DFA, 2009, p. 34). By 2006, twelve county-level governments had passed resolutions supporting GM (University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources Statewide Biotechnology Workgroup, <<http://ucbiotech.org>>, accessed 5 March 2009).

The pressures at play over the potential mobilizations were such that it did, in fact, ultimately spur a state pre-emption bill, California Senate Bill 1056 (2005), proposed by Senator Dean Florez and backed by the California Farm Bureau,⁶ large agribusiness, and pro-biotech locales. The bill would prevent local anti-GM initiatives on the basis that different county and city ordinances regulating the use of

Table 1. California county-level GM ban attempts.

County	Date	Name	Type	Outcome	Support
Mendocino	2 Mar. 2004	Measure H	Ballot	Passed	57%
Trinity	Aug. 2004	–	Supervisor	Passed	3-1
Marin	2 Nov. 2004	Measure B	Ballot	Passed	62%
Humboldt	2 Nov. 2004	Measure M	Ballot	Defeated	35%
Butte	2 Nov. 2004	Measure D	Ballot	Defeated	40%
San Luis Obispo	2 Nov. 2004	Measure Q	Ballot	Defeated	41%
Sonoma	8 Nov. 2005	Measure M	Ballot	Defeated	45%
Santa Cruz	20 June 2006	–	Supervisor	Passed	5-0
Lake	21 Oct. 2008	–	Supervisor	Passed but invalidated	3-2

Sources: Meadows, 2004; Miller, 2006; Anderson, 2008; <<http://smartvoter.org>>.

seed could pose 'serious financial and practical problems, concerning the orderly marketing and sale of agricultural commodities within the state'.⁷ Many of the activists involved in Measure H, got involved again to oppose the bill. State pre-emption would compromise not only county-level GM regulation, however, but also other concerns previously under county jurisdiction. Consequently, this opposition found a wide base for support. In conjunction with significant mobilization from activists in Mendocino, Cal GE-Free, and others, the state pre-emption legislation did not pass in California. The backlash spilled beyond California, however, and in an apparent response to the activities in California, similar legislation was proposed in various states across the country: many of these did pass.

While the Mendocino initiative could have been considered a hindrance to Cal GE-Free's mobilization, Cal GE-Free ultimately capitalized on the experience and contacts they gained in defending against SB 1056 to undertake a new statewide initiative. As Brillinger describes it:

'[The legislative processes] is not intuitive, it's got its own set of rules, and so working on state legislation, you know, is its own sort of skill set, and had we not had the pre-emption experience... We never intended to run a state bill. We thought about it way back in the beginning, and we said, oh well that's years away, we can't just jump to that place... [W]e'd been together four years by the time we started fighting state pre-emption, which is much quicker than anybody expected us to get to the state legislative arena, but it was only because those circumstances led us there' (Brillinger, personal communication, 16 July 2009)

In response to their efforts, California Assembly Bill AB 541 (2007) was introduced by Assembly Member Huffman in February 2007. Bill 541 was essentially a liability law for GM technology, but when it was first introduced it included a number of very progressive features. Over the succeeding years of negotiation, many of the bill's more controversial features were dropped – notably, a requirement of a 'system of notification for the locations of [genetically modified] crops', the confinement of 'experimental pharmaceutical-producing crops to greenhouses', and the assignment of liability for any genetically modified crop contamination to the technology's manufacturers, as opposed to farmers (Genetic Engineering Policy Alliance, 2008). While many rumblings exist regarding the ensuing bill's 'weakness' and 'watering down' of activist's goals, Cal GE-Free's approach from the beginning was strictly pragmatic, and focused on what they might actually succeed in passing. Thus many compromises were made in order to gain broader support – most importantly from the California Farm Bureau, which was a powerful influence and which to date had opposed any regulations of genetically modified crops (*ibid.*).

In its final form, AB 541 outlined just the kind of protocol that many argued was blatantly lacking in the infamous case of Monsanto's infringement suit against Saskatchewan farmer, Percy Schmeiser (for more on this case and the issue of liability more broadly, see Pechlaner, 2012). AB 541 outlined protocols for obtaining and testing crop samples, and provided protection for farmers 'who acted in good faith' from liability for GM contamination 'based on the presence or possession' of a patented genetically modified plant, provided that this presence was minimal and the material was not knowingly acquired.⁸ On 27 September 2008, Bill 541 was signed into law. While AB 541 does not cover many of the key health and environmental concerns raised by GM's opponents, it is nonetheless hugely progressive for even its

limited concerns in contrast to a clear federal reluctance towards liability legislation. In the words of Cal GE-Free's president, the end result was 'only a tiny sliver of what we would ideally think... should be put in place', but nonetheless, 'it remains one of the only bills in the county that in any way shape or form attempts to put any kind of limitation on the free market reality of GE crops' (Brillinger, personal communication, 16 July 2009).

Despite the limited success accomplished, the experience was 'painful' and Brillinger saw no future in furthering such attempts at regulatory reform, given the degree of power that rested in the hands of conventional agriculture. In fact, Cal GE-Free itself was undergoing a transformation and the organization was refocusing on sustainable agriculture more broadly, specifically with respect to climate change. Genetic engineering would be one of four subsets of that issue. Consequently, the organization changed its name to California Climate Change and Agriculture Network (CALCAN).

Conclusions

If the Measure H movement is any indication, it is only by broadening our analytical scope that we can begin to gain any insight into the real consequences of social movements. Breaking the analysis into the different 'moments' where social movements interact with law provides a strategy for this more meaningful interpretation of 'how law matters' for social movements than might be possible by focusing on limited causal factors or outcomes. Through these 'moments' the broader, cultural, aspects of the movement begin to be exposed. Thus, Mendocino suggests important additions to the growing body of work on what Guigni calls the 'political, (mainly policy) effects of social movements' (2008, p. 1583) or what Amenta and Caren call the 'external consequences... especially those relating to states and struggles over legislation' (2004, p. 461).

Rather unequivocally we see here how law acted as a constraint on the range of possible actions of those interested in regulatory reform for GMOs. Proponents of the measure to ban GMOs were concerned about the health, environmental and/or social risks of agricultural biotechnology and felt that the current regulatory regime was insufficient. At the same time, those involved saw very little recourse for input, not only at the international and national levels, which dominate biotechnology regulation, but even at the state level. For activists, regulatory oversight in California was seen to be ruled by the conventional farm industry and its organizations, such as the Farm Bureau. Thus the habitus of those in the legal and regulatory fields were antithetical to the goals of activists, and this played a central role in their choice to pursue a county-level GMO ban as opposed to another form of regulatory reform. For Mendocino county activists, this was something that *could* be accomplished, in part because as a citizen's initiative it circumvented having to navigate some of those fields.

From our assessment of the implementation stage, it was clear that even once the ballot was won, the battle was far from over. Broadening McCann's legal mobilization approach even further with the help of Bourdieu's (1987) conceptualization of legal fields could provide significantly further insights here. Where legal change requires citizen input, as in a ballot initiative, factors that influence the salience of the topic for citizens will be far more influential than the subtleties of Boudieu's notion of habitus. In this case, for example, the characterization of the local standing up to

big business was an issue of particular salience for Mendocino voters. The casting of law as a 'field' rather than a code – with its opening of awareness of the elements that comprise the players in that field and habitually constrain their actions – could provide significant insights into the implementation of the new law on the books, however – something markedly evident in the strained role of the Agricultural Commissioner, for example.

Last, the Mendocino case suggests that the legacy phase of social movement interaction with the law is extremely multifaceted and complex. Nonetheless, it is also the most compelling for assessing the efficacy of law for social change – for assessing the extent to which social movement legal mobilization can actually affect the pro-agricultural biotechnology regulatory dynamics in the United States. The legacy phase also includes the initiative's backlash, of course. The importance of questioning whether this backlash undermined any gains made through such mobilization is clearly illustrated here: the answer is somewhat less clear.

For one, Mendocino's legacy is intricately interconnected to further social movement mobilization. Had county-level bans swept across California, it could have triggered a 'crisis of jurisdiction' challenging the legitimacy of higher scales of government, and potentially even forcing higher level legislation (Mulaney, 2008, p. 153). While enough county-level bans were attempted in California (and even more were considered) to be symbolically threatening, many did not pass and the particular mode of resistance they inspired has definitely slowed. Similar to the Percy Schmeiser case, however, they nonetheless are inspirational to others in the widespread anti-biotechnology movement, and they are well circulated on anti-GM websites and lists of GMO-free zones.⁹

Despite this inspirational effect, the Mendocino action also had a potentially thwarting or redirecting impact on a movement that preceded it – Cal GE-Free. To a certain extent, it also had a stimulating effect, as AB 541 is itself a part of the legacy of Mendocino. AB 541 certainly responded to the symbolic crisis of the attempted bans. Given the difficulties Cal-GE Free had in securing AB541, it seems unlikely that a California-wide ban on genetic engineering would have been possible even without the early backlash triggered by Mendocino. Nonetheless, the ongoing spotlight on GMOs and their risks has maintained salience for the public, no doubt facilitated by the ongoing attention to the issue that is the legacy of Mendocino. In 2012, this salience was deemed sufficient to attempt a statewide ballot on mandatory GM food labeling. Over half a million signatures were successfully collected to qualify the measure for the state's November 2012 ballot (Burke, 2012). While it would be a phenomenal feat for such an initiative to win, its existence is a clear threat to the US pro-biotechnology paradigm, as a very practical crisis would be caused by food companies forced to differently label for the Californian market. Even if the measure does not pass, its symbolic weight puts US regulatory agencies under considerable pressure for regulatory response.

All these factors suggest strongly that any narrower reading of the 'consequences' of the Mendocino initiative – for example, in pursuit of causal clarity – would completely fail to address the broader question of social change. McCann's legal mobilization framework thus provides reprieve from some of the weaknesses of law and social movements literature, but at an undeniable cost of generalizability. I would argue this is a necessary cost. Are legal successes a step towards changing the paradigm of agricultural biotechnology, or are they merely momentary flashes of resistance? Mendocino reveals that unraveling the answer to this is highly complex,

and may even suggest how McCann's legacy stage could benefit from further differentiation – for example, into a four-pronged investigation of a movement's explicit impact (e.g. the legal outcome); movement impact (e.g. on the original movement itself or on other movements formation and direction); cultural impact (e.g. on public awareness and support for the issue); and its regressive impact (e.g. backlash in the preceding three arenas).

While it is clear that the biotechnology paradigm has not shifted at this point, Mendocino's mobilization represents one successful battle in a broader anti-biotechnology struggle, with an associated (but less easy to determine) further success in the number of people it managed to sensitize to the issue. The cumulative effect of such actions will have a different legacy than each on its own, of course, and Mendocino belongs in the context of legal mobilization over labeling rBST in milk, environmental assessments of genetically modified alfalfa, and contamination by genetically modified beets, among other forms of anti-biotechnology protest activities. Thus the sheer number of mobilizations (and the resulting number of sensitized people) may become a factor worthy of study in itself, particularly in conjunction with important contextual factors, such as contamination incidents. It is clear here that Mendocino adds further support to Schurman and Munro's (2003) statement that the wide range of anti-biotechnology activism 'has turned what until recently looked like a done deal in the trajectory of agricultural industrialization... into a moment of uncertainty and openness' (2003, p. 112). If some might argue that Mendocino has not unequivocally changed the status of biotechnology in Mendocino, there can be little argument that it has unequivocally contributed to this uncertainty and openness.

Notes

1. Although genetic modification technically has a broader definition, the terms are generally used synonymously. I use GM in this article consistent with the most common usage. Where this article refers to others' perspectives or quotes, I am consistent with their usage.
2. Stated on condition of confidentiality.
3. Financial information is from Recipient Committee Campaign Statements, California 2001/02 Form 460, for 'Citizens Against Measure H. A Coalition of Farmers, Taxpayers and the CA Plant Health Association' and for the 'Campaign Committee for a GMO Free Mendocino'. Copies are with the author.
4. A map of California's county ordinances (pro- and anti-biotechnology ordinances, as well as counties with anti-GM 'activity') can be found on the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources Statewide Biotechnology Workgroup website, see Map of California Counties Ordinances <<http://ucbiotech.org/resources/legislation/legislation.html>>.
5. Confidential interview subject.
6. The California Farm Bureau Federation is a federation with input from 53 county farm bureaus. According to the Bureau, policy recommendations develop from the 'community and county Farm Bureau levels' (California Farm Bureau Federation, 2012), although many activists would consider it 'captured' by conventional industrial agriculture interests.
7. Senate Rules Committee. SB 1056. Office of Senate Floor Analyses. 25 August 2006.
8. An Act to Add Article 2.6 (Commencing With Section 52300) to Chapter 2 of Division 18 of the Food and Agricultural Code, Relating to Liability. Assembly Bill No. 541. Chapter 424. (2008) at 52305.
9. See <<http://www.gmo-free-regions.org/>> for GMO-free Europe, for example. Less comprehensive sites exist for other regions, such as GE-free BC: <http://www.gefreebc.org/gefree_tmpl.php?content=home>.

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Book Review

Naming Food after Places: Food Relocalisation and Knowledge Dynamics in Rural Development

Maria Fonte and Apostolos G. Papadopoulos (eds), 2010

Farnham: Ashgate Publishing

306 pp., ISBN: 978-0-7546-7718-5 [hbk]

Scholars' interest towards the relocalization of food as the exploration of the economic, political and social relations that characterize several forms of direct and proximate selling (Higgins et al., 2008) has grown consistently in recent years (e.g. Hinrichs, 2003; DuPuis and Goodman, 2005; Feagan, 2007; Holloway et al., 2007; Little et al., 2009). The book *Naming Food after Places* brings together the results of the research project CORASON (A Cognitive Approach to Rural Sustainable Development: The Dynamic of Expert and Lay Knowledge) aimed at identifying and analysing food relocalization initiatives in selected European rural areas. The overall object of the book is to enrich local food analysis and debate through focusing attention on the characteristics of the networks, the forms of knowledge mobilized by the rural actors and the way they have changed and interacted over time. Starting from the assumption that local food is a privileged domain for the exploration of knowledge dynamics, the analysis is conducted by using a case-study approach and by presenting different models of food relocalization from Ireland, Scotland, Sweden, Germany, Norway, Poland, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Greece.

The core concept that clearly emerges from the different rural experiences is the fact that there are two main perspectives on local food: the reconnection perspective denoting a socio-spatial proximity between producers and consumers, and the origin-of-food perspective, in which the concept of 'localness' is also linked to the specific conditions of production in a territory. As a consequence, the 10 case studies analyzed were grouped following these two diverse agri-food contexts in which the models of local and locality food are recognized (Maye and Ilbery, 2007).

The volume is divided in two main parts. The first part, entitled 'Reinventing Local Food and Local Knowledge', includes Hilary Tovey's research on the controversial concept of local food in Ireland, the case study on knowledge dynamics and the localization of food in the former German Democratic Republic (by Rosemarie Siebert and Luiz Laschewski), the exploration of the production, negotiation and application of different forms of knowledge in a local food system in Scotland (by Lorna Dargan and Edmund Harris) and the debate on how local food production and consumption can be maintained in a modernized agri-food system in Sweden (by Karl Bruckmeier). The second part of the book is concerned with the valorization of local food and local knowledge. It includes: a focus on an agri-food network centred on quality production in Portugal (by Isabel Rodrigo and Josè Ferragolo da Veiga), a chapter on the relevance of origin certification for local food (by Maria Fonte), an analysis on the importance of social networks for a local cheese in Poland

(by Tomasz Adamski and Krzysztof Górlach), the presentation of traditional food case studies of Norway (by Gunn-Turid Kvam), the description of two case studies from Spain (by Almudena Buciega Arèvalo, Javier Esparcia Pèrez and Vicente Ferrer San Antonio) and a final chapter that examines two networks of wine production in Greece (by Apostolos G. Papadopoulos). The conclusions point to the importance of relocalizing knowledge while relocalizing food as there is an abundance of local knowledge in rural areas of Europe that should be recognized, defended and exploited.

This book shows very clearly that, in profoundly different regions of Europe, farmers, producers and consumers cooperate to promote initiatives of the relocalization and valorization of food that could support the sustainability of rural areas. Moreover, it suggests that projects aimed at the place embedding of food offer important opportunities to the knowledge problems of an integrating European society.

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