

# An Analysis of the Local Food Movement in Carlisle, Pennsylvania

By  
Cynthia L. Baur  
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Dickinson College Department of Anthropology  
Dr. Karen Weinstein, Advisor

## **Abstract**

In this paper I critically analyze the local food movement in Carlisle, Pennsylvania and the surrounding area. I argue that the local food movement is a response to a global, industrialized neoliberal food system. Consumers seek out a more personal alternative to anonymous industrially produced food. I use my own ethnographic work, such as interviews with farmers and participant observation at the farmers' market, to understand the motivations of participating producers and consumers in Central Pennsylvania. I find that the local food movement in this area is not successful at giving all consumers access to local, healthy, and sustainable food. Individual participants are responding to a call to "vote" with their dollars to try to create change that will alter the entire food system. However, they are unsuccessful because they are acting within their individual capitalist identities. In addition, not all consumers have an equal opportunity to "vote" and the rhetoric often ignores certain components of food production, such as labor, adding to the elitism of the movement. Participants need to recognize the privilege and elitism that exists within the movement. While the local food movement may be unsuccessful at meeting all of its goals on its own, it is still a valuable component of a multi-level strategy for creating change within the food system.

## Introduction

The local food movement has captured the attention of many individuals in scholarly fields, including the field of anthropology. Food is not a new topic of interest to anthropologists but analyzing food and what makes it local is a relatively recent focus area. The local food movement is important because it is a grassroots attempt to address the faults that exist within our food system. The local food movement tries to address people's lack of access to fresh, healthy, and sustainable food. Anthropologists including Brad Weiss (2011), Heather Paxson (2010), Donald Nonini (2013), Nana Okura Gagné (2011), Laura DeLind (2002), Andria Timmer (2015), Joan Gross (2011), Seth Holmes (2013) and many others have studied farmer's markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) programs, local restaurants, and farms to understand alternative food movements. These anthropologists critically analyze the implications of local, alternative markets in a neoliberal, globalized and industrial economic system. They tackle ideas such as the *terroir* of North Carolina pork barbeque (Weiss 2011), responses to the global food economy (Timmer 2015), the effectiveness of civic agriculture (DeLind 2002) and the implications of farm worker labor in the local food movement (Holmes 2013 and Gray 2013). I will be introducing other key scholars and the importance of their work as I progress through my argument thematically.

In this paper I will engage with existing literature about the local food movement in order to analyze how this alternative food movement plays out in Central Pennsylvania. First, I will describe the farmers' market in Carlisle, Pennsylvania in order to provide context and imagery. Then, I will discuss the agrarian ideals we hold in the US and how those ideals influence Central Pennsylvania. I then interrogate the many interpretations of "local" including anthropologists' use of *terroir* within the local food movement. In a similar vein, I

apply the concept to this specific geographic region. Next, I describe the global, industrial food system, the local food movement, and neoliberalism. Like many anthropologists, I argue that the local food movement is a response to a neoliberal economic system in which consumers demand an alternative market that is socially embedded, environmentally sound and socially just. However, I believe that the local food movement is not successful at meeting these goals because it simultaneously recreates and works within the neoliberal structures to which it is reacting. Like neoliberal policy, alternative food movements rely on individual actors to create change through their capitalist identities, such as “voting” with their dollars. The local food movement relies on interaction between consumers and producers to create change in our food system. However, this exacerbates inequalities and perpetuates an aura of exclusivity since not all consumers have equal opportunities to “vote.” Finally, I conclude that while the local food movement may not be successful at provoking change on its own, it is still an important and valuable component of a multi-level, comprehensive strategy that aims to transform our food system.

## **Methods for Data Collection: Interviews and Observations**

In order to understand the various aspects of the local food movement in Central Pennsylvania, I used a combination of semi-structured interviews, participant observation and behavioral sampling. My choice of methods was inspired by the work of other anthropologists, such as Brad Weiss (2011) and Seth Holmes (2013). Brad Weiss (2011) is an anthropologist who teaches at the College of William and Mary. Weiss (2011) has a strong interest in understanding place and value, which has led him to study the *terroir* of the North Carolina pork industry. Seth Holmes (2013) is a cultural and medical anthropologist and physician with a research focus on structural and symbolic violence, which I will define

during my discussion of labor within the local food movement. Like Weiss (2011) and Holmes (2013), I chose these methods because I felt that the best way to understand the local food movement in this area was to get involved as much as possible. I have worked at the Dickinson College Farm since the spring of my sophomore year and I was already familiar with Farmers on the Square (FOTS), the farmers' market in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. My familiarity with the market helped me identify key informants. I also greatly benefitted from the advice and insight of the manager of the Dickinson Farm, Jenn, who was one of the founding members of FOTS. Jenn is an influential leader in Carlisle's local agriculture scene, and she helped connect me with other knowledgeable informants.

The bulk of the information I use in this research comes from semi-structured interviews with farmers in the area. I interviewed a total of eight informants between September 2015 and March 2016. The following chart details my informants.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Other Details</b>
Jenn	Manager, Dickinson College Farm	Founding FOTS member
Michelle	Owner, Roots Flower Farm	Founding FOTS member
Elaine	Owner, Everblossom Farm	Founding FOTS member, CSA farmer
Mel	Dairy farmer Owner, Keswick Creamery	Founding FOTS member
Steve	Owner, Esh's Produce	Amish family farm
Mike	Owner, Earth Springs Farm	CSA farmer
Ann	Manager, FOTS	Manager for four years
Shuchi	Community Member	Former FOTS board member

During my research I drew on a variety of documentary resources produced by individuals involved in the local food movement. I used the Farmers on the Square (FOTS) guidelines and bylaws, minutes from the Carlisle Central Farmers Market (CCFM) board meetings between 2007 and 2009 as well as archived newspaper articles to inform my understanding of the history of the local food movement in this area. In addition, I received permission from the FOTS board to observe their monthly meetings beginning in January, 2016. After observing three meetings, the board agreed to approve me as a temporary board member of FOTS beginning in March, furthering my direct involvement in the market. Being a participant observer allowed me to better understand the complexities and challenges of a non-profit organization run almost entirely by volunteers. The position also afforded me the opportunity to engage with key community members such as Mary, the manager of business attractions for the Cumberland Area Economic Development Corporation.

In addition to being a student farmer at the Dickinson College Farm, I became a regular volunteer from September 2015 through December 2015 at an uncertified organic CSA, community supported agriculture, farm, Earth Springs Farm. This farm is located just outside of Carlisle and is owned by Mike. A large portion of Mike's farm labor consists of workshare volunteers, or volunteers who work for four hours per week in exchange for a small CSA share. While I began volunteering to meet a requirement for a class, I continued as a workshare member for the rest of the semester, which gave me insight into the workings of a for-profit, medium-sized CSA farm.

I also conducted formal observations at FOTS for a period of six weeks. My observations consisted of timed intervals during which I took notes about customers shopping at three different stands at FOTS. For ten seconds every 30 minutes I observed

each stand, taking notes about the age, race, and gender of the individuals shopping there. I also recorded other relevant information that could help me place that individual in an income category, which I will explain further when I discuss my findings. I observed 126 individuals at FOTS between September 30, 2015 and December 9, 2015. These observations helped me understand the types of customers that shop at FOTS.

## **What is FOTS?**

Every Wednesday all summer long the cement square in front of the First Presbyterian Church, located at the center of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, transforms into a bustling marketplace full of tents, shoppers, children and dogs. Each unique tent houses colorful vegetables, fruits, flowers, and coolers full of chilled chicken and sausages. The air smells of roasting garlic and burning wood, thanks to the Dickinson Farm's pizza oven that the student workers use to fire up freshly made and locally sourced pizzas. Children run around on the lawn in front of the church, playing games as their parents fill their reusable totes with yogurt, apples and the occasional jar of pickles. Cheerful greetings exchanged between friends old and new fill the air. Customers, who are often treated much more like friends, ask question about the recent bout of rain they know flooded their farmers' fields. Families return home, overstuffed market totes in hand, anxiously awaiting the bounty of the next week's market.

Farmers on the Square (FOTS) is a producer-only farmers' market in Carlisle. From May until October FOTS is open every Wednesday at the intersection of High Street and Hanover Street. FOTS supports about 31 peak-season vendors including five produce farmers, one mushroom farmer, one flower farmer, two dairy farmers, three bakers, three meat farmers, one sauce vendor, one specialty beverage vendor, two fruit growers, and two

prepared food vendors. The market has an average of 436 weekly shoppers. Beginning in November the market moves indoors to Project SHARE (Survival, Help And Recipient Education), a local food bank and community resource center.

FOTS developed in 2009 after some vendor dissatisfaction with the Carlisle Central Farmers Market (CCFM), the reigning farmers' market in Carlisle from 2007 to 2009. The founders of FOTS wanted to create a market with strong and strict rules and guidelines. They believed markets with a strong mission and purpose have the best longevity. The CCFM was a mixture of a farmers' market and a prepared food market that operated in an old warehouse building on Hanover St in downtown Carlisle. A lack of clear purpose, tension between vendors, and the economic reality of running an indoor marketplace all factored into the demise of the CCFM. The market board wanted the market to be open five days a week while still hosting primary producers. Attending an almost-daily market and farming rarely coincide. As one informant put it, "If you're going to be a farmer, you're going to be a farmer" (Michelle, 17 Nov 2015). Small-scale farmers must devote a large portion of their time to production since they usually do not have many employees or timesaving equipment. They often can only spare a few hours per week to sell their products, and attending a five-day-a-week market is unfeasible for many small-scale producers.

Since the CCFM was in a physical building, organizers had to be concerned about covering the large overhead of maintaining the space. Consequentially, the CCFM filled empty vendor spots with resellers, which contradicted the producer-only image they were trying to sell to customers. Jenn, manager of the Dickinson College Farm and a vendor at the CCFM, (21 Jan 2016) explained, "I think that in wanting to fill up the building, the mission and vision of a producer-only farmers market was lost and so you had people reselling



bagged baby carrots.” Jenn pointed out her frustration with selling at a market with other vendors with products they could have never produced themselves locally, such as bagged baby carrots. Tensions between all parties involved arose about the economics of the market as well as the mission and purpose of the CCFM. At the end of 2008 the market collapsed and the building in which it existed is still for sale.

During the winter of 2008-2009, Jenn and other farmers established Farmers on the Square (FOTS). The founding members designed the guidelines with two things in mind—small-scale producer constraints and the longevity of the market. The FOTS guidelines state that all vendors must be primary producers and all products must come from within a radius of 50 miles from the market or from the producer’s farm. There are very few exceptions to these main guidelines. Like many other producer-only farmers’ markets, FOTS was founded on the belief that supporters of the local food movement truly care about knowing the person who grows their food. The guidelines were intentionally strict, Michelle, another FOTS founding member, (17 Nov 2015) explained. According to her:

What we did not say out loud was that by making it producer-only, people are being forced to have a relationship with the person or people who are actually making their food. And I think that people really, on some level, care about that, whether they recognize it or not.

Strict guidelines keep the market’s integrity intact, which was one of the founding principles of FOTS. Direct interaction between producers and consumers builds community and supports the local economy. It is also important to note that FOTS had support from Dickinson College from the beginning because the college, according to Jenn (21 Jan 2016), “understood and acknowledged the relationship of creating space for local farmers to create community around local food.” FOTS board members used their relationship with a long-

standing institution, Dickinson College, to establish and legitimize the market in the community.

## **Why do we value agriculture and small farms in the US?**

In the last 50 years, the US economy has shifted from one that is dependent on small-scale farming to one that relies on industrialized, mass-produced products. For many years, a large portion of the US population made their living from farming. The Homestead Act of 1862 was the first federally-supported entitlement act that gave land to citizens that agreed to develop and farm the land, which was supposed to stimulate economic growth (Freund 2013, 18). While not all land provided in this act was particularly appropriate for agriculture, some homestead land in the Great Plains region is still farmed today (Anderson 2011, 120).

Wendell Berry and Aldo Leopold, novelists and supporters of agriculture, are recognized as important advocates for “an agrarian and eco-friendly vision of agriculture” (Filipiak 2011, 175). Their work has informed the way we conceptualize and idealize agriculture in the US and modern popular food writers, such as Michael Pollan, often pull ideas from their work.

In more recent US History, farms have become highly mechanized and therefore more efficient, which means that less people are needed to grow the same amount of food. Due to the advancement of chemical, transportation, and agricultural technologies, the US began to rely on mass-produced food after World War II. People began to pursue quantity over quality as cheap energy encouraged farmers to shift toward large-scale, mechanized production (Gross 2011, 183, Bubinas 2011, 156). Supermarkets grew in popularity and a new culture of consumerism developed (Bubinas 2011, 156). Consumption patterns are something that anthropologists Kathleen Bubinas (2011) studies in Wisconsin. She is

interested in the role of informal economies, such as farmers' markets, and how they fit into a larger national economy.

Despite our current food system—featuring a small number of farmers growing a large portion of food—we often romanticize the agrarian lifestyle. Our romanticization of agriculture becomes apparent in local food movement rhetoric. Margaret Gray (2013), an associate professor of political science at Adelphi University, outlines some assumptions that come along with our romanticized perception of farming in her book, *Labor and the Locavore*. The first assumption is that all farmers are economically independent and self-sufficient (Gray 2013, 21). This assumption, however, is a false ideal. Farmers in the US are often dependent on subsidies and economic aid from the US government. Subsidies give false market indicators to farmers that dissuade them from making accurate, long-term decisions about what to grow (Gross 2011, 187). The result is a surplus of certain crops, such as corn and soy, which we then process and package into calorie-dense foods that have a long shelf life.

In addition, farmers themselves are economically vulnerable because their livelihood relies on factors that are entirely out of their control, such as year-to-year weather patterns (Gray 2013, 21). This fact became apparent during my research as I witnessed Ben, co-owner of Three Springs Fruit Farm and a core FOTS vendor, become increasingly stressed and sleep-deprived over a cold snap that threatened his fruit blossoms. He showed up to one board meeting with dark circles under his eyes after spending all night tending to fires in his orchard that may or may not have saved part of his fruit crop for this year.

The last two assumptions we make about an agrarian lifestyle, Gray (2013, 21) argues, are linked. Gray (2013, 21) explains that people assume that farming is an

intrinsically natural and moral activity. This idea also appears in Wendell Berry's (1977) *The Unsettling of America*, which popularized the romanticized agrarian ideal further. Gray (2013, 21) also argues that we assume that agriculture is an industry that is fundamental to human society. These last two assumptions cause people to believe that farming is an inherently good and essential part of human life. Agrarianism, Gray (2013, 23) explains, helps to recapture lost innocence. Farming brings people back to our 'roots' and to a time when everyone participated in this good, wholesome, and simple lifestyle. This is not to say that corporate entities cannot be wholesome and good but local, small-scale supply chains are, in theory, much easier to track and keep accountable.

Even though we have shifted to an industrialized food system, the US has seen resurgence in farmers' markets since the late 1970s. Low food prices caused by increased efficiency in both food production and distribution shifted agricultural responsibilities onto large companies. This shift forced small-scale farmers off of their land. The farmers that remained gravitated toward direct sales because they found larger profit margins selling locally (Bubinas 2011, 156). In 1976, the US government approved the Farmer-to-Consumer Act (Bubinas 2011, 156-157). This act required the USDA to invest in direct marketing of agriculture products, which helped small-scale farmers reach more customers. The Farmer-to-Consumer Act, combined with the health centered and environmentally conscious counter-culture movement of the 1960s, created a renewed interest in farmers' markets (Bubinas 2011, 157). In addition, changes in manufacturing patterns in the 1970s transformed small towns and cities, especially in the Midwest, from industrial powerhouses into economically vulnerable areas with minimal opportunities for employment. Small towns and cities used farmers' markets as a way to revitalize downtown business areas (Bubinas 2011, 157).

Farmers' markets have grown exponentially in the US—in 1994 there were about 1,755 farmers' markets in the US but by 2011, there were 7,175 (Janssen 2013, 68).

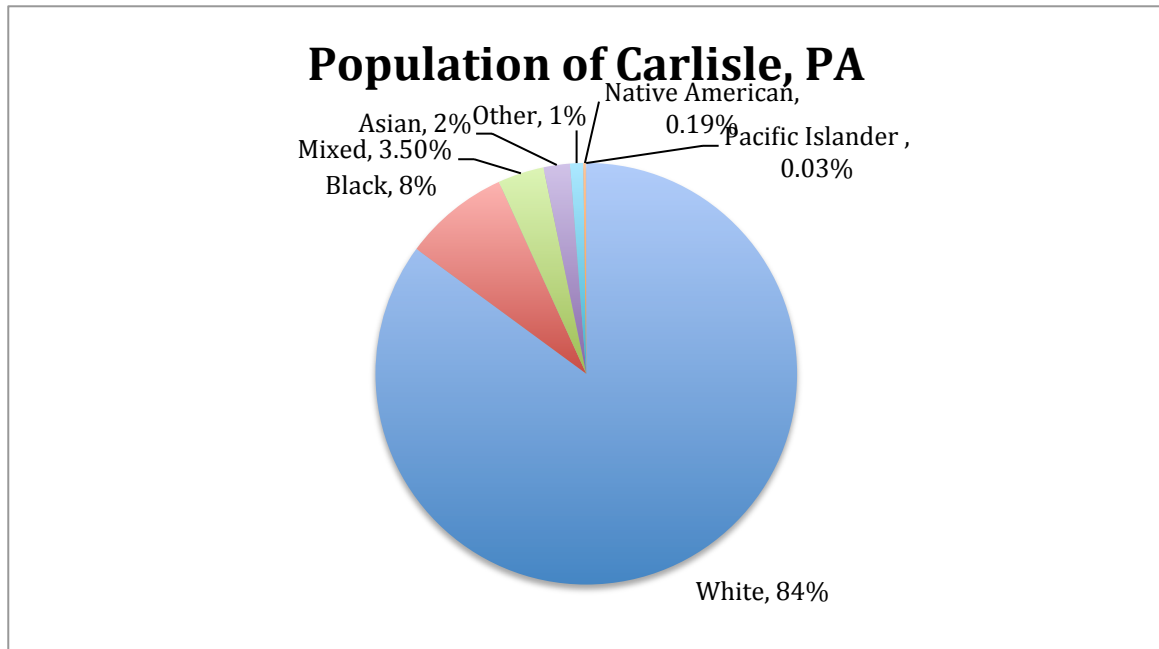
Originally, farmers' markets were designed as a way to help the family farmer. Recently they have evolved into socially embedded and economically rewarding spaces of exchange between farmers, entrepreneurs, and consumers (Bubinas 2011, 155). Sites of direct exchange, such as farmers' markets and CSAs, are the physical space in which interactions between producer and consumer occur (Eriksen 2013, 52). Mainstream agricultural production in the US is scaled for industrialized farms and often excludes small-scale farms.

CSAs are another way that consumers can support local agriculture. A CSA, or community supported agriculture, is a program that allows individuals to purchase a share of the product of a farm. CSA members pay a set fee at the beginning of the season for produce that they will collect on a weekly or bi-weekly schedule. CSAs help support farmers who function on a tight budget because the farmer receives money at the beginning of the season when he or she needs it the most. Farmers use that extra cash to purchase materials necessary to start planting, such as seeds, soil, and seedlings. Ideally CSAs are a way for people who are concerned about their food, where it comes from, and who is producing it to find a like-minded social group (Durrenberger 2002, 42). Elaine (12 Feb 2016), a CSA farmer in East Berlin, began as a CSA farmer due to a recommendation from her mentor, Steve Moore, the “Gandhi of greenhouses” according to the Rodale Institute. He believed that new farmers are safer if they pursue CSA sales over farmers' markets sales. According to him, farmers' markets can sometimes be volatile. With a CSA, the farmer is guaranteed money upfront, making farming a little more stable.

## **What does Central Pennsylvania look like?**

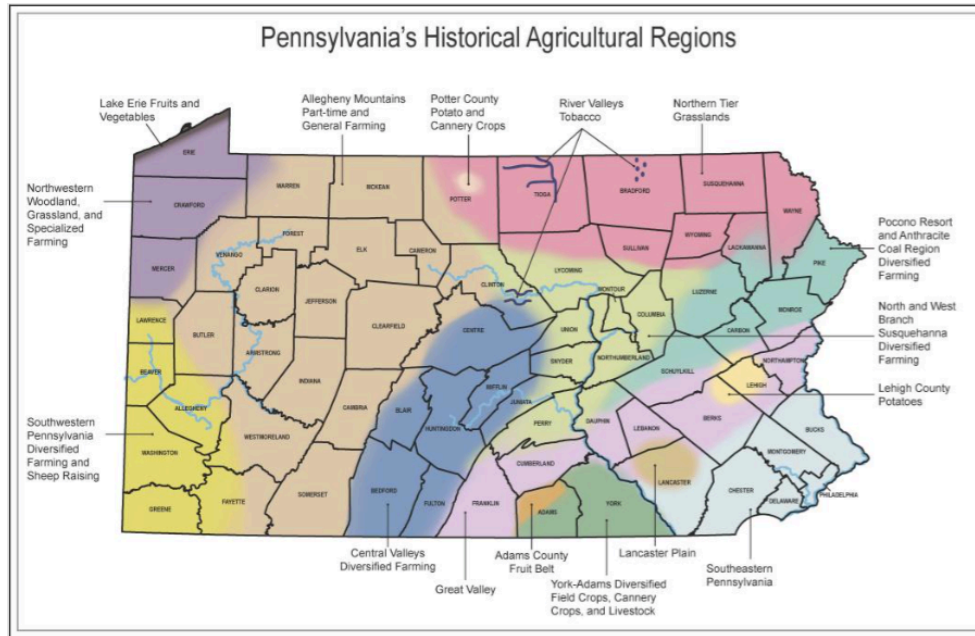
Geographically, my research focused on Carlisle, Pennsylvania and the surrounding area. Carlisle is a borough that sits in the Cumberland Valley in South Central Pennsylvania. It rests directly in between Blue Mountain to the north and South Mountain to the south. Carlisle is the county seat for Cumberland County, making it a hub of human resource offices. The borough of Carlisle consists of 5.5 square miles (“Carlisle Comprehensive Plan” 2002). Historically, Carlisle has existed at the intersection of most major roads that run through the center of Cumberland County, including the Pennsylvania Turnpike, Interstate 81, US Route 11, PA Route 34 and PA Route 641 (“Carlisle Comprehensive Plan” 2002). The completion of the PA Turnpike in 1940 and its extension to New Jersey in the early 1950s, as well as the completion of I-81 in the 1960s, established Carlisle as a transportation hub (“Carlisle Comprehensive Plan” 2002).

According to the 2010 US census, the city of Carlisle has around 18,600 residents. Many of my informants, including Shuchi (17 Feb 2016), described the average customer at FOTS as middle class and white. However, Shuchi (17 Feb 2016) also pointed out that the average FOTS customer is representative of the average resident in Carlisle. I display the racial breakdown of the population in Carlisle in the following chart.



According to the 2014 US census, the median annual household income in Cumberland County was around \$60,000, while the median household income in the borough of Carlisle was roughly \$45,000. The 2016 Pennsylvania Center for Workforce Information and Analysis data show that the main employment industries in Pennsylvania are health care and social assistance, retail trade and manufacturing. Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting only make up about 0.4% of all employment in the state. In Cumberland County agriculture makes up about 35 % of total land use (Cress 2014). In 2012 there were 1,415 farms in Cumberland County, which accounted for 154,879 acres of land (USDA 2012). Cumberland County sits in the great valley and the surrounding counties are all diversified agricultural areas. The map below outlines the historic agricultural regions of Pennsylvania<sup>1</sup>. This map is useful in identifying specific the growing regions of Pennsylvania, an agriculturally rich and diverse state.

<sup>1</sup> Agricultural Resources of Pennsylvania, C. 1700-1960, Adams County Fruit Belt, c. 1875-1960  
[http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/agriculture/files/context/adams\\_county\\_fruit\\_belt.pdf](http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/agriculture/files/context/adams_county_fruit_belt.pdf)



## How do we value small farms in Central Pennsylvania?

Planners have developed the farmland that surrounds Carlisle into agribusiness sites, corporate warehouses and housing developments. The many warehouses that are located just outside of town prove the transportation industry is flourishing. Individuals in the area increasingly sell farmland so that it can be developed into warehouse sites for companies such as Amazon or housing developments. However, there also exists a lot of support for the local food movement in this area. Some farmers grow corn and soybeans while other parcels of land support small-scale, local farms that participate in the local food movement. These industries—farming, transportation and development—are forced to interact because they all require a large amount of land.

The situation in Carlisle, however, is more than “warehouses versus farmland” (Marroni 2015). Johnathan Bowser, CEO of the Cumberland Area Economic Development Corporation, explained in a 2015 Sentinel article that Carlisle is already a distribution and agricultural hub. He believes that an opportunity exists in developing processing plants



around Carlisle to connect the two industries (Marroni 2015). Mary, who I met through being a board member of FOTS, is the manager of business attraction for the Cumberland Area Economic Development Corporation. I sat in on a meeting between Ann and Mary and in that meeting I learned that Mary is working toward what Johnathan Bowser believes is possible. Mary's job is to create jobs in the industry of agribusiness so that this county becomes known for agribusiness. According to Mary and her office, agribusiness means food processing. However, food-processing facilities require a lot of land, water and sewage compared to warehouses, which only need large parcels of land. In addition, many big food processors are already established in this area, such as Land O Lakes and Rice Fruit Company.

Since large-scale food processors are already established in this area, Mary is working on creating opportunities for small or mid-sized food processors to create and expand their value-added product lines, such as pickles and sauces. She is also looking into creating a commercial kitchen space that farmers could buy or rent out to use to process their products. Mary is attempting to transform the local food movement into something that, on a large scale, it is not necessarily aiming to do. The local food movement is about working through alternative markets but Mary's project is trying to help interested small-farmers tap into the agro-industrialized food market. She would help farmers expand their value-added production so that they could sell at mainstream grocery stores like Giant and Wegman's, which are not traditional sites of the local food movement.

If Mary's project is successful it will further complicate the term "local." This project would make locally produced products available at traditional markets, which is in line with the geographic definition of local. However, some people need a face-to-face

connection with the producer of a product for them to consider it as “local.” For other people, “local” is a product that is not shipped to a store on a big truck. In this area Land O Lakes products may be considered by some to be local. For others, the fact that the producer is a corporatized company prevents their product from being truly local because the farmer is not directly selling the product and he/she loses profit by selling to a co-op.

The issue with this development plan is that creating large food processing plants around Carlisle would only help large-scale farmers, most of whom do not participate in the alternative markets characteristic of the local food movement. In this area, there exists a mismatch between what non-farmers want and what is feasible for small-scale, local farms. This mismatch became apparent when the CCFM collapsed in 2009 after board members and vendors disagreed about the mission and purpose of the market.

Another issue with Mary’s plan that highlights this mismatch is that selling to processing plants is often not as profitable for farmers because it adds an additional middleman to their distribution strategy. Farmers make the most money when they sell directly to consumers. I learned about this first-hand while driving to the Headhouse Farmers’ Market in Philadelphia with Ben from Three Springs Fruit Farm one Sunday morning. After graduating from Penn State with a degree in agroecology, Ben returned to Three Springs interested in pursuing farmers’ markets and wholesaling as opposed to selling to a fruit-processing co-op. Investing in more direct sales saved his seventh generation family farm.

It is important to note that in this area, not all landowners are willing to sell their farmland. The agrarian re-awakening in the US has caused concern about the loss of arable farmland being lost to urban sprawl (Guthrie et al 2006, 2). This concern is showing up in

Carlisle as well. Some locals, who are worried about rapid commercial development, are pursuing agricultural easements that legally require the county to permanently preserve their land as farmland (Walmer 2015). This program is part of the Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program, which has preserved more than 4,500 farms since its establishment in 1988. The program works by combining local, state, and federal funds to purchase and protect land. The process is usually lengthy, with one participant waiting about a decade before receiving confirmation that her farm would be preserved (Walmer 2015). Agricultural easements surrounding Carlisle create tension with those who wish to develop the area as a transportation and food-processing hub. However, Big Springs School District Superintendent Richard Fry believes that preserved farmland reinforces a long-standing core value in this area (Walmer 2015).

## **What is local?**

While FOTS may have a clear and strict definition of local, it has become apparent already in this paper that not everyone has the same definition of local. Local has no set definition because it is a subjective idea. In general, local means that the consumer knows something about the farm that produced the food that they are buying (Gross 2011, 185). Safania Eriksen (2013), a professor in the department of communication, business, and information technologies at Roskilde University in Denmark, has outlined three domains of proximity that help us understand how people define local.

The first domain, *geographical*, refers to the link between food and place, an idea that permeates local food movement rhetoric. The term *terroir* captures the link between taste and place and I will describe this in more detail later. Andria Timmer (2015, 204), an anthropologist at Christopher Newport University who is interested in studying people

enacting social change, argues that “local” does not have one true, clear definition because it needs boundaries in order to be actualized. Those boundaries are neither tangible nor objective, adding to the difficulty of coming to a consensus on the definition. For some people, *geographic proximity* can refer to a set number of miles. The guidelines for FOTS define local as a product that was produced within 50 miles of the farmers’ market or, in the case of reselling, within 50 miles of the reseller’s farm. However, local may also refer to a more defined geographic area, such as a region, state, or even an entire country (Eriksen 2013, 52). One FOTS customer, Shuchi (17 Feb 2016), said that for a lot of people in Carlisle, local could be the state of Pennsylvania because “it’s local enough.”

While there is no standard geographic definition of local, geography can help researchers understand people’s perceptions of local (Duram and Oberholtzer 2010, 100). People who live in geographically dense areas may have a different understanding of local than those who live in rural or isolated areas. People in rural areas in most parts of the US do not have to travel far to find farms or a local source of food (Duram and Oberholtzer 2010, 100). In urban areas, less land is dedicated to farming and so urban dwellers must travel further to find locally produced food. Obviously this varies with arable land patterns across the US, such as in Arizona where water must be piped in for agricultural use.

The second domain of proximity that Eriksen (2013) describes is *relational*. Eriksen (2013, 52) explains that *relational proximity* is “immediate, personal and enacted in a shared space.” This kind of proximity implies alternative production routes as it reconnects producers and consumers through direct exchange (Eriksen 2013, 52). Here, direct exchange is referring to producers and consumers interacting in physical and shared spaces. Direct, farmer-to-customer sales foster loyalty, trust, and reliability (Andreatta and Wickliffe 2002,

167). *Relational proximity* can be interconnected with *geographic proximity* because both require a shared space. For example, multiple coffee vendors have attempted to become regular vendors at FOTS. Every time a coffee vendor applies to the market the board repeats the same debate. Obviously coffee is not “local” to Central Pennsylvania and so it does not fit within the 50-mile radius established in the guidelines. However, board members have agreed that if a vendor roasts, grinds, mixes, and brews the coffee within 50 miles of the FOTS then the product has been transformed enough locally, making it a worthy FOTS product. The FOTS board members are recognizing that products that are not necessarily produced locally can still show *relational proximity* if the person who enacted several stages of the key production processes is geographically nearby. In other words, for *relational proximity* it matters where the majority of labor is invested in the production chain, not necessarily where the product itself is sourced.

The third and final domain of proximity that Eriksen (2013) outlines is *value proximity*. Here Eriksen (2013, 53) is referring to the values and qualities people associate with local food. People conflate local with freshness and quality while simultaneously romanticizing and idealizing the image of the local farmer (Eriksen 2013, 53). Local values could also refer to environmental and social sustainability, health, trust, and wholesomeness (Eriksen 2013, 53). Michelle, a flower farmer at FOTS, created this wholesome ideal through a story called “I Remember”, which she displayed on a whiteboard on the opening day of the market in 2009. The story was about Michelle’s childhood experience selling vegetables and peanut butter blossoms at a farmers’ market on the sidewalk of Hanover Street. Having a new market in this area again “gave her a feeling of coming ‘back to [her] roots’” (Stauffer 2009). Michelle’s farm is called Roots Flower Farm because of her

connection to the area. Michelle is invoking certain key values, such as wholesomeness and innocence, to engage with consumers while creating a positive connection between local food and FOTS.

## **What is *terroir*? What is the *terroir* of central PA?**

*Terroir* is a concept anthropologists have redefined to refer to the connection between taste and place. Traditionally, *terroir* refers to winemaking and the taste that develops from the combination of weather, soil, climate, and topography, as well as the “soul” of the cultivator (Trubek 2010, 139). In theory, a skilled wine taster could taste the difference between one vintage of wine and another because of *terroir*. For example, a drought may drastically alter the flavor that develops in a specific vintage of wine, making it drier than usual. An experienced wine taster would be able to pick up on this immediately.

*Terroir* also dictates where certain grape varieties, and therefore certain wines, can be grown and produced. True champagne can only be called by that name if the grapes were grown in the Champagne region of northeast France. There are certain characteristics in the soil, weather and topography of this region that gives certain characteristics to the grapes, making it true champagne. In this way, *terroir* has distinguished geographically where wine makers can grow certain grape varieties, which established specific winemaking regions in “Old World” wine producing countries such as Italy, France, and Spain. The flavor of the wine also carries physical and cultural information regarding the region in which the grapes were grown. When used in the traditional sense *terroir* carries the local “social imaginary”, which includes memory, history, and culture around winemaking (Trubek et al. 2010, 140). The local “social imaginary” is shared through the wine within the experience of tasting the wine.

Anthropologists have taken the traditional use of *terroir* and redefined it to mean the local taste, history, and culture that all food can carry, not just wine. Brad Weiss (2011), Heather Paxson (2010) and Amy Trubek, Kolleen M. Guy, and Sarah Bowen (2010) all use *terroir* to analyze how place and taste simultaneously construct one another. Weiss (2011) studies the Piedmont region of North Carolina in order to understand how the interaction between taste and place is “cultivated and embodied in the production, circulation, and consumption of pasture-raised pork” (Weiss 2011, 440).

The local food movement draws meaningful connections between people, culture, and place. As the local food movement constructs place, taste’s grounding in place develops as well (Weiss 2011, 442). For example, there exists a strip that runs down South Central Pennsylvania that is climatically and topographically appropriate for growing fruit. It is impossible to drive through Adams County and the surrounding areas without passing through a fruit orchard. Towns like Chambersburg have become known across the state for their peaches but that would not be possible if the growing conditions in this area of Pennsylvania were not perfect for fruit. Chambersburg peaches are just one example of how we make sense of place and then inscribe place onto food.

In his study, Weiss (2011, 442) argues that the local food movement re-makes place through “reterritorialization”, a term coined by Heather Paxson (Weiss 2011, 442). Heather Paxson (2010) is a professor of anthropology at MIT who has explored topics such as artisanal cheese and the people who make it as a new source of cultural and economic value. Paxson (2010, 446) explains that new meanings and significance of place can be re-inscribed onto food through reterritorialization. Amy Trubek, Kolleen M. Guy, and Sarah Bowen (2010), anthropologists who study culinary traditions, also support the idea of *terroir* as an

instrument to redefine place within the local food movement. They argue that communities have the opportunity to imagine *terroir* in new locations, which brings the term beyond its traditional use (Trubek et al. 2010, 145). In addition, *terroir* requires an engagement with a common set of beliefs and practices about the food to which the term is being ascribed (Trubek et al. 2010, 146). Without the collective agreement on what *terroir* represents, the term becomes futile. Instead of the traditional interpretation of *terroir* as place affecting taste, Weiss explains that the local food movement can construct place, which then adds to the associated ideas of taste of a product.

A reterritorialization is occurring at FOTS when the board approved a new prepared food vendor. This vendor specializes in prepared African cuisine but sources their ingredients locally. Members of the board were excited about bringing in an ethnic prepared food vendor, but voiced concerns over the type of sausage this vendor wanted to bring. The sausage was locally sourced and within 50 miles of the vendor's farm but board members did not want this vendor to compete with primary producers at the market who already sell sausage. This vendor was approved on the condition that their sausage was "different enough" from existing products at FOTS. Ann, the market manager, followed up and confirmed that the vendor sells various African-style sausages. In this situation the board members approved a vendor that one might not expect at a local, producer-only farmers' market in Central Pennsylvania. One might question how "African" cuisine can be local to Central Pennsylvania. The board members here are reterritorializing local because they approved a vendor who produces foods that represent cultures that are not historically rooted in Central Pennsylvania but are made from locally sourced ingredients. Therefore, this



vendor is simultaneously redefining and reconstructing the taste and place of Central Pennsylvania *and* redefining our conceptualization of African cuisine.

This African cuisine prepared food vendor is just one component of the taste and place of Central Pennsylvania. Certain produce sold at FOTS can be found anywhere, such as tomatoes, kale, and apples. However, customers often have their favorite vendors at market from whom they buy specific items. For example, the Dickinson College Farm has loyal customers who always come to the Dickinson stand buy their carrots. Many customers have commented that these carrots taste sweeter than any other vendors'. Other typical products at the market include mushrooms, local clover and wildflower honey, cheese, yogurt, milk and even donuts. While these products do not appear to be special on paper, you would be hard-pressed to find yogurt as creamy and naturally sweet as the yogurt sold by Gettysburg Creamery. Donuts, another example, are a cheap and sweet pastry you can find at any grocery store but they never taste as good as those that Steve, a local Amish farmer, and his daughters make them fresh at market. Because these products come from within 50 miles of the market, they simultaneously influence and are influenced by the *terroir* of Central Pennsylvania.

## **What is neoliberalism and what does it mean to the local food movement?**

Anthropologists recognize that the local food movement exists as a socially constructed and socially embedded response by consumers to the globalized industrial food system. Pratt (2008), Gagné (2011), Timmer (2015), Sonnino (2013) and others have described how the local food movement is the result of a push by economically advantaged people who desire an alternative to a neoliberal capitalist economy. People seek out a local

market for environmental, health, political and social reasons. In the local food movement consumers demand knowledge about where their food comes from, which transforms the acquisition of one's groceries into a socially meaningful experience.

The local food movement exists as a consumer response to the conventional food system. By conventional food system I am referring to the global, industrialized way we grow, transport, and acquire the food we eat on a daily basis. This food system is almost entirely anonymous and untraceable. The only information you can obtain about industrially produced food comes from its packaging. Often that information overemphasizes nutritional content and standardization without actually giving the consumer much information about how the product was produced, who produced it, or even specifics about where it was produced. The global, industrial food system is designed to favor the large corporations that supply our food while allowing them to capitalize on our needs. In the globalized supply chain food is treated as a commodity just like any other product. According to Scanlan (2013, 357), a professor of anthropology and sociology at Ohio University, "such dynamics have enormous consequences concerning the power one has over what is eaten, where food comes from, and how much it is going to cost." This relationship leaves people in a state of food insecurity. In addition, corporations earn profit at the expense of animal welfare, farm laborer health, and the environment.

This global and industrialized food system is embedded within a neoliberal economic framework. Neoliberalism is a context and historically specific economic concept that guides global economic markets and private institutions (Eriksen et al. 2015, 916-917). Most anthropologists recognize that there is no single definition of neoliberalism because the

definition changes depending on the situation to which the term is applied (Hilgers 2011, 352).

Economists use neoliberalism to describe three different sub-concepts. The first sub-concept explains that neoliberalism can refer to public policies that stem from three main neoliberal principles—deregulation, liberalization and privatization (Steger and Ravi 2010, 13). Public policy pushes for the deregulation of the economy in pursuit of a free market. Neoliberal policy encourages the state to have minimal interference with economic activities because the market is ideally self-regulating. The state should only interfere with the neoliberal market to ensure that economic trade remains free (Steger and Ravi 2010, 2).

The second, neoliberal ideology, refers to an economic ideology that describes the current state of the world and also the state in which we would like it to be (Steger and Ravi 2010, 11). Neoliberal ideology focuses on the human experience and how the production and exchange of material goods is central to human life (Steger and Ravi 2010, 12). Finally, neoliberalism can also refer to a mode of governance. Foucault's concept of governmentality helps us understand how state's strategy for governance can be based on certain principles, power relations, and rationalities (Steger and Ravi 2010, 12). A neoliberal governmentality is rooted in entrepreneurial values. It also encourages individual empowerment and the minimization of state power (Steger and Ravi 2010, 12).

Within a neoliberal economic system, people create their identities through engagement with the neoliberal economic system (Gershon 2011, 539). When people interact through the market, such as a customer purchasing a good from a producer, they enter into a business partnership because they are entering into a mutually beneficial relationship. Steger and Ravi (2010) explain that our economy is based on mass production

because the middle class has money to spend on mass-produced items. The middle class receives their money from large corporations, which divide up profit between suppliers, retailers and employees (Steger and Ravi 2010, 7).

The business partnership between consumer and producers is an unequal partnership because it distributes more responsibility and risk to certain key players while leaving corporations unexposed to the risks of the market (Gershon 2011, 540). In a neoliberal system one must engage with risk if one desires to prosper (Gershon 2011, 540). Freedom in this situation is unstable because acting to one's advantage frequently leaves someone else in a disadvantaged state (Gershon 2011, 540). This often occurs in the conventional food system, which is embedded in neoliberal policies and uses certain vulnerable populations to perform the labor needed to produce on a global, industrialized scale. Corporations are capitalizing on the labor of farm workers to meet other people's nutritional needs.

In this neoliberal system the people who created and exacerbated poverty in the first place through structural adjustment programs and agricultural policies, namely governments and corporations, are never held accountable (Lafferty 2015, 230). In other words, a neoliberal economic system works to benefit corporations at the expense of individual consumers. According to Gershon (2011, 540), the neoliberal market must do this so that each person involved can preserve their independence as market actors.

If the conventional food system is embedded in neoliberal policies and the local food movement is a reaction to the conventional food system, then in theory the values of locally produced food directly opposes those of conventionally grown food. Local food is the socially embedded, environmentally sustainable, morally sound and socially just alternative to the industrialized food system. Customers in the local food movement support farmers for

a variety of reasons. According to Shuchi (17 Feb 2016), a regular customer at FOTS, “Just going and showing up is a big part of a person’s responsibility to me. I think we have an obligation to our local farmers.” Our obligation to farmers, she believes, exists because they have chosen to invest in the land and produce food, which serves the most basic human need in her opinion. Their work is hard and not always lucrative but she believes they are producing wholesome, nutritious and community-building food.

Small farmers are being pushed out of our current agricultural system and consumers are simultaneously being removed from the source of their food (Andreatta and Wickliffe 2002, 168). The increasing dissatisfaction with the globalized, industrial food system encourages consumers to support local food systems (Andreatta and Wickliffe 2002, 168). This sentiment was echoed by several of my informants. Having a personal connection to food producers was one of the main reasons why people shopped at FOTS. As Michelle (17 Nov 2015) put it, “On some subconscious level I feel like there is at least a part of our community that [is] desperate for a relationship. [...] That doesn’t happen in self-checkout lines and in box stores where everything is the same.”

Within the local food movement consumers moralize the products they buy and make the process of purchasing groceries overly romanticized. In this way, the local food movement directly opposes, ideologically and physically, global neoliberal capitalism (Gagné 2011, 286). We place positive notions, such as health, pleasure and community, onto local food (Timmer 2015, 209). These ideal qualities regarding health and well-being are elaborated at sites of place-making in the local food movement, such as farmers’ markets (Weiss 2011, 445). As anthropologist Kathleen Bubinas (2011, 155) puts it, the local food movement “re-embeds exchange relationships into communal meanings of morality.” At

farmers' markets a consumer is not just grocery shopping. That consumer is creating positive social connections, which creates community around "good food."

Local food movement rhetoric also promotes local food as more environmentally sound. Small-scale, local agriculture has the potential to reduce transportation energy. However, Jeffrey Pratt (2008, 288), professor of anthropology at the University of Sussex, argues that nothing about the food itself is guaranteed to be more sustainable (Pratt 2008, 288). Growing and selling locally does not bind a farmer to any specific type of growing practices. In one interview, my informant repeatedly referred to FOTS as an all-organic market (Shuchi, 17 Feb 2016). In reality, some vendors at the market are certified organic, some are certified naturally grown, some use organic practices but are uncertified, and others use pesticides. In addition, small-scale, local farms sometimes lack the proper equipment to efficiently and effectively ship or even refrigerate produce (Sonnino 2013, 4). Lacking proper processing and transportation equipment hurts the quality of the product and reduces the environmental sustainability of the local food system.

A large and important criticism of the local food movement, however, is that it only serves those with disposable income. Many anthropologists recognize that the majority of local food movement supporters are white and middle class (Dupuis and Goodman 2005, Bubinas 2011, Lafferty 2015). This makes the movement "elitist and reactionary" (Dupuis and Goodman 2005, 362). This is because the concept of local implies that certain people, places and ways of life are more 'local' than others, which makes it a moral distinction (Dupuis and Goodman 2005, 361). Several of my informants acknowledged that FOTS and many other farmers' markets are only accessible to wealthier populations in the community. Shuchi (17 Feb 2016) explained that shopping at FOTS has gotten to be more expensive in

recent years and so she only buys about 5-10 % of her vegetables as well as some meats and cheeses there. Shuchi (17 Feb 2016) said that she could probably afford to buy all of her groceries at the market but does not do so because it is so expensive.

My observations at FOTS confirmed that the majority of shoppers appear to be predominantly female, white, and affluent. Out of 126 individuals, 96 were female (76%) and 29 were male (23%). While I took note of race while making observations, my data is imperfect because I made assumptions about people's racial identities and so I will not discuss it here. However, the census data mentioned earlier confirms that Carlisle has a population that is predominantly white (84%). I also made assumptions about each individual's age, which I also acknowledge as imperfect data as I am not the best judge of age. However, I found that most shoppers fell within the 20-30 year age range. Fifty-nine individuals (47%) showed markers of being middle-upper class. I came to this conclusion by using wealth markers such as reusable bags (including tote bags, shopping baskets, wicker baskets, and carts), brand name accessories (Chaco sandals, Teva shoes, Longhorn bags, Vera Bradley purses, and Patagonia jackets), and clothing (professional work wear such as a chef's jacket) to make these categorizations. I made no income assumptions about individuals who had none of these markers, which means that I may have missed some people in my categorization.

The local food movement, despite its intentions, provides an alternative market space for those with disposable income while inadvertently excluding others who do not have the same economic opportunities. Philosophers Ian Werkheiser and Samantha Noll (2014, 201), who study food ethics, also critique the movement by arguing that it does not actually challenge our current food system. Instead, Werkheiser and Noll argue that the local food

movement has been coopted as a way to expand market choices to the consumers who can afford it. Nonini (2014, 270) also agrees that the local food movement is not a true social movement and is more of an alternative pathway for new elite to seek out trendy cultural experiences. Donald Nonini (2014) analyzes class formation, social movements and racial inequality and is a professor of anthropology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. As one food activist explained to Weiss (2011, 445), farmers' markets are "a place where customers 'put two little tomatoes next to an egg, and then socialize a lot.'" The local food movement relies on market mechanisms to increase food access. For example, establishing a farmers' market or other market that sells fresh produce in a low-income community is supposed to solve food insecurity in areas that we categorize as "food deserts." As Holmes (2013, 184) and Alkon and Mares (2012, 35) point out, there exists a common expectation that people can create health-related change solely with education and that low-income people are simply in need of education and transformation. These assumptions do not acknowledge that food insecurity is a problem that goes beyond education or even economic access. Low-income individuals are systematically excluded from shopping at farmers' markets or belonging to a CSA. This does not mean that low-income individuals do not know how to cook with products found at farmers' markets—they may lack the kitchen equipment to prepare it to their liking or store it.

Farmers' markets often have programs to help low-income individuals afford farm fresh produce. However, these programs can fail due to a lack of organization and funding. FOTS runs a program called Double Up Market Bucks (DUMB)<sup>2</sup> that attempts to help low-

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<sup>2</sup> At a FOTS board meeting on May 2, 2016, the treasurer of the board announced that FOTS is changing the name of this program to Cumberland Fresh Match (CFM). This board



income individuals have economic access to the market. The program matches government assistance so that people who receive assistance have twice the budget to spend at market. Recipients are required to stop by the market manager's table in order to receive their matching funds. The recipients of the DUMB program shop for their items and receive a white slip of paper from each vendor. Then the recipients must take those slips to the volunteer table to redeem their matching tokens. At the volunteer table they must reveal their identities and the fact that they receive government assistance. The volunteers that staff that table are upper-middle class white women who are often the spouses of students at the Army War College. This interaction is potentially embarrassing and uncomfortable for the recipient since they must share with strangers of a different economic class that they receive assistance from the government.

At FOTS there are two types of tokens—\$5 increment tokens and \$1 increment tokens. The \$1 tokens are printed with red ink and the \$5 tokens have green ink, which helps vendors differentiate between the two types. Unfortunately, the colors of these tokens also easily identify government assistance recipients, making the experience of shopping at FOTS, a market that largely serves the wealthier community in Carlisle, even more uncomfortable. Vendors cannot give change back to customers when they use \$1 tokens, which complicates and lengthens the exchange between producer and consumer at FOTS. While working as a vendor at FOTS I witnessed this exchange myself. When a shopper was trying to meet an exact dollar amount, I spent extra time weighing potatoes or tomatoes to

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member acknowledged the poorly chosen name and acronym and explained that the acronym often caused issues when applying for grants.

help them meet that amount as closely as possible because I wanted to help them make the most of their budget.

The DUMB program was initially funded through a grant given by a local foundation. However, that grant has been depleted and FOTS is ineligible to reapply to that same foundation. The board has applied for other grants but was unsuccessful at obtaining any funding<sup>3</sup>. They have attempted fundraisers in the past, but few board members have the spare time or energy to fundraise for this season. It is important to recognize that the board mainly consists of farmers who are trying their best to support their families with their businesses. In addition, FOTS, like most farmers' markets, would not exist without the struggles of these invested individuals who work through frustrations to make them exist (Markowitz 2010, 72). Unfortunately, the result of overcommitted and busy board members is that the DUMB will be unavailable this season until the board secures more funding. If the board is not willing to fight for other people's right to shop at the market, then how can we expect all community members to be able to have economic access to FOTS? Is it even the responsibility of individual community members to fight for other people's rights to the local food movement? Or should we refocus our energy on demanding change from the global, industrialized food system so that we do not have to rely on exclusive alternative food movements to access the kind of food we want?

### **“Vote with your dollars”**

Local food movement rhetoric encourages individuals to use their buying power to create change within the food system. Buying local is supposed to support the local economy

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<sup>3</sup> On May 2, 2016, the treasurer also announced that she has obtained a stream of funding, consisting of grants, individual donations, and matching funding for the 2016 season. This means that the DUMB/CFM will continue this year, with no gap in funding.

and increase food access for the entire community. This rhetoric stems from the way that the neoliberal economic system frames consumers' identities. In a neoliberal system, governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) see citizens not as citizens but as customers and consumers (Eriksen et al. 2015, 916). These identities are framed by economic and commercial transactions no matter how friendly and personalized those interactions may be (DeLind 2002, 218). DeLind (2002, 218), a senior academic specialist at Michigan State University with a research focus on the economic, social, and political implications of our food system, argues that we must be cautious when we equate production and consumption with active citizenship because consuming is not in and of itself a civic activity. The consumer-citizen has become central in alternative food movement rhetoric.

The idea that one can simply purchase local, organic vegetables and the entire food system will be corrected of all environmental, economic and social problems is comforting, but hardly likely. Encouraging customers to “vote” with their money is a fallacy that is hardly likely to have any societal significance (DeLind 2002, 218). In addition, Timmer (2015, 215) points out that in order to access local food one must be rich in a variety of resources. One must have time to shop at a market that may only be open one day a week. One must know where to find that food and how to prepare it. The local shopper must also be able to physically access the market, which sometimes requires transportation (Timmer 2015, 216). Finally, one must have the monetary resources to financially access local products (Timmer 2015, 217).

Buying local and supporting farmers is also supposed to directly support the local economy (Andreatta and Wickliffe 2002, 168). Local farmers are encouraged to “diversify to fill local tables” because local communities could recapture millions of dollars (Gross

2011, 187). Farmers' markets themselves are supposed to help retain money in the local economy while creating jobs and new opportunities for local entrepreneurs (Bubinas 2011, 155). Michelle (17 Nov 2015) buys from other local farmers because it makes her feel good and unselfish to support other small business owners like herself in her own community. She does not want to spread her money "to the ends of the earth" by shopping at traditional grocery stores (17 Nov 2015). Ann, the market manager, also felt that it is our collective responsibility to support farmers (23 March 2016).

Encouraging individuals to take responsibility for collective wellbeing, however, re-embeds the local food movement into the neoliberal system to which it is reacting in the first place (Gross 2011, 188). Neoliberal economic policy emphasizes individual action with little state intervention. In addition, a neoliberal economic system favors large corporations at the expense of individuals—yet it is individuals who must make the decision to "vote" for the change they want to see. Individual spending is miniscule compared to the large corporations that comprise the majority of economic activity and therefore have the largest influence in our economy. The local food movement is then putting responsibility on farmers and the individuals who support them to be the change-makers.

"Voting" with money is also not an effective strategy for change making when certain people in a community do not have an equal amount of voting power within the system. As mentioned above, some community members, especially in Carlisle, cannot afford to shop at FOTS. They do not have the opportunity to cast their vote, which means only the voices of the affluent customers are audible. This has become especially apparent in recent months at FOTS since the market no longer has funding for its DUMB program. FOTS is expensive and without the DUMB program, low-income participation in the market will drop. This will

affect the not only affect recipients but also the sales numbers for certain vendors this year. Ann said that certain vendors could see \$3,000 less in sales over the entire season.

Voting with your dollars is a way to convince people to support the local food movement in general, but this neoliberal customer choice model also exists *within* alternative markets. At farmers' markets and through CSAs, customers must decide from whom they will purchase their groceries. Customers have the ability to use their money to "vote" for the vendors they like and the vendors they want to support. In small-scale farming, every sale matters. As a result, voting for one farmer can negatively impact another.

The FOTS board uses surveys to listen to vendor and customer feedback in order to find a balance between the desires of the two groups. Both customers and vendors have requested more prepared food vendors at FOTS. The board has listened to those requests and for the 2016 season, the board approved another prepared food vendor as I previously mentioned. However, the board's decision may be at the expense of the other vendors at FOTS. One farmer who is especially concerned about where the market is headed believes that FOTS is transitioning from a shopper's market to a lingerer's market. Michelle (17 Nov 2015) says:

Customer count wise it looks as if our numbers are up. [...] What I see is that the same people are staying longer. We're offering entertainment. We're having music. They're camping out on the lawn. [...] If you're coming to hang out you're going to buy your kids a drink and you're going to get a pizza or a burger and an ice cream cone. But if you're coming there to do your weekly shopping you're going to drop \$50-100. [...] You can't buy meat if you're going to hang out for an hour and a half. You probably aren't going to buy dairy.

The vendor points out that having prepared food at the market encourages customers to linger and spend some or most of their budget on prepared food. When customers buy prepared food, this vendor believes, they spend less money on other products, such as vegetables,

meat, and cheese. Meat and cheese are two of the most expensive products sold at FOTS. When customers shift away from buying from meat and cheese vendors, they can really affect the success of those vendors. However, not all participants agree with this farmer. Another customer, Shuchi (17 Feb 2016) said that the longer she is at market the more money she spends. FOTS must find a balance between prepared food and other products. In a neoliberal consumer choice model, people expect their demands to be met by the market. That being said, the neoliberal consumer choice model conflates citizenship with consumerism, making it seem like purchasing the “right” product is all one must do to create change (Allen and Guthman 2006, 411). Adding more prepared food vendors is shifting the market to meet consumer demand, which does not benefit the other vendors.

## **Why do producers participate in the local food movement?**

Participating in the local food movement can be a more lucrative option for small-scale farmers who may find it hard to match the production standards of large-scale industrialized farms. Selling directly to consumers takes out the middleman in the supply chain, ensuring that the farmer makes more profit. Farmers’ markets can bring in up to four times as much profit compared to wholesaling (Gagné 2011, 283). One of the produce vendors at FOTS echoed this sentiment. Steve (29 Sept 2015) said he makes up to three times as much selling at FOTS than he does selling to the local auction.

Mel, one of the dairy producers at market uses direct sales and wholesaling to restaurants to keep her business successful. She explained that dairy co-ops have taken on a bad name because a few large companies hold what is essentially a monopoly on the market. According to Mel (18 Jan 2016), dairy co-ops today do not work for the farmer but instead work for their CEOs. Many dairy co-ops also own processing plants and so it is in their best

interest to keep the milk price low. Farmers sell milk to these co-ops in hundredweights, which is equivalent to 100 pounds. The co-op only pays Mel, who has high quality milk rich in fat and protein, \$0.21 per pound, which means she makes about \$1.80 per gallon of milk. Regarding the conventional dairy co-op price per hundredweight Mel (18 Jan 2016) said, “Think about if you’re just milking cows and getting \$20 a hundredweight. You can’t cash flow your farm on that [...] you have to figure out a way to cut out that middle man and get all of that consumer dollar for yourself.” She cited Trickling Springs Creamery, a local organic dairy co-op, as one of the only ones in this area that pays farmers a living wage. They pay farmers \$0.41 per pound. Mel’s dairy farm technically pays her creamery business, Keswick Creamery, \$0.40 per pound of milk, making it an economically sustainable business.

Despite Mel’s disapproval of dairy co-ops she still sells a small amount of milk to a co-op once a week. She continues to sell to a co-op because it gives her and her creamery business an extra layer of security. Recently, the FDA has increased their regulation of small dairy processing plants all over Pennsylvania. Mel’s association with a co-op qualifies her dairy farm as a grade-A milk producer. Therefore, her creamery business receives milk from a grade-A milk producer, which means that the FDA is less likely to flag her farm for inspection. FDA regulations are extremely strict and it is hard for small producers to follow the guidelines perfectly since the guidelines were originally created for big producers.

Local food movement rhetoric, due to its infatuation with the agrarian ideal, also fails to highlight the precarious situation of farmers. Both Holmes (2013) and Gray (2013) note that farmers themselves are in a precarious situation. Local food rhetoric assumes farmers are wealthy or unconcerned about their workers (Holmes 2013, 52). However, farmers often

struggle to stay in business every year even with people's interest in local food (Gray 2013, 15). One informant, Mike (14 Dec 2015), said, "It's like you can't breathe. It's like I'm just barely making the payments all the time." The increased demand for local products means producers have to make some tough decisions. They must choose between scaling up their production, collaborating with other farms or turning business away (Janssen 2013, 70).

Mike (14 Dec 2015), a CSA farmer, has had to make those decisions recently. Mike moved to this area with his wife after they had children so that they could be closer to her family. He knew he wanted to farm but did not have family land, so he ended up taking out loans for land and all of his equipment. Compared to other the farms that sell at FOTS, Mike's farm is large and mechanized. He is farming 23 acres and hopes to double that number eventually. Mike (14 Dec 2015) plans to scale up his production in order to get himself "out from under some pretty hefty equipment loans" because he now he has the equipment to do so. He has talked about collaborating with other farms to do a joint CSA that would allow each farm to specialize in a few crops. Every decision Mike makes regarding his farm is about efficiency and profitability because he is in an economically vulnerable situation.

Compared to large-scale production farms that sell to distributors, local farms have much more to manage as they oversee the entire process of production from seed to consumer (Janseen 2013, 70). Mike (14 Dec 2015) described the challenge of being a farmer:

It can get muddled sometimes during the season when you're just exhausted and you have like 10 workshares looking at you in the barn like, "What's next?" You're like let me finish these four cups of coffee and I'll get right back to you. I was up until midnight on the tractor or whatever it was. Two o'clock in the morning and you gotta show up at like seven o'clock and you have people just like, "Hey let's go buddy! We're ready to go!"



Mike deals with the stress of managing workers and workshare members (volunteers who work for a CSA share) by using the off-season to set up systems on his farm that make the farm more organized during peak production season. He says that unfortunately it all comes back to the bottom line. He believes “it’s human nature for us to keep wanting to refine our efficiency. Stop wasting so much and dial things in” (Mike 14 Dec 2015).

Not all farmers in Central Pennsylvania farm for economic reasons. A major population of people who farm for religious reasons in Central Pennsylvania is the Amish. Historically, the Amish developed out of a left wing resistance to the Protestant Reformation. The Amish believed in individual interpretation of the Bible. After being persecuted in various countries of Europe, the Amish arrived in North America in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and settled into communities located in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois (Johnson et al. 1977, 373). Religion permeates all aspects of Amish life, including agriculture, health decisions, and occupation (Buck 1978, 223). Farming for the Amish is not a “neutral occupation” (Johnson et al. 1977, 373) but is strongly preferred as a career that leads one to the “good life.” This belief stems from an interpretation of Genesis 1:28, which tells humans that they must replenish the earth and dominate animals and land (Johnson et al. 1977, 373). Because of their strong belief in tending the land, Amish have settled in areas where they can farm easily. Amish people’s religiously motivated farming adds an interesting component to the standard rhetoric surrounding local agriculture.

The Amish began to inhabit Central Pennsylvania in the 1950s when groups of Amish moved to the area from Lancaster County. The biggest task an Amish farmer must accomplish is to establish all of his sons on farms (Johnson et al. 1977, 374). Lancaster has become a densely populated area for the Amish and for Amish tourism, which has made it

hard to find farmland (Johnson et al. 1977, 375). Crowded, expensive land and tourism pushed Amish to the nutrient-rich limestone soils and isolated valleys of Central Pennsylvania (Johnson et al. 1977, 375). Amish farmers have been a part of the local food scene in Carlisle for years. Steve (29 Sept 2015), an Amish produce and value-added product vendor at FOTS, has been with the market since its first year. He heard about the market from his cousin, another Amish vendor that participated from the beginning. Steve's family moved to this area from Lancaster and he originally worked for the family's storage business. However, his wife's garden plot kept growing and so he decided to focus his energy on expanding into produce sales. Steve's (29 Sept 2015) entire family is heavily involved in the "produce patch" and only his oldest daughter works off of the farm as a teacher. While Steven tries to sell most of his produce at FOTS, he also sells produce at his farm store and at auction (Steve, 29 Sept 2015). Steve is just one example of an important group of producers that participate in the local food movement, the Amish.

## **Who works for the producers?**

Often we overlook the labor within the local food movement because other concerns overshadow this key issue. Consumers assume that local food is a wholesome, healthy, and sustainable alternative to industrially produced agricultural products. Corporations make profit while taking advantage of the vulnerable populations that perform the manual labor to create the products that the neoliberal market demands. Ethnographies such as *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies* by Seth Holmes (2013) and *Labor and the Locavore* by Margaret Gray (2013) highlight the perils of assuming that all labor within the local food movement is fair and just. These assumptions hide the fact that the customer is purchasing the labor of another person (Pratt 2008, 297). Encouraging consumers to buy local promotes consumer health "at the

expense of protecting the well-being of the farm workers who grow and harvest it” (Gray 2013, 2). Gray (2013, 2) points out that people are quick to criticize industrialized factory farms. However, when it comes to small-scale, locally produced food, people assume that these farms are operating with the highest integrity. Local food rhetoric associates these food systems with environmental sustainability, sound animal welfare and socially just practices (Janssen 2013, 69).

Supporters of the local food movement often get caught up in other aspects of the local food movement and inadvertently exclude farm workers from their concerns. This is partially due to the agrarian ideal that permeates how we think about agriculture. The agrarian ideal emphasizes the rights of the farmer while giving farm workers little to no attention (Janssen 2013, 69). The voice of the farmworkers is lost when people frame farm labor on these alternative farms as an objectified cost of production. Local food movement rhetoric does not acknowledge who the workers are, their working conditions, or their wages (Janssen 2013, 69). In other words, our romantic agrarian ideal obscures the structural violence of the food system, which I will define below.

Often local food movement literature frames local farms as the solution to the poor pay and working conditions of large-scale industrialized farm workers. However, not all farms that participate in the local food movement have respectable labor practices. Gray (2013) and Holmes (2013) reveal paternalistic, racist, and unfair working conditions in their respective ethnographies. Small farms, Gray (2013) revealed, are not always required to provide the same services to workers as larger farms. For example, if there are less than five farm workers the farmer is not required to provide bathroom facilities in close proximity to the work area (Gray 2013, 49). Farmworkers are often required to work long, physically

taxing hours, sometimes adding up to close to 60-hour workweeks during peak season. The USDA regulation of agriculture does not require farmers to pay their workers overtime (Holmes 2013, 7).

On small-scale, local farms, laborers tend to fall into one of two categories—privileged workers or migrant workers. Participating in local, small-scale agriculture can be a privilege because one must have the economic resources to work a seasonal, low-paying job (Janssen 2013, 69). Other farms, such as those highlighted in Gray's book (2013), use migrant workers, some of whom may be illegal, to fill the void. This can lead to labor abuse within the system because migrant workers are in a more vulnerable state than US citizens. They may depend on their employers for housing and if they lose their job they will also lose their home. The workers in Holmes' (2013) book were migrant fruit pickers in Washington state. These Triqui leave Mexico because they are experiencing structural violence there but in the US they are still experiencing harsh forms of structural violence. They must pick a minimum amount of fruit per day and if they fail to meet that requirement twice they are fired (Holmes 2013, 73). Like many migrants, the Triqui want to live in their home regions but often cannot afford to do so. In order to be able to afford to live in Mexico they must migrate far away because migrating allows them to make the most money (Holmes 2013, 161). By definition migration is a voluntary act but migrants themselves do not always experience it as voluntary (Holmes 2013, 17).

As Holmes (2013, 52-53) points out, every level of the farm hierarchy experiences social and economic vulnerability because "human beings are doing the best they can in the midst of an unequal and harsh system." The higher a person's positioning in the hierarchy, the more control that person has over time. A lower positioning means that the person has

less control over time and so they may be more structurally vulnerable (Holmes 2013, 83).

The physical and mental pain and suffering they experience represents the structural violence they experience (Holmes 2013, 89). Structural violence is unequal power built into a structure that creates “unequal life chances” through imbalanced distribution of resources (Galtung 1969, 171).

Holmes (2013, 43) defines structural violence as “the violence committed by configurations of social inequalities that, in the end, has injurious effects on bodies similar to the violence of a stabbing or shooting.” Holmes (2013, 44) also discusses symbolic violence, which he defines as the “interrelation of social structures of inequalities and perceptions.” Symbolic violence works through hierarchies of power that we perceive as natural (Holmes 2013, 44). Migrant and seasonal workers often experience the most structural and symbolic violence because they live below the poverty line and their mobility prevents them from being able to physically and economically access consistent and preventative care (Holmes 2013, 102-103). Symbolic violence causes us to observe their inequalities on the farm and at the doctor’s office as “natural” (Holmes, 2013, 44).

Farmers often want to pay workers a full-time, living wage but they also have to be conscious about their own financial situation. Mike, the CSA farmer, uses the H2-A agricultural guest-worker program to hire a few workers from Brazil every year. This visa allows farms to hire immigrant workers as long as they can show that they cannot find workers locally (Gray 2013, 51). However, the H2-A visa regulations require him to pay his US citizen workers the same rate, which is high for most small farms. Labor costs are often one of the biggest expenses for farmers, which is why they pay farm workers as little as

possible even if they would like to pay them more. As Gray (2013, 24) puts it, farm workers' low wages "subsidize farms" because they keep the agricultural industry financially viable.

## Conclusions

Recent anthropological work on the local food movement has framed the movement as a response to the global industrialized food system. The framework identifies white, middle-class consumers as the ones who have made the largest push in creating an alternative market. In Carlisle, this is the case as well. A closer examination of place shows that sites of direct interaction between producers and consumers in the local food movement are where notions of place are developed and elaborated. In Carlisle, Farmers on the Square (FOTS) is the farmers' market at which consumers and producers interact all year long. Face-to-face interactions as well as geographical connections create place, which is essential to the success of the local food movement. Producers have the opportunity to take advantage of place through the concept of *terroir* in order to reimagine and reconfigure notions of localness. The producers at FOTS are all within 50 miles of the market, making it a truly unique representation of Central Pennsylvania.

While the local food movement may be a reaction to neoliberalism, it simultaneously recreates and works within neoliberal systems to create alternative markets. The local food movement is not equally accessible to all consumers. It encourages individual actors to take responsibility for creating change within the food system by encouraging them to "vote" with their money. Local food movement rhetoric tells consumers that their buying choices will create change within the food system. However, nothing is actually guaranteed about the products they purchase or what the farmer will do with their money. In addition, not all individuals have equal voting power due to differences in income. I found this to be true at

FOTS as well with the Double Up Market Bucks program. The program is set up in a way that embarrasses and isolates participants and is inconsistently funded. These characteristics of the local food movement reinforce neoliberal systems that encourage self-regulation and individual responsibility and action through a neoliberal consumer-choice model (DuPuis and Goodman 2005, 367). As mainstream grocery stores adopt this rhetoric within their marketing of local produce the effectiveness of “voting with your dollars” becomes even more obscure.

Because local growers are also small businesses, they respond to consumer demand for locally sourced products by making decisions that will be the most beneficial and profitable for their businesses. For some farmers, like Elaine, money may not be the only reason they farm, but it definitely factors into why they push for more CSA members or more farmers’ market sales. Other farmers in the area, like Steve, choose to do so for religious reasons.

All of these criticisms are not to say that the local food movement is completely flawed. There is value in the places and spaces in which people can reconnect to their food and their farmers. The local food movement creates a space in which people have the opportunity to redefine local food systems. In addition, consumers are more likely to value their food if they are knowledgeable about the long, arduous hours farmers and farm workers spend planting, weeding and harvesting their produce. Farmers’ markets, especially producer-only ones like FOTS, are valuable, interactive spaces in which people create community and connect with their food in new ways. However, participants in the local food movement need to recognize the privilege of such knowledge and participation. Not everyone can afford to “vote” with their dollars in the local food movement, and we need to

recognize this so we can make the appropriate changes to make sure that *all* consumers have access to local, sustainable and healthy food.

Consumers need to also recognize that local is not always associated with people, places, practices and food that is inherently good. Just because a product is local does not necessarily mean it is healthier or more sustainable or even more socially just than its industrially produced counterpart. We must interrogate our assumptions about local producers, as well as the changes we believe the local food movement can create within our food system. Voting with our dollars, while a nice thought, is not entirely effective. The local food movement should be one component of a multi-level strategy that addresses issues such as food security and insecurity, health and environmentalism. The solution to these problems should not fall entirely on the shoulders of farmers and their customers. Instead, people need to examine the systems in place that create these problems in the first place and hold those systems and the people that create them accountable.

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## Appendix

### **Interviews:**

Steve—September 29, 2015

Michelle—November 17, 2015

Mike—December 14, 2015

Mel—January 18, 2016

Jenn—January 21, 2016

Elaine—February 12, 2016

Shuchi—February 17, 2016

Ann—March 23, 2016