The Geographies of Contemporary Food Networks in Kansas City

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The Geographies of Contemporary Food Networks: A Kansas City Case Study

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Abstract

The ways food and people negotiate their paths to consumption can provide insight into the modern world. By focusing on fresh produce and the many different networks through which it flows in Kansas City, this dissertation is a case study in local and global interaction. Its approach is ethnographic, asking what happens to the actors in these networks and how foods impact the lives of those involved. Although the literature suggests that people act in a rational way and respond to the actions of those with power, customers often ignore all the costs involved in food networks and act independently. The study concludes that people contest their association with food networks in a variety of ways that, collectively, provide valuable insight into contemporary society.

Acknowledgments

Although many people have contributed to the completion of this dissertation, several must be thanked for going above and beyond what was necessary. I would like to especially thank my primary advisor, Dr. James Shortridge, for understanding, pushing, prodding, cajoling, and continuing to work with me when it may have seemed to him a dead end. But his main strength is in the patience to allow me to work through many different approaches on the way to this final document.

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I would like to thank Dr. John Kostelnick, Benjamin Coles, ABD, Dave McDermett, MA, and Ryan Lash, MA, for their help in constructing all of the maps, for their constructive comments, and for being a strong support and sounding board as the work progressed.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family for being there for me and for believing in the value of the final result. I dedicate this dissertation to Helen, Zeke, and most of all, to my wife Jorgene. Without their unflagging support the future would not look as promising as it now does.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

> It's six-thirty in the morning, a Tuesday in early March of 2005, and I am riding in a produce truck with Ryan. "Riding with Ryan" is how he describes his job. We are on his normal, weekly route delivering produce to restaurants and small markets around Kansas City, Kansas. Although Ryan works for a well-known Kansas City produce company, and I have permission to talk with any of the employees of that company, neither he nor anyone else wants their real name used. When we talk about it Ryan says it's because not everything is kosher about the business. "The business or the food," I ask? To which he replies, "Well, it's really the food I think," but he won't tell me anything else. As we are dropping the produce on the back dock of the restaurant, a small man, stocky and weathered, begins to badger Ryan in Spanish. Not being a speaker, I notice only that he seems to be complaining about something. When I ask Ryan what is going on, he says, "It's the same thing every time. He always says that his grandmother back home grows a lot better stuff than this crap!" I ask Ryan if he feels comfortable asking the guy some questions for me and he agrees. The man says he is from Chiapas and has worked there for three years, but not straight through (the general manager had told me that she has a number of very good workers who are seasonal, going home during certain times of the year). He says that the difference between what they can grow and what gets delivered is night and day. Ryan says, "I'm not sure, but I think he said that they wouldn't feed their pigs the iceberg that gets served here . . . " (Fieldnotes, March 9, 2005).

Almost every day lettuce, tomatoes, and other kinds of produce make their way toward Kansas City from packing facilities for commercial producers in Mexico, Florida, California, or, in the case of fast-food restaurant tomatoes, Canada. At the same time, more regional produce grown in Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, and Colorado enters the same system. So do the crops of small local farmers, backyard growers, weekend hobbyists, and organic specialists. Upon arrival, these various produce items are divided, (re) boxed, reloaded, and then moved through the city to the various supermarkets, farmers' markets, grocery stores and produce retailers.

Ryan delivering lettuce doesn't care, but imagine that you are a consumer in any of these retail locations buying tomatoes for your family dinner. What factors would go into your decision? What uses for that specific tomato; what freshness, color, ripeness, or shape, help you make your choice? Does your youngest child dislike tomatoes? Does it have to be so much an organic tomato that even nonlocal dirt (topsoil in a bag from Virginia purchased from a garden center) or nitrogen from the urea of pigs in Iowa would violate it? At what market will you pay the least, if that is even a concern? Does distance to market mean anything to you? Or, do you simply buy a tomato "for no other reason than that it was there" (Fieldnotes, January 28, 2005).

It is not enough to just say, "foods move!" My opening vignette is a simple example of this truism. While Ryan and I deliver iceberg lettuce from the San Joaquin Valley in California, a man bitches to us that back home in Mexico he can get a better product from his grandmother's backyard. But, the restaurant that he works in does not have physical access to what she can grow. At least not yet, and this is important, because globally, perhaps it soon will. It is not outside the realm of possibilities that his grandmother's particular lettuce may command high prices on the open market if the factors of its production make it so.

Much of the literature about commodity exchange (and that is what produce represents, simply one among many different commodities) asserts that repercussions from the flow of produce as suggested above are largely unseen and unknown by the general public (Harvey 1990, Cook and Crang 1996, Goodman and Watts 1997). In

fact, these scholars argue that few consumers care how their produce gets to the store. Whether consumers even need to know is debated (Morgan et al. 2006). But is this really what is happening? Using both structured and unstructured interview processes, including talking informally to people in marketplace settings and sitting down with managers, CEOs, and owners of the various markets with a formal set of questions, I have assembled two very different sets of ideas, facts, and opinions. Using these, and the existing literature, this dissertation will examine how the relationships people have with food and the modern world are both highly contested and that we can better understand globalization and contemporary society through them

What has been written about commodity exchange suggests that consumers and retailers (lumping all of the various possibilities for sale under that word) act as rationally as possible. My top-down (food executives in their various forms, which include the owners of small, independent farmers as well as a number of public officials) and bottom-up (consumers and workers in the various markets) analysis looks at the movements of food to provide a means to test this assumption. For example, do the managers of independent markets and supermarket chains manipulate their delivery systems to such an extent that consumers are unknowing participants in their own daily eating? Or does each consumer react to different scenarios in multiple ways because of their understanding of modern food chains? Is the engagement with something that is biologically relevant in our lives a way to express our tastes, desires, longings; a way to contest contemporary society and its dehumanizing

effects; or simply one more nonreflexive, nonparticipatory aspect of global capitalism?

I will address these questions through the way the interviews present themselves as text in an ongoing story. I hope that a transparency becomes clear to the reader while I identify and work toward understanding and defining my hypothesis. My two different approaches, structured and unstructured, lead to patterns and systems of meaning being discovered. I will then use different theories on food networks to examine the results.

While geographers have criticized food studies for a lack of empirical sources, suggesting it is a populist field for study, they also assert that work in this area holds considerable promise "for a more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of the social significance of contemporary consumption practices" (Crewe 2000: 284). Several studies have researched farmers' markets (Andreatta and Wickliffe II 2002; Brown 2002; Feenstra et al. 2003) and local community supported agriculture (CSAs) (Hinrichs 2000, 2003).[1] Claire Hinrichs, in particular, has looked at the way CSAs are woven through several Iowan communities. Much of the work on farmers' markets originates in the UK, but these are mainly theoretical explanations of the roles markets play in consumption discourses and less case studies of the markets themselves (Holloway and Kneafsey 2000; Kirwin 2004; La Trobe 2001).

As a window into globalization and the modern world, I submit that an ethnographic examination of the ways produce and people circulate through Kansas

[1] Two websites exist for the locations of Farmers' Markets across the country: ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/ and wuwm.org/wuwmsite/scripts/fefault.asp.

City, both at the street level and through those in positions of power, can lead to a greater understanding of that important worldwide phenomenon. Taking my cue from the anthropologist David Miller that "the idea of being local can be a sign of our involvement in increasingly global relations" (in Mackay 1997: 25) my work in the marketplace holds the potential for a fully realized study of food, the modern world, and people.

I am not interested in making the dissertation only about how foods physically move through Kansas City. I will identify and detail the various different approaches in that movement, both for the consumer and for the many providers, but the larger context is contemporary society, the globalization of foods, and attitudes towards these processes. Kansas City is the place for this particular research, but I want to address the bigger picture as well.

I think that tremendous opportunity exists for further research on what people know of their food, especially on the dichotomy of poverty versus performance, of not having affordable, fresh foods available to all in the face of great abundance. It is ironic that classic "poor foods" such as collard greens, kale, and sweet potatoes are now too expensive for many pocketbooks and are considered upscale at many farmers' markets because they are organic. Indeed, as it has been said: "the history of dietary change, including the shifting role of industrial and corporate food, continues to bear the cultural legacy of contested power and property" (Friedman 1995: 17).

People tell me stories about food. These are interesting because they contain more than mere descriptions of an economic transaction that could take place

anywhere in the world involving any other type of commodity. They offer insight into the way society confronts the reality of food. These stories change according to context and personality, of course, but each one exposes a fresh understanding of the way cultures and individuals construct meanings out of the simple act of purchasing and eating food. I submit that everyone maintains strong but incomplete ideas about what foods mean in terms of nutrition, economics, cultural implications, and geographies. Simply put, we all eat to live but not all of us live to eat. Those whose business is providing food obviously are connected with its production, but they also have incomplete relationships, perhaps more so in the differences between that production as their livelihood and their own household consumption and cultural attachments to particular foods. My various interviews offer an opportunity to look into whether what is expressed through relationships is similar for all groups. I use this information to examine the way the literature either informs or contradicts itself. As geographer Irena Ateljevic has suggested (2000: 375): "If the value of the commodity to the consumer 'lies in the quality and quantity of the experience they promise and symbolize' (Britton 1991: 454) we can no longer relegate a passive role to the consumer. Their voices have to be heard." It is in these voices that I find the meaning of our modern world.

Globalization, food networks and initial perspective

Globalization has brought fresh produce, meats, fish, and dry goods, as well as wines and spirits, to different parts of the world regardless of the season in which they are produced. We are connected with these production areas in a complex chain of

commodities, sometimes called a food network. This dissertation includes a chapter that reviews how the literature identifies and defines these different networks. These food networks, under various guises and scales, bring both people (as merchants, traders, consumers, and those who are merely window shopping) and food (as produce, meat, fish, and dry goods) to cities and their respective marketplaces. These sites can range from locally owned family stores through farmer's markets and community-supported agricultural (CSA) projects and into wholesale markets, independent grocers, and large chain supermarkets. Some of these networks are global in breadth and scale, while others go merely from point A to point B within a particular city, but all are deeply embedded in our modern society and contested in the economic life we live. People can be a part of these networks through working within them, but everyone also encounters them personally through their own particular intercourse with food. All of the movement brings a social cost to consumers that, while often ignored or naively dismissed, is important. A frequent comment when asked about tomatoes is "Who cares, as long as it's in the supermarket!" As I have suggested earlier, these networks can illuminate "some of the key characteristics of contemporary capitalism, and the dynamics of change which have emerged in the age of globalization" (Raikes et al. 2000: 409).

David Harvey (1990: 428) has challenged geographers to get "behind the fetishism of the commodity" that the multiple networks circulating in and through cities represent, claiming that it is important to look at the way the many various commodity chains of food are constructed. Why, for example, are the factors of

production in coffee hidden in the image of "Juan Valdez" or tropical fruit in the hat of Carmen Miranda (Cook 1994, Cook and Crang 1996)? Harvey's words have been a clarion call to geographers who study food and opened many different approaches to commodity study. In the case of food as commodity, the biological is added to the mix but does not make an imperative of it. The literature now contains a number of studies about network theory (Fine and Leopold 1993; Bonnano et al. 1994; Jackson and Thrift 1995; Jarosz 1996; Whatmore and Thorne 1997; Hartwick 1998) and how individual foods operate within particular systems. Furthermore, outside the purchase and consumption of the commodity, a large interdisciplinary literature exists on the associations and repercussions among people, food, and places. These associations can be seen in the connections between national, regional, and local identities bound up in cuisines and the sense of place of the people who create the foods (Cook and Crang 1996; Shortridge and Shortridge 1998). Food makes its way toward the city, not to suggest that it can't be produced there, but networks give us a framework to examine the means. The study of the commodity chain brings these into clarity. The stories that people tell me about foods are interesting because they contain more than the description of an economic transaction that could take place in any market anywhere in the world. The stories change, each new one exposing the way cultures and individuals construct meanings out of the simple act of purchasing and eating food.

A noticeable feature of modern, industrial food is the sheer amount available for consumption. The supermarkets of today provide consumers with choices

unconceivable only ten years ago. In fact, "the embourgeoisement of shopping--the relentless upmarket march of food shops aimed at the mass market--has been one of the marked features of commonplace social observation of the last couple of generations" (Fernandez-Armesto 2002: 202). Even perishable products now circulate to all parts of the globe and seasonality has been overcome to deliver those foods. Consumers can purchase fresh asparagus in Boston in February, haricot vert in Paris in October, and red grapes in Buenos Aires in September. In the pages that follow I examine how this globalization process plays out in Kansas City. Designed to examine contemporary society and its globalizing effects on the city through its food, it presents the foods, the networks, and the actors involved. As another definition of the process states, it "can be taken to denote the stretching, and deepening of social relations and institutions across time and space such that, on the one hand, day-to-day activities are increasingly influenced by events happening on the other side of the globe and, on the other hand, the practices and decisions of local groups can have significant global reverberations" (Held 1995: 20).

Consumers have multiple and complex relationships to all commodities, but I am particularly interested in the attitudes of people involved in the movements of foods and places of consumption from "field to plate" (Cook and Crang 1996). The metropolitan (primarily downtown) area of Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas will be the case study area, and I use produce, most often tomatoes, as a specific commodity to explain the process. Through putting myself into these networks via ethnographic and participatory practices which will be detailed at the beginning of chapters four

and five, I assemble different types of interviews and observations. The actors involved at ground level have different ideas about what takes place with tomatoes or other types of produce than those in positions of greater power. I propose that shopping with a housewife buying tomatoes in the City Market near the downtown is not the same as talking with the CEO of one of the major supermarket chains. What do the differences tell us? Is what is generally written in the literature actually what takes place in the street where human agency must be juxtaposed against that of the economist's theoretically rational man? Do consumers have connections to food other than the nutritional and do the attachments to places of consumption in their various forms yield insights into our modern world? These are my questions.

The term modern implies a continuum from the past through the present and into the future, with "postmodern" providing a counterpoint. In this dissertation I use the word in its simplist, literal sense. Terms such as organic, sustainable, alternative or local-versus-global, are not ones with which people in the past had to grapple. Naively stated, sustainable in the past meant the difference between eating and dying. I use modern to mean "in our current system," the contemporary society. Consumers construct a different world than in the past, it is true, but the modern world necessitates that we consume at other places than from our own provisioning. There is no postmodern aspect in my way of thinking, merely how the current system requires a long consideration of ideas that were not relevant in the past.

Which food and why?

> Its 7:30, Saturday morning June 17th, 2005, and a well-dressed, thirtyish women approaches a table piled high with produce that sits in the center of the parking lot in front of the City Market near downtown Kansas City, Missouri. This is the marketplace the city has created south of the Missouri River at 5th and Walnut Streets. It attempts to recreate the open marketplaces found in cities throughout the world. I am hovering about ten feet from the table, trying to appear unobtrusive by examining garlic on another vendor's table. It is garlic the lady seeks but she seems uncertain what exactly she wants. There appear to be at least seven different varieties on the table and she says, "I didn't realize that there were different types of garlic. What should I buy?" The stall keeper laughs out loud, explaining, "No one can be undecided about garlic!" We all laugh. The woman buys the garlic right in front of her and moves away, somewhat chastised, and, I think, more than a little upset. (Field notes, June 17, 2005)

I can sympathize with the women in this vignette. I know that there are at least twenty-four varieties of garlic and I suspect many more, but why would the woman know that? She is a consumer, of course, but perhaps garlic is not a concern of hers. Maybe she thinks that all garlic is the same. Maybe she shops at the market because of some other reason than a choice of garlic.

The question as to what foods to study, and why, is the most problematic of my study. If I were to keep the choices open, talking to people regardless of what type of food they are buying, I would face the prospect of being too broad because different foods have different networks and are subject to their own boundaries. People also have varying relationships with particular foods based upon class, income, and personal preferences. Although this is exactly what I am looking into, how people negotiate the realities of the modern world through food, using too many products opens my study to the criticism of being too vague. I would like to use a

singular item of produce because it would be seasonal, allowing for different delivery systems throughout the year. Produce typically has an iconic idea attached to it that could be considered an archetype, for example Californian grapes or Florida oranges. It also has multiple cultural uses too, such as coleslaw versus kimchee (pickled cabbage). Selecting a particular food also helps to define the type of commodity chain the food is moving through. Since one of the criticisms of actor-network theory (one of the networks identified in the literature review) is that it suggests the world has no economic borders anymore, the realities of imported foods and protectionist governmental policies provide a good test for its utility.

Of the many possible produce items, I have concentrated on tomatoes. This was a matter of practicality. Simply stated, tomatoes became the most frequently followed produce item because they are in the market year round as an industrialized agricultural product, but also for a long time in the summer and fall as a fresh, local product. They are an ideal metaphor to represent the movement of food, acting as a bridge to understanding because of their ubiquity. Still, because this fruit is important to me not in and of itself, but as a vehicle used to negotiate access to my interviewees, I do not provide great detail on tomatoes themselves. For these particularities I refer readers to a recent book by Deborah Brandt (2002).

I am making no claims to absolute objectivity in my research because the selection criteria for my sample are not based upon any standard statistical methodology. This is not to say the selection was not thorough and well considered. I began by gathering addresses for the major supermarkets in Kansas City from

metropolitan phone books, individual companies' web sites, and the Internet search engine Google. In doing so I discovered that the city differs from other major U. S. cities in that independent grocers, as opposed to national chains, have a relatively large percentage of the local market and, as such, keep some of the major companies out. After confirming this through industry sources (chapter two contains details), I contacted officials at these companies (both independent and chains) for structured interviews. I then went back and identified the owner/operator of every produce wholesaler that distributes through the city as well as all the independent produce growers who sell at the farmers' markets of the city. These addresses (see Appendix one) were assembled into maps to show how they were dispersed throughout the city. My goal, again, was to interview a representative set of people.

As might be predicted, several companies refused to speak with me, among them Hy-Vee and Kroeger. Wal-Mart officials would not even allow contact with their employees, nor would they comment for this work. Other companies, however, including Dave Ball of Balls Foods and almost all of the growers at the farmers' market, were not only happy to talk with me, but also served as gatekeepers to put me in contact with employees at their distribution centers, delivery drivers, and production personal for further discussion. Beyond these structured occasions, I spent time in every one of the city's major supermarkets as an uninvited guest, wandering, asking questions, and listening to people shop. I also worked at and wandered through every farmers' market and produce center in Kansas City for the better part of two years (at all times of the year) to get an idea of what happens in the city.

Methodologically, I am most comfortable approaching people in a market setting through a commonality based upon a particular food and then seeing where the conversation leads. Most people would not allow me to use their names (especially employees of those companies) but they sure liked to tell me stories. I present these views mostly in chapter five. Although each interview, long or short, is evaluated for its own merit and not judged against others, I group the formal interviews into common responses in chapter four to facilitate discussion of the general ideas held by those who control the provisioning network. What people tell me is how I construct ideas on how relationships with food lead to an understanding of globalization and contemporary society and in the process discovering if what is written in the literature is actually what consumer responses at the local level are.

The ideas about food that people have shared with me for this research are filtered through my own understandings. People tell me how they see the food world about them, and it is up to me to interpret the meanings. Since I consider each of my interviews as a different text, I am not sure if my thesis—that the relationships people have with food and the modern world are both different and contested and that we can better understand globalization and modernity through them—can ever be proved or disproved in an absolute sense. The people I interviewed chose how much to talk about their own lives and I must decide on the interpretation. Using human interaction as a means for research as I do is recognized as valuable in the social sciences. Although all may not consider it science, my methodologies are consistent with the ethnographic process.

Because of my background as a trained chef, and my knowledge of what I will call the modernization of global food production through my literature review, I went into the field with a substantial *a priori* bias. I acknowledged this at the outset, and do not try to hide it in the research and writing. In several instances, for example, I contest the opinions and assertions of particular individuals in food networks. But this is the authenticity that Golden-Biddle and Locke (1993) search for in trying to convince the reader of the validity of ethnographic research. Readers will not doubt that I was in the field, or that I did the research because of my active response to interviews in the writing. It is my hope that by researching different areas and arenas of the city, and interviewing many different people in the various food networks, I will present an accurate composite picture of the realities of modern food production. I also hope that this ethnographic approach, this participating in many different guises, will suggest to the reader a new way to look at food.

Organization of the dissertation

The dissertation has six primary chapters. This first one, the introduction, has defined the purpose of the research and provided preliminary information on the networks themselves, modernity, and the reasons for doing the work. Next, in an effort to define my study area and introduce the locations and nature of the major retailers, produce markets and farmers' markets there, I will devote chapter two to Kansas City as a place. This includes a series of basic maps and demographic information.

Any effort to define consumption as it relates to participatory research must include many different approaches to understanding. Among these are Marxism and capitalism, the fetishism of the commodity, globalization as a force in the world, colonialism, feminism, the imperialism of neoliberal free-market trade agreements, and the different political economies involved through the national, regional, state, and local economies. Although I could argue that each of these subjects deserves a separate chapter, I realize that such an examination would exceed the scope of my dissertation. Therefore I will the use the third chapter, a literature review entitled "The Context of Globalization," to establish key themes from the academic canon that concern commodity exchange and food. Sections within this chapter will set the stage for, and establish the framework of, the following chapters.

The fourth chapter will present a "top-down" view of Kansas City's food networks via my structured interviews with those in positions of power. I discuss the different networks each of these interviews relates to and how it differs from the others. I also present what each of my interviewees believes their company and the networks they deal with suggest about the food available in the city. The fifth chapter, in contrast with the fourth, will consist of what I call a "bottom-up" look at the city's produce scene. These are undercurrents within the food business, if you will, gathered through a series of unstructured interviews made while wandering the myriad marketplaces of the city. By no means do these interviews echo the words of the executives from chapter four or the scholars from chapter three. Many of my interviews absolutely contradict and even invalidate those ideas, in fact, and this is

important in my examination of modernity and how it can be reflected in food. Both chapters four and five contain a methodology section in which I explain the different approaches used in that particular research, the purpose of having those differences, and how I will use the distinctly separate data sets gathered.

The sixth chapter will be the conclusion where I demonstrate how the questions posed in the introduction and the literature chapters are answered through the different approaches addressed in chapters four and five and how the dissertation benefits the academic fields of commodity exchange and geography. I also highlight ways in which my findings may or may not differ from what is established in the theories.

Chapter Two

The Case Study of Kansas City, Kansas and Missouri

Preliminary investigations suggested that Kansas City contains no single, civic-oriented, locational focus for food. Although the municipality claims a city market (called the City Market or River Market) and officials attempt to channel revitalization projects toward that area, consumers do not recognize it as an urban icon. Instead, area residents gravitate out to the suburbs and the farmers' markets, supermarkets, and bulk discounters found there. As the self-styled "Heart of America," Kansas City is well suited geographically for examining different food networks. On an academic level, at least three identifiable types of these systems (which I will detail in chapter three) are visible in the city, but the produce scene is dominated physically by a classically simple, linear distribution system that exists at both the local and global levels.

In this chapter I introduce the city as a whole and define my study area within it. I provide a brief background of the setting and various important dates, but readers should be aware that this is not a history of Kansas City per se, and so detail will have to be found elsewhere.[2] Using census data and official websites, I break down the

[2] Standard sources for the history of Kansas City, Missouri, include History of Kansas City, Missouri, edited by Theo. S. Case (1888); The Politics of Reform: K.C. Municipal Government 1925-1950, by A. Theodore Brown (1958); Frontier Community: A History of Kansas City to 1870, by A. Theodore Brown (1963); K.C.: A History of Kansas City, Missouri, by A. Theodore Brown and Lyle W. Dorsett (1978); Kansas City and the Railroads: Community Policy in the Growth of a Regional Metropolis, by Charles N. Glaab (1962); and Kansas City: An American Story, by Rick Montgomery and Shirl Kasper (1999). Kansas City, Kansas, sources include Wyandotte County and Kansas City, KS (1890); History of Wyandotte

demographics of the city. This will include the relationship of the various food markets to the number of households, income levels, and racial characteristics. I also add some background perspective, as well as maps, on the different food companies and the various roles they play.

Kansas City (Figure 1) is positioned at the center of both the physical and mental maps of the United States along the main route between St. Louis and Denver.. Physically, Interstate 70 accesses it from the east and west, Interstate 35 comes up from Dallas and Wichita in the south and extends on north to Des Moines and Minneapolis. A third major artery, Interstate 29, runs north to St. Joseph and Omaha. U.S. Highway 71 provides a link from the southern states of Louisiana and Arkansas.

All of these highways are important for the delivery of produce because the major growing areas of the world can be accessed from many vantage points along their paths. One of the major issues that will be shown in chapter five, though, is thata popular mental image of the city as the nation's "breadbasket" is not matched by the reality of the city as a place where easy access to food is a given.

County, Kansas, edited by Perl C. Morgan (1911); History of Johnson County, Kansas, by Ed Blair (1915); and Johnson County, Kansas: A Pictorial History, 1825-2005, by Mindi C. Love (2006). Good looks at the architecture of the city can be found in Roots: the Historic and Architectural Heritage of Kansas City, Kansas, by Larry K. Hancks and Meredith Robert (1976); and Kansas City by the Kansas City Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (1979). The role of African Americans in the city can be found in Take Up the Black Man's Burden, by Charles E. Coulter (2006).

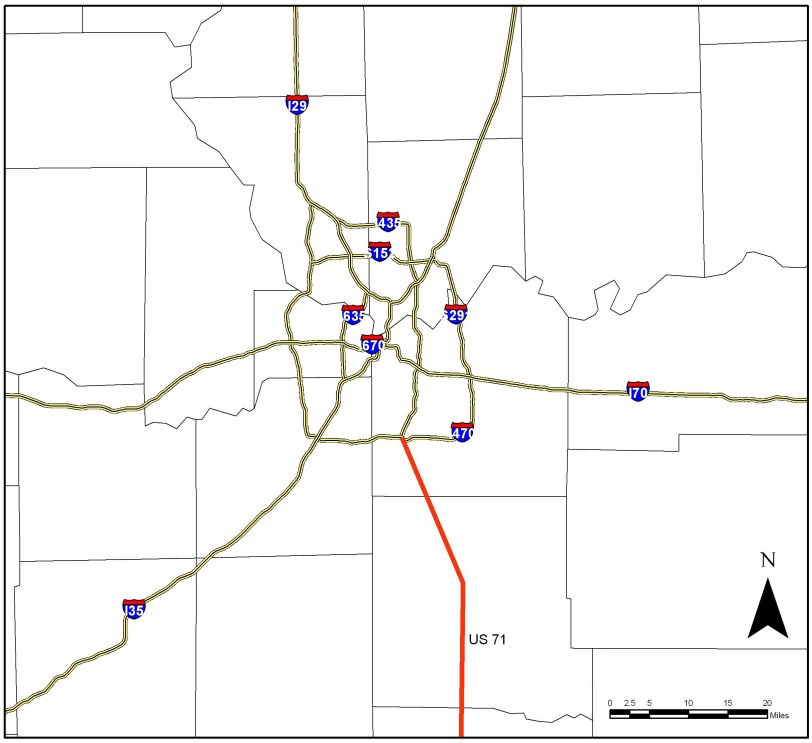


Figure 1. Kansas City, Kansas and Missouri. Created in ArcMap, February 22, 2007. Source: ESRI, Inc.

On the whole, very little produce reaching the commercial entities of the city is grown locally. Local growers exist, of course, along with farmers' markets that they can sell through, but the bulk of produce comes in by truck, rail, or for expensive, extremely perishable goods, airplane. The city actually is not even the hub of produce for the Midwest. Des Moines, Iowa, and St. Joseph, Missouri, claim that distinction, operating as a secondary and tertiary break points for distribution throughout the region.

The Kansas City metropolitan area straddles the border between Missouri and Kansas and, as such, is divided politically. An entity called the bi-state government, works to foster a common relationship between the two, but most observers over the years have felt that petty rivalries have often hindered economic development.[3]

The primary research area

I restricted my research to the five most urbanized counties (Figure 2) of the metropolis. These five: Wyandotte and Johnson in Kansas, and Platte, Clay, and Jackson in Missouri, lie at the core of what is now a seventeen-county area. The

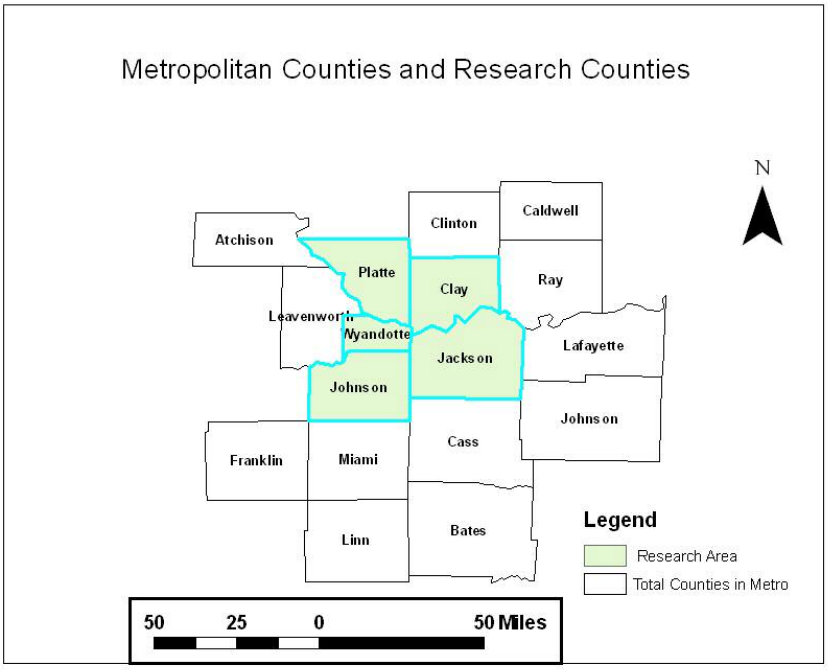


Figure 2. Metropolitan Counties and Research Counties. Created in ArcMap, May 5, 2007. Source: ESRI, Inc.

[3] www.kcmo.org/kcmo.nsf/web/home?opendocument.

recent growth is defined on the Mid-American Regional Council (MARC) website as follows:

> Through the 2000 census, the Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) was composed of eleven counties. In June 2003, Franklin and Linn counties in Kansas, and Bates and Caldwell counties in Missouri were added to the MSA. In February 2004, Atchison County in Kansas, and Johnson County in Missouri were added to the fifteen counties in the MSA to form the new Kansas City-Overland Park-Kansas City Combined Statistical Area (CSA). Demographic information used in the compilation of figures and tables below, draws on census data compiled for the area by MARC.[4]

Initial research began at City Market located near the downtown area. I then broadened out into the rest of the city to sample other places of consumption. I intended a near-saturation sample, including all the produce dealers and farmers' markets in the five counties and a large percentage of the supermarkets. In actuality, I visited every produce company, ninety percent of the farmers' markets, and approximately ninety percent of the supermarkets. As it turns out, I did very little research in northern Platte and Clay counties, western Wyandotte, and eastern Jackson because relatively few stores and markets exist there. Maps of all the stores, farmers' markets, and produce distributors in the city I visited through the course of my research will be presented shortly, after I sketch the city's development history. Appendix A lists the addresses of all these places.

[4]The Mid-American Regional Council serves as the association of city and county governments and the metropolitan planning organization for the bi-state Kansas City region. Their website is www.metrodataline.org.

A brief look at the city's history

The initial, nonindigenous settlement in the Kansas City area occurred on the Missouri side in 1822 when a Frenchman from St. Louis, Francois Chouteau, established a trading post along the north bank of the Missouri River. After being flooded out in 1826, he moved his store to the foot of what is now Troost Avenue. In 1833, John Calvin McCoy established a store some miles inland on the Santa Fe Trail and called it Westport. He also established a riverboat landing on a rock ledge on the south shore of the Missouri River near Chouteau's post, and by 1845, goods moving from the river made Westport an important source for supplies and a departure point for people heading west.

Realizing that even more growth potential existed for a town on the river, McCoy and thirteen others purchased two hundred and seventy-one acres there. Their site was incorporated under the name Town of Kansas on June 1, 1850, and it officially became known as Kansas City in 1889. The first city council meeting was held April 25, 1853, near where the City Market is now located between Walnut and Main Streets.

After the Civil War, Leavenworth, Kansas, and St. Joseph, Missouri, loomed as major competitors for trade dominance in this area. After much maneuvering by local businessmen, a bill was passed in Congress that provided for the construction of the Hannibal Bridge across the Missouri River at Broadway Avenue. When this bridge opened on July 3, 1869, it was the only one along the entire length of the river. A railroad connection to Chicago followed immediately. This link, plus a similar one

to St. Louis, helped make Kansas City one of the world's major cattle markets. The stockyard was founded in 1870 and the Kansas City Livestock exchange there, in its heyday, was the largest building in the world devoted exclusively to livestock interests.

Kansas City, Kansas, was initially named Wyandotte after the indigenous group that moved into the area to the west of the confluence of the Missouri and Kansas Rivers in 1843. Educated by Methodist missionaries while located in Ohio, leaders of the seven hundred citizens banded together with local Kansas City businessmen and formed a town company in 1857, and then a city in 1859. In 1872, still called Wyandotte, the town was incorporated but looked to the Missouri side for protection from fire. Several smaller towns also had arisen south and west of Wyandotte. These included Armstrong, Riverview, Kansas City (on the river bottoms adjacent to Kansas City, Missouri), and Armourdale (named after the Armour meatpacking family who had incorporated the area around their slaughterhouse). In 1886, Kansas City, Kansas, was formed when these five towns consolidated (Wyandotte County 1890: 388).

Johnson County, just south of Wyandotte, was predominately rural throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Organized in 1859, it was named after one of its prominent citizens, the Rev. Thomas Johnson. Three major roads traversed it, providing transportation corridors that were important to the development of the county: the Santa Fe Trail from Westport to New Mexico; a road along the northern

edge running from Kansas City to Lawrence; and an old military supply route winding south from Westport to Fort Scott.

By the end of the nineteenth century, greater Kansas City had twenty-two railroads shipping cattle, wheat, corn, and many other materials from the nation's interior to both coasts: "The city was fast becoming the butcher, miller and distributor for a large part of the country" (Hudson 1989: 13). Four major meatpacking companies supplied beef from stockyards along bottomlands where the Kansas and Missouri Rivers merged. Because of the success of the city, fortunes were being made and wealthy people gradually began to build mansions beyond the existing city limits.

Two local business men, William Rockhill Nelson, publisher of The Kansas City Star, and J. C. Nichols, a real estate planner, had the foresight to purchase land and the influence to encourage prominent Kansas City denizens to move southward. Development led to a series of upscale neighborhoods beginning with the Plaza area and continuing south along Ward Parkway, Wornall, and around Loose Park (Hudson 1989). As the city's stockyard and rail prominence subsided over time, these neighborhoods remained as places where new local capitalists, whose interests were in such varied fields as tourism, pharmaceuticals, greeting cards and real estate, wished to live.

According to authors Lawrence Larsen and Nancy Hulston (1997: xi), any discussion of Kansas City during the early part of the twentieth century must include Thomas J. Pendergast and his political machinations. He was the dominant figure in the Democratic Party: "His mastery of machine politics, his reputation and that of his

organization for fostering corruption and flaunting law and order, and especially his role in facilitating the political rise of Harry S. Truman" made him one of the city's major figures. Unlike many other big-city bosses, upon his death, the organization he led, with its open alliance with hardened criminals and the promotion of Kansas City as a wide-open town with every kind of vice imaginable, fell into disarray and then gave way to the current period of governance known for nonpartisanship and practicality.

Beginning around the time of the Second World War, the administration led by city manager L. D. Cookingham (1940-1955), recognized the need to keep at least some of the new, affluent suburban areas within the municipal tax base. He subsequently initiated a series of annexations in the late 1950s and early 1960s that literally doubled the size of the city.

Today, the economy of Kansas City is no longer based on agribusiness. Like most other American cities, it has become dominated by service industries (Table 1). Thirty-two thousand businesses, the majority in the area, are in this sector and forty-one percent of the total employees (330,016) worked in these places. However, the manufacturing sector, which represents only five percent of the total businesses and employs over eighty thousand people, has by far the largest average sales, 150 million dollars compared with seven million dollars for services. The city has come far from its roots as a cattle town, but companies such as Sprint, Hallmark, and American Century Investments, have enabled the city to continue on a path of growth.

Table 1. Kansas City MSA, (4th quarter, 2006)
Total Business Establishments and Establishments in Business 1 Year or Less by Major SIC Division

	All establishments				
Business	Est.	% Total	Total Employees	Total Sales $Millions	Average Sales $Millions
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing	3,250	4%	11,825	8589.6	36.6
Mining	111	0%	789	317.9	25.7
Construction	7,196	9%	49,036	7653.6	9.7
Manufacturing	3,601	5%	82,446	27178.1	153.2
TCPU (Transportation, Communication, Public Utilities)	2,996	4%	55,235	14466.9	32.5
Wholesale	4,438	6%	44,640	17419.6	59.5
Retail	12,209	16%	143,302	8895.9	11.5
FIRE (Fire Departments)	7,625	10%	63,432	18408.2	16.6
Services	31,757	41%	330,016	25317.8	7.3
Public Administration	1,022	1%	40,498	0	0
Nonclassifed Establishments	3,558	5%	685	4.1	0.8
Total/Average	77,763	100%	821,904	128251.7	32.1

Note: The MSA total includes only the 15 counties designated as of 2003.
Source: MarketPlace 4Q06
www.metrodataline.org/mt_econ.htm
Accessed 05/22/2007

Population

Since 1950, the total population of the metropolitan area has almost doubled (Table 2). In Missouri in 2000, Jackson County (the site of the original city), had a population of 654,880, while Clay was 184,006 and Platte 73,781. Included in this are many suburbs, some major cities in their own right: Independence, found in Clay and Jackson, Lee's Summit in Jackson, and North Kansas City, Liberty, and Gladstone in Clay. Similarly, Johnson County in Kansas had a population of 451,086 and Wyandotte of 157,882. Cities such as Lenexa, Olathe, and Overland Park add

Table 2. POPULATION HISTORY OF THE KANSAS CITY MSA: 1830 TO 2000

County	1830	1890	1950	1970	1990	2000
ATCHISON (KS) *		26,758	21,496	19,165	16,932	16,774
FRANKLIN (KS)		20,279	19,928	20,007	21,994	24,784
JOHNSON (KS)		17,385	62,783	220,073	355,021	451,086
LEAVENWORTH (KS)		38,485	42,361	53,340	64,371	68,691
LINN (KS)		17,215	10,053	7,770	8,254	9,570
MIAMI (KS)		19,614	19,698	19,254	23,466	28,351
WYANDOTTE (KS)		54,407	165,318	186,845	162,026	157,882
BATES (MO)		32,223	17,534	15,468	15,025	16,653
CALDWELL (MO)		15,152	9,929	8,351	8,380	8,969
CASS (MO)		23,301	19,325	39,448	63,808	82,092
CLAY (MO)	5,338	19,856	45,221	123,322	153,411	184,006
CLINTON (MO)		17,138	11,726	12,462	16,595	18,979
JOHNSON (MO) *			20,716	34,172	42,514	48,258
JACKSON (MO)	2,823	160,510	541,035	654,558	633,232	654,880
LAFAYETTE (MO)	2,912	30,184	25,272	26,626	31,107	32,960
PLATTE (MO)		16,248	14,973	32,081	57,867	73,781
RAY (MO)	2,657	24,215	15,932	17,599	21,971	23,354
Totals	13,730	532,970	1,063,300	1,490,541	1,695,974	1,901,070

Census 2000 MSA Totals:				
Population	814,357	1,256,327	1,566,280	1,776,062
Square Miles	1,629	2,748	4,987	5,406

Notes: The earliest implementation of a county-based metropolitan area definition comparable to the current MSA definition that is used today was in 1950.
The beginning of the shaded rows indicates the census year when the county's population was first included in the MSA counts.
* Atchison County, KS, and Johnson County, MO, were added in 2004 to create a new 17-county Combined Statistical Area (CSA).
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census
Accessed from www.metrodataline.org

substantial population to Johnson County.

The American Community Survey (ACS)[5] is a nationwide survey designed to provide communities with updated data in the years between census years.

[5] www.metrodataline.org/mt_pop.htm

Table 3. Kansas City, MO-KS Metropolitan Statistical Area: Sex and Age

General Demographic Characteristics	Estimate	Margin of Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Total population	1,909,666	+/-4,035	1,905,631	1,913,701
SEX AND AGE				
Male	936,205	+/-2,694	933,511	938,899
Female	973,461	+/-2,621	970,840	976,082
Under 5 years	139,689	+/-1,361	138,328	141,050
5 to 9 years	129,566	+/-4,316	125,250	133,882
10 to 14 years	134,984	+/-4,132	130,852	139,116
15 to 19 years	130,423	+/-1,769	128,654	132,192
20 to 24 years	122,383	+/-2,165	120,218	124,548
25 to 34 years	264,676	+/-2,406	262,270	267,082
35 to 44 years	295,991	+/-2,172	293,819	298,163
45 to 54 years	287,284	+/-1,876	285,408	289,160
55 to 59 years	116,032	+/-3,821	112,211	119,853
60 to 64 years	82,677	+/-3,987	78,690	86,664
65 to 74 years	110,522	+/-1,381	109,141	111,903
75 to 84 years	73,748	+/-1,835	71,913	75,583
85 years and over	21,691	+/-1,739	19,952	23,430
Median age (years)	36.1	+/-0.2	35.9	36.3
18 years and over	1,421,872	+/-2,681	1,419,191	1,424,553
Male	686,911	+/-2,089	684,822	689,000
Female	734,961	+/-1,573	733,388	736,534
65 years and over	205,961	+/-1,876	204,085	207,837
Male	88,289	+/-1,009	87,280	89,298
Female	117,672	+/-1,157	116,515	118,829
RACE				
Total population	1,909,666	+/-4,035	1,905,631	1,913,701
One race	1,873,990	+/-5,931	1,868,059	1,879,921
White	1,548,953	+/-7,810	1,541,143	1,556,763
Black or African American	245,939	+/-3,932	242,007	249,871
Some other race	52,370	+/-5,848	46,522	58,218
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	124,266	+/-438	123,828	124,704

Source: 2005 American Community Survey

their compilations as well as those from the Census Bureau[6] for 2005 (Table 3) show that total population for the metropolitan region was slightly over 1.9 million, up

[6] 2006 estimates from http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFPopulation.

from the 2000 census number by one hundred and twenty-five thousand. Females outnumbered males in all age categories, and African Americans made up thirteen percent of the population, or almost 250,000 people. Hispanics (of all racial categories) numbered almost 125,000 or six percent.

Demographics

The total population of the metropolitan area lived in 755,954 households in 2005 (Table 4). The majority of these made between $35,000 and $99,999 per year in

Table 4. Kansas City, MO-KS Metropolitan Statistical Area: Income and Benefits

		Margin of error
Total households	755,954	+/-5,440
Less than $10,000	55,021	+/-4,080
$10,000 to $14,999	40,429	+/-2,995
$15,000 to $24,999	78,156	+/-3,673
$25,000 to $34,999	83,061	+/-4,926
$35,000 to $49,999	117,097	+/-5,143
$50,000 to $74,999	153,522	+/-5,026
$75,000 to $99,999	99,653	+/-4,824
$100,000 to $149,999	86,377	+/-4,235
$150,000 to $199,999	22,921	+/-2,337
$200,000 or more	19,717	+/-1,955
Median household income (dollars)	50,486	+/-764
Mean household income (dollars)	64,164	+/-1,001
With earnings	632,288	+/-5,863
Mean earnings (dollars)	64,893	+/-1,190
Families	499,654	+/-7,046
Less than $10,000	20,758	+/-2,465
$10,000 to $14,999	14,699	+/-2,136
$15,000 to $24,999	37,015	+/-2,853
$25,000 to $34,999	45,947	+/-3,182
$35,000 to $49,999	75,643	+/-4,489
$50,000 to $74,999	112,933	+/-4,523
$75,000 to $99,999	79,756	+/-4,000
$100,000 to $149,999	74,834	+/-3,591
$150,000 to $199,999	20,984	+/-2,230

$200,000 or more	17,085	+/-1,756
Median family income (dollars)	62,272	+/-974
Mean family income (dollars)	75, 028	+/-1084
Nonfamily households	256,300	+/-6,324
Median nonfamily income (dollars)	30,766	+/-978
Mean nonfamily income (dollars)	40,955	+/-1,484
Median earnings for workers (dollars)	29,927	+/-492
Median earnings for male full-time, year-round workers (dollars)	46,087	+/-898
Median earnings for female full-time, year-round workers (dollars)	33,401	+/-684
PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES AND PEOPLE WHOSE INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS IS BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL		
All families	7.9%	+/-0.6
All people	10.4%	+/-0.6
Source: 2005 American Community Survey		

2005 inflation-adjusted dollars, with a median income of $50,000. Some subtle differences exist in those figures. For the 500,000 households that are considered families, the median income was $62,000, but for the 250,000 that are considered nonfamily, this income was only $30,000. Men made far more than did women in those nonfamily households: $46,000 versus $33,000. A staggering ten percent of the people, or 190,000, lived below what is defined as the federal poverty level.

Racial Characteristics

The percentage of African Americans living in the various counties of the metropolitan statistical area is quite uneven (Table 5). The outer counties of the city, those that have been added last to the area, have the lowest numbers. The core counties of Wyandotte and Jackson have the largest: twenty-nine and twenty-five percent, respectively.

The Census Bureau separates race into six categories: White; Black or African

American; American Indians and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; and "some other race."[7] People of Hispanic origin constitute almost

Table 5: Counties with a Black Alone or in Combination Population Greater Than Zero, Ranked by Percentage: 2000

Rank US Counties	County	State	Total County Population	Total Black Alone or in Combination	Percent
340	Wyandotte	KS	157,882	46,455	29.4
428	Jackson	MO	654,880	158,464	24.2
752	Leavenworth	KS	68,691	7,716	11.2
1054	Atchison	KS	16,774	1,019	6.1
1148	Johnson	MO	48,258	2,375	4.9
1246	Platte	MO	73,781	2,924	4.0
1368	Clay	MO	184,006	5,668	3.1
1374	Johnson	KS	451,086	13,665	3.0
1438	Lafayette	MO	32,960	865	2.6
1591	Miami	KS	28,351	543	1.9
1630	Clinton	MO	18,979	337	1.8
1632	Ray	MO	23,354	413	1.8
1650	Cass	MO	82,092	1,390	1.7
1691	Franklin	KS	24,784	386	1.6
1959	Linn	KS	9,570	83	.9
2059	Bates	MO	16,663	122	.7
2600	Caldwell	MO	8,969	28	.3

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1.
www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000phc-t.14

all of this last category, although it is admittedly an imprecise measure (Table 6). Although the representation is open to criticism, I include it as a comparison of numbers within the metropolitan counties. The distribution for Hispanic peoples in Kansas City is similar to that for Blacks with the surrounding areas of the metropolitan areas having low values. Only Wyandotte has a percentage above eight. Jackson County has the largest total numbers, fifteen thousand, but that only represents two and a half percent of the population (Table 6). Figure 3 maps the distribution of Hispanics and Blacks within the urban core

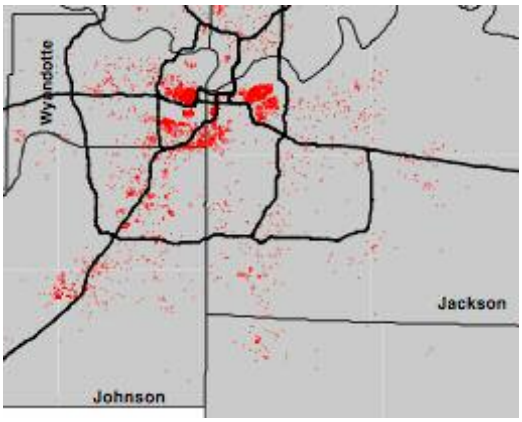
[7] Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin, Census 2000 Brief, issued March 2001.

Table 6: Counties with a Some Other Race Alone Population Greater Than Zero, Ranked by Percentage: 2000
For definitions, see *www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf*

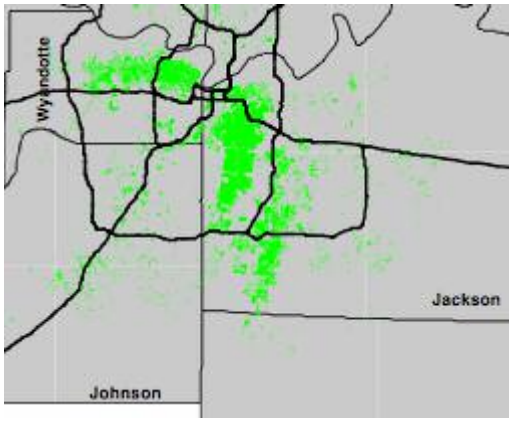
Rank	County Name	State	Total County Population	Total Some Other Race Alone Population	%
293	Wyandotte	KS	157,882	12,901	8.2
751	Jackson	MO	654,880	15,914	2.4
957	Johnson	KS	451,086	6,976	1.5
1079	Johnson	MO	48,258	623	1.3
1108	Leavenworth	KS	68,691	853	1.2
1139	Clay	MO	184,006	2,173	1.2
1223	Platte	MO	73,781	773	1.0
1446	Franklin	KS	24,784	194	0.8
1754	Atchison	KS	16,774	86	0.5
1769	Cass	MO	82,092	413	0.5
1901	Miami	KS	28,351	124	0.4
2006	Bates	MO	16,653	65	0.4
2083	Ray	MO	23,354	84	0.4
2339	Clinton	MO	18,979	51	0.3
2655	Caldwell	MO	8,969	16	0.2
2741	Linn County	KS	9,570	15	0.2
	Lafayette	MO	32,960	No data	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1.
www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000phc-t14

of Kansas City. Hispanics concentrations occur near the downtown, east and north of Interstate 70 in Missouri, and in areas just west of the state line along the rivers. Black populations occur in a larger band north of Interstate 70 but south of the Missouri River in Wyandotte and Jackson Counties. The majority live east of Troost Avenue.



Hispanic distribution 2005



Black distribution 2005

Figure 3. Hispanic Distribution 2005, Black Distribution 2005. Sources: US Census Bureau, MARC, accessed 5/27/2007.

Research Areas: background and maps

The following sections present background information on the companies and other specific places where I interviewed and observed. Figures 4 through 8, and 10 through 12 map these locations against county outlines that also show the census blocks used to gather the demographic data used above. The areas represented by the

census blocks are uneven due to restructuring in 1980 to reconcile urban/rural differences for voting purposes.

Farmers' markets

Numerous farmers' markets exist throughout the city offering fresh, local food (Figure 4, Appendix A). I will point out in chapter five that the location of these markets has a dramatic effect on price, availability and integration within the greater metropolitan area. In many instances these market locations influence who shops where and who has access to or is denied quality produce. These markets typically are open on weekend mornings throughout the spring, summer, and fall months, although some are open Wednesday evenings and the Zona Rosa market, north of the river, operates on Tuesday evenings. As the seasons progress, what is available at these sites is a matter of the weather, as all of the product must be local.

I visited each of these farmers' markets at least ten times through the course of two full seasons. They run a gamut of philosophies. Some are carefully articulated such as: "The Farmers' Community Market at Brookside is Dedicated to Creating a Unique Partnership between the Community and Farmers that provides High Quality, Local and Organic Products in an atmosphere that is mutually beneficial, wholesome and fun." Others are much more informal. The KCK GreenMarket, for example, is simply a number of tables in a bank's parking lot with food stacked and stored in plastic tubs filled with ice. Some of the markets are busier than others and they differ

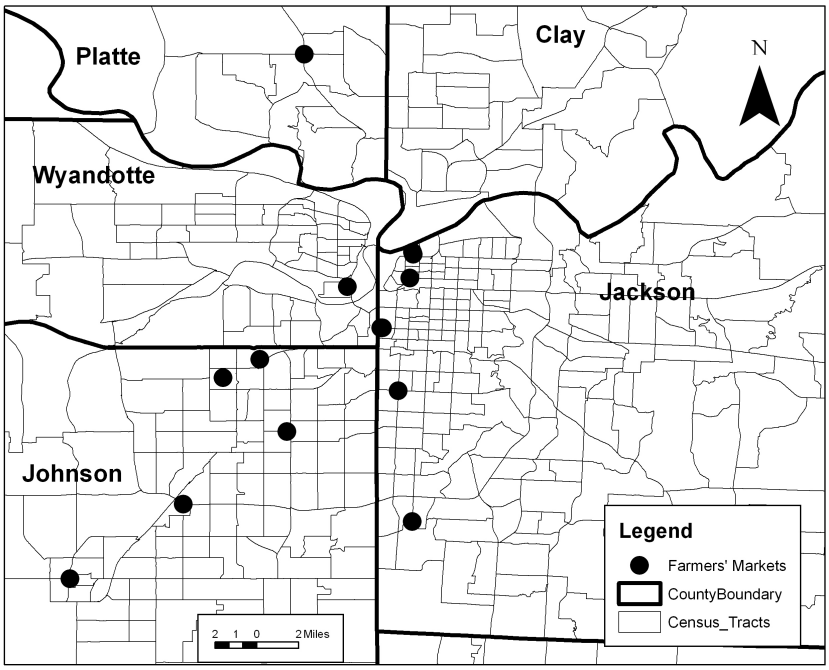


Figure 4. Farmers' Markets. Created in ArcMap June 12, 2007.
Source: US Census, ESRI Inc.

in the interaction and "feel" among the sellers. Merriam's gathering is particularly friendly, and most people there (both consumers and vendors) seem simply glad to be outside. Other markets are hard to find and almost ephemeral in the times they are open. The names and relationships included are those from my fieldwork period between spring 2004 and fall of 2006. Several of these market locations have changed, moved, and reopened since I last visited.[8]

[8] For time and locations of current markets, see www.localharvest.org, www.kccua.org, and The Kansas City Star food section.

The major chain supermarkets

According to the Food Marketing Institute,[9] supermarket sales for the year 2006 totaled $499.5 billion from 34,019 stores nationwide. The average sale per customer transaction for that year was $29.26 and consumers took an average of 1.9 store visits per week, down from the 2.1 of 2004. Based upon U.S. Department of Agriculture figures for 2005, the percentage of American disposable income spent for food consumed at home was 5.8 percent, up from 5.4, while restaurant expenditures remained at 4.1 percent. The average number of items carried in a supermarket in 2006 was 45,000.[10] Of the major supermarket chains in America, only Wal-Mart, Kroger, and Costco operate in Kansas City (Table 7).[11] In the rest of this section I will provide a brief background of two of these three companies, plus other chains and independent operators that are important in Kansas City. The addresses of every store that I visited can be found in Appendix A. I provide no background, however, on Kroger. Kansas City's seven Kroger stores are located just outside of my research area.

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[9] Food Marketing Institute (FMI) conducts programs in research, education, industry relations, and public affairs on behalf of its 1,500 member companies--food retailers and wholesalers--in the United States and around the world. FMI's U.S. members operate approximately 26,000 retail food stores with a combined annual sales volume of $340 billion--three-quarters of all retail food store sales in the United States. FMI's retail membership is composed of large multi-store chains, regional firms and independent supermarkets. Its international membership includes 200 companies from 50 countries. //fmi.org/media/mediatext.cfm?id=872

[10] www.fmi.org/facts_figs/superfact.htm site, accessed February 20, 2007

[11] For the 2007 Top Seventy-five North American Food Retailers go to www.supermarketnews.com/to75/

Table 7. Top 10 U.S. Food Retailers by Sales

1983	1993	2003
Safeway	Kroger	Wal-Mart*
Kroger	Safeway	Kroger
American Stores	American Stores	Albertsons
Winn-Dixie	Winn-Dixie	Safeway
The Southland Corp.	A&P	Ahold USA
Lucky Stores	Albertsons	Costco
A&P	Food Lion	Publix
Albertsons	Publix	Delhaize/America
Grand Union	Vons Companies	Winn-Dixie
Jewel Companies	Path Mark	A&P

*Includes Wal-Mart Supercenters and subsidiary Sam's Clubs.

Sources: Business Guides, Directory of Supermarket, Grocery & Convenience Store Chains, 2004, 1994, and 1984 www.fmi.org accessed February 20, 2007.

Wal-Mart's rise is nothing short of meteoric. Sam Walton opened his first store, Wal-Mart Discount City, in Rogers, Arkansas, in 1962.[12] Within five years the company had expanded to twenty-four units across the state and reached $12.6 million in sales. In 1968, it opened its first out-of-state stores: in Sikeston, Missouri, and Claremore, Oklahoma. Wal-Mart's operations today are comprised primarily of three retailing subsidiaries: Wal-Mart Stores Division U.S., Sam's Club, and Wal-Mart International. I visited fifteen of their stores (Figure 5).

[12] en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wal-Mart#HistoryWalMart.

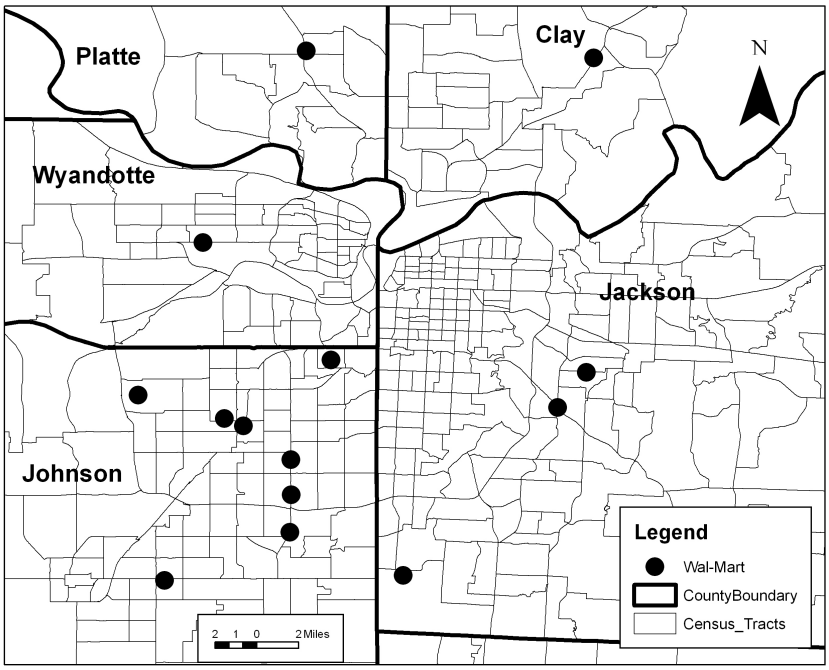

Figure 5. Wal-Mart. Created in ArcMap June 12, 2007.
Source: US Census, ESRI Inc.

Costco Wholesale Corporation, out of Issaquah, Washington, operates as a club where memberships are purchased in exchange for the possibility of purchasing bulk goods and foods and large discounts. Their annual report suggests that "very low prices on a limited selection of nationally branded and selected private label products . . . will produce high sales volumes." They have over four hundred stores and, in fiscal year 2006, reported net sales of $58 billion. This volume makes it the largest

membership warehouse club chain in the world (Costco Fiscal Year Report 2006,[13] Smith 2004). I visited three stores (Figure 6).

In addition to Costco, two other bulk discounters have a presence in Kansas City: Save-A-Lot Ltd. and Aldi Inc. These are stores that purchase produce (as well as many other commodities) directly from as close to the growers as can be found in order to secure volume discounts. These savings are then passed on to the consumer. Save-A-Lot Ltd. has eight stores in the area and I was able to visit five (Figure 6).

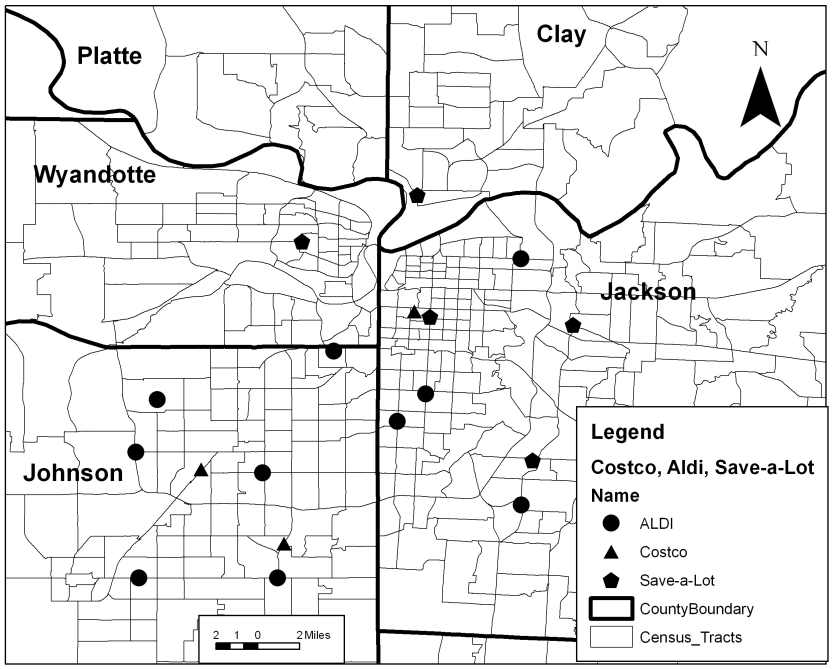

Figure 6. Costco, Aldi, Save-a-Lot. Created in ArcMap June 12, 2007. Source: US Census, ESRI Inc.

[13] www.media.corporate-ir.net/media_files/irol/83/83830/report/70072002.pfd www,en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Costco.

Started in 1977 from a single store, the company now operates more than eleven hundred locations with annual sales of $4 billion. It is the fifth largest retail grocer store under a single banner.[14] Aldi Inc. is a German-owned company with more than five thousand stores worldwide. Twenty-four are in the Kansas City area; I visited eleven (Figure 6). It is a discount food retailer "specializing in a limited assortment of private label, high-quality products at the lowest possible prices." [15]

Whole Foods Market was founded in Austin, Texas, on September 20, 1980. Originally called SaferWay, the first store, at 12,500 square feet, was quite large compared to standard health food stores of the time. Two years later, SaferWay merged with Clarksville Natural Grocery and adopted the name Whole Foods Market. Expansion out of Austin began in 1984, first to Houston and Dallas, and then to New Orleans. In 1989, they opened on the West Coast with a store in Palo Alto, California, and, in 2001, generated a good deal of interest from the media and financial industries by moving into Manhattan, New York. With sales of $5.6 billion in fiscal year 2006, Whole Foods is now a Fortune 500 company and the world's largest natural and organic foods retailer. Currently one hundred and ninety-one stores exist in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, with one store in Overland Park and one near the downtown.[16] I visited both of these (Figure 7).

Wild Oats Natural Marketplace operates one hundred and ten stores in twenty-four states and British Columbia, with approximately $1.2 billion in annual sales and

[14] www.save-a-lot.com, accessed February 20, 2007
[15] www. aldifoods.com, accessed March 21, 2006
[16] www.wholefoodsmarket.com/company/history.html, Smith 2004.

roughly 8,500 employees. Founded in Boulder, Colorado, in 1987, Wild Oats is the second-largest natural and organic foods chain behind Whole Foods. They entered the

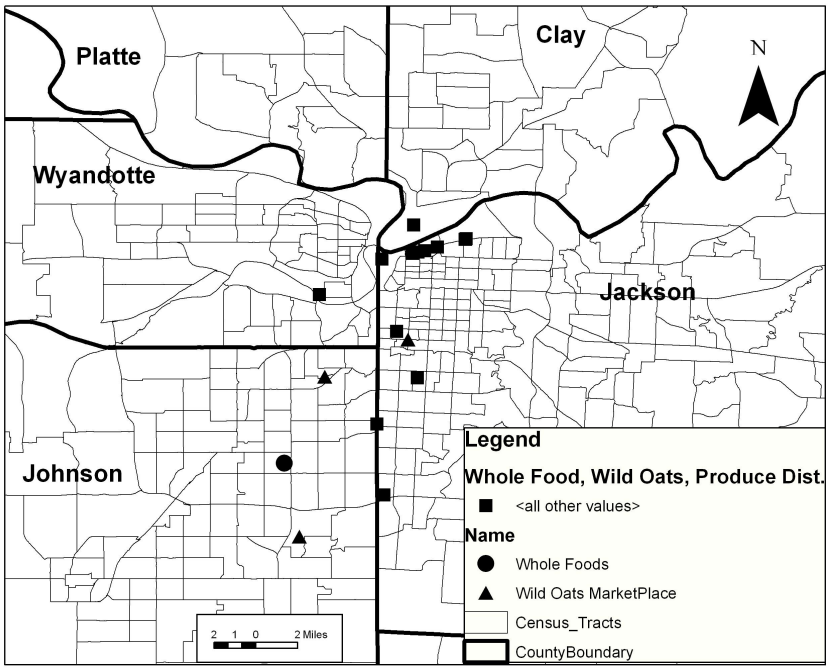

Figure 7. Whole Foods, Wild Oats, Produce Distributors. Created in ArcMap June 12, 2007. Source: US Census, ESRI Inc.

Kansas City market in 1993 and now has three stores (Figure 7). In February 2007, Whole Foods announced that it had acquired Wild Oats Markets' outstanding common stock, effectively merging the two companies.

In 1930, Charles Hyde and David Vredenburg opened a small general store in Beaconsfield, Iowa. From this start came a chain of supermarkets they called HyVee as a combination of their last names. They entered the Kansas City market in 1988

and, in 1997, purchased seven former Schnucks Markets to convert to Hy-Vees (Figure 8). Their web site stresses excellent service and low prices. Hy-Vee's corporate office is in West Des Moines, Iowa, while a 650,000 square feet of state-

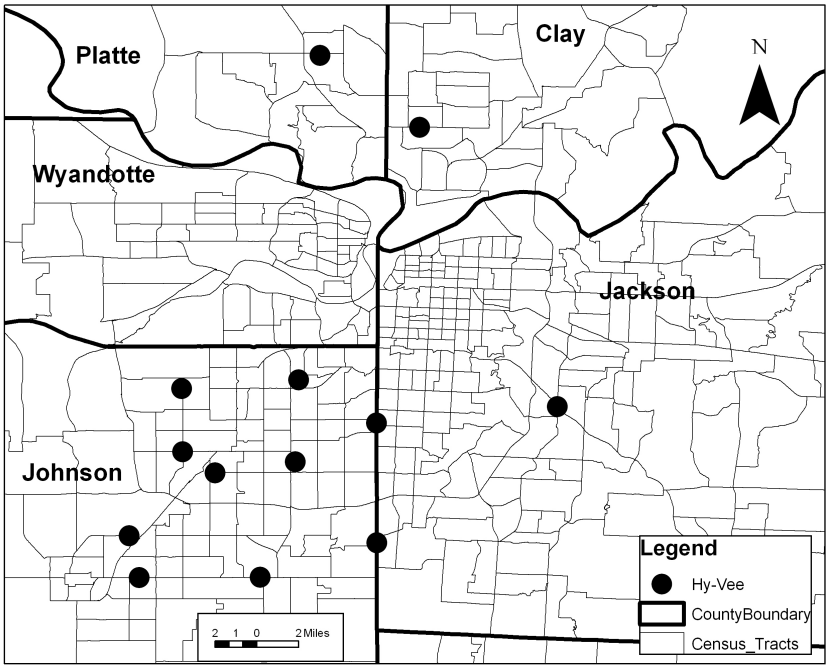

Figure 8. Hy-Vee. Created in ArcMap June 12, 2007.
Source: US Census, ESRI Inc.

of-the-art warehouse in Chariton, Iowa, provides easy access for their one hundred and ninety- eight stores spread out over Missouri, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, Illinois, and Minnesota (Smith 2004). With sales of more than $4.6 billion in 2005, Hy-Vee ranks among the top fifteen supermarket chains in the nation, placing it

in the middle between the major players and the smaller independents of Kansas City.[17] Hy-Vee operates thirteen stores that I was able to visit.

The independents

Kansas City is unusual among major American cities in that independent grocers rather than national supermarket chains dominate the market (Smith 2004). Mark Hamstra, retail editor for *Supermarket News*, a New York-based trade publication, has commented on this, saying that: "The larger chains want to increase in size to increase their buying power. For independents to have a dominant share of the market is unusual." Although this is true in one sense, as I will detail below, these independents are major stores in their own right, not the "mom and pop" local markets of the past. Tom Zauca, president and chief executive officer of the National Grocers Association in Arlington, Virginia, alluded to this indirectly by saying that: "With diversity comes strong price competition, variety, quality, service. A marketplace like Kansas City provides a very high level of diversity and therefore consumer value (Smith 2004: D20.)

The primary mover behind the success of independent markets in Kansas City is the co-operative American Wholesale Grocers (AWG), founded in 1924. Their headquarters are at 5000 Kansas Avenue, Kansas City, Kansas. The company's web site states that:

> AWG is the nation's oldest and second-largest retailer owned grocery store wholesaler in the United States serving over 1,900 stores in a 21-state area. AWG supplies customers from seven modern and efficient

[17] www.hy-vee.com/about/about.asp, accessed January 15, 2006

distribution centers, totaling more than 5 million square feet. In 2005, AWG achieved record sales of $4.9 billion. It is however, AWG's support services which allow our members the best opportunity to win at retail.[18]

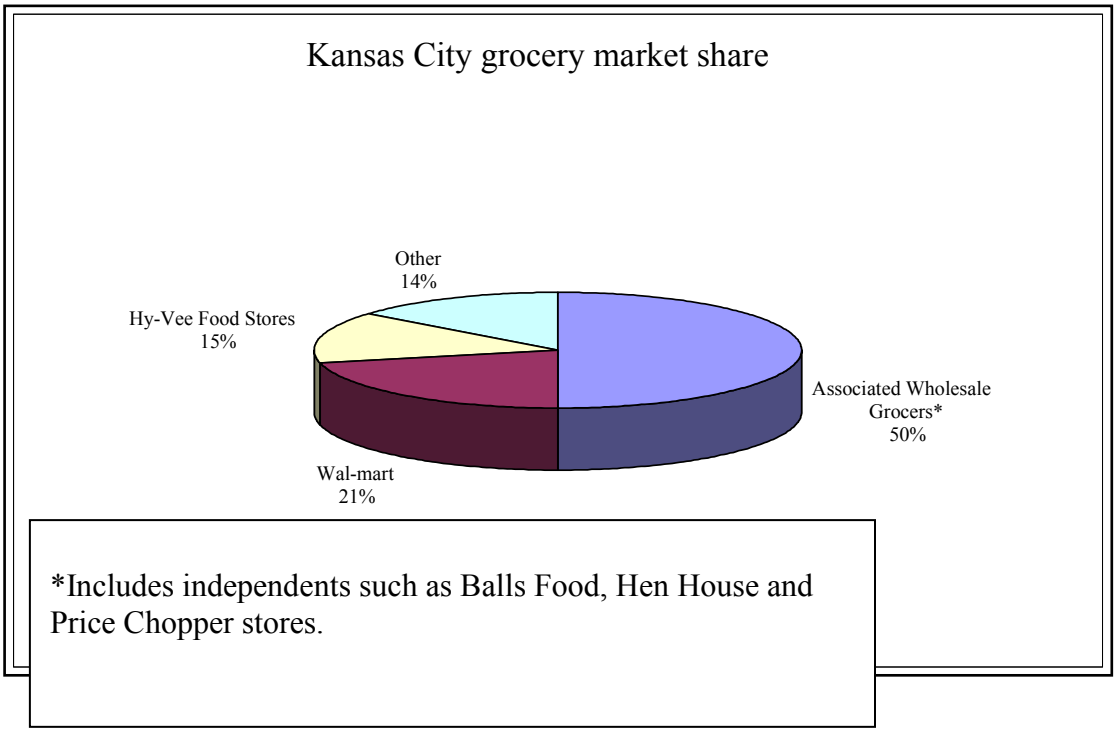

Figure 9. Kansas City Grocery Store Market Share (based on Metropolitan Statistical Area). Source: Food Marketing Institutes MarketScope data. The Kansas City Star, Tuesday, November 23, 2004, pg. D 21.

Ball Foods Stores and Cosentino's Food Stores, the two largest of the independent dealers in Kansas City, are AWG members. According to AWG sources, so are most of the smaller stores.

Ball Foods Stores (Figure 10) is headquartered at 5300 Speaker Road, Kansas City, Kansas, near the AWG warehouse. In their eighty-fourth year of operation, they own thirteen Hen House Markets, fourteen Price Choppers, and three Balls

[18] www.awginc.com, Accessed April 24, 2007

Neighborhood Markets throughout the metropolitan area. Hen House represents their upscale,

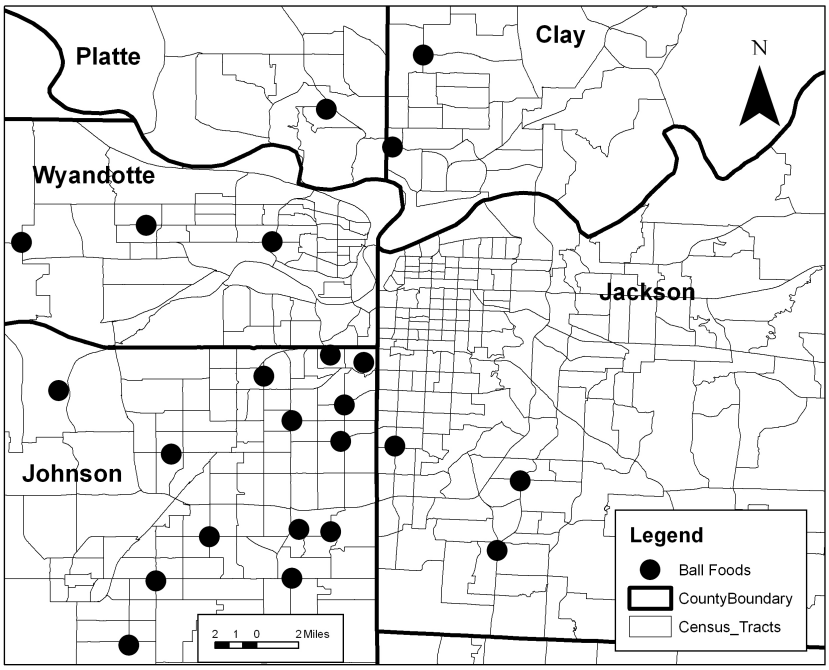

Figure 10. Ball Foods. Created in ArcMap June 12, 2007.
Source: US Census, ESRI Inc.

service-orientated name, while Price Chopper emphasizes a combination of variety and low prices based on a more traditional supermarket model.[19] David Ball, grandson of founders Sidney and Mollie Bell, is the chief operating officer after taking over for his father Fred in recent years. I was able to visit all thirteen Hen Houses and eleven Price Choppers.

[19] www.kssg.com/newsandevents/pressrelease.asp?article_id=93&curpage=1

Cosentino's Food Stores (Figure 11), with central offices at 8700 East 63rd Street in Kansas City, Missouri, is an umbrella organization that oversees two companies: Cosentino's Group, run by Dante Cosentino Sr. and his three sons

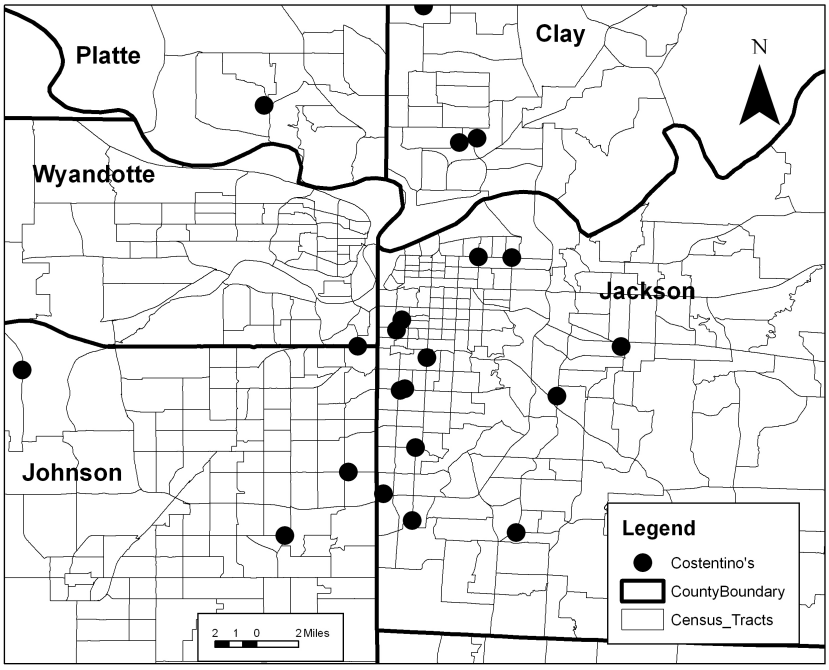

Figure 11. Cosentino's. Created in ArcMap June 12, 2007.
Source: US Census, ESRI Inc.

David, Jamie, and John; and Cosentino Enterprise, run by Dante's brother Jerry Cosentino and his sons Donnie, Victor, and Jimmy. The two combined are estimated to have total sales of $362,700,000 in 2004.[20]

[20] tradedimensions.com/pdf/gidebook/profpgs.pdf

Produce distributors

A number of smaller produce delivery companies operate in Kansas City (Figure 7). Consumers might not be aware that one can walk in to any produce distributor and purchase produce but it will be in bulk only. Most of these companies service the restaurant industry exclusively. Several, however, occupy permanent stores along the outer buildings of the City Market and sell commercial produce seven days a week. This produce is broken down into individual units for purchase. I attempted to interview in seventeen of these companies with various degrees of success. In particular, Liberty Fruit, DeFeo Produce, and those of the City Market play prominent roles.

The City Market

One hundred and fifty years ago, the city established a fruit and vegetable terminal, known commonly as the "city market," just south of the original trading sites of Chouteau and McCoy. This retail space was owned and operated by the city. At the time, it was near the center of regional retail trade and also convenient to the river. The decline of the river as a transportation artery, along with the movement of the city's business center roughly ten blocks southward, did not diminish the market. Prior to 1950, Kansas City was not only a distribution center for the surrounding area, but also one of the primary diversion facilities for product moving to larger markets in the central and eastern United States. Still prominent as a rail center, the city was positioned such that produce bound for New York and Boston, for example, could be

divided there, alleviating the terminal transportation and storage requirements for larger cities (Wales 1946).

According to economist Hugh Wales, the Union Pacific Railroad was interested in expanding Kansas City's already important role in food distribution by developing a terminal in Kansas City, Kansas. This would house a farmers' market, a railroad holding yard and warehouse, a cold-storage unit, and facilities for wholesale dealers (1946: 162). This terminal opened in December 1939, and within a month, two-thirds of the Missouri produce dealers had moved there. However, suspect rental arrangements by the Union Pacific in an effort to recover their investments in the new terminal soon led to court proceedings that ultimately closed the Kansas terminal. All of the businesses transferred back to Missouri. There, loss of railroad importance and the decline of the surrounding neighborhood contributed to a corresponding decline in the importance and relevance of the City Market. When supermarkets further reduced the impact of local dealers, greater services were required that the market simply could not handle.

In a rambling interview on October 20, 2005, Deb Connors, the market manager of the City Market at the time, talked to me about the place in her experience. The following day she emailed me the history of the market as it is currently viewed (Appendix C). In 1990, the buildings now occupied were renovated to house approximately 160,000 square feet of restaurants, food-related establishments such as a wine shop and a spice store, and museum exhibit space. The infrastructure improvements include new curbing, antique pedestrian lighting, and

2,700 free parking spaces. The City Market is open year round so that "people can continue to make use of the City Market as a living example of Kansas City history."

According to Connors, ten thousand visitors come to the market on a busy Saturday and three thousand on a busy Sunday in high summer. Still, even with the new lots in the surrounding neighborhood, parking is "perceived to be the biggest obstacle to people coming. We get a lot of inner city people on Sunday." The market is laid out like a horseshoe, with permanent structures on the south, west, and north sides, and an open space to the east that fronts the Steamship Arabia Museum and other stores (Figure 12). In the center of the horseshoe, three long, metal-roofed aisles

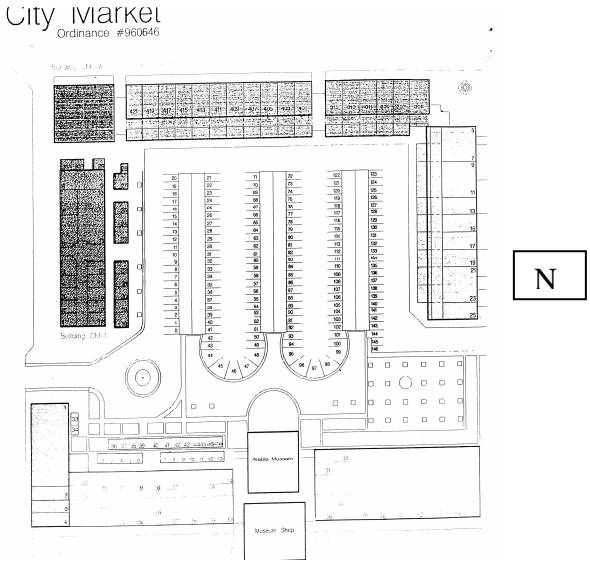

Figure 12: City Market. Source: 2005 Vendors Handbook

run west to east where the vendors set up their stalls. The main offices of the market (20 East 5th Street, Suite 201) are in the south building upstairs and a Minsky's pizza

parlor stands alone on the southwest corner. Individual, year-round shops occupy the west and north buildings.

Other options

The preceding discussion is by no means a complete list of all the places in Kansas City that sell food to the public. It excludes restaurants, of course, and several ethnic specialty shops that sell produce. Although I have been in a couple of these ethnic stores surrounding City Market, I was unable to talk to anyone or to follow people around because of language barriers. Indirectly, however, I have learned that a heavy volume of locally grown specialty vegetables (interviews suggest north Kansas City sources primarily) goes into these stores. I was unable to find out anything beyond what some of the market traders selling their own produce that they had not sold to these markets told me. I was also unable to do any research in the Hispanic markets along Southwest Boulevard.

Chapter Three
The Context of Globalization

Agriculture serves many purposes. Its primary activity is production for human consumption, either directly (fruits and vegetables) or indirectly (e.g. fed to livestock in order to fatten them for market), but it also includes industrial products such as oils as lubricants for industry or fibers for clothing. No matter how long humans have produced foods for consumption, or which type of farming is being practiced, the delivery of those foods and other products to areas of consumption operates through a web or chain. It has been said that "there exists a continuum of 'transitional' states between pure 'peasant' farming at one extreme, as found within many developing countries, and large-scale, capitalist (wage-labor), corporately-owned farming at the other" (Atkins and Bowler 2001: 57). All points along this spectrum exist in Kansas City and other major urban areas; it is merely a question of which form production takes and which network leads a particular food to a consumer.

Regardless of the degree of commodification or industrialization of the product, all foods entering the city rely on highly organized networks and myriad actors, processes, and agencies. The globalization of today's food production requires us to "more fully theorize the relationships between practices associated with the provision of food and the consumption of that food" (Crewe 2001: 630). It is not enough simply to accept that food will be available somewhere in Kansas City; we must search out and define the methods that bring it there.

It is power in many different guises that keeps the individual nodes along any of the chains connected from field to plate. The interrelations mediated through the various discourses are such that "a complex mesh of networks [exists] in which resources are mobilized, identities fixed, and power relations consolidated" (Lowe et al. 1995: 103). The ability to command a resource to such a degree that it will flow toward a destination is power over that resource. Power and networks both are complex subjects. As the geographers Ilbery and Kneafsey have written (1999: 2218): "The power of the network, and the legitimacy of its representations, depends on who or what it represents, how it does this, the material resources it has access to and how each in turn is connected to other networks." This chapter will help to define the many networks involved in Kansas City's food, the power relations involved in each, and how they affect not only the city, but also the world beyond and modernity in a broader context.

The challenge to understand

Following Harvey's challenge to look behind the veil of the fetish, my interests in this dissertation focus on the "social life of things" (Appadurai 1986). By this I mean both the journey to and what happens after, a commodity's point of sale. What types of relationships do people and machines (those that facilitate the movement of the commodity) have with the product, how are lives impacted, and what types of "embeddedness" (Winter 2003) have been created along the way. What can lettuce tell us? How does broccoli talk? Foremost is that:

> Biographies of things can make salient what might otherwise remain obscure. For example, in situations of culture contact, they can show what anthropologists [and geographers] have so often stressed: that what is significant about the adoption of alien objects--as of alien ideas--is not the fact that they are adopted, but the way they are culturally redefined and put to use (Kopytoff 1986: 67).

Trying to think of the social life of broccoli is hard, of course. One must get out into the field and talk to those whose lives are bound up in its planting, harvesting, and processing as well as to those who make soup or drive delivery trucks. Studying the circulation of broccoli or another commodity leads me in two directions: first, it interests me on a personal level, and second, as Appadurai (1986: 5, italics in original) has written:

> Even if our own approach to things is conditioned necessarily by the view that things have no meanings apart from those that human transactions, attributions, and motivations endow them with, the anthropological problem is that this formal truth does not illuminate the concrete, historical circulation of things. For that we have to follow the things themselves, for their meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories. It is only through the analysis of these trajectories that we can interpret the human transactions and calculation that enliven things. Thus, even though from a *theoretical* point of view human actors encode things with significance, from a *methodological* point of view it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context.

Appadurai has gone on to suggest reasons for the circulation of commodities beyond the mere exchange of values. Consumers will have different uses for the same ingredient depending upon individual preference. He justifies his own collection of essays on the subject by writing that they permit "glimpses of the way in which desire and demand, reciprocal sacrifice and power interact to create economic value

in specific social situations (1986: 4).” I am following this line of reasoning in looking at what is transpiring in the market, thinking of each person I talk with as a new “essay” into the workings of the different food networks. “Essays” can mean different things, of course. Here is where we cross the line between people and things in a different way than mere embeddedness or interconnectedness within a network. Kopytoff once asked (1986: 66-67) “what, sociologically, are the biographical possibilities inherent in its ‘status’ [a thing as opposed to people] and in the period and culture, and how are these possibilities realized? Where does the thing come from and who made it? What has been its career so far, and what do people consider to be an ideal career for such things?”

Defining networks

Theorization about networks has multiple origins. Researchers were working specifically on food in the 1980s and early 1990s (e.g. Arce and Marsden 1993; Friedman 1993, 1994A; Friedland 1994; McIntosh and Zey 1989; Mintz 1985), but Eric Wolff’s Europe and the People Without History (1982) and Immanual Wallerstein’s The Modern World System (1974) appear to be the seminal works of modern inquiry even though they do not focus on food networks per se. Wolff suggested that the circulation of commodities is an ancient construct and that the power of certain geographic regions to produce excess food was taken advantage of repeatedly throughout history. Hopkins and Wallerstein, working on Wallerstein’s original 1974 thesis, have suggested envisioning commodity chains as networks of labor and production processes whose end result is a finished commodity (1982,

1986). In this system, one could examine modernity through the changing dynamic that the individual commodity represented. What they discovered about the movement of goods in the modern world is perhaps best summarized by Raikes, Jensen, and Ponte (2000: 393) as a "focus on the emergence of a new global manufacturing system in which economic integration goes beyond international trade in raw materials and final products, to encompass centrally co-coordinated but internationally dispersed production of many of the activities along the chains of given commodities or manufactured products."

Duke sociologist Gary Gereffi and his colleagues (1994) established what is called global commodity chain analysis (GCC) in the early 1990s in an effort to understand how industrial commodity brokers establish geographical links to activate material flows and distribute finished products. They gave GCC primacy over other definitions as the way to define global flows of commodities (Gereffi et al. 1994). I am not going to comment upon the totality of Wallerstein's or Gereffi's theories here, except to say that, as I look into the ways foods circulate through Kansas City, they were the beginnings of what I hoped to identify as reality in the city. Two of their points are critical: "the willingness to include aspects of power excluded from other analyses of international production and trading relations" and that "the dominant direction of flows along GCCs is from 'the periphery' to 'the core'" (Raikes et al. 2000: 401).

My reading of the literature indicates that there are three distinct networks through which food moves. First is a simple, linear model whereby each movement is

considered a step in a logical progression towards consumption. Second is one where different, distinct processes deliver a product towards a final consumption point with no direct emphasis on point of origin. Finally, a third type of network acts as a net over the whole of a globe. In it no causal relationship exists between product and place. I will discuss each of these three in turn, including a small subset within the linear network I will detail below.

Standing in front of John Goode's stall at the City Market I can form a mental picture of the short journey heirloom tomatoes make from his Wathena, Kansas, fields to me. John picks the fruits from the field and places them into boxes so expensive to replace that he reuses them constantly. The crop then goes onto the bed of an old Dodge delivery truck, down US Highway 36 and onto the Interstate 29 and US 169 until it reaches the rented stall he has at the market. This is a simple, linear network that has real money (mine) exchanged only at one point (he, though, must pay at many different points for gas, oil, and fertilizer among other items). When I say real money here I am contrasting John's cash-only policy from customers with the credit system by which he pays for his inputs. It is relatively easy to talk to John about what takes place along the way, and he is transparent about the many difficulties involved.

The step-by-step progression of an agricultural commodity from production to consumption is rarely as straightforward as with John Goode's tomatoes. If one hypothesizes a linear construction of these chains, one from field to plate, it is possible to study not only the chain itself, but also what the geographers Leslie and

Reimer (1999: 402) have called "the reworking of meaning along different sites in the chain." John's example focuses us on the commodity as an entity moving along and through each node of the chain, where we must acknowledge the situatedness of each individual point. It is easy to move along these chains, but it is not so simple to define the exchanges along the way.

One of the challenges of commodity research is in the possibilities for imagining the lives of people along these chains. We can visualize these lives as being perpendicular to the flow, a sideways step if you will, that situates their experiences and reactions as events happening near but outside the chain itself. Each step is unconnected to the others once you step away from the chain. The lives of the pickers of fruit, their diets, lifestyles, money exchanges, and social relationships have nothing in common with those of consumers along the high streets of England or the main streets of America. This separation is one that I will address in other chapters as being in contradiction to what the literature suggests must happen. But it is useful to contrast John (I am not trying to pick on him, he is a good sport in this) with his workers. John alleges that he continues to come to the City Market to sell his tomatoes because he has an affinity with his customers, but he is also successful enough there financially that he can take regular vacations in the winter to Central America. His several local employees from Wathena, however, are seasonal, poorly paid, and without insurance. Still, they are young people who would rather spend time with the gruff-exterior, soft-interior John than work other menial-labor jobs in their hometown.

More refined network models extend the search for meanings embedded in the commodity (e.g. Cook and Crang 1996). Under such a microscope the food product in question is examined from its point of origin such that it abandons "its chimerical world of stable, unchanging, unitary cultures. The immediacy of the production point is lost to the adulterations of commodification" (Jackson 2002: 9). In other words, the food takes on an identity separate from its point of production. A tomato becomes simply a tomato. The locale from which it came is irrelevant because it is just a tomato, not "an organic tomato from Wathena, Kansas." Although one can watch metaphorically the movement of points of origin for tomatoes from Mexico to Florida to Arkansas to local farms to industrialized greenhouse tomatoes in Canada and back again through the course of a year, in the supermarket the fruits are simply ovals 5x6 inches in circumference, sometimes bright red, sometimes paler, but always that same size and assumed ripeness. All of the other salient aspects of the tomato--its taste, smell, color or, organically, point of origin--are largely lost. The sheer economies of scale required to bring tomatoes to market reduce the local impact of freshness to possible irrelevance because the universal availability seems (at least to the consumer) to eliminate whatever local weather or transportation difficulties that might arise. Once again it is simply a tomato in the market.

Another approach to the study of linear food chains is the French *filière* (loosely meaning, "string") method whereby the chain itself is used as a tool for research (Kydd et al. 1996, 1997). Emerging at the same time as Gereffi's GCC analysis, the *filière* was developed to track the movement of agricultural products

from the former colonies of France to France itself. Again, I will use John as an example. As an individual, he is more meaningful in this line of reasoning through his actions and responses to the modern world than are his tomatoes, no matter how wonderful they might be. His costs associated with gasoline, fertilizer, land rents and other processes in the movement along the chain become useful tools for understanding. This type of research renders the food itself less than transparent, even irrelevant. Michael Watts' work on contract farming in Africa is another good example here (1994, Goodman and Watts 1997). He examined the movement away from traditional plantation production, which included considerable subsistence farming on the side by the laborers on their own landholdings, towards a system whereby small landholders contract with state-run agencies to grow food for the global market. This system replaces the wages for hire on the plantation with wages that come from contracts on their own lands. None of the land is now used to produce food for local consumption. Instead everything is sent back to the former colonizing country, in this case France, and wages are substituted for the purchase of food brought in from elsewhere. But *filière* research only looks at the effects upon the movement of the food, not the foods themselves and is not common in the Anglo literature.

The second major network theorized for food movement comes from the economist Ben Fine (1994: 522) who observed that "the passage of a food from farm to mouth comprises a sequence of distinct activities that are, nonetheless, structurally bound into a unified whole that is integrated with other economic activity, such as

transport, shopping and domestic labor." This description might seem like simply another kind of linear movement, but the complexity of analysis changes the dynamic. One might think of a network as being "centrally co-coordinated but internationally dispersed production of many of the activities along the chains of given commodities or manufactured products" (Raikes et al. 2000: 393). In The World of Consumption (1993) Fine, along with his co-author Ellen Leopold, labeled this chain as a "system of provision," but this has been challenged by a number of other writers (Friedman 1994B, Whatmore and Thorne 1997) as being naive and simplistic.

Still, any global food chain that allows farmers "indirect access to markets at lower costs than individual small-scale producers would face" (Raikes et al. 2000: 393) would appear to be one that consumers would welcome. Fine's "system of provision" offers a different perspective than that of a strictly linear model, but keep in mind that he acknowledges the same intent of his research: "Only the revolution in availability makes it possible to mix and match elements delivered--often in processed form--to a kitchen which resembles an assembly plant . . . more people can get more variety than ever before; yet they seem willing to forgo the privilege in favor of cheap, standard products" (Fernandez-Armesto 2002: 222). We are not in isolation as consumers; rather, there exists an "equality of genuine relativism that makes none of us a model of real consumption and all of us creative variants of social processes based around the possession and use of commodities" (Miller 1995: 144).

For Fine, this is the key point. It doesn't matter what goes into the finished product for the consumer, only the product matters.

Follow the story of Dan to illustrate Fine's concept. Dan is a stocker whose job entails putting new products, almost always dry goods, on shelves as they come into the store. He rarely gets to work in the meat or produce sections. The product comes in on pallets, wrapped tightly in shrink-wrap, and needs to be shelved in sequence because it is ordered on an "as needed" basis. This is not Dan's way of talking; it is the store's vernacular. Dan says managers take inventory, figure out what they need, and make out a joint order with the other Hen House supermarkets in town. The product is then delivered already in the exact sequence and amounts needed for stocking. All Dan does is to put the pallet on his pallet truck (a type of dolly with a hydraulic lift), roll to the correct aisle, rotate the stock that is behind to the front, and then put the new stock on the shelves in the correct places. He works down each aisle until the pallet is empty. If a mistake is made, surplus goods can be taken to a room out back, but store managers don't like this because the stock gets in the way there and is often lost or broken. Deliveries come to the store all the time, but actual stocking occurs only in late evenings or early mornings so it does not get in the way of customers. The managers know that product may have to be restocked during the day, but they don't like doing this because it puts people on the floor where customers can see them. Dan is not sure about the stocking policy for produce or meat but he knows that a bargain section exists for older produce and that it is best to buy

meat early in the morning when they put out the specials (typically older goods approaching their expiration dates).

Dan doesn't know where most of what he stocks comes from. In fact, he feels no particular connections to food. He doesn't do the shopping at his house, and as a youngster, he never went to the store with his mother when she did the household shopping. He knows that most of the produce comes from California, but hasn't a clue about salsa or potato chips. I asked him if he ever thinks about how far the foods he puts away have traveled, but he said no. The cans and jars are just things he puts into bare spaces on the shelf.

Although Dan's vignette does not address produce specifically, it highlights a particular "system of provision" network that integrates product through multiple trajectories and implies that a balance exists between production and consumption in the delivery of the finished item. The vignette also demonstrates a view less centered on the cultural meaning of individual commodities and more on a dialectical relationship between consumption and production. For processed foods such as salsa or canned vegetables, the product is demanded at the point of consumption and the response from production is to provide it no matter where the ingredients come from. A tomato's point of origin is irrelevant; it simply must materialize for the finished product. People are not important in this model ether because the "system of provision" does not involve them in the procuring of the initial foods. There is no relevance placed upon a specific locale, only consumers at the consumption end have meaning.

A third type of network, less linear, and considered by it adherents to be more dynamic is called Actor Network Theory (ANT) (Law 1991, Latour 1991,Whatmore and Thorne 1997). Adherents believe that it has furthered our understanding in geography of how commodities are negotiated and embedded into webs that connect seemingly dissimilar parts (Hughes 2001). Although ANT is criticized because it "problematises global reach, conceiving of it as a labored, uncertain, and above all, contested process of 'acting at a distance'" (Whatmore and Thorne 1997: 290), perhaps it is best to think of ANT as an umbrella-like web placed over the whole production/consumption idea with all points linked together in a nonlinear system. This opens a debate on whether each link has a causal relationship with others, asking "for example, do supermarkets (who 'drive' the fresh fruit and vegetables chain), processors (who seem to be the dominant agents in the case of cocao and coffee), and international traders (the 'drivers' in the case of grains and cotton) 'drive' their respective commodity chains similarly?" (Raikes et al. 2000: 398). ANT is a reflexive idea in this sense, where no particular link has "power" over another. Each link reacts to others as information is received and sent along. As the seasons move through their natural course, so do the movements of food. It is assumed under ANT that the market will reconfigure availability and deliverability as nature (Nature but without the vagaries of climate) responds through a linkage of machine, technology, and human agency.

Although ANT suggests dialectical relationships that differ for each particular commodity, Whatmore and Thorne (1997: 301-302 italics in original) have written that:

> networks, unlike systems, are not self-sustaining; they rely on hundreds of thousands of people, machines, and codes to make the network. They are *collective*, that is their length and durability are woven between the capacities and practices of actants-in-relation. They are *hybrid*, combining people and devices and other living things in intricate and fallible ways in the performance of social practices. They are *situated*, inhabiting numerous nodes and sites in particular places and involving their own particular frictions (cultural and environmental) to network activity. And finally, they are *partial* even as they are global, embracing surfaces without covering them, however long their reach.

In essence, ANT networks cover but do not actively embrace a commodities trajectory towards consumption. They act like a vast web but each individual strand is not as important as the overall entity. In one way or another, due to the various actants, the product will always be available to consumers.

Amy Chartier is general manager of the Red Lobster restaurant on South Harrison Street in Olathe, Kansas. As such, she feels that she has her finger on the pulse of all the food that comes into her store. Her restaurant places orders with purveyors four times a week because of the amount of business they do and the relatively small amount of storage area in the restaurant proper (although she says that if they expanded the back as little as four feet they could eliminate one whole delivery and save some money). All orders must go through an outfit called MBM in Dallas; she thinks this is a part of the Marriott conglomerate but is not sure. Red Lobster is a large company and all of its dry goods and frozen products are shipped

based upon what MBM in Dallas thinks a particular store needs. Produce and fruit are the only things coming into any Red Lobster where the individual store is responsible for ordering specific amounts and sizes. Even these items, however, are tempered by corporate philosophy and must be ordered ultimately through MBM.

Red Lobster is part of the Darden Restaurant Group started thirty-five years ago in Lakeland, Florida. The Olathe store is part of the Dallas division, which covers ninety Red Lobsters and Olive Gardens in Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and Arkansas. One of the keys to their success lies in what they call "partnering" with providers of materials. This process creates an accountability based upon both corporate standards of quality and the image of quality based upon the brand name of particular items such as Kraft Mayonnaise. So there is a standardized tomato at a certain size and color and a lettuce mixture that has to be 100 percent available from a purveyor. If such standards and quantities are not met, another purveyor is contacted. But for items such as mayonnaise, the brand name is what ensures both the quality and quantity. MBM's system responds to any anomaly by working backwards to the company in whose truck I am riding. Ryan, the driver of the delivery truck in the vignette opening chapter one, says that MBM could shift away from his company with no warning and he might lose the stop for a period of time and thus considerable income (his salary is based upon volume delivered) (Fieldnotes March 9, 2005). While Amy suggests that the accountability within the network benefits Red Lobster in that they are always sure of having product, Ryan, through nothing more than the vagaries of production in other parts of the world, stands to lose.

Although it is outside the reach of this dissertation to explore ANT in detail, it is important to note that, as a research tool into commodities, it implies that borders between nations are fluid or even irrelevant in the modern world. Reality is not so simple. Trade barriers, technological innovations (or evasions), differences in national laws concerning pesticide or herbicide use, and even what is in the water used to nurture the fields all work against easy movement between economic regions.

No matter which of the different commodity chains or networks is at work on a particular food, one of the more salient features of this type of research is "its inclusion of power in economic relations and transactions, and the willingness to include aspects of power excluded from other analyses of international production and trading relations" (Raikes et al. 2000: 401). A focus on networks also allows new methods for approaching societies in different parts of the globe and the ways they are forced to confront the realities of the modern world. The aforementioned chains can and will deliver any sort of distinctive produce to me in Kansas City; it would be naive to think otherwise. Money or power demands from numerous sources ensure that this process works in our present-day economic reality. The greater question is how to connect the networks with people.

Why food as a commodity?

> We carry the story of the people who make our clothes around with us. This is the fashion equivalent of mothers looking at the back of a can to see what exactly she's going to feed to her kids . . . we're answering a demand that's just stirring (Bono 2005: F6).

It is important to realize that a commodity is something more than its physical form. As a metaphor it can offer researchers insight into many aspects of our modern world, including, for example, how "geographers' concerns with the nexus of the global and the local can be explored by 'mapping' the labile, sliding identities forged in specific yet globalized sites" (Watts 1991: 11). Consumers make an idealized construct based upon what they believe a commodity represents and use this to create a hierarchy of value. I cannot, from my research, suggest that they have complete knowledge of the commodity. Perhaps, though, they "know it, but they have never thought about it" (Page 2005: 301). Many levels of this construct exist: quality, scarcity, use-value, exoticness, and sexual relevance to name only a few. Each carries different weight in its perception for the consumer when they are purchasing. Where did it come from, who made it, how does it make me look? These are thoughts that factor into decisions about an item that physically is only for clothing or feeding. Although such a view may seem simplistic, it hides a deeper concern. What is the critical reflexive consumerism manifested in all of this? If none exists, then it becomes simply one more thing to be added to a hectic world, but observers see the beginnings of change in the networks of food, as "alternative commodities veritably shout to consumers about the socio-natural relations under which they were produced through carefully wrought images and texts" (Bryant and Goodman 2004: 348).

Food, as it is presently viewed, is often turned into something other than a labor-produced "thing." Bell and Valentine (1997: 6) have argued that food has become an important part of the social creation of "lifestyles." In this thinking, the

media and chefs emphasize ingredients in a discourse that creates cultural capital, thus making "stars" of certain foods. There is a social cachet to eating at specific locales or with access to the current "in" foods. Our eating choices have been seen in some circles as a means to identify who or what we are (Cook and Crang 1996, Marsden, 2000). The geographers Ilbery and Kneafsley (1999: 2214, italics in original) have noted that "given current theorizations concerning the social construction of consumption attitudes towards food quality, it seems appropriate to describe consumers as operating predominantly within a *lifestyle* area."

Eating the mushroom truffles will place an individual far outside the mainstream dining community of Kansas City. For one thing they sometimes cost $120.00 per pound, so much that chefs, from my experience, merely hint at having them on the plate. There is, however, not a large difference in the price of the truffle between New York, Kansas City, or even Tuscany, Italy (Howran 2006). But if you ate a truffle in Kansas City, you certainly can claim to have eaten very exclusively.

The same thing applies to Kobe Beef©. This is a rare presentation of beef in which Japanese producers (although it is being raised in Montana, western Kansas, and Texas on a trial basis) feed the animals a special diet (including beer but no chemicals or growth hormones) to encourage massive growth, hand massage them to make them tender, and keep them docile to encourage fat production. Even the knuckle cut from above the knee bone of such cows commands prices upwards of $50.00 per pound. As a chef I can personally state that Kobe Beef© is not that tasty,

but it carries an idea of worth far beyond what (to my mind) would be a better piece of meat, a Kansas steer allowed to range freely in a Flint Hills pasture.

The anthropologist Daniel Miller (1995) has suggested that the study of current consumption signals the erosion of culture and thus the problems addressed by the debate on modernization. Miller's concern echoes David Harvey's challenge: the "fetishism of commodity." In this view: "consumed commodities and their valuations are divorced for and by consumers from the social relations of their production and provision through the construction of ignorances about the biographies and geographies of what we consume" (Cook and Crang 1996: 135). In place of this reality, we are substituting image (or fetish). In a perfect world consumers would buy only that which is produced, and what was produced would be only that which is necessary for the continuance of all parties involved. Kansas City demonstrates how this is false. Fetishes, in Miller's phrase, "are vastly abstract generalities about the modern global world," images created and maintained by marketing people who "rarely return to the kinds of populations they are supposed to be about in order to see whether these descriptions really apply" (quoted in Mackay 1997: 23).

Raising the issue of food as fetish leads to interesting questions about how exactly we as individuals confront shopping choices. E. M. DePuis (2002: 228) has suggested that we engage increasingly in "reflexive consumption," which she defines as the "process of taking in claims but not necessarily espousing any of them." Consider my personal behavior towards bananas. I am politically against the process

that imports this crop from Central America and favor fruits from the Windward Islands, which are smaller in size and produced by local, independent farmers. There are no Windward Island bananas where I usually shop, but since I like bananas, I will buy others rather than do without. This is taking an easy way out of the dilemma, for as DePuis (228) has pointed out:

> A reflexive consumer is therefore not a social activist, nor is he or she necessarily committed to a particular political point of view, as espoused by other actors in the public sphere . . . . However, the reflexive consumer listens to and evaluates claims made by groups organized around a particular food issue . . . and evaluates his or her own activities based on what he or she feels is the legitimacy of these claims.

DePuis essentially argued that we can become armchair activists if we wish, taking on issues as they suit us. It is commentary on my own backbone to have to acknowledge that my particular situatedness, my "lifeworld" (Buttimer 1976), is one that I can manipulate to my own advantage. It makes a mockery of my claim to understand those who bring food into my world, since I can pick and choose my battles while those who produce the foods I consume may not have that option. The same circumstance applies in larger context through the way "cultural capital is tied down in practices that would be heart-wrenching to change for the mere sake of material gain" (Fernandez-Amesto 2002: 65).

Through the reflexive discourse that individuals have with fetishized commodities, "the globalization project reifies not only the accumulation process, but also its individual recipients (consumers), whose loyalty is now to an abstract market

Figure 13: Hen House Advertisement
Source: The Kansas City Star, June 22, 2005.

devoid of community" (McMichael 1998: 111). My distanciated encounter with bananas is a simple example of how retail supermarkets create the image of the

quality of a food product merely by offering it for sale. " If it is in the store, it must be good!" An example of this use is the Hen House brochure from the summer of 2006 (Figure 13). This credo of trust is flawed, of course, because a supermarket's checks of quality "usually relate to process rather than to raw materials" (Ilbery and Kneafsley 1998: 332).

The modern world and commodity

Many consumption studies highlight the ways people confront modernity (Miller 1998), but none of these look at the city and urban food networks. The general thinking is that we are all assumed to be of a consuming nature through our involvement in modern capitalism. I do not say this lightly, for the economic world permeates through the marketplace so completely that it is impossible to offer alternatives to capitalism in Kansas City. In general my experience confirms the claim of Miller that "key items in modern consumption are used to objectify, and thereby understand, the nature of modernity as social experience. This focus developed because for many people the entry into consumption is also seen as their entry in self-conscious modernity" (1995: 149).

A key issue in contemporary society is whether consumers are forced to adjust to the modern capitalistic world or can operate outside of it. Certainly subsistence peasants in other countries live in self-sustaining economies and a few people do so here in this country as a lifestyle choice. I am by no means equating modern culture with modernity. In our consuming world the availability of goods does not inherently lead to high standards of living. It merely suggests or hints that the world is shrinking

and that the products of globalization are becoming more and more accessible to everyone (Friedland 2004).

Some geographers have moved toward the belief that consumption can be separated from production. According to Goodman and DePuis (2002: 5), an emphasis on consumption is caused by "the earlier 'turn' to culture and the cultural in post-structuralist and post-modernist social theory, which contested the dominant optic of production relations." Miller (1995: 148) has suggested that a return to the study of material culture, a reified look at how a commodity plays a part in economics through its ability to "focus on the commodity and its social significance" will not only move our understanding of social theory, but also broaden the depth of the production/consumption dialectic. In the search for meanings this increases the "struggle over commodification" and, in reference to Carrier and Miller's (1998) criticisms on the abstraction of economics, point to "the transformation of nourishment into abstract value" (Friedman 1994: 560).

Any research into the debate should help to "further the understanding of the process of commodification beyond the classic definition of particular kinds of manufactured goods and services" (Jackson 1999: 104). Goodman and DePuis (2002) have argued that production-centered approaches against consumption focusing on the division of labor are centered upon the "commodity fetishism" of Marxist social theory. Although this is not the topic of this dissertation, it needs to be clarified to allow us to focus upon what consumption means. One definition of consumption is "people rely[ing] increasingly upon goods that they do not themselves

produce" (Miller 1995: 154). A broader definition would be called economics but again, noting how the factors of production are hidden behind the fetish of the commodity created by marketers and others to sell goods for consumption.

Two of the main scholars of the debate on contemporary society are geographer Peter Jackson (1995, 1999, 2002) and anthropologist David Miller (1995, 1998). Much of their writing is centered on consumption studies ranging from food, fashion, video, and popular culture to the effects of structuralist policies on local economics. Although they do not explicitly claim that consumption stands alone and needs no link to production, the bulk of their findings points in that direction. In an attempt to "acknowledge" consumption, Miller (1995: 142) has observed that "almost nothing was written [from the 1950s through the 1970s] about consumption in any of the humanities or social sciences" and this hides the "creativity of consumers in actively shaping the meanings of the goods they consume in various local settings" (Jackson 1999: 95). Jackson has augmented this thinking with the idea that the move toward consumption is "exacerbated by the tendency to equate culture with consumption and the economic with production" (1999: 95). In referring to the pioneering work of geographer David Harvey on the "condition of postmodernity" (1985a, 1985b, 1989), Jackson and Thrift (1995: 205) wrote that:

> In much of this work, consumption is treated as part of "the politics of distraction" rather than as a substantive topic on its own account. The culture of consumption is reduced to the economic imperative of sustaining sufficiently buoyant levels of demand to keep capitalist production profitable. Consumption is about "the cultivation of imaginary appetites" . . . .

Goodman and DePuis (2002: 7) have posited that even Miller's and Jackson's analyses are not enough to isolate the power of consumer relations from the role of production. "Though consumption as a category is deployed as a causative mechanism to help explain trends and directions of change, . . . the consumer emerges only to disappear again into a production-centered framework." They actually go further in stating that "consumption has been neglected, under-theorized, treated as an exogenous, structural category, and granted 'agency', or transformative power, only in the economistic, abstract terms of demand" (2002: 9).

Jackson and Thrift (1995: 204) have called for a tracing of the contours of specific geographies of consumption since this might show how an "understanding of the processes of consumption is central to debates about the relationship between society and space." They also argued that "a useful starting point is the suggestion that our identities are affirmed and contested through specific acts of consumption; we define ourselves by what we buy and by the meaning that we give to the goods and services we acquire."

We can identify the power of consumer choice and the way the influence of (or resistance to) advertising affects the commodity chain. In essence, "the way consumers transform and use commodities can illuminate the power of consumer resistance" (Leslie and Reimer 1999: 402). These resistances, however, can also turn the meaning of the commodity upside down, making the product more important than the reality behind it. This phenomenon is what bell hooks (1992) has called "communities of consumption" with "commodification stripping the signs of

difference of their political integrity and cultural meaning" (quoted in Jackson 2002: 16). In the actions of an individual consumer negotiating her pathway towards a zucchini (if this can be identified through a discourse), lie the best hope for a way in which modernity can be examined. It is all a process, of course, one where our understanding of the reality comes from our examination of the process. For Mackay "consumption is not the *End* of a process, but the beginning of another, and thus itself a form of production (and hence, we can refer to the 'work of consumption')" (1997: 7 italics in original).

Production as a response, or, What does the commodity mean?

I elect to use food to study because of the biological imperative that we humans have to eat. Food thus becomes both a necessity and a matter of choice. In the original Marxian thought process, relatively simplified, the exchange of products occurs "when each commodity is an embodiment of use and exchange values, . . . putting two different use values (which are themselves qualitatively different) equal to each other in exchange implies that both use values have something in common . . . [that is] human labor" (Harvey 1999: 7-13). This exchange is noted as simply C-C (commodity-commodity). For me, it would be easy to study the food networks if they were simply ones whereby a tomato grown along the Missouri River could be exchanged for one page of a paper I was writing or for half a bag of radishes I grew in my backyard. The value and form of the tomatoes are realized as equivalent to the physical form of my half bag of radishes (Marx 1976: 138-142). This exchange could possibly take place if one of my market traders needed radishes and I happened to

have extras, but it is not likely. Thus a substitute is needed for both parties, a medium that removes the differences. This is money.

Substitution then allows for the exchange commodity-money-commodity (C-M-C) as the definition of the commodity form of circulation from an exchange of use values. At the beginning the uses of shoes are equal to that of clothing. Commodity exchange then moves to a stage where money has the same exchange value as both (since money has no use value in this transaction outside of its exchange value, it does not assume the same form). Marx (1976: 136) substituted the use value of each commodity with money as an equivalent (but hid the factors of production for the clothing and the shoes behind it [i.e., behind the M]). Harvey has written that with the proliferation of capitalism "one commodity (or set of commodities) will likely emerge as the 'universal equivalent'--a basic money commodity such as gold (1999: 11).

Altering the exchange process around with insertion of money or M-C-M (money-commodity-money) "yields no qualitative change in the nature of the commodity held at the beginning and end of the process" (Harvey 1999: 21) because now M is the commodity and is faceless. All is hidden behind it including the factors of its own production and of anything it is exchanged for. Money has become a stand-alone commodity that holds equal value no matter whose pocket it is in. This point is relevant because it logically follows that individuals believe that their commodity is of greater use value than that of others and therefore worth more in the exchange. Or, in my study, the result of possessing that tomato becomes more valuable to me than

the page I wrote does to my trading partner. I will as a consumer (depending upon other factors that will come into play in later chapters) pay more than he or she.

Difficulties arise from the process when capitalism moves from an exchange of similar (equivalent) use values to an exchange where money-commodity-(money + the change of money) M-C-(M+ΔM) realizes the beginnings of profit. Recognized by the possession of more capital (money or values) at the end than possessed at the beginning of the transaction, one party gained more than the other. This, in essence, is *the production of surplus value* since money is defined as the material representation of value and one party has more at the end than at the beginning. The accumulation of capital begins in this process of expansion of value. Thus, the "fetish of the commodity" appears through the process of consumers valuing one commodity at the expense of another based upon some ideal other than use value.

It is only as ΔM approaches us as consumers that we see the fetish of an individual commodity. Consumers becomes more or less willing to participate in the exchange because of their own particular social relations with the desired commodity. Is a tomato simply a tomato, or is it the fetish of organic, grown in Holland, etc. that is realized by the possession of more capital (money or values) at the end than at the beginning. Place must play a role when consumers are making choices. How much of their own capital would they be willing to part with for a commodity owing to the places of purchase and consumption?

Even with the abstract idea of following the "thing," we must acknowledge that someone or something made that thing, that something was produced. Whether it

was a tomato grown in the fields of Mexico or fava beans between vineyard rows in Italy, every food production is "in all cases, an act of human labor" (Walker 2000: 114). Fine and Lapavitsas (2000: 363) have written that "the use value of capital goods . . . is of critical importance in determining the productivity of labor, . . . [and that] the concept of concrete labor is neither designed nor expected to reveal much about the social relations within which such labor takes place, and even less about the reasons why its product becomes a commodity." It simply acknowledges that human agency of some form produced the commodity.

In essence, humans produce the goods. While "the forms of food consumption associated with delivery, access, and the role (significance) of food in the reproduction of everyday life are becoming increasingly differentiated" (Arce and Marsden 1993: 293), the need to reconnect with all of the points along the chain as an act of production by humans is seen in the "struggle against being regarded as 'merely' labor-power, as a conforming 'part' in a broader technological system--and such struggle, to repeat, is endemic to the capitalistic organization of the labor process--intimately relates the empirical behavior of workers to the philosophical theme of human agency" (Giddens 1984: 24). The whole point is to reconnect production and consumption in a way that recognizes the inequality of the commodity process. While realizing that in classic Marxist political economy, this is the "fetish of the commodity," we must move from the narrow focus that it represents toward a more fully realized view that brings the consumer to the field where the producer works and even outside beyond this to the "lifeworlds" where they both live. New

approaches place an emphasis on direct contact between producers and consumers and seek to re-embed food production and consumption in specific local or regional contexts (Parrott et al. 2002: 255). Jackson himself has written (2002: 4) that he "seeks to challenge the kind of dualistic thinking that separates production from consumption, the local from the global."

Any attempt to place a quality rating on a commodity through different marketing techniques can "tie particular qualities inherent in the *product* to particular qualities inherent in the *context of production* (organizational context, cultural context, territorial context, and so on)" (Parrott et al. 2002: 246, italics in original). This point is critical to the commodification of a product, a way to take the product to another level in the eyes of the consumer--to make the product more than it physically is. Wilkenson (1977, quoted in Parrott et al. 2002: 248, italics in original) has written:

> In some less-favored areas of the European Union--generally thought of as the southern areas--the *context of production*--culture, tradition, production process, terrain, climate, local knowledge system (all summarized in the French word "terroir")--strongly shapes the quality of the product itself. That is, in some sense, the product acts to "condense" all these conventions and this condensation is revealed in the act of consumption.

The act of production, the social implications of the division of labor, is removed from the idea represented by the commodity.

Commodification debates soon return to a central theme in economics, division of labor. In a globalized world, "the division of labor has reached unprecedented complexity, and autonomous producers relate to each other primarily

through competition in the market" (Fine and Lapavitsas 2000: 371). Walker (2000: 115) has written that, "without a division of labor, there would be no differentiation of economic activities, no factories to site, no localization of industries," and thus no consumption to be thought of as a driving force. Agribusiness epitomizes this point, in that "individualized work, where the person labors alone on a project like making a pair of shoes, is rare in advanced economies. Work today is mostly collective labor in the sense that each person is responsible for a part of the whole. These collectivities range from small groups . . . to entire commodity chains" (Walker 2000: 115). Food products are not isolated into specific, individual parts. Even something as seemingly individual as a potato on your plate is the product of many actors and many stages of production.

In Tangled Routes: Women, Work, and Globalization on the Tomato Trail, Deborah Barndt (2002: 36) has written about the transformation of the production process for tomatoes on the Canadian fast-food market. Most of the "inputs" for this crop (a term for all tools and technologies used in production) now involve industrial processes and products: greenhouses that produce the seedlings, fertilizers and pesticides that prepare the ground, irrigation systems that provide the vast amounts of water needed for growth, plastic sheets that keep the moisture in the ground, pails and boxes that carry the tomatoes from field to plant, netting that turns a stack of boxes into a skid, forklifts that carry the skids to refrigerated rooms, and so forth:

> With each new tool, there are also new work processes and organization of workers (both in agriculture per se as well as in the manufacturing of industrial inputs for farming). The move toward greenhouse production . . . is by far the most automated and reflects the high-tech approach to

> tomato production . . . total climate control, drip irrigation that incorporates water, fertilizer, and pest control, mobile carts for picking tomatoes extended to the ceiling, packing processes that are computerized to measure weight and sort by color, foam dividers that protect the boxed tomatoes during their long journey north, and so on. . . . At the Del Monte processing plant, for example, firm tomatoes are preferred as raw materials for making ketchup, rather than the ripe or over-ripe tomatoes that would seem more logical. This is because the conveyor-belt system that leads the tomatoes from the place they are dumped into the cauldrons where they are cooked can better handle firm tomatoes: the machine is too harsh for soft tomatoes, which get caught in the belt system and create a mess that must be cleaned up. Ketchup production is designed as an even more industrialized process than cultivating and picking fresh tomatoes, following a Fordist-style assembly line process in which much of the work (e.g., filling, capping and labeling bottles) is almost fully automated.

Two criticisms of production as it relates to food are that it "has never been assimilated into theories of automation based on manufacture" and that "it does not proceed evenly across the whole front of the division of labor . . . despite the rapid circulation and diffusion of new ideas" (Walker 2000: 126). Arce and Marsden (1993: 296) have written in justifying these points that "[this] demonstrates both the advantages and inadequacies of food system analysis: it explains everything (holism); but it closes off a fundamental project in rural sociology, social science, and environmental economics, that of reconceptualizing value in everyday situations (social practices)." As I have tried to point out throughout this dissertation, the production/consumption debate is occurring precisely at this boundary where manufacturing principles meet agriculture. I certainly would not deny the satisfaction that a consumer derives from eating a tomato that just came out of a field covered in sunshine, completely organic, and freely given. However, this is not the reality of the supermarket, (many) farmers' markets, or even many local interactions.

Capitalism and globalization

Perhaps the most basic trait of the modernist world is inequity caused by the inherent difficulties and market-driven goals of capitalism. A large literature in the subfield of food geographies addresses this issue (Atkins and Bowler 2001, Hefferman and Constance 1994, McMichael 1995, Walker 2000). Part of what is sometimes called the "new" economic geography (Amin 1999), this work is not solely an examination of the power of economic theory to shape government's decision making. It recognizes that decisions made from an economic perspective will have far-reaching effects upon others outside that immediate sphere of influence. Weber (2000: 499), for example, has written that "understanding international political relations means also understanding the economic relations between places, and that to understand the economic relations between places it is necessary to understand their political relations." Walker then justifies my look into capitalism through geographic inquiry when he writes, "Economic geography is not a stale field of study, but partakes of the most startling developments of political economy" (2000: 29).

Government's role in the economic transactions that take place has to be acknowledged. The state is central because of the way it mediates the relationships of production and consumption. Fine (1994: 525) rather boldly has stated that the state actually "comprises both structures and is itself the product of the forces that act upon it." The effects of these decisions can be seen in the ways that restructuring processes of late twentieth-century economics have "undermined the [nation-state's] capacity to

reduce the deprivations arising from the (now global) commoditization of money, labor and land" (McMichael 1998: 111).[21] In addition, McMichael (1998: 97) has argued that the most basic assumption of the rhetoric of restructuring [for states] "is that the material well-being depends on the freedom of the market, understood as an independent and rational force." This provides the means for the power elite to exhibit consumption behaviors that "commodify" goods but are, in effect, the downside of consumption.

Organizations outside the nation-state, including "development agencies" such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, NGOs, or transnational agencies (e.g. the European Union and NAFTA) modify conditions further. According to one authority, each of these units has, at one time or another, "undermined the coherence and viability of pre-existing national economies. Lowered wages reduced local purchasing power, which meant that the market for goods produced locally, contracted" (McMichael 1998: 109). A market for subsistence foods developed where none had previously existed. Neoliberalist restructuring in many underdeveloped countries has led to opaqueness within the different food chains created by the organizations that worked there. The tractability of food disappeared within an economy where mobility and the need for cash to participate in the global economy subsumed any existing food system.

[21] For a detailed look at the role of "analytics of government" in the political economy of consumption see Hughes 2001 and Dean 1999. Giddens (1984: 234) offers a rationalization of why "political economy" has relevance in consumption/production dialectics.

Thinking about the role of the World Bank and similar agencies is reflected in the literature of globalization (Arce and Marsden 1993; Bonanno et al. 1994; Goodman and Watts 1997; Le Heron and Roche 1995). I recognize globalization as "the stretching and deepening of social relations and institutions across time and space such that, on the one hand, day-to-day activities are increasingly influenced by events happening on the other side of the globe and, on the other hand, the practices and decisions of local groups can have significant global reverberations" (Held 1995: 20).

Although this dissertation is not a specific examination of the literature of globalization, I consider some of the implications as it relates to food. James Carrier, in commenting on the abstraction of economics, the separation of it from the concreteness of its reality, wrote in *Visualization* (1998: 2) that, "the removal of economic activities from the social and other relationships in which they occurred, and carrying them out in a context in which the only important relationships are those defined by the economic activity itself" blinds the local producer from the vision of the global consumer and vice versa. This is one of the problems with globalization. Whereas modernist society would posit that capitalism dominates everywhere, a review of economics indicates that there are many different economies and many different ways the relations of production/consumption are actualized (Giddens 1981).

Watts (1999: 306) has written that "the process of commodification--of even greater realms of social and economic life being mediated through the market as a

commodity" plays a significant role in global politics. Understanding the impact of consumption forces us to recognize how economics filter through our lives as we deconstruct the façade of a commodity (Harvey 1990). This life, this objectifying, begins to accumulate meanings. Watts (1999: 315) has stated the situation well, writing that "once they leave the confines of their maker, commodities take on a life of their own." The history of the commodity is further revealed when we consider that its hidden history "allows us to expose something unimaginably vast, namely the dynamics and history of capitalism itself" (Watts 1999: 315). This perspective highlights how "the movement from vertical integration within large 'Fordist' firms towards the various mechanisms (down-sizing, out-sourcing, just-in-time delivery of stock, comprehensive contractual structures) by which TNCs were able to cut labor costs and the cost and risk of investment, while maintaining or even increasing their control over subordinated labor processes" (Raikes et al. 2000: 402).

Chapter Four

The View from the Top: Structured Interviews with Power Brokers for Produce

Interacting with a variety of consumers, traders, distributors, and producers provides multiple lenses for understanding the movements of food. This chapter presents a top-down approach to the research, reporting on a series of structured interviews with people in positions of power over the flows of produce in the city. These range from CEOs of major supermarkets down to owners of stalls and growers selling produce at the different farmers' markets. If I could not talk with the top officers of the larger companies, I asked for permission to interview managers of produce sections of supermarkets and dispatchers for produce businesses.[22] For smaller businesses such as growers, I used only owners, feeling that they were able to offer personal as well as professional viewpoints. I include results of interviews with people who would not give their full names and those who provided interesting comments not directly answering a particular question because I feel their responses are relevant to this chapter. Several other persons are included based upon their relationship with the Kansas City marketplace such as the food editor of a local newspaper and the director of an organization dedicated to alternative approaches to agriculture. In all, this chapter reports on twenty total interviews.

Officials from Wal-Mart and Costco, Aldi, and Save-a-Lot declined to speak with me on any level. I was able to contact the Consumer Affairs department of Kroger's who gave me a number to call that seemed promising, but I was refused

[22] A useful guide to these businesses appeared recently in the Kansas City Star business section (Smith 2004).

information due to proprietary concerns. This is not so unusual though; Kroger's is famous for declining. Nor was anyone at any of the above companies willing to comment on my study.

The questions

I asked three specific questions of the industry leaders, hoping both to solicit specific information and to open opportunities for further comments. The basic form of the three was as follows:

1. Globalization's effect upon the modern food-delivery system provides consumers with many choices for their meals. I am thinking here of the ways different foods flow into and through the city and consumer choices of what to buy based upon availability year-long. What do you feel prompts consumers' choices of one type of food, say mixed greens in a vacuum bag from California in February versus waiting to eat fresh greens from a local farm in May?
2. Beyond the obvious difference between a farmers' market and a supermarket, from your experience, how do you think the consumers of Kansas City make decisions on the availability and desirability of the food they wish to consume?
3. Your job gives you a connection to food that is elemental and essential in the sense of a connection to the land that is missing from much of our modern understanding of food. Perhaps it works through you as an integral part of life, but most consumers have few direct cultural connections to the foods they eat.

In what ways do you try to bridge that gap with your customers? Or is it simply not something that ever comes into the equation of local food?

The wording of each question changed for different actors depending upon their particular circumstances. This was done so that I could more appropriately frame the question towards their particular strength. On question three, for example, I do not want to imply that a CEO has a direct connection to farming. But results indicate that it is a lifestyle for the farmer. It also stands to reason that a CEO would be more directly in contact with prices and availability of global produce than a farmer, while vendors at the farmers' market will adjust to particular daily market prices. Local farmers are not immediately affected by the capriciousness of nature in other parts of the world although they will charge more if there is a shortage. The reaction of the local market after the hurricane season of 2004 to the loss of the tomato crop in Florida is a good example. Prices went up dramatically even though there had been no change in the availability of local tomatoes.

I do not compile the results for each question into a statistical framework, but instead present them in succession as a narrative. There is no temporal order to what is presented. I start with the produce manager for Associated Wholesale Grocers (AWG) because, as mentioned in chapter two, they play the largest single role in the city's independent supermarket's produce business.

The major players

Associated Wholesale Grocers (AWG) operates on a globalized perspective, epitomizing the vast economic supply chains discussed in chapter three. They simply provide produce to anyone who is a part of their organization regardless of consumer insights into food. They have the means and the economics of scale to dictate both price and in some cases even availability regardless of season.

Dave Leiker is the Director of Produce for Kansas City for AWG. We spoke by phone after a long correspondence with Steve Dillard, the company's vice president for corporate sales development, negotiating access. Leiker would not tell me what it would cost to join the organization, saying this was proprietary information. An owner of a local produce distributor, however, said this fee was $30,000 per year. "Can you believe that?" he added. "No wonder it's an exclusive club, no one who is little can afford that price just for produce!" AWG actually provides a full line of foods including the Best Choice label, but I believe that my source's fee information is correct.

Although Mr. Leiker represents the corporate philosophy of AWG, his personal feelings were evident in the interview, as they were in most of my discussions: "More and more produce is available due to globalization; it offers consumers much more choices. For example, right now, red grapes from Chile, hothouse tomatoes—we have them nine months of the year—but they are grown in British Columbia under greenhouses. There are many avenues for produce, lots of wholesalers. The market is normally chain-driven [i.e. supermarkets] but a large

percentage is wholesaler, more food-buying choices. Bananas come into Miami, or Freeport, Texas, but most of our food comes into Philadelphia because it is the best deepwater port. It's not bad though, two weeks from Chile, good time frame, quality remains high. Safe handling, one stop from Chile to Philly, only our export. So globalization plays a big role for us. Some items need special handling, ninety-five percent is by truck; berries and herbs come by plane. We won't do rail though, unreliable, really negative, even for onions or potatoes." He came back to question one later on: "There are other places, of course; Ball has a smaller warehouse where he can handle some things, also the icon status of some goods that, of course, we can't do. Local is Iowa, Missouri, and Nebraska, nice-sized farms, good food, but they all fall back on AWG. We are the primary supply for Kansas City in a number of things, not concerned about Wal-Mart. We feel they have very limited organic impact. We have more organic lines than they, something like eighty-two versus forty. We don't think they are that big of a deal."

For question two he was most emphatic about the role of farmers' markets in Kansas City: "Oh absolutely, we compete with them, there are some real good growers out there. Farmers' markets can generate demand for quality—not big enough to cover out needs though. For example, if a farmer has fifty cases but we need five hundred, we can't even be sure that the fifty will show. There is too much liability. Look at the trouble with melons and cantaloupe. This is also one of the drawbacks, any melon problem anywhere hurts us by extension."

For question three he said that they get "lots of feedback, it's daily, it's positive. Vegetables are not a canned good, so we get it from retailers by fax, email, phone. The more produce is available by volume, the lower the price. We are aggressive, volume pricing, but it's also scale. A market with high product availability is good for quality, bad for pricing. Consumers have short memories. We think along the lines of three months. They won't remember this freeze by mid-summer. They have already moved on from the California frosts of early winter when lettuce was expensive. They say 'why is the produce not good, or why is it high priced?' rather than remembering what happened. It's big news at the time but then it's gone. It also can be something again that the local will drive. California lettuce simply may not sell at local prices, has to be cheaper."

Tracey Nelson is the assistant produce manager for all of Cosentino's businesses. Public information about the company that I reported in chapter two suggests the operation is divided into two separate entities, but Mr. Nelson indicated that he controls produce for both. I tried for more than a year to get an interview with the company owner, John Cosentino, with no success. Finally Mr. Nelson called me, saying that John had forwarded one of my phone messages and that he could give me fifteen minutes. As with Dave Leiker, Tracey Nelson represents his company's view, but again, his own beliefs come out in the interview.

Nelson started question one by saying: "Absolutely, people prefer local product, it's a given. But it's also quality driven. You must have outstanding product or people will shop elsewhere. But also it is apparent that consumers understand how

good the produce is in our stores no matter where it comes from. We are very global; you must be in produce these days. Our food comes in mostly by truck, some rail. What we don't get ourselves we get from AWG or from Liberty Fruit." When I expressed my surprise at the latter company, (I actually snorted), he said, "oh yeh, they are big, very big, a major player in Kansas City." I said that I had heard that Liberty had over fifty percent of the restaurant business in the city [my understanding is that they are not prominent in produce sold elsewhere], he replied that it was a lot more than that.

Nelson would not comment on new stores, or on any of the stores north of the river. Neither was he at liberty to tell me who gets what produce or how much from AWG as opposed to their distributors. He said that they have relationships with numerous places around the country. The difficulty is in getting it to Kansas City: "Very hard, Chile is by boat, nothing comes through Des Moines, or any other distribution center, only direct, truck and rail but it's becoming more difficult."

He immediately jumped to answer question two: "We try to carry some local producers, but of course, they can not ensure us enough product for every store, so we have to be careful. But overall the farmers' markets and local producers really help us quite a bit. There is an awareness of local-grown foods; we carry as much as we can get, of course. We do a lot of local direct purchasing, not through AWG, or anyone else [i.e. other wholesalers]. Local is Kansas or Missouri, perhaps Iowa, but we get very little from them." When I asked if it went to other companies in the city he declined to answer. I meant Hy-Vee or some other competitors. "We really like the

farmers' markets," he continued, "We welcome them because they make our job easier. Of course, we think of ourselves as one [i.e. a farmers' market] and seven days a week, not like one [day], [we are] better because we will always have it. Again, it's quality driven, people are smart enough to recognize good quality produce and they don't think about where it comes from. Or, if they do, they don't actualize their feelings."

As to the role of City Market as a competitor for Cosentino's newly developing downtown store, Nelson dismissed them with a snort: "City Market is ridiculous. It uses rejected produce and has stupid prices. It's an artificial entity and we don't consider it at all." I asked about the downtown store and he said: "it's going as scheduled. It will open by the first of the year [i.e. 2008]. It will be specialty foods, finished foods, upscale; we are very excited." He again would not comment when I asked about the demographics of the area around the former Jones store downtown and why they would go there when no one else made the move.

For question three Nelson said that is it one of his company's philosophies that benefits them the most: "Lots of feedback from our customers. It's our best indication of what is going on." I asked if this feedback came mostly from the suburbs, he said, "You would be surprised, it's not there, but I can't tell you." When pressed further, he finally said that "Brookside gives us the best feedback--more educated consumers, [they] understand food, want food"--but did not mention the farmers' market there.

David Ball is the chief operating officer and president of Balls Food Stores Inc. He took over from his father, Fred Ball, who remains the chief executive officer and chairman. Fred, in turn, had taken over from his parents, Sidney and Mollie, who opened the first store in 1923. I interviewed Mr. Ball on November 16, 2005, at their business headquarters at 5300 Speaker Road, Kansas City, Kansas.

Mr. Ball suggested that, "there is a second level of produce in Kansas. If it is not shipped directly from those producers on either coast, or from a distribution center near to production, it must pass through either Des Moines or some other hands. We use AWG as a secondary source, a back up. Many others, particularly smaller stores, use them as a primary source. But we don't have any difficulties to speak of in bringing produce here, we have a 40,000 square-foot warehouse and we only take 400 or more cases from individual farms." In answer to question one he replied, "we feel that directly from the grower or packer travels best. The stuff that is closer to being too ripe is sold closer to production. In a way, this gives us the best shot at really good produce. It isn't in the interest of producers [in California] to ship produce that arrives spoiled; that is not good business. The lines of supply or distribution are the key players. If there is good quality food in the system then we will provide it." Mr. Ball stated that the company really believed that. He felt that the produce they were offering, especially in their Hen House stores, was as good as anywhere in the country, even in the production areas themselves.

"The downtown area is really all about a question of what can it do for each of the players involved, not as a whole," Ball went on. "There needs to be 5,000 to

10,000 roofs in a certain area around each store just to support one. This does not take into account competition or economic factors. Roofs, not people, but roofs. But the downtown has fewer families, more apartments, which are different from households--more disposable income or people who work odd hours and would rather eat out. Certainly dual income, no kids, or people who might prefer living closer to the downtown are not the same types of shoppers as families. Families have broader, longer-term needs, more stay-at-home; perhaps thinking of feeding better (not necessarily organic or healthy) [cheaper perhaps], although mothers will hunt to feed their families good food. Which we can supply, it's a build-up of trust and relationships. People will run out in the middle of the night to pick stuff up if they know that we are there."

Mr. Ball said that Wal-Mart was his biggest competitor: "They saturate the market, 25-27 percent, and then they look for new markets. If Kroger's is the largest supermarket chain, doing about 53 billion, million, can't remember, then Wal-Mart is 120, more than double."

Regarding locally grown produce, Mr. Ball told me that: "We try to follow the same principles as Deb Endicott, you know, 'Bridging the Gap' and her group [see below] when it comes to local. Within two hundred or three hundred miles, in no sense is Colorado going to be considered local." He believed that the relationship the company was building with places such as Endicott's organic beef farm was working because it "uses the icons [place names] to sell products; it's our only way of teaching about the foods. In answer to your question on flows of knowledge, if our

cherry grower is in a store talking to customers about cherries, he is still only reaching 15 percent of each store's potential business, just not big enough to get results. So the ads put us close [to the consumer], [the] signature items make for a connection is some ways. What we don't like is the use of food plants to produce finished goods." He was referring to the ways that some canned and boxed foods now use iconic advertising to suggest place, specifically canned tomatoes or the use of the trees in Florida orange juice adds where the farmer picks the carton as if it were an orange.

The head of produce distribution for Hy-Vee took my call but, saying that they are a private company, most of his information was proprietary and therefore restricted. Despite my assurances that I was not out to vilify anybody, he would not answer questions for the record. However, he did offer some useful general comments on the overall project. He began by stating that "we make a point of doing business with local producers as much as possible. It's good business to do business with them because local means Missouri and Kansas and obviously that has a great impact on Kansas City." He added though: "Not all growers sell home-grown product. It is very typical for local purveyors to supplement their produce with commercial."

He suggested that: "Really, Wal-Mart is not a concern for us. Price Chopper is much more competitive. We compete for a different customer than Wal-Mart; theirs are more paycheck to paycheck." In reference to the general market profile of Kansas City he said: "The city's very typical of all cities in our experience. AWG just happens to be very good at what they do. There are a lot of wholesalers doing

business around the country, and, while we would like to have fifty percent of the market, the way they do business is successful. So we don't feel that we even need to worry about Wal-Mart, just the others."

In an interview that took place in her upstairs office on the south side of the outer buildings of the City Market, Deb Connors, the market manager at the time, told me that, despite its name, the market actually is run by the real estate company copaken white and blitt (CWB), located at 8900 State Line Road in suburban Leawood, Kansas. This firm is responsible for developing many landmark projects throughout Kansas City including the Nordstrom department store in the Oak Park Mall, the World Headquarters for Universal Underwriters' Group in Overland Park, Kansas, and in 1990, the NCAA National Headquarters Building (now First National Center), also in Overland Park.[23]

I obtained this particular interview after emailing Connors my three questions. While she attempted to answer them individually, she moved through a number of side topics that I include as another reflection of the different relationships food has with Kansas City. Ms. Connors suggested that the city wants CWB to use the marketing arm of the company to transform the City Market into an icon for the city along the scale of European city markets [Connors emailed the official history of City Market, see Appendix C]. They don't want a global focus, however, but rather a concentration on the local. The main problem is that "we are fighting through the past impressions of bad (food, Mafia), [and] the crafters [her name for individual stall

[23] www.cwbkc.com/Archive/Fact.asp?IdS=0061AA-95AC650&Task=Default.

owners][who] couldn't compete with retailers. Initially the market was styled more along a flea market and it was hard to find the right mix because the wholesalers could out-compete the crafters in both prices and quantity (but not quality, although that is a matter of education). Starting seven or eight years ago CWB made a change in the bylaws to support the local economy and the variety that could be supplied by local vendors [see Appendix A]. No more wholesalers would be allowed in the market and several roofs would be constructed to protect the consumers shopping in the center aisles."

A small problem developed because past impressions were that "consumers could drive right up to the market . . . . Now, parking overall is perceived to be too difficult." Although the market is ostensibly open all week long, only on Saturdays and Sundays are there vendors in the center aisle. Allegedly a farmers' market exists on Wednesday, but multiple visits suggest that, while two or three vendors may show, consumers simply do not go. You can drive right up to the wholesalers' stalls during the week but the produce is very spotty since they also focus on the weekends. For Connors it's all about "finding the right mix . . . [a] need to find ways to educate consumers about food to get them to come here. We need for the vendors to talk about the food, to have consumers look at the food, what it is, how do you use it--these are things that the wholesalers simply can not do." She added that "the consumers, many don't want global food, only local, but also many don't understand that things are not always able to grow in area--lemons for example."

Perhaps the main problem for the City Market is convincing vendors to come. According to Connors, "it is perhaps not worth it to some of them to drive back in on Sundays. Most of them live fairly nearby but it is still a pain to drive in, back home, and then back in, especially that early in the morning."

Farmers' market growers

One of the rewards of being in the City Market so much was an introduction to John Goode, an heirloom tomato grower from Wathena, Kansas. John is the owner of "Goode Acres Farm," eighty acres of loess soil on the south side of the Missouri River near St. Joseph. He says that his property has a northern exposure as it slopes down to the river, making it an ideal tomato-growing property. He will have anywhere from 1,200 to 1,600 plants every year, with each yielding around twenty pounds in a good year. Along with the tomatoes he grows eggplant, winter squash, and other crops, and is successful enough that he can spend the early parts of winters pursuing an interest in archeology in Central America and Venezuela. John says, "I could go to Brookside [an upscale farmers' market] if I wanted, but I have been here since '93 and I have a following. I feel a bit of loyalty to them because even in lean times I sell out. I have to have some trust, right? In the market, you know. I specialize in heirloom tomatoes so people know me." I discovered over time that he comes to the City Market Wednesdays and Fridays [two days when few customers come], then again on Saturdays and Sundays, and also to Zona Rosa [a new, upscale shopping center in the northern part of the city] on Tuesday evenings because, "those people

are great! They need produce so bad they will pay anything. It's great, you could name your price there. Of course I don't, but I sure could!"

John acted as a sort of gatekeeper for me in the market. Most of my better interviews came because he vouched for my integrity. He also generously let me hang around his stall, cleaning and stocking it in exchange for listening in without identifying myself. It was interesting to John that I would care what people thought about his tomatoes even though that is his primary business. He understood that there were people who would not buy from him because his fruits are not perfect. Heirloom tomatoes are knobby and often bruised because the plant's energy goes more to the fruit than the supporting stem, and the crop ends up growing along the ground. But John doesn't care. He says, "I know that those who know will buy my food; I always sell out so I don't get offended by that."

In responding to question three, John said that one of the problems with food in the city is the lying that goes on within some of the bigger companies: "They will mislabel tomatoes as homegrown, or even heirloom, when they are, in fact, commercial. I still think that most consumers are unaware of the foods they eat, but I have enough business here that I don't worry about it." He then changes tack and points to the outside stalls where the wholesalers are: "I am struck sometimes by the difference in the quality of the produce, especially today. The commercial stuff is more consistent in its sizes but lacks the vibrancy of the local product. Also the commercial places have all of the produce that can't be grown locally—mangos,

bananas, and strawberries. What parallel produce they offer is just not as wholesome looking or as freshly colored."

Because of the intense competition between the many different food retailers, new ways to attract and keep customers must emerge. David Ball mentioned how Hen House Markets have been working in association with Good Natured Family Farms to bring local products into their stores. A pamphlet entitled "Buy Fresh, Buy Local More than a Slogan" (Endicott 2005), also has addressed this issue. This writer, Deborah Endicott, the head of the organization that promotes "Good Earth*Good Food*Good Life," has been criticized by some in the Kansas City Food Circle [see below for detail] for compromising her integrity by dealing with Hen House. But Endicott countered this by suggesting that a person must take one's best advantage to survive in today's world. In answer to question one, she told me: "It's not enough to be totally committed if you have no market. Better to sell my beef [although she promotes all types of food] where consumers can see it and perhaps benefit from it. I do not apologize for working with David Ball and his stores because I think he is sincere" (Fieldnote, April 2, 2006).

Nancy Kalman is the owner/operator of Pickings & Pumpkins LLC, a small farm located in Spring Hill, Kansas, south of the city. Her motto is "Come watch us grow!" She is a member of the Kansas City Food Circle but focuses on running her community supported agriculture business (CSA)[24] and would prefer customers to

[24] A number of farmers in the metropolitan area provide a box of produce each week to consumers who pay an up-front premium for the privilege of receiving quality, local, home-grown food (Chapin 2005). See also Hinrichs 2000, 2003.

come out to her farm rather than her coming into Brookside, which is her preferred farmers' market. She and I exchanged email over a period of time as well as one sit-down interview on December 10, 2005.

For question one she answered specifically, but then asked for the other two questions and answered them together: "I think some of my members [CSA] realize that foods that I grow are not as likely to have bacterial contamination or pesticide residue, especially compared to foods from Mexico. One of my members brought an article to me regarding food contamination, but I think the far majority are just concerned with good taste. They probably don't have a problem buying greens in a grocery store in February, but don't buy tomatoes. The real taste advantage comes with tomatoes, eggplant, sweet corn, and melons. To a lesser extent green beans, sugar snap peas, and herbs. Many of the members just don't know how to prepare some of the vegetables, such as eggplant, okra, squash, and beets. Education is a big part of my CSA."

She wrote on December 7, 2005 to revisit question one, saying that: "Educating the Overland Park community is quite a challenge. They understand that pesticide free and locally grown foods are better for them, but they still expect a perfect shape, no dirt and no blemishes and delivery to their door. Those that come to the farm (even though they don't harvest or even go to the fields) seem to be more understanding. A lot of interest in my CSA comes from Prairie Village, which I find interesting."

She began again for the next question: "I can only speak from my experience with my CSA and the Food Circle. The growth of CSAs, farmers' markets, and the growing interest in fresh, local foods shows that more and more people are becoming aware of the advantages of local, fresh foods. There are still the majority of people who purchase from the local supermarket (whichever is closest), and are happy to have produce that is out of season. I have been delivering food to a home in the city for the last two years. I place the food in tubs and the members pick it up (hopefully) that evening. I don't have any personal communications with these people. They are not as connected to their food (more complaints) as those that pick up at the farm or even those that pick up from my truck."

"I try to have activities at the farm," Kalman continued, "to draw them [customers] to the farm, but they are too busy. I have decided, for several reasons, to have a delivery with someone present (even if I have to hire someone). I am also developing a program for young children to visit the farm and have an educational program on growing foods. Even my daughter-in-law was surprised that the sweet corn only had one ear per stalk. The kids see beehives (without the bees) and I show them where the fruit develops in the flower. The parents were fascinated. The kids also do age-appropriate activities, such as planting seeds and transplanting. I also have an agricultural treasure hunt for them. The kids all love to taste the various herbs."

Kalman senses that "the growing interest in the Food Circle and slow foods [a movement dedicated to local foods integrating into networks of food provision based

upon reducing the number of miles food travels to consumption] indicated, to me, that people are starting to have an interest in healthy foods. My members have indicated that they just can't wait until they have a 'home grown' tomato. Sweet corn is never as good, either. I don't think they have the same association with hard squash or lettuce. That is why I try to grow specialty greens that they won't see in the grocery store. I try to educate my members about the possible contamination of shipped lettuce and even melons (an outbreak of E. coli occurred on muskmelons a couple of years ago). I never thought to wash the outside of melons, and I'm a microbiologist."

Kalman went on, saying that, "I thought it would be easy to find a location to park and distribute my CSA produce, but it wasn't easy. One store would say it was too much competition, another would say I was not related to their product. I don't want to leave the produce in tubs: one person took another person's weekly produce, they don't always pick it up promptly, the tubs might get too hot (even with ice), etc. The members don't have any choices. It's more difficult to keep the produce at the best holding temperature during transport than at the farm. I harvest right before delivery and packing everything is not easy. I have enough members that I was running out of space to carry the produce. I need a trailer or commercial van. I also had delivery one day before pickup at the farm. I needed to space out the harvest. I also had to hold some produce, such as beans and strawberries, in the refrigerator, because harvest had to occur before the delivery day. I don't like to do that."

When we talked about the difficulties in bringing food to Kansas City, both for her and for major producers, Kalman replied: "I don't really understand the

question. What do you mean by 'production areas?' California and Brazil are production areas, but so are other local farmers. The biggest difference in 'shipping' produce and local produce is the variety that we grow. To have a 'shipper' you must breed into the vegetable or fruit the ability to stay firm for several days. Some vegetable and fruits are harvested very green (such as tomatoes) and they ripen during shipping. Some fruits are exposed to gases that encourage ripening. Asian Pears do not ripen after they are picked. They just can't be shipped. Sungold Tomatoes will split during shipping, and are a local product only. The varieties of strawberries are getting better for shipping, but they are so much better tasting when vine ripened. Sweet corn will start losing its sugar content after is taken from the stalk, even with cooling (which slows down the process). Some varieties of sweet corn should be eaten within a few hours of picking. Large producers will use a quick-cool system to keep the vegetables fresh and refrigerated trucks and freight cars. The small grower, such as myself, might have a cooler and we wash in cold water right away, but the expense of refrigerated trucks is out of the question. We just try to harvest right before delivery as much as possible."

"If you are asking about supermarkets that buy local produce, it is a growing movement," Kalman continued. "Ball Foods, which own several Hen House supermarkets in Kansas City, is working with local growers to supply their markets. They are promoting the 'Buy Fresh, Buy Local' campaign. The University of Missouri has a professor that is working on connecting local growers with the local markets, Mary Hendrickson. A couple of markets, Whole Foods and Wild Oats,

contacted growers about setting up booths at their stores on Saturdays. But when I contacted Wild Oats (which I have a couple of times) they indicated that they are a national chain and can't have local foods. They wouldn't even talk to me about purchasing herbs. I understand that I could become a local supplier if I filled out about eight pages of information and showed proof-of-product liability insurance. I do have the insurance (which costs me over $1,000 per year) because of the pumpkin patch and pick-your-own strawberries. I don't need the hassle.

Last year was a difficult year for growing," Kalman concluded. "I had planned to have enough produce for my forty-five members and have a farm market. However, a late freeze killed the early strawberries, the cherries and apples, potatoes and cabbage. Then twelve inches of rain drowned many herbs, the basil that was outside the high tunnel [a type of greenhouse but portable and more versatile], and other crops. Finally, we had a drought in midsummer and I was hauling water for several weeks. So I didn't sell on the farm, and didn't have as much for the members as I had planned. During June and July the members kept asking when they were going to receive more produce. The fall harvest did pick up and most members were pleased. There is normally a slow point in June and early July when the greens don't like the heat and the tomatoes and peppers aren't ready. I put up a high tunnel to bridge that gap for tomatoes and put up a shade cloth, [to protect crops from the heat] in the summer. However, the early tomatoes were set back by the freeze and two days of very strong winds took down the high tunnel in late spring. I put it back together and strengthened it, so I hope to improve on the early summer lull. Some vegetables

will not keep if they're washed, like beans and strawberries. No one complained, but I think they prefer a pristine product and that is my goal, too."

Nancy Kalman is a feisty, colorful woman with a great sense of self-deprecating humor, especially about eating. In a later aside, she said, "I don't have much time to store my own foods, so I freeze a lot. I was in 4-H where we learned cooking and home-preserving methods. So I do make my own dill pickles and beets, but freeze lots of tomato sauce. I have it down to a science. I do buy meats, but not much red meat and don't even want to think of how the chickens were raised. I raised chickens when young and now hate cleaning out the brooder house and fighting off the old sitting hen, but am thinking of getting some this spring. I don't eat whole eggs, just eggbeaters. Basically, I eat what I raise."

On a May morning in 2005 at the Kansas City, Kansas Green Market farmers' market at 6th and Tauromee, I talked with Ms. Pender, a dignified women who was selling peas and small portions of bagged lettuce (which she claims is grown organically and picked this morning). "There is a Whole Foods produce manager used to work for the Price Chopper over in Lenexa and would buy a lot of local produce from a number of us, but he got fired for losing money, or at least making it seem like he was doing a good job, but he was always a month behind and that is how he got away with it. He works for Whole Foods now and so I called them up to see if I could get my produce in there, but they won't pay for good food. There is little chance of selling to them. They 'talk the talk' about having local, but told me that local to them means America. Can you believe that? They are very small-minded, so

we don't even bother anymore. It's like a crock of crap, food that should be sold can't be. I don't even care about the money. I just think I should be able to sell to them." This was in response to question one, but she got bored after this and stopped talking to me. This was atypical. Usually, once people got going on my questions, it was more a question of how to stop them.

Robbins Hail, a partner in Bear Creek Farms, near Osceola, Missouri, granted me an interview on April 15, 2006, at the company's stall at the Brookside Farmers' Market. To my first question she said: "Customers buy the produce because it is there. No one in their right mind would buy those tomatoes in winter, but it has just slid into place in consumer's minds. It's there all the time, they can't go without. I find it sad at how short a shelf life some of that produce has. You get so much longer-lasting produce when you buy mine. People are so used to having food in the stores, it's not even something that comes into play. They are going to be very surprised when there isn't at some time in the future. That lack is not even a thought to them and this is a huge amount of people. A woman came up to me this morning (now this is very unusual here), but she asked when the corn was going to arrive and she didn't mean what time of year, she meant what time today! It's sad that there can be that much of a disconnect."

"Many of my customers focus their buying needs on Saturday morning," Hail went on. "Our market is their primary destination, but keep in mind they are also from Brookside in general. I have some who complained when we moved here from

Barstow School [the location for the market up until 2005] but most are in this neighborhood anyway. They buy because it is the right thing to do, the healthy thing."

Later in our conversation, Hail addressed question three: "While it is something they like--the market and the connection to the farmer--they realize that they are connected to the global through money, since they have so much of it. This is where the exchange of knowledge comes in rather than in any historical, European connection. They recognize that it exists but that is due to an education and world-view level that most don't have based upon their money. Brookside is limited, a little closed as a community, but people here crave the market connection, the attraction to the community. They say 'it's too much gas to drive down there [to the City Market].'"

Hail said that she can not raise her prices this year (2006), even in the face of rising costs for gasoline. She already defines her produce as "premium" and charges more than others in the Brookside market: "Why should people pay for medicine instead of healthy food--why wouldn't people pay a premium if they are educated about it?" She says: "I am the grower. I put it in the ground, picked the bugs off of it. I am not able to hire a stranger to help." This was a criticism of both industrial growers who exploit labor in Mexico for tomatoes and also some of her neighbors who take advantage of cheap labor to make more money by charging the same as Hail and her husband who only use their own labor plus that of interns working for and studying with them. "I'm the one who takes the hit for the weather or the gas or the accident on the way here, not the consumer."

Hail then continued: “Who thinks about the grower, about the farmer when reaching for a product such as frozen peas? I have a responsibility in growing the way I do to my customers that works the same as their loyalty to me, farmer to consumer. But Jim [her husband] and I are only going to do it for two more years [and] then just grow seed, or maybe move to Nicaragua or Costa Rica and grow coffee, that’s pretty easy. We have no down time for relaxing, maybe late November but then we are back at it full time.”

When I asked Hail if she felt that the market for small farms such as hers was sustainable, if someone would move into the niche she plans to leave behind, she said: “What fool would work as hard as we have to work? Certainly not someone young; they don’t want to work that hard. I would hope that someone would replace us, but most people make money elsewhere so their kids can do something else besides grow vegetables.” Laughing she said, “they could raise organic cattle, that’s pretty easy.”

Katherine Kelly is one of the founders and directors of the Kansas City Center for Urban Agriculture and Kansas City Community Farm. After a long correspondence by email and phone, we met April 2, 2006, to address my particular questions. She began with question three by arguing that: “Ideally there would be a type of system where there would be small farms such as mine, many of them, who can provide a certain amount of food for the city. Then there would be a second tier of slightly larger farms that cover certain items well and then there would be the biggest farms that would be able to cover all of the rest of the needs. Hopefully it

would develop such that it got big enough where, if someone dropped out, it wouldn't destroy the whole network. Others would move into and fill each and every niche that appeared. The system would be self-sustaining! Not self-sustaining in the agriculture sense, [but] rather in the idea that the whole thing would perpetuate itself continually without failing."

"I have been working for ten years," said Kelly, "and have come to the realization that I am unusual in the sense that I have been successful where others have not been able to make a go of it. I am not sure why that is." I suggested to her that it might be because she has a better connection to the community and to a lifestyle that allows her to feel that way. She said, "I want you to come out and work with me some day, we can talk over weeding and see if that is the way it is." I never got the chance to take Ms. Kelly up on her offer but I did continue to talk with her over the course of the next two years.

Dan May, owner of Organic Way, a pesticide free/all-natural farm in Milo Missouri, is a busy man. He told me he spends most of his days arguing the benefits of organic living with anyone who wants to and so he doesn't have a lot of free time. At the same meeting where I met Ms. Kelly, after asking to see my list of questions, he said that he would address only question three. He said: "We sell to forty restaurants in Kansas City. Four years ago we only had thirty-two, so we've grown two a year. Hadn't thought about that. Hey, that's even better than I thought." Laughing loudly, he continued: "We deliver to them, it's important that we do. We drive in twice a week to drop off food. Lydia's [a well-known, high-end Italian

restaurant in the Crossroads District near downtown which invests considerable time and effort into local connections] in particular--six hundred pounds of tomatoes a week in season. Our CSA delivers on Wednesday afternoons to the farmers' market there also [although I never saw them during two summers of research] . . . . I sell my product directly to consumers and businesses that I trust to have the same standards and ideas as myself, but I also have to sell to anyone who will buy--they may not believe the same things I do."

I heard John Goode say things similar to May, that while he had particular ideals and values that he raised food under, he still needed to make a living, so it was a trade-off. Dan May has been known to refuse to sell to people if he didn't think they were the type of farmer that he himself was (personal communication Jill Silva), but he also goes to open markets to sell the fruits of his labor and can not always refuse a sale based upon moral feeling.

Betty Mendenhall is the "better half" of Peacock Farms, located in Higginsville, Missouri. She says this very affectionately and with a laugh and a nod toward her silent husband, whose name I never learned. My wife and I talked to her at the Kansas City Food Circle Farmers' Exhibition, held on a Saturday in April of 2006, at the St. Pius X High School in northern Kansas City, Missouri. Co-sponsored by the Sierra Club, the Kansas City Wellness Magazine, St. Patrick's Parish, and several other organizations,[25] this exposition is the annual kick-off event for many

[25] The Food Circle Networking Project-Missouri Extension, the Kansas City Greens, Faces of Food, the Green Sanctuary Committee of All Souls UU Church, the Peace &

people in Kansas City's organic and alternative network of farmers who work the various farmers' markets and community supported agriculture groups (CSAs) in the area.

Mendenhall is very forthright about moving food into and around Kansas City. Referring to question three and the way consumers do or do not connect with the city's food, she said: "We had to move the Wednesday market from downtown to 39th and Genesee, near KU Med [i.e. the University of Kansas Medical Center] because of the disaster of the Crossroads District. Local Harvest [a local food organization that operated in the downtown area during the earlier part of this decade. It was out of operation when I was researching but has resurfaced lately[26]] went under and the construction was a nightmare!" I said, "I went there a number of times and there was no one there. Why was that?" She replied, "Oh, it was just a disaster, poor Holly (the Local Harvest director) just couldn't get anything going with the city. No matter what she tried, it just didn't work out--no people, no help, nobody coming to shop, just a disaster." She said that the local area around KU Med is more family oriented and people should have better access to vendors. The parking lot is also much larger. In my experience, this last point is not true. The lot is behind a Chipotle's and a Starbucks Café, right up against the beginning of the houses along Genesee. It is also congested and dangerous with cars zooming by along 39th Street. I visited this market at least ten times, and on seven of those occasions no one was

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Justice Office of the St. Joseph/KC Diocese, Order of the Precious Blood, Growing Growers Project, Bridging the Gap, KKFI and eKC.

[26] See www.localharvest.org.

present. Although she was there for two of my visits, Mrs. Mendenhall had a rough year with the weather and focused more on their CSA because people there had paid up-front for the food.

As the KC Organics & Natural Market at Minor Park, east of the intersection of Holmes and Red Bridge, winds down, an older vendor who says that she noticed me hanging around talking with people, motions me over. Although I never found out her name, or ever saw her again at this market, she did answer some of my questions. When I asked what customers think about at this particular market, she said: "Consumers expect to be able to eat fresh food 365 days a year, regardless of the food's origin. They've been trained by years of availability and few think much about it until spring arrives and along with it the choice of a farmers' market. More and more of our customers, however, state that they'll not be eating tomatoes again until we arrive with our heirlooms in June or early July--but that is a taste thing. Face it--bagged greens from wherever are pretty good, as are most store bought-from-wherever veggies. Most of our customers, however, are willing to wait for things like corn and tomatoes until they are in season. But, again, it's a taste thing. And most of our customers think Wild Oats or Whole Foods are good places to get "fresh" fruits and vegetables when the local stuff is out of season. We keep a photo album on our table at market--I'm always amazed that people enjoy looking through it and commenting on the beauty of the land and the veggies we produce. Many ask if they might visit our farm--some do. Some, however, feel they connect simply by buying

directly from the farmer--they seem to enjoy a relationship with us and seem to like the fact the food they buy has a face on it."

When I asked this vendor how ideas such as freshness, local, and healthiness are attached to the movement of food in Kansas City, she said: " I am not sure of the question but I will say that all three terms are what drive our customers to seek out our products. I think the terms are similar for every product. Because we are at a growers-only, all-organic market, our customers are looking for just that--and because they know they will get locally grown, fresh and healthy-for-them products. Again, I think people want unprocessed foods that they perceive as healthy. We are all told to eat lots of fresh fruit and vegetables, and since locally grown is not always available, most consumers think industrial-grown produce from afar is an acceptable choice" (Field note, July 1, 2006).

Other perspectives

Jill Silva has worked as food editor of the Kansas City Star newspaper for the last twelve years. I interviewed her by telephone on December 2, 2005. In answers to question one she answered that "[now is a] time where people are not connected to seasons--they felt that way originally, but it is no longer the norm. There is a movement towards questioning food origins--picking up momentum in the last few years but it started ten to twelve years ago. Small percentages of people have the time and money to understand what benefits the producers of our foods. Lots of people will be willing to do that more and more. They are moving towards it; it contributes

to their lifestyles, it's good for the farmers' health as well as their own, and there is a community-access aspect of a farmers' market."

For question two, Silva replied: "There are different reasons to shop farmers' markets than what's available. There is a socializing there as well as it's trendy. Large companies are jumping on the organic--it is convenient marketing too. Wild Oats and Whole Foods can tell you exactly who their consumers are. Wild Oats is moving towards being a full, week-long farmers' market but where does the food come from? There is a sort of lack of transparency to it. In some areas of Kansas City there is an ethnic catering to the local area, but that breaks down in the suburbs because what is ethnic there? North of the river we hear a lot of complaints about access to goods, especially foods. I mean, why would 'Dean and Deluca' put a shop at 119th Street? How does that serve north Kansas City?"

To question three, Silva said: "There is a strong core of foodies, mostly based around the nutritional aspect. It is becoming a gradual involvement from health, not a gourmet interest. Kansas City consumers do have a connection to food; everyone does, whether it is a hobby, a passion. Johnson County Community College's food program has been a huge part. There are great restaurants here. We don't have the numbers of New York, but we do have consistency and people who like to go out. I am from Denver and was surprised by the indoor focus here, as opposed to the outdoor one there. But many here don't have the same relationship [to food] that you or I have. Their world doesn't revolve around food like ours. It's great to say local,

local, local but it's not that way for many. But one of the great things with the spread of our farmers' markets is the way this helps change."

In the City Market, a young man who wore clothes that identified him as a member of a conservative religious community along with his wife and young daughter was selling fresh corn grown on his farm. He would not allow me to use his name, but allowed me to ask my questions. Although he did not feel that he could address them properly, he understood my concerns: "I have a neighbor who raises cattle. I know you don't look at that, but I want to tell you a story that might be helpful. He knows about the problems the hormones [in his beef] are causing, things like obesity, asthma, early growth for young girls, aggression in young boys, but he gains eighty pounds per each cow with the simple injections and so gains the corresponding money. The commercial, industrial sites like his are providing a free marketing example for the rest of us--mad cow, E. coli, things like that affecting their products leads consumers to our products. But the uneducated consumer never sees that; nor do they see the positive side about my business. The moment I close the truck door on a shipment that I don't personally deliver, I am no longer responsible for that product. The flow of knowledge also disappears as far as consumer transparency. They could check back with me, but few do. Same for my neighbor!" I was very impressed by his answer and tried to suggest that he seemed very knowledgeable on food in general, but respected his wish not to continue with me (Fieldnote, August 5, 2006).

Partial interviews

At the same exposition where I spoke with Katherine Kelly, I later interviewed Lee and Cindy Quaintance. They own Acme Grain (soaringeaglefarms@juno.com), producers of organic wheat, spelt, and other whole grains in southwestern Johnson County. Lee likes to quote from an unknown author when he is asked why his grain is so much more expensive than others: "the bitter taste of poor quality lingers long after the sweetness of low price is forgotten." In answer to question two he said: "I have a connection to a producer of breads that lends credence to what I am doing. They use my products; people buy it and begin to understand what I am doing and also to understand how important what I do is to the product that they enjoy. Without me, there wouldn't be that product, so we are building a better pathway to the consumer."

On April 12, 2005, I talked with the warehouse foreman at the Hen House supermarket at the corner of 83rd and Mission Road. Ron agreed to speak to me but not give his last name. He said that his store obtains produce from a number of places [contrary to David Ball who suggested that Hen House is only supplied from the Ball Foods warehouse or AWG], but if they have an emergency that the main warehouse can't cover, then they get it from Liberty Produce or from AWG. "It [AWG] is a co-op. You pay $30,000 to join but it's not open to the general public. It acts like a distribution center but it isn't transparent; they just seem to have product." He suggested that Hen House customers don't realize how good they have it in answer to question one. "Personal relationships are valuable between customers and buyers,

between buyers and the wholesaler, but only with certain things--Hen House is very good with specialty items and so the price is really low." But he thought it funny that Olathe Corn is not grown in Olathe, but is instead a brand name from Colorado. Still, for most of his clientele, Colorado is local.

In answer to question three, Ron told me that: "Many of our customers won't eat Mexican [produce] because of the alleged human waste water being put on the fields. Chilean [produce] is getting better and better, especially peaches, but Mexico is getting a bad rep, it's beautiful produce!" One of his complaints is that, "to the wholesaler it's just a pallet; only the sales reps and buyer consider the quality. They prefer to deal with pallets--cheaper, easier to deliver, and you don't have to break them up. But customers complain when produce is not there. No connection is made to living product; it might just as well be salsa. They eat a lot of food in the store and say 'dude, it's not your concern, it's just a corporation so why do you care.'"

Along the west edge of the City Market, in the main building, a number of businesses sell produce wholesale as well as during the farmers' market. These are the stores that market manager Deb Connors referred to where difficulties arose in the original concept for the market. The companies are Global Produce, whose motto is "Experience the freshness," Christina's Produce, River Market Produce, Carollo's Meat Market and Italian Grocery (they only have produce on Saturday and Sunday), and Kansas City Produce. The produce manager of Global Produce would not give me his name because, as he said with a less-than-convincing grin, he simply stocks the place and builds the display out front. He tried to convince me that each of the

stalls along the City Market's west side is independent from one another and that the actual ordering is divided up between the other stores as it is delivered, so that each place has produce. He continued by saying that, although they will purchase local melons in the summer time, pumpkins in the fall, pine trees around Christmas, mostly their food comes from AWG or Liberty Fruit. They have boxes advertising "City Market" tomatoes that they display around the streetside and sidewalk.

The majority of people working for Global and its neighboring companies are young Asians. The men wheel dollies laden with boxes out to the front of the stores where the women divide it up into smaller cartons for display. Most produce is purchased by size of the carton, most often simply for a dollar apiece. All of the stores have scales to weigh purchases on, but everyone avoids using them. I never found out exactly why, although one young woman told me: "It eliminates waste; you simply sell the bad stuff under the good stuff and no one complains since it's a buck!" (Field note, March 17, 2005).

I include this story because, as I suggest in chapter two and will elaborate on below, all of the City Market companies except Carollo's are under the same corporate umbrella. Repeated attempts to talk with the manager and subsequent attempts with other managers of the stores met with silent and very strong rebuke. I believe that this was because it became known that I was researching and questioning their stores.

The Kansas City Food Circle is an organization whose aim is to "help local organic growers and consumers connect with each other for the promotion of healthy

eating habits and the survival of small family farms" (Kansas City Food Circle Directory 2005). As a group these people do not look at availability as the primary act of importance in the local food situation. Rather, they are a politically radical organization with sometimes unrealistic and uncompromising ideals. One of their goal is to: "Educate the public about the health and ecological benefits of a small-scale, regional, organic and free-range food system, in contrast to the destruction caused by the industrial-scale, global, and fossil fuel-dependant conventional food system" (Kansas City Food Circle Directory 2006). Others have suggested that their focus is an environmentalist concern but only for a particular environment. They want equity in the food systems but are not willing to pay or even consider the true cost of providing cheap food for mass consumption (Endicott 2005).

Some critics have called certain Food Circle members "side activists--food but not farmers. They wish to support small farmers and farming but do not like the differences in people's directions in producing and providing that food. If the food is compromised in any way, i.e. Deb Endicott willing to sell her beef through Ball Foods, then they do not wish to see it so." In essence, they get bogged down with what others see as petty arguments: "They have a different world view than some small farmers, and perhaps there are not the same destinations [desired results or change]" for the final delivery of the product if it is in any way tainted by contact with the enemy (Silva 2005).

Readers no doubt have wondered why I did not interview anyone of note from Wild Oats or Whole Foods, especially in light of the inclusion of many organic or

alternative sources for food. As was the case with the Wal-Mart and Kroger corporations, I was not given access to management by spokespersons representing these companies. I was able to overcome this problem to some degree by talking to people in the produce sections of the natural foods stores. These will be reported in the next chapter. More relevant at this point, however, is a consideration of why I was not able to similarly hang around the produce areas in the other supermarkets without attracting attention. The key factor was not management approval or disapproval, but rather architectural design.

In the big player's stores, the sheer sameness that each has makes them almost mirrors of one other. In some places, Save-a-Lot and Aldi in particular, the store designs are so nearly identical that consumers seem to sprint through as if aware that a quick glance will tell them if an item is there or absent. Hen House puts the produce section on the right side of most stores while Wal-Mart's are on the left. All of the stores except for ALDI and Save-a-Lot attempt to mimic an outdoor market in the way foods are displayed, but even then it tends to be only with one sample of each variety, for example, one type of red pepper. These foods are sometimes packed on ice in an attractive, creative manner, but still only one choice exists. In a supermarket, as you walk down the aisles of uniform displays, the distinguishing feature becomes only the amount of each item available. In contrast, farmers' markets not only have more than one type of pepper, but each stall will have them throughout the season. Your choices are therefore exponentially greater, but, conversely, there will not be a

huge amount of an individual item available. When the display is done, the farmer is out. Not so in the supermarket.

I was able to conduct research in the Wild Oats and Whole Foods stores because they were more idiosyncratic and people oriented. No one ever took offence at my hanging around. The displays are ever-changing, with those near the entrance always exhibiting the same seasonality as the produce. Workers in Wild Oats and Whole Foods are very knowledgeable. This is in direct contrast to the clerks at the other major players where their jobs are limited to stocking shelves and where a strong back is the main prerequisite. Supermarkets have a lot of people who work for them and so there are always people in the produce sections, so this makes it a real problem. At Whole Foods and Wild Oats the produce people always seem to have time to talk to customers without violating store policy.

General themes identified in the chapter

Several common threads run through the above conversations. I will spend the remainder of this chapter fleshing out what I believe they mean. At the beginning of chapter two, I quoted the geographer Louise Crewe (2001: 630) as saying that globalization requires us to "more fully realize the relationships between practices associated with the provision of food and the consumption of that food." Although the above interviews are not at the level where consumption for bodily existence happens, consumption of another type takes place along the various networks working toward the ultimate food purchaser. One major theme that develops is that all my interviewees reduce globalized produce to a same-as-local idea. The philosophies

of both Cosentino and AWG toward availability enable their managers to approach the sale of produce to consumers as though all such crops are local. They do not sell local as a rule, of course, but they do equate their produce with the local. What they are really saying is that, to them, the world is local.

The world-as-local idea seems to be accepted almost with resignation and carries with it corollaries of indifference to the plight of local farmers and other area participants in food provisioning. The idea is good in some ways, of course. Availability and ubiquity mean that consumers do not have to consider ideas such as food shortages, famine, or the vagaries of nature, since the stores themselves will ensure food's availability. In essence, the globe has been reduced to the size of the market down the street. The relationship that is most important to the major players is also one that their customers take solace in knowing: a trust that food will always be in the stores.

Distance from the perspective of world-as-local is not approached in the same manner as consumers do when they decide how far to travel to a store. If the price of fuel to bring produce from Chile goes up, the costs are passed on to the consumer. If some climatic catastrophe such as an unexpected frost or hurricane affected availability, consumer memory loss will enable the stores to soon overcome potential customer inquiries. This same indifference to distance does not trickle down to the local level, of course. Here the costs are very real and a part of everyday concerns. Rising fuel prices, for example, directly impact local farmers in that they may have to reduce their profit in the face of consumer uproar for fear they will lose their market.

A second theme is that local producers simply cannot grow enough to fill the needs of the bigger entities. Whether or not everyone was being sincere in my conversations, it still is evident that one of the ways major dealers can avoid contact with local producers is to suggest that those growers simply do not possess the proper economies of scale to supply the needs of the larger stores. None of my informants outside of the major players addressed the issue of size directly, only that of rules and regulations.

A changing dynamic within the supermarket industry as many consumers shift towards a more organic basis for their foods constitutes a third theme. Approximately ten percent of consumers presently seek out alternative foods, but the growing popularity of healthy eating is expanding their percentage rapidly. This is in response to what almost might be termed the relentless approach to improving our nations health. Such converts tend to shop at Whole Foods and Wild Oats for their specialized products and Wal-Mart, Costco or other discounters for their bulk items, eliminating the traditional supermarket entirely (Warner 2005). Wal-Mart is now a major player in the organic movement and David Ball suggested to me that the volume of product currently needed is such that smaller organic stores are forced to seek supplies outside the country with a major loss of transparency that this distancing entails. David Leiker of AWG, however, who supplies the Ball's organization with food, said Wal-Mart is no real threat to the organic movement. I wish I had been able to talk with national chains, in particular Kroger's, on this issue

and learn their corporate philosophies. Hy-Vee lays claim to interacting with local producers to supply its stores, but I did not find any evidence to support that.

All of major players I interviewed seemed not to think about the social implications of their actions. I am not criticizing them for this, but it is still an important point--any line of questioning that addresses lives beyond the direct consumer links to Kansas City would be unacceptable. To them, food is food, not social relations or the "finger of exploitation." In contrast, remember Robbins Hail's discussion on how difficult farming is and how she doubts anyone would choose to replace her. Katherine Kelly thought that if a small farm comes off of the local grid, another would simply move into the gap. No one, not even the small growers, specifically discussed the human element involved in any of the networks. This lack of confrontation with the specifics of farming is in contradiction to the challenge and opportunity of commodity research. Theorists say that networks are supposed to expose the social problems of food production, but this is not so in Kansas City. It is all well and good for organizations such the Food Circle and Ball Foods to highlight different approaches in an effort to make food transparent, but in discussing the actual physical and mental aspects, no one talked to me about the specifics.

Disconnecting from social issues, one can argue, is what allows the largest companies to succeed. Hy-Vee and AWG have no need for any sort of fetish in their produce. In fact, it behooves them to make the produce a part of the faceless foodscape to ensure that the availability is unquestioned by the consumer. Balls Foods, though, must straddle both worlds as they struggle to assert themselves in the

marketplace. Not only must they ensure food availability to customers, they must also insist that, in some ways, where this food comes from is also important.

The last theme that is obvious to me is the way all of my interviewees imagine produce as a simple linear delivery system. Dave Leiker of AWG spoke casually of Miami and Philadelphia in the same way that John Goode does of Wathena. To Leiker, it is a simple progression, easily facilitated by the delivery system they work with. The idea that food can leave Chile and arrive in Kansas City with the same ease and low cost as if Goode were bringing it down from Wathena in his truck makes the world a very small place. The literature from chapter three suggests that many different transactions take place along the way for Leiker's produce to move to the city. Governmental regulations have to be negotiated, the vagaries of nature overcome, and much more. But to Leiker, it's simply Chile, Philly, and Kansas City with no problems. Only some major outside interference such as a truckers' strike or the closing of the Panama Canal would upset Leiker's or David Ball's produce worlds.

Chapter Five

The View from the Ground: Informal Interviews in the Field and on the Street

This chapter presents a series of interviews conducted with people in the different locales of Kansas City identified in previous chapters. These are un-structured, free-flowing discussions started from a common framework of familiarity with a given food or questions about what to do with a particular item. I am most comfortable approaching people in the market setting through a commonality based upon a particular food and then seeing where the conversation leads. Similar to the majority of my structured interviews, once people begin talking about what they knew, and saw that I was interested, they told me a lot. Although I am not claiming that this is a statistically valid sample, I have interviewed over a thousand people in different contexts around the city, and therefore feel confident of my findings. As a window into globalization and personal relationships with modern society, my ethnographic interactions in the field allow for an exchange of ideas not seen in more positivistic studies, such as one that might count the number of kumquats sold in Kansas City. My goal for this chapter is to open the possibilities for "why kumquats are sold in Kansas City and what does that say about the city and our world in general?"

Interviewing in the field is hard work, and it is often difficult to follow procedures for the controlled collection of data. Interview notes are hastily scribbled, crammed on scraps of paper or in notebooks that are rained upon or coffee stained, and sometimes lost. Memory fails such that conversations are not recorded verbatim. After each interaction I immediately stopped and wrote down what I had heard. At

the end of each day in the field I assembled these notes into a coherent fieldnote that was entered into the building data set.

In this chapter I use what people have told me. I construct ideas on how relationships with food lead to an understanding of globalization and contemporary society. In the process, I discover if what is written in chapter three and talked about in chapter four matches what is happening. I will briefly comment on some of the differences and unusual contexts at the end of this chapter, and then more fully develop my ideas in the concluding chapter that follows.

The anthropologist Roger Sanjek (1990: 394) has referred to the validity of ethnography as being different than that of the hypothesis-testing scientist in the laboratory. The ideas about food that people share with me are filtered through my own understandings. It is a snapshot of a particular place at a particular time. Other researchers will be able to repeat part of my study; that which defines a particular route a food must take to get to Kansas City. Seasonality and its effects on production areas and distribution routes will change, but since I consider each of my interviews as a different text, I am not sure if the falsification of my thesis—that the relationships people have with food and the modern world are both different and contested and that we can better understand globalization and the modern world through them —can be discovered. People will only choose whether or not to talk about their own lives.

Interviewing consumers about their uses for a particular food, the recipes they are thinking of using, the circumstances of the particular uses, and the relationship

between the foods and their own culture can be discovered in a public forum such as a market by simply mingling and listening. Because of my culinary background and training, interviews could be started and conducted by asking questions that come from an understanding of a food, or by striking up an informal conversation and then, with their permission (which I found usually pretty easy to secure), following them and participating as they shop. This worked with the market traders in open forums and at farmers' markets as well. This is the authenticity that Golden-Biddle and Locke (1993) searched for in trying to convince the reader of the validity of the research. It is descriptive through discussing what they have to say and what the conditions of that discourse are.

Individual consumers have different approaches to food and how it infiltrates and influences their lives. Methodologically, I interacted with these people by working in the stalls and stores of the different markets. Offering to help in the stall for free was always accepted, especially when I identified what I was looking for. This, in return, often led to talk about various networks that brought them the commodity (although not in that language), and to contacts as gatekeeper's for continuing investigation, especially with delivery and distribution people. It also, of course, provided access to interesting customers. Since the fall of 2004, I have spent roughly ten hours a week wandering through many different markets, talking with everyone I can (Appendix A lists the locales). I have been in every venue listed in chapter two at least five times. Although I did not always come away with an interesting glimpse into contemporary society, each trip was a learning experience.

This type of research is easiest to do in farmers' markets or the City Market where one can blend in better than in the aisle of a standard supermarket. I estimate that I have researched in all of these areas well over five hundred times, often multiple places in the course of a day's work.

Casual interaction has allowed me to develop relationships with consumers without having to approach them for formal, structured interviews. I listened in on conversations between stall owners and consumers, consumers with other consumers, and asked what a consumer might plan to do with what he or she was purchasing. Many different approaches can be used for gathering information. One of the best examples of what I am referring to occurred in the Merriam farmers' market, on a Saturday morning in June 2005. There, tomatoes were selling for $1.50/lb. in all of the stalls and an older couple (mid-sixties) said sadly to one of the stall owners: "There are no homegrown tomatoes yet, are there." "Nope," he replied, "there are some fresh Missouri ones though!" The couple merely shook their heads and walked slowly back to their car. I said to the stall owner: "Well that gives a definite description of what homegrown means." He sadly responded: "Those folks think it should be from right next door; I guess they don't think it through that my farm is forty miles south of here. It might as well be in Florida." I asked him if that is something that comes up often--the concept of what is local. He said, "I consider anything that is grown within a day's journey to be local." I responded with: "But you can drive from Colorado in a day!" To this he said: "I would consider a potato harvested [in Colorado] this morning, delivered this evening from there to be local.

Maybe not a tomato or lettuce, I guess, but a potato for sure." I then asked, "So just how are those Missouri tomatoes you have any different than those that you could grow yourself later this summer?" He said: "Actually, they are Arkansas' and I think that they are greenhouse grown but I am not sure, I got them from Des Moines." Then he decided to stop talking to me and asked that I not use his name.

That same day, in the Hen House at 15000 West 87th Parkway in Lenexa the tomato prices were different. Three varieties were offered: "vine-ripened" [still attached to their stem to prove their origin] for $2.99/lb., Romas for $1.35/lb., and hothouse-grown for $2.35/lb. In a number of other stores earlier that morning, the "vine-ripened" were going anywhere from $2.35 to 3.50/lb. Although I could not confirm it from my vendor, none of the varieties were home-grown. All were from either Arkansas or Mexico, shipped through AWG, or, in the case of Hy-Vee, Des Moines.

Opening at the City Market

I begin this discussion at the City Market because it is at the center of the city physically and the center of my research metaphorically. My first visit was Wednesday, June 15, 2004, at 6:45 a.m. because the market opened at 5:00 a.m. and I thought to be early was important. The site turned out to be deserted at that time. It was also exceptionally hard to get to when coming in on I-35 from the west. I had to go east on I-70, then backtrack west on I-35 toward Des Moines, and then west toward Topeka on I-70 again, looking for the Steamboat Museum exit sign because I could not find the one indicating the market. A Liberty Fruit truck delivering produce

to the River Market Produce Company was one of the few signs of life. Another was a man from Oxfordshire who said that he was staying downtown on business, saw a brochure in his hotel for the City Market, and thought he would check it out: "Very disappointing, there is nothing in any of the stalls." He said that in the city markets he was used to, people of the city got everything--especially food. He wondered why Kansas City would invest in a market that had nothing to offer. I said that some area farmers' markets had lots of food, but that they were out in the suburbs and also more seasonal and weekend oriented. He was surprised that there was no local downtown area of food year-round. I added that numerous supermarkets existed around the city, but he responded: "Well, so what about that, they're not really that exciting are they?"

At the main entrance to the City Market there is a large sign, underneath which someone sits on Saturdays and Sundays to keep visitors from driving into the center where the stalls are located. The rest of the week this is not a problem, because typically no one is there. A black man who worked crowd control there on a Saturday morning in March 2005 told me that: "Friday, Saturday, and Sundays are best; the vendors come at five and foot traffic will flock to whomever is open first and get the best stuff, often selling them out." I said: "Who comes on foot? Every time I come there are only cars and it is very hard to get here on foot." He answered: "Well, it's the other races of people." I could tell he was clearly uncomfortable with this, perhaps because he is black and I am white. He then said: "Well, I can tell you that most of the early product winds up in restaurants, you know, cheap ones like Chinese and Mexican." He changed the subject to the history of the market: "Did you know that

the mob used to be in here bad?" I said that I had heard that but didn't have any confirmation. He said that, "in the seventies and eighties there was a fight between the interests of those who wanted a better, safer family environment and those with red-light interests which had always been down here. There was even a bombing right over there," nodding toward the river to the north. "But the safer family won out, now it [the City Market] is a part of the city trolley tour, you know, the stadium, business district, all of that." When I said that I didn't know there was a city trolley tour, he looked at me, stopped talking, and I could get no more from him.

Among the many other things market manager Deb Connors told me about the area around 5th and Walnut was its checkered history of produce warehouses and seedy happenings. Following up on this, I located the produce companies along the river. The driver of a delivery truck from DeFeo Produce at 414 E. 4th Street, Kansas City, Missouri, gave me the number for the produce manager. This official, Bill, allowed me to work there one Friday morning loading trucks. The motto for DeFeo is "Original since 1895," and Bill assured me that the company had always been along the river since then. I asked him about the history of mob involvement with the riverfront and the market and he laughed, saying: "Well, one way or another they are all related somehow. If one goes out of business, like if the building disappears or if the boss is never seen again, they just open up in another place and it's business as usual." I asked him if this situation is still true and he said that all of the glamour of the produce business now is gone; it's not like the television show "The Sopranos" or Kansas City in the seventies. Similar to Ryan at the beginning of this work, the

drivers all were hesitant to talk with me, especially in the warehouse. I gathered that most of the produce came from Des Moines or from AWG. One told me "it's pretty interesting how we never seem to really run out of product; it might be garbage but we will have it." I asked him if that is because of availability and he says no, "it's because of the interconnections of the different companies. If we are out, we simply call someone and there it is on the warehouse floor."

On July 14, 2006, a Friday, I spent from eleven in the morning to three hanging out at the City Market. Almost no one was there. Only Global Produce and River Market Produce had products on display. Winslow's KC Style BBQ on the corner of the market, underneath the main offices, was open and occasional customers walked in but no one sat outside at the tables overlooking the market. An Asian man from River Market Produce wheeled a couple of boxes out to the mini-van of an older white couple. Throughout the morning several cars drove into the market but no one bought much. In the early afternoon a truck from United Foods out of Topeka pulled up in front of Succotash restaurant. This is a small breakfast and lunch place in the north building of the market. Among the many boxed items were a couple of bags of onions and several boxes of potatoes from Colorado. I asked the girl checking in why they would buy produce from Topeka when they were in a produce market. She replied: "It's just easier, cheaper and we don't have to deal with anyone." I said, "but it's summertime, the produce is right here and a lot cheaper now than in winter; in winter I could see." She just laughed and said: "Why bother with them!"

Two couples traveling together, Sarah and Bill Wilson, from Omaha, Nebraska, and the Bridgers, from Olathe, entered through the northwest entrance off 3rd Street by Carollo's Meat Market and Italian Grocery. Mr. Bridger exclaimed: "There is so much to do here; it's such a good time!" Mrs. Wilson said: "Wow! Look at all of the food!" Mr. Bridger, changing his sunglasses for his regular ones responded: "Oh, you can get all of this at the supermarket by our house."

A City Market vendor, selling peaches from his farm in Missouri ("best fucking peaches in the world!") said to me: "Look at that asshole; it's all bullshit; he didn't grow those (pointing to bagged Jonathan apples); what is he selling? He bought those in St. Joseph and is passing them off as his. I tell you, it's a wonder this market even exists! Did you know they came to my farm to check to see if I grew my own food in December? December! I don't even have an idea of what I will grow yet, let alone starting things. And how can you tell if I grew my peaches if it is the middle of the fucking winter? What a joke!" He said: "Look up the hill towards downtown, or even at the government of this city. It demonstrates just how poorly this city operates. The market is isolated, constructed out of real estate, impractical and nonhistorical. It doesn't represent progress or a solution, it is simply an example of throwing money at things until something sticks."

Later this man whispered an aside into my ear: "There are a lot of restaurants and people who buy food here and then resell it elsewhere as their own!" When I asked how this was done, he said: "People, misinformed ones, will not buy some of my food because of the wrinkles or blemishes. But, if it's elsewhere and differently

labeled, who really knows? You know?" Confused, I said: "But wouldn't people know if it was not someone else's?" He laughed and said: "Organic, alternative, healthy, they mean different things in different parts of the city," and moved off, still laughing at me.

Similarly, there is much interest in the fall in what are called "Waverly Apples." I have heard women loudly proclaim the name with delight and then purchase a bag of mixed Golden Delicious and Jonathan's, paying a lot of money for the privilege (around $11.00 for a 5 lb. bag. I never did find out what exactly a "Waverly Apple" was [apparently it is in reference to Waverly, a town in central Missouri, on the Missouri River, an orchard area] but other, local apples in the stalls right beside them, sold for a lot less. John Goode told me that it was an apple from near St. Joseph that had a very short window in the market, but I never figured out just what was going on. The same excitement for other local apples never existed even though a lot of them were in the market that fall.

Different relationships with seasonality occur often when interacting with consumers. For example, when walking the floor of the Wild Oats Market on the corner of Johnson Drive and Roeland Avenue in Mission on June 3, 2005, an older, well-dressed lady with a Slavic accent asked the check-out girl how much cherries are --3.99/lb. is the answer--so her total for the cherries in her bag would be well over ten dollars, and she did not have a lot of cherries. Although she made it clear that she wanted to buy them, she began to complain about the price. The checkout girl sympathetically said: "Well, that is expensive, I won't pay that much for cherries

myself." I chimed in: "In about a month the price will come down dramatically." "Really," she said to me, "why?" I explained about Michigan and Oregon cherries coming on the market, about how only a brief window exists for really fresh, cheap cherries because of seasonality and delivery difficulties. She then said: "Have you seen the price they charge here for blueberries? Almost five dollars for a tiny box! I'll pay the ten dollars a pound they want for Orange Roughy (a type of fish from New Zealand or Spain) but not for blueberries!" I mumbled something to the effect that I would not even pay that much for Orange Roughy, but she stopped me short by snorting derisively: "It's all a rip-off anyway" and leaving without buying the cherries. The girl working laughed, saying: "I guess it's what you're willing to pay isn't it? Blueberries and cherries, no, but Orange Roughy, yes. Of course, blueberries are very healthy, best thing for you." I said: "Blueberries, salmon, and broccoli, we could live forever." And she went back to work saying: "But not cherries."

While City Market is open on Wednesdays, numerous visits indicated that it is mostly deserted on that day. On August 31, 2005, I came to the market specifically to talk to John Goode about why he continued to go. He told me: "It's only out of loyalty that I come on these days. Sometimes I sell bulk to people, but I've got to get lucky to do that. Most time it is simply to those people who expect me to be here; I've developed a relationship with them that works for both of us." The next Wednesday, September 7, I was helping him set up his booth when an older man in a black Lexus sedan pulled right up next to John's stall. He got out, ate some of the fruit right off the table, bought ten pounds of tomatoes in a flat without looking at them, chatted and

laughed with John for ten minutes or so, slapped John on the back and then left. John said that this his how many of his Wednesday customers interact with him.

Despite its problems, the City Market can provide great occasions. For example, on Saturday, July 9, 2006, I arrived at 7:30 in the morning to find the place packed! It was crowded not only with shoppers, but also over sixty vendors. Lots of different things were for sale, too, ranging from a religious community selling fresh pies and breads, to stalls with flowers and house plants, to some where Asian families were selling backyard beans, garlic, and greens. In addition to the food, I saw jugglers, musicians playing around the outside area, a puppet show, and a trampoline for kids, and even actors doing skits that represented different parts of Kansas history. Most stalls featured the tail end of spring crops such as snow peas, lettuces, onions and garlic, but some had new corn.

One sign said: "40 cobs for 8 dollars, all homegrown, won't get any sweeter than that." This vendor was from Garnett, Kansas, about eighty miles from the market. She grows corn and sometimes takes it to Lawrence or Ottawa, Kansas, depending upon where she thinks she can get the most money. When I told her that there was no one here the rest of the week, she said: "Saturday is the only worthwhile day to come to the City Market and that only depends upon how much advertising is in the paper." If she and her husband don't feel there is enough [advertising], they go to some of the other farmers' markets. She also said that Sundays were worthless, not just because of church, but because the city has no idea what to do: "If it was a real market, there would be a reason to come here, but it's just not worth it."

Another example comes from October 22, 2005 when a relaxed, end-of-the-season feeling settled over the market. Prices were much more fluid than normal; if a pumpkin was selling for $1.50, you could easily get the price down to one dollar if that was all you had. Lots of greens were available: lettuce, cole crops such as kale, Swiss chard and broccoli rabe. The Asian stalls, in particular, were loaded with greens, most of which were unrecognizable to the uninformed (i.e., most Caucasians) who passed by, but eagerly bought by those with knowledge. Squash was everywhere, many different varieties. Some of the vendors even had recipe cards indicating different ways to cook this vegetable beyond simply baking.

A couple selling peaches told me that "we are a market couple; we met here, got married, and now are trying to consolidate. We live seventy miles apart out south of town but since I farm during the winter in my greenhouse and he during the summer in the fields, we now are year-round." Laughing heartily, she said: "Now we work harder when we thought it would be easier!" She told me that "the flow of knowledge between us and customers is diminished as the season fades, but if you have fields, you can continue to sell in the market. Lots of the vendors are selling commercial food; there is no check on where it comes from now or even if you really grew it. They checked our fields last winter when they were fallow. What can you tell then?"

In the center aisle of the City Market there is a booth, or rather a series of tables, behind which sit an older Asian couple from North Kansas City. I was working in John Goode's stalls across from them. A young woman, dressed in what

can only be described as hippy chic said to the Asian woman: "Wow! What great looking lemon grass. Is it organic?" The older woman, from the look on her face, was not certain just what that meant and looked to John for help. John asked the young woman what she was looking for. "I want to know if the lemon grass is organic. Was it grown without any chemicals and under pristine circumstances?" John turned to the couple: "Did you grow the lemon grass in any different way than how you grow your other produce?" The woman replied: "It's grown next to the fence, does that make a difference?" The customer insisted: "But is it organic?" After a number of similar exchanges the young woman moved away exasperated and exclaimed to John indignantly: "I only buy organic." John, who I have learned, is nothing if not on the lookout for pretty young women, cooed something nice to her and guided her towards some of his organic heirloom tomatoes. The Asian woman looked at me, smiled, and said in perfect English: "Fuck it! It's a weed!"

On October 8, 2005, Bill, wearing an impressively dirty pair of overalls, pointed across the center aisle of the City Market, and mumbled: "The Amish or Mennonites, whoever they are, you know, they sell these perfect 'Mountain Spring' or 'Mountain Air' tomatoes. Perfect, but they are tasteless, and they flood the market with them (although they charge the same price as for heirloom tomatoes). We are going to grow some next year just because we have to compete. We have loyal customers; in fact, they keep us in business. People argue with us all the time about the produce. What they don't realize is that each variety only has about a two-week window where it is available and then you wait for the next variety to ripen

depending on species. Not always do you get the same type [of produce in general, but I think he meant tomatoes in this particular instance] for a long period. Right now there are the remnants of the year that we can sell, so the market has a lot of leftover stuff such as the last plums, end-of-the-year tomatoes, cukes that are getting seedy, etc. [We are] only going to be growing squashes and lettuce right on through fall."

I caught a conversation between an elderly man and his daughter as I walked behind them: "I don't trust the big booths, you never know how fresh the food can be," he murmured to her. She said: "Do you think that is why all of the produce seems to be cheaper in those places?" He said under his breath: "You never really know where it comes from either; that's why the center stalls are so much better."

Two younger Asian kids, one boy and one girl, were sitting on chairs behind a table right on the south side of the City Market. The table was covered in exotic greens. I said: "Did you grow all of this?" The girl answered" "Yes, it's all home grown." "You've been busy," I said. She laughed, "Well, my parents there (pointing behind the car backed up to the stall) have. They grow everything at our house in north Kansas City." I, noting that, while a lot of white shoppers look and poke around, few buy, asked: "Why don't you sell it to people who know what it is?" She said: "Everyone in our neighborhood grows their own food, and even if they wanted to buy it from us, they wouldn't pay for it because they know how cheap it is." I laughed and said: "You shouldn't have told me that. I won't pay for it either!" She looked me right in the eye and said: "Oh yes you will." As it is, this Asian produce was far cheaper than more traditional types of produce at other vendor stalls in the

market. It was also sold differently. Rather than by the pound, it was wrapped with rubber bands into bundles, which typically cost a dollar. According to the young lady, one bundle of a type of green similar to squash blossoms that have not flowered, (I have no idea what kind of plant they were), would have enough edible material to be used in a stir-fry for six people over the course of three meals. Two-foot long bean pods that resemble more traditional green beans and are served the same way, weighs more than a pound and will serve two people at least twice. There was real value for a cook here but no one was buying except those already in the know.

At the suburban farmers' markets

Along a single table in a stall with no clearly identified name in the Zona Rosa farmers' market on a Tuesday evening, small bags of herbs and many varieties of early potatoes were stacked next to each other. Zona Rosa is a new, upscale shopping center in northern Kansas City. The two people working were wearing tee shirts that said "Juhl Greenhouse & Truck Farms," but when I asked if that was the name of their farm, both laughed and said they were just tee shirts. They also won't tell me where they are from, simply saying, north Kansas City. A small, handwritten sign on their table read: "Nearly everything was picked within 24 hours, varieties and production techniques available upon request." I asked the woman there if anyone takes them up on their sign. She said no, but when I asked why not, she was unsure of herself, I realized that she didn't speak English very well. So I asked if having local food is a big deal or do customers not care? She brightened, grinned wildly and said: "It is the most important thing. People ask all the time."

At the Kansas City Organics & Natural Market at Minor Park, a very thin man selling small bags of radishes, lettuces, and single cobs of corn, told me: "We are down on the number of vendors today, seem to be missing three or four." I asked, "why here?" He replied: "Well, we used to be over there on Holmes, closer to the city. Had a lot more vendors, too. They seem to be drifting away." This decline in vendors is similar to what I learned at the KCK Green Market on the corner of 6th and Tauromee in Kansas City, Kansas, during their normal Wednesday noontime farmers' market. There usually were only three stalls, each run by an elderly gentleman selling the overproduction of his backyard garden. Only elderly women were shopping the three stalls whenever I visited, and all were paying with vouchers from the state of Kansas used to promote healthy eating. All three vendors participated in the Kansas Senior Nutrition Program that provides the vouchers. They told me that this system works and is necessary for the bulk of their customers in this market. As one trader said: "It [i.e. the voucher system] keeps us in business here and provides good, healthy food for seniors. It's been like this since the Local Harvest people sort of fell apart. We lose vendors, the place looks like crap because there aren't any people here, so no one comes, blah, blah, blah. I only sell what I can't eat or give away (don't tell anyone I give stuff away!). Thank god for the vouchers; it pays for the gas."

This same vendor also told me that: "Zona Rosa people are great, they don't even ask about prices. They are so happy to have us there. Most of what I have today is left over from last night [a Tuesday] there. The only thing they dislike is when I don't have certain sizes of an item such as tomatoes or cukes. They are so used to

what is in the supermarket, they think that is the only way food comes. They don't like it if there are blemishes or funny shapes." With a laugh he added: "I still can't convince them that a wrinkle on a tomato is distinctive and better flavored than a perfectly round one."

Later during the summer of 2006, I went to the KCK market on a Saturday morning. There were more vendors than Wednesdays. An elderly black woman told me that she grew everything on her table except the "watermelon and sweet potatoes because I don't have enough room in my backyard. So I get these wholesale [I do not find out where] and sell them here." I asked her if she felt conflicted by the selling of a global product at a local farmers' market and she said: "Well, I never think of it, it's just watermelons isn't it?" She also implied that the sweet potatoes came from elsewhere but I believe a friend of hers grows those.

Another vendor there told me that he gets apples from St. Joseph because his brother-in-law wholesales from there and he can tack on a smaller order without messing that up. He sells them at the KCK market because "older people eat more apples, and they like fresh, local ones." But later, another vendor called him out by saying "all food here has to be food grown in Kansas or one county next to it in adjacent states." I could not find out if this was true but it suggests that it would limit the direction food travels to the market—"This ensures that the food is at least local at the state level. We have a very different crowd, much older. Most walk here or at least car pool; no one seems to have much money. There is more of a neighborhood feeling. People can drive right into the parking lot, bring their own shopping bags,

and go to each stall to visit, chat for awhile and than go home with a little fresh food." The first gentleman assured me that his apples were grown in a Missouri county right next to Kansas, he only gets them from St. Joseph.

One Wednesday at the KCK Green Market there were five vendors instead of three. One was a man from Bonner Springs who told me: "When I do come here on Wednesdays it's because I don't have to travel very far and I can always sell out what I have. But I go to Merriam on Saturdays." He then leaned over and whispered: "There is a better clientele there." I quietly asked him: "What does that mean?" He finished by saying, "younger, with more money." As it is the prices were very low—a bunch of really fresh, clean mustard greens sold for fifty cents total. I happened to know that this product was selling for $1.88/lb. at the Wild Oats store.

I was strolling around the Brookside farmers' market on Saturday morning, September 16, 2005, when I heard a young woman who works for the Kansas Community Garden organization [which promotes making gardens on unused urban lots in an effort to both clean up the city and provide healthy produce], talking to an equally young couple pushing a baby carriage: "Taste is what consumers want to buy. In many ways it's like what Alice Waters is trying to do in California with Chino Farms [a well-known champion of fresh food, Ms. Waters own Chez Panisse in Berkeley, one of the first organic restaurants in the United States. She also promoted Chino Farms in their growing of alternative varietals and unusual vegetables]--you know, a system of excellence along the lines of the old IBM where people work for a lifetime because they are treated right. So they give back because they know that they

can expect the same." I mentioned that something like this is called a lifestyle commodity because not too many can afford such expensive produce. She said: "Well, it damn well shouldn't be! Why the hell is it? It's because of corporate greed that's why. If they didn't need to make so much goddamn money we wouldn't have to pay so much!" I said that it was a little more complex than that, since everyone needs to make a living, but she scoffed at me, saying: "Well how much is enough then?"

In August of 2006, I was hanging around the front entrance to the Merriam farmers' market. A young man selling corn and tomatoes in bulk quantities of five and ten pounds only, had a sign that read, "Fresh, Sweet Corn, picked this morning. Very sweet, some ear worms in tips." As I bought a dozen ears, I asked if the worms bother customers and if the worms were because he made a point of not spraying. I was implying to him that he must be organic and should make a selling point of this. He said: "Some customers won't buy because of the worms, but this time of year you can't get away from them. I would spray but I am too busy." I then bluntly asked why he did not make a corresponding positive out of the presence of the worms. He laughed and told me: " If I was dishonest I might; I certainly could make a killing if I went to Brookside with that in mind. But I spray early and late simply because farming is really hard work and I just need the help. Many customers won't buy. They think the worms are harmful, but just cut them away. They only eat the tip!"

I asked the corn vendor: "Why here, why Merriam?" He replied: "I sell in Bannister [I'm not sure where this is since there is no market at the now-closed

Bannister Mall, near I-435 and Bannister Road] on Tuesday, Independence Wednesday. I'm in the field on Friday so my mother sells for me, Saturday in Independence and Bannister and Sunday here, just too busy to think about it." I asked: "Do you have to sell here during the week in order to sell on Saturday or Sunday?" "No," he replied, "anywhere I sell is okay with them [i.e. the Merriam officials]; "Saturday and Sunday are my big days."

Later that same day, a vendor told me: "Merriam is great! Most of us roll in around ten. It gets busy just enough to sell, peaks around one after church (got to love those church goers) and then drops off so fast I can go home." I asked: "So it peaks around one because of church getting out?" "Yeh," he laughed: "Folks here still seem to have a little of the traditional Sunday meal about them. They buy lots of food each week that I am open. It's a slower, later, nicely drawn-out day and I make some money."

On September 17, a Saturday, I followed an elderly man who seemed to be giving a tour to a small group of people around the Shawnee farmers' market on Johnson Drive. He said in a happy voice: "Isn't it great! They've got pumpkins, huge gourds, and lots of squashes. You never see this stuff in a supermarket. It's better food than the supermarket, and cheaper, too. Especially now as the season winds down." He walked them around some more and then they dispersed to shop. He told me his name was Jerry and that he worked for one of the local greenhouses and gives little tours as a favor to the owners. He said about the market: "There is a tradition with some about going to the marketplace. Sometimes people talk with me about that,

about how they want to recapture an older feeling, a sense and style that they remember."

A twenty-something black woman was shopping with her mother who was wearing a large, brightly colored, and flowing dress. They wanted to buy three dozen ears of corn from one of the vendors at the Overland Park farmers' market and it was apparent that they wanted a deal. The market price at this time of day (early morning) was still relatively high--$3.50 a dozen. The vendor they have chosen said that three dozen ears was not enough to warrant a deal, but when they insisted, he offered a price of three dollars per dozen. The elder woman then took out a knife from the folds of her gown and cut open each cob, rejecting those with worms outright. The vendor half-heartedly objected, saying: "The worm doesn't affect the flavor, just cut it off." She ignored him in silence, gathered her three dozen into a bag, paid him with a twenty that he had to make change for, and then moved off. He rolled his eyes at me but rather resignedly as they walked off; he did not say anything.

In the stores and elsewhere

A gentleman named Mark and his wife from Lenexa were shopping for tomatoes at the Save-a-Lot Store along Blue Ridge Cutoff in Kansas City, Missouri. They were buying tomatoes in bulk from the store because, as Mark pointed out: "One of the great things about this type of bulk supermarket is that they want to move food because it's already on its way out! We come from a ranching background but don't have the time to grow tomatoes now. We really like to can though, for the winter. Our own taste better than canned ones." I suggested in surprise: "But these are

commercial tomatoes. They are not even close to those at one of the local farmers' markets in flavor! Why would you buy them?" He replied with no hesitation: "It's too dammed expensive to buy from those people, even tomatoes that have gone by are way expensive. We believe that during the summer or late summer, all tomatoes are good enough." I asked if his canned tomatoes are better than those one can buy fresh in the winter. He said: "Well, we don't usually buy fresh in the winter; it's not really something one does. Winter is time for sauces and things, not really for tomatoes."

In the Whole Foods Market in Overland Park, a man stocking the banana display right in front of the entrance door said that "I think there are people coming into our store or to any of the farmers' markets of the city on Saturdays out of a tradition. They are from Europe but also a lot of the Asians too. These are people who remember city markets and try to capture that feeling again. They bring their kids a lot but that's mostly for the other things like the toys here or the jugglers at City Market. The Asians come to shop. I think that they still buy a lot of fresh food that way, you know, every day." I wondered why he would think that about his store, so I asked: "But your store is nothing like one of the farmers' markets!" He said: "That's what we try to emulate with these displays and the way we situate our produce. It's so that customers feel like they are in a market."

Dolores at a small coffee shop in Lenexa near the entrance to the farmers' market, said to me as I was buying my morning coffee: "People are always coming in, exclaiming about how great it is and then wondering in their excitement how long the market has been at this location and how could they have missed it! They are

always shocked," she said, "that they have been there longer than the nine years I've been working here."

At the Brookside farmers' market, I once stood behind Robbins Hail's stall, up against the fence, at her husband's invitation. A woman who stopped and fondled the fruit on the table said: "I really like the pretty red or pink peaches the best. How come some have yellow streaks on them?" He replied: "All of these [all varieties of peaches] are grown under or off of limbs that are typically under the canopy. The top of the tree has very few peaches. The yellow is only an area where a leaf was up against the peach." She said: "Does it affect the flavor?" He answered: "No, they all ripen at the same time. Day length is what is important; the sun's direct rays only make them more colorful." She asked then: "So, the yellow ones are just as ripe?" He nodded in the affirmative, but she then said: "Well, I only like the red ones, they still are the best" and she walked away without buying any. He looked at me, smiled, shrugged his shoulders, and said: " Sometimes you can't tell someone the truth; they just don't want to hear it."

General themes identified in the chapter

Consider the perfectly ripe, consistently sized, wonderfully colorful tomatoes in the Kansas City marketplace from growers in a religious community along the nearby Missouri River. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many people purchase tomatoes from these vendors simply because of the stereotypical images of Amish and other conservative farming communities: organic, heirloom varieties, fresh, ripe, and ultimately (it is hoped) delicious. On cursory examination this means nothing, but

deeper insight via the *filière* analysis of chapter three reveals that these tomatoes come from two single seed groups that are genetically modified (Jet Star and Mountain Fresh). Further, enclosed greenhouses are the reasons for both consistency in appearance and year-long production and, while the heat source that enables this production is a wood-fired oven and all that this implies, the modern, industrial production is hidden behind the religious ideal.

Although the above example is that of a linear network, it is also an example of a fetish. Not of the tomato in this case, but of the religiousness, the wholesomeness, or purity that produces the tomato. Consumers purchase this fruit based upon the ideal that the people represent, not the ideal of the fruit itself. Actually the tomato is irrelevant here; it only represents the people. The hybridized fruit itself is actually nothing more than an example of a "faceless foodscape." This fruit to the consumers embodies no particular place. Anecdotal evidence was given me from other traders who did not wish to seem blasphemous about the growers. I do not know if their story is true, but I do know that week after week through the entire City Market season, the "Amish" tomatoes were always the same size, ripeness, and color. No consumer thought to question them, however, nor did I until various stall owners pointed the fact out to me. Several of these same vendors told me that they would be growing similarly in the future to compete.

Quoting the geographer Louise Crewe (2001: 630) again as saying that globalization requires us to "more fully realize the relationships between practices associated with the provision of food and the consumption of that food," the

relationships that I discussed in the previous chapter come to play here but with very different contexts and possibilities to explore. The first is that, for most consumers in the farmers' markets of the city, the relationships they have with the farmer are what drive the transaction. This type of trust, however, is vastly different than that previously examined. It is not one of ubiquity and convenience. Rather, it is the trust of health, organics, and possibly sustainability. It is one of value, not of price. The value that consumers attach to these places of consumption far exceeds any imposition price would bring. Something other than sheer capitalism brings these relationships into play. In many cases the price is as irrelevant as was the tomato in other examples, since it is often so much out of proportion to the price one could pay for a similar item in one of the supermarkets. These transactions definitely lie outside the model of "rational man" and are not the way consumers should act according to the literature explored in chapter three.

One of the interesting differences between the City Market and the other farmers' markets is the composition of shoppers. This is especially noticeable with Brookside. The City Market has a very mixed crowd from its opening bell until 11:00 a.m. It is equal parts blacks, Hispanics, and whites, but topped by a majority that is clearly Asian. Around 11:00 a.m., however, this racial mix changes to almost exclusively white. Couples are pushing strollers with their kids. They come down for the entertainment and buy at most a couple of tomatoes, often exclaiming at how beautiful everything looks. Older couples on holiday or who have driven in from the surrounding communities are almost always disappointed, perhaps because they

remember when markets were different. There is a very good diner called Succotash, which operated in the north building during my time there. Many people came there for a late breakfast.

Bill and Janice Johnson from Lenexa rode into the City Market on a tandem bicycle late one morning as I was loitering by the north wall. As they were sharing stories with a group of other riders and a small group of tourists from Iowa, an older man approached on a ten-speed and asked about the Succotash restaurant: "Have you eaten here?" Their reply was very upbeat: "It's good, great breakfasts. We like riding down here on Sundays and eating." The visitor said to them: "I thought there was a biking club that met here before riding. I thought I would come and see if I could find them. Forgot that there was a market here." He wished them a good day and went off without buying anything. This one of the common occurrences at the market: consumers (other than the ethnic groups that arrive early specifically to purchase food), treating it as a place for show and not for food. Another Sunday there were twenty-one booths in the center aisle selling items ranging from produce to magnetic healing bracelets. Two small tables held the bagged items of backyard growers, and John's truck was backed up behind three large stalls. Kids jumped on a large, covered trampoline, families seemed to be shopping mostly for fun. I didn't see a single transaction at John's stall for over an hour. A band played Cajun music on the southeast corner and Winslow's BBQ joint was packed with white customers watching the festival.

In contrast to the City Market, I heard it said in Brookside that if there was a Hispanic, Black, or Asian person in the neighborhood, they were either there to mow the lawn, clean the pool, or act as a nanny. In many ways this reality is a problem for Brookside. Theirs is the most organic, most "healthy" of all of the markets. It is also, by far, the most expensive. The customers at Brookside do not complain, but the people who most need the food offered there cannot afford to shop. In essence, Brookside is a destination market—you have to go there from some other place, making an effort as if it were an event, not simply food shopping, although those who live there do not look at it that way. Tomatoes there sold for $4.00 a pound during a time when they cost $1.50 at all the other markets. All of the vendors come from somewhere in Missouri or Kansas. Although I often heard: "Oh, we grow our food in north Kansas City," or even: "We just come over from Bonner Springs," I never heard: "We grew this in the immediate neighborhood." I am not being critical about the idea of this market. It serves its purpose for the community and has a legitimate audience. It is totally organic (that seems to be the basic point of its existence), but many people in the city either cannot afford its cost or do not feel comfortable in its upscale, white setting.

There is no association placed upon Brookside that is linked to the quality of that actual food. To say that a tomato comes from the market does not imply that it was grown there in the same way as John's produce speaks of Wathena. What is implied is that Brookside tomatoes are better because the neighborhood itself is better. It is, in many ways, a reflection of how good people who live there have it

over those in other parts of the city. It is implying a quality of life beyond just the quality of food. It also suggests that demographics play a bigger role in the movement of food (at least organic food) in the city than some of the major players would admit. Cosentino's is the only chain to have stores in Brookside. It would be unrealistic to expect competitors to respond to the demand the money of Brookside commands. They are excluded in a practical sense because not enough households exist there to support a third store. This potentially changes the face of Brookside into one of exclusion even more than does the price of its tomatoes.

One of my *a priori* conceptions about farmers' markets and those who sell at them was that there would be a sense of shared responsibility to each other and to the market. I thought that each person involved would believe that it was in their best interests to have the market succeed. But I now think that it is the larger supermarkets and produce distributors, the people who by rights should be the most capitalistic and want their competitors to fail, who are more dedicated to ensuring that produce will be available. It seems odd, but AWG has a greater vested interest in seeing Ball Foods or Liberty Fruit stay in business then Robbins Hail does in seeing Dan May do the same. Although she would not wish ill on him, or hope for Brookside to fail, she would still be able to move elsewhere and sell her goods if he or the market could not continue.

The dynamics of capitalism seem to be best indicated through the economies of scale that bring produce into AWG's system. These same economies also work best to keep everyone within that system in business. If one local farmer has a bad

year (that could entail many different things from frost to drought to pests to illness in the family), no one except the immediate family involved will give them produce to continue selling at the market. The community that builds up around a particular vendor would suffer from the loss of that relationship, but it quickly would then move elsewhere to get its fresh food. But a supermarket will always have the food. It is expected. In fact, as I have shown, it would be inconceivable for the food not to be there. The institutional memory that Tracey Nelson from Cosentino's alluded to, where consumers only remember three months back, would not ensure that Nancy Kalman's customers would wait for her to recover from some sort of disaster. And, from a consumer's perspective, there may simply be not enough passion for the food to overcome anything they hear or read about a local failure. A small percentage of people really care, roughly the same who are involved in alternative networks or who shop with the same intensity as me. Only a few customers differentiate from the mainstream as far as buying Kalman's food.

As a researcher talking to people I often felt that I should purchase at least something. After all, it is their livelihood, I am merely a commentator. I was not alone in this. Many consumers, after talking about recipes or exchanging growing tips, visibly go through a mental checklist of manners as they grapple with rewarding the farmer for their knowledge. Some of those people often would buy very small amounts, the smallest they could find; in so doing they admitted that they were not really shopping, but rather searching for entertainment.

The City Market in Kansas City is simply a construct, not a "real" market like ones in Europe or Asia that feed the cities of those places. A more representative market here would have to be in one of the suburbs near the intersection of major highways, but even this location would be inaccessible to many. You would have to drive to it, even if you lived nearby, and while it would be easy to provision with really fresh food, the globalization process suggests that it still would not save citizens money over what they already have access to in the local supermarkets. Commercial produce happens to be very cheap at the very seasons when the local crops are also available. For example, melons from Guatemala are one dollar each when local melons enter the market selling for $2.00/lb. Tomatoes will sell for .30 a pound when the market price is 3:00. Cedar Rock Acres in southern Missouri grows seedless Mars grapes. They can make enough money several weeks in a row in late August to afford to rent a U-Haul to come to the market. Their grapes sell for $5:00 a pound. Global Produce has green seedless grapes from California at the same time that they sell for .50 a pound. This poses a dilemma for many first-time customers coming to the market.

I do not want to imply that the City Market never works. Occasionally you go and it feels like a market. There will be lots of people looking and walking around and also lots of really fresh food being bought in the center aisle. But this does not happen often, usually only when some sort of promotion exists such as a band or a holiday festival drawing people.

John once told me a story: “Had an interesting thing happen in Zona Rosa last evening. A young Russian woman [again, John has an eye for the ladies] came up and said that nothing smelled like it did in Russia. I asked her where she was from and she said the Ukraine, but she had been in the states for ten years. She said that the only place she could smell the foods at all was at a farmers’ market, but it wasn’t the same. We argued about it for a little while, but then I stopped being a salesman and tried to listen to what she said. I asked her if there was anything good about my produce, and she said that it had a good smell, that of the soil and water, but it wasn’t enough to make a difference. I told her that my farm was along the river so she tasted my area. She thought about it, I guess, because she came back later and bought a bunch of stuff. Isn’t that interesting?”

A younger man named Tom, who often worked for the farmer whose stall is next to John’s, heard us talking and, since he knows that I am from the university, said: “Well, that’s the beauty of a farmers’ market, isn’t it? It’s the meeting place of cultures, of foods. Look at the different perspectives: Europeans versus Orientals. The Asians, they grow all of this food in their backyards. The Europeans [I assumed he meant people with a European background] are more farm oriented, you know, larger and more used to western foods like tomatoes and potatoes that take up space. Here in Kansas it is exactly like some of the Oriental climates, much better for their type of food than ours. They can grow like crazy, but it’s perfect for them. Take Asian pears [a small, apple-like fruit that is crunchy rather than soft when ripe] for instance; they are perfect for growing here, plus, they taste great!”

These stories do not reflect the inside of any supermarket; they are those of the producers of our food, not the suppliers (separating these into two categories). Modern concerns about the safety of food eliminate all odors, even those that evoke memory. These memories are not considered necessary or even beneficial. Such issues concern people who have their hands in the dirt of our food production but, as stated throughout this dissertation, they are removed from our modern food systems because they take away from the unrelenting provision of plenty. Odors and such make us stop to think about food, and that is not something that the modern supply networks find useful.

Many different approaches and interactions with the modern world occur to consumers everyday without comment or confusion. But the above vignettes highlight how our world is not as simplistic or isolated into America's heartland as we might believe. The produce distributors on the outside buildings of the City Market sell melons from Guatemala at the same time as a farmer sells his from southern Nebraska. But others will have melons from Rocky Ford, Colorado, famous for being among the most flavorful in the country and only appearing in the market for a short time in early August. Sustainability would suggest the purchase of the local ones to ensure the success of that particular network. Reflexive consumerism might result in the Rocky Ford melon gracing a table. But economies of scale means that globalized melons are the cheapest.

To take another example, what should one do when the market itself is not easily reachable by public transportation, impossible to walk to because of the

prospect of getting killed by a car zooming by on the Interstates, and too far away for those of the city who might most benefit from the melons in the first place? Availability issues harken back to Friedland's (2004) comments from chapter three that, as the products of globalization become available, they shrink our world. This, of course, does not inherently lead to an improved standard of living. It leads instead to confrontation, the dilemma of contemporary society.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

Food is a chimera; it both reveals and disguises patterns of consumption, which themselves are ever changing in a swirl of habit and the challenge to stay interested in good nutrition. What may be true for a certain day in a certain place is difficult to pin down in others. Tomatoes for a stew are different than those fresh with basil and mozzarella. This characteristic, again in Marxian terms, also hides the exploitation behind what it took to bring the product to the consumer. I have tried to emphasize throughout this dissertation that the difficulties of contemporary society are revealed in the movements of foods and people's attitudes toward what they eat. Consumers must stake a claim to what goes into their bodies. The name Kansas City perhaps evokes ideas of the nation's "heartland" or "breadbasket," but this does not translate necessarily into cheap food, or for that matter, into more readily available food sources. We are not inherently safer here in our food systems than anywhere else simply because we live in one of those mental places.

Food is now very definitely part of globalized culture. We all know this, but we are still not fully aware that the space our foods travel is both hidden in the price and yet, at the same time, the cause of that price. When the idea that places make spaces, or better put, the places we make are not those of others so the distances between them become visible, food must then travel between places. One troubling concept is that the distance a tomato travels from Wathena, Kansas, to the Brookside farmers' market somehow creates a far more expensive price than that from the Santa

Rosa plant in Mexico to a Hen House in Overland Park. The spaces for the latter are greater geographically but the idea of the former carries more use value as a commodity for consumers. Strange though this may be, the idealization of the local product gives rise to a mental space that is greater than the global tomato.

I have offered numerous examples to show that the food networks of Kansas City reveal important truths about modernity and globalization. People attach different value to foods, which, in and of itself, is the crucial point. I have also tried to demonstrate why this matters. Food is both easily dismissed and yet amenable to an in-depth interview lasting hours. It is much more than simply, "let's eat!" or "the way to a man's heart is through his stomach." A more thoughtful explanation can come from pondering the words of historian Felipe Fernandez-Armesto (2002: 202.):

> The way to eat cheaply and well, if you have a decent larder, stove and cooking pans at home, remains essentially what it has always been: buy seasonal vegetables, abundant potatoes, garlic and onions, pulses and milled but uncooked grains. Some of these things can be stored for long periods of time; larder materials such as salt or other spices, vinegars and oils, certainly in the past potatoes, garlic and onions were stored in vegetable cellars for much longer than they are today. And any uncooked grains would have been kept as insect free as possible until they were eaten.

For someone who can cook, it is easy to negotiate the way to "eat cheaply and well." For those who cannot cook, endless information exists on the Internet and television in the form of recipes and celebrity chefs. Yes it seems so easy, and yet many Americans reject all of the above and decide to eat out.

Many different ingredients go into a single meal and each one has an individual, involved production history. These all go to form a curtain around the meal. Hugh Mackay (1997: 48) has written that:

> Because consumers are acting with deeply held values and are not mindless hedonists, it does not, however, follow that the consequences of what they do are good for others. On the contrary, the more consumers try to save money on behalf of their families, the more they enable global economic agencies to justify the reduction of labor costs and to end welfare to people who produce these goods. Indeed, increasingly in the complex modern economy, the same people may, in their roles as worker, be the people hurt by the action they take as consumers.

I take exception to Mackay's thought that consumers act with "deeply held values." My experience is that some do, but it is the same minority who buys organic, or seeks out local produce. Consumers who actively shop with good intentions may not fully follow through on the repercussions of their actions. Again, it harkens back to those who would pay more for a tomato coming from forty miles away than for one from a thousand miles. Or, is it better to buy a local strawberry with some small amount of chemical used to control slugs than one from California that is certified organic? Kansas City may be different than other cities in the percentage of reflexive consumers who act this way, but this question is outside the scope of this dissertation. What is relevant is discussion of the differences between what is said about delivering food to the city and what is actualized on the street.

Think back to the story about the woman buying cherries at Wild Oats from chapter four. All of the many things happening in that social interaction are critical to

my dissertation. It is all well and good to suggest that a fetish is attached to the cherries the lady desires. But it is also true that the availability of cherries during their peak season floods the market with such quality and price value that consumers get blinded. This is not fetishism; it is simply a reflection of seasonality delivering a commodity. If Wild Oats then offers cherries year round, the consumer can buy them because of the company's overarching theme: "it's organic and fresher, right?" What then does the consumer do?

My interactions in the markets of Kansas City are a personal geography, but also one where each of my interviewees has expressed their own insights into place and space. What is true is that there is simply much more to food due to the changing nature (or Nature, of course) than might be said about other types of commodities. In sum, I think they have proved my basic hypothesis that this type of research is a valuable tool for examining our modern society. An ethnographic approach to everyday consumption practices shows us "an explanation of the political significance of consumption studies" (MacKay 1997: 4). Using Kansas City as case study for broader examinations of modernity, I have tried to lead readers toward a fuller understanding of commodity exchanges. Although the possibility always exists that I am wrong, that what I did can not be duplicated in other places and that the existing theories overshadow my more ephemeral findings, I feel I have discovered a series of important and strongly suggestive points to challenge current academic thought.

Everything is local--we recognize the immediate effects upon people; I understand that the consequences of my actions show me how to connect the

inequalities of society into my own life. I have worked to show how the social awareness of a product, our understanding of the problems associated with commodities exchange can be seen through food. As David Miller has written: "The idea of being local can be a sign of our involvement in increasingly global relations" (quoted in Mackay 1997: 39). Connections have to be made between all of the various actors, not simply those at the local level (Angus, Cook, and Evans 2001). I am not an isolated human operating in my own world. Rather, I am a part of many different "things" that had to happen to realize my presence in front of a commodity that a market trader wants to sell. This is not to say that relationships are causal; the process is subtler than that. Latour (1991: 125) has suggested that:

> successive layers of actants . . . get goals and borders attributed to them. Each of these layers is characterized by incompatible vocabulary. On the one hand, the translation operation consists of defining successive layers of vocabulary, of attributing goals, and of defining impossibilities; on the other hand, it consists of displacing--hence the other meaning of translation--one program of action into another program of action. The overall movement of the translation is defined by a detour and by a return.

Thus, I am embedded in a web much like a commodity, which flows through me from others, but also between others from myself in a constant (re) shuffling.

The web of which I speak should not be conceived only as the physical links that run from me to any other person; they are also how we as humans and our technologies are linked to nature. The wholesaler, the importer, the shipper, the exporter, the merchandiser, the producer, the land owner, the farmer, the seed company, the researcher, the university, the students, the building, the builder, his

workers, the brick and wood, the forest and quarry, the chain saw and the awl, the skipjack and the skidder, the truck, the petrol, the refinery, the tanker, the pipeline, the oil rig, the drill bit, the diamond, Amsterdam, a Hassidic Jew, a diamond smuggler of unknown ethnic background, an Angolan or Congolese, perhaps a legal representative of the South African government, a migrant black mine worker from Soweto, all are connected to me, other shoppers, and each of the different things offered here.

Between each of these entities are the spaces where decisions are made, knowledge is (re) claimed (Haraway 1988), and human/machine/nature interactions move from the abstract into the real (read commercial). Each of these is not separate from our individual existence. Rather, they offer opportunities for new connections and the web gets wider and wider. It can make you a little crazy if you think of acting on everything. Haraway does not isolate these spaces however: "No insiders perspective is privileged, because all drawings of inside-outside boundaries in knowledge are theorized as power moves, not moves toward truth" (1988: 576). She merely has noted that, again, there is more to this than meets the eye. Modernity (globalization) simultaneously brings us both closer to the rest of the world and distances us from it. Food is available at all times and in many different modes while turning us away from the factors of production and the differences of variety. We gain access while losing knowledge.

Although some people use the term "placeless foodscape" for our current situation (Ilbery and Kneafsey 2000: 319), real places still exist in our mental picture

of the city. Places make other places and also the spaces between those places. This is not just idle musing. Thinking of Kansas City as a sort of ridgeline, facing south from the river toward the Plaza and beyond to Route I-435, you can see how the city falls off east and west, both physically and as a mental construct through food. West, along the Kansas River to your immediate right, are the river bottoms, Southwest Boulevard, and then out southward into the more exclusive neighborhoods of Kansas. To the east lies Independence, Missouri, and some neighborhoods that might be labeled as the lesser part of the city. As I have shown, not a lot of access to wholesome, nutritious food exists in either of these "lesser" regions.

Food networks work in both directions with all of those involved. Consumers seek out the foods. They want the cachet these products bring to their lives; they make the fetish of commodity possible; and everyone uses these desires to make a living. For Mackay (1997: 4), "culture is about the process of identification and differentiation, what we choose to eat and how we negotiate its purchase becomes a part of who we are as well as the means to show it to the world." Some consumers also use all of the various networks at their disposal in confronting the modern world of food, understanding both the linear idea of fresh asparagus and the inherent difficulties of February, but most do not. People involved in the farmers' markets, the Food Circle, and the many different CSAs are rational in their economic decisions but flexible in recognizing that modern consumption possibilities offer options to seasonality. Most consumers in the major supermarkets of the city do not. I have shown how those who are aware act to improve that awareness, but this is really

preaching to the converted. The world that some confront has a transparency to it, but perhaps it is only partial, one where certain details emerge that are acted upon but these same details disguise others. Some might call this the "double fetish" (Coles and Hallett 2007), but in the eyes of others (see for example Sack 1997) this is where advertising drives our consumerism.

If one is buying ice cream at any of the supermarkets of Kansas City, little connection exists to the origin of that product if it is not stated on the label. It could be from Wisconsin, Vermont, or almost anywhere else. The driver of the truck that delivered it doesn't know either; he only picked it up from a wholesaler. The only quality check is his word, the governmental regulations that provide the infrastructure that facilitated the ice cream arriving there, and whether it is melted or frost damaged. Each of the supermarkets as a business will dictate the price based upon their own profit needs. So, in essence, it is true that a generic ice cream in the supermarket is a part of a "placeless foodscape." But once a specific place of origin is identified, concerns about the ice cream disappear as this place begins to define the food.

For some people in the city it is important to know where their ice cream or their tomato came from because then they can "consume" a place as well as the product. These people are a minority, however. Another way of looking at this problem is the question of why the origin of a wine is so important to consumers, but not that of a bottle of Coca-Cola? Certainly the origin of the cola must bear some relationship to its flavor? Places present the consumer with an opportunity to consume something different than generic, to consume "geography."

Furthermore, taking the opposite argument, a local tomato farmer must make a minimum profit to continue farming; otherwise the economics of living would require that she switch to some other item. But who can forecast that far into the future? So to "sell a place," for example Brookside, to a consumer to eat while eating the tomato is perhaps outside our right to criticize. All of the ideas of modernity in our foods add successive layers of problems for a reflexive consumer. The ethics of fair trade, or the health suggestions inherent in organic must be considered, if only for a moment.

Why does downtown Kansas City lack substantial food providers? To suggest that the City Market can provide food for that area is naïve in that it gives primacy to the market as if it had control over food movements. As I have pointed out, it has constricted hours of operation, lacks storage space and easy delivery systems for its own internal operations, and most of all, exhibits little reality as a space of consumption. Standing there one day, engaged in a conversation, I thought again of Kansas City as a central spine of privilege running southward falling off on either side toward poverty. Heather, a college student just returned from a Peace Corps mission in Burkina Faso asked me: "Where do the people eat who live along Troost Avenue around 39th Street?" When I replied they really have few choices, she asked, "What is meant by a food desert? My boyfriend heard the term shopping over in Waldo about the Troost area." I said that a food desert is a part of the city where no access to a grocery store exists within walking distance, places so isolated from food that they might as well be in the Sahara. The standard answer for why this particular

desert exists was provided by David Ball in chapter four: there simply are not enough households in the downtown area to make it economically viable for a major supermarket to put a store there.

The Cosentino company wants to put an upscale grocery store in downtown Kansas City, Missouri, near the new H&R Block headquarters at 13th and Main streets. This move is strongly supported by the Downtown Council, which represents a number of employers and property owners downtown (Smith and Collison 2005: A-6). Its president Bill Dietrich has said, for example, that: "An urban grocer . . . is the number-one-rated amenity by a very wide margin. Residents have told us that the last three years."

The council estimates that about nine thousand people now live in the core of downtown—defined as the City Market, central business district, and Crossroads (Smith and Collison 2005: A-6). As indicated by Figure 14, this is a large geographic area, one not easily walked. Is this enough to support a supermarket? The former mayor of Kansas City, Missouri, Kay Barnes, has argued yes, saying that major new entertainment plans including the new Sprint Entertainment Complex, in addition to the gentrification of downtown, will invigorate the area. She sees Cosentino's as "a full-service supermarket along with a wonderful gourmet, take-home section similar to the Brookside Market, which everyone is thrilled with" (Smith and Collison 2005: A-6).

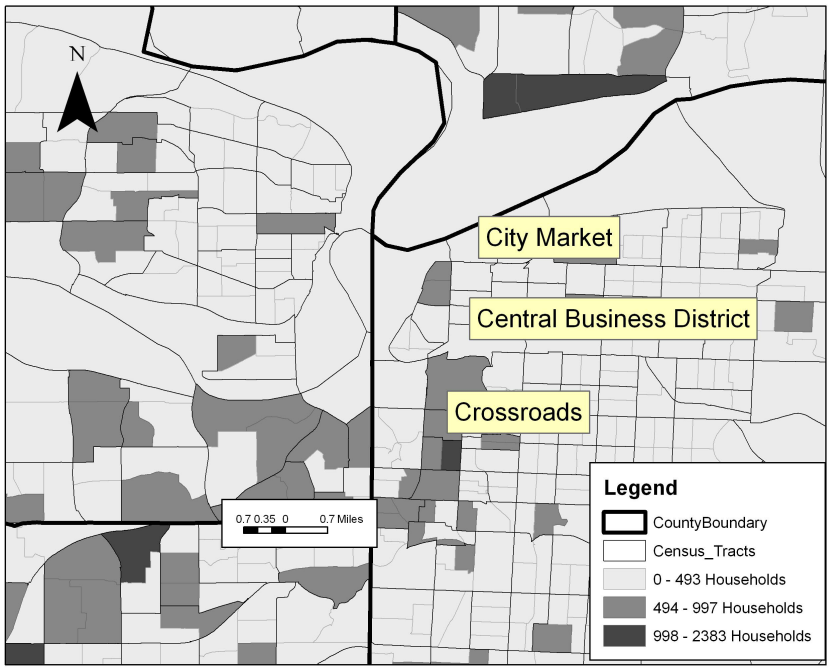

Figure 14. Downtown Area. Created in ArcMap June 12, 2007.
Source: US Census, ESRI Inc.

Problems exist with the downtown supermarket concept on many levels, however. One is concern over total customer numbers (Figure 14). On this map, shading represents the number of households per census block. The lightest is for 0-493 households, the middle grey is 494-997, and the darkest is 998 to 2,383, which is the largest single value in this data. In reference to David Ball's suggestion that it takes ten thousand roofs to support a single store, the total number of households in the entire area is simply too low.

The second problem is the new supermarket will cut into what little business the City Market now enjoys, especially since the new store will presumably sell the same kinds of produce. Third is a social issue of how the supermarket might accommodate those whose needs are now currently met by lower-priced outlets such as Costco. Many people living in the surrounding neighborhoods cannot afford to shop at an upscale place.

Racism is at least as big a factor in Kansas City's food deserts as population totals, but this is hard to prove. Ask any of the major players in food and they suggest it is simply one of many significant factors in the demographics of the area. The situation indeed is complex and laden with moral as well as economic issues. Why would Hen House, for example, locate an upscale market in a downscale area? Why should a farmer be criticized for selling in Brookside for more money per pound for tomatoes then he or she can get at the City Market or in any of the supermarkets? Altruistic farming practices extend far, but not that far. Capitalism suggests that a farmer should make the best living he or she can. The idea that produce coming from Brookside is better than that of a supermarket implies that it is Brookside and not the food itself that makes the difference. Again, a tomato is just a tomato for some, while places are more important for others. The theory that profit is found as M-C-MΔM is grounded in the thought that some consumers will pay more for a commodity based upon an idea even if all other things remain the same. The flaw here is that control of that idea is constructed out of vague beliefs in things such as "organic," "free-range," and "natural" that come from human trust and not physical reality.

All of the three questions I posed to industry leaders in chapter four as well as the themes on commodities from chapter three are visible in a field observation from May 10, 2006. Tomatoes were $1.99/lb. at the Hen House at 87th Street and Lackman Road in Lenexa, $2.99 on 83rd and Mission Road in Prairie Village, and $2.45 at 53rd and Shawnee Mission Parkway in Fairway. When I spoke to the produce manager of the Lenexa store and asked why, he said: "The prices are given to us each day. We don't really have any input into that except for how many we have on hand." When I point out that the tomatoes all come from the same place and cost the same, he simply said: "I don't know why." On first inspection this might seem to be a minor point, but Regina Brown in the Lenexa store realized that she was getting a bargain. Another woman in a full burkha (who wouldn't give me her name) said it did not matter, and she needed tomatoes. A third women listening to me said that all prices for produce "must be reasonable or the stores wouldn't be in business. They reflect what it cost to get to the store." When I said again that the same tomatoes existed at all three stores, Regina beamed, saying, "I knew it!" Personally, I am puzzled by the pricing simply because the numbers do not reflect the costs to the three separate stores. Perhaps it only matters as a whole price to Ball Foods. If all prices are dictated by an outside reality, why then do consumers purchase them for different reasons, why not strictly on price?

Underneath the performance aspect created for public consumption lies a pure business that must generate enough profit to continue to operate. A store has to make money to continue to orchestrate its performances although the markets seem so

obviously visual when you are observing them at full operation. They are geared toward the grand gesture and the crowds, who stand five or six deep surrounding the booths. Each stall, though, must sell a lot of produce and the price of that produce is high.

All of the methods through which foods move in Kansas City come back to the theme of place. If we try to isolate place from consumption, fetish disappears, of course, but many of the interviews earlier in this work suggest that fetish is irrelevant as a focus of concern--a tomato is just a tomato. The modern world appears in the guise of convenience, a philosophy, perhaps, that nothing be examined if one needs it to cook dinner. Kansas City and its surrounding areas are embedded in an idea of fresh food, barbeque, and the thought that we live in the breadbasket of America. But the details reveal the over-simplicity of this view. Merriam points out that place is important through exclusion; the downtown City Market exists through political will. The Brookside Price Chopper and the farmers' market up the street both rely on local and distanced (and also localized and distanciated) networks, and both--reduced to a basic level of M-C-M exchange--mobilize geographic knowledges to varying degrees.

If, as Bourdieu (1989, quoted in Mackay, 1997: 4) has suggested, "consumption is the articulation of a sense of identity," then we must also offer that contemporary society affords consumers many different opportunities for that sense of identity. It also offers the potential to refuse participation in any engagement at all. This reflection echoes Escobar's (2001) discourses on place as it relates to globalization. What is the role of place and places, local ones in particular, in our

modern world? The delivery system that keeps Price Chopper, Hen Houses, and other supermarkets supplied with food creates local places out of globalized ideas. The City Market is also a local place, but one constructed to eliminate the global to present a different "place" for Kansas City consumers to consume. It is supposed to represent the most local of local.

Icons of different food geographies are hidden behind those same geographies as meanings but not realities. For instance, Hen House suggests that they are working with local growers to provide fresh food to Kansas City. But, as I have shown, the stores themselves are not positioned throughout the city such that they could facilitate the actual delivery of that fresh food to those who really need it. Two discounters in the less-well-off areas, Aldi and Save-a-Lot, claim fair and balanced availability and pricing, but they too, are caught in the trap of bulk food from economies of scale. I have been suggesting that consumers do not care about any of this beyond face value. They believe that the geographies suggested by these stores are providing them with optimum produce.

I am not equating a vision of today that differs from that past as a means to explain contemporary society. Rather, I am merely using the view itself to mean today's world. Some have called it the modernity project or merely globalization, but they are a part and parcel of the same idea. What we consider an engagement with these times is a reflection of each consumer's individual state of mind and physical awareness of his or her position in the world. Geographies of consumption (of consuming places as we consume the products of that place) are not new, of course.

Ingredients in the past were from somewhere and this made them distinctive and unique to those who could afford to consume them. In fact, these very geographies were what made them desirable. But in our modern world with its amazing variety and availability, it is not as simple to consume those geographies as a means of personal statement. People tell me that it does not matter where a particular product comes from; it simply must be in the market. For it not to be there is unimaginable.

In a time where all that is "real simply fades into the air" (Berman 1982), we not only need to understand where the chimerical quality that hides our food emanates from, but to reunderstand how it got that way in the first place. Is it such an easy thing to have our food disappear from view only to reappear in such quantity that obscures the first view? I am not sure of the implications of this thinking except that it is a question of value and not availability. But value needs to be put into different meanings. Price is one, of course, but also the item's inherent importance to the consumer through cultural concerns, culinary meaning as a consumed item, benefits as a nutritive force, the way it fits into time transitions of the seasons, and the way it is imbedded into society. Value has color, chroma, meaning, importance--all of which make it a shifting, appearing, and disappearing entry to the examination of food.

The globalized delivery of every kind of product regardless of season and the marginalizing of nature for the sake of unsustainable and potentially isolationist consumption practices make the past disappear. Only the modern exists as a world to live in. Alternative commodities imply a conventional equivalent, else why would

they be labeled as alternative? But when commodities labeled as alternative flow through conventional networks, then how do we describe them? Although it is perhaps more contestable than thought, there is nothing cold and calculated in the process of exchange. Naively, consumption is consumption, an act engaged at by individual agents negotiating meanings and ultimately values for goods. At the abstract level it should be rational and logical, but I have shown that, for individuals, it is highly personal. Yes, most consumers simply must have the tomatoes in their market and do not think about how they got there, but they still have their own reasons for needing tomatoes over guavas or papayas.

People in position to influence our foods, no matter if they are CEOs or local farmers selling salad greens, have to deal with a variety government regulations tied to ideology. National externalities can dictate access to food through tariffs and taxes, while at the same time facilitate the infrastructure used by all. For a consumer, the quality of a product is perceived as protected by our government, but access to information that defines exactly how this process works is limited. Supermarket chains and produce distributors rely on this protection as a way to ensure safety and quality control. This can be directly contrasted with consumers at markets where the quality is visible (although it must be acknowledged that it is also perceived) and access to the producer is transparent (based upon trust and exchanged knowledge.)

The food situation today is more complex than ever. It becomes a graphical methodology, the point where each particular view comes up short of what's happening at other times and in other places. If "taste" is what consumers want to

buy, then how can we justify a tomato in January? Fetishes remove labor from the produce; it becomes a "lifestyle commodity." Critical reflexive consumerism based upon flows of knowledge lead some to purchase foods in particular spaces, but these flows are not visible in a supermarket. As researchers we need to get beyond the language currently being used. Words such as fetish, genetic and alternative, not to mention modernity, globalization, and industrial, restrict our understanding.

People say there is more to a food than mere life. This is trite, of course, but people whose lives are involved in networks contest their associations with foods in many different ways. Moreover, as a window into globalization and personal relationships with contemporary society, my ethnographic interactions in the field allow for an exchange of ideas not seen in more positivistic studies. Although the home garden is perhaps the ultimate flow of localized knowledge about food, not everyone has access to a backyard and thus lives in the modern world of food. Current trends in provisioning now being negotiated by producers and consumers are creating new, complex, confusing, and ultimately, re-energizing engagements with eating.

Food is a messy, complex stew, a very difficult subject to completely cover. I have barely scratched the surface of the myriad of food networks in Kansas City and how consumers negotiate them. Much is still to be discovered and discussed ethnographically, academically, and especially, geographically. This dissertation is not a complement to The Food Channel, it is not meant to simply highlight the ways

food moves to, through, or within Kansas City. Rather, it has used stories from the people involved to illuminate the modern condition.

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Fieldnotes

Fieldnotes are listed here in the same sequence they appear in the text. They provide dates and locations of those whose stories open chapters and those I interviewed who consented to answer my specific questions but would not give their names. Anonymous interviews from chapter five are not detailed.

Fieldnotes, March 9, 2005, Liberty Produce truck, Olathe, Ks.

Fieldnotes, June 17, 2005, City Market, 5th and Walnut, Kansas City, Mo.

Fieldnotes, March 9, 2005, Liberty Produce truck, Olathe, Ks.

Fieldnotes, January 28, 2005 Wild Oats Market, 5101 Johnson Drive, Mission, Ks.

Fieldnotes, April 2, 2006, Shawnee Civic Center, 13817 Johnson Dr., Shawnee, Ks.

Fieldnotes, July 1, 2006 Minor Park, Holmes and Red Bridge.

Fieldnotes, August 5, 2006 City Market.

Fieldnotes, April 12, 2005 Hen House, 83rd and Mission,.

Fieldnotes, March 17, 2005 City Market.

Appendix A

Locations of Food Purveyors Interviewed and/or Observed

Name	Street Address	City	State	Zip
	Farmers' Markets			
Brookside Farmers' Community Market	6321 Wornall Rd.	Kansas City	MO	64133
City Market Farmers' Market	20 E. 5 St.	Kansas City	MO	64105
Cross-line Coop Council	736 Shawnee Ave.	Kansas City	KS	66105
Crossroads Community Market	130 W. 18 St.	Kansas City	MO	64108
KCK Green Market	6th and Tauromee	Kansas City	KS	66101
KC Organics & Natural Market at Minor Park	11215 Holmes Rd.	Kansas City	MO	64131
Local Harvest	130 W. 18 St.	Kansas City	MO	64108
Local Harvest	13 E. 3rd St.	Kansas City	MO	64106
Local Harvest	1621 W. 39 St.	Kansas City	MO	64111
Merriam Farmers' Market	5740 Merriam Drive	Merriam	KS	66203
Olathe Farmers' Market	200 W. Santa Fe St.	Olathe	KS	66061
Old Town Lenexa Farmers' Market	Santa Fe Trail and Pflumm St.	Lenexa	KS	66210
Overland Park Farmers' Market	7315 W. 79 St.	Overland Park	KS	66204
Shawnee Farmers' Market	11110 Johnson Dr.	Shawnee	KS	66203
Zona Rosa Farmers' Market	8640 N. Dixson Ave.	Kansas City	MO	64153
39th St. Community Market	1713 W. 39 St.	Kansas City	MO	64111
	Supermarkets			
Neighborhood Market Store	9000 Metcalf Ave.	Overland Park	KS	66212
Neighborhood Market Store	10303 Metcalf Ave.	Overland Park	KS	66212
Neighborhood Market Store	11010 W. 74 Terrace	Shawnee	KS	66203
Wal-Mart	5150 Roe Blvd.	Roeland Park	KS	60205
Wal-Mart	7701 Frontage Rd.	Overland Park	KS	66204
Wal-Mart	11701 Metcalf Ave.	Overland Park	KS	66210
Wal-Mart	13600 S. Alden St.	Olathe	KS	66062
Wal-Mart	6505 State Ave.	Kansas City	KS	66102
Wal-Mart	11601 E. 40 Highway	Kansas City	MO	64133
Wal-Mart	6709 Blue Ridge Blvd.	Raytown	MO	64133
Wal-Mart	8551 N. Boardwalk Ave.	Kansas City	MO	64154
Wal-Mart	8301 N. Church Road	Kansas City	MO	64158
Wal-Mart	16100 W. 65 St.	Shawnee	KS	66217
Wal-Mart	1701 W. 133 St.	Kansas City	MO	64145
Wal-Mart	15700 Metcalf Ave.	Overland Park	KS	66223
Aldi	6300 Independence Ave.	Kansas City	KS	64125
Aldi	4801 Roe Blvd.	Roeland Park	KS	66205
Aldi	6415 Troost Ave.	Kansas City	MO	64131
Aldi	7511 Wornall Rd.	Kansas City	MO	64114
Aldi	8833 W. 95 St.	Overland Park	KS	66212
Aldi	15105 W. 67 St.	Shawnee	KS	66216
Aldi	10475 Blue Ridge Blvd.	Kansas City	MO	64134
Aldi	15751 87 St.	Lenexa	KS	66219
Aldi	8640 W. 135 St.	Overland Park	KS	66223

Aldi	16175 W. 135 St.	Olathe	KS	66062
Aldi	4805 State Line Rd.	Kansas City	KS	66102
Costco	241 East Linwood St.	Kansas City	MO	64111
Costco	9350 Marshall Dr.	Lenexa	KS	66215
Costco	12221 Blue Valley Parkway	Overland Park	KS	66213
Save-a-Lot Stores	3410 Troost Ave.	Kansas City	MO	64109
Save-a-Lot Stores	8744 Blue Ridge Blvd.	Kansas City	MO	64138
Save-a-Lot Stores	3500 Blue Ridge Cutoff	Kansas City	MO	64133
Save-a-Lot Stores	2815 State Ave.	Kansas City	KS	66102
Save-a-Lot Stores	2751 Burlington Rd.	North Kansas City	MO	64116
Hy-Vee	12200 State Line Rd.	Leawood	KS	66209
Hy-Vee	13400 W. 87 ST.	Lenexa	KS	66215
Hy-Vee	6655 Martway	Mission	KS	66202
Hy-Vee	16100 W. 135 St.	Olathe	KS	66062
Hy-Vee	18101 W. 119 St.	Olathe	KS	66061
Hy-Vee	11552 W. 95 St.	Overland Park	KS	66214
Hy-Vee	6801 W. 91 St.	Overland Park	KS	66212
Hy-Vee	8900 W. 135 St.	Overland Park	KS	66221
Hy-Vee	7620 State Line Rd.	Prairie Village	KS	66208
Hy-Vee	13550 W. 63 St. NE	Shawnee	KS	66216
Hy-Vee	6731 Blue Ridge Blvd.	Raytown	MO	64133
Hy-Vee	8301 North St. Clair Ave	Kansas City	MO	64151
Hy-Vee	207 Northeast Englewood	Kansas City	MO	64118
Hen House Market (Ball Foods)	6238 N. Chatham Ave.	Kansas City	MO	64151
Hen House Market (Ball Foods)	81 St. & Parallel Parkway	Kansas City	KS	66112
Hen House Market (Ball Foods)	2724 W. 53 St.	Fairway	KS	66205
Hen House Market (Ball Foods)	5800 Antioch Rd.	Merriam	KS	66202
Hen House Market (Ball Foods)	6950 Mission Lane	Prairie Village	KS	66208
Hen House Market (Ball Foods)	4050 W. 83 St.	Prairie Village	KS	66208
Hen House Market (Ball Foods)	15000 W. 87 Parkway	Lenexa	KS	66215
Hen House Market (Ball Foods)	11930 College Blvd.	Overland Park	KS	66210
Hen House Market (Ball Foods)	13600 S. Blackbob Rd.	Olathe	KS	66062
Hen House Market (Ball Foods)	6900 W. 135 St.	Overland Park	KS	66223
Hen House Market (Ball Foods)	11721 Roe Ave.	Leawood	KS	66211
Hen House Market (Ball Foods)	6450 Sprint Parkway	Overland Park	KS	66251
Price Chopper (Ball Foods)	4820 N. Oak Trafficway	Kansas City	MO	64118
Price Chopper (Ball Foods)	4950 Roe Blvd.	Roeland Park	KS	66205
Price Chopper (Ball Foods)	12220 S. 71 Highway	Grandview	MO	64030
Price Chopper (Ball Foods)	9550 Blue Ridge Blvd.	Kansas City	MO	64134
Price Chopper (Ball Foods)	500 N.E. Barry Rd.	Kansas City	MO	64118
Price Chopper (Ball Foods)	7000 W. 75 St.	Overland Park	KS	66204
Price Chopper (Ball Foods)	2101 E. Santa Fe	Olathe	KS	66062
Price Chopper (Ball Foods)	7734 State Ave.	Kansas City	KS	66109
Price Chopper (Ball Foods)	4301 State Ave.	Kansas City	KS	66102
Price Chopper (Ball Foods)	12010 W. 63 St.	Shawnee	KS	66218
Price Chopper (Ball Foods)	8430 Wornall Rd.	Kansas City	MO	64114
Price Chopper (Ball Foods)	15970 S. Mur-Len Rd.	Olathe	KS	66062
Cosentino's Brookside Market	14 W. 62 Terrace	Kansas City	MO	64113

Cosentino's Sun Fresh	2415 NE Vivion Rd.	Kansas City	MO	64118
Cosentino's Apple Market	3719 Independence Rd.	Kansas City	MO	64124
Price Chopper (Cosentino's)	5600 Hedge Lane Terrace	Shawnee	KS	66226
Price Chopper (Cosentino's)	1030 W. 103 St.	Kansas City	MO	64114
Price Chopper (Cosentino's)	5800 Wilson Rd.	Kansas City	MO	64123
Price Chopper (Cosentino's)	8700 E. 63 St.	Kansas City	MO	64133
Price Chopper (Cosentino's)	7418 W.119 St.	Overland Park	KS	66213
Price Chopper (Cosentino's)	3700 W. 95 St.	Leawood	KS	66206
Price Chopper (Cosentino's)	6327 Brookside Plaza	Kansas City	MO	64113
Price Chopper (Cosentino's)	9107 NW 64 St.	Kansas City	MO	64152
Cosentino's Apple Market	4300 Blue Ridge Blvd.	Kansas City	MO	64133
Marsh's SunFresh in Westport	4001 Mill St.	Kansas City	MO	64111
SunFresh Market	10225 N. Oak Trafficway	Kansas City	MO	64155
SunFresh Market	11212 Holmes Rd.	Kansas City	MO	64131
Westwood Apple Market	4701 Mission Rd.	Westwood	KS	66205
Apple Market Plaza	1215 Emanual Cleaver II Blvd.	Kansas City	MO	64110
John's Apple Market	8501 Holmes Rd.	Kansas City	MO	64131
Country Club Apple Market	3508 NE Vivion Rd.	Kansas City	MO	64119
Longview Apple Market	6859 Longview Rd.	Kansas City	MO	64134
Marsh's Apple Market	3600 Broadway	Kansas City	MO	64111
Whole Foods	7401 W. 91 St.	Overland Park	KS	66212
Overland Park Whole Foods Market	4001 Mill St.	Kansas City	MO	64111
Wild Oats Natural MarketPlace	4301 Main St.	Kansas City	MO	64111
Wild Oats Natural MarketPlace	5101 Johnson Drive	Mission	KS	66205
Wild Oats Natural MarketPlace	6621 W. 119 St.	Overland Park	KS	66209

Produce Distributors

Everyday Produce Market	1014 W. 103 St.	Kansas City	MO	64114
Liberty Fruit	1247 Argentine Bl	Kansas City	KS	66105
Brown and Loe	7611 State Line Rd.	Kansas City	MO	64114
Herb Gathering	5742 Kenwood Ave	Kansas City	MO	64110
Chunco Foods	1400 E. 2 St.	Kansas City	MO	64106
River Market Produce	403 Main St.	Kansas City	MO	64105
Kansas City Produce	403 Main St.	Kansas City	MO	64105
Global Produce	419 Main St.	Kansas City	MO	64105
Christina's Produce	419 Main St.	Kansas City	MO	64105
Carollo's Meat and Italian Grocer	9 E. 3 St.	Kansas City	MO	64105
DeFeo Produce	414 E. 4 St.	Kansas City	MO	64106
Herman Kimes Produce	400 Charlotte St.	Kansas City	MO	64106
Lofredo Fresh Produce	750 Wyoming St.	Kansas City	MO	64104
Central Produce	2806 Guinotte Ave.	Kansas City	MO	64120
B&B Produce	2850 Guinotte Ave.	Kansas City	MO	64120
C&C Produce	2800 Giunotte Ave.	Kansas City	MO	64120
C&C Produce	1100 Atlantic Ave.	Kansas City	MO	64116

Appendix B
City Market Vendor Categories

(all mistakes and typing errors are those from the original document)

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The bylaw changes created two categories for farmers:

1. Farmer 100% Grower includes Greenhouse

-a vendor in the farmer 100% grower category is described as someone who is responsible for both planting and harvesting the produce regardless whether or not they own the property. The grower is responsible for the produce "seed to the table." The agricultural product is to be grown on family held land. "Family-held land may be interpreted as land which is owned, rented, leased or share cropped by a member of the stall holder's immediate family, including parents, children or siblings." Market management reserves the right to conduct on-site inspections of vendor's property. From May 21st through September 30the no supplemented produce will be allowed. During this time you can only sell what comes from your farm. From November 1st through May 20th a vendor in the farmer 100% grower category may supplement his or her own crop. During this time supplement produce sold may be no more than 50%. Supplement produce may be purchased from local growers, wholesale proprietors or local auctions.

2. Farmer w/locally grown supplement (Supplement with 500 mile radius)

- a vendor in the Farmer with locally grown supplement category is described as a grower who, in addition to his/her crop, sell produce or plants bought from another local grower. Growers will be allowed to sell not more than 50% of produce grown by other growers to enhance Market diversity and to allow for cooperation among neighboring farms and small produces. Local grower is defined as naturally grown in the Midwestern states of Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Arkansas and Oklahoma and harvested within a 500-mile radius of The City Market. Market Master reserves the right to request receipts for all locally grown supplements. In addition, vendor may also purchase produce at the North Missouri Produce Auction in Jamesport, Missouri, or the Central Missouri produce Auction in Versailles, Missouri. Receipts must be provided for al locally grown supplement upon Market maser's request. A vendor in this category agrees to only sell locally grown produce May 21st through September 30th. Grower must be willing to allow periodic on-site visits to his/her farm and submit signed receipts from local growers in order to verify this category. From September 30th through May 20th a vendor in the Farmer with Locally Grown Supplement category may supplement his/her own crop. During this time , supplement produce sold may be no more than 50%. Supplement produce may be purchased form local grower, wholesale proprietors or local auctions. (City Market 2005 Vendor Handbook, pg. 12-

17, underline in text.) If you wish to be called organic, you must be certified as such by a recognized agency and you must display your certificate. All other requirements are the same as Farmer 100% Grower/Includes Greenhouse. This has caused some problems since groups of farmers who fall into the organic category cannot sell under one stall.

Appendix C

City Market History

(Personal Communication Deb Connors, October 21, 2005)

Located at the intersection of Walnut Avenue and 5th Street along the Missouri River, the city has attempted to re-create an open-air market similar to what one might find in European cities. The City Market has been in the same location since 1857. It was part of the land that Gabriel Prudhomme purchased from the Federal Government in the early 1820's. After he was murdered, Prudhomme's land was sold at auction to the Town Company and named the Town of Kansas. In 1857, the City Council granted a lease to Jacob and Fred Scheibel, for $50 per year, to operate a market on the square. The Scheibel's built a series of wooden stalls on the east side, near Walnut Street. The Council allotted $4,637 to build a new City Hall and courthouse on the site. For the next forty years, the town growth radiated from the public square. Main Street, next to the square, became known as "Battle Row" because of the violence bred by all the saloons and gambling houses that were located there. On the second floors of the buildings were elaborately furnished private bars, faro banks, poker rooms and brothels. Heroes of western folklore like Wild Bill Hickok, Wyatt Earp, Bat Masterson, Buffalo Bill Cody and Doc Holliday spent time in the area. Jesse James frequented the Doggett House, a hotel on West Sixth Street near Walnut Street, and although he was recognized, walked around the market without fear of being arrested. In 1888, the old stalls were taken down and a market building was built along Walnut Street from Fourth and Fifth Streets. Later when City Hall was built on the west side of the square, the two buildings were connected by a walkway. The farmers backed their wagons to the edge of the buildings and sold their produce, much as the farmers do today, no matter what the weather.
The City Market was the site of horse trading, farm produce sales, political rallies, revival meetings, medicine shows and circuses. In 1940 the present Market buildings were built.