

How to Build Urban And Rural Sustainable Food Systems

Dissertation Question: Is there a new paradigm in sustainable local food systems represented by farmers markets and their associated organic box schemes that challenges the dominant food systems?

A journey into self care and responsibility through interpretivist and critical theory research methodologies into alternative and local food systems.

Title: Alternative food networks and a new holistic agro-ecological paradigm in agriculture

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Submitted July 21st, 2009

Word Count 20,148

Dissertation submitted as course requirement for the MSc in Education for Sustainability, London South Bank University

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Abstract

The extremes of obesity and want at the fundamental level of food present a challenge that concerns all humanity and our long term sustainability. The rapid and continuous expansion of the dominant path of food production-consumption has not entirely succeeded in addressing this paradox. In addition, the impending threat of climate change has in many ways been exacerbated by industrialized methods of agriculture, which contribute to the human exploitation of natural resources.

This essay in the form of a Masters Dissertation examines the constructive activities of small scale local food production-consumption models that provide healthy foods to communities and address important issues of social, environmental and economic justice. Alternative food networks such as farmers markets and their associated organic box schemes connect a diverse network of people who work together to create social change. These learning communities produce a range of possibilities to enact new social relations between producers and consumers. The new paradigm in agriculture also links emerging structures and processes within local networks to a global democratic social movement that is concerned with meeting the global challenges of loss of biodiversity and the multiple crises of food insecurity and natural resource shortages.

Key words: *farmers markets, organic agriculture, globalization localism, Slow Food movement, Growing Communities, methodologies and methods in qualitative and critical theory research, Efs, democracy.*

Acknowledgments

Many people have inspired me to study the emerging agro-ecological paradigm that recognizes the role of humans in maintaining healthy ecological systems for the long term survival of the planet. The new paradigm rejects the mechanistic and dominant paradigm that views the world as being made up as separate mechanical parts and instead embraces a holistic or interconnected approach that sees the planet and everything on it as a living organism.

I would like to thank Dr Maewan Ho and Professor Saunders of the Institute of Science in Society, who saw my potential and inspired me to greater efforts than I thought possible. I thank Martin Khor, who inspired me to keep networking and Lim li Ching and Jules Haffegee, who inspired me to study. I also thank Ros Wade, who was kind enough to understand my personal needs and Clayton White, the best tutor a girl could have.

I thank the many organic intellectuals that I have met on the journey and for the good times that we have shared in our struggles for a more healthy and integrated world, not just for us, but for those who follow. I also thank Eva Novotny, Vera Chaney, Caroline Clarke, Rudolf Kirst, Gerald Miles and Nick Papadimitriou.

To my friends and family, it really goes without saying that this would not have been possible without them. My love goes to Andrew Watton, who has supported my sitting at the computer for hours on end and then flapping about when everything got on top. To Stuart Oliver, who taught me to overcome my fear of learning, a huge thank you.

Introduction

The study of food and our gastronomic growth will bring with it knowledge about a hundred things, but mainly of ourselves. Margaret Mead (1997).

Margaret Mead's words have been an inspiration for me as I have sought to research the topic of food. My enquiry takes the form of a Masters Dissertation so is therefore formalized research in the form of reflective enquiry, which comes after many years of paying attention to and learning about what passes my lips as food.

I am careful of what I eat because I have had serious health issues in the past, but I also recognize the important role of food and food production systems in our social, economical and environmental wellbeing. Paying attention to the quality and provenance of the food I consume is an expression of my personal responsibility for working towards sustainability.

Carlo Petrini (2002) the founder of the Slow Food movement argues that, "bringing food back to the centre of our lives in an immensely responsible act, as well as a benefit to ourselves."

Petrini's perspective resonates with my personal interpretation of multiple human responsibilities, which I take to also mean individual responsibility and self care of the body. With that in mind, I investigate the issue of self care through healthy food both subjectively in terms of my own quest for health, but also objectively by researching several community food networks that provide healthy food in radically different ways to mainstream food systems.

This dissertation will examine in depth how communities are mobilizing individual-based and collective action through the conduit of alternative food networks. These networks integrate theories of change and social justice, both formal and informal social

learning and participation to the action of re-localizing food systems. This emergent approach to secure and sustainable food supplies opens local flows of knowledge that connect to a wider range of important global issues such as climate change and the intensive use of finite resources.

I visited three farmers markets Crediton in Devon, Stoke Newington in North East London, and Queens Park in North West London to observe and participate in local food communities. My personal and qualitative interaction with participants at farmers markets has helped me to outline the structures and processes of an emerging agricultural paradigm that has transformed both producer and consumers patterns of behaviour and to personally engage in new behaviour and practices myself. I discovered that local food systems are knowledge-based practices that mobilize various forms of knowledge in both rural and non-rural community settings.

I particularly focus my research on Stoke Newington farmers market and its associated organic box scheme. Stoke Newington farmers market is part of a radical local community enterprise called Growing Communities, which originally started sixteen years ago as a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) organic box scheme funded by the Soil Association. Over the years, Growing Communities has evolved to become a fully self supporting social enterprise with a wide range of stakeholders. This learning community works together to provide a model of strong sustainability based on the concept of organic agriculture and principles of local food growing. I discuss their new model of urban food production-consumption in relation to Education for Sustainability (EfS) throughout the dissertation.

In a time when capitalism has achieved global hegemony it is hard to see what an alternative system could or will be (Barker, 2007). Therefore, my argument is that farmers markets connect with wider social justice movements to direct political action

to the radical changes within emerging food systems. This alternative system provides different socio-environmental and economic outcomes to dominant food systems and capitalism.

Therefore, the alternative food networks must be read for difference (Harris, 2009). The radical new political spaces opened by alternative food systems are closely linked to environmentalism, or early forms of emancipation that has gained knowledge from ecological perspectives. This form of local activism leads to a different form of power; shared community and local power which has had widespread global influence (Beck, 1999).

Before I started my investigation, I assumed the answer to my question would be that farmers' markets DO represent a new paradigm in sustainable local food systems. I started out with my own set of ideas around the subject of local food systems and how they could contribute to notions of care and responsibility. I share the process of how my thinking and actions changed and developed during the course of my investigations.

My research findings discussed in Chapter 3 and 4 confirm the multiple social, economic and environmental sustainable benefits of local food systems. What personally emerged for me as a result of my research is that I would find it difficult to sustain my healthy eating habits without participating in local systems, or feeling connected to a wider philosophical social movement that believes that we can work together to change ourselves and society.

My work-life experience of trying to understand the ideologies behind both dominant and alternative food systems has connected with my own struggles, thoughts and assumptions that relate to a philosophical social movement consisting of individuals defined by Gramsci as "organic intellectuals" (Barker, 2007). What this broadly means

is that people, including myself, learn about the world and seek knowledge through social participation rather than through formal education. (I explain the concept of organic intellectuals in Chapter 1 and relate it to new social movements in Chapter 2).

A cultural shift in our perception of how we humans use the worlds' natural resources is rooted in the new agro-ecological paradigm that challenges the dominant theology on many interconnected social, economic and political levels that includes formal and informal learning and collective learning. My primary case story Growing Communities is a good example of a local social enterprise that has a small, but pivotal role in making the shift.

Summary of aims and objectives

My research aim is to explain how and why alternative food networks address the key issues of social, economic and environmental sustainability. This is a way of exploring the potential of human beings to change their behavior, or be caught in cycles of dependency that impair cultural learning and increases social, economic and environmental problems.

My research objective is to present primary case stories, secondary literature and participant-observations that interpret the multiple meanings that influence the special interests of the multiple actors within the social reality of my case story context, including myself. In this way I hope to fill a gap in knowledge about alternative food networks.

A further objective is to explore the range of possibilities that exist for expanding alternative food networks. One possibility is the “sensitive globalization” of the Slow Food Presidia or local food networks that Petrini, (2002) argues for. How can sensitive

globalization and democracy lead to healthy, responsible and sustainable modes of living? This is another way of asking my primary research question. The scope for sensitive possibilities seems to me to give depth to the future of local food systems, the politics of knowledge and to EfS.

Dissertation Structure

Chapter 1, Literature Review

My literature review broadly indicates that farmers markets and organic box schemes represent a diversity of alternative, local and community food networks that occupy emerging political, social, environmental, cultural and economic spaces (Jackson, Ward and Russell, 2008). These are described as “green spaces” within the food chain (Coleman, Grant and Josling, 2004), or the ‘local’ as space (Harris, 2009).

The emerging green spaces occupied by alternative food networks can also include Education for Sustainability (EfS) in the form of formal and informal social learning that integrates emerging theories, ideologies and methodologies that support the sustainable development of communities by the local communities themselves.

Chapter 2, Methodologies

I explain my use of ethnography to interpret the meanings of actors involved in local food systems and to generate heuristic knowledge about alternative food networks through my case story evidence.

Methods: I describe the variety of qualitative research methods that I used to gather my case stories and any difficulties or limitations.

Chapter 3, Research Finding/Social Analysis

I discuss my research findings and examine these in relation to wider concepts, values and principles of environmental sustainability. I consider the revived “Dig for Victory” campaign as a metaphor for democracy. I explain my choice of the alternative food paradigm in relation to my personal understanding of EfS.

Chapter 4, Evaluation of findings

I evaluate my use of a critical theory research paradigm (Welford, 1997) and reflect on my experiences as a participatory action researcher in my research context and how my perceptions changed during my research.

Conclusion

Chapter 1

Literature Review - Socio-Political Background

Food and sociology

The full range of social, cultural, political and philosophical phenomena associated with food has revealed unexpected points of intersection among a wide range of critical perspectives of reality. (Counihan and Esterik, 1997).

A critical perspective of reality where the full range of social, cultural, political and philosophical phenomena associated with food exists within the concept of globalization. This can be seen particularly in the areas of global trade, transport and rapidly widening extremes of wealth and poverty. This ever increasing integration of

national economies into the global economy through trade, investment rules and privatization is aided by technological advances (UN, 1979; Mander, 2001; Hines, 2002).

The multiple food, energy and economic crises that we face in the 21st Century are not new. The preceding food crisis in the 1970's brought awareness about food security into the international political arena. In particular the fact that most food is not consumed in the region where it is grown, that there are more people with less to eat, and that the people who need food the most can't afford it. Both (Pretty, 2002) and (Schlosser, 2002) argue that this is the broad reality of an increasingly globalized food system that has produced the two extremes of hunger and obesity.

Therefore, Counihan and Esterik's (1997) statement above implies that the big debates about food are really debates about changing worldviews, or paradigms. And, that the subjective study of food is a window onto many different worldviews and perspectives that throw up a range of values, ideologies and special interests that concern every human being in the world.

In broad terms, these worldviews are influenced by the cultural perspectives (Samat, 1992) of social groups that are formed by food production, consumption and preparation. Throughout this dissertation I will explore a range of theories that that underpin the multiple perspectives in my research context.

In the West, post war food production has developed in two distinct directions of global and local development (Murdoch, 2000). The first is the modern fast food system incorporating industrialized food processing, supermarkets and global corporations whose technological advances dominate all aspects of food production from seeds to major distribution chains (Schlosser, 2002). The second is the alternative food networks

that operate at local levels and incorporate the emergence of organic agriculture, Slow Food movements, farmers markets, farm shops and box schemes (Pretty, 2002).

The changes in food production-consumption patterns at the local level are increasingly seen as viable alternatives to the uniformity and evident harms of industrialized and globalized food systems (Hinrichs, 2003). There is now a need to examine the emerging knowledge structures occupied by alternative food networks and local development of sustainable food systems and our perceptions of the problems in relation to EfS.

Education for Sustainability (EfS)

EfS has to recognize both formal and informal knowledge production systems of humanity (Parker, 2006). I introduce empirical evidence from my primary research case stories (see Case Story Interviews, Appendix 1) to support my research context from an EfS perspective. My primary research aim is to investigate the emerging structures of knowledge at alternative food networks to explore the potential of human beings to change their behavior, or be caught in cycles of dependency that impair cultural learning and increase environmental problems. In doing so, I hope to explain how the key issues of sustainability can be met by the emerging structures socio-political possibilities produced by humans in local food systems.

My research aim is informed by the process of EfS, which is a holistic and whole picture approach that recognizes the complex interconnected nature of connections, patterns and processes of the world around us from an individual to a global level (Sterling, 2005). Therefore, EfS can be said to represent an emerging body of values, content and an alternative methodology that implies that meaning emerges from a community based and participative strategy to ‘sow and grow’ it (Sterling, 1996).

This seems to be a good perspective from which I can examine the challenges and opportunities of farmers markets and local food development. And, in addition, to connect my personal values of health through individual self care and wider social responsibility to community values of care and concern.

Parker (2006) argues that a great many connections have to be made between sustainability and local campaigns for democracy. The multiple principles of sustainability within my primary case story of Growing Communities (see Values of Sustainability, Chapter 3) connect a wide network of local people, farmers, urban growers, wholesalers and businesses to their weekly farmers market and associated organic box scheme.

Growing Communities are a small-scale experimental concept of a complex living system of local food production in an urban community setting. This systems approach is consistent with a social process that seeks to develop sustainable communities, ecological health, and social justice (see Social Justice, this Chapter). The innovative approaches of interactive systems are supported by proponents of sustainable development (cite Redclift, 1987; Clayton and Radcliffe, 1996 in Parker, 2006).

Hinrichs, (2003); Counihan and Esterik, (2005); and Harris, (2009) agree that alternative food networks create conditions for closer social ties between producers and consumers. These social ties form the fundamental basis of social learning in local food systems described in the following quote from my case story interview with Nicole at Stoke Newington farmers market:

“A lot of the people shopping here said that they have a relationship with the farmers and traders and they can ask you know, ‘Where’s that meat come from? What do I do with it? How do I cook this fish?’” (Interview 4, 2009).

The above statement describes the reconnection of previously disengaged social relationships between producers and consumers. Growing Communities (2009) claim that human disconnection with food production has contributed to a lack of knowledge about growing, preparing and cooking food which increases human dependence on fragile food systems. This ecological perspective is based on an awareness of global interconnectedness that Welford, (1997) states has recognized that while humans can be dependent on certain social structures they can at the same time destroy those living structures.

Growing Communities' local food model is a representation of an emergent paradigm of food production-consumption (See A new Paradigm in Agriculture, this Chapter) where local supply chains are based on networks of both formal and informal knowledge. A formal social learning component of Growing Communities' local food system is described by Nicole who states:

“We’re holding a workshop in two weeks time about replicating the Growing Communities model because we don’t want to expand because the whole point is that we are small and local. But we’re going to offer support to other individuals or organizations who want to, in their own urban communities in the UK, set up a model similar to Growing Communities...”(Interview 4, 2009).

The formal replication of a local food model implies a no growth, or a low growth economy that prioritizes social need and environmental quality as primary economic criteria at a community level (Pepper, 1996). This can be seen as a process which reverses the trend of globalization by discriminating in favour of the local (Hines, 2000).

However, many would argue that alternative food networks reinforce the binary assumption of global and local (Hinrichs, 2002; Harris, 2009). For example that local is good and global is bad. This dissertation refers to the challenges of local

sustainability in a globalizing context that can be met by the interpenetration of local-global processes that encourage wider inter-actionist social relations (see next section).

Both formal and informal knowledge systems are evident in local food organizations that approach key issues of sustainability through an alternative methodology wherein food production-consumption patterns change at local levels. Therefore, the knowledge production systems of humanity represented by local food networks link a wide range of important social, political, environmental, economic and ecological perspectives to EfS.

Local Food Activism

The construction of the 'local' is acknowledged as a 'green' space where alternative food networks can thrive (Harris, 2009). This approach recognizes the interrelationships between personal well-being and the natural systems (Sterling, 1990). This awareness produces new social relations at community levels based on ecological perspectives that interact with human behaviour in local communities to address key issues of sustainability.

In my research context, Hinrichs (2003) defines local as the introduction, recovery and promotion of food earmarked by locality, which is always characterized by social capital and relations of care, or a more moral and associative economy. Pretty (2002) agrees that where social relations and human capacity are changed and communities work together the conditions for the emergence of new local associations are created.

Local food spaces have emerged as a significant banner under which people attempt to counteract the negative social, economic and environmental trends of dominant food production (Hinrichs, 2003). This activism can be seen in the UK, US, Australia, New

Zealand, Europe and other countries. In Cuba, organic growing and eating is a matter of national importance since the US trade embargo on trade, fertilizers, pesticides and oil (Wright, 2005).

A positive outcome of local food networks is the opening up new green spaces where community-led participatory activities effectively change the unknown global food supply to a known local food supply (Counihan and Esterik, 2005). Whilst this space can be seen as oppositional to globalization, it is also a strategy that centres on human choice (Harris, 2009).

The emergence of interconnected social movements and independent alternatives to mainstream ideology suggests a new form of political activism. A civil society that draws attention to the socio-economic and environmental costs of modernity, monitors the operation of capitalist markets and nation states, and acts to bring about reform and radical change towards sustainable development (Huckle, 2000) (Wade, in press).

This reading of local food networks as a place based phenomenon where one can adjust personal consumption habits rather than operating within a position of entrenched opposition offers hope for alternatives and recognizes political opportunity (Hinrichs, 2003; Welford, 1987; Harris, 2009). In addition, the intensive use of natural resources in the dominant food paradigm enhances the socio-political argument for local models of production-consumption. Therefore, emerging local food networks enact green theories that embrace both ecological and human systems and give rise to local activity and local development that is protective of the environment.

The ecological theories underpinning green food spaces have set observable limits on food production-consumption. For example, Growing Communities (2009) limit food production and transport to a maximum of within a 100 mile radius of Stoke Newington

farmers market and organic box scheme. Thus, the limits on miles that food travels from farm to plate, otherwise known as food miles, reactivate less carbon intensive local economies in order to meet the challenges of climate change.

Similarly, Smith and Mackinnon's (2007) "100 Mile Diet", is a local eating food experiment in Canada that limits production-consumption to within a 100 miles radius for sustainable outcomes. In theory, the 100 Mile Diet reclaims the diversity of food that has been lost to supermarket monocultures and assesses the true cost of natural resources in intensive agriculture. This social experiment has stimulated, through the internet and other global networks, a movement of people replicating the experience of local food possibilities.

Therefore, the theory and practice of local eating represent a movement of strategic activists who confront all forms of domination to mobilize and develop local capacity for change (cite Gibson-Graham, 2006, in Harris, 2009). This new social movement recognizes the potential of small scale political local actions to engage in the development of structures and processes that stimulate thinking and actions at global levels on the key areas of sustainability.

Social Justice in local food systems

Sustainability is an ethical and political programme that states that human production and consumption and settlement should respect the real limits of global life-support systems and the principles of social justice (Parker, 2006).

My conceptual framework is built around social change through social justice, participation and emancipation. Social change is linked to my use of the critical theory research paradigm and my participatory action strategy discussed further in Chapter 2, Methodologies. Parker (2006) defines sustainability above, but she also explicitly connects sustainability to the principles of social justice.

Social justice is a philosophical and political concept of a movement towards a socially just world where opportunities exist for a greater degree of social and economic egalitarianism based on human rights and equality (Rawls, 1971). My literature search shows a strong connection between social justice and local food networks (Counihan and Esterik, 1997; Pretty, 2002; Harris, 2009; Jackson, Ward and Russell, 2008). Many would agree that the realm of rights and food advocacy in terms of health, wellbeing, equality and social justice are reflected in alternative food networks that promote organic, local, and fairly traded food.

In addition, Giddens, (1992) argues that the emancipatory politics of local action that incorporates the principles of social justice raises the question of “Who I want to be?” in respect of a social contract with those whom “I” agree and trust to represent me. The fundamental question of who I want to be is implicitly related to my personal learning journey of self-care and health.

The theory of social contract was developed by Rawls as a hypothetical arrangement between a system of collectivity such as farmers markets and the agreement of the individuals who are subject to it. Therefore, the choice of consumers to buy produce from local, organic food systems as a basis to address socio-environmental injustices is legitimized by farmers markets and organic box schemes (Harris, 2009). (See Social Contract, Chapter 3).

The action of social justice in community networks has also resolved some of the tensions of unfair recompense for farmers and allowed for the emergence of low tech solutions to agricultural production. Pretty (2002) argues that the emerging structures of face to face producer-consumer relationships inherent in local food networks improve farmers’ capacity to make better financial incomes than in mainstream food systems. These structures free producers from aspects of the dependent and competitive

structures of agriculture in the dominant food production paradigms (see Agricultural Paradigms, Appendix 5) that are inequitable (Coleman, Grant and Josling, 2004).

It is argued that the social ties between the small-scale producer and the consumer have reconnected local communities and renewed passions for seasonal, regional and artisan (handmade) foods (Hinrichs, 2003; Petrini, 2003). In addition, the alternative food networks have heralded the emergence of local food producers as heroes. This portrayal has given well deserved recognition to those artisans, farmers, fishermen and growers who respect the limits of global life support systems by limiting their use of fossil fuels, chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

Social justice is implicit in the unifying aspects of food where large numbers of people come together to celebrate local and seasonable food in community settings such as farmers markets (Pretty, 2002). Nicola, a producer and consumer at Crediton farmers market describes her experience of face to face social interaction:

“And you know, if you go and buy your cheese from someone and they get to know your face and you talk to them and the same with the vegetables and stuff it just makes it all that much more of a pleasure. It’s much more fun going round chatting to people in the market than going to the supermarket. It’s also that Crediton market particularly is a social occasion. People stop and they have a coffee and they chat and it’s very much a place where they can meet their friends.” (Interview 2, 2008).

I interpret pleasurable social interaction from Nicola’s description. This empirical evidence supports the literature that argues that farmers markets are important for rebuilding social bonds in urban and semi-rural areas, and have considerably boosted social participation and quality of life (Pretty, 2002; Petrini, 2002; Harris, 2009). My interpretation relates to my use of the qualitative methodology and the critical theory research paradigm to explain social change in local food networks (see Methodologies, in Chapter 2).

Similarly, Monty Don (2008) the celebrity organic gardener and the President of the Soil Association argues that the deterioration of physical and mental health in the UK is related to the fact that people have lost touch with the integrative pleasures of sitting around the table together and eating freshly picked food from local sources. Similarly, Sterling (1990) and Bohm (1980) agree that this human fragmentation is a result of the dominant techno-scientific thinking that breaks down wholeness from its dynamic context.

The principles of social justice provide a positive ethic that unifies care, concern for the environment with the concern for human beings. This recognition of wholeness and integrity in systems is generally linked to my dissertation theme of “health” and my participatory action guided by wider responsibilities to socio-environmental problems.

The politicization of food – the Slow Food movement

It is argued in the literature that food as a context is a useful focus on social movements as well as for academic research (Counihan and Esterik, 2005). The Slow Food Movement is one of the best known examples of an international social movement that is characterized by the re-localization of community-led food networks (Pretty, 2002).

Social movements are radical, social and political collectives that seek to share perceptions of commonality, cohesion and continuity (Barker, 2007). New social movements have a history of using the globalization of ecological problems to emancipate people from forms of social oppression (Finger, 1994).

Carlo Petrini the founder of the Slow Food Movement argues that what farmers need to be taught is how to protect biodiversity (Petrini, 2002). This ecological perspective

makes explicit the link between food production and environmental responsibility, a characteristic of the second path of development in food production (Murdoch, 2000).

Slow Food networks are based on local “Presidia’s” that help people to produce new structures of knowledge in relation to food and to lay foundations for biodiversity in relation to sustainable food production. All Presidia have a different story, and adapt to local needs to help small communities market their produce and create a network for sales.

I’m very into the development of communities of producers and farms and it’s only if we enforce these communities that we can overcome an industrial logic. (Petrini, 2002)

Petrini argues here for an alternative market, or a farmers market where small scale farmers understand that they are working for a re-learning of the industrialized market. In other words, a community network of formal and informal socio-political, economic and environmental knowledge systems based on the plural principles of sustainability and social justice.

On the other hand, Petrini’s statement exposes a tyrannical aspect of alternative food networks that can be interpreted as being oppressive and undemocratic. However, his forcefulness may represent an urgent call for formal political recognition of the link between sustainable development and community food networks that create bio-diverse and healthy systems, new jobs, protect natural resources and indigenous cultures through democratic participation and overcome the negative aspects of industrialism (Pretty, 2002).

In any case, Mead (1997) warns that authoritarian methods of enforcing food standards may endanger democratic participation. In this case, enforcing communities of producers and farms is counter intuitive to the ‘sensitive globalization’ which Petrini (2002) argues already links the global expansion of slow food Presidias in 196 countries

that adapt to local conditions with positive social, economic and environmental outcomes.

Petrini's claim that slow food is independent of globalization and creates its own stance is a contradiction to the need for knowledge about sensitive and democratic food networks on a global scale to counteract the extremes of obesity and want. This contradiction is reflected by criticisms (Hinrichs, 2003; Winter, 2003; DuPuis and Goodman, 2005) of local food networks as being defensive and unreflexive.

In effect, the Slow Food Presidia do defend a cultural politics, which is an economic and moral right (see Ethics and Morals in Food Economies in Chapter 3) to local food produced by the family farmer and the small-scale producer. Therefore, the Slow Food networks seek to define and protect local food cultures all over the world from a perspective of responsibility towards local distinctiveness. Local food movements in turn are critical of dominant models of globalization that tend towards homogeneity (Pretty, 2002).

Alan Simpson is a Labour MP and champion of the Slow Food Movement. He argues that when he first raised the issue of local food networks with the Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) (Questions 73-75, Select Committee on Environment, Food And Rural Affairs) he was surprised to be told, "That's alright in France, or in Italy, but we don't have local food cultures". In addition, Lord Haskins, a DEFRA advisor advised Simpson:

On the other hand, to be fair, we do have in our supermarkets the best quality of food sold nationally that any country knows in terms of quality and people make their own choices. I really think the Government should be careful about wasting time on changing people's attitudes towards food.

This response by Lord Haskins suggests a lack of political awareness about local food systems that implicitly sanctions unsustainable dominant and centralized food systems.

Therefore, alternative food networks such as the Slow Food movement are an attempt to direct political action towards radical changes within agricultural food production-consumption at local levels.

In doing so, these socio-political movements create new networks of food production that are socially just and based on emerging structures of knowledge and biodiversity. These structures represent a new paradigm that is yet to be fully recognized by Government departments operating within the dominant paradigm.

A new paradigm in agriculture

Coleman, Grant and Josling (2004) recognize the important changes that have taken place in food production systems. They argue that a new “globalized production paradigm” has emerged that is characterized by the distinguishing norm that the consumer rather than the farmer drives the food system.

The new paradigm in agriculture can include local or international, organic or conventional food production systems based on networks (Kirwan, 2004). In addition, it supports the adoption of socially sufficient local activity at global levels. The broad ambit of the emergent globalized production paradigm adequately supports an affirmative answer to my dissertation question.

The new face to face producer-consumers relationships that define the emerging structures means that the consumer’s anxiety can be assuaged the by freshness, quality and provenance of local food (Pretty, 2002). In addition, the process and structure of alternative food networks emphasizes the social and ethical values associated with particular supply chains and sustainability (Ilbery and Maye, 2005).

The new structural changes and emerging technologies have contributed to the transformation of agriculture, which has extended to the political environment in which it operates. Many would agree that the farmers that have taken advantage of the changed conditions within the new paradigm and begun to serve the differentiated networks such as farmers markets and organic box schemes have prospered (Coleman, Grant and Josling, 2004; Pretty, 2002; and Hinrichs, 2003). However, many farmers operating in other paradigms (See Agricultural Paradigms, Appendix 5) have not been so fortunate.

The changes in production-consumption have been stimulated by recurring food scares and farming crises (Jackson, Ward and Russell, 2008). Similarly, the Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food (2002) recommend the call for the reconnection of producers and consumers to avert further crises. The crises in conventional and industrialized methods of farming have led to a breakdown of consumer trust, difficulties for many farmers and a series of animal disease outbreaks.

Consumer fears have also been linked to the emergence of biotechnology (Coleman, Grant and Josling, 2004; Pretty, 2002; Shiva, 1993) Critics argue that biotechnology is the eliminator of alternatives and point instead to sustainable and organic agriculture, a defining feature of alternative food networks, as an increasing viable option. Pretty argues that the individuals and groups that have chosen routes to a holistic transformation have succeeded in changing both communities and landscapes by a redesign of whole systems of food supply.

In addition, Pretty states that organic and whole systems approaches to agriculture and food production can be efficient and equitable. From an EfS perspective and in relation to my research context, Pretty's statement inevitably begs at least two further questions that supplement my dissertation question:

- How effective are farmers markets at meeting local food needs?
- How do local food networks meet the tripartite aims of sustainability; efficiency, sufficiency and equity? (Huckle and Sterling, 1996).

The new paradigm focuses on agriculture as a concept (see next section) and offers an important new area of research for EfS.

Organic food and alternative food networks

Organic is the defining symbol of the alternative food narrative (Coleman, Grant and Josling, 2004).

I explore the philosophical concept of organic which is integral to the representation of a new agro-ecological paradigm in alternative food networks. Organic agriculture has been described as a system of agriculture rather than a set of technologies (Pretty, 2002). This systems approach to food and agriculture is holistic by nature drawing its inspiration from ecology and the interconnectedness of the whole domain (Hinrichs, 2003).

Lady Eve Balfour (1944) was the founding mother of the Soil Association and one of the first scholars to argue for the concept of organic or whole systems of agriculture in the development of food in post war planning. As such, she believed that the health giving properties of food are dependent on the way it is grown, prepared and consumed. Balfour also argued that the wholeness of food provided a biological foundation for determining the health of the food and the person or animal consuming it.

Balfour believed that a nation's health depended on fresh, whole food, and went as far as to say that agriculture must be looked upon as one of the Nations' national health services. She argued that once agriculture came to be regarded as a primary health service then the only important question concerning the production of food would be: "Is it necessary for the health of people?" If Balfour's argument is correct it means that

mainstream economics would have to take second place to the moral economies (See Ethics and Morals in Food Economies, Chapter 3) offered by organic food systems within the new globalized production paradigm.

Under the dominant and fragmented industrialized systems of food production Balfour's vision of a whole food health service seems a long way off. But within my research context where fresh, whole food is integrated into local and community systems her vision seems both possible and practicable. There is no doubt that Balfour's philosophical approach has influenced the emerging knowledge structures of the new paradigm in food production that connect the farmer to the environment and to the local production and consumption of food and directly to consumers through alternative food networks such as farms shops, farmers markets and organic box schemes.

In relation to EfS, the connectivity of whole and organic agricultural systems integrates a set of approaches designed to work in harmony with the environment to improve the quality of soil, air, and water that aim to protect long term planetary health now and for future generations. These are holistic approaches to sustainable development that reflect the goals of Agenda 21 (UNCED, 1992) and respect the carrying capacity of the planet (Chap 36, 1992).

The multiple justices within organic and agro-ecological food systems are integral to the social construction of new knowledge. This puts small scale organic farmers at the centre of local knowledge systems that recognizes an ecological systems approach to man-nature relations (*See fig 1.0, Appendix 4*) and indicates an important hands-on role for small scale organic producers in the emerging agri-ecological paradigm.

Counter-Hegemony

The politicization of food as a form of localist activism was originally developed in North America where the diversity of production methods of alternative food networks have been read as a counter hegemony to the globalization thesis where the local is constructed as a realm of normative resistance (Harris, 2009). The perception of an elitist and reactionary response by alternative food networks to globalization (Hinrichs, 2003) can be balanced by the following understanding of local food systems:

An inclusive and reflexive politics of place would understand local food systems not as local 'resistance' to a capitalist logic, but as a mutually constitutive, imperfect, political process in which the local and the global make each other on an everyday basis (cite Dupuis and Goodman, 2005, in Harris 2009).

Nevertheless, local food systems do fit Gramsci's (1891-1937) idea of the organic intellectuals, who are the thinking and organizing element of the counter hegemonic movement and its allies. Gramsci's theories of hegemony relate the process of making, maintaining and reproducing authoritative sets of meanings and practices to the hierarchical structures within society (Barker, 2007).

Therefore, a counter hegemonic bloc can be related to the actions of Growing Communities (2009), the International Slow Food movement and to local farm networks in Iowa in the USA, (Hinrichs, 2003). These are organizations whose knowledge and definitions of knowledge represent the interests of the community that operate in a particular paradigm (cite Habermas, 1972 in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

Counter hegemonic blocs by politically coordinated interest groups such those mentioned above use critical emancipatory and ideology theory to question the status quo and transform understanding through criticisms of the power structures of dominant ideologies (see Methodologies, Chapter 2 and Reflecting on Critical Approaches to

Research, Chapter 4). The coordinated mobilization of local food networks such as farmers markets has therefore lead to the global drive towards a more politicized awareness of food and how it is produced.

Reading for difference

I will end this chapter with the question: How can we be sure that alternative food networks are not the same old structures dressed up as something new? My literature review argues that researchers should concentrate on reading alternative food networks for difference instead of giving the neo-liberal subjectivities inherent in dominant theory the ability to characterize the emerging food systems.

Reading for difference, not dominance (cite Gibson-Graham, 2006 in Harris, 2009) is a theoretical framework for reading contemporary food politics. Difference acknowledges an opening of new social learning spaces where knowledge systems such as EfS, which are not interested in simply reproducing neo-liberal forms of education, but are critical of dominant ideology, can enact different outcomes. This indicates a range of different politics; such as the politics of possibility or the politics of knowledge that acknowledge, develop, encourage and imagine new forms of social action.

The flows of formal and informal knowledge systems that operate within local food networks represent individual and collective meanings and interpretations emerging from the dynamic process of social change. These knowledge flows represents an alternative methodology that integrates the evolving multiple theories of EfS to bring about social, environmental, economic, political, philosophical and educational awareness and action for long term sustainability.

Chapter 2

Methodologies – Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions

I introduce some of my own philosophical perspectives of my research context in relation to my dissertation question. By undertaking research from a participatory action research and an EfS perspective I have committed to becoming part of local and alternative food networks for the six month time frame of the dissertation.

In doing so, I accept the assumption that there is something wrong with the mainstream food system which many would argue is inequitable and unsustainable for farmers and growers and for the planet. In addition, experts argue that the intensive agricultural production methods produce rapidly rising levels of global greenhouse gas emissions (Matthews, 2006). Therefore, dominant production methods are clearly unsustainable over the long term and invite EfS research into sustainable, alternative and equitable food systems.

Ethnography and the participant observer

Ethnography is an empirical and theoretical approach to research which seeks detailed holistic descriptions and analysis based on fieldwork. This definition by Barker (2007) accords with Hammersley and Atkinson, (1983) classical conception of the ethnographer who interacts with the researched for an extended period of time, watching what happens, asking questions and listening. This insider approach allowed me to actively explore social, political and environmental processes of social change in real-life settings.

By using qualitative research strategies such as ethnography and participatory action research I was able to subjectively explore values meanings and experiences of both

myself and participating actors in my research context as a “whole way of life” (Barker, 2007). This approach suited my learning journey of self-care through healthy foods and holistic processes such as organic agriculture, which I could explore more deeply through ethnographic research.

My primary research objective was to understand the issue of change from the multiple perspectives of social actors in local food systems. Being part of a process to address change in food production-consumption in the context of farmers markets forms the ontological element of my participatory action research. Therefore my research worldview encompasses the ethnographic participator-observer approach of lived experience which has an ontological perspective of “being there” and sharing that experience with those being researched as well as generating case stories about them.

My role as researcher as instrument and ethnographer was to grasp the point of view of the researched and to generate rich descriptions of the multiplicity of complex conceptual structures (Geertz, 1973; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Guba and Lincoln, 1989) of farmers markets settings. These complexities include the taken for granted assumptions of such communities, and presents detail, context, emotion and the webs of social interpretation that require further explanation. For example:

“Growing Communities is a very local organisation. People know us, we have real regulars. Obviously, on the box scheme there’s members there, they’re regular by definition and they’re regular shoppers here [Stoke Newington Farmers Market]. People know us, they know we’re trusted. Whereas people know that you can’t trust Tesco as far as you can throw them, so there’s that relationship.” (Interview 4, 2009)

The above quote is an example of rich description that demonstrates Nicole’s strong feelings and assumptions about the local community within the context of Stoke Newington farmers market and its associated organic box scheme. Producing knowledge about human beings is inevitably founded on readings and meanings

(Griffiths, 2005). Therefore, my ethnography has tried to represent the subjective meanings, feelings and cultures of others.

My interpretation of Nicole's impressionistic tale is that she is describing value choices and new relationships of trust between farmers and consumers. Therefore, the breakdown of trust between consumers and supermarkets has been a powerful force behind the shift to the new paradigm in food production, which has led to direct forms of political action. Nicole's assertion of a collective local food identity challenges the need for large global organizations such as supermarkets (see, *Reflecting on Critical Approaches to Research*, Chapter 4). These challenges to the status quo relate to my choice of methodology and to my dissertation question that reflects some of my own personal values of trust in local alternatives.

My ethnographic research also relies on an implied epistemology that assumes that my personal position of observation and participation in a realist setting generates knowledge about the world (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). This position is open to criticism by those (Clifford and March, 1986) who say that the interpretation of meanings through the eyes of others is further distorted by the ethnographers' process of writing research into text.

However, interpretative research allows me as the ethnographer to understand the actions and voices of people challenging mainstream society, to engage in conversations with humankind and to explore new descriptions of the world with the possibility of improving the human condition through different representations of social practices (Barker, 2007).

This approach requires insight and depends on formulating ways of talking about those meanings which explain, but do not predict. Therefore, interpretivism is a moral science

(Griffiths, 2005). The re-moralizing of social life lies behind many new social movements (Giddens, 1992). This accords with my philosophical perspective of farmers markets as new social movements connected to wider environmental social movements that have been integral to my self-expression, learning and participation with others likeminded people.

Therefore, interpretivism offers different ways of interpreting the world. It places humans at the centre of social phenomenon where the interpretations of facts and knowledge are subjective and created by human actors. Thus, the practice of ethnography opens up possibilities for the improvement of the human condition.

Qualitative research

Research may provide us with new knowledge, a better way of understanding social reality and provide us with alternatives so that we can consider how we can begin to make changes necessary to avoid mounting crises in society (Welford, 1997).

This section briefly discusses the differences between qualitative and quantitative research. I also discuss the four major paradigms within educational research. This examination will allow me to conclude which paradigm or paradigms are most useful in bringing about the kind of research that will allow the necessary changes that Welford outlines to avoid multiple social, environmental and economic crises.

There are four major paradigms within educational research; these are positivism, interpretivism, critical theory and critical realism (Welford, 1997). A paradigm is defined as a philosophical framework comprising a set of assumptions that makes the complexity of reality comprehensible. This framework includes values, beliefs and techniques that are shared by a given community (Kuhn, 1962). Paradigms also and more fundamentally reflect deeply held beliefs and values which a person rarely questions or critically reflects upon.

The Positivism paradigm simply accepts society as it is and relies on predictability and the separation of social phenomena and individuals. The positivist paradigm sees reality as an “object” capable of being identified through the rigorous application of science and scientific method (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). This approach is more commonly taken by researchers seeking quantitative and measurable outcomes to research such as statistics, surveys and numerical data.

Welford (1997) argues that the interpretivist paradigm is good for analyzing the problems relating to environmental sustainability and arguments based on changing the basic values of society and the organization and behaviour of individuals. This is qualitative research that focuses strongly on the primacy of subject matter, sees reality as being socially constructed where the variables are complex and difficult to measure. However, the interpretivist approach, whilst useful, just accepts society as it is.

Therefore, in order to answer my dissertation question and continue on my learning journey I needed to be guided by a methodology that allowed me to clearly express my feelings, thoughts and philosophical concerns within the context of social change. This choice must also be compatible with ethnography and qualitative research to explore a full range of perspectives and realities. In this way I hoped to produce new knowledge about farmers markets.

The most suitable paradigm to combine with my use of interpretative and ethno-methodologies and link with my conceptual framework of social justice, participation and emancipation is the critical theory research paradigm. I explain my reasons for that in the following two sections.

Selection Procedure

Critical theory is a useful methodology when researching from an EfS perspective. Huckle (1996) argues that EfS should draw on critical theory as this constitutes a prime challenge to the modernist hegemony. I have already touched on Gramsci's theory of a hegemonic bloc in order to challenge dominant social ideologies in Chapter 1.

The challenges to the status quo over the past fifteen years or so, I believe have transformed the thinking and behaviour of people, including myself, from all walks of life through formal and informal socio-political learning processes. These people are what Gramsci terms as organic intellectuals (Barker, 2007). Huckle and Sterling (1996) argue further that the role of transformative intellectual who helps communities to construct alternative futures look to the appropriate area of critical theory to justify their authority in this role.

The influence of the organic intellectuals on my selection procedure indicates the thoughtful nature of my dissertation, but one that is justified by the scope of participatory action research and social change in relation to EfS research. The participatory action research approach co-creates social reality through participation and inquiry methodologies and is sensitive to the emerging worldview that is holistic, pluralistic and egalitarian.

However, in order to answer my dissertation question I needed to find a methodology that explicitly connected the failure of the old social paradigm to address urgent issues of multiple social, environmental and economic crises to problems to do with ideology, culture and values (Huckle, 1996). Critical theory was necessary for my research into challenges to the dominant social paradigm that denies the existence of alternatives in

an increasingly fragile and industrialized world (Ritzer, 2002; Simpson, 2003; Barker, 2007).

Methodology

It seeks to envision and outline better forms of rational social organization which are more sustainable and better protect the traditionally repressed groups of humans. (Welford, 1997).

Welford's statement describes critical theory's multiple interests that have both an objective and subjective dimension. Critical theory is a good fit with a participatory action research design for people like me who are aware of the social, environmental, and economic problems in the old paradigm and are ready to take positive and active steps forward to actively participate in social change.

The multiple perspectives of critical theory seek to explain, rather than predict. I outline three examples below from my case stories that create awareness, action and change in relation to my critical theory research methodology through explanation rather than prediction. Cheryl, the co-manager of London Farmers Market states:

Farmers markets have kept many small farmers in business. They have the ability to control their sales, charge a fair price to customers, and in return they receive valuable feedback from customers. Some have even converted to organic methods or added new lines due to customer comment. (Interview 5, 2009).

This statement from Interview 5 (see, Appendices v) indicates that small farmers are empowered and their livelihoods regenerated by farmers markets. It also highlights the problems faced by small farmers and implies threats to farmers from larger forces. Cheryl's statement also indicates that environmental sustainability and diversity is enhanced through sharing knowledge and increased organic stewardship. Helen, an organic farmer at Crediton Farmers market explicitly connects environmental sustainability and organic stewardship to local food production. She states:

“Conservation and wildlife are at the heart of our farm and we work closely with Devon Wildlife Trust. We have been planting trees and hedges since we came here in 1996, including over 5000 trees on 5 acres in 2003, and a further 2000 trees and hedgerows in 2004. We have areas of rough grassland to provide habitat for mammals, plants, insects and fungi” (Interview 3, 2009).

This case story evidence accents the importance of the participative and ecological perspectives of critical theory in relation to environmental problems that ultimately stem from the organization of society and its interaction with the natural world (Welford, 1997). Therefore, the awareness of radical change, reversing environmental degradation and resolving social injustices within my research context is a powerful outcome of critical theory research.

The emancipatory aims of critical theory can be applied to small scale farmers as a “repressed group of humans” that Welford refers to in the opening quote. My primary evidence and secondary literature suggests that farmers are freed from the isolation and repression of dominant food production systems by the socially just and ideologically critical farmers markets. However, not everyone agrees that critical theory is emancipatory, or that ideological critique is necessary for emancipation (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2007). Nevertheless, participatory and emancipatory support for small farmers outside of mainstream systems is expressed at Stoke Newington farmers market. Nicole states:

“At a time like this, this is when the farmers are feeling the pinch, kind of need that support really and need people to stick with it.” (Interview 4, 2009).

Nicole’s statement makes explicit the symbiotic relationship between farmers and consumers at farmers market. In fact, both producer and consumer benefit from the emergent face to face relationships (See Chapter 1). The democratic social ties between farmers and consumers at farmers markets enact a revived tradition of farmers bringing their produce to market. This is an interesting contradiction to Giddens (1992) who

argues that emancipatory politics is concerned with freeing social life from the fixities of tradition.

Therefore, the new generation of farmers markets (Kirwan, 2004) is a solid proposition of a traditional and democratic culture, but one that has evolved in step with the times and strives to keep the nature of wholeness alive through ecological approaches to whole and healthy food production, which connects with my dissertation theme of “wholeness”.

The participative and ecological perspectives of critical theory are designed to change society for the better and to recognize the obstacles that exist to achieving long term sustainability (Huckle, 1996). This worldview can only come from a critical perspective that stresses both knowledge and action to promote a real agenda for change.

Methods

I outline the multiple methods used to justify my selection of the critical theory research methodology. My research strategy was loose in that my research focus was open, it wasn't narrow and my approach was non-experimental and flexible. My research objective was to elicit opinions and perceptions about almost all aspects of events at farmers markets from the actors involved.

I used a variety of techniques that were consistent with qualitative research to gather five case stories within my research context. I tape recorded three in-depth interviews to preserve the information, which I later transcribed for analysis from my tape recorder to my desktop computer. I have kept the original recordings as evidence of the trustworthiness of the interviews.

My fourth interview took place in a busy market setting so I made hand written field notes which were typed up as soon as the interview finished. My fifth interview with a senior farmers market director took place over the course of two telephone conversations and four email exchanges. I have kept the emails as evidence of the validity of the online interview.

My participant-observations, recordings, documentary written notes and visual methods took place at three farmers markets; one urban farmer market, one semi-rural farmers market and my local market which I used as a 'control' market. At my local market in Queen's Park my role was researcher as instrument (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) participating in and learning about locally produced food.

I shopped at Queens Park farmers market every Sunday for six months to see what effects this local food experience had on my perceptions about farmers markets and if my food habits or shopping habits changed (see Personal Experience of Farmers Markets and How Research Changed my Perceptions, Chapter 4). Gaining access to the farmers markets under my observation was straightforward because they are open to all. Growing Communities farmers market is open every Saturday, Queens Park farmers market is open every Sunday, and Crediton farmer market is open on the first Saturday of every month.

By visiting three different markets I was able to compare similarities and differences between a semi rural farmers market in Devon, an inner city farmers market in Stoke Newington as well as my local market and relate my findings to EFS (See Three Farmers Markets, Chapter 3).

Qualitative research methods allowed me to immerse myself fairly deeply in the lifestyle, beliefs and feelings, and to closely identify with my research subjects. These

methods enabled me to present a summative portrayal of the multiple perspectives of participants in my research context.

My five case stories enabled me to qualitatively interpret multiple responses to social, environmental and political values in several different localities. Shorter interviews with people were not formally written up for the dissertation, but were useful for triangulation, which reflect the multiple ways of establishing truth in qualitative research (Golafashani, 2003).

Limits/difficulties in gathering case stories

There were limits on the time that I could spend observing and gathering case stories. Ironically, these are limits that make farmers markets more sustainable in the long term. For example, farmers markets take place once a week or even once a month, which makes them a bit special, and people including myself, adjust their shopping habits around their occurrence (Fried, 2002). One interview (Interview 5) had to be conducted entirely over the phone and over the internet because spring is a busy time for farmers markets.

When writing up my case stories interviews (See Case Story Interviews, Appendix 1) I was surprised to see that almost all of my interviewees were women. I could say that this is because women are inclined to talk more. Or, that the men I approached were not as willing to be interviewed. In all fairness, I have to say that I just gravitated towards talking to women. It may well be that the intensity of research experiences generated by ethnographic research (Barker, 2007) was easier for me to process in the company of women.

However, I do not think that the quality of my interviews and the resulting research has been adversely affected by the lack of male voices. I do believe that if time permitted more case stories then I would, with the experience gained from my previous interviews, and in the interest of balance make a point of interviewing male subjects in depth.

I have spoken to many male farmers and producers at farmers market. However, these interesting, albeit brief conversations were always cut short because they were busy serving other customers and would have lost sales. These interviews have not been transcribed for this dissertation, but have been kept as useful notes in relation to my primary research.

Sampling

I sampled my interviewees from a range of people who would have a broad insight into farmers markets. This purposive sample ranged from a small focus group of small-scale producers, an organic farmer, a farmers market manager and the co-director of the London Farmers Market, an organization which oversees the running of sixteen farmers markets in London. In all I conducted five formal interviews that are submitted as samples with this dissertation in Appendices i-v.

During my case story interviews I was able to get personally involved with the interviewees 1, 2, and 3 by staying on a farm in Devon and working at Crediton farmers markets in Devon. I also habitually visited two farmers markets in London for the six months research timescale.

I followed up my interviews with telephone conversations and email correspondence. I also looked at farms and farmers markets websites for more information. There was

no need for any formal introduction at either Crediton or Queens Park farmers market to complete my interviews.

Summary of Critical Theory

Critical theory supported my research aim to produce new knowledge for myself and for the reader. My research strategy reflects the multiple possibilities of social change inherent in critical theory and stresses the need for a political and moral science that can translate results into action (Furhman, 1978, Welford, 1997 and Griffiths, 1998). This strategy reflects my key research aim of exploring the potential of human beings to change their behavior, or be caught in cycles of dependency that impair cultural learning and increases social, economic and environmental problems.

My primary participatory action research into the complex social world of farmers markets from an EfS perspective allowed me to link the actions of participants, myself included, to a shared philosophical connection with a broad network of social movements such as the Slow Food Movement, The Soil Association and the organic agriculture movement, the organic intellectuals, the 100 Mile Diet and Growing Communities. These politically active socio-environmental movements are underpinned by ecological and organic theories and principles, which I discuss in the following Chapter 3.

Chapter 3

Research findings/social analysis

Values of sustainability

My primary case story of Growing Communities local food development project produces different ways of knowing by linking the social, economic and environmental aspects of farmers markets together to interpret human values in meaningful ways. These include ethical issues in growing, producing and trading food that consider the interests of future generations, humans in other societies and non-humans.

I visited Stoke Newington, in the London Borough of Hackney where Growing Communities operate a weekly farmers market and a pick-up organic box scheme that serves 400 local households. Nicole is the deputy market manager at Stoke Newington farmers market. She describes how the local people interact with Growing Communities' innovative organic box scheme:

“We deliver by bicycle and by our electric milk float to a number of community drop offs. Like there’s a City Farm in Hackney, there’s an arts centre and a couple of other places, and our main one [an old fire station] where we do the packing and people come and collect from us and when we’ve done our service about 95% of people come by foot, or on bicycle and it’s local so they can collect from us.”
(Interview 4, 2009).

Growing Communities' local activities accord with Hinrichs' (2003) view that Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) schemes represent an authentic and innovative attempt to provide an ethically driven alternative to dominant food systems. These findings indicate that there are possibilities in local models that challenge the conventional assumptions that development should be a large scale process of change and economic growth for the benefit of the nation state (Dower, 1997).

Growing Communities (2009) adhere to “12 Principles” that are a set of values guiding local food production as follows:

- Farmed and produced ecologically
- From as local a source as practicable
- Seasonal
- Mainly plant based
- Fresh, or involve minimal processing
- Derives from small-scale operations
- Supports Fair Trade
- Involves low carbon resource use
- Promotes knowledge
- Fosters community
- Independent of external funding
- Promotes trust throughout the food chain

These key principles stress the importance of values in producing knowledge and skills that are designed to produce environmental and social benefits that create conditions for community led social learning and democratic participation. These conditions reflect the development of independent organizations which are self-regulating and constrained by principles to bring about sustainability (Roome and Oates, 1996). Therefore, principles of sustainability emphasize the need for social learning founded on ethics and value systems that overlay the conventional systems and highlight the importance of partnerships and local commitments. Nicole describes the multiple realities of Growing Communities’ values:

“The good thing about Growing Communities is because we are fundamentally an ethical organization, you, as a shopper, don’t have to

make those choices and work out where things have come from. Is this organic? Is this local? What Growing Communities does, if you trust Growing Communities and we try to be a transparent organization, if you trust our ethos then that entire decision making and all that complicated workings out is done for you.” (Interview 4, 2009).

Growing Communities’ local actions allows consumers to make ethical value choices in relation to resource management. However, the process of having one’s “entire decision making” done for you smacks of paternalism that can appear to be undemocratic. This may also portray consumers as “docile bodies” (Foucault, 1988) who lack personal agency.

On the other hand, responsible action can also signal agency anchored in local places as something done by people, not something done to them, (Hinrichs, 2003; Hines 2002). An ethical strategy for different outcomes can also be seen as a form of self care and personal agency which ties in with my learning journey.

Social Contract

I return to the theme of social contract in the relation to my conceptual framework of social justice. Academics and philosophers have used social contract theory to explain the workings of civil society based upon the work of the philosophical fathers of democracy; Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau (Rawls, 1971).

In Chapter 1, Petrini’s (2002) approach of “enforcing” slow food communities was criticized for being defensive and unreflexive. However, when examined in relation to social contract, and according to Rawls (1971), the use of enforcement in a particular social context is legitimate and since every proposal involves some degree of coercion, the assumption is that people will behave reasonably.

The reasonable enactment of local food networks emphasizes a democratic rights and social change based approach of social movements (Edwards, 1999) and local food

activism. In this socially constructed world people can behave in more just ways so that justice should rise from the people and not be dictated by the law-making powers of government.

In broad terms, this democratization and social change approach is combined with the understanding of human interdependence on social structures and the right to reasonably protect those structures in terms of long term sustainability and human responsibility (Tickle and Welsh, 1998). These processes produce the epistemological values of knowledge inherent in farmers markets and alternative food networks that have shifted thoughts and ideas towards greater awareness and action of sustainability and EfS.

A rights ideology must include the goal of protecting the environment because rights carry political weight (Aitken, 1992). This approach creates powerful synergies between political activists and environmental movements towards a broad definition of the environment (Ageyman, 2000). In my research context I give the examples of the Slow Food movement, who are interested in promoting international justice and Growing Communities, whose positive approach to social change considers people-environment interactions and ecological awareness as a whole.

Ethics and morals in food economies

Whilst the moral aspects of food production are concerned with care and responsibility, the market deals with the apparently rational and amoral pursuit of price and profit (Jackson, Ward, and Russell, 2008). However, in dominant systems the legitimate questions of sustainability are not integral to knowledge produced by those systems.

Therefore, consumers who eat supermarket and fast food legitimize a system that can be criticized for precluding ethical questions about food production such as: Where does my food come from? Who produces it? What chemicals were used in its production and preparation? How were humans and animals treated? Why is food so cheap?.....so expensive?.....have so much packaging?

These legitimate questions of sustainability are answered by food producers using ecological and local systems (Pretty, 2002; Hindrichs, 2003; Growing Communities, 2009). However, sustainability is more than simply environmental protection. It is concerned with bringing values into economic decision making (Brundtland, 1987). Therefore, the moral environmental imperative of local food networks has taken a step towards connecting local food systems with a 'moral economy'.

It was originally Adam Smith (1723-1790) who argued that economic relations cannot be divorced from the moral notions of fellow feeling (Rawls, 1971). Today, these feelings might be interpreted as trust and reciprocity, the integral values theme to have emerged from my research into the alternative food paradigm. My following case story finding supports the element of a shared feeling at farmers markets. I interpret Nicole's following statement to mean that she is guided by an economic morality when she spends money at Stoke Newington farmers market:

"I think that when we spend money we should think about the consequences of that and mostly we don't. And personally I do. So if I'm spending money, I'm really happy to spend money here [Stoke Newington Farmers Market] because I know there are beneficial consequences of that. I shop as ethically as I can and I just think that's really important. In most of the food system and consumerism there are people at the bottom of the chain who are exploited and I think that the person who spends the pound is part of that and I don't want to be part of that, so...." (Interview 4, 2009).

The social anxiety that Nicole describes above is therefore not just about how food is produced, but about where it comes from. Beyond her concerns there is a deeper

question about the values of modernity that has legitimized the exploitation of human and non-human natures (Huckle, 2000).

Therefore, the individual and collective action of farmers markets produce a viable and legitimate praxis where participative local food economies challenge economies where knowledge and practice do not engage with the moral and ethical dimensions of economic life.

Breaking Free of Rationalization

My key findings indicate that the emergent face to face relationships between producers and consumers are central to the negotiation of values in local food networks (see *fig 1.0 Appendix 4*). This diagram explores the range of interconnections and social, economic and environmental benefits that emerge from positioning the relationship between producer and consumer at the heart of alternative food networks.

In this new paradigm people can assert their feelings of “Who I am” in a system which on balance promotes human wellbeing. From this position people can escape the possible dangers of the inhuman and dehumanizing ‘efficiency’ of the over-industrialized systems that Weber (1864-1920) described as an “iron cage of rationality.” Schlosser (2002) has applied Weber’s idea to the modern fast food systems and in particular to MacDonalds. Schlosser argues that MacDonalds is the epitome of a transitory and soon forgotten food experience that is reliant on the exploitation of young people and natural resources.

It is worth noting the growing consensus that implies that the knowledge systems underpinning the dominant paradigm are run on processes of bureaucratic rationalizations which states that there is no alternative to the free market system

(Horkheimer, 1972; Ritzer, 1993; Welford, 1997; Schlosser, 2002). This inflexible approach suggests that ethical and moral considerations are constrained within the dominant paradigm, which is primarily driven by productivity and profit (Huckle, 2000).

My findings suggest that enterprises such as CSA and farmers markets are a way for people to create less rationalized ways of life for themselves. People are taking steps towards ethical systems that improve the quality of food and the quality of life for producers and consumers. The implication of a social contract by which rational people agree to act towards a just society can also underpin the hope of a rational use of knowledge in society (Griffiths, 2005).

Knowing where food comes from is just one of multiple social, economic, environmental and ethical benefits of community food networks that have shifted towards the local and known food supply and away from the fear and anxiety of the unknown and global (Counihan and Esterik, 2005). Beverley, a small-scale producer in Devon describes her feelings as a result of participating at Crediton farmers market:

“When I visit friends from the market, other stall holders and small producers, I can see my meat walking around. This increases my feeling of food security in terms of quality and traceability. I can feel absolutely confident about where my food comes from. This experience is an added benefit of being part of a farmers’ market community. How many people in London can say that? (Interview 1, 2008).

Beverley’s assumption of her food security and traceability within a local food community is clear. However, there is an implication that people in London are not in the same position as she is in Devon to guarantee the provenance of their food. This throws up a range of arguments about urban-rural relationships which are not explored in any detail here. This assumption does imply a connection between subjectivity,

identity and social order, which again links to democratic choices brought about by social contract.

This case story quote also indicates that joining and interacting with social groups generates who we are and produces new identities and makes something of those meanings (Huckle, 2005) This form of informal social learning explicitly links knowledge about food to choice and value choice as a basis for addressing the multiple injustices of dominant food systems (Smith and Mckinnon, 2007). Therefore, the relationship between knowledge and choice points to local food networks as powerful knowledge-based practices that mobilize various forms of knowledge that produce multiple benefits for the community.

Which paradigm do I support?

The choice of one community over the other is a matter for evaluation (Griffiths, 2005). This choice is made by selecting perspectives marked by an evaluative interpretation of social reality. Therefore, my choice of paradigm is already answered in part by my choice of dissertation question.

I support a paradigm that is socially aware, and environmentally accountable that acts justly to provide the very best food it can under those conditions. I support new concepts of sustainable production, renewable resources, new economies and the theories underpinning organic systems that increase knowledge about environmental health and empower me as a human being to look after mine.

I support a paradigm that is good for people and good for the planet that produces healthy food for a healthy society with care and consideration for other humans, societies and sentient beings (Finger, 1994). In short, I support a paradigm of

sustainable enterprise (Roome and Oates, 1996). The decision to shop at farmers markets coincided with my decision to research farmers markets as a dissertation topic indicating my personal understanding of the connection between knowledge and choice.

We make a choice every time we sit down to eat a meal. The choices that we humans - who are nothing without food – make can influence our diet and our environment (Pretty, 2002). When we sit down to eat a meal; a fast food takeaway, or a ready prepared supermarket meal, or a meal cooked from scratch using whole organic ingredients from the local farmers markets we are buying into a system of production.

Choosing one community over the other can include an evaluation of beliefs and action based on principles for judging worth, or destruction (Griffith, 2005). For example, depending on how we value choice as consumers, we are supporting a system of production that can sustain nature through sustainable food production systems, or destroy rainforests and intensify industrial agriculture.

Once I had accepted this overly simplified, but fundamental assumption then the process of my personal recovery towards responsible and sustainable choices could begin. The widespread adoption of this assumption by producers and consumers has started the process of collective recovery from damaging choices which can be made at local and global levels (Pretty, 2002).

On my learning journey I have gained inspiration from the synergies of broad networks of organic intellectuals who act as learning leaders (Meadows et al, 1992). I have linked this learning with the participative methodologies of EfS. Without the broad interaction of these social relationships I believe that staying committed to my personal path to sustainability would be a challenge.

Food Revolution

There is no doubt that to embrace the local food model on a national scale would represent the most dramatic revolution of our food supply since the Second World War. (cite *The Ecologist*, 2004, in *Growing Communities*, 2009).

Many would argue that growing food yourself has become the most radical of acts that represents the only effective protest that one can make to overturn the damage wreaked by the dominant paradigm of food production. My research findings indicate this increasingly popular social movement has reached a broad consensus that the social change people seek cannot be made by Governments and corporations (Huckle, 2000; Goldsmith 2001; Don, 2008; *Growing Communities*, 2009).

Tickle and Welsh (1998) argue that the environment has become a global site where a number of political, cultural, economic and political forces intersect and co-operate. This in essence is a conceptual move that suggests that the environment assumes both national and global importance that allows some of the problems of nationalized food systems to be addressed through global civil society movements.

During the course of my investigation everyone that I spoke to from farmers and small producers, market managers, stall holders and consumers described the activities of farmers markets as something that “we” the people want and need for social wellbeing. I interpret this “we” to be a collective voice that is holistic and passionate about whole food, slow food, and organic and artisan food production (see full Case Story Interviews, Appendices). This “we-ness” suggests that only by working together can the values and power of the dominant paradigm be challenged (Etzioni, 1988).

In addition, this collective we-ness implies that people participating in local communities already feel connected to something bigger and outside of their locality indicating a collective consciousness that positive action to protect the environment is

possible on a global scale. This can be seen as a result of the globalization of ecology and the transformation of environmental activism into a global civil society movement (Finger, 1994).

Turkey Twizzlers

I briefly return to my dissertation theme of whole food and health. Here I develop my narrative theory of organic which underpins a philosophical social movement towards social sufficiency and acts as a metaphor for democracy.

A recent media campaign for healthy food in schools by celebrity chef Jamie Oliver called the “Ministry of Health” borrows implicitly from the Dig for Victory campaign which ensured local healthy food supplies for children during World War II (See Appendix 6). The contemporary campaign is premised on the idea that fresh whole food, a characteristic of the alternative branch of food development is better for child health than “turkey twizzlers”. These are a form of re-constituted industrially processed turkey meat covered in breadcrumbs and served up at school dinners.

Turkey twizzlers are emblematic of the ideological conflicts between the two food paradigms and the concerns over obesity due to the high salt, sugar and fat content in industrialized food systems. The shift towards healthy school meals may also be driven by medical evidence that suggests a connection to healthy food intake and improved concentration. Government campaigns do support a link between whole food and health, such as the “5 a day” recommendation of five fruits and vegetables as an advised daily nutritional intake.

The original Dig for Victory (1941) campaign was started by the Ministry of Agriculture as a way of defeating German oppression and creating food security

amongst the population of war-torn Britain. The new campaign is seen by many as a democratic revolution that is reclaiming food systems from the dominance of corporations and from Government compliance with industry. Politicians who promote the campaign as a practical solution to the rising food costs and impending energy crises indicate that people will have to dig their own way out of crises (Johnston, 2008).

The contemporary Dig for Victory campaign has been revived by agricultural organizations such as Garden Organic and the Soil Association. These organizations use the moniker as a metaphor for democracy and as a way of learning about and promoting an alternative worldview that rejects the dominant worldview dependent on technological fixes. This connects agriculture to a global struggle for democracy that campaigns for the rights of people to grow and eat the food that most benefits the community (Pimbert, 2008).

The Soil Association explicitly promote organic and local food campaigns as a way of empowering the self, re-connecting with the soil and local landscapes to provide and share whole food directly with individuals, families and local communities via the back garden and allotments (Don, 2008). This shift towards social sufficiency highlights the important tenet of the emerging worldview that “when we work with nature we change ourselves.” (Huckle, 2000).

The influence of organic as a metaphor for democracy is expressed by the heads of state Queen Elizabeth II and the new US President Obama, both of whom have recently planted organic vegetable plots in their ‘official’ gardens (Hunt, 2009). This indicates the power of philosophical social movements and shared ecological perspectives to cut across national boundaries and influence events (Beck, 1999) for democratic change.

Three farmers markets

I briefly introduce my findings of the similarities and differences between the three farmers markets under my qualitative research method of participant-observer. I start with Stoke Newington market, which currently has 32 stalls, all selling organic produce, of which 2 sell meats. The rest sell fruits and vegetables, breads, cheeses and butter, fish, home-made cakes, pickles, juices and Fair Trade coffee.

In contrast, Crediton market is dominated by a mixture of organic and non organic meat producers. Of a total of 32 stalls, 8 sell home produced meats and there are only two vegetable stalls, the larger one is organic. Not all producers sell food, some sell hand crafted pottery, hand made greetings cards, winter-knits and fleeces. The market takes place in Crediton's town square, which was rebuilt specifically as a public space for relaxation, performance and the farmers market.

The farmers market in Queens Park currently has 32 stalls, of which six sell meat and one sells fish. This market is dominated by two large vegetable stalls. In addition, there is a large organic salad stall, which sells a wide range of salad leaves such as spinach, rocket, kale and pak choi. There are several other smaller stalls selling biodynamic greens, non-organic tomatoes, asparagus and artichokes. There are a wide range of fruits in summer such as strawberries, raspberries blueberries and gooseberries as well bedding plants and cut flowers. Other stalls sell eggs, artisan breads, honey, buffalo and goats cheeses and hand patted butters. Both Queens Park and Stoke Newington farmers market take place in primary school playgrounds. All three markets sell value added foods such as hot-dogs, burgers, meatballs, pastries, soups, patties and pakoras.

A link to social learning is implied by the many farmers markets that are hosted by school playgrounds. Cheryl outlines the broad social benefits of farmers markets:

“I said earlier that they're the heart of a community; they're not going to solve all problems, but they're better for a town, keeping people shopping in the centre, supporting small shops, keeping money circulating in the vicinity - than supermarkets that leech all life out a town. No child is going to learn where their food comes from at a supermarket” (Interview 5, 2009).

“No child is going to learn where their food comes from at a supermarket.” And no adult for that matter! The school playground provides a relaxed and familiar atmosphere to learn about food and provides a safe space for children to play while their parents shop.

The growing awareness of the connection between food, health and social learning is becoming formalized by the links between farmers markets and local school playgrounds. This connection points to the new role of small scale producers as core learners in EfS and the small to medium sized organic farm as a site for social learning.

Chapter 4

Evaluations of finding/reflections

Evaluating Critical Research

The key to evaluating critical research is to determine whether there is evidence of real tangible benefits to people and the planet (Welford, 1997). This research approach stresses the action which needs to be taken to create social change which will improve human existence and the environment. Therefore, the actions of local food systems such as my primary case story Growing Communities can be evaluated against a Critical Research agenda that:

1. Identifies the contradictions and tensions which exist between the dominant food systems and socio-environmental implications.

2. Provides a critique of the dominant social systems and is clearly aware of the consequences of continuing down the dominant paradigm path.
3. Engages in political action and helps humans move to a position of increased awareness and knowledge through participatory action and social learning
(Based on Welford, 1997).

These key points will allow me to reflect on my use of the critical theory research paradigm in relation to the responsible and participatory actions of community led initiatives towards sustainable food systems. My dissertation theme of “responsibility” is supported by Barker (2007) who states that responsibility is very much a characteristic of post modern thinking that has ultimately led to the recognition of human’s significant role in environmental responsibility.

I have previously indicated that local food activism began in the North America (See Local Food Activism, Chapter 1). There are parallels in local food activism that can be drawn further to reflect the growth of the globalizing environmental justice movement, which uses discourses about social injustice as a tool to mobilize society. This form of ideological framing can be viewed as frameworks akin to paradigms (Ageyman, 2000).

This framework has provided me with a way of exploring the ‘traditional’ cultural role humans can play in an era of environmental, economic and social crises. In other words, where old traditions meet new social movements something creative happens. For example, the revival of the democratic tradition, or the new generation of farmers markets (Kirwan, 2004) is an effective way for small scale farmers to maintain their livelihoods and interact with wider social relations. This is the clear ‘comparative advantage’ of the new paradigm in agriculture.

In Chapter 1, I presented findings from my literature review to support the emergence of a new paradigm in agriculture. Agricultural Paradigms (See Appendix 4) briefly evaluates the major problems within the first three models of agri-food production. The dependent paradigm is linked to domestic production and provides basic food needs. Whilst this is good for social and political stability, the policy message to farmers is to provide low quality foods for government stocks under the assumption that consumers are not active players in the agricultural policy arena.

The competitive paradigm emphasizes that agriculture can function effectively in world markets and return adequate incomes for farmers. However, those farmers who cannot compete in the long term are paid to leave the sector, whilst others are subsidized in the short term. The multifunctional paradigm is a European Union initiative of a European model of agriculture under CAP, or the Common Agricultural Policy. This model perceives agriculture as more than just a provider of raw materials for the food industry, and although rewards are low for farmers, there is strong concern for environmental and rural development.

The globalized paradigm situates farmers in a potentially global supply chain where he provides a variety of technologies such as supplying land stewardship, animal management and direct marketing. For these services he receives a higher profit margin, which keeps farmers economically viable and actively farming. This preserves farmlands for the current and future generations and low start up costs for farmers markets have made new entries into agriculture possible (Fried, 2002). The emergent structure allows farmers to engage in local networks and to meet the demands of the modern consumer and of sustainable living.

Reflecting on critical approaches to research

In Chapter 1, I discussed the lack of political awareness about local food systems in the UK (See *The Politicization of Food*). My primary case study *Growing Communities* challenges the lack of direction from Government departments in the development of sustainable and equitable local food systems by calling for radical change. *Growing Communities* state:

We need to work together to take our food systems back from the supermarkets and agri-business and put the power back where it should be with communities and farmers. (*Growing Communities*, 2009).

Growing Communities' challenges to the status quo reflects a communal perspective to reclaim power and underpin social learning. Their call to rebuild social networks to produce a model of local food development presents a clear analytical and practical approach to systemic change in the ways in which food is produced, distributed and consumed. Therefore, the implication is that there is no individual way out and learning will have to be a collective endeavour (Finger, 1994).

By sliding between the critical theory and interpretivism paradigms my research findings have helped me to reflect upon the shift towards interpretation and a move away from the assumption of value free interests and towards change as a major force in society (Barker, 2007). The importance of new structures and changing social reality is captured by the quote below by Buckminster Fuller (1895–1983), who states:

You can never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete (*Growing Communities*, 2009).

Buckminster Fuller's statement means that new models or paradigms can only be brought about by a deep and profound change that is radically different to the existing social construction of reality. Therefore, the change brought about by the social reality

in my research context is dependent upon the interpretation of knowledge by the social actors themselves.

Growing Communities' call for change is ultimately an ideological critique (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007) of dominant worldviews. This reflects the development of the emerging worldview, supported by a growing number of people, who boycott powerful groups such as corporations and supermarkets in favour of local and independent alternatives. Nicole is a potter at Crediton farmer market. She states why she thinks consumers make that choice:

“I think its raised consciousness and people just wanting to get away from the mass produced. I think, it’s just a general feeling that, erm, I think it’s a sort of the awareness of the environment and all that sort of thing. And it’s all sort of tied up together.”(Interview 2, 2008).

I interpret Nicola's statement to mean that there is a shared perception of environmental and social justice amongst people participating at farmers markets. The participants see themselves as part of a holistic and reciprocal interface “all tied up together” between local farmers markets and local producers that produce different and more sustainable outcomes. Farmers markets are therefore perceived as challenging the industrialized methods of food production which disrupt these fundamental social relations.

Nicola also highlights the cultural shift away from dominant food models where producer-consumer relations are non-existent and the origins of food is often unknown, as discussed in EfS in Chapter 1. This shift takes into account the recognition of finite nature of global resources that may lead to new lifestyles (Giddens, 1992).

The response to contingency by emerging social structures and networks of farmers markets and alternative food networks confirms the existence of a social movement engaging at local levels to construct a new agro-ecological model or paradigm in food

production by participation and change. This movement towards the local may have inspirational roots in Local Agenda 21 (LA21) (Roome and Oates, 1996).

Reflecting on vision and principles

My use of critical research has allowed me to include the visionary concepts that interpretivist and positivist positions do not have. This research strategy enables me to make connections between the concepts, vision and principles within my primary case stories in relation to the emergent structures in the new paradigm in agriculture.

It is argued in Chapter 1 (See Organic Agriculture) that the visionary influence of Lady Eve Balfour on the development of post war organic agriculture underpins the theory and practice of many small producers participating in farmers markets. My findings reflect that Growing Communities' (2009) continue Balfour's vision of whole food for healthy populations by integrating a complex set of social and economic interrelations such as the skills of producers with the needs of local households and the development goals of communities. This vision has resulted in multiple social benefits where farmers markets have enriched community spaces through the following innovative approaches:

- .The visibility of the farmer – food with a face
- Experiential social learning through smell, sights, sounds and taste
- Markets in non-commercial spaces such as school playgrounds, open to all
- Conversion of parkland to urban market gardens where formal social learning takes place enhancing community capacity to feed itself
- Once weekly market that is aware of the limits and possibilities of local food and is not taken for granted by consumers
- Valued as a hub for local communities and social networking that provides interactive forms of knowing about food through cookery demonstrations, recipe sharing and formal feedback with farmers

The visibility of farmers has encouraged social and economic interactions that are counterbalanced by shared social concerns, knowledge and justice (Fried, 2002). Therefore, farmers markets have become a flexible local institution that support communities and nurture diversification and expansion of small farms (Gillespie, Hilchey, Hinrichs, Freestra, 2004).

The possibilities for scaling up the Growing Communities local food development model exist through the formal learning replication workshops were discussed in EfS in Chapter 1. I believe that it would take one more step in joined up policy thinking for the schools that host many farmers markets to start buying fresh food for school food services from farmers markets and for farmers to start coming into schools to talk about where food comes from. The community benefits for farmers markets are boundless, for example in New York, farmers markets are significant fresh food donors to homeless and community shelters as well as hosts to political canvassing by local politicians (Fried, 2002).

There are further plans for the creation of food zones to bring rural regeneration ever closer into the city (Growing Communities, 2009). The innovative organic box scheme offers discounts for old age pensioners and Healthy Start vouchers for new families. I have seen a wide range of ages and different nationalities both working and shopping at several farmers market under my observation reflecting the expansive element of social inclusion.

The application of the 100 miles limit for city farmers market is reduced to a 30 mile maximum at Crediton farmers market in Devon. This reflects the possibilities for local low carbon alternatives and sustainable development to provide a platform for rural regeneration in closely knit rural communities.

My participatory action research has allowed me to apply the findings of my dissertation question to the research itself. This has provided me and hopefully the reader with new answers to the challenges of providing alternatives to unsustainable food production-consumption patterns. In this way I have reflected on the purpose of democratic participation in local food networks to provide significant new sources of legitimization through the engagement of social contract in which people can reasonably act towards a more just society (Rahema, 1992).

Therefore, the key to social change is democratic participation. In my case story context, my findings suggest that the organic networks of social relations at farmers market is a broad 'church' where producer-consumer relations are mutually conditioned in favour of fresh, seasonable and local food. This system provides a direct income for the farmer, is value for money for the consumer in terms of taste, traceability and ethical and moral considerations towards human, animal and environmental care.

Farmers participating in the new paradigm have changed their work patterns and roles to provide whole food in ways beneficial to themselves, the environment and for communities. Similarly, consumers who shop at farmers markets and organic box schemes have direct access to a positive, healthy and democratic 'place' where they can change their shopping patterns and behaviours and reconnect to nature in more just ways. I reflect on my personal experiences of change within my research context in the next section.

Personal experience of farmers markets

As part of my participatory action research I also took the role of a consumer at farmers market. My weekly visit to my local farmer market in Queens Park was a great pleasure that significantly increased my awareness of healthy food and therefore my capacity for

self care. I had direct access to a diversity of fresh food produced by small producers at the heart of alternative food networks. I learnt a lot by watching and talking to producers about food preparation and received recipes which helped me prepare and cook food that I have never made before.

My experience of shopping at farmers markets in the fresh air, even in winter on crisp Sunday mornings was incredibly liberating. As the season turned to spring, I saw the flowers coming up and the trees come in to blossom as I walked, or cycled to my local farmers market. The contrast of not being under electric strip lights, or waiting in long queues at the supermarket checkout was palpable. The outdoor element of the bustling playground, the communicative stallholders, the relaxed atmosphere, the ability to smell, see and taste fresh food, to find out where it comes from and how it was produced before you buy, is in my experience a meaningful argument for farmers market.

The historical and cultural tradition of bartering in open air markets allows people on a budget to haggle for nutritious food. This is an element of social justice that is not possible at the supermarket, although there are discounts on out of date foods, or two-for-one deals. However, these discounts and deals may ultimately mean that the consumer is buying food that is not fresh or nutritious, and the farmer receives less for his produce, or the worker gets paid less for their labour.

During my six months participation-observation my local farmers markets I didn't use plastic carrier bags, or drive to the market. This was a good opportunity to continue my commitment to reducing my personal ecological footprint. My partner and I ate healthily all week, wasted less food, spent less money, cooked more meals from scratch, made soups from leftover vegetables and cakes from any leftover fruit. We learned to appreciate a wider variety of seasonal food, its provenance and the changing of the seasons.

In addition to recycling cardboard and papers, we had already set up compost bins in the garden into which more organic matter such as vegetable peelings and leaves went from waste from farmers market than food brought at the supermarket. This was because I was buying far less processed and packaged food. Therefore, farmers markets have emerged as a new way forward for me to maintain my commitment to reducing my use of plastics, forgoing car journeys to the supermarket and throwing 'out of date' processed foods away. Farmers markets have fulfilled my quest for a local source of healthy food and significantly improved my experience as a consumer.

How research changed my perceptions

When I started my research my perception of food at farmer markets was that it was good quality hand prepared food, but overpriced. I did not shop at farmers market, or consider it was something that was affordable for me. Over the course of my six months research my perception and understanding of farmers markets changed. Now I believe that farmers markets food is good quality, value for money and presents a strong social, economic and environmental alternative to food produced by industrialized models.

It took me a few weeks to adjust to changing my shopping patterns. But because my local farmers markets only takes place once a week, I was able to set my food budget for that one day a week and stick to it. I ended up spending less money at farmers markets than I would normally have done at the supermarket, which surprised me.

It was wonderful to see the availability of irregular shaped apples, pears, ugly heirloom tomatoes and Brussels sprouts still on their stalk. Similarly, the freshly baked artisan breads, none confined to plastic wrapping. It felt different, but good to grab handfuls of

spinach and peas in the pod out of dewy crates and know that I was only one step behind the friendly biodynamic couple who had picked the stuff only a few hours earlier.

Shortly before I started my research into farmers market I had given up my organic box scheme (not the Growing Communities one) because I missed the freedom of choosing exactly what types and amounts of food I ate each week. It was then that I started to think about shopping at farmers market in terms of continuing my commitment to participating in local food practice, and as a way to touch, taste, see, and smell the food of my choice before I purchased.

During my research trips to the supermarket became far less frequent. However, I would pop in on foot to a local supermarket to pick up items that I couldn't get at farmers market. This indicates that farmers markets do have limits, but also that there is consumer demand for the co-existence of both paths of food development. Once I had adjusted to the way farmers markets work, I celebrated the range of wholesome food on offer and reigned in some of my less sustainable consumer habits.

Another defining experience of my research took place when I stayed on a small farm in Devon and worked at Crediton farmers market. I saw the friendly social interaction between producers and consumers and how people of all ages bonded over knowledge about local and less intensively produced food. Many of the shoppers had walked to the market with hand-woven baskets that are on sale at the market - there wasn't a plastic bag in sight. It was here that I started to see the indicators that connect farmers markets to environmental sustainability, as well as learn more about local food production and the enjoyment of home cooked food.

The positive experience of farmers markets has been pleasurable and supported my commitment to social, environmental and economic responsibilities towards

sustainable living and my personal responsibilities to my own health. I valued every aspect of consuming food from farmers markets from a renewed perspective of EfS. My hopes are to continue with the awareness and knowledge I have gained from my research after the dissertation has been completed.

Local food - a form of knowing

In the event of rapid climate change and a post peak oil scenario it is unlikely that both fast and slow food systems would remain unaffected (Heinberg, 2007). However, I believe that where vision, principles and new possibilities exist in alternative and local systems, the far reaching potentials for personal and environmental transformation can be seen for the greater number of people.

The transformation of human beings exploitative relationship with natures' resources will require people to change their attitudes and actions to avert further environmental crises. Therefore, the development of emergent structures and processes that reflect a decentralized and participative politics help people to transform their behaviour (Huckle and Sterling, 1996).

If, as EfS researchers, we are looking to preferred futures and possibilities then let us “judge the vision by its internal consistency, its ability to motivate, and inspire, it’s possibility” (Khan, in Huckle and Sterling, 1996). The founders of the “100 Mile Diet” reflect below on the possibilities of the liberating and learning processes of local eating that implicitly connects knowledge about food to our wider relationship with the world:

We could continue to decipher every far-flung product that appeared on our supermarket shelves. Or we could start fresh. We could immerse ourselves in the here and now, and the simple pleasures of eating would become a form of knowing (Smith and McKinnon, 2007).

Therefore, on reflection, local food is about developing ways of knowing about food and the nature of human enquiry. I believe that knowing in my research context is to understand the relationship between food and where it comes from. This is different to knowledge, but knowledge does connect with knowing at the level of consciousness. For example knowledge about environmental problems motivates environmentally conscious citizens to face those challenges (D'Souza, 1998).

As consumers in the West we must consider ourselves fortunate to have the choice between two paths of food development from which the pleasures of local eating have emerged as meaningful. But with privilege comes responsibility and pleasures must not be gained at the expense of others, or the planet. The democratic co-existence of the two paths of food development must now be steered towards what is being learned by the challenges and opportunities of local food activism.

I reflect on my primary case story Growing Communities who have acted as learning leaders, or organic intellectuals, to make the philosophical, spiritual and physical connections to organic systems of food production in meaningful ways. Their local action supports people's behavioral change and the shift towards a range of local, free range, and certified foods derived from ecological systems of agricultural production that enrich the environment and leads to a preferred path of sustainability.

Democracy is achieved in local systems by putting theories of change into the diverse practice of developing face to face connections between local producers and consumers. This direct approach is innovative enough to include people with busy lifestyles who do not have time to meet the farmers at market, but can participate in once weekly pick-up organic box scheme, or home deliveries.

There are concerns about the organic project somehow failing in times of crisis (Murray, 2009) but these concerns are being challenged by democratic and accountable organizations such as the Soil Association that have initiated social learning programmes across the UK in schools, universities, agricultural associations and wider environmental networks to raise awareness and action about the multiple social, environmental and economic benefits of organic and home growing and its potential to become a mainstream phenomenon.

Reflecting on values

My experience of researching farmers markets has helped me to learn about the theories and practices underpinning the new structures, processes and paradigms in local food networks. I have gained knowledge about the environment, moral economies and the interconnections between local social relations and learned to actively celebrate diversity and choice. For me, this has highlighted the importance of direct grassroots participatory action and local democracy.

The positive action of local food networks reflects a surging global movement of an alternative paradigm that synthesizes community values of co-operation, trust, and new learning where the conceptual resources of groups multiply potential. This paradigm values difference such as not for profit, and moral economies that re-define notions of growth and success (Pretty, 2002).

My own participatory action research has allowed me to behave as a member of the public within my research context, albeit with the opportunity and desire to stay on a small farm and to work at a farmers market. I do believe that it was by actually getting

closely involved with both urban and rural farmers markets that I was able to change my negative personal perception that farmers markets could not fulfill the range of food needs that I have as a consumer.

My thinking and behaviour changed during the course of my research when I understood that knowledge produced at farmers markets closely connects to a wide range of cultural values that appeal to and support life-affirming positive experiences. This demonstrates the broad possibilities of personal fulfillment as well as the potential of long term social, environmental and economic sustainability in local food networks.

What my research didn't do

In the context of creating sustainable alternatives and challenges to dominant food systems my primary case story findings indicate that there are significant changes being made by the emerging structures and processes of local food development. This social change has broad implications for both the empowerment of small scale farmers at local levels and for people looking for community actions into which they can channel new insights of sustainability (Smith, 1994).

My research didn't specifically look at the ways that these converging of rural-urban relationships at the level of food and growing can and are being used as a developing world model of food development to address the global paradox of obesity and want. However, I believe that the possibilities and potentials in alternative food networks warrant further research to find out exactly how local 'place' based food models that use holism as a basis of change (Sterling, 1990) can be utilized to improve the quality

of life and the health of individuals and communities in both urban and semi-rural areas around the world.

Conclusion

I conclude that my primary case story of Growing Communities farmers market and innovative pick up organic box scheme has adapted to the new environmental threats and realities of climate change by using concepts, values and visions of organic agriculture to mobilize local awareness and action. This community-based organization and leadership point to the possibilities of local solutions to the multiple global social, economic and environmental crises. This community model of positive change enacts a range of different outcomes based on value themes of responsibility, trust, moral economies, diversity and shared outcomes of sustainability.

Farmers markets alone may not be powerful enough to make the shift to mainstreaming organic agriculture and local systems of small scale sustainable food production-consumption. However, their socially critical methodologies do connect to broad networks of environmental and social justice movements that together represent a surging global movement that can transcend national boundaries. This social movement towards co-operation and “we’ness” (Etzioni,1988) connects local movements to events outside their locality which has spread the influence of organic, the grassroots metaphor for democracy, to the gardens of Queen Elizabeth II and the President of the United States.

The significance of the bottom up empowerment of the small-scale producer at local levels in relation to EfS is the construction of democratic local spaces where producers

and consumers can learn to sensitively respond to and responsibly act to change the inequities of the dominant competitive and dependent agricultural paradigms. The emergent paradigm defines “the learning mindsets that have stayed attentive to the shifting needs of society and the dynamic of environmental change as well as staying close to the needs of consumers.” (Roome and Oats, 1996).

The changing patterns of production-consumption within the new agricultural paradigm are driven by consumer demands for a local and known food supply chain. This political process is the key to reconnecting farmers face to face with consumers where transformed social relations can begin to re-humanize the dominance of fast and faceless industrialized food production. Ultimately, the new generation of farmers and farmers markets have come into being from a synthesis of the best of past ‘tradition’ and by eliminating practices that causes damage to the environment (Pretty, 2002). I let Nicola conclude why farmers market are a success:

“But I just think that farmers market are brilliant, and they’re a very, very good way of selling food and keeping people in touch with community. They’re successful and they’re successful because the need is there. Yeah. People just want it. It’s amazing how it’s grown” (Interview 2, 2008)

Therefore, farmers markets in both urban and semi-rural areas do represent a meaningful cultural place where adults can become active agents of social change. This has led to my understanding and hopefully the readers of the small scale farmer, whose knowledge and skill is congruent with the new agricultural paradigm, as a core learner of EfS. In addition, farmers markets provide a relaxed and positive atmosphere where adults and children alike can experientially learn about the taste and provenance of food.

The emergence of local structures and processes that emancipate the small scale farmer from the mainstream agricultural paradigms are premised on equitable social, economic

and environmental cycles. Therefore, the development of a new paradigm in agriculture that includes organic networks is a strong model of sustainability. This has encouraged the family farmer to stay in agriculture, broadened his social network and in some cases increased the land managed under organic stewardship. This offers hope for this generation and for future generations as well as opportunities for new entries into agriculture.

Local and small-scale production-consumption is different because it considers the interests of other human societies, other sentient beings and human and ecosystems health. The commodity relations that inevitably do exist in farmers market are based on social connectedness and values of care, consideration, participation and knowledge sharing. Alternative food networks are also significant local political sites for challenges to the assumptions of conventional development that support continuous economic growth. Rather that development is change in society based on a set of values that are worth sustaining (Dower, 1997)

The new social and economic relations that have emerged in alternative food networks fundamentally operate on a basis of trust that is integral to a moral economy that conveys notions of shared feelings, responsibilities and outcomes. There is also a sense that without a change in attitudes and thinking and the ability to trust others to act differently too then there is less hope of sustainability (Pretty, 2002). Therefore, farmers markets do not simply reproduce the 'ordinary values' of neo-liberalism, but produce different value choices based on ethics, morals, social justice and the principles of sustainability.

Of course, this is not to say that farmers markets do not appeal to the senses and to ordinary consumer demands such as value for money, freshness and taste. My habitual "field trips" to observe and participate in my research context were inordinately

pleasurable social experiences where my primary consumer demands were met in such a way as to transform my previously negative perception of overpriced farmers markets. It is a practice that I hope to continue into the future.

My research from an EfS perspective was made richer by “a progressive element of postmodern time with the emphasis of liberty, diversity, and sustainability.” (Huckle, 1996). This is another way of describing my experience of farmers markets as the joyful liberation of shopping outdoors, re-connecting with the seasons by having direct access to local food produced in agro-ecological systems that have the potential of producing abundant food supplies while protecting and improving nature.

My philosophical understanding of social movements has been deepened by researching this Masters dissertation. I have understood that knowledge about alternative food systems grows directly out of and in conjunction with specific communities and movements. The conceptual framework that I applied to my research of social justice, emancipation and participation has chimed with the powerful ideological paradigm of a globalizing socio-political movement that uses collective identity to mobilize common efforts to re-localize food and agricultural systems for environmental justice.

This powerful framing represents a synthesis of a broad range of influential thinkers and organizers, or organic intellectuals, who act as learning leaders to critically challenge the status quo. It is this influence that brings to bear a collective opposition to the environmental and social injustices of the dominant paradigms in the form of an emergent civil society (Tickle and Welsh, 1998). These challenges produce different epistemologies, or configurations of knowledge that shape the practices and social order of specific historical periods. When we look back at this time, which may well be a tipping point in respect to human use of finite resources, we want to see that there were

alternatives, that people did try hard to protect the environment and that the shift towards a better possible future was a reality.

The extant synergies between the environmental groups, consumer groups, the organic movement, local food pioneers such as the Slow Food movement, the 100 Mile Diet and Growing Communities and small-scale producers have irrevocably linked local food production-consumption with theories of ecological diversity. These complex agro-ecological relationships are integrated into the formal and informal social learning, knowledge and skills that are produced when communities work together and create conditions for the emergence of new local identities, agencies and social orders. Therefore, emerging structures and processes produce the new meanings and actions that support people to change their behaviour.

Farmers markets and their associated organic box schemes do legitimize new ways for people to take positive steps toward fresh whole food diets and long term sustainability. Through the democratic and responsible use of social contract a form of 'earth' justice (Aitken,1991) can arise from the people in respect of shared agency that favours social and environmental justice. Therefore, the rights based approach for shared outcomes invites Governments to notice and input into local food communities acting to protect the global environment with constructive solutions based on low technological inputs and no-growth economies. Cheryl supports my conclusion with an important question:

“I've been aware of the issues around food security for a few years - DEFRA seem still to be ignoring it, they think it's not necessary, but I'm sure you're aware of the 9 meals from anarchy quote and arguments for and against. However the fact stands that we import around 70 - 80% of the food we eat and in a crisis, should the oil run out, what are we going to rely upon?”
(Interview 5, 2009)

However, the fact that local food networks do exist independently indicates that the role of Government may not even be necessary, or desirable. Whilst, this inevitably links back to capitalist ideas of the free market, the scaling down of intensive and polluting industrial technologies by Government regulation would be a welcome adjunct to the authentic processes of sustainable communities.

Ultimately, the choice for a better possible future depends on the value choices we humans make in relation to worth or destruction (Pretty, 2002). The fact that we make these choices every time we sit down to a meal is a testament to the influence that we have over our diets and our environments. My learning journey of self care has shown me that value choices based on worth allows for new ways of knowing that connect me to new ways of acting in the world.

This knowing in my research context has taken me on a voyage of new forms of pleasure, social interaction, safe spaces and places, and most of all new learning. On a deeper level, I believe that local participation at farmers markets can nourish ideas, theories and feelings about how we humans can support each other as we change and behave in mutually sustaining ways. The first port of call on the voyage to sustainable food systems is the transformation of social relations between producers and consumers.

My participatory action research strategy has enabled me to make more allies on my learning journey to self care at my local farmers market. I have strengthened my links to wider social movements such as the Soil Association, the Biodynamic Association, and the Small Scale Producers Association. By using qualitative and ethnographic research methodologies I have gained confidence about communicating in person with social actors in my research context and enjoyed interpreting their feelings and beliefs, as well as my own.

Sustainability is the way to overcome the multiple social, economic and ecological crises. But unless we uphold the models that are strong and based on networks of trust, it will be merely an extension of the dominant process of rationalization (Smith, 1994). The action of place based localism is an opening for new knowledge flows where the local makes the global on an everyday basis. This knowledge flow can start, or enhance the process of personal and collective recovery that can play a role in global recovery. My next challenge will be to grow and cultivate more food at home and to become more self sufficient.

I conclude that responsible globalization (Beck, 1999) can be politically shaped by learning organizations and the sensitive development of 'new' agricultural dimensions through community based action such as farmers markets and innovative organic box schemes. These transformed agro-ecological networks have emerged as a new paradigm in agriculture that is based on theories of local production-consumption that promote change, diversity and community at global levels.

By taking positive steps towards addressing the key issues of climate change and food security through communicative strategies such as face to face social relations and local networks based on trust, we also start a process of re-humanization and de-rationalization in our daily lives. This brings about new opportunities to develop a knowledge society (Huckle, 2001) where decisions on what is culturally acceptable and morally and politically right is based on the best of what choices are available to us today.

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Appendix 1 Case Story Interviews

WHO	CONTEXT	WHERE	WHEN	HOW LONG
Interview 1: Beverley	Small-scale egg producer	A farm kitchen near Crediton, Devon	31 st December 2008	55 minutes
Interview: 2 Focus Group with Nicola, Beverley and Adam	Hand-craft potter And two small-scale producers	A farm kitchen near Crediton, Devon	30 th December 2008	1 hour
Interview 3: Helen	Organic farmer, runs a vegetable box scheme and a vegetable stall	Crediton Farmers Market, Devon	3 rd January 2009.	45 minutes
Interview 4: Nicole	Farmers market deputy manager and organic box scheme packer	Stoke Newington, Farmers Market, London	31st January 2009	70 minutes

Interview 5: Cheryl	Co-Director of London Farmers Market, an organizing association of 16 farmers markets	A telephone interview and several email exchanges	5 th May 2009	50 minutes
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Appendix i

Interview 1: Beverley

SB is me, Samantha Burcher

SB: Tell me about an aspect of farmers market that interests you?

Beverley: *“The catering at Farmers market that has been taken over by the farmer market chairman, who is so busy with the social side of the market that his granddaughter has taken over his stall which sells his own home produced honey. She’s 13, and now has a part-time Saturday job the market takes place on the first Saturday in every month and she loves it! The catering side is a new aspect of the market and provides extra custom for the meat producers who sell their products to the chairman to use on the stall.”*

SB: What do you like about the market?

Beverley: *“The social aspect of the market is great, and with the tables and chairs positioned in the middle of the market means that people can stop and have a coffee or a tea, and a bacon or sausage roll and the catering creates a welcoming ambiance and invites in people and crowds.”*

SB: Any other positive aspects of farmers market from your perspective?

Beverley: *“It’s very relaxed, and there is no police presence, which means that customers never have to worry about their purses being stolen. It’s so honest. I was born in London’s East End, so I really enjoy that aspect of rural community. The regulars who visit the market come rain, shine or snow, but the weather plays a huge part in terms of people coming to the market. I’m positive about the market because I work there and I want it do well.”*

SB: Do producers help each other out?

Beverley: *“There’s a code of conduct between stall holders whereby we are very helpful to each other in many ways. For example we watch each others stall if we need to pop to the loo or do a bit of shopping. Or we give each other change for larger bank notes. We also socialise outside of the market and visit each others farms. There are some stalls that are run by husband and wife teams so they can cover for each other, but I’m there on my own so the market community is important to me. Often, if it’s a busy Saturday I have to wait until the end of the day to get someone to watch the stall and cover for you while you do your shopping.”*

SB: What is your experience of other farmers and the producers in the market, are they all organic, or are some are conventional?

Beverley: *“Most of the producers are conventional farmers. Farming doesn’t need to be organic because there is space in Devon for reasonable sized herds of cows and sheep so that the local producer using conventional systems are not intensive. The local producers are devoted to the welfare of their lambs and cattle, both of which they sell at market as meat. For instance, if a lamb gets sick it gets brought in from the fields, placed in a basket and put in the agar to warm up.”*

SB: You’re involved in producing food, what are the most important aspects of food for you?

Beverley: *“Quality is all important with food. I think that local doesn’t always mean good because there’s a butcher in town that sells locally produced meat, but it’s just not good quality meat. You won’t get food poisoning, but it’s not up to standard.”*

SB: So local doesn’t always mean good quality?

Beverley: *“In most cases it does. To ensure good quality i.e. freshness and taste I would rather spend more money on a good quality steak and buy a smaller portion, than spend less money on an inferior piece of meat. I buy my meat and fish at farmers market and also at Waitrose. So I’m balancing my shopping between the farmers market and the supermarket.”*

SB: What else do you use the supermarket for?

Beverley: *“I use the supermarket for things like washing powder, kitchen towels, toilet rolls, oranges, bananas, toothpaste and the like”.*

SB: What are the negative aspects of farmers market?

Beverley: *“I can’t really think of any. But on the negative side, there is a threat to the market in the shape of Tesco. I’m worried because Tesco are coming to Crediton. I wish it was Waitrose! Because there is only one crummy supermarket in Crediton, I think that another one is needed. I’m concerned that it could wreck the delicatessen in Crediton. It will be half a mile away from the market, and will provide competition for the farmers market which can’t rest on its laurels and must strive to be consistently better, or good.”*

SB: What don’t you like about the quality of food in supermarkets?

Beverley: *“The fresh food in supermarkets is not what it claims to be. It looks fresh, but it’s not as fresh as the local produce at farmers market, and it doesn’t last in the fridge as long.”*

SB: Anything you’d like to get in farmers market that you can’t?

Beverley: *“I can’t buy things like oranges and bananas there which are important to my diet.”*

SB: What does the farmers market of the future look like?

Beverley: *“There’s already food sold there [Crediton farmers market] that I thought would never be ever be allowed to be sold there. [She’s referring to the 30 mile local rule of the market farmers trading standards. There a stall there that sells olives that are imported from Italy, but prepared in Devon - softened, pitted and stuffed - and the producer planted olive trees on his farm twenty years ago that have only just started to fruit. I think that there may also be a trend for other Mediterranean fruits to be grown in Devon and sold at the farmers markets, climate permitting.”*

SB: Do you feel secure about your food supply in the light of your positive experience of farmers market? Do you have food security?

Beverley: *“Working and shopping at the farmers market has increased my appreciation of food and food security. When I visit friends from the market, other stall holders and small producers, I can see my meat walking around. This increases my feeling of food security in terms of quality and traceability. I can feel absolutely confident about where my food comes from. This experience is an added benefit of*

being part of a farmer's market community. How many people in London can say that they know exactly where their food comes from?"

SB: How do customers at Crediton farmers market respond to you?

Beverley: *"A woman came to my stall and looked at my sample of hard boiled egg with its golden yolk and said "I don't think the kids will like this, it's too yellow." Laughs. Oh and the chairman told me that a customer came back a month after buying a pot of his honey and said, "You're honey's a bit sweet isn't it?" Laughter.*

SB: Is there an educational aspect to the market that you know about?

Beverley: *"It's about educating people's palettes and tastes, and introducing people to different tastes and good fresh seasonable home produced food."*

The following Saturday I went with Beverley to the first Crediton Farmers Market of the year on Saturday 3rd January 2009. We sold out of all the eggs that she took with her, there was less stock because of winter. Beverley also got asked to sell her produce at another farmers market, Cullompton farmers market in Devon. She said I was brought her luck for the day.

Appendix ii

Interview 2: Small focus group of Nicola Adam and Beverley

Nicola was the main speaker in this group. She is a potter with a stall at Crediton farmers Market in Devon; she is also a volunteer member of the Crediton Farmers Market Committee. She makes, displays and sells a wonderful variety of hand made, fired and glazed pots that can be used for food such as soup bowls, pizza plates, cider and juice jugs, tea pots, butter dishes, and bread and casserole dishes.

SB: How did you first find out about farmers market?

Nicola: *"I was first introduced to farmer market by a friend who was interested in Slow Food; it was then that I first made the connection between the pots I make and food. I feel very much that my pots are based on the food that is cooked in them."*

SB: Is there anything you would like to see done differently at Crediton Farmers market? And the way it's run?

Nicola: *“I think Crediton market is very good, and I think it’s run very well. We’re sort of always looking of ways to attract people to come in and one of the things I’m trying to get set up before I go and I’m probably not going now ‘til the autumn anyway, but I’m interested in getting rural crafts represented as rural skills and have them as demonstrations.”*

So there’s a chap who makes really nice Greenwood furniture, chairs and things. He’s quite interested in coming with a display, and perhaps doing a bit of demonstrating of how he maybe using a draw horse, bringing a draw horse with him that sort of thing, and someone making hurdles, who I’m not sure about, but I think I could get in touch with him.”

SB: Do you think that demonstrations would inspire younger people to take up older crafts?

Nicola: *“Well it might, and just to show people that these things still happen. Because I think that an awful lot of people have no idea that these rural skills are still going on.”*

Adam: *“I haven’t seen any hurdles, I haven’t seen any homemade hurdles, have you?”*

Nicola: There is a chap at Chagford who does them, and this man who makes the Greenwood furniture, he says he knows someone who does it. So, yes, I mean I do know people who make them, but not as a business.

Adam: *“I think there is somewhere I’ve seen them. On the road from Tiverton to Crediton, No Man’s Land, I’ve seen hurdles. Of course there’s Under the Greenwood Tree’ Thomas Hardy’s book where the heroine was a hurdle maker. Fanny Hay wasn’t it?”*

Beverley: *“That was one of the few books I haven’t read by Thomas Hardy, I didn’t read ‘Under the Greenwood Tree, I didn’t get round to it.”*

Adam: *“I’m all in favour. I mean we now buy these lightweight aluminium sheep hurdles, but you can’t put them really around a garden to look attractive, although we have. But you could put the handmade ones (greenwood hurdles) round the garden to keep rabbits and mice out and they’d look lovely.”*

SB: Are these practices sustainable, do you think that the makers are using local wood?

Nicola: *“Yeah oh yeah. Definitely, they’re coppicing and doing it properly.”*

SB: Would you say that farmers market in Crediton is much more beneficial for your business than any other outlet?

Nicola: *“It’s good because it’s steady. And, people get to know about me so they may not actually buy at the market, but they may come and get in touch with me. It’s a good window for my work. And what I like about it is that I get a bit more for my pots than if I sell them through galleries, and the customers pay a huge amount less so everybody benefits.”*

SB: It’s a win-win situation that just wouldn’t happen if you were doing it in say a local craft shop because they would take their percentage?

Nicola: *“Yes, and it would push up say a tea pot that I sell in the market for say £34 would probably be nearer £50 if it was in a gallery if I was still taking the same amount. Well I wouldn’t be able to, I’d have to take less.”*

SB: You wouldn’t get satisfaction from knowing who was buying from you?

Nicola: *“Yes! I like feedback. It’s very good. Yeah.”*

SB: What do you see as the future of arts and craft and artisans in food and handmade products?

Nicola: *“I think it’s much better, much brighter than it has been for a long time.”*

SB: Is that down to community, or raised consciousness?

Nicola: *“I think raised consciousness and people just wanting to get away from the mass produced. I think it’s just a general feeling that erm.... I think it’s a sort of the awareness of the environment and all that sort of thing. And it’s all sort of tied up together really.”*

SB: Is it a reconnection?

Nicola: *“Yes, I think so. I think that people are wanting to do that”.*

SB: What’s the most important aspect about farmers market from your point of view?

Nicola: *“What do you mean for me personally what’s important? I suppose the fact that I’m able to sell pots there from just the practicalities of it. But I just think that farmers markets are brilliant, and they’re a very, very good way of selling food and keeping people in touch with community. They’re successful and they’re successful because the need is there.”*

Yeah! People just want it. It's amazing how it's grown because how long has Crediton market been going, Beverley, do you know?"

SB: Why do you think the locals support produce sold at farmers market?

Nicola: *"I think that for the same reasons I do. Because it's locally produced, it's fresh; they know it's good, they know the quality is good. I don't think that the organic bit is so important, it's that it's locally grown. And you know if you go and buy your cheese from someone and they get to know your face and you talk to them and the same with the vegetables and stuff it just makes it all that much more of a pleasure.*

It's much more fun going around and chatting to people in the market than going to the supermarket. It's also that Crediton market particularly is a social occasion. People stop and they have coffee and they and they chat and it's very much a place where they can meet their friends."

SB: So, it's a bonding and unifying experience, a socially inclusive activity? Even if you're doing different tasks, selling different thing, you're all included?

Nicola: *"I think Crediton is an unusual place and I think Crediton market works very well because actually in Crediton there's quite a strong, alternative, creative group of people within the population in Crediton is quite strongly that way. Obviously it's not all strata's, but there's a local core (dialogue lost to the sound of a food processor)."*

SB: And do you see the farmers market continuing way into the future?

Nicola: I don't see why it should change, really.

Nicola: *"It's a mixture of the whole thing I think. I mean I like to eat good food that I feel confident where it's come from, but it's also the aesthetics that's important and that comes into making the pots really. It's the aesthetics of the way that you present food and stuff which is important. That's what I make the pots for. I like to make dishes that are quite sort of open so that you get a nice lot of ..."*

Beverley: When it comes to food presentation, Nicola kindly made me a giant egg cup to display goose eggs in it.

Nicola: It was too big though, wasn't it. I must make you a smaller one.

Beverley: "Yes, it was a little big. That was really sweet of you. I'm looking forward to using it again"

Appendix iii

Interview 3: Helen

Helen runs the organic vegetable stall at Crediton farmers market once a month and also runs an organic box scheme that delivers to residents in the local area once a week. She was extremely busy serving on her stall so I opted to take notes and speak to her as and when she was able to talk rather than attempt to record the conversation.

This is a sample of the transcribed interview.

SB: How long have you been running an organic box scheme?

Helen: *“I’ve been doing it for twelve years. But over the last two months we, that’s me and my husband, have broken our rule over no imports. My husband has been ill and as a result I’ve had to bring some fruit from abroad and buy in some organic vegetables for the box scheme. There’s nothing else I can do, my husband is ill.”*

SB: Have you felt supported in setting up and running a local food and organic box schemes for the community by local and national Governments?

Helen: *“Even if they say they support small producers they don’t, and they are making it as hard as they can for small producers and taking the enjoyment out of the business. The local council are trying to make it much more problematic to get my produce to and from the market.*

We have a lot more stock than other producers so we need a lorry to get our stuff to the market. We put the veg boxes onto pallets then load them into our lorry. This is all about to change because the local council have said that if me and my husband want to deliver such an amount of food to farmers market then we will have to do a 5 day lorry driving course.”

Helen feels that this is a waste of time and money because both she and her staff are all qualified to drive heavy goods vehicles so why should they have to spend time and

money on a course in something they can already do. She said that other producers at the market have much less produce so can make do with using vans.

SB: What motivates you to keep going?

Helen: *“Nothing is motivating me to keep going at the moment. But when I started it was about sustainable farming. Our aim was to produce local and healthy food and to tick all the boxes for an ideal world.”*

SB: How much enjoyment are you getting out of running your own business?

Helen: Very little. I feel let down by the bureaucratic system. I feel that I am providing a local service and creating local employment and this sort of bureaucracy is a waste of time and money as far as I’m concerned. I’m fed up with these crappy rules.

SB: Are you worried about the impending Tesco supermarket that is due to come to the town?

Helen: *“Yes, people go where it’s cheapest of course.” I believe that Tesco bribed the Council by offering them a percentage of their takings. I wonder if I would get better treatment if I did the same.*

We do not aim to compete with the supermarkets. We believe that “Local Food for Local People” should mean just that. We also aim to produce top quality food at a fair price - there is plenty of “cheap” food available but we believe that this comes with a hidden price tag that is paid by the health of the consumer and the environment.”

SB: How did you get into organic food production in the first place?

Helen: *“Me and my husband both did agricultural MSc’s. We wanted to do it properly. To get our business up and running we worked all day and every day, seven days a week. But now I’ve had four children, I don’t know how I did that. Organic farming is labour intensive because of mixed cropping instead of just planting one crop- monocropping. It’s the mixed cropping that creates the complexity of organic farming and makes it labour intensive.”*

SB: What’s your take on sustainability?

Helen: *“Sustainability is a concept. It’s dynamic and changing, but it’s no good if there are no systems, government systems in place to support it. I thought that actions would speak louder than words and that the local community could be educated into*

healthy eating by my actions. My philosophy is “You are what you eat”. But, how do you make the masses people that aren’t already here, i.e. eating organic and producing organic get here in terms of understanding sustainability.”

SB: Where else do you sell your produce?

Helen: We also supply vegetables to local shops, pubs and other organic box schemes based in Devon, to help them reduce their dependency on imports, so perpetuating this cycle of local regeneration within the rural economy.

SB: What are your special interests?

Helen: *“Conservation and wildlife are at the heart of our farm and we work closely with Devon Wildlife Trust. We have been planting trees and hedges since we came here in 1996, including over 5000 trees on 5 acres in 2003, and a further 2000 trees and hedgerows in 2004. We have areas of rough grassland to provide habitat for mammals, plants, insects and fungi. “*

Helen is very emotive with her children running around the stall. It seems to me that she is very upset by the situation and on the brink of throwing in the towel. This checks out as I discover later than her farm and land are for sale, but not the name of the business.

Appendix IV

Interview 4: Nicole

SB: What is Growing Communities?

Nicole: *“Growing Communities is a social enterprise in Hackney and we have this weekly organic farmers market and we run a box scheme and we also have growing sites here in Hackney, which are Soil Association Certified. We mostly grow salads in terms of high yields, which supply the box scheme.”*

SB: Have you seen any changes over the years, how has the market and the box scheme grown as a whole thing?

Nicole: *“We, as Growing Communities have grown. The market has grown in terms of the number of stalls we have here and obviously the number of people who come and*

shop here and the numbers of people who are members of our box scheme as well has pretty well grown month on month.”

SB: Can people pick up their vegetable boxes?

Nicole: *“Yeah, we don’t deliver, it’s a pick up box scheme. We do not deliver to individuals, but we have a number of community places where we do deliver to. We deliver by bicycle and by our electric milk float to a number of community drop offs. Like there’s a City Farm in Hackney, there’s an arts centre and a couple of other places and our main one where we do the packing and people come and collect from us and when we’ve done our service about 95% people come by foot or on bicycle and it’s local so they can collect from us.”*

SB: Where did you get the idea from?

Nicole: *“I don’t know it was before my time. The box scheme was on of the earliest to start. Julie Brown whose our Director of Growing Communities started it 15/16 years ago just in her garage, just in contact with a farmer in East Anglia and directly bringing the produce in and it’s grown now. That was when she started it. It was her and 20 friends putting some money in and they started off and now as we say....”*

SB: How many members would you say that you’ve got for the box scheme?

Nicole: *“There are, oh gawd! I think we do, let me see, because I pack the veg as well. How many bags do we do? 400.”*

SB: Is there a formal learning aspect to Growing Communities?

Nicole: *“We’re holding a workshop in two weeks time about replicating the Growing Communities model because we don’t want to expand because the whole point is that we’re small and local. But we’re going to offer support to other individuals or organisations who want to in their own urban communities in the UK set up a model similar to Growing Communities so the film is being made to show an aspect of the community that they won’t meet at the conference because the conference is on a Wednesday and they’re not going to hear from the farmers, or the traders so we’ve interviewed some of the public here, box scheme members and some of the farmers about what Growing Communities means to them.”*

SB: What is the most important aspect of farmers market from your point of view?

Nicole: *“Well, we’re a bit different. I mean generally people would say that the farmers*

market is about buying local produce. But we're a bit different because we're the only farmers market that's all organic. So it's local and organic."

SB: Is that the philosophy behind Growing Communities?

Nicole: *"Yes, our box scheme's organic, our growing sites are Soil Association certified. I mean we're organic, that's part of our ethos."*

SB: Do you think that's put anyone off or had the opposite effect?

Nicole: *"That's interesting because one of the farmers here has a stall at another farmers market which isn't all organic and he says it's great because people come here to buy organic stuff. So they know it's an all organic market, whereas, at the other market he gets a bit lost because most farmers markets, as you know, are not all organic, whereas people think that they are and he gets a bit lost in that whereas here everyone is on a par."*

Having said that I've got nothing to say, here am I blabbing away. (When I first asked Nicole if I could talk to her, she said she wasn't sure if she had anything to say).

Just to finish answering the question how important...Again interviewing a lot of the people shopping here said that they have a relationship with the farmers and traders and they can ask you know, "where's the meat come from?", "what do I do with it", "how do I cook this fish?"

SB: What other feedback have you received?

Nicole: *"A lot of people, when we were asking them were saying "We come here, we meet our friends here, you know, it's a social activity as well, we feel part of this community, we're here every week."*

SB: Do you buy your own food here?

Nicole: *"Yes, and I'm on the box scheme as well, so I get stuff through the box scheme, so yeah, I shop here. It's difficult to shop while I'm working. I always wish I brought more at the end of the day, but...."*

SB: Has working here influenced or supported your food habits?

Nicole: *"It's supported it and made it a lot easier. I just come and shop here, I don't have to go and choose what you're getting. The good thing about Growing Communities is because we are fundamentally an ethical organization, you, as a*

shopper, don't have to make those choices and work out where things have come from. Is this organic? Is this local? What Growing Communities does, if you trust Growing Communities and we try to be a transparent organization, if you trust our ethos, then that entire decision making and all that complicated workings out is done for you. I mean you know if I'm buying from Growing Communities then you know...."

SB: Isn't that a bit like the dominant supermarket model that expects the customer to trust what they've got is good?

Nicole: *Silence. "Well there's something. I dunno if this answers your question, but Growing Communities is a very local organisation, people know us we have real regulars, obviously on the box scheme there's members there, they're regular by definition, and they're regular shoppers here. People know us; they know we're trusted, whereas people know that you can't trust Tesco as far as you can throw them, so there's that relationship."*

SB: So it's that close relationship of trust between producers and consumers. A question that's came up for me both in this interview at this market and the interview at Crediton Farmers Market is: Why do we need a collective "we"? So what's happening here in Hackney is a collective?

Nicole: *"Yes, We're called Growing Communities and we've got 12 or 10 principles, one of which is fostering community, and that's community amongst the farmers here who buy off each other and there's a guy making soup and pakoras and he obviously buys his flour from one of the farmers, and his vegetables, so there's that community amongst the farmers and there's a community among the people who belong to the box scheme and shop at the market as well and you know people will tell you that."*

SB: This is a community that's evolving, has it rippled out to the people on the streets?

Nicole: *"I think so; it's very much you know, we're a Hackney organisation, based in Stoke Newington. I think a lot of people, like there was a Transitions Town meeting recently in Stoke Newington and lots of the people know about Growing Communities and we spoke there."*

SB: How would this market cope if there was an oil and energy crisis tomorrow?

Nicole: *Laughs. "Well our farmers have already been affected by the price of oil and diesel in terms of, I mean they're local, but local means Kent and Essex. You know it's*

added to their costs driving here. The prices have gone up for animal fee for example and that's related to the fuel crisis. We in Growing Communities, god I mean, even the coffee machine uses electricity, we use our mile float is electric as I say; we would be affected, but..."

SB: Do you choose which producers you have at the market?

Nicole: *"We do, but it was more in terms of timing. It was the fact that we'd only had one meat stall with us right from the beginning, but they were no longer able to meet the demand that there was there was room for another farmer to come in. Whereas we won't just get loads, if we had people asking every single week "Can I have a stall here" and we don't say "yes" unless it's going to be of benefit to the market and it's not going to affect the trade of the other farmers here."*

SB: The market is in a school playground, is there any interaction with the teachers and the pupils?

Nicole: *"Not formally, no."*

SB: You don't supply their kitchens with food?

Nicole: *"No."*

SB: Do you think there is space for having animals in the local area?

Nicole: *"I don't know if you heard Julie [Brown] or Kerry [Rankine, another market manager] at the Soil Association conference has got a vision for how farming should be to be sustainable. It's kind of very much about "zoning" so animals would probably be, maybe in zone 2 or 3 in terms of where they are in that kind of zoning locally and very locally would be what we grow on our sites, which is salad leaves, not stuff that needs a lot of attention and high yield stuff."*

SB: There's a lot that's positive about this market. Is that needed to offset the damage from the dominant food system?

Nicole: *"That's the ethos of Growing Communities, that's what we're trying to do, we're trying to change how the food system in this country is organised, and that's what we are trying to do at the farmers market and in a small way I'd say that we are very successful."*

SB: Small is beautiful! Do box scheme members pay weekly when they collect their bag?

Nicole: *“Most people pay by standing order, but people can pay buy cash if they want to, but it’s easier for us if they do a standing order. We also do a discount for OAPS, and we accept ‘Healthy Start’ vouchers. which is for parents that are pregnant or with young kids.”*

SB: The box scheme and the farmers market have the possibility to reach everybody in the community? So it is a socially holistic framework.

Nicole: *“Yes yes yeah!”*

SB: I’ve seen one of your films before, an interview with the Julie Brown [Director of Growing Communities at one of the growing sites in Hackney] It was packed full of information even though it was short. It really put forward to me the message that your model is the new model for sustainable food systems. Sustainability is the focus of my study.

Nicole: *“Yes, we have 10 principles and one of the first ones is sustainability. And what’s interesting is that we’re looking at sustainability in you know both environmentally and economically and socially. And so we are unusual in that we are financially sustainable as well. We don’t have funding. I think we employ something like 16 part time staff you know local people and that money comes from the farmers market and the box scheme.”*

SB: Are there any threats to your vision?

Nicole: *“Ermm. I mean, I think the credit crunch, the supposed credit crunch, is having a little bit of an impact on us.”*

SB: You use the term “supposed”. Do you think that the credit crunch is designed to have an effect on people who are claiming back their own power? Or am I just being cynical too?

Nicole: *“Conspiracy theory! Dunno, I don’t know. I think something like you know, we’re just doing ok on the box scheme, but numbers have levelled out a bit, and I think some people are totally supportive of what we are going and they’ll, you know, they’ll always wanna buy organic and support local and ethical. But some people begin to*

see it as a bit of a luxury rather than actually the way it should be and so that's maybe why they'll possibly cut back on organic and ethical food, I think."

SB: I think that food is the thing that makes people feel good, and that it's the thing that we shouldn't be shy about spending money on.

Nicole: *"Yes, yeah yeah, exactly! Well people have lost the idea of the true cost of food haven't they? At a time like this, this is when the farmers are feeling the pinch, kind of need that support really and need people to stick with it."*

SB: Is there a way of making people understand that what they eat and their relationship with food is part of a whole worldview and affects the way the world is?

Nicole: *"I mean, I think through what we've done at Growing Communities, people have learned through information that they see. We put up posters and stuff. People can talk to the farmers here. On our box scheme, we put a little newsletter in with recipes and a little bit of information, stuff about what's going on in the food world."*

SB: Do you hold any really strong ideologies or beliefs personally?

Nicole: *"Yeah! God I'm into, you know, I'm into how, for me I hate shopping normally, and you know I think when we spend money we should think about the consequences of that and mostly we don't, and I personally do. So if I'm spending money, I'm really happy to spend money here because I know there are beneficial consequences of that. I shop as ethically as I can and I just think that's really important. Most of the food system and consumerism there are people at the bottom of the chain are exploited and I think that the person who spends the pound is part of that and I don't want to be part of that, so..."*

Appendix v

Interview 5 – Cheryl

SB: Please tell me how you got involved with Londons Farmers Markets? Did you set it up?

Cheryl: *“I didn't set up Londons Farmers Market, but I've been involved now for over 9 years. There were no farmers' markets in London 10 years ago, no way of buying fresh seasonal food direct from the farmer apart from a few pick your own farms on the outskirts of London.*

I joined because I'm passionate about markets; I'm interested in where our food comes from, what we buy, where we buy it and why. I notice that supermarkets tend to suck the life out of a community, whereas markets are the heart and soul, providing not just the ingredients for a meal, but a positive environment, atmosphere, and community where people are actually happy. I've rarely seen a child have a tantrum at a farmer's market.”

SB: What difference do you think that farmers markets have made to the lives of small-scale producers?

Cheryl: *“A farmer I spoke with at Queens Park on Sunday told me that they wish they'd found us 10 years ago. Farmers' markets have kept many small farmers in business. They have the ability to control their sales, charge a fair price to customers, and in return they receive valuable feedback from customers. Some have even converted to organic methods or added new lines due to customer comments.”*

SB: Can you describe some of the feedback from consumers?

Cheryl: *“The feedback we receive is 99% positive. I get emails from customers thanking me for bringing a market to their locality. People love that they can buy direct from farmers. They like the relationships; I hear customers talking about people on stalls by their first names. They know all about them; when they're ill, we've been sent cards to send on to them for example.*

The remaining feedback concerns products that people have not been happy with which will always either be replaced or refunded. We have email list for every market and once or twice monthly messages are sent, concerning events at market, new season produce back etc. We always receive a few positive comments back thanking us for the markets and for keeping them informed. Some people have said that the markets have changed their lives and the way they shop.”

SB: Has Government show any interest in Londons Farmers Market?

Cheryl: *“Do you mean local or national? At local level yes, we've had several strands of interest. I'm on the board of London Food, the mayoral board set up to oversee food issues in the capital. We've advised on many different consultations about markets in the capital for example. We've also been consulted by the office of the deputy prime minister and had meetings in the past with DEFRA”*

SB: Can we in London like other urban cities grow food on a commercial basis to feed ourselves?

Cheryl: *“I've been aware of the issues around food security for a few years - DEFRA seem still to be ignoring it, they think it's not necessary but I'm sure you're aware of the 9 meals from anarchy quote and arguments for and against. However the fact stands that we import around 70 - 80% of the food we eat and in a crisis, should the oil run out, what are we going to rely upon?”*

SB: There is a strong social learning element in direct producer-consumer relations. Do you think that this could be developed in any way?

Cheryl: *“Some farmers markets do take this element further than we have time to do. We encourage farmers to offer ideas, tasters, recipes, information etc to customers and customers of all ages learn about seasonality, flavours, varieties etc. When our website and database are redeveloped, we will have a page especially for children and I want to do more in the line of farm visits this year for customers.”*

SB: Whose idea was it to hold farmers markets in school playgrounds? It's a good idea, how do the schools benefit?

Cheryl: *“I can't remember whose idea it first was but we're very happy to work in conjunction with schools. They get a weekly farmers' market thus benefiting the local community. They receive a contribution from us, and we also offer other services such as farm visits (yet to be taken up due to the problems of health and safety it seems). We also have some school children who want to help out by working on the stalls for work experience and some help out at the PTA drinks stall at Parliament Hill for example. At one school we helped set up a trial to offer a box scheme to parents, which was run by the school children.”*

SB: I used to think like many other people that farmers markets were overpriced. Now I feel that farmers market offers great value in terms of freshness, taste and

quality. How do you think that the perception that some people have that farmers markets are overpriced can be changed?

Cheryl: *“It's difficult. I would say to you, how did you overcome your fears? It's something that I get all the time and it's very annoying. From time to time I will do a supermarket v farmers' market shopping bag comparison (I'm doing one at the moment) and I'm thinking of putting something on our website when it's finished. Other than sending info out to journalists and having it on our website, word of mouth is still one of the best ways of spreading the word.”*

SB: Do you see that farmers markets springing up all over the world would solve some of our major economic, social and cultural problems?

Cheryl: *“I've not really answered your question. Socially, culturally I believe wholeheartedly in markets; it's ironic that we have gold markets as well as food markets, but the former are centuries away from their original format, whereas food markets are still on the streets. I said earlier that they're the heart of a community; they're not going to solve all problems, but they're better for a town, keeping people shopping in the centre, supporting small shops, keeping money circulating in the vicinity - than supermarkets that leech all life out a town.*

No child is going to learn where their food comes from at a supermarket. Schools need to play their part and I'd say family learning. More and more, people leave school without the ability to cook or recognize a vegetable and are therefore unable to pass on these skills to their children. Maybe we need to skip a generation and look to the grandparents for help.

We need a new generation of urban farmers willing to take on the challenge of feeding the population.”

Appendix 2 ETHICS GUIDANCE AND FORM

FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SCIENCE, LONDON SOUTH BANK UNIVERSITY GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROJECTS BY STUDENTS.

London South Bank University in line with other UK higher education institutions is reviewing all post-graduate research through a research ethics committee to insure all students have considered the ethical implications of their research and that the research falls within the ethical guidelines.

Ethical issues to consider when carrying out research.

In social research, ethics refers to moral choice and accountability on the part of researchers throughout the research process. It is your responsibility to protect the interests of your research participants. Your research should not cause the participants any harm, contravene their rights or involve them in financial expenditure. Participants in your research should give their voluntary consent to take part on the basis of information and knowledge about the research and you should ensure that they will not be recognisable in the write-up of the material. You should not pass on information about them to other people.

1. Research details

Name of student: Samantha Burcher

Title of dissertation: Alternative food networks and a new holistic agro-ecological paradigm in agriculture

Name of dissertation supervisor: Clayton White

What are the overall aims of your research:

My research aim is to explain how farmers markets address the key issues of social, economic and environmental sustainability. My research objective is to present primary case stories, secondary literature and participant-observations within my research context to fill a gap in knowledge about alternative food networks.

Briefly describe the type of participants who will take part in your study:

People who work in agriculture as small scale producers. People who co-ordinate farmers markets and box schemes and organic farmers. A Co-Director of an organizing body of London farmers markets.

Research methods – questionnaire, interview, participant observation – what will you ask questions on or what will you be observing?

I will be observing direct producer-consumers relations within the social context of farmers markets. I will interview a range of social actors within my research context about their thoughts, feelings and perceptions of working and selling produce direct to the public.

2. Professional guidelines

There are several sets of guidelines or ethical statements for good practice for researchers throughout the research process. The British Educational Research Association guidelines are included in Appendix 4 and they are also on the course website. In addition there are several alternatives with links below. **Please tick below the set of guidelines you have read and intend to follow:**

- Association of Social Anthropologists: www.anthropology.ac.uk/ethics2.html
- British Association for Applied Linguistics: www.baal.org.uk/ethicsug.htm
- British Society of Criminology: www.britisocrim.org/ethics.htm
- British Educational Research Association: www.bera.ac.uk/guidelines.html
- British Psychological Society: www.bps.org.uk/about/rules5.cfm
- British Sociological Association: www.britisoc.org.uk/about/ethic.htm
- Oral History Society: www.oralhistory.org.uk/ethics/ethics.html
- Political Studies Association:
www.psa.ac.uk/Publications/Professional_Conduct.htm
- Social Research Association: www.the-sra.org.uk/index.htm
- Other (please give details):

3 Voluntary participation and informed consent

Participants should agree to take part in your research without threat or inducement, based on being provided with clear and accessible information about the aims of the research, what they will be required to do, and what use you are going to make of their data. It is not enough to obtain permission from line managers or professionals if you intend to conduct fieldwork in an organisational setting. In the case of children, people with learning difficulties and other vulnerable groups, however, the consent of a responsible carer may also be required (see www.qualidata.essex.ac.uk/creatingData). It should be clear to participants that they can withdraw from the research at any stage.

Some social researchers prefer to get verbal consent from research participants, others prefer to ask them to sign a consent form (an example of the sort of information that you should give to people and a consent form is given on the next page). Which are you intending to do? Please tick the relevant steps:

- a) Verbal consent
- b) Written consent

This is the type of information that should be provided to research participants as part of informed consent, either verbally or in written form:

- your name and contact details at London South Bank University
- a short and clear explanation, without using jargon, of what your research project is about
- an explanation of how you are carrying out your research (methods), and what you are asking them to do (e.g. fill in a survey, take part in an interview)
- how much of their time you are likely to take up
- their right to withdraw from the research at any time
- your obligation to protect their anonymity
- your obligation to keep the information they give you confidential
- how you will use the data they give you.

MSc Education For Sustainability

DECLARATION

This work has not been previously accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed(Candidate)

Print name:..Samantha Burcher.....

Date21st July 2009.....

STATEMENT ONE

This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Magister in Scientia at South Bank University.

Signed(Candidate)

Date21th July 2009.....

STATEMENT TWO

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/ investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged in the reference.

Signed(Candidate)

Date21st July 2009.....

STATEMENT THREE

I hereby give consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations and to be in part or in full published on the university web site.

Signed(Candidate)

Date21st July 2009.....

Appendix 3:

Box: A potted history of Stoke Newington

Place, space and local identity

Stoke Newington has a reputation for radical non-conformity, diversity and difference (May, 1995). An element of non-conformity is demonstrated by Stoke Newington farmers market, which is the only fully organic and biodynamic farmers market in Britain.

Growing Communities was the first organic box scheme to deliver vegetables from farms just outside of London onto inner-city doorsteps. Julie Brown, the founder of Growing Communities feels that this was a subversive act which connects her alternative food network to Forsyth's (2003) idea of ecology as a 'subversive science'. Stoke Newington is a natural candidate for a "progressive sense of place" (Massey, 1994). In this context progressive can be defined in terms of the role of civil society in developing knowledge for food networks within community-led settings. This is supported by the Healthy Meal Initiatives, Market Chef Demonstrations, recipe sharing

and formal and informal food growing and replication workshops that take place in and around Stoke Newington farmers market.

Similarly, place is understood to be a unique point of connection to a wider series of knowledge flows, instead of a closed place. This highlights local food activism as not necessarily being defensive, but local as a place of knowledge and power, security and identity. The conceptualization of place has coincided with the debates concerning the process of globalization and identity (cite Featherstone 1993, in May, 1995). Therefore, Stoke Newington farmers market is links practical local actions in to real economic, political and cultural content between the local as place and the wider world in which it is set (Massey, 1994).

Stoke Newington Church Street, the site of Stoke Newington Farmers market, was recorded as far back as circa 1325 (Baggs, Bolton, and Croot, 1985). It was previously noted as “Newtowne” in the Domesday Book. By the 15th century Stoke Newington had become a country retreat for the wives of wealthy merchants who could spend time by the New River, a place conducive to health. Stoke Newington’s connection to food and growing dates back to the 16th Century when its nurseries and market gardens supplied London’s fruits and vegetables. One fruiter on Stoke Newington Church Street had vines growing in a walled garden containing forty two fruit trees. In the 19th Century green space totalled forty acres of meadows, twenty-nine acres under fruit and vegetables and twenty three and one half acres that may have been arable. By 1890 no farming land was recorded.

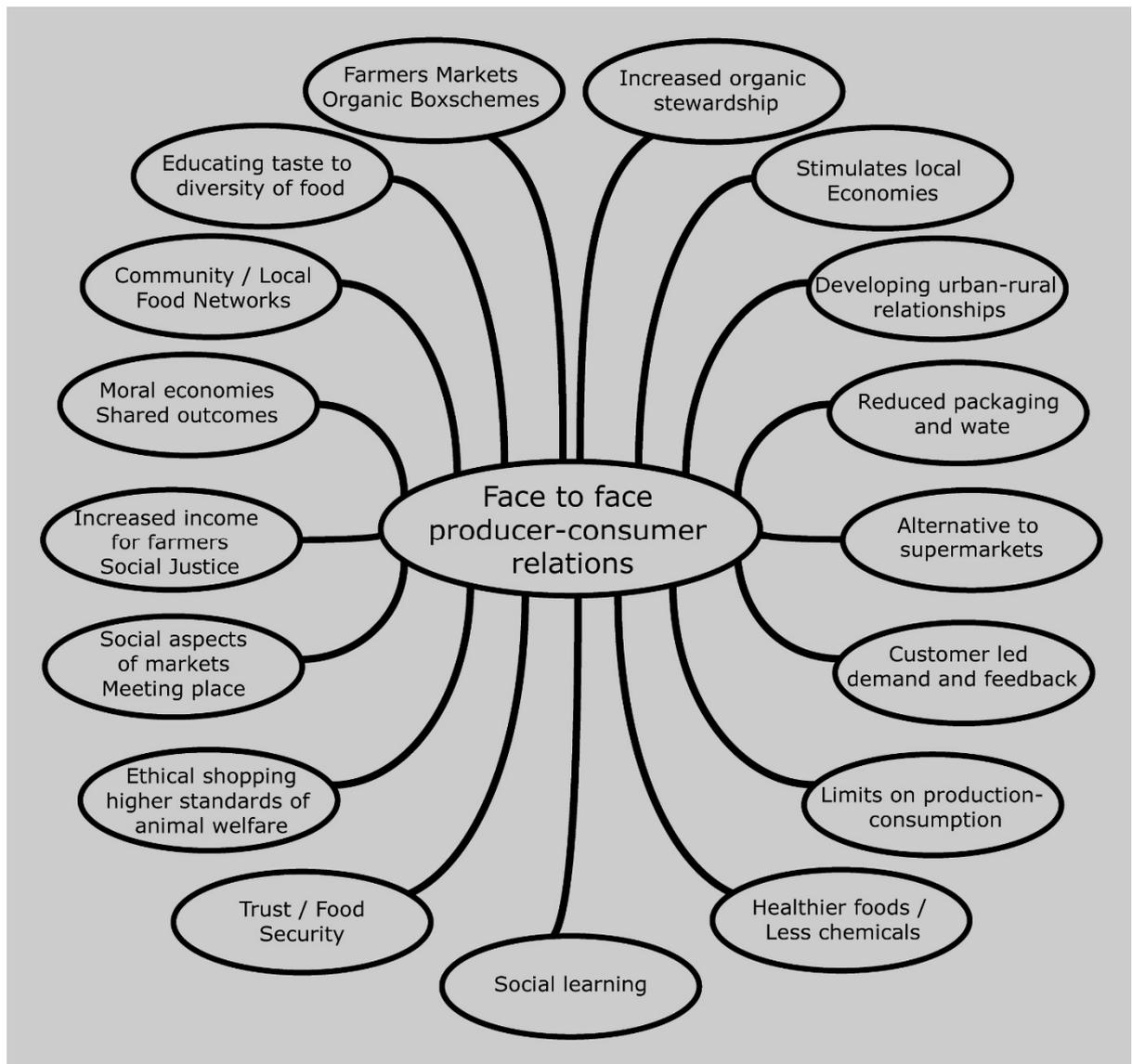
Since the 18th Century, Stoke Newington has been noted as a residential area for city workers, a high proportion of which were no longer the well to do. However, by 1932, it had changed again to a place of overcrowding, poor health and a high death rate. During World War II it became a place of safety for Jewish refugees and more recently for Kurdish refugees.

Therefore, I interpret Stoke Newington as a significant site of social change. The daily activities of Growing Communities change the local food supplies through local development while continuing to look outwards to wider communities is an attempt to bring about a global sense of the local for its future (Massey, 1994).

A consequence of Growing Communities actions has been to reconnect healthy and sustainable local food supplies to Stoke Newington which resonate with its historical

past and with a sense of place that may, or may not have been intentional. This broadly implies a transitional period in postmodern cultures of changing economic, social and environmental patterns, which are shaping the contours of a sustainable future (Huckle, 2000; Barker, 2007).

Appendix 4: Face to Face Producer-Consumer Relationships in Alternative Food Networks (fig 1.0)



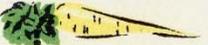
(fig 1.0)

This diagram is based on ideas that I got from thinking about the social, environmental and economic benefits of farmers markets, organic box schemes and alternative food networks.

Appendix 5: Agricultural Paradigms

Four paradigms in agriculture	Major features/problems
Dependent:	Low incomes, a chronic problem in agriculture, non-competitive and Government dependent. Farmers are encouraged to take land out of production and live on payments for keeping land idle.
Competitive:	Average, or above average incomes if costs are kept under control. Competitive in world markets only with level playing field reform of tariffs and border policies.
Multifunctional:	Incomes from farming are inadequate to support rural areas and production of food goes under rewarded.
Globalized:	Consumer driven sector implies focus on market opportunities and product differentiation which policy must encourage. Incomes depend on bargaining powers of farmers and growers, not just on costs. Based on Coleman, Grant and Josling (2004).

THIS PLAN WILL GIVE YOU YOUR OWN VEGETABLES ALL THE YEAR ROUND

		COMPOST HEAP · TOOL SHED · SEED BED TOMATOES · MARROW · RADISH · PARSLEY			
MISCELLANEOUS CROPS C			DWARF PEAS* 3 ROWS (2 ft. 6 in. APART)	6' 9"	
			DWARF BEANS 2 ROWS (2 ft. 6 in. APART)	9'	
			ONIONS* 8 ROWS (1 ft. APART)	16'	
			SHALLOTS 2 ROWS (1 ft. APART) BROAD BEANS DOUBLE ROW	9'	
			RUNNER BEANS* (1 ROW)	9'	
POTATOES & ROOT CROPS A			PARSNIPS 3 ROWS (1 ft. 3 in. APART)	6'	
			CARROT (MAINCROP) 5 ROWS (1 ft. APART)	6'	
			POTATOES (EARLY) 3 ROWS (2 ft. by 1 ft.)	6'	
		POTATOES (OTHERS) 6 ROWS (2 ft. by 1 ft. 3 in.)	15'		
		SPINACH BEET OR SEAKALE BEET 1 ROW	8'		
WINTER & SPRING GREEN CROPS B			CABBAGE (WINTER) 3 ROWS (2 ft. by 2 ft.)	2'	
			SAVOYS* 2 ROWS (2 ft. by 2 ft.)	2'	
			BRUSSELS SPROUTS* 2 ROWS (2 ft. 6 in. x 2 ft. 6 in.)	2' 6"	
			SPROUTING BROCCOLI 2 ROWS (2 ft. by 2 ft.)	2'	
			KALE 2 ROWS (2 ft. by 2 ft.)	2'	
			SWEDES 2 ROWS (1 ft. 3 in. APART)	6'	
		GLOBE BEET 2 ROWS (1 ft. 3 in. APART)	6'		
		★ INTERCROP SPACE FOR SAVOYS AND BRUSSELS SPROUTS WITH EARLY CARROTS (2 ROWS) AND EARLY BEET (1 ROW)			
		★ PRECEDE BEET WITH EARLY DWARF PEAS (1 ROW)			

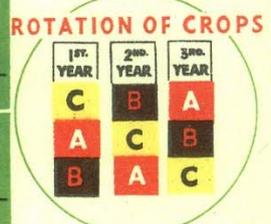
★ INTERCROP WITH SPINACH (2 ROWS) AND FOLLOW WITH LEEKS 1 1/2' APART (4 ROWS)

★ FOLLOW WITH SPRING CABBAGE (4 ROWS) 1 ft. 6 in. APART

★ FOLLOW WITH WINTER LETTUCE

★ INTERCROP WITH SUMMER LETTUCE

★ FOLLOW WITH TURNIPS (1 ft. APART)



ALLOTMENT OR GARDEN
PLOT 90' x 30'
APPROX. 10 SQ. RODS
POLES
OR PERCHES