

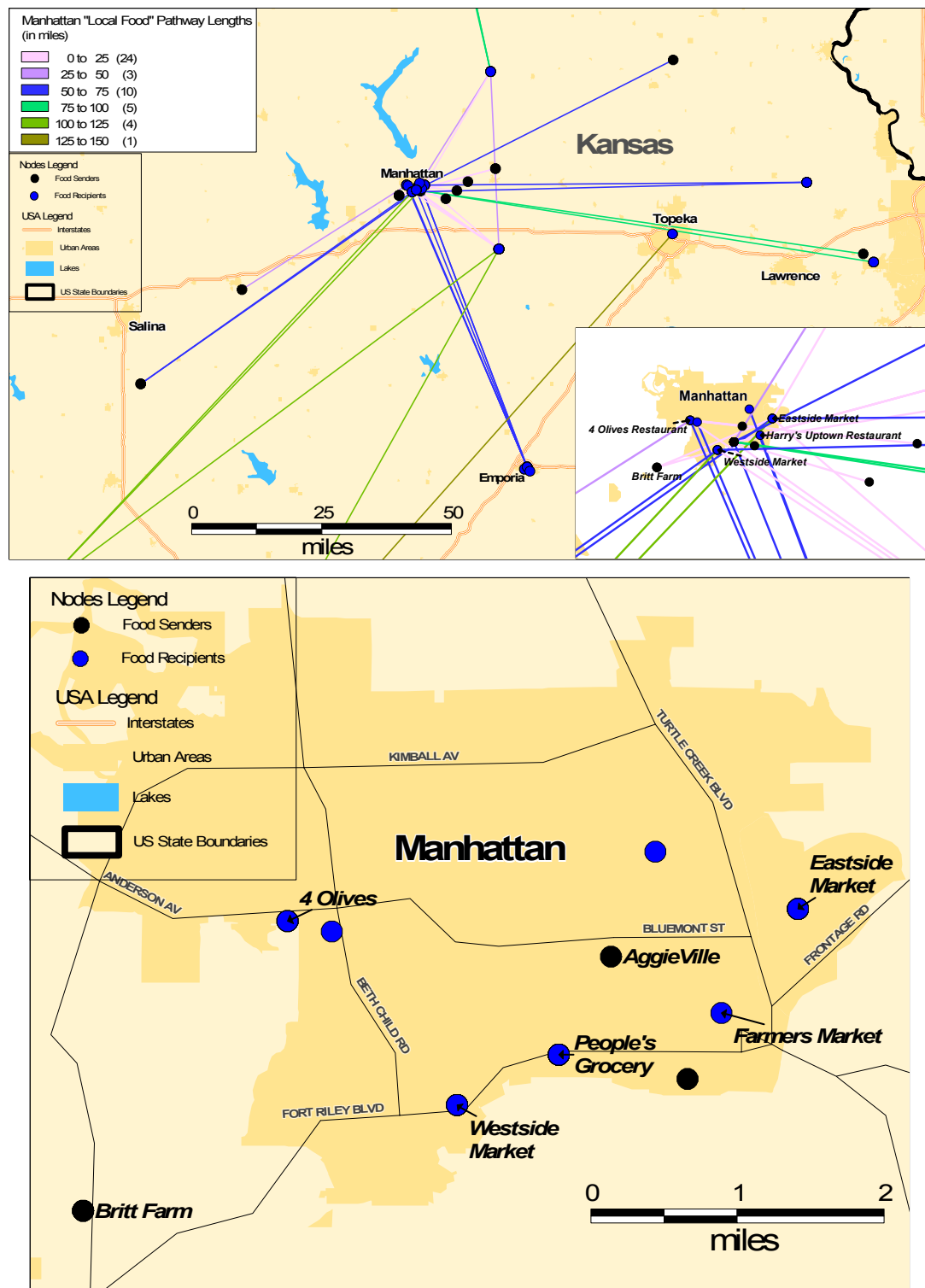
and consumers who wish to remake downtown Lawrence in the image of sustainable commerce. The collaborative spaces of local food throughout Lawrence and its local producer-suppliers demonstrate many of the progressive tendencies of the local food movement, where ecological, civic, and domestic moral worth can compete with elitist and industrial commercial interests. However, this interplay of values occurs through diverse spaces of plural and interdependent activities.

C) Divided Spaces of Manhattan

Compared with Lawrence, the spaces of local food in Manhattan are fragmented, partial, and distanced from each other. This is in part a reflection of the fragmented commercial districts in Manhattan, where the downtown has declined over the last few decades, a small bar and shopping district near to Kansas State University called Aggieville has been ascendant, and modern large-scale retail shopping centers at the east and west sides of town have emerged to dominate retail sales. The fragmentation is also facilitated by conflicts and incompatibilities between collaborative local food values and market-based values in the organized spaces of local food participants. The result is that Manhattan has very few spaces that are open to redefining agri-food relations. The limited spatial insurgency of local foods in Manhattan is discussed in this section through a basic presentation of the disparate commercial districts of the city, their effect on the farmers market and restaurant promotion of local foods, and the stresses of competition and accommodation that affect receptivity to local foods in retail spaces. Manhattan is a place where plurality is a source of geographic difference through its own internal developments and in comparison with the Lawrence local food network.

Manhattan has three primary commercial shopping districts, none of which hosts very much local food activity. Downtown Manhattan is on the east side of town and its small shops have long suffered next to a large shopping mall, and more recently have felt the competition of new mass-retailers like Wal-Mart nearby. With limited foot-traffic, this is a difficult place for a farmers market. More centrally located in town is Aggieville, a more extensive and thriving few blocks of small shops, bars, and restaurants next to Kansas State University. The price-conscious purchasing by a highly transient student population limits the appeal of local foods in terms of localism or food quality in

Figure 53: Geography and Topology of the Manhattan-Area Local Food Community



Caption: (Above) Manhattan's local food network is sparse and geographically dispersed across Eastern Kansas, limiting localized agri-food production/consumption interdependencies (Below) Local food is dispersed throughout Manhattan, itself. Retailers along major roadways are the predominant points of final sales, while the farmers market is located in away from the vibrant Aggieville shopping district near the center of town and the restaurant district on the West side. Britt Farm is sizeable produce grower nearby.

Figure 54: Manhattan Farmers Market & Downtown Manhattan



Caption: (Top Left) The Manhattan downtown parking lot where the weekly farmers market is held; (Upper Right) The parking lot's relation to downtown – note red brick rectangular high-rise in background center; (Lower Left) Downtown shops – note red brick high-rise at left and rear entrance to the shopping mall at center; (Bottom Right) Salvation Army Thrift Store at right adjacent to two unused, boarded-up shops for lease, picture taken adjacent to mall entrance.

this university-dominated consumer culture. The west side of town hosts the third major shopping area, with extensive strip malls and a number of small-chain restaurants. A couple of these restaurants have reached out to local suppliers, but these two restaurants buy only a small amount of local foods from one or two suppliers in line with the very modest foodie culture of their patronage. Individually, none of these districts is a strong promoter or host of local foods, nor are they collectively able to pool any meager consumer interest that exists due to their dispersal throughout distant areas of Manhattan.

Figure 55: Mass-Retailing in Manhattan



***Caption:** (Top) Expansive shopping mall in foreground adjacent to downtown shops in background as identified by tall red brick building; (Middle) Newer high volume and low price shopping - A Wal-Mart Supercenter ½ mile to the right of the mall in the*

Top photo; (Bottom) More new high volume box store developments – Best Buy as seen from the Staples parking lot between Wal-Mart and downtown, the rectangular red brick high-rise seen in background to the right of the Best Buy. Commercial development in Manhattan has eschewed development of its traditional downtown for box store type corporate retail development, and downtown foot traffic has suffered, along with its locally owned small businesses, as a result. The Manhattan Farmers Market is hosted in this relatively and increasingly unused old downtown district, limiting its ability to act as small farm or food business incubator.

Figure 56: Fragmented Commercial Districts in Manhattan



Caption: (Upper Three) Aggieville is a busy few blocks of storefront directly adjacent to Kansas State University, primarily occupied by bars, fast food restaurants, and KSU paraphernalia stores for the college crowd; (Bottom Two) Westloop Shopping Center is across town from downtown Manhattan, a sprawling mini-mall style commercial district, and housing Manhattan's analog to Lawrence's Free State Brewery, a micro-brewery restaurant called Little Apple Brewery. Little Apple is a steakhouse featuring conventional Black Angus beef, its own beers, and not a shred of evidence of local food.

As the figures above show, Manhattan's commercial shopping districts are ill-suited to boutique window shopping or a culture of consuming artisan products. Large-scale retailers and a typical North American indoor shopping mall dominate shopping contexts on the east side of town, a bar district caters to college student excesses in the center of town, and a strip-mall shopping area hosts medium-scale chain retailers on the west side of town. These divided commercial spaces each cater to a specialized set of consumer interests, and none of them support the kind of innovative restaurants and retailers that could capitalize on marketing local foods. Neither do they foster an artisan consumer culture that would appreciate the distinctive products and values of a diverse local food provisioning culture. Against this commercial backdrop, it is difficult for alternative local food values and progress to take hold and make space for themselves in Manhattan.

This fragmented commercial development context in Manhattan is correlated with fractured and divisive local food developments in the city. The key local food developments in Manhattan revolve around the spaces of the farmers market, two retailers, and a meager smattering of restaurants. The following is a spatio-political analysis of each of these sites: the farmers market¹⁴, Eastside and Westside Markets¹⁵, and the People's Grocery, as well as Britt Farm's¹⁶ influence on the spatio-politics of these sites.

The previous section noted the core importance of the farmers market to local food projects in Lawrence, specifically in enrolling producers and linking to other local food spaces. Manhattan also has a farmers market, but it performs a very different role in area local food development. Similar to Lawrence, Manhattan's farmers market is also located downtown, but much of the hustle and bustle of downtown Lawrence is absent from Manhattan's version. An adjacent large shopping mall has detracted from redevelopment of the downtown shops for decades, and as a result the foot-traffic of downtown Manhattan is nowhere near comparable to that of downtown Lawrence (see

¹⁴ Discussion based on frequenting the farmers market as an undergraduate student at Kansas State University in 2001-2002, as well as a recent visit during the summer of 2005

¹⁵ These markets provided a list of Kansas-based products sold in May of 2005, and commentary on the fetishization of "local" and "homegrown" in their product selection is based on phone conversations asking product manufacturers to describe their ingredient supply subsequent to obtaining the list of their suppliers.

¹⁶ The owner-operator of Britt Farm was interviewed on 14 August 2005 during a visit to the farm, providing information about his production and marketing priorities and frustrations.

Figures 54 and 55). Along with the reduced foot-traffic is a lack of developed boutique consumerism as compared with the Lawrence downtown. In short, the forces that promote specialized products from small-scale producers in Lawrence are absent in Manhattan. In addition, small-scale producers are effectively excluded from the Manhattan farmers market due to the presence of inexpensive produce from Britt Farm, a nearby medium-sized highly intensive produce grower. Both poor reinforcement of artisan consumption and competitive dominance of prices by a single producer effectively stifle access, innovation, and incubation of alternative values in the Manhattan farmers market.

The second key site(s) of local food in Manhattan are the Eastside and Westside Markets, two small shops with the same owner and each located on opposite sides of Manhattan along major highway routes. They are basically year-round roadside stands at the edges of Manhattan that specialize in selling seasonal bedding plants, houseplants, odd trinkets and knick-knacks, fresh produce and gourmet Kansas food products. Only a small portion of the gourmet foods qualifies as local foods for the purposes of this study due to the traceability of their ingredients, while the local produce originates from a relatively large farm outside of town called Britt Farm, the very one that has stifled product diversity in the farmers market through heavy price competition. There is no emphasis in the markets themselves on organic or other ecological production methods, nor on the specific origins of the produce – merely on its freshness and price. Gourmet durable foods fetishize “local” and “Kansas” with scant information about the provenance of ingredients or even expressions of alternative values. Physical, discursive, and metabolic spaces in the form of store shelves, shallow label fetishes, and product freshness thus align in support of market and opinion-based values (in conventions nomenclature). At the same time, associational space is suppressed as a way of ignoring social relations in support of these same abstract values.

Figure 57: The Spaces of Eastside and Westside Markets in Manhattan



Caption: Eastside and Westside Markets are small shops, and they fetishize “homegrown” and state of origin claims for produce, with little representation of material-metabolic relations or associational ties between product and origin. The markets also specialize in “gourmet Kansas foods”, physically located in their stores alongside assorted seasonal decorative knick-knacks, many of which celebrate Kansas State University and its marketable fetish, the KSU Wildcat symbol. Some of the “gourmet” food products for sale were made from Kansas-grown ingredients. Others were made by Kansas small businesses using untraceable generic ingredients from conventional supply chains, but marketed under the state’s “From the Land of Kansas” program as a way of accessing a market niche through the fetish of “Kansas gourmet food products.”

Figure 58: Intensive Production and Commodity Produce at Britt Farm



Caption: These pictures show different vantages of Britt Farm, three miles west of Manhattan, KS. It is a relatively large produce farm (approximately 100 acres), using the best new crop varieties of high demand seasonal produce crops, genetically modified or not, in combination with intensive application of fertilizers and pesticides/herbicides. The land is fertile river valley, and this fertility is exploited for the benefit of high volume production. The farm markets its products through Kansas City supermarkets, regional wholesale distributors, two Manhattan roadside stands, the Manhattan farmers market, and a store on the farm. (Top) Immigrant workers in background resting in front of the farm's storefront, and unused produce bins in the foreground. (Bottom Left) Debris and machinery along the staging and storage building. (Bottom Right) A harvested field in the left foreground, the farm's full-size tractor trailer in right background for mass deliveries to wholesalers and supermarkets, and left background is the storefront and storage buildings in above photos.

The other important retail space for local foods in Manhattan is the People's Grocery. It is the cooperative grocery discussed in the previous chapter alongside Lawrence's Community Mercantile, where ecological values emphasize consumer health

free from food additives and catering to food allergies rather than farm ecologies and civic and domestic values are subordinated to these concerns as well. As a result, local foods have made rather modest entries into the spaces of People's Grocery. There is physically little space available for local products, and there is very little, if any, representational space devoted to highlighting the physical spaces of local food in the store or the material-metabolic and associational spaces to which local food belongs. Local foods are not linked to the farms and farmers through signage other than that on the packages (if any) themselves, and no mention is made of the material or metabolic qualities of the foods or their origins. At the same time, the store features a gluten-free section, expressing and building many of the spaces just mentioned, dedicated to products without wheat gluten to which many customers are allergic. The lack of coordinated spatial incorporation of local food in People's Grocery reflects the management's lack of expanded prioritization of alternative values associated with local food relationships. Instead of taking responsibility to compromise with local producers, management has reacted to local food interests by diverting responsibility to the other sites of local food in Manhattan.

Consolidated wholesale distribution systems, even for health foods, incentivize bulk purchasing and high volume sales. People's Grocery originated as a group of consumers who collectively pooled their buying power to get health food from wholesalers in a town with no health food retailers. Compromising the benefits of bulk purchasing from a single distributor to instead begin reaching out to numerous local producer-suppliers requires an organizational leap that People's Grocery management and membership have not yet endeavored to make as a collective. Instead, the grocery implicitly and explicitly recommends farmers markets for fresh produce and local foods, but it ignores the stifling commoditized competition and fetishism of the Manhattan farmers market and Eastside and Westside Markets¹⁷. It is true that these alternate economic spaces already offer foods that could be described as local, but these local products largely represent a de-contextualized and unreflexive defensive localism rather than one based on reflexive and

¹⁷ Producer-suppliers to People's Grocery consistently communicated frustrations in working with store management during interviews, as well as their inability to adequately market organic foods at the farmers market due to competition from non-organic and larger-scale producers.

extended ecological and civic valuations. By failing to acknowledge this, People's Grocery has in effect denied a confrontation between alternative civic, ecological, and domestic values of its membership and the structures of food distribution that have enabled its growth to this point.

The denial of localism in People's Grocery has led to the disenfranchisement of consumers and producers in Manhattan. While the grocery is not solely responsible for the inhibition of innovation in the potential spaces of local food in Manhattan, it has not been the enabler of collaboration and innovation that could be claimed for the Community Mercantile in Lawrence. Instead of embracing local foods, People's Grocery keeps them at arms length, with its Wednesday farmers market of two produce vendors (depicted below) as a symbolic and real example of this arms-length treatment. Caught between a price-driven competitive farmers market and an unfriendly cooperative grocer, small-scale local artisanal producers cling to desperate spaces of exchange at the margins of each.

The local food network centered on Manhattan is divided, incoherent, and repressed. Commercial development has been focused on large-scale mass-market retailing, leaving restaurant culture and boutique consumerism weakened and separated into distant minor shopping districts. Price-sensitive consumption dominates food culture, and there is no commercial center for local food insurgency in Manhattan. There are also no champions of local food in Manhattan, with the farmers market loosely governed, the few upscale restaurants largely indifferent, and the potentially strong retail champions concerned primarily with market-oriented values. Among the existing participants, alternative values are not embraced nor empowered in guiding relationships between producers and retail and restaurant spaces, leading to stifling competition, un-reflexive fetishism of "local" and "homegrown", and overall resistance to challenging existing orders. There is very little collaboration among participants, and little to no discussion about engaging alternatives and what common values might guide those engagements. As a result, individual retail spaces and associational network spaces are divided and not representative of any substantial linking of consumer and producer relations and values in the geography of local foods.

Figure 59: Limited Local Food Spaces of People's Grocery



Caption: (Top) People's Grocery store-front in Manhattan, KS. This physical store was occupied by the grocery beginning in May 2005 as a large upgrade in size from the previous store, a result of a great increase in sales in recent years. (Middle) Fresh produce occupies a small refrigerated space, and local produce is featured on a small table adjacent to the refrigerated unit. There are no markings differentiating it from the other produce, minimizing the discursive and associational spaces of localism. (Bottom Left) local meats are the most common of local foods at the grocery, but they are very informally labeled and often difficult to interpret. It is up to the consumer to seek additional information from the producer if desired. (Bottom Right) The deli counter is an interesting juxtaposition to the limited spaces of local food throughout the store, as it is a dedicated space with dedicated staff catering to special dietary needs and tastes. The choice to dedicate resources to producing these spaces is a much higher priority than local food at People's Grocery.

Figure 60: Hybridized Spaces of Survival outside People's Grocery



Caption: *The price-conscious consumerism and competitive spaces of the Manhattan farmers market drives small-scale organic producers to People's Grocery for sales. However, with little space in the store for specialized products, a weekday farmers market outside the store is the option afforded these producers. This arrangement allows producers and consumers to entertain domestic, civic, and ecological values through personal relations and direct information sharing, but it is a proxy that allows People's Grocery management to continue largely excluding local produce from the spaces of the store itself.*

There is nothing inevitable about this arrangement. The cross-linking and collaboration at the heart of the Lawrence network community was actively produced by key individuals producing key spaces of engagement. In Manhattan, changes in governance of its farmers market and of People's Grocery could play highly significant roles in establishing welcome spaces for alternative agri-food relations and public forums for negotiating common values. Coalitions of concerned consumers and open-minded businesses could also cooperate to create new sites for local food in the form of alternative farmers markets and/or other spatial projects. The key emphasis must be on developing open spaces of exchange and negotiation so as to foster both producer and consumer interests in their fullest expressions. Ultimately, local food networks will be stifled in Manhattan until institutional champions, consumer culture, and alternative