

forms of spatial production all find ways of co-evolving in service of a more inclusive and reflexive value set.

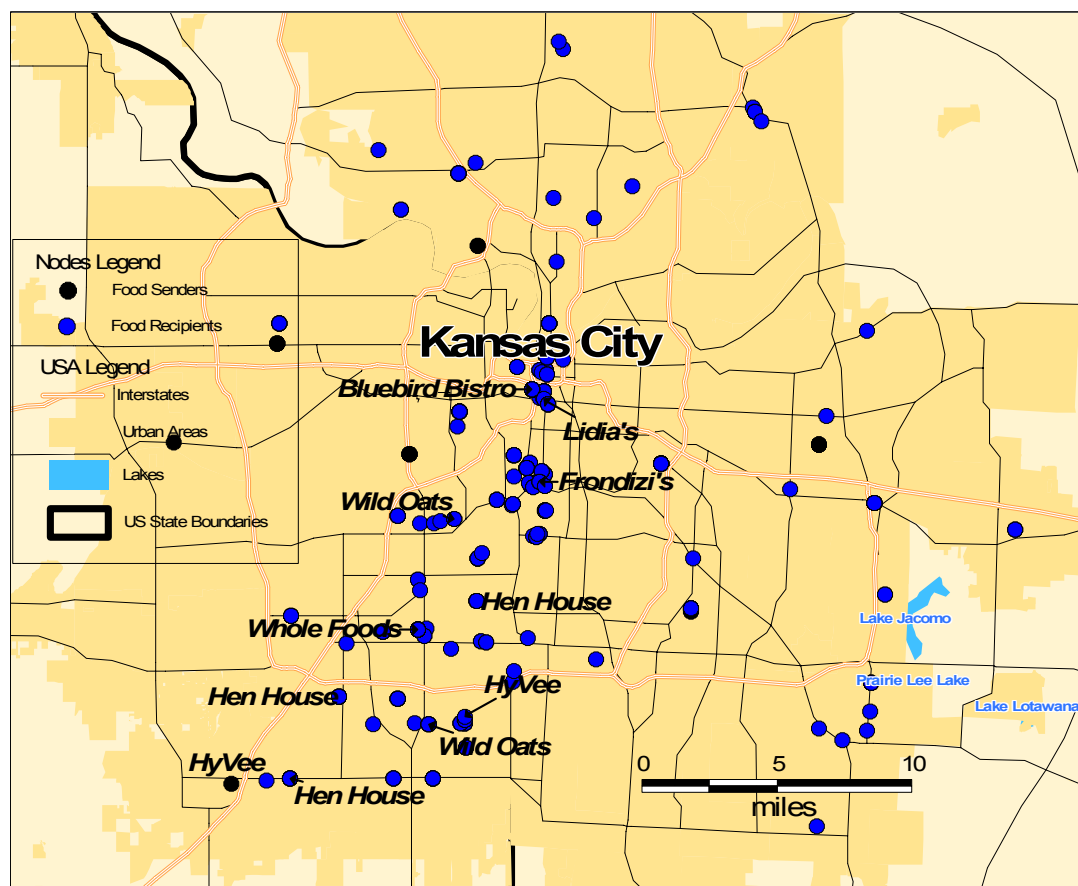
D) Differentiated Spaces of Kansas City

While the previous two sections outline the spatial projects and coalitions of local food in two micropolitan contexts, by far the majority of local food links in Eastern Kansas feed consumption in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Lawrence may demonstrate healthy debate and collaboration in the construction of local food, and Manhattan may demonstrate divisive and stifled developments, but the regional politics and geographies of local food are largely defined by projects centered on sites and spaces in Kansas City. The number of participants, amounts of food, market segments, and sites of local food are all much more numerous than the previous micropolitan examples, and Kansas City local food network communities show substantial differentiation, as presented in Chapter Five. This section will seek answers to two questions relevant to understanding the role of large metropolitan areas in local food development: what are the spatial projects underpinning the differentiation of local food markets and networks in Kansas City, and what are the politics expressed through these productions of space?

Lessons from the previous two chapters are integral to beginning to answer these questions. Chapter Five noted the division of Kansas City local food relations into two major network communities, the restaurant-oriented and retail-oriented communities. The two communities are represented by different network structures, but Chapter Six also outlined distinctive compromises of values ordering the local food pathways at the heart of each community. These compromises shape conventions in the form of social relations for each community, but they also shape the ordering of resources at the heart of the production of space by local food projects. Noting the dependencies between the spatial orderings and network topologies, participant compromises, and social relations of local food in Kansas City is essential to understanding the value produced and political economic implications from these developments.

An overview of Kansas City's urban development patterns shows some interesting correlations with the patterns of local food network development. Kansas City is a large metropolitan area with over 1.5 million residents, and while Kansas City proper is a somewhat densely inhabited older urban area, it is surrounded by sprawling low-density suburbs. Upscale food and entertainment options are an important part of contemporary urban renewal efforts in downtown and mid-town Kansas City, and this provides an economic development context within which local foods are making their mark through upscale independent restaurants, as has been discussed in Chapter Six. This is also the

Figure 61: Kansas City Local Food Sites



Caption: Blue markers indicate restaurants and retailers in Kansas City who source at least some of their foods locally. The distribution of these participants follows distinctive development patterns in Kansas City. Restaurants are primarily positioned in two clusters in the map above, located in downtown and the midtown Country Club Plaza shopping area – Bluebird Bistro and Lidia's are located in the former, while Frondizi's is located in the latter. Retailers, on the other hand, are spread throughout the low-density suburban developments, especially to the southwest of midtown. They are especially characterized by large-scale supermarket chains – conventional regional ones such as HyVee and Hen House, as well as specialty national ones such as Wild Oats and Whole Foods.

reason why the Kansas City local food restaurant community has its strongest presence in downtown and mid-town Kansas City. The retail community, on the other hand, is primarily active throughout the southwestern suburbs of Kansas City. Most of the retail participants in the network are actually suburban supermarkets appealing to middle-upper class clientele of the more wealthy and extensive of Kansas City's suburbs. The geographies of urban development and renewal in Kansas City are therefore highly influential over the kinds of participants and local foods co-constructing alternative agri-food relations.

Within these urban geographies lie the key sites of local food activity, engaged through a variety of spaces as in the previous discussions in this chapter. The following discussion of these sites and spaces continues with a distinction between restaurant- and retail-oriented supply chains, organized into two subsections. The first will focus on the relationships and interdependencies between farmers market, restaurant, and small farm space-times in the restaurant-oriented network community. The second will note the integration and conglomeration of farmers market, farm, and retail space-times through supermarkets. Physical, discursive, associational, and material-metabolic spaces are all featured through each of these spatial interdependencies, shaping the forms of access and politics of participation in Kansas City's key sites of local food.

1) The Restaurant Community

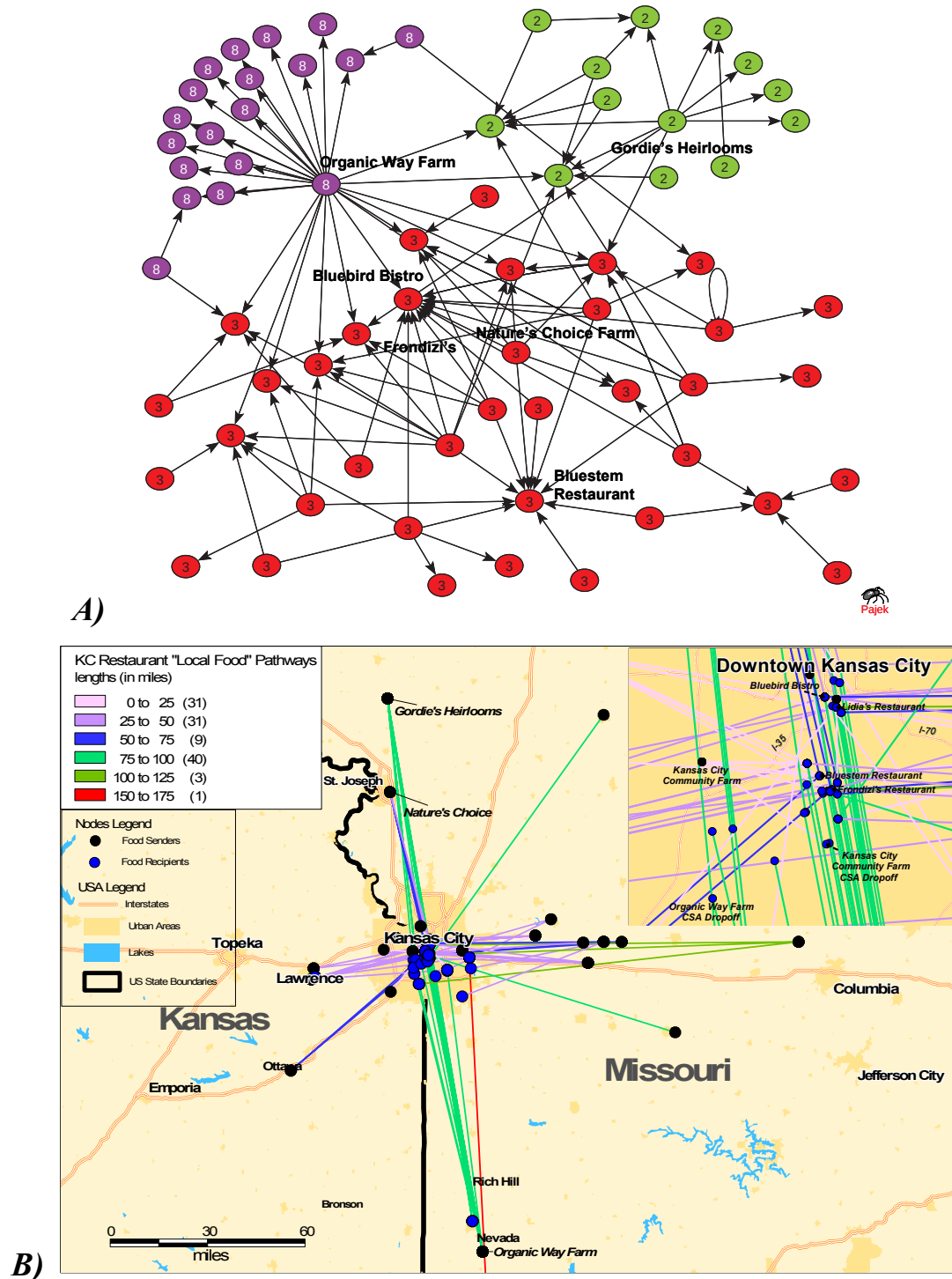
The restaurant-oriented community is one of two sub-communities identified within the Kansas City local food network community in Chapter Five. It is composed largely of independent upscale restaurants in downtown Kansas City and a collection of small-scale vegetable and meat producers who serve them from farms located along major transportation routes into Kansas City. Chapter Six took a closer look at the values framing the social relations in this community through conventions frameworks, noting two distinctive restaurant strategies with regard to local food and the implications for producers. Some restaurants place alternative values at the core of their restaurant organization and style, making local food an integral element of the restaurant identity enabling reflexive consumption, while most of the restaurants instead use local foods and alternative values in service of market values and exotic restaurant identities. In

exchange for high profile and consistent sales to restaurants, producers are forced to balance product specialization and custom growing and delivery practices on the one hand and high productivity and bulk sales on the other. Yet, it is not entirely clear from network and conventions analyses why some producers are more active at marketing to restaurants than others, nor why certain values take precedence over others in any given case study. This section will hopefully address some of these remaining questions through spatial analysis.

This restaurant community is an interesting illustration of how the geographies of local food are produced and anchored by spatial projects. Producers in the community are for the most part located within about 50 miles of Kansas City, but there are a couple active and somewhat larger producers that represent a large proportion of the community's foods located upward of 100 miles away. This variable distancing of local food links is produced through differences in producer capitalization, marketing approach, production methods, and values, but the distancing is also enabled by the regional transportation infrastructure. The star pattern of local food links in the map below shows how producers cluster along major highway corridors leading to Kansas City – the network is anchored by highway infrastructure as much as it is producer or restaurant characteristics. However, urban commercial districts are another important spatial context, as the inset in the following map also offers further illustration of the clustering of local food purchasing restaurants in downtown and midtown shopping districts. As is the case with Lawrence and Manhattan above, the distribution of commercial districts in Kansas City plays a large part in the geographies of local food in Kansas City, and also in shaping the spatial projects of local food.

These urban and rural geographies of infrastructure and development are the subtext to a triad of place-based spatial projects constructing the restaurant local food community. The triad consists of the places of production (the farm), the places of final production and consumption (the restaurant), and the places of exchange (the farmers market) that reinforce each others' spatial projects through their networking. This triad is one of many mutually reinforcing economic circuits contributing to the newest waves of urban development and reproduction taking place in Kansas City. It is doing so by

Figure 62: The Kansas City Restaurant Local Food Community



Caption: A) The food trading network of the KC restaurant community, Organic Way Farm (discussed in Chapter Six) circled in blue at upper left, Nature's Choice farm (discussed below) circled in blue at center; B) The geographical distribution of the KC restaurant community network, particularly noteworthy are the regional scale of the network, the location of farms along major highway routes, and the clustering of restaurants into two commercial districts within Kansas City.

making possible the engagement of alternative values and the negotiation of new conventions of commerce, as studied in Chapter Six, in continually producing the spaces of the city. The following illustrates the reinforcing spatial tendencies, and their political implications, of the farm-restaurant-farmers market triad through the example of Nature's Choice farm and through drawing comparisons with Organic Way farm discussed in Chapter Six.

Nature's Choice¹⁸ is a five acre biodynamic produce farm that sells at both the Kansas City Riverside City Market and to a few restaurants, including Bluebird Bistro. It sells heirloom varieties of high quality biodynamic produce advertised as "beyond organic", and it sells for premium prices at the farmers market and through its restaurant customers. The high value of Nature's Choice products is created through the metabolic spaces of taste, color, and shelf-life of its produce, the discursive spaces setting the farm apart from competitors through personal communication and the message that biodynamic production is "beyond organic", the associational spaces linking farm metabolisms to consumer through farmers market and restaurant, and the physical spaces that juxtapose these spatial productions with the conventional spaces which they challenge. Each of these spaces is produced in the Nature's Choice vendor stall at the Riverside City Market, and they are valued enough by customers that Nature's Choice sells out of their produce by mid-morning each Saturday. Yet, the once-a-week farmers market is too infrequent to wholly support farm sales in the peak of the growing season.

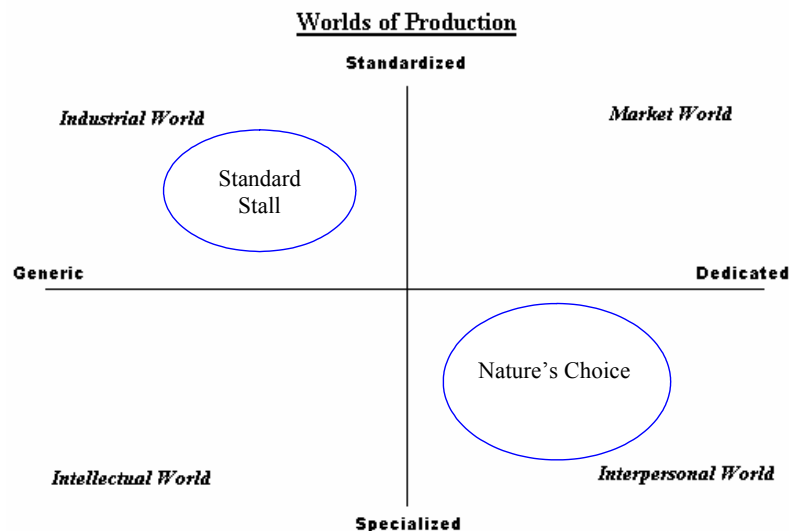
Luckily for small-scale niche producers like Nature's Choice, restaurants seek the same ecological, civic, and domestic values that make their local foods distinctive at the farmers market. It is lucky because these producers rely on restaurant sales in the middle of the week between Saturday farmers market for two interrelated reasons: it helps to keep product quality and customer satisfaction high by only harvesting and selling products when they are perfectly ripe, and it also helps to support higher levels of sales and to maintain high prices on those sales. This system of mid-week local food

¹⁸ Nature's Choice proprietors were interviewed at their farm on 13 January 2006, providing an extended account of their struggle to balance level of production, product type, and marketing approaches such as farmers markets, CSA offerings, restaurant sales and on-farm sales. After much experimentation, they have settled on a combination of market and restaurant sales, emphasizing the relations featured in this discussion.

Figure 63: The Spaces of Kansas City's Riverside Market



Caption: (Left) Nature's Choice market stall. Customers are allowed to choose their own produce individually. Signs indicate the variety of each product as a form of discursive space, but the proprietor often must explain the origin or taste of rare varieties. Each item is afforded its own physical space at the table, honoring the metabolic-material uniqueness of each item. (Right) A mass-marketing farmers market vendor. There are no guarantees of any sort of special production methods, no insignia of the producer, only one variety of produce is offered, and in fact there is no way to tell where the produce came from. The corn is pre-arranged in bags for ease of selection and priced for quick sale. A few ears are partially husked to ensure basic product quality, but the primary emphasis is on quantity and low price.



Caption: The worlds of production framework introduced in Chapters Two and Three helps to conceptualize spatial differentiation in the farmers market. Comparing the two market stall examples above, Nature's Choice is distinctive for its emphasis on specialized products with specific flavors, emphasis on values, and spatial interactions that appeal to dedicated consumers. The standard stall sells products of standardized characteristics that appeal to generic consumer demands – this standard stall appeals to consumers who merely want some sweetcorn and are unconcerned with the extra information, guarantees and authenticity of Nature's Choice sweetcorn.

deliveries also suits the restaurants well in that they receive the high quality local goods in advance of Friday and Saturday, the busiest days of the week for restaurants. In addition to all the ways in which fresh local foods blend well with certain restaurant values, being able to connect the food on a restaurant menu to an actual producer who many customers may have found at the farmers market is a valuable association for restaurants in that it authenticates their local food marketing claims. The synergy between value in farmers markets and in upscale restaurants therefore creates a condition of co-dependency between restaurant and farmers market spaces, much as was postulated in the description of the Lawrence downtown food scene above. In the case of Kansas City, however, the combinatorial possibilities between the many urban and suburban farmers markets and the upscale restaurants clustered in downtown and midtown are much more complex than in previous examples, demonstrated through the network diagram above.

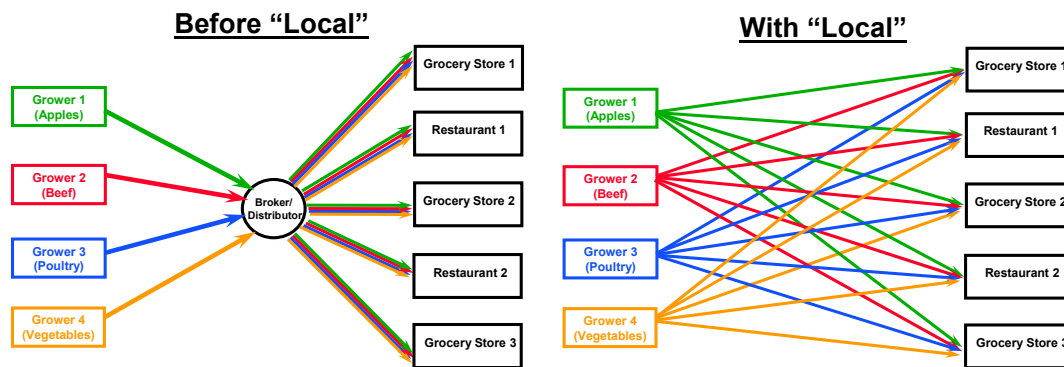
As was discussed in the previous chapter, the connections between specific farms and restaurants require negotiation of specific conventions for applying common values in real relationships. However, the spatial component of the construction of these relationships was left out in that chapter's account. It helps that most of the upscale restaurants interested in local food are clustered near downtown Kansas City in that it makes it easier for producers to make multiple deliveries in one trip. Other spatial arrangements are also important, though. Ease of loading and unloading is impacted by the back-door spaces of restaurants, pantry and kitchen spaces affect the quantities of food involved and chef expectations about packaging and durability. Only on top of these practical physical and material-metabolic spatial negotiations do the discursive and associational spaces on menus and between waiter and customer come into play. This consideration of space adds to the conclusions in the previous chapter that it is the producers, and not the restaurants, who tend to direct the topology of the network. They decide the degree to which they market to restaurants based on their ability to mitigate the practical frustrations of dealing with restaurant spaces, their capacity to collaborate with chefs in negotiating values, and their need for marketing alternatives to farmers markets and CSA programs. Yet, it is the restaurants who hold the power by dictating

how spaces are accessed and what kinds of behaviors are allowable in these spaces – in essence, how difficult it is to forge and sustain relationships.

The system is most successful for restaurants that are not very demanding and make efforts toward inclusion, and for producers who are well organized and intent on meeting the needs of their restaurant customers. The discussion of Bluebird Bistro and Organic Way Farm in the previous chapter presented the two strongest performers in this regard in the Kansas City restaurant community. Nature's Choice is less invested in marketing to restaurants than Organic Way, and there are still other producers who only market to one or two restaurants who they know very well. On the other hand, there are restaurants who really only seek one special ingredient locally, or who merely respond to one or two producers who approach them vigorously and professionally. Noting strong performers and successes does not necessarily indicate that these approaches are the avenues of growth for restaurant-farm local food relationships. In fact, there are important limits to growth relevant to the negotiation of conventions and the production of space that hinder the field of participants as a whole and that many of the strong performers overcome only through self-exploitation.

The conscious choice in the local food movement to avoid powerful intermediaries forces both farm and restaurant to perform roles of these intermediaries for which each is not ideally suited. As the previous chapter suggested, local food relationships create issues in coordinating between restaurant and farm in that it is difficult to develop trust between restaurant and farm and to evoke authenticity between restaurant and consumer. These difficulties are exponentially compounded as the web of relationships between restaurants and farms becomes denser. Add to coordination complexities the difficulties of bridging time and space through product distribution, a resource and time intensive set of activities. With low levels of capitalization and staffing to handle distribution and coordination challenges, these difficulties are often addressed through strategies that are expedient rather than efficient. Existing specialized regional foodservice distributors would be the logical organizations to tackle such inefficiency, but they have thus far resisted incorporating the alternative values and information that is the true value of local food into their coordination systems and marketing efforts. A side-effect of inefficiency

Figure 64: Disrupted Topologies of Local Food Networks



Caption: *Grassroots development of local food value chains involves a re-centering of coordinating and consolidation activities within the spatial projects of farmer/providers and institutional/individual consumers. Thus far, there is little evidence of support for intermediaries in these new value chains, but this could easily be due to an inability of conventional intermediaries to adapt and mediate the value imbued in local products. This may become an important growth sector as local food networks continue to grow and evolve. (Champion and Champion 2006)*

is high cost, reflected in high and escalating prices for local foods, and exacerbating concerns about equality of access for all consumers to local food. Another side-effect of inefficiency is that participants tend to exploit their own time and energy to forge and maintain relationships without adequately accounting for and reflecting these costs in the price of local foods.

The result is that current local food relationships, especially those in the restaurant-farm pathways, are built on participant sacrifice rather than equity. Producers and restaurateurs sacrifice their time and energy to maintain relationships under difficult circumstances. Farm and restaurant spaces must adapt through compromise to new requirements and functionality. Consumers must sacrifice by paying a high price for their high quality food and by being forced to seek this food in the city's central commercial districts. The growth of local food along these principles of sacrifice for both individual and common good may not ultimately lead to the goods for which these sacrifices are being made, as there are incentives for exploitation of land, of labor, of affluence, and of values in these relationships. In addition, the specter of production and distribution inefficiency casts doubt on the energy savings from reduced transportation miles. Any just revolution in food systems must adequately address the incentives for

exploitation and obscuring the true costs of local food development – sensitivity to alternative values and quality is not sufficient to secure the future of local foods.

Meeting the challenges of local food with non-exploitative solutions requires collaborative spaces. The benefits of collaboration are clear in the example of Lawrence, and by the effects of its absence in Manhattan. Collaborative spaces are where disparate efforts come together, where the public has common access to spaces of exchange and of debate, where common values can be presented, discussed, defined, and developed alongside their practical applications. One important expression of political economic power is that of defining access to space and the forms through which it is constituted. In this sense, self-exploitation is an expression of power, a way of assuming power by creating access to spaces through willful adaptation to the adverse circumstances limiting this access. Organic Way Farm is expert in this type of power by meeting even the most irrational restaurant demands in order to maintain access to these restaurants and a high volume of sales. Other important examples of spatial power are the chambers of commerce and business associations that define the locations and governance structures regulating farmers market spaces. Although it has done little as of yet in this regard, the Kansas City independent restaurants association also has the potential to become powerful by coordinating discussions among restaurants about how to define and incorporate local foods into their profession. These roles and opportunities are rarely explicitly recognized, but they profoundly affect the development of discursive and associational spaces within the physical spaces of urban geographies. They also define the terms of access to these spaces for metabolic-material-corporeal relations, those that are the heart of the associations and discussions about food quality, health, and ecology. If exploitation in the guise of non-reflexive consumerism, overworked chefs and producers, degraded land, inefficient use of resources, and poorly compensated workers are all to be challenged through local food, these exploitations must be challenged through democratic means of participation and governance.

In looking forward toward the continued popularity of local foods found in restaurants and the growth of restaurant-farm marketing alliances, there is a great need for innovative spatial projects in these alliances that meet the challenges of increasing the

scale of local food with democratic processes. Great strides to this end could be made through establishing and building on producer and restaurant cooperatives where information can be shared, resources can be pooled, and collaborative projects can be devised to enhance efficiency, access, and equity toward resilient local food systems. Some of these collaborative innovations may, in fact, require re-conceptualizing the nature of farms and restaurants in terms of the producer-consumer relations they engender and also the spaces which they build and to which they belong. Such organizational innovations would also challenge the fabric of urban space through the dialectical links between restaurants and their commercial districts. These kinds of conversations must be engaged, and these kinds of projects must be entertained, if the local food movement is to deliver on its promises of reduced environmental costs, the embedding of ecological processes in commerce, a radical increase in economic opportunities for disenfranchised producers, and the equitable distribution of benefits throughout society.

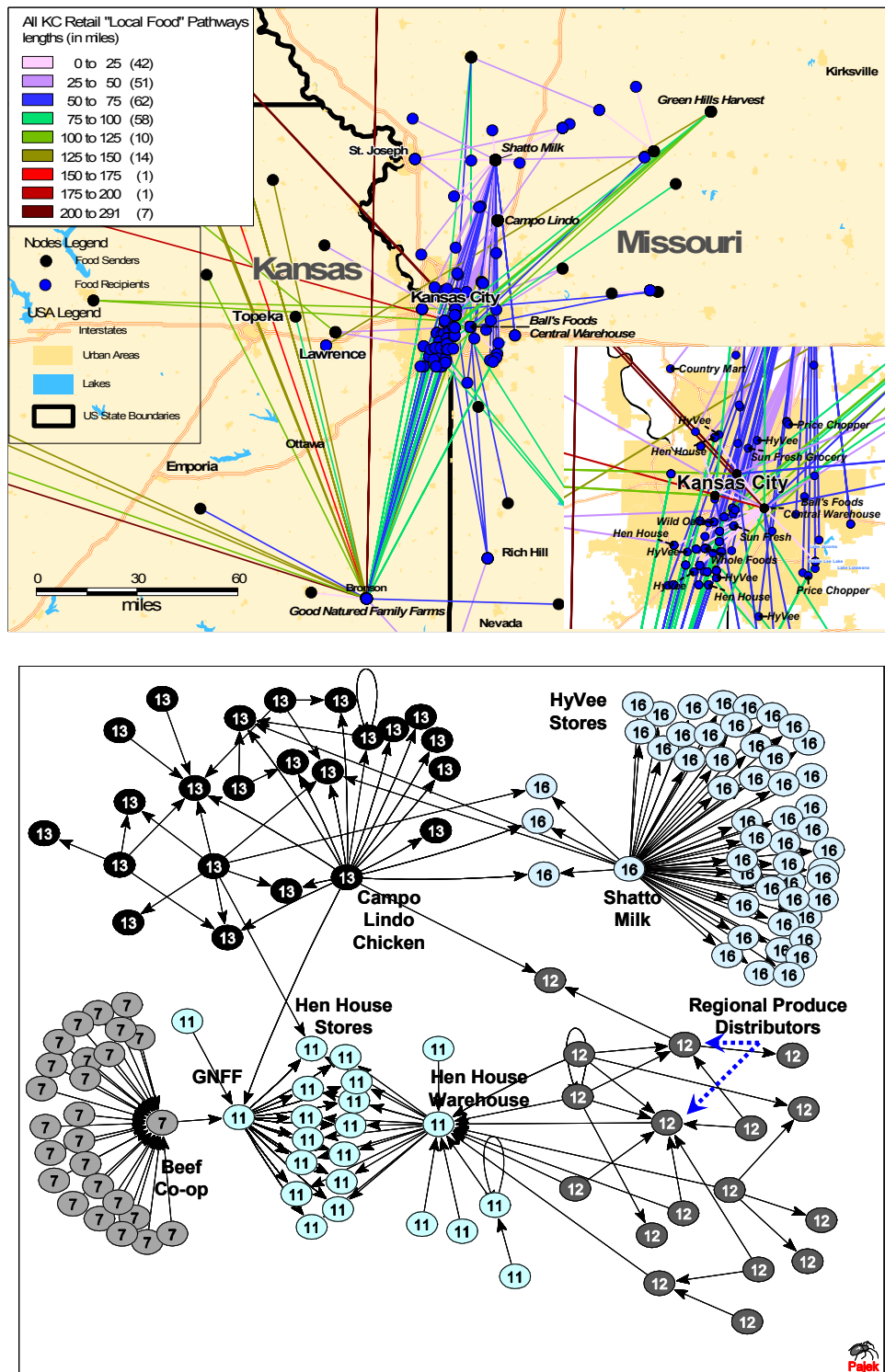
2) Scaling Up Local Food: The KC Supermarket Community

Despite finding much value in the recent debates questioning the primacy of scalar thinking and imaginaries in geography (Marston, Jones et al. 2005; Jones, Woodward et al. 2007), I cannot help using a scalar ontology for distinguishing the Kansas City retail and restaurant network communities in this work. Compared with the restaurant community discussed above, the Kansas City retail community engages local foods at greater scales in almost any dimension of scale that one could consider. The community is dominated by farm-supermarket links, as detailed in previous chapters, bringing along with them greater flows of food, more formalized and standardized relationships between producer and retailer, and a higher degree of clustering in the network and centralization of coordination due to the corporate coordination of supermarkets. The producer participants in these supermarket local food programs are distinct from those supplying restaurants due to their own extended scalings. They are typically larger, more capitalized, and higher volume producers of either basic produce commodities or value-added products like bottled milk or high value processed meats. Each of them benefit from the large and distributed customer base of supermarket chains, and the chains'

ability to purchase in large quantities, in investing in high levels of farm productivity and value-added processing. By avoiding wholesale intermediaries and by marketing farm image and special product characteristics, these producers receive greater income per unit at the cost of coordinating directly with supermarkets. With greater scales of production and exchange in this supermarket community, the stakes of coordination are greater as well, and the politics of negotiation become paramount for the distribution of benefits in supermarket local food programs. While the recent debates about scalar thinking certainly problematize uncritical use of scalar ontology as proxy for greater size, number, or intensity of relationships, I can think of no better way to concisely evoke the differences between restaurant-farm and supermarket-farm relations in Kansas City. Yet, spatial relationships are the foundation of these scales, and this section, as well as the rest of the chapter, is an attempt to use sites and spaces as frames for explaining local food development without necessarily privileging scale as a way of thinking or seeing.

The first sets of spaces to address in this analysis are the urban and rural contexts of which supermarket local foods are a part. In contrast to the restaurant community above, Kansas City supermarkets are spread evenly throughout the suburbs rather than clustered in central upscale shopping districts. These suburbs tend to be relatively affluent – upper-middle class – and low density developments based on strip-mall commercial shopping developments interspersed between single family home neighborhoods. The low density of development virtually requires access to the personal car for basic consumer provisioning, and commerce is built around the car as a result, emphasizing convenience and one-stop shopping as opposed to strolling and window-shopping. Yet, the large affluent consumer base in these areas represents a strong marketing opportunity for high value products. Producers that have been adjusting to the emerging market for high value local foods in these supermarkets are for the most part medium-sized family farms who have either re-engaged productive agriculture in response to these marketing opportunities or have barely maintained intensive productivity and survived by selling to wholesale markets. Nearly all of the producers are located within 200 miles of Kansas City, most within 100 miles, but the producers are not clustered as tightly along major highways as in the previous restaurant community, likely owing to the greater

Figure 65: Kansas City Supermarket Community Network and Map



Caption: Above) Food pathways are longer for supermarket local foods than for restaurants. Producers are not clustered along major highways as were restaurant producers. Retailers are primarily located in suburbs, especially the affluent southwestern Kansas City suburbs, and are peripheral to the older downtown districts where most local food restaurant participants are clustered. Below) There is also much more concentration and clustering of food flows in the supermarket network than the restaurant network. The hubs in this network tend to be individual producers and producer cooperatives, although one is a central distribution warehouse for a major KC supermarket chain. Successful local food provisioning in supermarkets depends on producers, retailers, or both assuming the roles of brokers and distributors in coordinating supply chains and marketing products.

transportation efficiencies of marketing higher volumes of product. Organic agricultural methods are rare among these producers, although animals tend to be pastured for most of their lives, or at least not caged, and sub-therapeutic antibiotics and growth hormones are also generally avoided.

Local food pathways to supermarkets differ from conventional pathways in that supermarkets purchase local foods directly from the producers themselves. These direct relationships allow local foods to be verifiably traced, even if informally, to their place of production. Prior to the recent local food programs in supermarkets, any local products that arrived in supermarkets would have done so through specialized regional wholesale distributors. In fact, this pathway still exists and several of the produce growers in the Kansas City supermarket community use these wholesale distributors as a marketing back-up for any excess production. These distributors tend to treat their products as commodities, however, and most products are stripped of information about production methods and provenance through the process of wholesaling. To circumvent this intermediate exchange of hands, and to carry forward the value of greater information and authenticity to consumers, local food programs in supermarkets use creative means to incorporate local foods into supermarket spaces that were not designed for them and to distinguish local foods in the hearts and minds of the consumer.

Each of the Kansas City supermarket chains have developed local food marketing programs, with varying strategies and levels of support, to remain competitive in suburban commercial spaces. To understand the broader contours of local food development through large-scale retailers beyond the descriptions of values and networkings outlined in previous chapters, the remainder of this section will compare the supermarket local food programs on the basis of the spaces produced by each. As opposed to the de-centered triad featured in the restaurant community above, the retail community features centralized and intensive productions of space, the intermingling of functions and spaces performed by each of the members of the restaurant triad within local food programs. Through these programs, the supermarket becomes part farmers market and part farm in its attempt to represent their features under one roof for the suburban consumer. The most developed of these programs is the Hen House Buy Fresh,

Buy Local program discussed previously, while HyVee, Whole Foods, and Wild Oats chains are building on their own programs. Each will be featured in the following discussion.

A partnership between a non-profit environmental organization, a producer alliance, and the Hen House executive office is the origin of the Buy Fresh, Buy Local program. From this partnership has come a mandate for each Hen House store to participate, but also a directive to integrate the local foods directly into the distribution system, including the central warehouse and information systems that guide product procurement, tracking, and placement. The Hen House executives have also provided a budget supporting Delbert Housworth as a dedicated warehouse-supplier coordinator for the program, for store displays, for the elaborate farmers market-style marketing program, and to accept lost store placement fees and lower profits for local food items. While there is a certain generosity to this financial and official empowerment, management of the virtual and concrete spaces of the program relies on two key people with structural limitations on their abilities to effectively connect farm and supermarket spaces.

Interfacing local producers with an intricate supermarket management system requires mediation. Delbert Housworth of central warehouse and Diana Endicott of the Good Natured Family Farms producer alliance are charged with this mediation, but they have little authority to shape the form or spaces of the program. Delbert is responsible for identifying new producers and products, for coordinating with these producers, and for incorporating local foods into the flow of products from the central warehouse to each of the stores. However, he does not have the authority to affect marketing decisions for Buy Fresh, Buy Local that would be in the best interest of small-scale organic producers interested in marketing their production methods and farm identity as well as their products. As a result, the number and diversity of participants and products are limited by the authority and coordinating ability of a single warehouse manager and the needs for large amounts of product and uniformity across Hen House stores. The program as a whole is also limited in its ability to support strong agri-ecological production methods due to underdeveloped supply chain management and marketing that is disconnected from the dynamic opportunities of supply chain development.

Diana Endicott is similarly limited in her efficacy at growing and managing the supply of processed local food products by her limited authority and available support structures. As the primary manager and representative of the Good Natured Family Farms producer alliance to the Hen House program, she is responsible for enrolling new producers and developing products, but she is also responsible for making sure those products are successfully integrated into store spaces. This requires visiting stores on a regular basis, dealing with manager problems as they arise, coordinating product recalls if needed, and more. She has very little time and money left to develop new products. As a result, Diana seeks existing high-capacity producers with valuable products, many times from distant locales, rather than being able to develop a production base more intimately tied to Kansas City. There is certainly nothing wrong with Kansas City consumers supporting disenfranchised farmers in western Kansas, central Iowa, or eastern Missouri. However, as it is currently structured, the program runs the risk of constrained development and somewhat misleading marketing implying a localism and environmental benefits that are distorted and limited at best.

Figure 66: Distribution Spaces of Buy Fresh, Buy Local in Kansas City



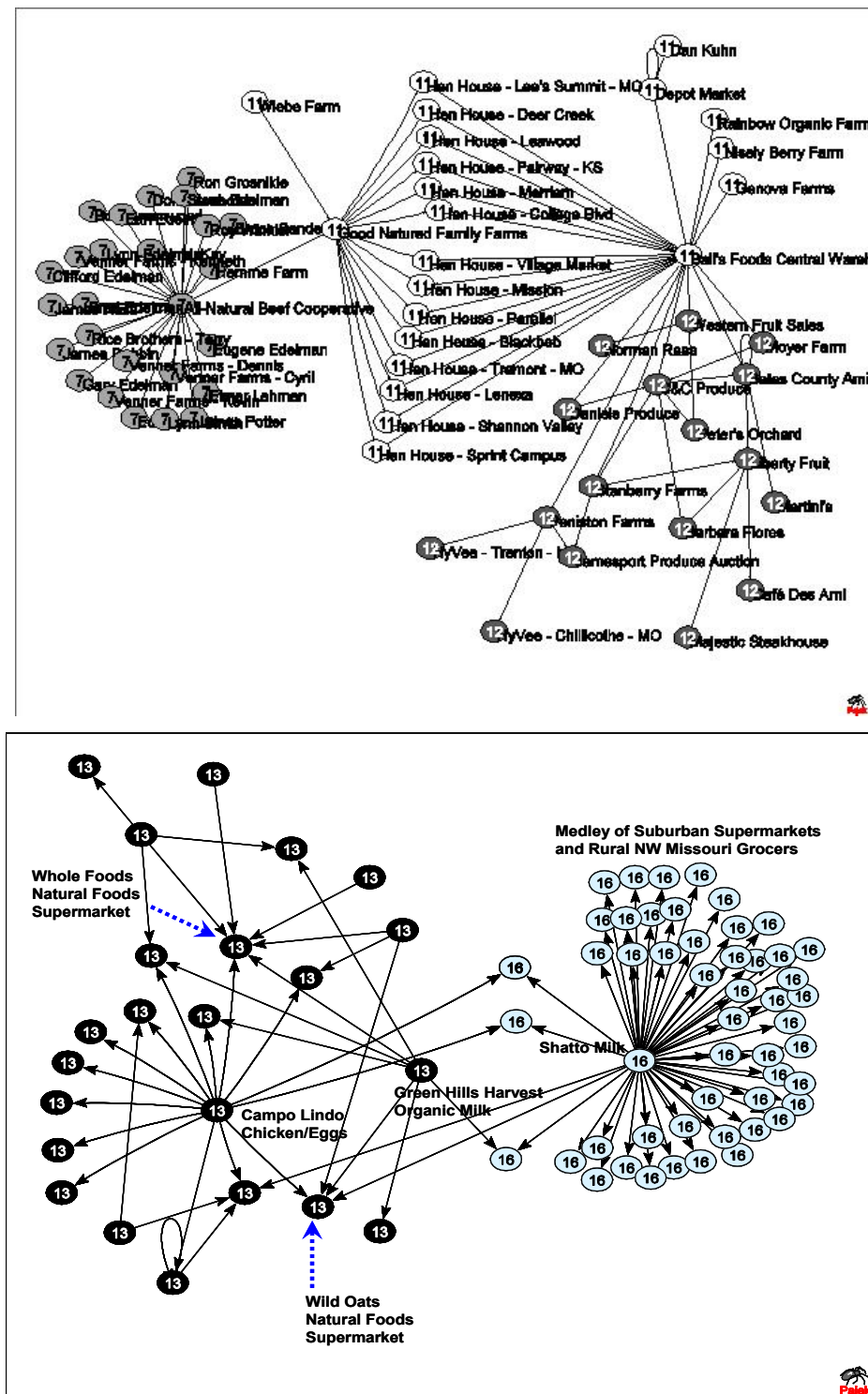
Caption: (Top) Delbert Housworth in the staging area of the Ball's Foods central warehouse. Delbert coordinates with local food producers, especially those supplying fresh fruits and vegetables, and integrates their products into shipments to stores and into Hen House information systems. (Bottom Left) The warehouse uses its specialized spaces, like the refrigerated bays shown here, to maintain freshness and product quality while being stored and sorted for delivery to stores. (Bottom Right) local foods are boxed and stacked along with products from conventional sources on pallets, wrapped in plastic for transport, and delivered in this form to individual stores on Hen House trucks.

Figure 67: Hen House Buy Fresh, Buy Local Marketing Spaces



Caption: A) Hen House supermarket façade during a summertime Saturday morning. Buy Fresh, Buy Local promotions simulate farmers market spaces at each store on Saturdays featuring local foods and their producers. B) Inside Hen House, these spaces are also engaged in sampling and promotional stands typical of supermarkets but dedicated to local foods in this case. C) Products available in stores can be found on the Hen House website, along with producer biographical information, an abstract production of associational space. D) Attractive marketing slips and brochures adorn the shelves and racks where local foods are found within the supermarket, highlighting conventional physical and metabolic spaces with innovative discursive and associational spaces identifying producers and linking foods to imagery.

Figure 68: Comparing Kansas City Local Food Retail Networks



Caption: Above) The Hen House Buy Fresh, Buy Local network. The program relies on two informational and product brokers, depicted as the hubs at left and right between producer clusters and the supermarket array at center. Below) The remaining portion of the supermarket community (without the Hen House program) shows that the Hen House program coordinates as many participants as the rest of the KC supermarkets combined. Furthermore, the coordinating hubs are individual producers as opposed to supermarket program managers, the Shatto Milk micro-creamery at right and Campo Lindo chicken producer at center.

Despite some of these reservations, the Hen House program has been very successful in attracting consumers and helping the stores to maintain market share against the competition. Other Kansas City supermarkets have taken note and have begun to develop their own programs. In the summer of 2005, HyVee marketing coordinators had recognized the threat posed by the strong and highly coordinated Hen House program and communicated to store managers to individually seek out local suppliers and to market the food as such. This situation empowered well-capitalized regional producers, like the well-organized Shatto Milk micro-creamery and Britt Farm near Manhattan, to coordinate among most HyVee managers for high levels of sales in the aggregate. The result is similar to the Hen House program in the management of shelf spaces in stores, with noticeable products like bottled milk and fresh produce to compete with Hen House's own brands of these local products. However, absent is the central coordination and marketing, and thus also the valuable discursive and associational spaces that set local foods apart in the store and link them to produced rural spaces in the minds of consumers. Additionally, producers are left with the sole responsibility for coordination with each HyVee store, and many fewer producers are able to participate. Furthermore, the HyVee system is more susceptible to competitive bidding among producers for access to stores for a few common products, as opposed to the ability of Hen House's Delbert Housworth to encourage competing producers to grow different products so they all have access. One final issue is that without organized coordination, detailed information about production methods and food quality is rarely communicated to the consumer in retail spaces, giving the most exploitative and intensive growers an advantage in the market due to their ability to offer lower prices.

Other supermarket entrants in the local food craze have been Whole Foods and Wild Oats natural foods supermarkets. With fewer stores and an emphasis on organic foods, they each have specialized in reaching out to the smaller organic farmers who have not had luck with Hen House and HyVee. Yet, these two national chains have authentication systems for vendors with which it is difficult to cooperate from the perspective of a small farmer. Additionally, organic production is more variable without the use of chemicals and inputs to moderate climate and pest variables. Whole Foods and

Wild Oats have met with only very scant success in incorporating local foods into their stores as a result, leading Whole Foods to simply establish a farmers market in its parking lot as an alternative to working out difficulties of in-store integration. This phenomenon is reminiscent of the small farmers market outside People's Grocery in Manhattan as an alternative to its own inability to welcome local foods.

Supermarket incorporations of local foods are definitely born out of a high degree of competitiveness in the food retail sector. Therefore, despite the many earnest intentions among supermarkets of improving economic opportunities for producers, of providing healthier and higher quality food to consumers, and of improving environmental impacts of farming, the form and politics of local food programs is largely governed by competitive interests. This market instrumentalism can lead to blindness about the true economic, environmental, and social impacts of supermarket local food programs. Supermarket spaces and coordination spaces are aligned to deliver innovative products and many times intricate information to the consumer, but it is difficult to verify the claims of these spaces. It is also difficult to argue that local foods produce social justice from this perspective, where these foods are more expensive and increasingly devoted to more affluent neighborhood supermarkets, and there is never any reference to labor conditions on supplying farms.

Instrumentalism born of competitiveness in the food retail sector also blinds consumers and managers to the disorganized coordination problems and competitiveness among producers that can stifle growth of their local food programs and the benefits accrued to participants and their communities. Britt Farm near Manhattan found itself competing with Amish communities from Missouri for a place in the Buy Fresh, Buy Local program, and instead of coordination by Del Housworth of Hen House to allow them each to grow complementary crops, the Amish out-competed Britt by offering large enough quantities of a wider selection of crops at lower prices than Britt. Britt then went to individual HyVee managers and out-competed his rivals with these managers by offering more flexible distribution using his own trucks to deliver the produce. This kind of competition may be natural in well-developed food markets, but these local food programs are still in fledgling stages, and this competition stunts their growth before they

even establish themselves. It narrows the potential field of products and participants by disallowing access to retail spaces unless they are large-scale regional producers already, stifling innovation in the programs and their products. Additionally, the effects of local food suppliers on their truly local markets can be pernicious as they become local elites of sorts, as was seen above in the discussion of Britt Farm's influence on the Manhattan local food market.

The increased scale of local food in the supermarket context therefore introduces a number of complexities, and it raises questions about the broader effects of scaling on alternative agro-food networks. Some degree of centralized authority and coordination is required for increasing flows of local foods to meet the demands of scale in supermarket retail spaces, but the nature of the authority and the ways in which it is exercised in relation to the performance of coordination functions is critical to healthy participation and access to new participants in these programs. Truly collaborative programs between consumers, producers, and supermarkets are not yet forthcoming in this expanding supermarket sector of local food marketing. The intensity of increased sales privileges producer collaborations as a way of sharing marketing burdens, but it also privileges intensive cultivation and/or processing of products for market. This inhibits access for upstart farms and smaller producers, including most organic farms in Kansas and Missouri. The challenges at intermediate stages of local food chains raise questions about whether hierarchical corporate organizations are capable of fostering grassroots growth of alternative food chains. They also put a strange twist on the concept of defensive localism, where producers and consumers indeed have defensive intentions against the vagaries of globalized foods, but their versions of localism are highly distorted toward more of an abstract and placeless regionalism. As they currently are organized, supermarket local food programs in Kansas City create many new marketing opportunities for many producers and supermarkets, alike. However, the internal politics and instrumentalisms of these programs cater to streamlined engagements with alternative values and leave complex environmental, social, and economic effects and feedbacks untested and unseen.

E) Conclusions

This chapter has been an attempt to apply the importance of the production of space in political economy to methods of knowing power and posturing in the growth of local food networks. This spatial analysis vantage on local food projects is based on ontological theorizing about the nature of space and scale, and the dialectical links between space, scale, and politics in economic development. Lefebvre (1991 (1974)) has noted that all movements must produce space as a matter of actualization, Massey (1999) has emphasized the relational, incomplete, disrupted, and plural aspects of space and spatial projects, and Harvey (1996; 2000) has argued for the importance of space in the continual production and reproduction of geographies and justice through dialectical political economic processes. As the local food movement is dedicated to challenging ecological, metabolic, and social relations in the political economy of agriculture and food, the spaces through which it is produced are highly relevant to the outcomes of these challenges. By focusing on the value embodied in particular spatial arrangements of local food across Eastern Kansas, and the institutional and social arrangements enabling these productions of space, this chapter has produced a number of conclusions about the political economic trajectories of local food in this study region.

First, the spaces of local food are plural, partial, and interwoven in complex ways. On farms, in transit, in restaurants, and in supermarkets, the production and consumption of local foods is accomplished by innovative productions of physical, material/metabolic, discursive, and associational spaces. These simultaneously coincident, dispersed, uneven, and overlapping spaces are the foundation of the construction of value in local food networks, even as the “orders of worth” described in the previous chapter are the heart of the motivations behind these spatial projects. In each of the network communities of this study, creating this value and producing these spaces has involved creating new relationships and redefining the nature of these relationships in order to sustain new spatial configurations. Although the new spatial configurations do create an alternative agri-food political economy, the values underwriting these efforts do not guarantee that the outcomes of the new arrangements are consistent with them. There are

all manner of unintended consequences that result from unrecognized dependencies among these spaces and assumed benefits in their production.

Second, the plurality, partiality, and interconnectedness of local food spaces are sources of geographic difference rather than processes unifying the region. Local food development in Eastern Kansas is most developed and prevalent through larger cities and the various (mostly rural) producer interests able to capitalize on these large markets of concerned consumers. This means that Kansas City dominates the contours of local food development in the region, while other micropolitan cities foster their own unique mix of local foods and participants. However, the smaller cities toward Central and Western Kansas have yet to reach a critical mass of formalized local food activity sufficient for study of the kind in this research project. The same could be said for the vast rural areas throughout Kansas, where the production of rural landscape and the social reproduction of rural lifestyle involve very different engagements with food localism. These geographic differences deserve further study, but what can be concluded from this present work is that the drivers of the local food movement – urban consumer consciousness and small producer market disenfranchisement – have begun to produce alternative agri-food networks heavily weighted toward renegotiating rural-urban agri-food economic relations.

A third general conclusion builds on the second in that a common, subtle, and usually unrecognized dependency exists between the success of local foods and the evolution of urban development. Each urban context in this chapter has a different relationship with local foods, some stimulating and others stifling the production of local food spaces, some open to being shaped by local food spaces and culture while others feeding on the fruits of this movement. Farmers markets are often important for enrolling producers into urban spaces, developing consumer affinity for local foods, and incubating more formalized supply chain relationships. On the other hand, the geography of commercial shopping districts plays a profound role in attracting consumers and shaping their forms of relationship to local foods and their providers. The dialectics between produced urban spaces and the dynamic interactive spaces of the local foods

themselves are therefore very important for shaping access to local foods for both producers and consumers.

A fourth important conclusion lies in recognizing that an important form of power in current local food networks is the ability to shape the production of space and the access of participants to spaces. This power often is exerted by intermediaries – restaurants and retailers in the case of local food – but producers have proven capable of cooperative organizing and/or self-exploitation to gain access to retail and restaurant spaces. As Claire Hinrichs has noted in farmers market and CSA contexts, local food relations are not immune from instrumental expressions of power in service of market-oriented priorities (Hinrichs 2000). This was also found to be the case to varying degrees in Kansas City restaurant and supermarket agendas for local foods. This instrumentalism often distorts the politics of local food by only allowing access to important spaces of intermediaries for those who can serve the needs of market competition for those intermediaries. Yet, there are examples, especially in Lawrence, of intermediaries transcending the bounds of simple instrumentalism toward what John Allen has called associational politics marked by collaboration (Allen 1999). Enabling open, transparent, and democratic governance of local food spaces, especially intermediate urban ones, therefore becomes extremely important for enabling public engagement and progressive outcomes from these kinds of local food development.

Spatial analysis has therefore allowed for a highly textured presentation of local food development in Eastern Kansas. It has provided rich pictures of the sites of networks and the embodiments of alternative values at the heart of these networks. The *a priori* postulates about space offered by spatial theorists hold true in this case: local food cannot be adequately represented apart from the spaces it helps to produce; spaces are relational, plural, incomplete, disrupted and the source of disruption; and the politics of local food are intricately interwoven in the politics of these spatial projects. While the movement embodies an ongoing renegotiation of agri-food relations by circumventing powerful intermediaries and processes of commodification, other remaining intermediaries are able to consolidate power to differing degrees in the renegotiation of relationships. Yet, the overlapping networks, spaces, and scales of local food disrupt

each other across regions (e.g. the trans-local participation of Britt Farm in Manhattan and Kansas City clusters, disrupting the explanations of politics in each locale) and make any simple representation of local food politics either overly reductive or impossible. As consumer demand for local foods continues to increase, tensions between the desire for producing alternative political economies and the limitations of instrumental economic growth set the stage for paradoxes of localism similar to those noted as the growth of organic foods has led to the disenfranchisement of its original apologists (Guthman 2004). Escaping the limits of instrumental action and the obfuscations of un-reflexive defensive localism requires diverse, collaborative, transparent, and open spatial projects aligned with the best of alternative values. The ability to create these alternative systems of governance may rely on challenging what it means to be a farmer, a consumer, a restaurant, or a retailer in line with expressing collaborative, rather than instrumental power, in the production of the spaces and scales of local food.

