

REEVALUATING THE COMMUNITY-BUILDING POTENTIAL OF COMMUNITY
SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA): A CASE STUDY OF THE
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY CSA PROGRAM

By

COURTNEY FIELD BENNETT

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the thesis of
Courtney Field Bennett find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

Dr. Jessica Goldberger, Chair

Dr. Christine Oakley

Dr. Lynne Carpenter-Boggs

Dr. Marcy Ostrom

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Abstract

by Courtney Field Bennett
Washington State University
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Chair: Jessica R. Goldberger

This thesis explores the role of community in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). I present a profile of CSA as it has grown and spread across the country as well as review the debates and discussion around CSA's community-building potential. To expand how we evaluate CSA's community-building potential, I propose a multidimensional framework based on sociology's community literature. I then apply this framework to an in-depth case study of the Washington State University Organic Farm CSA Program. I use a combination of qualitative research methods such as semi-structured interviews and formal participant observation.

Within this thesis I argue for an alternative analysis of CSA's community-building potential. I suggest first that CSA's community-building potential should be evaluated by assessing the different "people and organizations" affiliated with the program. Second, I call for an analysis of the "actions and practices—spaces and structures," where meanings, activities, and social displays of community are maintained and contested. Finally, I argue that participants' "consciousness and meanings" should be explored in relation to three components of community: shared interests, social connections, and place-based environmental connections.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The 1930s through the 1970s marks the start of a period of significant agricultural change in the United States (Buttel 2005). This change was driven by the “productionist ideologies” of a coalition including “the public agricultural research community, agroindustry (including not only agro-input and agro-output firms but also banks), major farm organizations (especially commodity organizations) and federal agriculture policy makers” (Buttel 2005: 277). During this time period agricultural productivity increased substantially as a result of new hybrid seed varieties and green revolution technologies including mechanization and the use of a variety of agricultural chemicals (Danbom 1986; Buttel 2005; Grey 2000). These new technologies required large capital investments and land consolidation resulting in a significant decline in the number of family farms in the U.S. (Grey 2000). According to Lobao and Meyer (2001:109), “from 1940 to 1980, the farm population declined tenfold, the number of farms declined by more than half, [and] the average acreage more than doubled” (see also Grey 2000; Lyson 2004; Ostrom 1997).

These changes, including an emphasis on “capital-intensive farming and efficient production” (Grey 2000: 144), put in motion another wave of structural transformations in the food industry in the 1970s and 1980s. Through a myriad of acquisitions and mergers a global system of multinational food giants emerged leading to the globalization of the food supply (Grey 2000; Lyson and Raymer 2000). Heffernan et al. state that “to understand the global food system one must understand the operations of the major global firms such as Cargill, ADM, and ConAgra” (1999: 3). They explain that the global

system has resulted in the emergence of “firm clusters” or “alliances” that form a fully vertically integrated seamless system that controls the food supply from the gene to shelf (Heffernan et al. 1999). Through these changes, control of agriculture has shifted from farm owners to distant nonfarm firms (Grey 2000). In this system “farmers produce commodities to be turned over to agribusiness they do not own” (Lobao and Meyer 2001: 109; see also Heffernan et al. 1999). Furthermore, value is taken out of the raw agricultural product and moved to “the input suppliers, processors, distributors and marketers” (Lyson 2007: 22).

Opposition to the industrialization and globalization of the food supply came about in large part with the publication of Rachel Carson’s (1962) *Silent Spring* and Jim Hightower’s (1973) *Hard Tomatoes, Hard Times*. Carson (1962) called attention to the excessive use of agricultural chemicals, especially DDT, and its effects on the environment. Hightower (1973) argued for awareness about negative effects of agricultural restructuring on “small farmers, sharecroppers, farm laborers, and consumers” (Danbom 1986). Buttel (2005) explains that by 1990 two major shifts in the agricultural opposition movement occurred. First, activism shifted its focus from criticism of the public research institutions (Hightower’s main emphasis) to criticism of the private sector. Second, the opposition split into two social movements: the agricultural sustainability/local food systems movement and the anti-GM food/crop and anti-food system globalization movement.

There is considerable overlap between the two movements, but emphasis here is on the sustainable agriculture/local food systems movement. This movement concentrates on a wide variety of social, economic, and environmental concerns associated with the

globalization of our food system. While what constitutes sustainable agriculture is hotly debated, broadly the idea suggests that “long-term considerations such as ecology, economic viability and social equity ‘are privileged over the short-term considerations of maximum economic profit and productivity’” (Esbjornson 1992: 21 as cited in Ostrom 1997: 24). The movement in its many forms works to address environmental issues such as “degraded topsoil, contaminated ground water, depleted underground aquifers, destroyed wildlife habitat, reduced genetic diversity and [the] consumption of immense quantities of non-renewable fossil fuels” (Ostrom 1997: 21).

In addition to addressing environmental concerns, the local food systems aspect of the movement works to tackle many of the social and economic components of sustainable agriculture. A diverse variety of local/regional food related activities are associated with local food systems including community supported agriculture (CSA), farmers’ markets, community gardens, urban gardens, food coops, farm-to-school/farm-to-hospital/farm-to-restaurant programs, and cooperative delivery systems (Lyson 2000; Guthman et al. 2006; Hinrichs 2000; Grey 2000). These local food systems, O’Hara and Stagl (2001: 545) argue, “provide a vehicle for re-connecting and re-embedding food markets into their physical/spatial, social and ethical context.” Physical/spatial re-embedding occurs by recognizing ecological problems associated with agriculture and building systems that work within ecological cycles and limits (O’Hara and Stagl 2001). Social and ethical re-embedding occurs by reducing the distance between producers and consumers and creating direct face-to-face interactions that have the ability to reestablish trust lost with the global system (O’Hara and Stagl 2001). Feenstra explains that local food systems “are rooted in particular places, aimed to be economically viable for

farmers and consumers, use ecological farming practices and enhance social equity and democracy for all members of the community” (1997: 28).

Local food systems are also referred to by a variety of other names including direct marketing systems (Grey 2000; Hinrich 2000), alternative food institutions (Guthman et al. 2006), alternative food networks (Cox et al. 2008), and civic agriculture (Lyson 2000, 2004, 2005). Civic agriculture, Lyson explains, includes “smaller-scale agriculture and food ventures that are tied to the community through direct marketing integrated into local circuits of food processing and procurement” (2005: 94). Together civic agriculture organizations are thought to enhance a community’s problem solving capacity and achieve the principles of sustainable agriculture (Lyson 2005). This is accomplished by creating agriculture and food systems that “rely on local resources and serve local markets and consumers ... through a set of cooperative and mutually supporting social relations” (Lyson 2005: 94).

A significant body of literature has been generated about local and alternative food systems. Within this body of work a considerable amount of research has been devoted to CSA programs. The general idea behind CSA is that before the beginning of the growing season consumers make an up-front contribution and investment in a local or regional farm. This investment provides a farmer or group of farmers with the resources necessary to grow local/regional low in-put organic produce and provides a guaranteed market at harvest time. As part of the sustainable agriculture movement, CSA is cited as a way to address some of the major social, economic, and ecological concerns with global agriculture.

In their seminal book *Farms of Tomorrow* and *Farms of Tomorrow Revisited: Community Supported Farms– Farm Supported Community*, Groh and McFadden (1990, 1997) discuss the role of community in CSA. They explain that “the primary need is not for the farm to support community, but rather for the community to support itself through farming” (Groh and McFadden 1997: xiv see also Groh and McFadden 1990). They argue that communities need to embrace the farms of tomorrow for their own well being and the future well being of the planet (Groh and McFadden 1990, 1997). Furthermore, they suggest that “every community needs to incorporate farms not only to have fresh local food, but also to have [the] educational” opportunities provided by these farms (Groh and McFadden 1997: 9).

Despite their emphasis on community, there is an on-going debate about the role of community in CSA. This debate includes a broad spectrum of perspectives about CSA’s community-building potential. On one end of the spectrum numerous scholars argue that local food systems including CSA can provide solutions to the environmentally and socially destructive aspects of the food system by building and rediscovering civic community (Kittredge 1996; Kloppenburg 1996; Lyson 2004, 2005; O’Hara and Stagl 2001; Sharp et al. 2002; Wells et al. 1999). In-depth empirical research about the role of community in CSA has produced mixed results leading many scholars to conclude that the communities necessary to sustain CSA, in the majority of cases, have not been formed or rediscovered (Cone and Myhre 2000; Russell and Zepeda 2008). On the opposite end of the spectrum, one scholar suggests that CSA has become little more than a source for local, organic produce and that emphasis on community is a barrier to CSA’s ability to help build a more democratic food system (DeLind 2004).

In this thesis I engage the debate about the role and community-building potential of CSA. Specifically, I ask: Can the role of community be re-conceptualized or broadened to revitalize its meaning and purpose in CSA? To answer this question, my study builds on ideas from the sociological literature on community to explore different ways to evaluate CSA's community-building potential.

The remainder of this thesis is organized into six chapters. In Chapter 2, I provide the basic definitions and history of CSA in the U.S. This chapter also includes a profile of basic CSA characteristics. In Chapter 3, I review the literature about the role of community in CSA. This chapter includes discussions of studies that argue CSA builds community, empirical studies focused on farmers' and members' perspectives of and organizational influences on the role of community in CSA, and finally, the major critiques of CSA's community-building potential. In Chapter 4, I review pertinent sociological literature on community and create a multidimensional framework useful for an expanded analysis of the role of community in CSA. Chapter 5 presents my study site, research methods, and data analysis procedures. My research findings are presented in Chapter 6 couched in the multidimensional framework outlined in Chapter 4. In the final chapter I discuss my research findings in relation to the CSA community debate and the community literature presented in Chapters 3 and 4. I also discuss the contributions and limitations of my study and present ideas for future research.

Chapter Two

Community Supported Agriculture

Defining CSA

Community Supported Agriculture was first established in the US in 1986. It has since spread across the country with CSA farms currently located in every state (Adam 2006). Its basic structure has taken many shapes as interested producers and consumers mold it to fit their particular interests and circumstances. In its many forms, CSA “is providing direct support for hundreds of small farms and clean local food for thousands of families” (McFadden 2004). While many variations on the general theme exist the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service of the USDA defines CSA as:

A community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farmland becomes, either legally or spiritually, the community’s farm, with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing risks and benefits of food production. Members or shareholders of the farm or garden pledge in advance to cover the anticipated costs of the farm operation and farmer’s salary. In return, they receive shares in the farm’s bounty throughout the growing season, as well as satisfaction gained from reconnecting to the land. Members also share in risks, including poor harvest due to unfavorable weather or pests (Adam 2006: 2).

The Robyn Van En Center at Wilson College founded in recognition of one of the pioneers of CSA, has a similar definition to the USDA but captures additional characteristics:

The arrangement...enables many small to moderate scale organic and/or bio-intensive family farms to remain in business. Ultimately, CSA programs create “agriculture-supported communities” where members receive a wide variety of foods harvested at their peak of freshness, ripeness, flavor, vitamin and mineral content (Wilson College 2008).

Cooley and Lass (1998: 228) suggest that “CSA represents an important new alternative relationship between farmers and consumers in today’s industrial food system.” In

addition to creating a unique opportunity to link local farmers and local consumers, CSA is also connected to a diverse array of goals and principles. Table 1 outlines the goals and principles frequently discussed in conjunction with CSA.

Table 1. Goals and Principles of CSA

1. Provide farmers with direct outlets for farm products and ensure fair compensation
 2. Encourage proper land stewardship by supporting farmers in transition toward low or no chemical inputs and utilization of energy saving technologies
 3. Support environmentally sustainable farming and food that is produced locally by family farmers.
 4. Strengthen local economies by keeping food dollars in local communities
 5. Build community by directly linking producers and consumers and allowing people to have a personal connection with their food and the land on which it was produced.
 6. Make nutritious, affordable, wholesome foods accessible and widely available to community members
 7. Create an atmosphere for learning about non-conventional agriculture, animal husbandry, and alternative energy systems not only to farmers and their apprentices, but also to members of the community, to educators from many fields of study, and to students of all ages
-

Adapted from Wilson College (2008) and Strohlic and Shelley (2004)

As will be discussed, the organizational structure of CSA has taken many forms, with some CSAs emphasizing the foundational goals and principles more than others. Despite their differences the basic premise of CSA in the majority of cases adheres to the following ideas. Interested consumers before the start of the growing season make an upfront investment in a local or regional farm. The consumers' investments supply various percentages of the farm's operating budget for the growing season. After making their investments, the consumers are referred to as "shareholders" or "members" and

sometimes “subscribers” of the farm. In return for their investment, members receive “shares” or portions of the farm’s harvest, usually supplied on a weekly basis.

A typical weekly share provides enough produce to meet the needs of a family of four. Often other arrangements can be made including half shares or work share options. The farmer(s) with or without the help of a core group or assistance from their shareholders are responsible for producing an adequate supply of food for their members within the environmental limits of the season. Through the formation of this relationship members and farmers share the risk of producing locally or regionally grown, low input, and typically organic produce (Groh and McFadden 1997; Ostrom 1997; VanderTuin 1987; Winne 2008).

In addition to receiving a weekly supply of freshly grown organic produce, in many cases, members receive a newsletter discussing various aspects of the farm including current and future farm work, what vegetables are being planted, and what crops are coming into season. Newsletters usually include recipes and tips for how to prepare items in the week’s share especially for the more unusual fruits and vegetables. When the “share” pick-up is at the CSA farm, many programs provide opportunities for members to pick a small bouquet of flowers or take a tour around the farm. Throughout the growing season many CSA farms organize field days, harvest festivals, and other events that allow CSA members and the general public to socialize and learn about the farm.

History of CSA

There are two conflicting stories about how CSA became established in the United States. One commonly held belief is that “the CSA movement originated in the

1960s in Kobe, Japan, where a group of women desired a closer connection with farmers and the food they were consuming” (Brittain 2007: 1; also see Strohlic and Shelley 2004). In Japan the idea was referred to as “teikei” which translates to mean “food with the farmer’s face on it.” It is believed that the concept then spread to Europe and eventually to the United States (Brittain 2007). This version of CSA’s history was reported in a *Time Magazine* article: “The CSA movement began in Japan 30 years ago with a group of women alarmed by pesticides, the increase in processed food and their countries dwindling rural population. Their teikei—partnerships with local farmers through annual subscriptions—spread to Europe and United States” (Roosevelt 2003: 60).

Contrary to the widely held belief that CSA originated in Japan, McFadden (2004) found the roots of the U.S. CSA movement to be inspired by the biodynamic and anthroposophy ideas developed by Austrian Philosopher Rudolf Steiner. Steiner developed the concept of biodynamic agriculture in the early 1920s while assisting struggling German farmers. Lovel suggests that biodynamic agriculture “is the oldest organic agriculture movement in the western world” (2000: 42). Anthroposophy is a worldview described in Rudolf Steiner’s *The Philosophy of Freedom* published in 1893 (Rudolf Steiner School 2008). Simply, it is the “study of the wisdom of humanity...[and] is sometimes referred to as spiritual science” (Lovel 2000: 2). Anthroposophy concepts incorporated into the original CSA farms include new forms of property ownership, new forms of cooperation, and new forms of economy (McFadden 2004). A fundamental anthroposophic idea built into the structure of the first two U.S. CSA farms and now incorporated into CSAs throughout the country is the reliance on producer-consumer

associations “where consumers and producers are linked by their mutual interests” (McFadden 2004). This history of CSA suggests that two agriculture activists, Jan VanderTuin and Trauger Groh worked with Steiner’s ideas in agricultural settings in Europe and eventually returned to the U.S. to play a major role in the creation of CSA (McFadden 2004; McFadden and Groh 1997; VanderTuin 1987; Wilson College 2008).

VanderTuin (1987) has identified himself as one of the founding fathers of CSA in the US. From his various work experiences in the U.S. agricultural sector, VanderTuin (1987) developed an array of concerns with large-scale U.S. agriculture. His concerns included underpaid migrant labor, lack of farmer-consumer interactions, excessive use of pesticides and herbicides, energy intensive long-distance transportation, government and market control, exploitation of the Third World, and environmental pollution. His frustrations with the structure of the U.S. food system pushed him to search for alternative means of farming. He explained: “I needed to find a situation that gave more recognition to the value of agricultural work” (VanderTuin 1987: 75). While involved with producer-consumer cooperatives in various parts of Switzerland VanderTuin found practices that aligned with his values and visions of farming:

The concept of these new cooperatives is simple: divide the costs of the farm or garden among shareholders before the growing season begins. Instead of an agriculture that is supported by government subsidies, private profits, or martyrs to the cause, they create an organizational form that provides direct support for farmers from people who eat their food (Groh and McFadden 1997: 121).

After finding the style of farming he was searching for, VanderTuin returned to the U.S. Settling in Western Massachusetts, VanderTuin joined Robyn Van En, John Root Jr., and a handful of community members familiar with Rudolf Steiner’s work (McFadden 2004).

Together, referring to themselves as the “core group,” they organized the CSA Garden at Great Barrington (McFadden 2004; Groh and McFadden 1997).

The group’s first project was providing apples, fresh pressed cider, hard cider, and vinegar to thirty shareholders (Groh and McFadden 1997; VanderTuin 1987). With the success of their orchard project they moved into vegetable production and hired a biodynamic farmer (VanderTuin 1987; Groh and McFadden 1997). The core group worked through production, recruitment, and budget logistics (Groh and McFadden 1997). The story of the CSA Garden at Great Barrington is full of ups, downs, restructuring, and relocations. Despite their struggles their vision along with that of the Temple–Wilton Community Farm helped inspire the CSA movement.

While the Massachusetts group was designing the CSA Garden at Great Barrington, Anthony Graham, Trauger Groh, and Lincoln Geiger were developing a similar farming organization based on Groh’s work with Rudolf Steiner’s ideas in Northern Germany (McFadden 2004). “Groh had studied extensively the concepts of biodynamic farming and produce community co-op programs” (Wilson College 2008). Together in 1986, the three founded the Temple–Wilton Community Farm in New Hampshire, 80 miles from the Great Barrington Farm (McFadden 2004; Groh and McFadden 1997). The following passage captures a piece of the vision behind the creation of the community farm:

Independent families in the area who wanted would join together in an association known as the Community Farm. Some of the members had land suitable for farming most did not. Landlords would make their fields available to those who were able and willing to use them. The rest of the people would continue their lives independently, but through their association in the Community Farm they would receive food from the land. In order to make this possible, they would support the farm by providing finances (Groh and McFadden 1997: 106).

The Temple–Wilton Community Farm exhibits many similarities to the CSA Garden at Great Barrington but also has distinct differences. For instance the Temple–Wilton farm is organized and operated primarily by the three farmers instead of a “core group.” Additionally, while the farm was in its initial development stages twenty families met regularly to establish the farm’s framework including its intentions, underlying concepts, actions, and principles of cooperation (Groh and McFadden 1997). Twenty-four years later, the founding directives still guide the Community Farm’s operations (Temple–Wilton 2008).

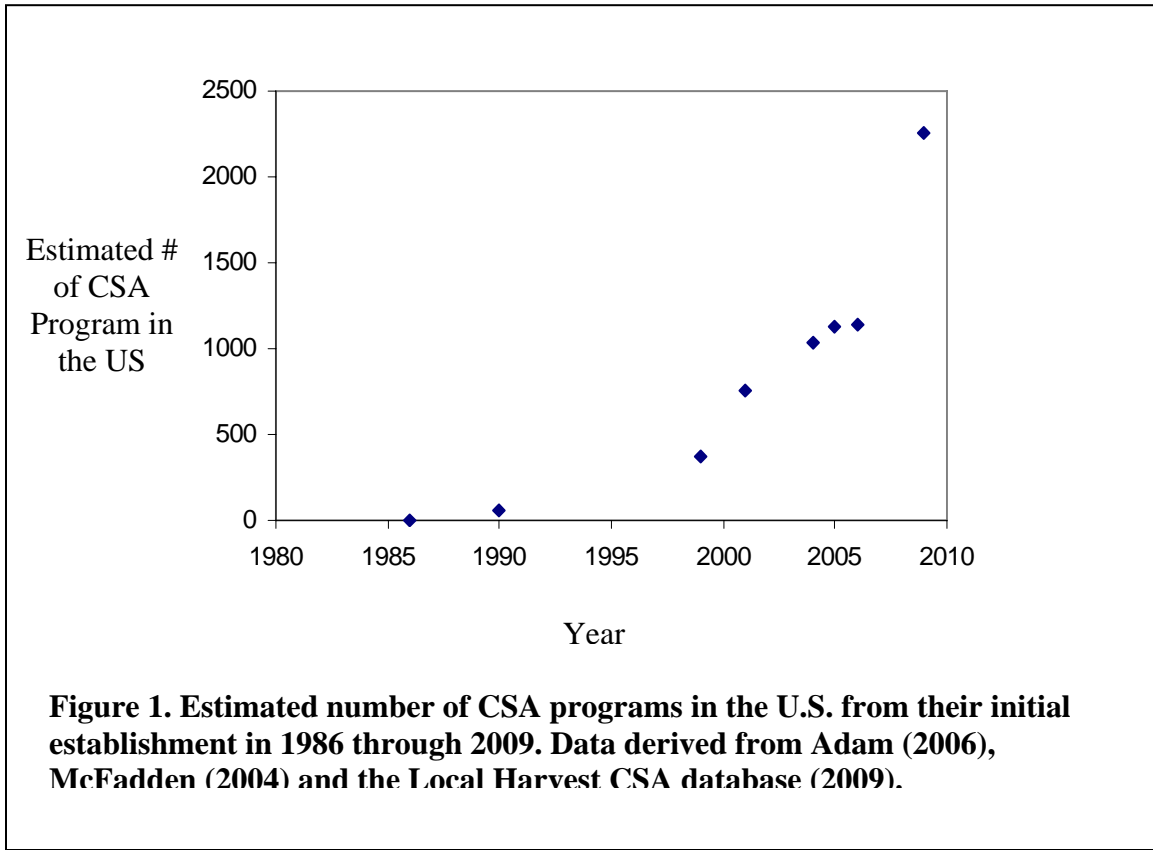
It appears that the history of the U.S. CSA movement is more directly tied to the founding farmers’ experiences with Rudolf Steiner’s work in Europe than knowledge of the Japanese “teikei” movement. Both movements, whether foundationally linked or not, identified similar problems with the changing nature of food production. These problems include but are not limited to the lack of farmer–consumer interactions and the excessive use of pesticides and fertilizers. The movements also responded similarly by establishing farming organizations that built direct links between producers and consumers. Because of these and other similarities it seems natural to connect the two movements. Whether foundationally linked or not, the “teikei” philosophy is frequently discussed and referred to on CSA farms throughout the US, with produce from these farms often referred to as, “food with a farmers face on it.”

Profile of CSA in the U.S.

CSA has grown substantially since the first farms were established in 1986 on the East Coast. McFadden (2004) explains that the first wave of growth resulted in the establishment of 60 CSAs by the early 1990s. The second wave of growth has been

captured through various surveys, reports, and databases. The 1999 National CSA Survey was mailed to 1,019 CSA farms and received responses from 368 farms (Lass et al 2003; Adam 2006). The USDA-CSA database in 2001 contained 761 registered CSAs and a study conducted by the Leopold Center at Iowa State University in March of 2004 reported 1,034 farms (Adam 2006). In 2005, the USDA–CSA and Local Harvest databases contained 1,144 and 1,080 registered CSA programs respectively (Adam 2006). The Robyn Van En Center as of January 2009 indicates there are 1,300–1,500 CSA programs across the country (Wilson College 2008). In January 2009 the Local Harvest database contained 2,257 CSA listings. Figure 1 illustrates the growth of CSA programs from 1986–2009 using these statistics.

In 2004, McFadden (2004) suggested that the 1,000–1,200 range for CSA programs was a low estimate because of unreported farms. He insisted that 1,500 to 1,700 was a more accurate approximation of existing programs. In addition McFadden (2004) predicted the “potential for a third wave of CSA development, a wave that could not only triple or quadruple the number of CSAs over the next few years, but also raise in importance the role these farms play in their communities.” There is a significant difference between the current (2009) numbers of registered CSAs suggested by the Robyn Van En Center and the Local Harvest database. The Local Harvest database appears to have the most accurate up-to-date CSA listings across the country. The presence of 2,257 CSA programs in the Local Harvest database suggests that CSA has not tripled or quadrupled as McFadden (2004) predicted. Nonetheless, the number of CSA programs across the country continues to increase.



As CSA has grown and spread across the U.S., the academic community has compiled a substantial amount of work including “theses, dissertations, survey reports, and journal articles, grounded in empirical evidence from diverse regions of the country” (Ostrom 2007: 101). These studies provide considerable insight into the structural and philosophical aspects of CSA as well as detailed information about the perceived benefits and challenges of this type of alternative agricultural arrangement. The following sections rely heavily on information collected from surveys and in-depth case studies to create a general picture of CSA across the country. A significant amount of the data presented below comes from four main studies: research conducted by Ostrom in 1997 on 24 Upper Midwestern CSA farms, the 1999 national CSA survey (Lass et al. 2003), a Mid-Atlantic (Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia) study of 13 CSAs conducted by the Small Farm

Success Project (Oberholtzer 2004), and a West Coast (California, Oregon, and Washington) CSA study of 13 farms conducted by the California Institute for Rural Studies (Strochlic and Shelly 2004). The discussion focuses on the following CSA characteristics: farm size, production practices, land ownership, organizational structures, and farmer and member characteristics.

CSA Farm Size by Acreage

The majority of studies indicate that farms running CSA operations are smaller than the average conventional U.S. farm. In 2002, the average farm size in the U.S. was 156 acres (USDA 2002). The average farm size in the national CSA survey as well as the mid-Atlantic CSA study was 60 acres (Lass et al. 2003; Oberholtzer 2004). The national study reported a median of 18 acres (Lass et al. 2003) and the Mid-Atlantic a range of 11–300 acres (Oberholtzer 2004). Farm size in the Upper Midwest ranged 1.5–300 acres with an average of 87 acres and a median of 40 acres (Ostrom 1997). The Western CSA farms ranged from 5 acres to 180 acres (Strochlic and Shelly 2004). The national survey provided the most information about acres under production, reporting an average of 26.8 acres and a median of 7 acres. CSA production varied as a percentage of the total production averaging 7.4 acres and a median of 3 acres (Lass et al. 2003). Average and median CSA acreage in the Upper Midwest were 5.5 and 5 acres respectively (Ostrom 1997). The CSA study in the Mid-Atlantic region reported a median of 6 acres under production with a range between 5 and 200 acres (Oberholtzer 2004). Table 2 below presents these data compared to the 2002 USDA Census of Agriculture data on farm size.

Table 2. Total Acres, Acres Under Production, and CSA Acres from Four CSA Studies Compared to 2002 Census of Agriculture Farm Size

	Mean (Acres)	Median (Acres)	Range (Acres)
Mid-Atlantic CSA Farms (MD, PA, VA)^a			
Total acres	60	n/a	11–300
Acres under production	n/a	6	5–200
Acres devoted to CSA production	n/a	n/a	n/a
<i>Census of Agriculture Farm Size (2002)</i>	156	90	n/a
Upper Midwest CSA Farms (MN, WI)^b			
Total acres	87	40	1.5–300
Acres under production	n/a	n/a	n/a
Acres devoted to CSA production	5.5	5	n/a
<i>Census of Agriculture Farm Size (2002)</i>	274	160	n/a
Western CSA Farms (CA, OR, WA)^c			
Total acres	n/a	n/a	5–180
Acres under production	n/a	n/a	n/a
Acres devoted to CSA production	n/a	n/a	n/a
<i>Census of Agriculture Farm Size (2002)</i>	385	39	n/a
National CSA Farms^d			
Total acres	60	18	n/a
Acres under production	26.8	7	n/a
Acres devoted to CSA production	7.4	3	n/a
<i>Census of Agriculture Farm Size (2002)</i>	441	120	n/a

^a Oberholtzer (2004)

^b Ostrom (1997)

^c Strohlic and Shelly (2004)

^d Lass et al. (2003)

CSA Agricultural Production Practices

CSA farms have a unique set of agricultural production practices. Lass et al. (2003) found that 94% of CSA farms employ organic or biodynamic farming practices. While organic is taking on many characteristics of industrial agriculture, CSA in many cases goes beyond organic and/or has managed to maintain some of the ideas embodied in the original organic agriculture movement (see Guthman 2004). Inherently embedded

in CSA production practices is an emphasis on biodiversity and enhanced soil quality. Biodiversity on CSA farms is most apparent in the number of crops grown. Within a single growing season farmers cultivate between 40 and 70 different crops for their members (Strochlic and Shelley 2004; Ostrom 2007). CSA also creates rich biodiverse farms by employing integrated pest management (IPM) practices and planting cover crops, pollution barriers, and wind breaks. The pollution barriers and windbreaks also create habitat for a wide variety of wildlife.

Strochlic and Shelly explain that producing such a diverse array of crops “entails a high level of knowledge and extremely complex planning systems” (2004: 6). The complex agricultural system is necessary so farmers can provide members with a variety of produce every week throughout the growing season (Strochlic and Shelly 2004). In addition to growing a diversity of fresh fruits and vegetables farmers often supplement member shares with “flowers, nuts, baked goods, jams and jellies, dairy products, meat, and eggs” (Strochlic and Shelley 2004: 6; also see Ostrom 2007). The following quote captures the complicated production practices of CSA systems:

A complex production schedule of continuously planting and harvesting at regular intervals throughout the growing season is necessary to assure a steady stream of food. In addition, much of the work on small-scale organic farms is done by hand. The ability to produce the right vegetables in the right amount at the right time, while at the same time minimizing off farm inputs and maximizing efficiency is essential to the success of a CSA operation (Ostrom 1997: 133).

CSA Land Ownership

Land use arrangements vary considerably across CSAs and in many circumstances can pose a significant challenge to the success of the program. Lass et al. (2003) found that 27% of CSA farmers did not own any of the land they worked and 17%

owned less than 10 acres. Strohlic and Shelly (2004) found that land ownership in their West Coast study ranged from 25% to 100% with an average of 75%. The mid-Atlantic farms had both rented and owned land but the percentage of each was not specified. Both Ostrom (1997) and Lass et al. (2003) reported the occurrence of a variety of land use arrangements that helped to ensure the viability of CSA operations. Lass et al. (2003) indicated that 68% of CSA farms made arrangements with private land-owners; 21% made land use agreements with universities, churches, conservation organizations, family members, housing authorities and other institutions; while 11% of arrangements were organized through the government agencies, CSA organizations, and land trusts (Lass et al. 2003). These “land use arrangements included rental agreements, long term leases, and ownership by a CSA organization or a land trust” (Lass et al. 2003: 7). Land use arrangements discussed by Ostrom (1997) included farmers renting their land, the use of land trusts, and membership assistance with the purchase of farm land.

CSA Organizational Structures

Explaining the organizational structures of CSA is a complex endeavor. While distinct similarities and differences can be drawn, CSA is as variable as the people and places involved. As CSA expanded, many variations on the original structure were created. To help understand and explain CSA, Ostrom (1997) created a basic classification scheme including the classical model, managerial model, and a non-profit model. A decade later, Adam (2006) suggested that CSA has two distinct forms the “shareholder CSA” (similar to Ostrom’s classical model) and the “subscription CSA” (similar to Ostrom’s managerial model).

The “classical model” Ostrom (1997, 2007) explains, works to mimic the structure of the original CSA farms. This model emphasizes member participation, the development of a strong core group (an organizing committee), community building, democratic decision making, budgets worked out jointly, member involvement in acquiring land, and the reliance on volunteer labor for field and organizational logistics. Similar to the classical model, the “shareholder” CSA as explained by Adam (2006) is initiated by consumers, where a core group creates the CSA and therefore takes on the majority of the farm’s organizational logistics. Ostrom (1997) found that many of these organizational features are difficult if not impossible to attain. Challenging aspects associated with this particular structure include dealing with the logistics of democratic decision-making, having an active membership base, and the long-term maintenance of a strong functioning core group (Ostrom 1997).

The “subscription CSA” (Adam 2006) is farmer-initiated, where the farmer organizes the CSA and makes management decisions. The “subscription” model coincides with Ostrom’s (1997, 2007) “managerial model,” where the farmer assumes full responsibility for running the farm, meeting both the vegetable and social needs of the members. Ostrom (1997, 2007) suggests this organizational model arose in response to the difficulties and often unattainable qualities of the classical model. The “managerial model” she goes on to explain, operates like a business, focused on the production of high quality produce supplemented with educational newsletters, recipes, and a few farm events.

The third model discussed by Ostrom (1997, 2007) is the non-profit model. These CSA organizations are legally incorporated by the federal government and go beyond

providing fresh produce to a membership base. Non-profit CSA programs organize and facilitate conservation and educational activities and work to establish conservation easements for the purpose of preserving farmland (Ostrom 1997, 2007). CSA programs using this organizational structure receive both the benefits and logistical challenges of incorporating as a non-profit (Ostrom 1997, 2007). Benefits from this type of structure include tax breaks and the ability to apply for state and federal grants such as the USDA Federal Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) grants. Challenges include formal logistics such as establishing a board of directors, creating bylaws, and non-profit accounting procedures (Ostrom 1997, 2007).

Classifying CSA into various categories helps characterize the different organizational structures that have developed, but Ostrom explains: “in reality farm enterprises [have] overlapping characteristics that cannot be neatly categorized” (1997: 209). Groh and McFadden (1997: 202) in *Farms of Tomorrow Revisited* recognize the evolving nature of CSA: “We are still at the beginning of the exploration and discovery of the many forms that this movement can assume in expressing itself in both economic and social terms.” In addition to their analysis of five more traditional CSA farms Groh and McFadden (1997) discuss congregation supported agriculture, corporation supported agriculture, college or school supported agriculture, community supported composting, tax supported farms, and CSAs involving low-income or homeless people and food banks.

A variation on CSA mentioned by Groh and McFadden (1997) are college or school supported local agriculture programs. The Rodale Institute (2008) created a directory of colleges and universities that have and support student farms. Through these

programs the college/university and surrounding community can access fresh local produce grown by the school through various venues including farm stands, farmers markets, dining centers, and local markets. Many colleges/universities have also integrated CSA into their local farming and agriculture programs. The Rodale Institute Student Farm Directory includes 61 campus farms divided into four regions: the Northeast (18), Southeast (7), Midwest (13), and West (23) (Rodale Institute 2008). Of the 61 campus farms in the directory, 41 % have incorporated CSA into their student farming programs. Table 3 is a list of 25 U.S. campus farms that have integrated CSA into their local agriculture programs. Little research has been done on the benefits of integrating CSA into a college or university setting. The presence of 25 university/college integrated CSA programs suggests that this is another type of CSA model that has developed. The following study takes an in-depth look at the Washington State University (WSU) Organic Farm and CSA Program in the Horticulture and Landscape Architecture's Tukey Horticulture Orchard.

Farmer Characteristics

This relatively young, unique, and challenging farming system has attracted new farmers to the field. While the U.S farm population ages, CSA has been successful at recruiting and developing a younger generation of farmers (Lass et al. 2003). Strohlic and Shelly (2004) found that CSA farmers in the Western states ranged in age from 23 to 50. Lass et al. (2003) reported an increase in the number of farmers in the age groups 25–34, 35–44, and 45–54 involved in CSA as compared to the typical 54 year old U.S farmer. Ostrom (1997) reported a wider age range (30–70) for CSA farmers in the Upper Midwest than the average age of the U.S farmer.

Table 3. Universities and Colleges with CSA Programs

<u>School and Farm Name by Region</u>	<u>Year Founded</u>	<u>Acres Farmed</u>	<u>Primary Markets</u>
<u>Northeast</u>			
Black Bear Food Guild at Rogers Farm, University of Maine	1994	3	CSA, FS, FM
Cook Student Organic Farm, Rutgers University	1993	3	CSA
Dilmun Hill, Cornell University	1996	4	CSA, FS
PoughKeepsie Farm Project, Vassar College	1999	6	CSA
Fulton Farm, Wilson College	1994	6	CSA, DH, FM, RS
Green Mountain College Organic Farm	1997	-	CSA, DH, FM, RS
Common Ground Student-Run Educational Farm, University of Vermont	1995	3	CSA, DH
<u>Southeast</u>			
Berea College Farms	1855	480	CSA, DH
Center for Environmental Farming Systems Student Farm, North Carolina State University	1994	15	CSA, FS
The Land Lab at the Sustainable Farming Program, Central Carolina Community College	1995	1.5	CSA, LM
Calhoun Field Laboratory Sustainable Farming Project, Clemson University	2000	15	CSA, FM
<u>Midwest</u>			
Miller Farm, Earlham College	1970	2	CSA
ISU Student Organic Farm, Iowa State University	1996	2	CSA, FM, WS, MC
MSU Student Organic Farm, Michigan State University	2003	-	CSA
Oberlin Sustainable Agriculture Project, Oberlin College	1995	-	CSA, FM, SC
<u>West</u>			
Wolfberry Farm, Prescott College	1996	30	CSA
Cal Poly Organic Farm, California State Polytechnic University	1989	10	CSA, WS, FM
Sustainable Agriculture Farm, College of the Redwoods	2001	38	CSA, FM, RST, GS
Arcata Educational Farm, Humboldt State University	1993	2	CSA, FM
Biodynamic Garden, Rudolf Steiner College	1984	2	CSA
The Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, University of California, Santa Cruz	1967	27	CSA, FS
Davis Student Experimental Farm, University of California	1977	20	CSA
PEAS Farm, University of Montana	1997	6.5	CSA, FB
OASIS, New Mexico State University	2002	1	CSA
Organic Farm Project, Washington State University	2004	3	CSA, FB, FS, LM

Adapted from the Rodale Institute Directory of Student Farms (2009); DS=dining service, FB=food bank, FM=farmer's market, FS=farm stand, GS=grocery store, LM=local market, MC=meal centers, RS=restaurant, WS=wholesale

In addition to recruiting younger farmers, CSA farms are breaking the male-dominated stereotype associated with conventional agriculture (Ostrom 1997). The national, Upper Midwest, Mid-Atlantic, and West Coast studies all reported a relatively equal number of men and women serving as primary operators on CSA farms (Lass et al. 2003; Ostrom 1997; Oberholtzer 2004; Strohlic and Shelley 2003). CSA operators were also found to be a group of highly educated farmers. Lass et al. (2003) reported that 95% of the primary farmers had “attended or graduated from college,” while Ostrom found that farmers had “high levels of formal academic training, with undergraduate and graduate degrees” (1997: 136). Another similarity among CSA farmers in the studies was a “lack of ethnic and racial diversity” (Ostrom 1997: 136). Lass et al. (2003) reported that 97% of farmers in the national survey were white/non-Hispanic. Similarly, all but one of the farmers interviewed by Strohlic and Shelly (2003) were of European descent and all of the farmers in the Upper Midwest were white (Ostrom 1997).

Three of the four studies discussed CSA farmer experience. The results in this category showed some variation, indicating that CSA is attracting new farmers, while also providing alternatives and diversification options for farmers who have spent many years in the field. The national CSA survey found the majority of CSA farmers had fewer than 10 years of farming experience (Lass et al. 2003), while farmers interviewed on the West Coast exhibited a broad range of farming experience from less than 10 years to over 20 years (Strohlic and Shelly 2004). The Mid-Atlantic CSA farmers were relatively new to farming with an average of 11 years of farming experience and 4.2 years running a CSA (Oberholtzer 2004).

Member Characteristics

Members play an important role in the success of CSA organizations, leading many CSA researchers to investigate who participates and why. Here I focus on the “who” and later in Chapter 3 I discuss the “why.” In-depth case studies show that the majority of members are from similar socioeconomic backgrounds. Oberholtzer (2004) and Ostrom (1997) reported similar household income and educational levels of CSA members. The mid-Atlantic CSA members household income ranged from <\$25,000 to >\$100,000 with 29% bringing in over \$100,000 and 4% below \$25,000. The median income reported for this study was between \$75,000- \$99,000 (Oberholtzer 2004). Ten percent of CSA members in the Upper Midwest in 1994 had incomes of \$100,000 or more while 7% had incomes less than \$20,000 leaving over 80% of members in the salary range of \$20,000 - \$99,000 (Ostrom 1997).

Research also indicates that CSA members have similar levels of education. In the Mid-Atlantic region, 56% of CSA members had graduate or professional degrees, 33% had undergraduate degrees, and 11% reported having other types of advanced education (Oberholtzer 2004). Similarly, in the Upper Midwest only 12% of participants had not been to college and 50% of members had graduate degrees (Ostrom 1997). Cone and Myhre (2000) also reported similar results for member education.

Ostrom characterized CSA members as “middle class, urban, white, and highly educated.” (2007: 109). O’Hara and Stagl (2001), in a study of CSA members in New York, also found members to be highly educated with a median household income well above the state’s average. CSA participants in the study were also found to be more politically active than people not affiliated with a CSA program (O’Hara and Stagl 2001).

While CSA attracts a relatively homogenous socioeconomic group, Ostrom reported that “member composition varied by farm with various farms attracting high proportions of single, older, younger, female and low-income members” (2007: 109).

Summary

The purpose of the previous discussion was to provide a general introduction to CSA including a basic description of CSA and the official UDSA definition, a brief history of how CSA started in the U.S., and a snapshot of the basic characteristics of CSA as the movement has spread across the country. Since the two original farms were established on the East Coast in 1986, the number of CSA programs has increased substantially with 2,257 CSAs listed in the Local Harvest Database as of January 2009. CSAs are renowned for the diversity of crops grown (40–70) on relatively small acreages.

The growth and success of CSA may be attributable to creative land-use agreements, malleable organizational structures, and the dedication of local farmers and their supporting members. While CSA appears to be an excellent way to help preserve farm land, rejuvenate small-scale local organic and/or biodynamic agriculture, and build producer-consumer relations, it is not without its flaws and challenges. The next chapter explores the intricacies of CSA focusing on the different interpretations of the role of community in CSA. Then, in Chapter 4, I create a multidimensional framework using the sociological literature on community to expand how CSA’s community-building potential can be evaluated. Finally, I apply the expanded community framework to in-depth research conducted at the WSU Organic Farm CSA Program.

Chapter Three

The Role of Community in Community Supported Agriculture

Community Supported Agriculture has a tall order to fill. As an alternative local food system, CSA is seen as a means for a small farming enterprise to survive outside the competitive global market (Cox et al. 2008). From a more radical perspective, CSA is seen as a social movement or form of protest against the social and environmentally destructive aspects of the global food system (Ostrom 1997, 2007; Cox et al. 2008; Lyson 2004). CSA's historic roots suggest it was created as a way to reduce and/or eliminate the use of agricultural chemicals and shorten the distance between producers and consumers. Other goals and objectives of CSA include strengthening local economies; creating personal connections between consumers, their food, and the land where it was grown; and providing educational opportunities to all those interested in learning about alternative agriculture (Wilson College 2008).

CSA looks like a silver bullet to many of society's problems but the extensive list of goals begs the question: how is all of this possible through CSA or can it really be this easy? Cone and Myhre (2000: 187) suggest that "concerns about the quality of the food supply and the survival of small farms...are to be addressed through building communities of farmers and consumer members." Similarly, Ostrom (1997: 170) explains that "a stated objective of CSA is to fashion communities of consumers who are committed to the well-being of a particular piece of land and a particular farmer." DeLind (2004) indicates that the discourse on CSA is scattered with community building rhetoric with ideas such as bonds of trust and responsibility, partnerships, collaboration, and

mutual and shared interests. These ideas suggest that community building is one avenue through which the objectives of CSA can be accomplished.

The seemingly fundamental link between CSA and community has enticed many scholars to explore the connection in more detail. The literature contains a broad spectrum illustrating disagreement about the role and success of community in CSA. Some scholars argue that CSA serves as a community building tool (Kittredge 1996; Kloppenburg 1996; Lyson 2004; 2005; O'Hara and Stagl 2001; Sharp et al. 2002; Wells et al. 1999). Other scholars claim that CSA has succeeded in creating a community of interest but not a community built on bonds of trust, responsibility, collaboration, and partnership (Cone and Myhre 2000; Russell and Zepeda 2008). On the opposite end of the spectrum, emphasis on community is seen by some as a barrier to CSA's ability to help build a more democratic food system (DeLind 2004). This chapter will present these different perspectives about the role of community in CSA.

Support for CSA's Community Building Potential

The role of community became strongly integrated into CSA through Kloppenburg et al.'s (1996) explanation of the foodshed and the notion of civic agriculture as explained by Lyson (2000, 2004, 2005). A foodshed is modeled after the concept of a watershed and is built by creating food systems tied to a specific locality or region. Kloppenburg et al. (1996) argue that foodsheds provide solutions to the environmentally and socially destructive aspects of the global food system by creating ways for "alternative producers, alternative consumers, and alternative small entrepreneurs [to] rediscover community...find common ground...and a sense of connection and responsibility to a particular locality" (Kloppenburg et al. 1996: 33).

Similarly, civic agriculture, as defined by Lyson (2005: 92) “is the embedding of local agriculture and food production in the community,” and is said to “contribute to the health and vitality of communities in a variety of social, economic, political and cultural ways” (Lyson 2005: 92; also see DeLind 2002).

Foodshed and civic agriculture scholars argue that CSA and other alternative agricultural arrangements build community through numerous channels. Kloppenburg et al. explain that alternative food systems build moral economies by reestablishing the “obligations of mutuality, reciprocity, and equity” that have been eroded by principles of the global food system such as “efficiency, utility maximization, competitiveness, and calculated self interest” (1996: 36). CSA is cited as a way to build a moral economy through the creation of a “commensal community,” where social bonds are reconnected “among producers, between producers and consumers, and among consumers,” through cooperative arrangements for the production of locally grown, organic, nonindustrial food (Kloppenburg et al. 1996: 37). Community vitality, as explained by Lyson (2005), is enhanced through civic agriculture arrangements such as CSA by creating bonds between producers and consumers leading to agricultural literacy and improved local economies. Together these activities are thought to enliven a “community’s problem solving capacity” (Lyson 2005: 92; Young 1999).

Several more empirical case studies support the community-building notion of CSA as explained by Kloppenburg et al. (1996) and Lyson (2000, 2004, 2005). In a study of the Sweat Pea CSA, Sharp et al. (2002) suggest that with the aid of university Extension services, CSA at the rural-urban interface has the potential to serve numerous valuable community building functions. First, through providing increased opportunities

for social interaction, CSA can create links between non-farmers and farmers, relationships that can teach non-farmers about local food production and help reduce farmer/non-farmer conflict at the rural-urban interface (Sharp et al. 2002). Second, Sharp et al. (2002) claim that CSA builds community by creating new intensified production markets on the urban fringe leading to increased agricultural profitability. Finally, they claim that CSA provides increased opportunities for the creation of social capital or “social resources associated with trust and networks, useful for purposes beyond CSA” (Sharp et al. 2002: 6). (The notion of social capital will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.) In their final thoughts, they explain “that creative enterprises such as CSA can bring people together through food production and contribute to the emergence of stronger communities” (Sharp et al. 2002: 7).

Wells et al. (1999) illustrate how CSA can serve as a community building tool by highlighting a dynamic network between the Magic Beanstalk CSA and a member-initiated Field to Family (FTF) Community Food Project. Together the CSA, FTF project, and a diverse coalition (including sustainable agriculture organizations, social service agencies, and churches) conduct numerous civic engagement projects including donating thousands of pounds of fresh produce to local food banks and involve low-income residents in weekly CSA distributions (Wells et al. 1999). The group has discussed branching into catering, food processing, and community meal sponsorship, and expanding their network to include clubs, schools, hospitals, and restaurants (Wells et al. 1999). Numerous educational opportunities have also been created including cooking and nutrition classes at pick-up sites, mentoring for volunteers interested in gardening, and locally grown meals and menus sponsored by Iowa State University, to

help educate consumers about eating locally and generating support for local food systems (Wells et al. 1999).

Kittredge (1996) and O'Hara and Stagl (2001) also contribute to our understanding of CSA's community building potential. Kittredge argues that CSA creates a way for people to reconnect with place, each other, and ultimately build "stronger and richer human connections" (1996: 254). Other community benefits of CSA he describes include keeping money circulating locally, providing opportunities for diverse groups to learn about agriculture, protecting valuable farmland, reducing waste, providing low-skilled labor opportunities, reducing chemical exposure, and getting healthy, nutritious food to low-income households. In a similar vein, O'Hara and Stagl (2001: 545) argue that CSA has the potential to create more "resilient communities and regions [by] ... providing a vehicle for re-connecting and re-embedding food markets into their physical/spatial, social and ethical context."

Together these studies present several common themes that illustrate CSA's community building potential. All of the scholars suggest that CSA builds community by providing opportunities for social interaction that can foster the creation of "stronger human connections," (Kittredge 1996: 254) such as connections between people and place, broad social connections and networks, and connections among producers, among consumers, and between producers and consumers (Kloppenburger 1996; Lyson 2005; Sharp et al. 2002; O'Hara and Stagl 2001; Wells et al. 1999). Other common themes described by the scholars that capture CSA's community building potential include enhanced local economies, diverse forms of education, support for low-income households, and better care and protection for the environment.

While these scholars suggest that CSA builds community through various means, other empirical studies have produced mixed results about CSA's ability to forge the bonds of community. The following section will discuss the range of perspectives that fall in the middle of the spectrum in relation to the role of community in CSA. The section includes farmers' and members' perspectives and how different CSA organizational structures enhance or minimize the role of community in CSA.

Mixed Perspectives about CSA's Community Building Potential

While the notions of civic agriculture and foodsheds, as well as a handful of case studies support the hypothesis that CSA can and does build community, other empirical research has produced mixed results about the role of community in CSA. Research conducted by Cone and Kakaliouras (1995) and Cone and Myhre (2000) questioned if CSA was building moral community or an alternative consumer choice. Ostrom (1997), O'Hara and Stagl (2000), DeLind (2004), and Russell and Zepeda (2008) also address the community building dimension of CSA. Surveys, interviews, focus groups, and participant observation allowed these researchers to assess the community aspects of CSA using a variety of social research methods. The bulk of the community building research focuses on members' perceptions and involvement, but farmers' perspectives and CSA structures are also pertinent to the discussion. The following review will discuss the role of community in CSA from the farmers' and members' perspectives as well as how various organizational structures are linked to and affect the community building potential of CSA.

CSA Farmers' Perspectives

Research shows that farmers participate in CSA programs for a variety of economic, environmental, and social reasons, but the extent to which each aspect is emphasized varies from farmer to farmer. Many rural Iowa farmers expressed a mix of economic, educational, and community reasons for participating in CSA (Wells et al. 1999). Farmers interviewed by Cone and Kakaliouras (1995) and Cone and Myhre (2000) saw their involvement in moral terms such that they were all committed to growing food sustainably and nurturing community and healthy soil. Engagement in nurturing community however, varied considerably. Oberholtzer found that “while most farmers interviewed enjoyed the social components of CSA (e.g., communicating with members, putting on farm festivals), only 3 farmers viewed community building as a key element of their farm” (2004: 10). The majority of these farmers indicated that the economic arrangement was a key reason for being involved in CSA (Oberholtzer 2004).

In contrast, only a few farmers interviewed by Ostrom (1997) saw CSA as strictly a marketing strategy. The small group of farmers with this perspective significantly reduced or eliminated their focus on the social and community aspects of CSA. Farmers interviewed by Ostrom (1997, 2007) discussed numerous reasons for participating in CSA. Farmers explained that they chose to participate because they saw CSA as a way to educate consumers and/or to focus on social justice within the food system (Ostrom 1997, 2007). Other farmers described CSA as a way of life and/or as a means through which to frame their identity in conjunction with other alternative lifestyles and social movements (Ostrom 1997, 2007). Environmental conservation and land ethics were uniting themes among many CSA farmers across the country. The majority of farmers in these studies

emphasized the importance of protecting the environment through low-input and/or organic agricultural practices (Oberholtzer 2004; Ostrom 1997, 2007; Cone and Kakaliouras 1995; Cone and Myhre 2000; Lass et al. 2003).

The social dynamic between farmers and members is a challenging aspect of CSA. Ostrom (2007) explains that unlike the original CSA farms, the majority of CSA programs are started and sustained by farmers. She goes on to say that while these farmers are completely invested in the success of their farm, they have encountered difficulty finding equally committed members (Ostrom 2007). Farmers in this situation express frustration with CSA member involvement, lack of understanding about the underlying tenets of CSA, and high turn-over rates (Ostrom 1997, 2007). Other farmers, Ostrom (1997, 2007) explains, have had more success in actively engaging their members. These farmers require members to help in various capacities including attending a meeting, helping on a harvest day, or delivering vegetables (Ostrom 1997, 2007).

While farmer-member relations and member-member relations (as will be discussed) appear to pose challenges in many CSA programs, studies in the Upper Midwest show that networks and social relations are being built between producers. Cone and Kakaliouras (1995: 29) suggest that “[farmers] are rapidly building community among themselves.” Ostrom (1997, 2007) discuss the creation of the Madison Area CSA Coalition (MACSAC), a coalition of farmers and other supporting activists designed to foster collaboration and support for CSA programs and farmers.

CSA Members' Perspectives on Community and Engagement in CSA

Numerous studies have been conducted to understand why members choose to join and participate in CSA programs. Diverse research methods tend to produce and/or highlight different and sometimes contradictory results. Surveys about members' motivations for joining CSA programs have produced consistently similar results. Table 4 is a compilation of survey results from Cone and Kakaliouras (1995), Cone and Myhre (2000), and O'Hara and Stagl (2000). The results suggest that the majority of members do not see the community aspects of CSA as their primary reason for participating. The top five motivating factors for joining a CSA include obtaining fresh produce, obtaining organic produce, concern for the environment, supporting local farmers, and supporting local food sources (Table 4). Similar results were also reported by Ostrom (1997, 2007), Laird (1995), and Kelvin (1994). Other high priorities include knowing where food is grown and eating vegetables in season (Table 4).

While building a community of farmers and members is a foundational concept of CSA, Table 4 illustrates that "sense of community" is not a primary concern among the majority of members (Cone and Kakaliouras 1995; Cone and Myhre 2000; O'Hara and Stagl 2000). Ostrom (1997) reported similar results indicating that "community" and "desire to learn about agriculture" were not high priorities for members. Column one in Table 4 shows members' interest in community ranked 10th; column two shows that only 35 % of members thought community was extremely and/or very important and column three indicates that "sense of community" was seen as much less important as a motivating factor compared to other aspects of CSA.

Table 4. Members' Reasons for Participating in CSA

<u>Ranking of members interests in their CSA farm¹</u>		<u>Members' reasons for belonging to a CSA—extremely important or very important²</u>		<u>Motivation for becoming a member³</u>	
		%		Mean	
1.	Organic produce	Concern for the environment	92	Fresh vegetables	1.23
2.	Fresh produce	Source of organic produce	91	Organic vegetables	1.29
3.	Concern for the environment	Source of fresh produce	90	Support for local farmers	1.33
4.	Supporting local food sources	Support for local food sources	86	Concern for the Environment	1.39
5.	Supporting small farmers	Known where food is grown	80	Eating vegetables in season	1.64
6.	Know how and where food is grown	Desire to eat vegetables in season	80	Reduced packaging	1.72
7.	Desire to eat vegetables in season	Health Reasons	73	Knowing where food comes from	1.87
8.	Desire to reduce packaging	Support for small farmer	72	Health reasons	1.92
9.	Health reasons	Desire to reduce packaging	65	Knowing how vegetables are grown	2.25
10.	Sense of community	Sense of community	35	Know about a biodynamic farm	2.47
11.	Opportunity to connect with a piece of land	Price	33	Strong sense of community	2.64
12.	Price	Opportunity to attend festivals and events	11	Price of vegetables	2.66
13.	Unusual produce varieties			Share risk with farmer	2.74
14.	Place to bring your children			Know how to grow vegetables	3.05
15.	Opportunity to attend festivals and events			Take children to the farm	3.23
16.	Opportunity to be around animals			Work at the farm	3.31

¹Adapted from Cone and Kakaliouras (1995); ²Adapted from Cone and Myhre (2000); ³Adapted from O'Hara and Stagl (2000), means calculated from the following choices 1=very important, 2=important, 3=indifferent, 4=unimportant, and 5=very unimportant

While many of CSA's social aspects (i.e., community, a place to bring children, and participation in farm events) were ranked as low priorities, other survey questions and research methods presented a different picture. Ostrom (1997: 93) conveyed this idea:

Many people wrote comments on their surveys stressing that they did not join a farm looking for social and educational opportunities. They emphasized they did not need new social opportunities. To view these results in isolation, however would be misleading because in other contexts it is the social connections formed through CSA that many people hold up as one of the greatest benefits of participation.

Other survey results show that members were interested in participating in the social and community aspects of their CSA program (see, e.g., Cone and Kakaliouras 1995; Cone and Myhre 2000). Over half of CSA members had visited their respective farms and expressed interest in volunteering; three-fourths of those surveyed indicated that they would attend harvest festivals, potlucks, and field days (Cone and Kakaliouras 1995). During in-depth interviews, members expressed four main reasons for participating: "a source of healthy food, support for the local farmer, land stewardship, and belonging to a community" (Cone and Myhre 2000: 193). These results show a more extensive range of participation motivations and interests than basic survey questions imply.

During focus groups conducted by Ostrom (1997), members discussed more holistic perspectives about their involvement with their CSA program. Discussions revealed that members were "interested in building connections to the land, to the source of their food and to a small, local farm" (Ostrom 1997: 94). Education was also a prominent idea with members talking about the importance of teaching children where food comes from. Members indicated their participation was in response to their

“dissatisfaction with the existing food and agricultural system, ranging from its industrialization and large scale to environmental and farm crises” (Ostrom 1997: 96). Members also suggested “that CSA helped to strengthen local communities [and] build local connections between growers, eaters, and the land” (Ostrom 1997: 99 –100). Ostrom goes on to explain that “building local ‘connections’ came up repeatedly...[and that CSA] was considered important to strengthening local communities” (1997: 99–100).

Another way researchers have assessed members’ interest in the community building aspect of CSA is through analyzing member participation. Cone and Myhre (2000) categorized member participation as low, moderate, and high. Similarly, Ostrom (1997) created the customer, cheerleader, and partner membership designations. Members engaged at the low or the customer participation levels were minimally engaged in the CSA operation. Their role was to provide a check at the beginning of the season in exchange for locally grown produce throughout the growing season (Cone and Myhre 2000; Ostrom 1997). The customer label indicates that members saw the arrangement in business terms where they felt they were purchasing a service or a product (Ostrom 1997).

Members participating at a moderate or cheerleader level engaged in their CSA program in relatively different ways. Moderate members, as explained by Cone and Myhre (2000), are engaged participants assisting at least twice throughout the year with various activities including harvest days, farm events, or committee work. In contrast, cheerleaders are not actively involved but they read the newsletters, engage in getting to know the farmer, and attend farm festivals when possible (Ostrom 1997). The

cheerleaders believe in CSA's foundational goals, believe CSA contributes to a larger cause, and feel they benefit both socially and educationally (Ostrom 1997).

High participation is similar to moderate participation but entails visiting the farm three or more times and assisting in various farm and organizational logistics (Cone and Myhre 2000). The small number of members interviewed by Ostrom (1997) that assumed a partnership role actively participated in organizing drop off sites, volunteering at the farm, and participating in a core group. A partner, Ostrom explains (1997: 112) "took personal ownership...actively working to reduce the burden of the farmers and working...to ensure the successful operation of the community farm organization."

Another way Cone and Myhre (2000:194) assessed members' connections to their farm was through coding interview comments that suggested a member's "deeper engagement in issues of civic responsibility and spirituality relative to farm membership." The results of the study indicate that:

Members who participated more extensively...found [that] membership provided an avenue for civic responsibility and enhanced their feelings of connectedness to the land and the generative quality of nature. The farmers became extensions of the shareholder's ideal life...The life of the farm family became part of their own life narrative and heightened their sense of moral and spiritual well-being (Cone and Myhre 2000:196).

While active participation appears to enhance a member's quality of life and is linked to the level of community present in a CSA program, half of the members interviewed by Cone and Myhre (2000) participated at the basic/low engagement level.

Cone and Myhre (2000) draw significant and widely cited conclusions about members' ability to foster community in CSA. They suggest that despite low survey rankings for the importance of community, that fact that members modify their lifestyles, change their eating habits, and renew their membership, indicates that CSA programs can

succeed in creating a “community of common interest” (Cone and Myhre 2000: 196; also see Russell and Zepeda 2008). But they suggest that when labor and capital are scarce “community must be one of relationship, not merely interest” (Cone and Myhre 2000: 196). Additionally, they conclude that “for some, if not most [community] seemed to be an expression of longing, a nostalgia for the imagined social bonds of our rural past – a kind of community that is difficult for CSA members to realize, given the demands and constraints of their lives” (Cone and Myhre 2000: 196).

This section illustrates that members’ perspectives on CSA’s community-building potential is better illustrated through in-depth interviews and focus groups rather than brief survey questions. Additionally, the role of community in CSA is linked to the extent that members actively engaged in their CSA organization. Active member participation is also influenced by the different types of CSA organizational structures. Therefore, in the following section, I explore how different CSA organizational structures affect member involvement.

CSA Organizational Structures and the Role of Community

The CSA literature suggests that the extent to which community exists in CSA is linked not only to the farmers’ emphasis and members’ perspectives and level of participation but also to the farm’s organizational structure. The original CSA programs referred to by Ostrom (1997, 2007) as the “classical model” and by Adam (2006) as “shareholder CSA” have the strongest community connotations because of the social emphasis of the organizational structure. The “classical CSA model” emphasizes community building by focusing on member participation, development of a strong core group, democratic decision making, budgets worked out jointly, member involvement in

acquiring land, and reliance on volunteer labor for field and organizational logistics (Ostrom 1997).

The classical model's foundational principles ultimately require actively engaged members. As a result, the level of community associated with CSA is frequently discussed in relation to and measured by the extent to which members are actively engaged. Lass et al. (2003: 15) explain that "CSA farms were conceived to be community farms and part of the community's role was to support and help the grower, beyond paying the price of membership." Similarly, Cone and Kakaliouras (1995: 29) state that member participation is critical because "farmers cannot manage on their own the entire operation of farming and building relationships with and among members." Ostrom (1997: 185) also supports this idea suggesting that no matter what CSA model is employed "the farms who have succeeded in engendering a spirit of camaraderie and cooperation [community] among members revealed a common thread: they all asked their members to work on the farm or contribute in other ways."

Cone and Myhre (2000) further illustrate the idea that community is measured by the extent to which an active membership base exists. On the low end of the community engagement scale they discuss member participation in the largest CSA farm in their study. The farm, they explain, has: "an informal core of supporters who acted in an advisory capacity and held one or two farm events a year" (Cone and Myhre 2000: 190). Additionally, farmers were present at the pick-up to help foster producer-consumer relationships. On the opposite end, the farm with the highest level of community engagement had an oversight committee who assisted a formal core group involved in budgeting and other logistics. Moreover, members were required to volunteer one day

throughout the season and numerous events were held throughout the year (Cone and Myhre 2000). In their concluding remarks they reiterate this concept: “participation was essential to building the necessary community of relationships” (Cone and Myhre 2000: 196).

The formation and establishment of a core group is a critical aspect of the “classical CSA model.” As illustrated above the presence of a core group is linked with the CSA’s community-building potential. The core group appears to emerge in one of two ways. If the CSA is started by a group of consumers, as was the case with the Great Barrington Farm, that group naturally assumes the role of the core group. If the CSA is started by a farmer or group of farmers, as is the case with the majority of CSA farms, the core group is “generally comprised of the small subset of a farm membership that not only understands and concurs with the underlying principles of CSA, but also has the time available for doing volunteer work” (Ostrom 1997: 189). Core group members are active participants in the CSA operation tasked with “planning and budgeting, organizing volunteer labor and farm festivals, and preparing newsletters” (Cone and Kakaliouras 1995: 29; Ostrom 1997, 2007; also see Lass et al. 2003). The core group is therefore responsible for forming the community core and arranging many aspects of the program associated with community building, such as farm festivals, volunteer workers, and writing newsletters.

While the founders of the “classical CSA model” had great visions, those working to provide alternatives to modern production and consumption practices encountered both social and economic challenges. As discussed in Chapter 2, the social and community aspects of the classical model—building member relationships, democratic decision

making, active member participation, strong functioning core groups, and building social capital—presented significant challenges (Ostrom 1997, 2007). The national survey results support these conclusions in part, reporting that 72 percent of respondents did not have a core group (Lass et al. 2003).

Numerous studies suggest that on some farms the economics of CSA have not worked out as originally envisioned. Research indicates that in general CSA farmers and farm workers are not being fairly compensated for their work and often farmer salaries are not being factored into operating expenses (Oberholtzer 2004; Strohlic and Shelly 2004; Lass and Sunneh 1997; Ostrom 2007). Studies have concluded that share prices should be increased substantially to provide a better return for farmers (Tegtmeir and Duffy 2005). Lass and Sanneh (1997) suggest that the “average share prices would need to be raised by at least \$120 to account for their wages” (See Oberholtzer 2004: 11). As a result of both the social and economic challenges faced by CSA organizers, the role of community in CSA has been called into question. These challenges led Ostrom (1997: ii, see also 2007) to conclude that on many farms “the ‘community’ in CSA never materialized leaving farmers overworked, underpaid, and demoralized.” Additional concerns and critiques about the role of community in CSA will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

In response to the challenges presented by the “classical CSA model” and for a variety of other reasons many diverse forms of CSA have evolved. As a result of structural changes, the role and emphasis on community building has inevitably changed. Ostrom (1997) describes the development of the “managerial model” and the “non-profit model.” McFadden and Groh (1997) discuss: congregation supported agriculture,

corporation supported agriculture, college or school supported agriculture, community supported composting, tax supported farms, and CSAs involving low-income or homeless people and food banks (see Chapter 2).

In the “managerial CSA model” farmers take full responsibility of the operation from vegetable production, distribution, to any and all social organizing logistics (Ostrom 1997, 2007). The focus of the CSA centers on production of high quality produce supplemented with educational newsletters, recipes, and a few farm events (Ostrom 1997, 2007). This model in many instances has reduced and/or removed many of the traditional community-building and community-dependent aspects emphasized in the “classical CSA model” including an active membership base, democratic decision making, and the formation of a core group.

The “non-profit CSA model” is a creative way producers and consumers have organized to achieve the diverse tenets of CSA and to combat CSA’s social and economic challenges. These programs garner additional support by building broad networks, resulting in additional financial and social support. The Holcomb Farm CSA organized in 1993 by the Hartford Food System (HFS) is an example of a non-profit CSA that works to help low-income households (Winne 2008). The CSA started with 5 acres, 35 shareholders, and 5 non-profit community organizations and has since expanded to include 25 acres, 300 shareholders, and 11 community organizations (Winne 2008). The mission of the HFS is to “work on social justice and local food security issues, while influencing food policy” (Adam 2006: 4). The Holcomb Farm CSA plays an important role in helping the HFS accomplish their mission. Of the 150,000 pounds of diverse fruits and vegetables grown by their farmer and group of college interns, roughly 35 percent is

distributed to low-income Hartford residents (Winne 2008). The bottom line is covered through shares sold at market price and HFS fundraising efforts (Winne 2008).

While the “classical CSA model” has specific community-building ideals built into its structure, the community-building potential of the additional CSA organizational structures have not been explored to any great extent. In many instances CSA’s community-building potential is restricted to discussion of the classical model. My study therefore explores different ways to evaluate CSA’s community-building potential, in light of the different CSA structures that have developed. Part of my interest in this study, is to explore the idea that CSA has not achieved its community-building goals but has instead become primarily a niche market for locally grown fruits and vegetables, a perspective discussed in the next section.

Critiques of the Role of Community in CSA

The numerous social and economic challenges associated with the “classical CSA model” and aspects of the “managerial model” have brought the role of community in CSA into question. DeLind (2004) in the article entitled “Considerably More Than Vegetables, a Lot Less Than Community” argues that in practice CSA has not been successful at achieving a community built on trust, responsibility, and mutual obligation. The community in CSA, DeLind (2004: 194) suggests, “exists more as a metaphor than as fact.” The following discussion outlines DeLind’s (2004) three main critiques of the social components of CSA including 1) the notion of shared commitment, 2) the idea of shared responsibility, and 3) and the role of community.

The argument against the actualization of shared commitment is first discussed in relation to the farmer. DeLind (2004) suggests that the majority of CSAs are now started

by farmers who see their operations as private enterprises and in certain instances do not want members to interfere with their business affairs. DeLind (2004: 197) indicates that trade journals are teaching farmers “how to price community” concluding that “market economics are being superimposed upon what are claimed to be deeply cooperative relationships.” The commitment on the part of the members is also brought into question. DeLind (2004) argues that members lack commitment because they only have to commit for a growing season, because they show little interest in the community-building aspect of CSA, and are either unwilling and/or unable to assist with organizational activities.

The problems associated with member commitment feed directly into the lack of shared responsibility. DeLind, (2004) suggests that CSA falls short of attaining shared responsibility for numerous reasons. First, members’ seasonal commitments have resulted in high turn-over rates leaving the farmer(s) to carry the weight of running the operation. DeLind explains: “Most often, it is the CSA farmer who absorbs the workload and subsidizes the operation with her health, her family, and her off-farm income, a situation that encourages burnout and labor exploitation” (DeLind 2004: 200). As mentioned above, Ostrom (1997: ii) drew a similar conclusion suggesting that on many farms “the ‘community’ in CSA never materialized leaving farmers overworked, underpaid, and demoralized.”

Second and associated with the idea of shared responsibility, DeLind (2004) argues that the idea of “shared risk” has been all but eliminated from member agreements because CSA has transformed into a form of commerce rather than a true community endeavor. DeLind (2004) suggests that farmers cater to their members by purchasing additional produce to make up for poor harvests, bake cookies, serve tea, and provide

value-added products such as garlic braids and edible flowers to enhance weekly shares. Other accommodations DeLind (2004) suggests are indicative of the “commoditization” of CSA include providing newsletters and recipes, developing various “share” types, the use of credit cards for payment options, and incorporating additional items such as meat, eggs, and berries.

Finally, as a result of the lack of shared commitment and shared responsibility DeLind (2004: 196) concludes that: “CSA in the greater majority of cases, represents little more than an excellent source of locally raised, organic produce, a source that provides at least partial employment for a small farmer and a niche market for an active green consumer.” DeLind goes on to suggest that “a share in a CSA equates more closely to the price one pays for vegetables than it does to an investment of conscience in a farm, a landscape, a way of living and consuming, or a deliberate campaign to reform the food system” (2004: 200).

The last social component of CSA critiqued by DeLind (2004) is the role of community. The critical assessment of community is similar to and builds from the problems associated with the notion of shared commitment and shared responsibility previously discussed. DeLind (2004: 201) states that while the majority of CSA members are socially and politically active; ultimately they are “interested in their own, highly fragmented time schedules and for their own private, not collective, purposes.” She suggests that members view the farm as a theme park, where they can bring their kids to “pet the corn” and have a picnic. The notion of community in CSA, DeLind argues is “socially and experientially quite hollow” (2004: 203). Not only is the notion of community hollow, she suggests community in CSA is a myth: “...the myth of

community as a dense and enduring set of interpersonal relationships, fitted to time and place that represents the collective will and serves and protects the collective needs of its members” (DeLind 2004: 201).

Summary

The literature discussed above shows the different perspectives about the role of community in CSA. Kittredge (1996), Kloppenburg et al. (1996), Lyson (2004, 2005), O’Hara and Stagl (2001), Sharp et al. (2002); and Wells et al. (1999) argue that CSA and other alternative agriculture arrangements build community by providing opportunities for social interaction that can foster social bonds among producers, among producers and consumers, and between consumers. These bonds, Sharp et al. (2002) indicate, have the potential to build social capital. Other community-building themes described by these scholars include enhanced local economies, diverse forms of education, support for low-income households, and better care and protection for the environment.

In-depth empirical research on CSA has produced mixed results about CSA’s community-building potential. Results suggest that farmers have had varying levels of success building social bonds. While producer bonds and networks are forming, producer-member and member relationships are extremely variable and often tenuous. Survey questions asking members about their motivations for participating indicate that the majority of members are not joining CSA programs for reasons associated with community. In contrast, other research methods and survey questions illustrate that the social and community aspects play an important role in CSA. After in-depth analysis of members’ perspectives and levels of engagement in CSA, Cone and Myhre (2000)

conclude that CSA has succeeded in forming a community of interest, but to function properly CSA requires community built on relationships.

The “classical model” has the strongest community connotations, but many social and economic challenges associated with this model and CSA in general have called the role of community into question. The social dilemmas of CSA are frequently associated with members’ unwillingness or inability to fulfill the active participation requirements outline in the classical model. Numerous studies show that members engage in their CSA programs to varying degrees with members given low/moderate/high participation designations (Cone and Myhre 2000) or customer/cheerleader/partner labels (Ostrom 1997). Similar to economic challenges faced by farmers around the world, CSA farmers are frequently underpaid and/or unfairly compensated for their work, time, and effort. The social and economic challenges of CSA have resulted in the evolution of numerous CSA models. In these models the traditional community-building ideals associated with the classical model are not incorporated into the new structures.

Drawing from empirical research and personal experiences, DeLind (2004), Cone and Myhre (2000), and Ostrom (1997, 2007) equate (to varying degrees) many of CSA’s social and economic challenges to its inability to cultivate community. They suggest that CSA has not succeeded in creating the social bonds expressed by Kloppenburg et al. (1996), Lyson (2004, 2005), Wells et al. (1999), and Sharp et al. (2002). CSA, as frequently cited (see DeLind 2004; Grey 2000; Russell and Zepeda 2008), has not succeeded in creating “communities built on mutual relationships of rights and obligations, on reciprocity” (Cone and Myhre 2000: 196). Some scholars believe that the movement requires the formation of these deep communal relationships to ensure its

long-term success (Cone and Myhre 2000; Grey 2000; Ostrom 1997). In contrast, DeLind (2004: 203) concludes that the community rhetoric inhibits CSA's ability to achieve "a more decentralized and democratic food system"

The literature presents a significant debate about the role of community in CSA. In an article documenting her personal experience with CSA, DeLind (1999: 9) "invites conversation and sharing of 'lessons learned' across other contexts of personal negotiations and community building." This statement is a clear invitation for others to join the discussion about the role of community and community building in CSA. I accept this invitation and seek to contribute to the ongoing discussions/debates about the 'community' aspects of CSA. Before engaging these discussions, it is important to consider different sociological conceptualizations of community which I argue, can shed new on CSA discussions. Engaging this literature provides another way of assessing the community-building potential of the various CSA models.

The next chapter will present different and applicable perspectives of community from the sociological literature. These perspectives will provide a framework through which the concept and role of community in CSA can be expanded. Specifically, I ask: Can the role of community be reconceptualized or broadened to revitalize its meaning and purpose in CSA? To answer this question, my study draws on the sociological literature on community to explore different ways to evaluate CSA's community-building potential. In the following chapter I present an original multidimensional framework useful for an expanded evaluation of CSA's community building potential. I designed the framework to focus primarily on CSAs with unique organizational structures. In Chapter 6, I apply the framework to the case of the WSU Organic Farm CSA Program.

Chapter Four

Building a Community Framework

As explained in Chapter 3 the community building aspects of CSA are intricately tied to the structure of the “classical CSA model.” The general premise is that social bonds will form between and among producers and consumers through active member participation. Ostrom explains that community in CSA “suggests that farm members should form a dense web of relationships and commitments to one another” (1997: 184). Through this process it is believed that CSA can create a community built on bonds of trust, responsibility, partnership, collaboration, and mutual and shared interests (DeLind 2004). Consequently, members and farmers will “establish an obligation to the land, to each other, to local food security, and to a wider community grounded in place” (DeLind 2004: 195).

The literature reviewed in Chapter 3 suggests the community envisioned by the “classical CSA model” turned out to be, in the majority of cases, an unattainable idealistic form of community. Cone and Myhre (2000) suggest that constraints of modern day lifestyles have inhibited the majority of members from actively participating in CSA activities. As a result DeLind (2004: 196) concludes that “CSA, in the great majority of cases, represents little more than an excellent source of locally raised, organic produce, a source that provides at least partial employment for the small farmer and a niche market for an active green consumer.”

These conclusions invoke numerous questions about the role of community in CSA. Is the notion of community in CSA meaningless? Without an active membership base can CSA still help build community and if so how? Are there other ways to frame

the community-building potential of CSA? To answer these questions I turn to the sociological literature on community. This literature encompasses numerous definitions, meanings, and theories of community. This diversity of perspectives about community provides a variety of ways to expand the assessment of CSA's community-building potential. The first section of this chapter therefore provides a brief overview of the different ways community has been conceptualized by sociologists. The second section merges similar community concepts into a multidimensional framework useful for a more extensive evaluation of CSA's community-building potential. The framework is then used in Chapter 6 to present my research findings from a case study of the Washington State University Organic Farm CSA Program.

Different Conceptualizations of Community

After reviewing a portion of the expansive literature on community, one quickly learns that there is not one universally accepted definition or theory of community. Bell and Newby (1972), Liepins (2000), and Reitzes and Reitzes (1992) provide historical accounts of scholarship conducted on definitions, meanings, and theories of community. Reitzes and Reitzes (1992) and Bell and Newby (1972) present an overview of classical theories of community. Both overviews give due recognition to Ferdinand Tönnies, the father of the theory of Community (*Gemeinschaft*) and Society (*Gesellschaft*). Community as described by Tönnies included social organization characterized by “common identification...a sense of communalism...long and rich social relations...shared experiences” and relationships containing elements of reciprocity comprised of both rights and obligations (Reitzes and Reitzes 1992: 16).

Both Bell and Newby's (1972) and Liepins' (2000) historical accounts of community research illustrate to varying degrees the breadth of scholarship on community. Traditional community studies sought to identify community's distinguishing attributes (Bell and Newby 1972). These studies frequently included typologies expressed in terms of a dichotomy such as Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. Liepins refers to these traditional community studies as "the structural-functional approach" (2000: 24). Other past approaches to community studies, discussed include "the ethnographic/essence approach, the minimalist approach, and the symbolic construction approach" (Liepins 2000: 24). In their more detailed account, Bell and Newby (1972) distinguish scholars who have studied community as an organization, as social networks, as a methodological approach to research, and from an ecological standpoint.

To illustrate the lack of consensus about the definition of community, Bell and Newby (1972) present George Hillary Jr.'s (1955) analysis of 94 definitions of community. While there is indeed a lack of consensus, the majority of definitions support the idea that community involves people engaged in social interaction, in a geographic area, with common ties (Hillary 1955; also see Bell and Newby 1972). Hillary's (1955) analysis also shows even stronger correlations between social interaction and common ties when location is removed, suggesting that community can exist where social interaction and common ties or bonds are present absent of place.

Consistent with Hillary's findings, Wilkinson (1991) focuses on social interaction as a key component of community. Wilkinson argues that for community to be present it must include "a locality, a local society, and a process of locally oriented actions" (1991:

2). While the importance of place is a contested aspect of community, Wilkinson argues that local territory or locality is an essential component and starting place for community research. Wilkinson defines local society as “the organization of social institutions and associations in the social life of the local population” (Wilkinson 1991: 27). Finally, building from social interaction, Wilkinson defines locally oriented actions as “a process of interrelated actions through which residents express their common interest in the local society” (1991: 2). These three elements form the basis of Wilkinson’s “interactional theory of community.”

Similar to Hillary (1955) and Wilkinson (1991), Flora and Flora agree that “human interaction is the foundation to all communities” (2000: 117). To further explain community they discuss three ways sociologists use the term community. First, community can refer to a place: “a location in which members of a group interact with one another.” Second, community can be explained by analyzing a social system: “the organizations or set of organizations through which a group of people meets its needs.” Finally, community is also used to describe “a shared sense of identity held by a group of people who may or may not share the same geographic space” (Flora and Flora 2000: 13-14). Thus, Flora and Flora (2000) suggest there are “communities of place” and “communities of interest.”

Given the diversity of ways community has been defined, discussed, and theorized, Walter (1997) and Liepins (2000) emphasize the need to continue to develop our understanding of community. They propose similar frameworks for evaluating community. Walter argues that community should be viewed as a multidimensional system composed of “people and organizations, consciousness, actions, and context

[dimensions that are] integrally related...forming the whole that is the community” (1997: 70). Similarly, Liepins argues that an enhanced community analysis will first examine “the contexts and people shaping the ‘community,’ and second, analy[ze] the meanings, practices, and spaces and structures which are interconnected in characterizing the material and cultural operation of such communities” (Liepins 2000: 23).

Considerable overlap exists between these two community frameworks including the need to assess context and people, actions and practices, and consciousness and meanings. These frameworks inform the multidimensional framework I describe in the next section.

In Walter’s explanation of the multidimensional components of community, she incorporates Selznick’s (1992) seven characteristics for determining levels of community. Selznick’s interpretation of community runs contrary to Wilkinson’s more classic theory of community previously mentioned. Selznick proposes that community exists inside “a framework of shared beliefs, interests, and commitments [that] unite a set of *varied* groups and activities” (1992: 358). Furthermore, he suggests that communities will emerge when there is “the opportunity for, the impulse toward, comprehensive interaction, commitment, and responsibility” (1992: 359). Ultimately, Selznick suggests that community can exist to varying degrees based on the presence of the following seven elements: historicity, identity, mutuality, plurality, autonomy, participation, and integration.

Building a Place-Based Community Framework

There are numerous debates about community among the scholars presented above. The importance and role of locality and place in community is one of the highly

debated topics. Hillary's (1955) analysis of 94 definitions of community supports the possibility for the formation of communities with or without ties to a geographic area. While Wilkinson (1991) argues for the importance of locality in community, much of the community literature reviewed suggests that both "communities of interest" and "communities of place" can and do exist (Bell and Newby 1972; Flora and Flora 2008; Liepins 2000). Recognizing the existence of this debate and that both place-based and interest communities exist, the focus of my framework is on building placed-based communities where shared interests and other components of community overlap with a physical locality.

Place-based communities, Liepins explains, are "indicative of a local scale of activity and a relatively bounded, place-based sense of connection" (2000: 32). Furthermore, Bryden (1994: 44) suggests that in placed-based communities "there is an assumption that shared interests overlap with physical localities. These place-based communities indicate the importance of a material, bio-physical space in which people build cultural and political practices and meanings" (as cited in Liepins 2000: 32). Similarly, Matless (1994: 77) explains that in place-based communities "relations are connected to the surrounding environment and...biophysical space is culturally layered through different discourses about 'landscapes,' watersheds' and 'open countryside'" (as cited in Liepins 2000: 32). Flora and Flora (2008) present a similar conceptualization of place-based communities. They explain that these communities possess a shared sense of place including "relationships with people, cultures, and the environment, both natural and built, associated with a particular area" (Flora and Flora 2008: 13). These

descriptions provide the overarching conceptualization of place-based communities for the multidimensional framework presented below.

To study the development of place-based communities, I have created a framework consisting of three broad dimensions based on multiple community concepts from the sociological literature on community. The framework is used to present my research findings (see Chapter 6). Drawing from Walter (1997), Liepins (2000), and many other community scholars, the first dimension centers on the “people and organizations” linked to the location or issue around which community is being defined. The second dimension focuses on the “actions and practices” and “spaces and structures” where community and community building can be maintained, developed and/or contested. The third and final dimension focuses on participants’ “consciousness and meanings” as they relate to shared interests, social connections, and place-based and/or environmental connections.

Community Framework Dimension 1: People and Organizations

In his analysis of 94 definitions of community, Hillary found that 69 definitions “are in accord that social interaction, area, and common ties are commonly found in community life” (1955: 118). Both Walter (1997) and Liepins (2000) emphasize the “people” component of community. “Initially, we must recognize ‘community’ as a social construct, one that is created (and enacted) by people. As a term indicating social collectivity and connection, ‘people’ therefore represent a core component of community” (Liepins 2000: 29). This dimension therefore focuses on the “people” component of community.

Community scholars refer to the people in a community in a variety of ways. Walter (1997) refers to those involved broadly as “people and organizations.” Wilkinson’s interactional theory of community defines the local society as a “comprehensive network of associations” (1991: 2) as well as the “organizations and associations of the local population” (1991: 27). Liepins (2000: 30) explains “people within a ‘community’ can be individually or collectively treated...in various categories such as ‘groups,’ ‘classes,’ and ‘networks.’” The network category Liepins (2000) suggests is an important designation because it illustrates that people can participate in numerous manifestations of community simultaneously. Recognizing the various ways “people” can be referred to in relation to community, I adopt Walter’s broad terminology “people and organizations” to capture all the ideas presented in this section.

In her description of the “people and organizations” dimension of community, Walter (1997) expands the traditional boundaries that often frame this aspect of community. She suggests that “by virtue of involvement in relationships with one another, every organization and every person at every level within both the horizontal and vertical dimension is potentially a part of community” (Walter 1997: 70). This idea runs contrary to Warren (1963), who suggests the “vertical dimension involves ‘the relation of local units to extracommunity systems’” (as cited in Walter 1997: 70). By broadening the boundaries of the “people and organizations” dimension, community includes “multiple stakeholders with diverse interests” (Walter 1997: 70) where relationships are present in both horizontal and vertical directions. While Walter’s conceptualization of community is more inclusive, she explains that “who and what are perceived to be inside or outside the

community, involves an ongoing process of negotiation. And different systems display different degrees of openness and closedness” (1997: 72).

Walter’s integration of horizontal and vertical ties suggests that people “closest to an issue in terms of experience” and those distantly related are all equally important to community (1997: 71). These relationships or social linkages can also be explained using the concept of bonding and bridging social capital. The concept of bonding and bridging social capital is introduced in this dimension of my framework but more applicable to consecutive dimensions. Bonding social capital similar to the horizontal ties, “consists of connections among individuals and groups with similar backgrounds...based principally on class, ethnicity, kinship, gender, or similar social characteristics” (Flora and Flora 2008: 125). Similar to the vertical ties, bridging social capital “connects diverse groups within the community to each other and to groups outside the community” (Flora and Flora 2008: 125). The presence of both bonding and bridging social capital, Flora and Flora suggest, results in “effective community action, or Entrepreneurial Social Infrastructure” (2008: 126), ideas that will be discussed in more detail in the second dimension of this framework.

These ideas bring in one final and fundamental component of this first dimension, Granovetter’s (1973) “strength of weak ties” theory. Briefly, he argues that strong ties can result in the formation of “isolated cliques” that lead to the break down of network structure and that “strong ties, breeding local cohesion, lead to overall fragmentation” (Granovetter 1973: 1378). He further suggests that “weak ties...are seen as indispensable to individuals’ opportunities and to their integration into communities” (Granovetter 1973: 1378). Wilkinson (1991) supports Granovetter’s theory claiming that one of the

problems faced by communities in rural America is the lack of weak ties and overabundance of strong ties.

I will examine this dimension in my research by presenting the different “people and organizations” involved with the WSU Organic Farm and CSA program. By using the components of this dimension as a guide, I will expand the boundaries to include both horizontal and vertical ties recognizing the involvement and roles of those closest to the program and those peripherally related. Presentation and analysis of the broad range of “people and organizations” opens up the opportunity for examination of the opportunities and presence of both bridging and bonding social capital as well as strong and weak ties.

Community Framework Dimension 2: Actions & Practices–Spaces & Structures

The second community framework dimension incorporates a variety of community concepts from the literature reviewed and builds on those previously discussed. First, this dimension merges “community action” and “practices of ‘community’” ideas presented by Walter (1997) and Liepins (2000) respectively. Second, this dimension includes Liepins’ “spaces and structures” community concept. Finally, through analysis of “actions and practices” and “spaces and structures” we can also include and evaluate Selznick’s (1992) participation element of community as well as the general idea that community results from people involved in social interaction with common ties (Flora and Flora 2008; Hillary 1955; Wilkinson 1991).

Community action is a widely discussed concept in the community literature. Walter explains that community action is “characterized by the power to, through activities and events involving people” (1997: 80). Similarly, Liepins suggests that another way we can evaluate community is through analyzing “the practices and

activities in which people participate...practices of community include the range of formal and informal ways people conduct their economic, social, and political life” (2000: 31). Both scholars suggest that community can be evaluated through analyzing the activities where people are engaged in community action and practices. This concept hereafter will be referred to as “actions and practices.”

Each scholar presents a list of activities that can be studied where conceptualizations of community emerge. Together these lists represent a wide range of activities that can be considered community “actions and practices” from the group level to individual actions. Walter suggests “community action can be relational, constructive, and/or expressive...including engagement in a broad range of group activities and events, such as the building a well, planting a garden, holding a meeting, marching or demonstrating, having a celebration, or participating in a ritual” (1997: 80). Comparably, examples of community practices include “the circulation of meanings and memories through newsletters and meetings; the exchange of goods and services at a local store or health clinic; the creation and maintenance of social groups and rituals; and the operation of local government boards” (Liepins 2000: 32).

Wilkinson (1991) and Flora and Flora (2008) also discuss community action. Wilkinson’s (1991: 2) interactional theory of community includes “a process of locality-oriented collective actions...interrelated actions through which residents express their common interest in the local society.” Wilkinson (1991: 38), quoting Warren (1978: 419), presents a similar list of activities that demonstrate community action including “extensive informal helping networks...the ad hoc development of coalitions for local purposes...or other group[s] with common bonds of interest, and in the personal bonds of

affection and sentiment that spring up among people in interaction even in the most formal settings.” Flora and Flora suggest that when both bridging and bonding social capital (as explained in the first dimension) exist, it results in “effective community action, or Entrepreneurial Social Infrastructure (ESI)” (2008: 126). Communities with high ESI, they explain “have certain basic features ... including legitimization of alternatives, inclusiveness and diversity of networks, and widespread resource mobilization” (2008: 132).

In addition to studying practices of ‘community’, Liepins (2008) also argues for the need to evaluate the “spaces and structures” where practices of community occur. These spaces are where the meanings, activities, and social relations that embody community are maintained or contested. Evaluating these “spaces and structures” includes analyzing both “the physical sites...where people gather in their practice of community” and the more symbolic spaces such as “the newsletters and meeting places which form the structure of communities of interest” (Liepins 2000: 32).

Analyzing “actions and practices” and “spaces and structures” provides insight into two other important and related community concepts: social interaction and participation. Flora and Flora (2008), Hillary (1955), Wilkinson (1991), and numerous other community scholars argue that social interaction is a key component of community. By studying people’s engagement in different activities and the location of these engagements, analysis of social interaction is possible. This analysis lends itself further to an accounting of different participation opportunities. Selznick suggests that “the more pathways provided for participation in diverse ways and touching on multiple interests...the richer the experience of community” (1992: 358). Building on the previous

dimension, by studying these components of community we also gain a better perspective of the presence of and opportunity for the development of both horizontal and vertical strong and weak ties and bridging and bonding social capital.

This dimension can be easily narrowed to focus solely on place-based communities. In working to build place-based communities, the “actions and practices” are centered on “local scale activity” (Liepins 2000). The “spaces and structures” analysis exhibits “the importance of material and bio-physical space” and the social interactions and participation opportunities result in “relations [that] are connected to the surrounding environment” (Matless 1994 as cited in Liepins 2000: 32).

I will examine this dimension by evaluating the “actions and practices” and “spaces and structures” associated with the WSU Organic Farm CSA Program. This analysis will provide an indication of the diverse opportunities for participation and social interaction as well as where horizontal and vertical strong and weak ties have the potential to exist. Finally, to address the overarching theme of building place-based communities, this dimension will recognize where locality plays a central role.

Community Framework Dimension 3: Consciousness and Meanings

Similar to the previous dimensions, the third and final dimension in my community framework brings together a variety of community concepts and continues to build on those previously discussed. This dimension emphasizes the need to understand the “consciousness and meanings” participants’ exhibit in relation to shared interests, social connections, and place-based and environmental connections. In addition to analyzing participants’ “consciousness and meanings,” I also elaborate on the role

autonomy plays in building community. Autonomy is one of Selznick's (1992) seven elements of community I find particularly useful for this particular framework.

Walter (1997: 71) explains that people involved in community fulfill a variety of roles which represent "different interests, experiences, levels of power, and perspectives," and ultimately reflect differences in consciousness. Consciousness, she claims, is what unites us in community and includes "the full spectrum of perceptions, cultural constructs, and frameworks" people use as they act and interact with one another and their environment (Walter 1997: 72). Selznick's inclusion of autonomy as an important element of community illustrates, I suggest, the need to recognize that communities are built and ultimately made up of "people and organizations" with diverse consciousness and meanings. He explains that community worth "is measured by the contribution it makes to the flourishing of unique and responsible persons...requiring both commitment and choice" (Selznick 1992: 363).

In a similar vein Liepins (2000) argues that to evaluate and recognize community we need to explore "the ways people discursively create sets of shared (and/or contested) meanings about their connections and identities" (2000: 31). She goes on to explain that through this analysis "we can ask how the term 'community' is used to represent and communicate meanings about widely held beliefs, shared interests, and some forms of social connections" (2000: 31). Furthermore, she suggests that community has power as a term when it is used to represent shared meanings. Merging Walter (1997) and Liepins (2000), in this dimension I call for an evaluation of "consciousness and meanings" as they relate to shared interests, social connections, and place-based and environmental connections.

Shared interests are a component of community discussed throughout the community literature. We see this idea used in the local society component of Wilkinson's interactional theory of community, where the local society consists of a "comprehensive network of associations for meeting common needs and expressing common interests" (1991: 2). The idea is further discussed in the explanation of the elemental bond: "The elemental bond occurs in social interactions, specifically interactions that embody and express mutual interests in the common life of a local population" (Wilkinson 1991: 14).

Selznick's (1992) explanation of community also includes numerous references to shared interests. He writes: "A group is a community to the extent that it encompasses a broad range of activities and interests...the main point here is that a framework of shared beliefs, interests, and commitments unites a set of varied groups and activities" (Selznick 1992: 358). The notion of shared interests is also included in Bryden's (1994: 44) explanation of placed-based communities "where there is an assumption that shared interests overlap with physical localities" (as cited in Liepins 2000: 32).

In addition to evaluating the "consciousness and meanings" of shared interests, I argue, similar to Liepins (2000), that we should explore the "consciousness and meanings" of social connections as an important indicator of community. Liepins (2000) explains that we derive value from the term when it represents meanings such as commonality and social connection. Drawing from Wright (1992: 205), Liepins also suggests that community in a post-rural era can be a "signifier of ideas about certain social relations, and at times this is more important than any lived relations or material demonstrations of community." This component of community analysis allows us to

evaluate the “consciousness and meanings” the “people and organizations” place on the social connections referred to previously as horizontal and vertical ties and bridging and bonding social capital.

The overarching theme of the proposed community framework is building place-based communities, thus the third dimension also addresses “consciousness and meaning” as it relates to place-based and/or environmental connections. As previously discussed, Liepins (2000) and Flora and Flora (2008) explain that place-based communities have a place-based sense of connection. Bryden (1994: 44) explains that “place-based communities indicate the importance of a material, bio-physical space in which people build cultural and political practices and meanings” (as cited in Liepins 2000: 32). And finally, Matless (1994 also see Liepins 2000) and Flora and Flora (2008) both indicate that place-based communities contain relationships that are connected to the both the natural and built environment.

I will examine this dimension by evaluating the “consciousness and meanings” participants of the WSU Organic Farm and CSA Program describe in relation to shared interests, social connections, and place-based and environmental connections. Additionally, I will identify where and why autonomy plays an important role in community building.

Summary

The brief literature review at the beginning of this section illustrated a variety of ways community has been conceptualized and studied by sociologists. Given the broad range of definitions, meanings, and theories, it becomes difficult to know which conceptualizations of community are most applicable to providing a useful analysis of the

role of community in CSA. Because of the extensive diversity of work in community studies I chose to work with the conceptualizations, definitions, and theories produced by several community scholars. Drawing from similarities found within their work, I created a multidimensional framework including three dimensions. The dimensions are designed to provide an expanded approach for evaluating CSA's community-building potential. In the first dimension, I suggest CSA's community building potential should be evaluated by expanding the boundaries around who is considered a part of the CSA to include those closest to the program and those peripherally related. In the second dimension, I argue for an evaluation of the "actions and practices—spaces and structures" associated with the CSA program where meanings and social displays indicative of community can be identified. Finally, in the third dimension, I argue that "consciousness and meanings" should be explored in relation to three components of community: 1) shared interests, 2) social connections, and 3) physical place-based and/or environmental connections.

Chapter Five

Research Methods and Data Analysis Procedures

My thesis draws on in-depth research and analysis of the Washington State University Organic Farm and Community Supported Agriculture Program. My research was reviewed and given an exempt status by the WSU Institutional Review Board. This chapter includes a brief history of the WSU Organic Farm and CSA program and an overview of my research methodology and data analysis procedures. For my study I used a variety of qualitative research techniques. First, I took on an opportunistic complete membership role (Adler and Adler 1987). Second, I conducted 24 semi-structured interviews using a grounded theory approach. Finally, I completed ten hours of formal participant observation. After completing my fieldwork, I coded and analyzed my research findings using the community framework constructed in Chapter 4.

A Brief History of the WSU Organic Farm and CSA Program

The CSA I analyzed is a component of Washington State University's Organic Farm. The three-acre organic farm is located in Pullman, Washington a mile and a half from campus, situated at the top of a gently south facing slope within the Horticulture and Landscape Architecture Department's 50-acre R.B Tukey Horticulture Orchard. The WSU Organic Farm was developed in conjunction with the nation's first organic agriculture undergraduate major to serve as a hands-on teaching farm for students (Stenberg 2008).

The organic agriculture undergraduate major was proposed in 2002 by WSU's Regents Professor of Soil Science John Reganold because of twelve straight years of 20 percent growth in organic agriculture production (Condor 2006). While creating the

organic agriculture major, Professor Reganold and soil science graduate student Kathi Colen-Peck envisioned an organic teaching farm to serve as an integral hands-on learning tool for students in the major. Their combined grant writing efforts brought in a total of \$25,000 from the Kellogg Foundation. The grants provided funds for a part-time assistant and the purchase of basic farm structures, tools, irrigation supplies, and seeds. Work on the farm began in 2003 and the first planting occurred in the summer of 2004 (WSU Organic Farm 2008b).

To link the organic agriculture major and teaching farm, the course Soils 480 (*Practicum in Organic Agriculture*) was established. To receive a degree in organic agriculture, students are required to complete six credit hours of field work at the farm. The practicum course started in 2004 and the nation's first organic agriculture major was approved for the fall of 2006 as part of a new undergraduate degree program in Agricultural and Food Systems (WSU Organic Farm 2008b). By the end of 2004 the farm's initial grant funds had been spent and future funding became a pressing concern. Community Supported Agriculture was proposed as an option to raise funds to help sustain the organic teaching farm. In 2005 an 80-member CSA program was established. As of 2008 the program had grown to include over 100 members.

Members of the WSU Organic Farm CSA program receive local, WSDA-certified organic produce for the 24-week growing season, extending from mid-May through October (WSU Organic Farm 2008a). Participants have two main participation options: full share members pay \$525 and receive produce estimated to feed 4–6 people for the week and half share members pay \$325 and receive produce estimated to feed 2–3 people for the week (WSU Organic Farm 2008a). There are a few positions available at the farm

for participants to join the CSA as workshare members. These members, instead of paying the up-front costs of their share at the beginning of the season, work on the farm 5 to 7 hours a week in exchange for their weekly produce.

Throughout the growing season harvest days and CSA member pick-ups are every Tuesday and Friday and members are divided equally between the two pick-up days. The Tuesday CSA pick-up is held in the parking lot of the Moscow, ID Food Co-op from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm. The Fridays CSA pick-up is held at the WSU Organic Farm in the Tukey Horticulture Orchard from 3 pm to 6 pm.

The WSU Organic Farm has a constantly changing and expanding work force to assist in growing over 40 different varieties of crops. The farm is run by a manager and assistant. In 2008 the farm hired a greenhouse manager for early season watering and an assistant field manager. Each season over a dozen students from Soils 480 provide a significant amount of labor required to operate the farm. Workshare members are a part of the farm's labor pool as well as a handful of volunteers from diverse backgrounds.

I selected the WSU Organic Farm and CSA program as a case study for a variety of reasons. First, I became very familiar with the farm through my involvement as a student. This aspect of my involvement is explained in more detail in the following section. Second, the farm's proximity and affiliation with WSU was extremely convenient. Finally, this case study captured a unique CSA structure that has not been studied in any great detail.

Complete-Member-Researchers (CMR)

Opportunistic complete-member-researchers (CMRs) are involved with and/or members of a group of interest before taking on a research role (Adler and Adler 1987).

Thus, I was an opportunistic complete-member-researcher because I was actively engaged in the WSU Organic Farm and CSA Program before choosing it as a case study. My role in the farm was not as a CSA member but rather as a student enrolled in the graduate counterpart of Soils 480. My official role as a student started in mid-May 2007 and extended through July 2007. I continued working on the farm volunteering one day a week until the end of the season in late October 2007.

As a complete-member-researcher, I related as a native, “sharing in a common set of experiences, feelings, and goals” (Adler and Adler 1987: 67). Through my complete membership role, I participated in the lecture component of the class and learned small-scale organic farming techniques with the rest of the students. I planted, weeded, and did other work with my fellow students and volunteers. We shared meals together and harvested and washed vegetables together on harvest days. Occasionally, I would assist with the CSA box preparations and hang out during the CSA pick-ups. Best of all, I enjoyed the fruits of our labor, cooking and sharing locally-grown meals. Douglas (1976: 229; as cited in Emerson 1981: 367) explains that “‘immersion in the natural situation’... provides the field worker with the rich ‘direct experience’ of everyday life that is the basis for reliable data.”

Formal Participant Observation

During my time as a complete-member-researcher, I also conducted ten hours of formal participant observation at the CSA pick-up sites. I completed eight hours at the organic farm CSA pick-up and two hours at the Moscow Food Co-op Tuesday Growers’ Market CSA pick-up. Formal participant observation consisted of observing and taking detailed field notes about the situation including descriptions of the surroundings, as well

as people's conversations, mannerisms, demeanor, and clothing. In this instance "data are obtained by observing interactions between group members rather than from researcher-member interactions" (Emerson 1981: 361). However, because of my complete-member-researcher role, I was often pulled from formal participant observation into active participation in the situation. This level of participation is becoming widely accepted "as a means for understanding critical social process in field situations" (Emerson 1981: 366). My participant observation field notes complemented my semi-structured interviews and supported emerging ideas.

Semi-Structured Participant Interviews

A large part of my research time was spent conducting semi-structured interviews with CSA members and Soils 480 students. My complete membership role gave me more credibility with members and students when planning and conducting interviews. Having worked in the field with the majority of students interviewed and by telling members I had been a student worker at the farm, I believe I created a certain level of trust that allowed for more open, honest, and insightful interviews. Of the 24 interviews completed, I interviewed 5 students (3 males and 2 females), 18 CSA members (9 males and 9 females), and the farm manager. Table 5 includes the socio-demographic characteristics of the interviewees excluding the farm manager. I randomly selected members to be interviewed from a list of all CSA members provided by the farm manager. I also asked members at the CSA pick-up sites if they would be willing to participate in interviews to discuss their thoughts about CSA. Student members were also randomly selected from the 2007 list of student participants. All participants were contacted via telephone to arrange an interview time and location.

Table 5. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Participants Interviewed from the Washington State University Organic Farm and CSA Program

	CSA Members	Students
Gender		
Male	9	3
Female	9	2
Age		
Average	41	23
Range	25-77	19-30
Highest Level of Education		
High School	-	-
Some College	-	4
Bachelor's	4	-
Master's	6	1
PhD	8	-
Household Structure		
Married w/ Children	8	-
Married w/out Children	3	1
Divorced	1	-
Single	6	4
Residence		
Pullman, WA	9	4
Moscow, ID	2	-
Colfax, WA	6	1
Palouse, WA	1	-

At the interview location participants signed a consent agreement and, in all instances, agreed to be tape recorded to ensure an accurate record of the interview. Interviews ranged from 45 to 120 minutes depending on the participant's availability and talkitiveness. The interviews were semi-structured in that I had a list of opened-ended questions about participants' roles and thoughts about their involvement in the CSA program. I used a slightly modified list of questions for the student interviews. The interview questionnaires for CSA members and students are included as Appendix A and

Appendix B, respectively. I conducted interviews in a way that let participants lead the discussion and used the list of questions to help keep the conversation going. This methodology is part of grounded theory strategies for qualitative research. Grounded theory “is the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research” (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 2).

Data Analysis Procedures

After I transcribed my field notes and tape recorded interviews, I coded my qualitative data. Coding is another part of grounded theory and has numerous purposes in qualitative research. Coding allows the researcher to begin to identify patterns, themes, and relevant aspects of the data (Richards 2005). Through the coding process categories start to emerge that provide an organizing framework for the data. As categories began to emerge from the data I also added new interview questions to explore certain ideas in more detail. Although I used grounded theory methods while conducting interviews and analyzing my data, I also used existing community theory to help frame my results (see Chapters 4 and 6). Therefore, I would describe my research and data analysis approach as a combination of grounded theory and applied community theory.

Throughout the research process I coded my qualitative data in numerous ways. Coding and categorizing became an iterative process where themes emerged from my research while also being influenced and informed by the community and CSA literatures. Categories that emerged while coding included a broad range of topics such as reasons for participating, meanings behind involvement, levels of engagement, CSA and social interaction, social networks, CSA and community, place-based and environmental connections, eating and cooking experiences, quality of life, CSA and local agriculture,

CSA and sustainability, and local knowledge and education opportunities. Categories also contained various subcategories. For example, subcategories under reasons for participating included: to obtain organic produce, to support local agriculture and local farmers, to support students' education, and to support an organic educational track.

After establishing my preliminary categories and subcategories for my qualitative data, I applied the multidimensional community framework presented in Chapter 4 to my data. To link my categories and subcategories to my three dimensions (“people and organizations,” “actions and practices–spaces and structures,” and “consciousness and meanings”), I went through additional rounds of coding. Employing the framework allowed me to connect my findings to the community literature.

Chapter Six

CSA in a New Community Framework

Chapter 3 illustrated that community building is intricately linked to the classical CSA model, the idea being that community forms as a result of active member participation. While a handful of CSA programs have been successful at forming a tight-knit community of shareholders and farmers, other programs have not succeeded in forming the social bonds envisioned by the classical model. Chapters 2 and 3 also explained the evolution of different types of CSA organizational structures such as the managerial and non-profit models (Ostrom 1997, 2007) and the subscription model (Adam 2006). Typically, these models do not stress active member participation and as a result the community building aspects of CSA in the majority of cases are restricted to the classical model. Oberholtzer explains: “because of...different ideologies and goals, CSA takes on many forms. The spectrum ranges from CSA farms that embrace the ‘community model’ and emphasize community building, to farms that use a subscription-based format and highlight the economic benefits of CSA for the farm operation” (2004: 4).

The “classical CSA model”, one could argue, aspires to create an idyllic, relatively closed CSA community through active member participation. While active member participation is one way CSA can build community, the framework presented in Chapter 4 was designed as a tool to provide an additional way to evaluate CSA’s community-building potential. I suggest that its greatest utility is in evaluating CSA organizations like the Magic Beanstalk CSA, the Holcomb Farm CSA programs, university programs, and others that have broad networks and links with numerous

“people and organizations.” My study applies the community framework created in Chapter 4 to research conducted on the CSA program offered by WSU’s Organic Farm.

Using the multidimensional framework this chapter presents the results of my research. The overarching theme woven throughout my research focuses on CSA’s contribution to building place-based communities. The first dimension proposes that CSA’s community-building potential can in part be evaluated based on the diversity of “people and organizations” affiliated with the program. Similar to Walter (1997), this study calls for an expansion of the boundaries around who is considered part of the CSA community. The second community dimension evaluates the “actions and practices–spaces and structures” associated with CSA that provide for different “conceptualizations and readings of community” (Liepins 2000). Finally, the third dimension evaluates participants’ “consciousness and meanings” as they relate to three components of community: 1) shared interests, 2) social connections, 3) place-based and environmental connections.

Community Framework Dimension 1: People and Organizations

As discussed in Chapter 4, the first dimension of the proposed community framework focuses on the diversity of “people and organizations” affiliated with the issue or locality around which community is being discussed. With expanded boundaries around what constitutes community, this dimension includes “people and organizations” with close as well as peripheral ties. Walter explains:

The people and organizations included in this new conceptualization of community represent multiple stakeholders with diverse interests...those closest to the issue in terms of experience may be seen as being local or intimately involved. Those farther removed who influence the issue or locality because they

control resources could be said to be more remote. But all are integral to community (1997: 71).

To link this theoretical concept to CSA, I argue that we need to expand the boundaries around who is considered part of the CSA community. While the classical CSA model expects members to provide all or the majority of support necessary to sustain the farming organization, other CSA models are pulling support from a variety of networks. The Magic Beanstalk CSA and the Hartford Food System / Holcomb Farm CSA highlighted in Chapter 3 are examples of CSA programs with broad support networks and enhanced capacities.

Using the WSU Organic Farm CSA Program as a case study, this community dimension highlights the “people and organizations” that create the broad networks associated with the organic farm and CSA program. CSA in the literature, in the majority of cases, is defined narrowly as the relationships among members and CSA farmers. With the onset of new CSA organizational structures, I argue that CSA should include the diversity of close and peripheral relationships that help sustain or are involved with local, organic, and biologically diverse agriculture. Figure 2 captures the diversity of “people and organizations” associated with the WSU Organic Farm’s CSA program. Below I describe these individuals and groups in more detail.

Washington State University

Washington State University provides the foundation on which the CSA program operates. The shaded boxes in Figure 2 and the following discussion illustrates the diverse support network provided by WSU. A considerable amount of support comes from departments, centers, and programs within the College of Agriculture, Human, and

Natural Resource Sciences (CAHNRS). The mission of the college is to:

Provide leadership in discovering, accessing, and disseminating knowledge through high quality research, instruction and extension programs that contribute to a safe and abundant food and fiber supply; promote well-being of individuals, families, and communities; enhance sustainability of agriculture and economic systems; and promote stewardship of natural and ecological systems (CAHNRS 2009)

Department of Crop and Soil Sciences

The Department of Crop and Soil Sciences (CSS) was instrumental in the establishment of the WSU Organic Farm and continues to play an integral role. The department's vision is to “serve the Land Grant tradition by offering nationally competitive undergraduate and graduate education programs, conducting fundamental and applied plant and soil research and extending the science of [the] disciplines to serve the public” (CSS 2009a). As explained in Chapter 5, CSS Regents Professor John Reganold and graduate student Kathi Colin-Peck spearheaded the effort to create the Organic Agriculture Major, organic farm, and Soils 480 (*Practicum in Organic Agriculture*), without which the WSU CSA program would not exist. As a key individual, Professor Reganold studies how different farming systems contribute to “soil health, crop yield and quality, financial performance, environmental quality, and social responsibility—indicators of agricultural sustainability” (CSS 2009b).

The WSU Organic Farm and Tukey Horticulture Orchard

As illustrated in Figure 2, the WSU Organic Farm brings together numerous “people and organizations” to support the production of fresh, locally grown, low-input organic agriculture, and the diverse tenets of CSA. While the WSU Organic Farm is a focal point within this dynamic system, it can be considered its own entity or

organization. As a teaching farm, it is “committed to education, research, and extension...with the primary goal to pass on the skills necessary to grow organic fruits and vegetables in an intensive small-scale environment” (WSU Organic Farm 2009).

In 2003, the vision of the organic teaching farm became a reality when a three-acre home was established within the Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture’s (H&LA) R.B. Tukey Horticulture Orchard. By contributing the land necessary to operate the organic farm and CSA program, the Department of H&LA and Tukey Horticulture Orchard, are key players in this dynamic system. Managed by Deb Pehrson, with assistance from Agriculture Research Technologist II, Wayne Shull, the orchard operations overlap significantly with the farm because of their shared space. While the organic teaching farm is located within the Tukey Horticulture Orchard, it is operated by the CSS department and managed by local farmer and Research Associate Brad Jaeckel (CSS 2009c).

Brad Jaeckel was originally hired as a part-time assistant “to help get the farm infrastructure established including building the first tool shed, building the first hoop house, figuring out how to lay out the farm, and the layout for the irrigation” (Interview 24). In the fall of 2004, Jaeckel was hired as farm manager and instructor of Soils 480 (*Practicum in Organic Agriculture*). Jewlee Sullivan, the first and only student to take the practicum course in 2004, continues to play a prominent role in farm. In 2005 and 2006 she held a part-time summer position and in 2007 she was hired as the full-time assistant farm manager for the length of the growing season (Interview 24). Together, Jaeckel and Sullivan hold the very important roles in any CSA program: the primary farmers.

Organic Farm CSA Shareholders

Table 4 in Chapter 5 reported the socio-demographics characteristics of the CSA members interviewed for this study. Members expressed a variety of individual, social, and environmental reasons for participating in the CSA program. Although several of these interests will be discussed in more detail in Dimension 3, the following quotes capture the broad range of members' interests and motivations. A married 40 year old male with two children expressed numerous reasons for participating:

It is great to get the fresh produce. It is organic. In this case it's not quite as much but ideally you're supporting local agriculture and local farmers. I like the idea that it is growing a new educational track. I mean we couldn't believe that last year Jewlee was the first person to get a degree in organic farming, we thought that was unbelievable so we like to help that grow. I guess those are sort of the main reasons and also it is a really good value (Interview 18).

The motivations expressed by this member were echoed throughout numerous interviews. Access to organic produce was one of the most frequently cited reasons for participating in the CSA program. A male in his 30s with two children spoke to this interest: "We want the organic produce. We like having organic produce as much as possible and we try to buy organic produce as often as we can afford it...because of all the pesticides and herbicides and everything else that is used on traditional business farming and agribusinesses" (Interview 5). While organic was highlighted as a primary reason for participating, some members suggested that supporting local agriculture and local farmers was even more important. A married 28 year old male graduate student spoke of this concern: "It's really important to me to eat local vegetables and local produce when it is available. The organic is a plus but I'm more concerned with locally produced than organic. I think it is important to support local farmers" (Interview 6).

Some members attributed their involvement to previous experiences with CSA organizations, while others were looking for ways to connect to a farm or garden without having to grow their own food. A married male member in his 50s explained: “My interest in it goes back to my previous experiences. [I was a professor at an agricultural university] and it had a very strong program in ecological agriculture and a friend of mine actually started a CSA” (Interview 16). A female graduate student in her late 20s spoke about her interests in being connected to gardening: “As a grad student I’m really busy and I wanted to have my own garden but I didn’t have time to take care of it. So, I decided it would be best to support the CSA and then I would have wonderful food and I wouldn’t have to take care of a garden” (Interview 4).

Members also discussed the high quality produce grown at the farm as another reason for participating. A married male member in his mid-30s with two children said the quality of the produce was his primary reason for participating:

We have been very dissatisfied with the quality of produce we get from the stores. We really have high hopes that a small operation, where people actually pay attention to what they do, may have a higher quality. By quality I mean taste not the look of it. When you go to the store the stuff looks great [but] you take a bite of it...it might as well be a cardboard piece. That is what we are looking for: the actual real taste of produce. That was the main factor (Interview 7).

One CSA member explained that her initial involvement with the farm was as a student. She explained that she was drawn to the class to learn how to garden: “I had always wanted to learn organic gardening and I thought...this is a great opportunity. So I had to take the class ... I had never been around a garden or farm ... I had never even heard of CSA before” (Interview 10). This member went on to explain that she took additional classes to get a feel for the whole life cycle of the farm. This interest was also expressed by another student/member participant: “Starting in February I think I’m

going to help in the greenhouse starting plants. I want to get the sense of the whole cycle” (Interview 6).

Similar to the CSA studies cited in Chapter 3, community was not a primary reason mentioned for joining the CSA. Although one married female member in her early 40s explained that one of the reasons her family participates is to be involved with the community:

It really does feel like being part of something ...when we have the form to fill out ... it is always a joint decision between my husband and I because our finances aren't flush ... but we weigh in not just that it is local and organic but that it is being involved in the community, both giving back and being plugged in for 24 weeks of the year. That's big and it's important (Interview 12).

Even though social connections and community were not explicitly mentioned as primary reasons for participating in CSA, this study seeks to illustrate the important roles of community, community building and social relationships in CSA.

The diversity of motivations for participating described by members of the WSU Organic Farm CSA program are similar to the findings from other CSA studies (Cone and Kakaliouras 1995; Cone and Myhre 2000; O'Hara and Stagl 2000; Ostrom 1997, 2007). The Members' Perspectives section in Chapter 3 and Table 3 illustrate these similarities. Regardless of their motivations and interests, CSA members play an integral role in this dynamic system. While the farm does experience member attrition, interest in the WSU Organic Farm CSA Program continues to increase. Member turnover is easily mitigated by the 75+ participant waiting list.

WSU's Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources

The WSU Organic Farm also receives resources from the WSU Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources (CSANR), another important WSU

organization within this dynamic system. When funding is available, support for the organic farm and CSA program comes from various programs within CSANR including the Small Farms and BIOAg (Biologically Intensive Agriculture and Organic Farming) programs. CSANR and its affiliated programs “lead efforts in sustainable agriculture—food and natural resource systems that are economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially responsible” (CSANR 2009). The Small Farms Program “provides research-based information and educational programs for farmers, consumers, decision-makers, and others involved in local food systems” (Small Farms Program 2009), while the BIOAg program works to build Washington agriculture through “research, education and outreach on organic and other biologically-based methods” (BIOAg 2009).

Organic Agriculture is another CSANR program applicable to this discussion. WSU is a leader in organic agriculture research for numerous reasons. This is illustrated by the university’s creation of the nation’s first organic agriculture undergraduate degree program and establishment of “certified organic land or organically managed land” at its research facilities throughout the state. The three-acre WSU Organic Farm, located in the Tukey Horticulture Orchard at the Pullman campus and designated as a BIOAg Learning Site and is included in CSANR’s register of WSU Organic Land.

Soils 480 – Students

Another crucial component of this dynamic system are the Soils 480 (*Practicum in Organic Agriculture*) students. Designed as a hands-on learning tool for organic agriculture majors, the organic farm attracts a wide variety of students. As one female student explains, student participants had “so many different backgrounds ... all of our majors were different. Older, younger, people with kids, people without kids. I thought

that was pretty cool” (Student Interview 4). While the organic agriculture major is the main conduit bringing students to the farm, Soils 480 and its graduate-level counterpart, Soils 502, attract students from all disciplines.

Students interviewed for this study and met while working on the farm include organic agriculture majors, but also soil science majors, both undergraduate and graduate students in anthropology, environmental science graduate students (myself included), hospitality majors, and non-traditional students both affiliated and not affiliated with a discipline or degree course. The following quotes represent the diverse interests that attract students to the farm. A female undergraduate anthropology student explained:

I wanted to try and connect anthropology issues ... I was looking at food and that led to organic agriculture and then to small-scale agriculture and working on the farm. I just took it as a class... I told the farmer that I wanted to see it from the start and worked in the greenhouses a little bit (Student Interview 4).

A female organic agriculture major described her interest:

My major is organic agriculture in the Agricultural and Food Systems program... I came to WSU because of that major...because it was the first in the nation and because I was interested in organic agriculture and sustainable methods of agriculture. It was sort of a no brainer (Student Interview 5).

A male undergraduate student explains what attracted him to the farm:

Eventually, my dream job is to open my own restaurant as local and sustainable as possible....I was hospitality through and through from the beginning but once I found out about the organic ag major I decided to pick that up too, so I could have the knowledge from field to table. So, I could understand, when I was working the restaurant what the chefs are going through. And when I work on farms I understand what the growers are going through too. So knowing the whole relationship, that is my goal (Interview 2).

Cultivating Success

Cultivating Success: Sustainable Small Farms and Education is another important organization affiliated with this dynamic system. Cultivating Success is a unique

educational program created as the result of a partnership between WSU, the University of Idaho, and Rural Roots. The goal of the program is to “create and implement educational programs to increase the number and foster the success of sustainable small acreage farmers and ranchers in Idaho and Washington” (Cultivating Success 2009). The program provides students, farmers, and community members the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of classes and on-farm learning experiences addressing agriculture entrepreneurship, sustainable food systems, and sustainable agricultural production (Cultivating Success Academic Brochure 2008).

One of the many opportunities offered through this program is the Practicum in Organic Agriculture course held at the WSU Organic Farm (Cultivating Success Academic Brochure 2008). Interested participants can take the course “individually for university credit and continuing educational units” (Cultivating Success Farmers and Community Member Brochure 2008) or as part of a program to receive a Certificate in Sustainable Small Acreage Farming and Ranching (Cultivating Success Academic Brochure 2008). Cultivating Success provides another way interested students, local residents, and farmers can get involved with the organic teaching farm.

Rural Roots

The Cultivating Success partner Rural Roots, a local non-profit organization, is another important yet somewhat peripheral player in this dynamic system. The Rural Roots mission “is to support and enhance sustainable and organic agriculture and local food networks in Idaho and the Inland Northwest” (Rural Roots 2009). Rural Roots supports the WSU Organic Farm and CSA program through its various media sources. First, the organic farm and CSA program can place advertisements in their local buying

guide *Fresh from the Field: A Guide to Locally Grown, Sustainably Produced Food and Farm Products from the Inland Northwest* (Rural Roots 2009b). Second, the Rural Roots website provides a location where the organic farm can post information about farm events and calls for CSA members. Rural Roots is an effective networking resource for those interested in local sustainably produced products.

The Palouse Food Project

The relationship between the WSU Organic Farm and Palouse Food Project started even before the CSA program was established (Interview 24). The Palouse Food Project (PFP) was created by the diverse WSU Team involved with the 2004 Washington Campus Compact's (WACC) Dialogue for Democracy (Weaver 2004). One of the Dialogue project goals was to "promote and convene locally-based partnerships to address education and community issues of common interest" (Weaver 2004: 3). Comprised of WSU faculty, staff, students, the Pullman School District's Assistant Superintendent, and representatives from GroundWorks, Koppel Farm, and the Community Action Center, the WSU Team's action plan was designed to "increase food security and nutrition for low-income residents through collaborative community-based education, practical gardening and food preparation projects, job skills training and economic opportunity development" (Weaver 2004: 18).

The WSU Organic Teaching Farm and CSA program assist the PFP's on-going efforts to serve low-income residents in a variety of ways. The following quote explains:

A lot of our members donate money toward a food bank share. So they might give \$10 extra dollars or \$20 extra on top of their share price. We put that toward a full share and usually get about one full share from that money. The community congregational church always donates enough money for one full share and then

there are other local businesses that will donate ... money toward a full share (Interview 24).

Shares raised through this effort are donated to the Community Action Center's (CAC) Food Bank with assistance from the WSU Center for Civic Engagement. The CAC mission is "to empower the people and communities of Whitman County to be self-sustaining [in part by] promoting cooperation between local communities to enhance social and economic resource development" (Community Action Center 2009). The Food Bank program of the CAC provides "emergency food assistance...to those who need access to nutritional food" (Community Action Center 2009).

The organic farm also donates leftover food to the Harvest House and Pullman Child Welfare respectively. The Harvest House is a non-profit organization "where adults living with serious and persistent mental illnesses come to work and socialize" (Harvest House 2009). The mission of Pullman Child Welfare is "to solicit private monetary donations, as well as donations of food and new and used clothing to meet the emergency needs of the low-income and indigent families in the Pullman School District" (Pullman Child Welfare 2009).

The farm is also involved with the PFP through its support and cooperation with the Pullman Community Gardens at Koppel Farm and Backyard Harvest. Koppel Farm "is a volunteer-run, non-profit organization committed to building a sense of community through preservation and enhancement of our natural, agricultural, and cultural heritage in Pullman and the Palouse" (Koppel Farm 2009). Backyard Harvest in conjunction with the Palouse Clearwater Environmental Institute's Community Food System Program works to connect "local gardeners to food banks and senior meal programs (Backyard Harvest 2009).

The Moscow Food Co-op

Finally, a dynamic and reciprocal relationship exists between the WSU Organic Farm and the Moscow Food Co-op. The Co-op's mission is to "build a strong dynamic, consumer owned natural food cooperative through the use of ethical and sustainable business practices" (Moscow Food Co-op 2008b). WSU's Organic Farm helps support the Co-op's mission by providing locally grown produce and the Co-op reciprocates by providing a place for locally grown food to be sold. The Co-op also assists the CSA program by providing a location for the Tuesday CSA pick-up.

Community Framework Dimension 2: The "Actions & Practices–Spaces & Structures" of CSA

As explained in Chapter 4, this framework dimension includes and merges a variety of community concepts. This dimension centers on the formal and informal "actions and practices–spaces and structures" affiliated with the WSU Organic Farm and CSA program wherein meaning, activities, and social displays of community can be read and traced. Analysis of both "actions and practices–spaces and structures" provides insight into Selznick's (1992) participation element of community and the general sentiment that suggests community consists of people engaged in social interaction with common ties. Building on the previous dimension, this analysis illustrates how "actions and practices" and diverse participation opportunities can lead to the creation, maintenance, and enhancement of "weak tie" relationships in both horizontal and vertical directions.

Table 6 captures a diverse array of formal and informal "actions and practices–spaces and structures" identified throughout my research. I discuss the majority of the

“actions and practices–spaces and structures” in more detail below. The table and following descriptions illustrate the diverse social interaction and participation opportunities associated with the organic farm. First, I present “actions and practices–spaces and structures” associated with working on the farm. Second, I analyze the two CSA member pick-ups. Third, I discuss activities held on the farm including the summer field day and resource fair and fall harvest celebration. Fourth, I discuss how additional farm sales can be considered community “actions and practices.” Fifth, I discuss how splitting shares and shared meals and cooking experiences can also be seen as community “actions and practices.” Finally, I briefly discuss potential future activities identified by participants.

Farm Work

Work on the WSU Organic Farm throughout the growing season is a labor intensive process. Diverse, dynamic, and reciprocal relationships exist between the farmers and those who choose to participate in the actual hands-on growing process at the farm. In the discussion of the “people and organizations” dimension, I explained the many channels that attract workers to the farm. In addition to the farm employees, the majority of farm workers are traditional and Cultivating Success students enrolled in Soils 480. A handful of workshare members and volunteers also work on the farm.

Group work on the farm occurs three days a week throughout the 12-week summer course. The lecture component of the course is held early Wednesday morning at the farm followed by various farm projects including weeding, planting, and pruning. Students are also required to assist with one harvest day per week. When unable to work their scheduled harvest day, students are required to find a substitute from a student and

Table 6. “Actions and Practices–Spaces and Structures” Associated with the WSU Organic Farm and CSA Program

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Actions and Practices</u>	<u>Spaces and Structures</u>
I. Organic Farming	a. Wednesday farm work b. Tuesday and Friday harvest day c. Tuesday and Friday group lunches	a. WSU Organic Farm b. WSU Organic Farm c. WSU Organic Farm work shed
II. CSA Member Pick-up	a. Member newsletter b. Tuesday CSA pick-up c. Friday CSA pick-up	a. Symbolic space b. Moscow Food Co-op c. WSU Organic Farm work shed
III. Palouse Food Project Donations	a. Community Action Center Food Bank b. Harvest House Contributions c. Pullman Child Welfare Center d. Backyard Harvest Contributions e. Community Gardens at Koppel Farm	a. Tuesday CSA pick-up b. Tuesday CSA pick-up c. Friday CSA pick-up d. Beginning of season e. Beginning of season
IV. WSU Organic Farm Events	a. Field Day and Resource Fair b. Harvest Celebration	a. WSU Organic Farm b. WSU Organic Farm and Tukey Horticulture Orchard
V. Additional Farm Sales	a. Campus farm stand b. Moscow Food Co-op	a. Pullman WSU Campus b. Moscow Food Co-op
VI. Others	a. Splitting shares b. Shared meals and cooking experiences	a. Homes, kitchens, offices, and pick-up sites b. Locations where cooking and eating occurs
VII. Possible Future Activities	a. Potlucks b. Workshops (cooking, canning, garlic braiding, gardening, etc)	a. WSU Organic Farm and other venues b. WSU Organic farm and other venues

volunteer contact list. The work done on the farm throughout the growing season can be understood as a community action or practice. As Walter (1997: 80) explains, community action can include “a broad range of group activities.” One example she provides is planting a garden. The “actions and practices” in this situation are the activities associated with learning how to and helping grow local organic food for CSA shareholders and local food banks. The WSU Organic Farm in the Horticulture and Landscape Architecture’s Tukey Orchard provides the physical “spaces and structures” where these “action and practice” take place.

The way students, workshare members, and student/members discussed their involvement and experiences working on the farm supports the idea that farm work can be considered a community action and practice. A 19 year old female undergraduate discussed how working on the farm is a group effort: “There is a lot of collaboration ...people on the farm relied on each other for information about what was going on in different parts of the farm...you had to have a really intense communication network within the farm” (Student Interview 5). In another part of the interview she explained the difference between her involvement with the farm compared to other classes:

With other classes it is all internal, even if you’re doing a group project ... it is all about you. But on the farm, in that kind of setting, it is about what can I do for these people, what is my contribution to the larger entity. It is not just about you and what you’re getting out of it, it is what are you are giving to the system (Student Interview 5).

The majority of people I spoke with who were active participants on the farm, especially students, discussed the social connections and relationships that developed from working on the farm. A 22 year old male undergraduate described how working on

the farm was a very engaging social activity full of opportunities for social networking and working with like-minded individuals:

I think the best part of [working on the farm] was the networking and the whole family type atmosphere you have with the workers and the other students out there. I liked that. Talking and communicating while you were weeding the green onions...learning from each other and networking...everyone was out there for similar reasons and just to talk with like-minded people about agriculture and what they wanted to do with their lives (Student Interview 2).

A female CSA member in her 30s, who had previously worked on the farm as a student recalled her farm experiences in a similar way. She described working on the farm as a social bonding experience. “I remember...working on the farm, myself and another student were out weeding in the garlic for like five hours...I didn’t even know this person but we got to know each other pretty well...I feel like that is some of the most valuable stuff that happens out there” (Interview 10).

Two members I spoke with mentioned being actively involved with growing food on the farm. One member was signed up as a student in the class while the other volunteered through the WSU Sustainability Club to help harvest for the campus farm stand. The student participant explained: “I really enjoy working out there...It has been really cool to be a part of producing my own food and producing healthy food for members of the community” (Interview 6). The volunteer stated: “this year I got a chance to go help out a little bit at the farm ... I feel like I’m doing something good by participating in our Tukey Farm. I feel part of the campus in a different way” (Interview 4).

These participant quotes show how working and being involved in the WSU Organic Farm can be considered, in Walter’s words, “the power to, through activities and events” (1997: 80). These participant “actions and practices” form the foundation that

allows for numerous other “actions and practices” of community to exist. Throughout these quotes we also see the formation of horizontal ties. Numerous participants spoke about getting to know like-minded individuals while working on the farm. Interviews with student participants also revealed the formation of vertical ties as well. A female undergraduate student in her early 20s mentioned getting connected with Rural Roots: “talking with the farm managers and working on the farm introduced me to certain credible small-scale sustainable agriculture sources like Rural Roots” (Student Interview 4).

One male graduate student explained that establishing both horizontal and vertical ties was one of his main reasons for participating:

That was part of my goal in last summer’s work. But at the same time I far surpassed my goal. I made loads of contacts, met a lot of people, [whom] not only did I find myself preferring to hang out with but it also helped my personal research goals and personal living goals. I go to the farmers markets on Saturday and I know a lot of the venders in a different sense than I did before ... So now I’m a little bit of an insider. So that is a wonderful thing because it is something that my wife and I value a lot. We see that as being a strong community (Student Interview 3).

As previously mentioned, engagement in farm work is the foundation for numerous other important community “actions and practices.” The analysis will now turn to the activities that surround the CSA member pick-ups.

CSA Member Pick-Up

CSA member pick-ups are every Tuesday and Friday and members are divided between the two pick-up days. The “spaces and structures” where the meanings, activities, and social displays of community can be identified are different for each pick-up site. The Tuesday CSA pick-up is held in the parking lot of the Moscow Food Co-op

in Moscow, ID, and the Friday CSA pick-up is held at the WSU Organic Farm in the Tukey Horticulture Orchard. Below I discuss in detail the pick-up sites and the associated activities that represent important community-building “actions and practices.” However, I first briefly discuss the CSA member newsletter, an important component of both pick-up days.

CSA Member Newsletter

The newsletter as Liepins (2000) explains is an example of a space where the “metaphorical embodiment of community” can be analyzed. The front of the *WSU Organic Standard* (the CSA newsletter) includes a message from the farmer and highlights a new student worker each week. The back of the newsletter includes a few recipes for the week’s produce, especially the more unusual items. A 77 year old member explained: “I liked the front of the newsletter ... the farmer wrote it to tell people what he was doing and how things were going and that really helped connect people to what’s going on on the farm” (Interview 13). Another female member in her 30s explained: “I like the little blurbs about the students that are featured. They always have to give a recipe or something they like” (Interview 1). A male student in his 30s explained: “the newsletter brings the CSA members together and allows for them to feel a sort of togetherness” (Student Interview 3). Numerous times in my participant observations at the farm, people would run back to the farm from their cars because they had forgotten the newsletter. Nothing captures the importance of the newsletter like the following excerpt from my field notes: “A male WSU professor arrived to pick up his full share, after loading up and leaving he returned and said my wife will divorce me if I forget the newsletter” (Field Notes 2008).

The Tuesday CSA Pick-up and Growers' Market

The Tuesday CSA pick-up is part of the Moscow Food Co-op's Tuesday Growers' Market. The Growers' Market started as an "idea inspired by a midweek market/parking lot party at a co-op in Lawrence, Kansas [and became] a destination where people could go to celebrate local fruits and vegetables" (Moscow Food Co-op 2008a). The following quote from my participant observation field notes capture the setting of the CSA pick-up at the Growers' Market:

I arrived to the WSU CSA table to find the farmer, his wife and two kids. Everything was set up and ready to go ... Sitting behind the table looking out, pumpkins lined the ground on the right side of the table, roughly 50 pumpkins made quite the jungle gym for the CSA members' and farmers children. The table in front of me had numerous items for sale or trade including carrots, tomatoes, garlic, onions, fingerling potatoes, salad mix, and kohlrabi. The table also held the bank box, weekly newsletter, and the annual CSA member survey. To the left of the table the blue CSA share boxes were organized into their respective piles: full shares and half shares. The shares closest to the table (half shares) made a perfect table for the scale. On the far left side of the boxes the CSA chalk board outlined the day's harvest and what was in each shareholder's blue box (Field Notes 2008).

The CSA members retrieving their shares at the Tuesday Growers' Market encounter a similar scene every Tuesday for the length of the growing season minus the pumpkins, of course. Next to the CSA pick-up, the west side of the co-op parking lot is full of other local farmers selling produce. When the weather is nice "the Tuesday Music Series and a barbeque [is] set up next to the growers to create a very homegrown, tasty experience for the market goer" (Moscow Food Co-op 2008a). The scene and activities of the Tuesday Growers' Market are reminiscent of what both Walter (1997) and Liepins (2000) suggest are the "actions and practices" of community. Walter (1997) suggests community action includes participation in a celebration or ritual and Liepins (2000: 32) in the informal "exchange of goods and services at a local store or clinic."

The following member quotes speak to the idea that participating in the Tuesday CSA pick-up is a community activity. A male member captures a general sentiment described by numerous members:

What is kind of fun is when we go to pick up the CSA there are so many people there. It is kind of a community experience. You see people and chat, people you know, friends and all that. It is kind of nice to hang out in the parking lot and chat It's nice with the music and serving food outside... We like the atmosphere around the Co-op because it's a community atmosphere.... They're tapping right into that (Interview 5).

A single female member in her 30s explained how picking up her produce on Tuesdays is ritualistic: "It became like this ritual, I got really excited. Every Tuesday I would go to the pick-up in Moscow, get my little bags together and go. It was always really exciting to open the box and see what was in it. It was always really fun" (Interview 10).

While the CSA pick-up for the majority of members is a communal experience – a social activity, a celebration, even a ritual, it is not the case for all of the members. A female member in her mid-30s with three kids explained that the pick-up was not a social activity where she felt comfortable:

I know the people are all really nice, but personally I just have a hard time talking to strangers ... It seem like there are a lot of people that already know each other or are somehow connected through other friends or working on the farm or something ... I don't think I need that as a community ... I don't feel like I need to be a part of any one particular group (Interview 3).

Even though the majority of members described the pick-up as an enjoyable positive experience, there were a few comments about the pick-up being stressful and inconvenient. A married female in her early 40s with two children explained:

That is probably the most stressful part of the whole deal ... I've forgotten at least one week out of each year and I get really ticked off because we are on a budget ... it is stressful that I have to remember and that I have to get everything at a certain time and parking isn't always easy (Interview 12).

Despite the grievances and discomfort with the CSA pick-up, in the majority of cases it is perceived as an activity that provides opportunities for CSA members, local farmers, and the general public to interact. It provides CSA members the opportunity to engage with their local farmers, to meet and talk with other CSA members and other friends, and to support the local co-op. A female CSA graduate student in her late 20s explained that by splitting a share with a friend and picking up at the Co-op she is able to maintain contact and spend time with a friend on a regular basis:

A friend of mine decided to split [a share] with me. We decided to pick it up on Tuesdays at the Co-op and that was our day to hang out. It was perfect time because we were both working full time and I was going to school full-time as well. So we split food and met up on Tuesdays and cooked (Interview 4).

Two other important communal activities at the CSA pick-up are the donations to the Community Action Center Food Bank and the Harvest House. Food bank shares generated through contributions from CSA members, local business, and churches are harvested and donated on Tuesday. A volunteer from the WSU Center for Civic Engagement collects the shares and brings them to the Food Bank. Additionally, leftover perishable food is donated to the Harvest House.

The Friday CSA Pick-up

The “spaces and structures” that make-up the Friday CSA pick-up are significantly different than those of the Tuesday Growers’ Market. The Friday CSA pick-up is located at the WSU Organic Farm work shed in the Tukey Horticulture Orchard. While the Tuesday CSA pick-up presents a celebratory atmosphere, the Friday pick-up provides members with a direct and consistent connection with the land where the produce is grown. If the Tuesday pick-up is considered a celebration, the Friday pick-up

could be considered an intimate gathering between CSA members and their families, student workers, the assistant farm manager, and the land. An important community-building activity provided at both CSA pick-ups, but especially the Friday farm pick-up, is the opportunity for members and their families to build a stronger connection with agriculture and the environment. This concept is woven throughout the following section and elaborated on in Dimension 3.

To illustrate the opportunity provided to make environmental and agricultural connections, my participant observation field notes captured the farm/orchard atmosphere members encounter on a regular basis:

I pulled into Tukey Orchard around 3:15. The orchard was in the middle of a Fall fruit sale, selling pears, numerous varieties of apples, and tomatoes. I followed white sandwich-board signs reading Organic Farming Project painted in bright red letters up the hill. On my way up the hill I past the orchard's variety block on my left, which I learned in a previous engagement held 85 different varieties of apples. As I neared the top of the hill I veered left toward a blue garage. To my right there were additional fruit trees and a mixed berry plot. A sharp right at the blue garage led me to where I was to park ... I walked my way past the pine-tree buffer onto the organic farm and headed toward the work shed. Organic pears lined the walkway on my right and asparagus and u-pick flowers on my left... Upon arriving at the work shed I found the farmers and a student chatting amongst the day's harvest that was neatly packaged in blue CSA boxes and arranged bountifully across the CSA table (Field Notes 2008).

A few members made similar observations and discussed how, by participating in the CSA program and the Friday pick-up, they were able to make enhanced connections with agriculture and the environment. A male member in his 50s explained:

I think it is always nice to go up to the farm. The other thing is that things are always changing up there. You look and see how the trees are changing and all the different crops and what he's done out there, where he's moved his irrigation ... I think that it has given me more insight. I am a gardener; I like to figure out how to optimize gardening, how things work, and the microclimate, and the bugs, and everything. It has been really helpful to go up to the farm and see how things are growing and what he has success with (Interview 16).

The CSA pick-up arrangement is similar to the Tuesday pick-up description except for the completely different surroundings. The organic farm covers two and half acres behind and on either side of the work shed. To the right of the work shed is a tool shed, herb garden, and two hoop houses. On a pretty consistent basis student workers hang out during the pick-up. A male undergraduate student in his early 20s described the dynamic interchange that exists at the Friday pick-up:

I would hang out, laugh, and talk to the kids that were with their parents who would grab strawberries and run to the fields. It was fun to be there when people came and met up with their friends. It was fun to see everyone come and be excited to get there food and be able to talk to them once in a while. Smiles from everybody, everyone was having fun, it was cool. I remember I was talking to some lady about Swiss chard and my favorite way to eat it. Being there when people were explaining what they do with the produce. I like the whole atmosphere that was happening, the whole environment when members are picking up their food. Plus you worked all day for them to pick up their food, there was a sense of closure, completion, that's the reason why you're out there (Student Interview 2).

The previous quote captures a variety of “actions and practices-spaces and structures” I suggest embody much of the community-building potential involved with the WSU Organic Farm CSA pick-up. His recollection illustrates that the farm provides a unique and important experience for children and families, serves as a social meeting place for friends, and is a location where acquaintances can talk about local food and exchange recipes. My participant observations highlight and numerous members explain that the farm is a place that parents want to bring their children to experience. The CSA member in her mid-30s who had a difficult time with the Tuesday CSA pick-up explained a more positive experience participating at the farm:

I loved the Pullman site because of the flowers and being out on the farm. I loved to take my kids there. I guess my favorite thing was seeing how my kids responded. When we would get carrots, they wouldn't even wait to wash them off they would rub them with their hands and start eating them immediately. Same

with the strawberries, we would eat them even before we got home. So having my kids aware of and excited about the food... To have them see or know where there food was coming from was important to me (Interview 3).

Another female member in her late 30s went into extended detail about how important the farming experience was for her two year old. But she also discussed how going to the farm was an important and enjoyable activity she got to share with her extended family: "I think it has enhanced the quality of our family's life in that it is an additional activity that we do as a family... It is certainly not something that the rest of our family does...it is something that we can share and get to help them experience by bringing them to the farm" (Interview 2).

The Friday CSA pick-up as a social meeting place for friends is best illustrated through observations. When friends or acquaintances run into each other at the farm pick-up it is impromptu and not something easily captured in interviews. Instead, the spontaneous social gatherings that occur throughout the growing season are readily apparent to those willing to sit and observe the dynamic situation. My field notes captured an unplanned social gathering that could be easily forgotten if a member was asked in an interview if they recall a story that involved social interaction between members:

Lots of members came with their newborn babies. Each couple seemed very excited to share the new addition to their family with the farmers. It was bizarre that many of the members with newborns all arrived at the same time, as well as a volunteer with her husband and young child. The work shed was packed with members and babies. There was lots of talking and cooing. The volunteer and her husband hung out for a while longer chatting with the farmers, other volunteers, and students (Field Notes 2008).

Social interaction and conversations between the farmers and members, between members, and with students, as would be expected, is often ignited by the week's harvest.

A married female member with two teenagers explained: “I go out there and talk to them all the time. When I pick up my stuff we share recipes. I know all the people that work out there. I know the orchard people” (Interview 11). Similar to the social gatherings, the social interaction that ensues around the exchange of recipes and discussion about the week’s harvest is best captured through observations. The following quote from my field notes illustrated this interaction:

A conversation about the weather ensued between the farmer and the next member. They discussed the light frost that killed the cucumbers and the expected frost that evening. While this conversation was taking place another member commented on his excitement about the spaghetti squash and how much he enjoyed the carnival squash. This changed the previous conversation into one about how to prepare spaghetti squash. The farmer’s description excited both of the members, they both showed signs of enjoyment smiling and laughing (Field Notes 2008).

Similar to the Tuesday CSA pick-up, the Friday pick-up also involves donations. On Friday any leftover perishable food from the exchange table and any unretrieved shares are donated to the Pullman Child Welfare Center Food Bank. After the CSA pick-up is over a representative from the food bank collects and distributes the produce to low-income residents the following day. While only an indirect link, CSA members through their involvement with the organic farm are helping create vertical ties between different groups.

While the Tuesday CSA pick-up is easily understood as a community “action and practice” because of the celebratory atmosphere, the Friday pick-up community “actions and practices” are more subtle yet equally important. At the Friday pick-up members are involved in an activity that provides a variety of opportunities for the creation of enhanced connections to agriculture and the environment. They are engaging in an activity they find important to their family and children. Moreover, the farm pick-up site

provides for impromptu social gatherings and dynamic social interactions involving diverse conversations between members, students, and their local farmer about the day's harvest, unusual vegetables, and recipes for cooking. Many of the "actions and practices" associated with the Friday pick-up are equally important and applicable to the Tuesday pick-up. Another important community activity associated with both CSA pick-up days is the donation of excess food to local food banks. This community action, while indirect, creates vertical ties between diverse groups within the community.

Farm Events

Throughout the growing season, the WSU Organic Farm hosts two major farm events, a Field Day and Resource Fair in late July and the Annual Harvest Celebration in late October. Both of these activities, I argue, are equally important "actions and practices" that can be traced and read for meanings, activities, and social relations that embody community. As will be discussed below, each event creates extended opportunities for social interaction including opportunities for maintaining, enhancing, and/or building both horizontal and vertical ties.

The WSU Organic Farm Field Day and Resource Fair

The WSU Organic Farm Field Day and Resource Fair is held in late July. The Field Day component highlights the WSU Organic Farm covering topics such as "CSA, extension, research, teaching, and potential partnerships" (WSU Organic Farm 2008). During the event students give brief presentations about their summer projects on the farm. In 2007 a CSA member and graduate student involved with the WSU Organic Farm organized the Resource Fair component of the event as part of her Master's work. The

Resource Fair was the action component of her community-based action research. The Resource Fair was designed as a networking, education, and outreach event to foster discussion and disseminate information about local and alternative agriculture organizations, programs, and food politics (Koenig 2007). The combined Field Day and Resource Fair is an event where many of the “people and organizations” listed earlier in this chapter come together and discuss their work. Table 7 below highlights the different “people and organizations” in attendance or with literature at the event. Not included in Table 7 are members of the general public.

Table 7. The People and Organization Represented at the 2007 WSU Organic Farm Field Day and Resource Fair

WSU Organic Teaching Farm

Farm Manager
Assistant Farm Manager
Soils 480 - Students
Volunteers
Community Supported Agriculture Members

Non-Profit Organizations

Backyard Harvest
Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute - Moscow Community Gardens Program
Pullman Community Gardens at Koppel Farm
Rural Roots
Washington Sustainable Food and Farming Network
Western Sustainable Agricultural Working Group (SWAG)
The Moscow Food Co-op

Higher Education Institutional Programs

BIOAg (Biologically Intensive and Organic Agricultural Program)
Cultivating Success
University of Idaho Soil Stewards

Source: Koenig (2007) and personal experience

Unfortunately, the students I interviewed did not go into detail about their experiences at the Field Day and Resource Fair. However, as a student involved with the farm at the time, I can provide my own perspectives of the event. The event officially started with a warm welcome from the farm manager who then introduced the Resource Fair organizer who discussed her civic agriculture community-action research and her goals for the event. Next, the student workers presented their summer projects. The “bicycle-powered / washing machine salad spinner” built by a students was one of the projects highlighted. I presented and distributed an educational map of the crops grown on the farm based on the season’s planting regime. After the student presentations, the organizations in attendance each took a minute to introduce themselves and their programs.

The formal aspects of the event were followed by informal networking and small group discussions. During this time I mingled and talked with the people representing the different organizations. My networking resulted in a vertical tie when I met and talked with a faculty member who later joined by thesis committee. I also collected literature provided by the local organizations and joined the Washington Sustainable Food and Farming Network (WSFFN) email listserve. The final highlight of the Field Day and Resource Fair was the tour of the farm.

A few of the members interviewed for this study participated in the event. A married male CSA member in his 50s had a similar recollection of the Field Day and Resource Fair:

I think the field day was good because it got some other groups involved...there were a number of organizations...I think I took some of their literature...I especially enjoyed the student presentations... some people had posters and then they had five or ten minutes to talk about their projects. I was quite fascinated,

especially that they grew greens in the plastic house without any heat last year and actually produced something— that was a concept that I didn't think would actually work (Interview 16).

A CSA member represented one of the participating organizations. She explained that the event was a good networking opportunity for her organization:

I met a few growers and a few stakeholders and was able to talk with them about their concerns. We are a statewide advocacy group that works with policy at the legislative and county government level. It helps to talk with growers and get input about what kind of political barriers are preventing them from producing what they would like to produce and really engaging in sustainable agriculture (Interview 30).

This event brought together many of the “people and organizations” discussed earlier in this chapter. The event included both formal and informal “actions and practices” that can be traced and read for meanings, activities, and social relations that serve as important community building tools. The event allowed for people with diverse yet similar interests to meet and network. It also presented the setting where relationships can be created in both horizontal and vertical directions, linking students with organizations and stakeholders with policy advocates.

Harvest Celebration

The Harvest Celebration celebrates the changing seasons and marks the end of the growing season. The Harvest Celebration is a way for the organic farm and orchard to get as much produce out of their fields as possible before the onset of consistently cold weather. The event is a very family-friendly, kid-oriented event, bringing in everyone and their families including shareholders, students, the academic community, and the general public. The following quote from a male CSA member and student volunteer at the celebration provides a good illustration of the day's events:

I actually participated in the harvest day this year. I volunteered to help get kids on and off the tractor for the hay ride... It was actually really fun. I really enjoyed seeing that many people on the farm. Everybody looked really happy and impressed with what [the farmers] was doing...there were hay rides, face painting, u-pick pumpkins, fresh pressed cider, and u-pick raspberries and strawberries... [the farmer was] walking around giving groups tours of the farm (Interview 6).

Similar to other CSA activities previously discussed, the Harvest Celebration includes numerous “actions and practices” that can be analyzed for meanings, activities, and social displays of community. The celebration as previously mentioned and as will be illustrated further, serves as an important family activity where children and adults alike can become more connected with the environment, agriculture, and how and where food is grown. Additionally, the celebration provides the opportunity for planned or unplanned social gatherings and the opportunity to meet and interact with a variety of people in a celebratory atmosphere.

A female member in her early 40s explained how the harvest celebration is an important activity for her family because her children can become more connected to how food is grown:

We’ve done two of the open days...we have two young boys so they’ve done the hay rides. We pick strawberries and go and do that sort of thing. We enjoy it as a family thing to do and given that we are not a family of gardeners, it’s nice that my kids have a chance to see the vegetables growing and be able to pick some. We were able to walk through the different things that were still in the ground and recognize what they are, so that was good. It made it more real (Interview 12).

A male member in his 30s with two children explained even though he is very connected to agriculture, he still sees the Harvest Celebration as a good social and educational activity:

We have gone to the harvest party for two years ... we actually got to talk to the people on the farm a little bit more. The thing is we are not disconnected from farming in general so being in the farm is not the surprise and excitement...but it

is more just to actually walk around on the farm and see how things are done and how they grow. We like to go and show our kids this is what that looks like, this is what that looks like which you just ate last week that was kind of nice (Interview 7).

Another male member in his mid-30s with two children illustrated how participating in farm activities, especially the Harvest Celebration, is a social activity and community event, an idea expressed by many:

[At] all of the events that they host, you get to see people in a more effective, fun atmosphere. Every time we've gone, we've met families, met new people. Kids are usually great conversation starters...people that you see and know are faculty but it's not until you're out at the farm with your kids that you actually start to talk. So yeah, going out to the farm to pick pumpkins and do the hay ride is a community event. I mean really it is better than most (Interview 9).

Finally, the recollection of a female interviewee who was extremely active on the farm demonstrates how the Harvest Celebration is linked to other programs and organizations presented earlier in this chapter. The following quote also captures how the Harvest Celebration presents diverse opportunities for social interaction.

I was grateful to be a part of it because I worked at it for a shift. I worked on something called the Palouse Food Project last year too. The Palouse Food Project interns were there working at the Harvest Celebration. I know they really enjoyed it. It was neat to see them there. It was a really nice coming together day. It was neat to bring all of these people out and for them to get out there and see where their food is coming from. I would say that it was a big success because so many people came. It was neat to be out there with like-minded folks... It was neat because people who worked on the farm were there. It was just a fun thing and the proceeds benefited the Harvest House which is a group home for adults with mental illnesses. It was nice to know that the proceeds were going there (Interview 10).

The Harvest Celebration and the Field Day & Resource Fair are both major farm events where meaning, activities, and social displays of community can be identified. Both events provide opportunities for social interaction between diverse groups of people. As a result each event provides unique networking opportunities. These

networking opportunities illustrate bridging and bonding social capital potentials. Donating a portion of the Harvest Celebration's proceeds to the Harvest House is an example of bridging social capital. With the presence of both bridging and bonding potentials we move into the realm of what Flora and Flora suggest is Entrepreneurial Social Infrastructure or "collective action for community betterment" (2008: 131-132). My discussion of Dimension 2 thus far has analyzed the major "actions and practices" and "spaces and structures" where community in CSA can be analyzed. The following sections briefly address more peripheral activities associated with the farm and CSA that I argue can also be evaluated for meanings, activities and social displays of community.

Additional Farm Sales

The role of additional farm sales is a debatable activity in CSA. In the classical model the cost of operating the farm is divided equally among members. As a result and ideally the harvest is divided equally amongst the members. Frequently member shares do not cover the entire operating costs of the farm. Farmers therefore bring in additional income by selling extra or excess produce through other channels (Lass et al. 2003; Oberholtzer 2004). The WSU Organic Farm sells additional produce through numerous channels. Additional farm sales substantially increase the number of people who can be counted as involved with WSU's CSA program. I will briefly discuss how farm sales at two venues, the campus farm stand and the Moscow Food Co-op, can be considered community "actions and practices."

A female member and volunteer in her late 20s captured how the farm stand serves as a community "action and practice":

This was the first year that we were selling produce on campus on Wednesdays, and it was actually a really good promotion for the farm. It was the first time that people on campus, students and teachers saw that there was this wonderful part of WSU that they didn't know about. And they wanted to be part of it...There is a lot of potential to grow there. People kept coming back, and I think that is part of the community too (Interview 4).

As described in the above quote, the farm stand allows additional people (students and teachers) to be involved with supporting the WSU Organic Farm. Walter's conceptualization of community argues that people "closest to the issue in terms of experience [and]...those farther removed...are integral to community" (1997: 71). The people purchasing produce through the campus farm stand and interacting with farm staff and volunteers, while further removed are still supporting the WSU Organic Farm. Their produce purchases whether they are cognizant of it or not is more than an economic exchange. While still peripherally connected, I think a similar case can be made for people purchasing WSU Organic Farm produce from the Moscow Food Co-op.

Additional Activities

Two additional "actions and practices" should be evaluated for their community-building potential: splitting shares and shared meals and cooking experiences. Because CSA is in so many ways about eating good, healthy, locally-grown and cooked meals, I suggest that when CSA food inspires activities centered on cooking and sharing meals it is encouraging what Walter (1997) would call "relational community action." In this section I will also discuss activities identified by members and students that if completed could also be read and traced as components of CSA's community building potential.

Splitting Shares

Splitting shares is a common phenomenon among CSA members. Splitting shares occurs when friends or acquaintances decide to split the cost of either a full or half share. In turn, members involved in this exchange usually meet on a weekly basis to divide up the harvest. Splitting shares is another way CSA fosters social interaction between people in a local area. A handful of members interviewed for this study were engaged in the process of splitting shares. A married male member in his 50s explained the phenomenon of splitting shares and the resulting social interaction:

So we split a full share because it is just myself and my wife. It works out pretty well. What we usually do is one of us will go out there on Friday and bring the produce back here...so then we split it up and say ok well what would you like ... certain people like certain things more than the others, we divide things up and say oh you got this, this week you can have the strawberries next week... A lot of times if we feel like we can't use it we will pass it off to grad students. We have a grad student that likes bok choy and some other things (Interview 31).

The following female CSA member explained how splitting a share is an enjoyable social interaction:

The family that we split our share with...that is a nice feeling ... even if we don't go to the farm together, we're still breaking up and splitting things together ... If I'm the one who goes to the farm to pick up our share, I still get to have interaction with my friends as we divide up the farm things (Interview 1).

Splitting shares encourages social interaction in a variety of locations, in a variety of spaces and structures. Therefore participating in a CSA program can encourage social interaction beyond the farm and beyond the place of pick-up. It can encourage social interaction in kitchens and offices where people discuss how they want to divide up the week's harvest.

Shared Meals and Cooking Experiences

Another area identified in my interviews where CSA encourages local social interaction is through shared meals and cooking experiences. I argue in this case that cooking and sharing meals can and should be considered a community action and practice. One student captures the depth of the eating experience provided through the organic farm and CSA experience:

There are three couples and we alternate who is cooking on Tuesday nights. So I worked all Tuesdays and it just so happened that every time I brought food home I brought it to everyone ... I would provide interesting stories for them because I just learned about kohlrabi and I was the one that harvested it so I would brag about how well harvested it was. We would cut it up and we would each have a bit of kohlrabi ... we all experimented with kohlrabi. There were certain foods that we would put straight into the meal and then I would tell everyone about how it is grown at the farm. So I was kind of a nice little agent for six people of sustainability discourse. We had a lot of fun with it, especially the foods that we weren't used to ... I think we have a wider appreciation for vegetables than we ever had before. I would say my entire group of six learned so many fun things (Student Interview 3).

A male member in his 30s also described a unique cooking experience between his family and other CSA members:

We get together, basically our friends say come on over we just got the CSA, let's cook something up, kind of impromptu ... Once a year we go up to Priest Lake and get a cabin. Three families share a cabin together, one of the things we do before we leave town is make sure we pick up our CSA. We usually go over the 4th of July, so everybody brings up their CSA and we have fresh produce for the whole week we are up there. The CSAs are very much a part of our food that whole week (Interview 5).

These quotes capture different ways the food grown at the organic farm enhances the shared meal and cooking experience. While the formation of social bonds through active member participation is cited as the measure of CSA's community-building potential (as discussed in Chapter 3), I argue that CSA's community-building potential can be traced and found in more subtle places like in the informal practice of splitting

local harvest fruits and vegetables or through cooking and sharing meals together.

Finally, many shareholders in this CSA program were very interested in additional educational and social activities. Potlucks and classes/workshops focused on gardening, garlic braiding, canning, and cooking were frequently mentioned in the interviews. A married male member in his early 40s explains his interest in additional farm activities, a very common sentiment among members:

I think it is a possible space where people are coming together with common interests or values that could be cultivated and grown. I don't know if that means cooking classes or potlucks...I think that could be a really positive thing... I could imagine that some people in the community would be willing to pay a small fee to learn about organic farming or how to translate some of the stuff that they do there to small plots behind their house or something like that. Those two things strike me as way they could help the community more (Interview 18).

Community Framework Dimension 3: Consciousness and Meanings

In the third and final dimension, I suggest that CSA's community-building potential should be evaluated based on the "consciousness and meanings" participants communicate in relation to three components of community: 1) shared interests, 2) social connections, and 3) place-based and environmental connections. Because of the overarching theme of building place-based communities, special recognition should be given where "consciousness and meanings" in relation to these three components overlaps with both the natural and built environment.

Shared Interests

Chapter 3 illustrated why many scholars question CSA's community-building potential. CSA surveys (as outlined in Table 4) consistently show that "a sense of community" is not a major motivating factor behind member participation. However, I

argue that this table captures a considerable number of shared interests. Community, as explained in Chapter 4, “can be used to represent and communicate meanings about...shared interests” (Liepins 2000: 31). My research reflects similar interests to those outlined in Table 4 and I argue that these shared interests should be evaluated as part of CSA’s community-building potential. Because many of these interests overlap significantly with locality CSA exhibits the potential to create placed-based communities instead of just interest-based communities.

Throughout the interviews participants expressed a diversity of reasons for participating in CSA. The threads of common interests included supporting local farms and farmers; obtaining organic produce; obtaining a variety of fresh, high quality produce; and supporting organic agriculture students. Concern for the environment was a common interest woven throughout these interests especially when participants discussed supporting local farms and purchasing organic produce. These motivations and interests in CSA are similar to those found in other studies (Cone and Kakaliouras 1995; Cone and Myhre 2000; O’Hara and Stagl 2000; Ostrom 1997, 2007) as explained in Chapter 3 and shown in Table 4.

Supporting Local Agriculture and Local Farmers

As mentioned in Dimension 1, numerous members explained that one of their primary interests in CSA was to support local agriculture and local farmers. As I will show below, this interest overlaps significantly with location and place. One female member in her late 20s explained her interest in a very general sense: “It is good because you’re not just supporting a farm, you’re supporting farmers. It feels good to support the farm and be involved. It is good to support local farmers because local farms need a lot of

support” (Interview 5). While this member captures a general sentiment, other members explain in detail that supporting local agriculture and local farmers was a political act and/or a way to help protect the environment. These more detailed explanations capture the meanings members apply to their interests while illustrating various levels of consciousness around the issues.

The following quotes capture a series of ideas describing how members perceive supporting local agriculture and local farmers as a political act. A single female in her early 30s explained:

Where you spend your food dollars really is a kind of political act. You’re supporting something when you spend your food dollars. I would much rather support my local farmer in my local community then having my money go to ... who knows where (Interview 10).

A married male member in his 30s explained that he actively works to support local small farms because he is supporting the local area instead of agribusinesses: “The WSU Organic Farm and others that do CSA [are] local small farms. So not only are you getting organic produce, it promotes the local area instead of agribusiness. We try to buy from small sustainable farmers whenever possible” (Interview 5). Finally, a male member in his late 40s explained:

Anything that prompts you to advocate for the farmers and help them out and specifically let them step outside of a completely dysfunctional commodity production system is fine with me. It makes me happy. I’m glad to do it and in a sense it is kind of a political contribution. Then the good quality food is kind of a side benefit of that (Interview 14).

Students also expressed interest in supporting local agriculture. In the following quote a male student in his early 20s described his interest in local agriculture and how the organic farm and CSA program are working to support it:

I'm a huge supporter of local food systems and of organic, not even organic certified but just growers that are conscious of their practices ... I definitely think it is doing a lot right now to let people know or realize that you can eat within 15 miles of your home. I think it is showing people that maybe a local system can work and I think it is showing people and making them think or re-think this global food system that we have (Student Interview 2).

While the meaning of CSA for many participants constituted a political act involving working to help change or express concern with the current food system, one member explained he liked supporting local agriculture and local farmers but did not see a problem with global agriculture:

If there are people who want to make a living off local farming I try and support them, but on the other hand I don't see a problem with buying things from far away that support developing countries that are trying to make a living exporting things. People I know would be very one way or the other but I kind of mix it up. I can see both sides of it (Interview 16).

This quote captures how different perspectives are reflected in similar interests. Walter (1997) suggests that different perspectives illustrate consciousness and that ultimately consciousness is what unites us in community. In a similar vein, this is where autonomy plays an important role. An extremely challenging part of CSA's community-building potential, I argue, is recognition and tolerance of different perspectives and participants' individual autonomy.

Concern for the environment was another common meaning attached to participants' interests in supporting local agriculture. Many participants indicated that by eating locally they were reducing food miles and thereby reducing their environmental impact. A female member in her early 40s explained this common interest among members: "I don't read a huge amount about environmental issues but I like that it is local that is really important to me just buying organic isn't enough ... I understand the

principles of not transporting food so we aren't polluting the environment more than we have to" (Interview 12).

Food miles were one of the most frequently cited environmental reasons for wanting to support local agriculture. Many participants also explained that the agricultural production practices associated with CSA were better for the environment and more sustainable. A male member in his mid-30s explained many of the beneficial agricultural practices associated with CSA (aside from organic practices which will be discussed in more detail in the next section): "the [practices] have more biological diversity. With the compost they use, they're building up soil fertility [and] organic matter in the soil, and, therefore, improving the quality of the soil" (Interview 7). A female CSA member expressed similar environmental concerns and benefits: "[With CSA] there is less use of fossil fuels, less pollution in the air. A big thing for me is protection of soil quality and building the soil quality, increased biological matter, less erosion, increased nematodes, that kind of stuff" (Interview 15).

In addition to the participants immediately tied to the CSA program and organic farm, the other "people and organizations" discussed in Dimension 1 are also interested in supporting local agriculture and local farmers. As previously explained, the Small Farms Program works to provide research-based information to people involved with local food systems, while also working to "unify farmers and consumers in developing local markets and community food access" (Small Farms Program 2009). Other "people and organizations" in this broad network interested in supporting local agriculture and local farmers include the Cultivating Success Program, Rural Roots, the Moscow Food Co-op, and the Community Garden at Koppel Farm.

Organic Produce & Reduced Chemical Exposure

Organic agriculture is another common interest among the majority of “people and organizations” listed in Dimension 1. Interest in organic agriculture is scattered throughout the supporting departments and programs in CAHNRS, found among students participating through various channels, expressed by official CSA shareholders, and embedded in the mission statements and actions of non-profit organizations throughout the region. Research into the affiliated organizations and interviews with CSA members and students captured a wide variety of meaning associated with organic produce. The major theme throughout the interviews was that organic agriculture provided reduced chemical exposure resulting in food that is safer for consumption and better for the environment. These findings are consistent with the Hartman Group’s (1996) research on properties suggested by organic.

The following quotes capture participants’ interests in organic agriculture because of the reduced chemical use and exposure resulting in food items that are safer for consumption. A male member in his mid-30s with two children explained:

My wife and I have two kids and we highly value organic vegetables ... I know that the growers are philosophically aligned with what we value. In this particular situation there is just about nothing sprayed ... They rely specifically on cultural control methods ... it is nice to see exactly where the food is being produced and exactly how. I can look and see the farm myself on a regular basis ... So we are pleased that the Tukey operation, despite the ability to spray tons of stuff, organically registered stuff they don’t ... I talk to the farm manager quite a bit about it. I really feel assured that there is not much spraying going on (Interview 9).

In the following quote a male student in his early 20s explained his interest and what organic agriculture means to him:

I was raised on a farm. It is what I know, it is what I want to do, and it is what I value. Embodied in that is also my mom, a nutritionist. So it was instilled in me

the importance of healthy food ... so growing food is an image I get when I look at my parents. So it is what I want to do and I see the healthiest food being organic food that doesn't have lots of synthetic crap on it. It is made with real nutrients and it is healthy (Student Interview 1).

Similar to many of the participants involved with CSA to support local agriculture and farmers, a female member described her involvement as a political act focused on doing something healthy for herself, her family, and her community:

I became interested in organic even before having a little one in our family ... I pick the places that I can see if I can make a difference with my family or in my community or my world. We don't do organic for lots of things but there are key things that I think I can commit to doing organic, the dairy products for my daughter and the produce to the extent that we can for the growing season of the farm (Interview 1).

Numerous members also talked about the role organic agriculture plays in being better for the environment. The following quote succinctly phrased by a male member in his late 40s captured what he sees are the major environmental benefits of CSA with what seem to be strong references to the fact that the produce is organic:

I guess the primary emphasis for me from an environmental standpoint is an incremental shift from non-toxic food production to sustainable food production from the standpoint of soil health, water quality and getting ... away from petroleum and oil inputs, from transportation of processed corporatized food products and then also getting away from oil and petroleum derived fertilizers and pesticides (Interview 14).

While the majority of participants expressed some interest in the organic nature of the food grown on the farm, a male member in his 30s explained that organic produce was not a major concern for him: "In terms of things like the fact that it is an organic farm versus something that uses lots of pesticides is not a primary interest of mine. I appreciate that the food is not something I have to worry about washing to get off a lot of chemicals but that is not the first thing on my mind" (Interview 8). This quote captures a different "consciousness and meaning" than those previously expressed and again reflects

the importance of member autonomy where each participant is entitled to their own beliefs.

Variety of Fresh, High Quality Produce

One of the major draws to the farm is the unique variety of fresh, high quality produce. This central aspect and draw to the farm, I argue can be considered a common interest among participants. The interviews contained numerous comments such as: “I love the variety. I love the freshness of it” (Interview 11) and “it’s great to get the fresh produce” (Interview 18). While the students were ultimately there to learn the art of small-scale organic farming, having the opportunity to feast on some of the excess harvest was recognized as an added perk by one student and explained as the best part of the farming experience by another. A female student explained: “definitely, [my favorite part of being involved] would probably be the free vegetables, I have to say when that ended, I was very sad about my vegetable choices afterwards” (Student Interview 5).

While fresh high quality produce is a major motivating factor and common interest among members, the majority of participants elaborated on the variety of produce they received. A common interest expressed by members was the pleasure of cooking and eating diverse and more unusual varieties of produce. However, according to some studies (see, e.g., Ostrom 1997, 2007), the unusual mix of produce can be a reason members choose *not* to continue their participation in CSA. The majority of participants interviewed for this study expressed enjoyment with the challenge posed by the unusual variety of produce. A female member in her late 20s explained: “I like the variety of food. There are definitely some vegetables I’ve never had before until the CSA—that is

always fun. You never know what you're going to get and you learn how to cook new food." (Interview 4).

The following quote from a married male in his 30s captured his interests and enjoyment with the quality and freshness of the produce as well as his family's enjoyment with getting unusual produce items that encourage experimentation and creativity:

The taste and quality of the food that we get is great. You get a certain amount per week and you're really forced to be creative and eat it and cook it in certain ways. Right along with getting a surprise once and a while, you're forced to experiment a little bit more. My wife really likes trying new things so it really goes along well with her experience and trying new things (Interview 7).

The interviews were scattered with similar comments. A female member in her early 40s described her interest and enjoyment with the unique variety of produce:

The vegetables that come each week and the newsletters have helped me broaden the way I prepared food. I'm actually learning what the vegetables are, what they should taste like, what they should look like, and how they should be prepared. There are at least four or five vegetables in the course of a season that I've never heard of or even seen before and now I can spot them (Interview 12).

While the majority of members exhibited a shared interest in the unique variety of produce they received, a few members explained that they didn't really care for the variety. A 77 year old female explained: "I'm probably too used to cooking in various ways to get too excited about most of the vegetables ... Too many things I'm not very interested in and not quite enough of things that I'm interested in" (Interview 13).

Similarly, a female CSA member in her 30s explained how her eating habits are not compatible with the variety of food provided through the CSA:

Part of my family's problem is we don't eat a lot of salads, [or] kale or bok choy or whatever. And I'm not in a position to do a lot of experimenting right now. But I feel like that is more of my own issue than an issue with the CSA (Interview 3).

Both of these participants explained that they would not be continuing their CSA memberships. Here again we see the importance of tolerance and autonomy.

Acquiring a diverse variety of fresh, high quality produce is also a shared interest among many of the other “people and organizations” discussed in Dimension 1. Numerous WSU dining and banquet services seek out the farm’s organic produce. The Moscow Food Co-op demonstrates their shared interest by purchasing and selling the farm’s excess fruits and vegetables. But perhaps the most important demonstration of this shared interest is the diverse network of people and organizations working to get fresh, high quality produce to low-income residents. This dynamic relationship was explained in Dimension 1 and illustrated in Figure 2. This shared interest is exhibited by CSA members, local businesses, and churches that provide monetary contributions for the production of food bank shares. Their shared interest is put into action through the dynamic networks and relationships that exist between the WSU Organic Farm, Backyard Harvest, the Community Gardens at Koppel Farm and the Center for Civic Engagement. The food grown as a result of the dynamic relationship among these organizations is donated to the Community Action Center Food Bank, the Pullman Child Welfare Center Food Bank, and the Harvest House. This dynamic network represents how shared interests can result in what Flora and Flora (2008) call “effective community action” or “Entrepreneurial Social Infrastructure.”

Supporting University Education

Support for students’ education is a top priority and shared interest among the majority of “people and organizations” affiliated with the WSU Organic Farm. The educational mission statements and faculty goals included in Dimension 1 speak to this

universal objective. Members of the CSA program also expressed interest in supporting students' education. Two major themes emerged around this common interest in member interviews. Some members liked the general idea that their involvement was supporting an educational opportunity for students. Other members more specifically liked the idea that their involvement was helping support an organic educational track that has the potential to expand both organic agriculture and CSA.

The following quotes are from members who expressed interest in the organic farm and CSA program because it helps support educational opportunities for students. A divorced member in her late 40s explained: "I like the idea that a lot of students are working on the farm and learning from it, instead of just a business person. I like the idea that it is very important in their lives as opposed to just a business venture" (Interview 2). Similarly, a male member in his 50s explained: "I like that it provides a learning experience to train students in the program. They do projects and work out there, so I think it is important to have a hands-on experience for students that is not just classroom learning" (Interview 16).

Several members also explained that they enjoy being part of the CSA program because it supports an organic educational degree program. A single member in his late 40s explained:

I think that one of the benefits of the WSU program is that it is also supporting an organic agriculture degree program, which I understand to be one of a few in the country and the first in the country to offer a bachelors degree specifically in organic agriculture. So in that sense it is promoting the kind of education that I'm particularly in favor of (Interview 14).

A married male member in his 40s expressed a similar interest, an interest also described by several other members:

What I think is great about this CSA is it trains people who are going to go other places, some of whom I would like to think would set up a CSA or would supplement their other work doing that. I think it is really interesting to think about it as an incubator that grows other CSAs that could spread out around the state. I don't know if it will happen but I would like to think it would (Interview 18).

Social Connections and Community

Social bonds and social connections are community concepts discussed throughout this thesis. The scholars that support CSA's community building role suggest that CSA builds community through increased social interaction (O'Hara and Stagl 2001; Sharp et al. 2002) resulting in social bonds among producers, among consumers, and between producers and consumers (Kloppenborg et al. 1996; Lyson 2005). Furthermore, these scholars argue that CSA can build social capital (Sharp et al. 2002) and help reconnect people to each other, place, and ultimately create stronger human connections (Kittredge 1996). Scholars that have delved deeper into CSA's ability to build social bonds have found that CSA in many cases has been unsuccessful at creating the social bonds envisioned by the classical CSA model (Cone and Myhre 2000; DeLind 2004; Ostrom 1997, 2007; Oberholtzer 2004). Instead of looking for the formation of strong social ties, this thesis argues that CSA's community building potential can be examined by looking for a network of social connections held together by both strong and weak ties in horizontal and vertical directions (Dimension 1).

Analysis of the "actions and practices—spaces and structures" associated with the WSU Organic Farm and CSA program illustrated not only the diverse participation and social interaction opportunities but also the meanings and social relations embodied in those activities. Dimension 2 described numerous activities scattered with discussions

about social bonds and social connections including work on the farm, the CSA harvest day pick-up sites, farm events, additional farm sales, splitting shares and shared meals and cooking experiences. These social activities illustrate the presence of both strong and weak ties with the presence of and opportunities for both bridging and bonding social capital. Building on the foundation laid by the previous dimensions this component of Dimension 3 focuses broadly on participants' "consciousness and meanings" in relation to social connections and the role of community in CSA. Social connections are explored by examining bonds between members and the CSA farmers (including students), bonds among members, broad network connections, and shared values.

Farmer-Member Social Connections

One of the tenets of CSA is building relationships between consumers and local farmers. The interviews were scattered with comments about members' connections to the CSA farmers. A female member in her late 20s explained: "The farmer is a friend of mine. I like that he is working for the farm and what that means for WSU for their ag program" (Interview 15). Similarly, a married male in his 50s said "I support the concept because I collaborate a lot with the farm manager" (Interview 16). Another female member explained: "I know the farm manager. I have a lot of admiration and respect for who he is, we have become friends. I also have the same respect for the work that the farm assistant does everyday" (Interview 10). One male member in his late 20s explained that he would like more opportunities to get to know the farm manager:

More communication with the [farm manager] would be nice ... When we were picking up at the Co-op, he was always busy with other people and selling produce ... it would be nice to have more one on one communication with him ... more of a bond between the CSA members and the farmer (Interview 6).

In addition to relationships between members and the farmers, one married male member in his 30s explained that the CSA provided a unique opportunity to link members to student farm workers:

I think it also brings in the students that work on the farm, because then they become part of the community. Because they grow the food, they come to deliver the food, and they meet people. I think it brings the students in a little bit more than they normally would. The average student doesn't necessarily interact with the community people all the time. I think [students] form a community and then [the CSA program] links the two communities (Interview 5).

Students expressed a similar connection with the local community. A female student explained:

It is a class for credit at the university but you're outside and you're growing vegetables for the outside community and it sort of makes that connection ... saying we are doing this for the community, we are taking these classes for the community. We are doing this so we can give back and be a part of. It sort of puts things into perspective and gives it a purpose (Student Interview 5).

A male student described a more direct social connection as a result of being a part of helping grow food for the CSA program: "I recognize people from the farm, CSA members ... I see them around town ... and they remember me and are willing to talk to me and I go to the Co-op more just to support local farmers" (Interview Student 1).

Several members explained more generally that CSA allowed for a connection between the people growing food and those consuming it. A female member in her late 40s explained: "It is so nice to see all of the people who are involved in the growing of your food and knowing them" (Interview 2). This idea is reiterated by a male member in his 50s: "The main thing is that people have a personal connection with the people that grow their food and being a small town like Pullman that can easily be done. I think people get enthused about it and see the value in it" (Interview 16).

Member-Member Social Connections and Community

Dimension 2 in the framework illustrated numerous opportunities for the creation, maintenance, and enhancement of social connections between members and connections throughout the broader CSA network. Numerous participants discussed how CSA pick-up days were social engagement opportunities. The Field Day and Harvest Celebration were also observed and described as social bonding and networking opportunities. Additionally, my research has shown that splitting shares and shared meals and cooking experiences is also a social bonding experience.

While all of these social bonding opportunities and experiences exist, there was a range of “consciousness and meanings” described regarding CSA’s ability to foster social connections and build community. Members fell along a spectrum from describing CSA as a community experience to members who suggested there was nothing social about it. First, several interviewees described their participation as a community experience. A male member in his 30s explained:

“It brings people together and you have something in common right there because you can talk about CSA, what the vegetables are, how things are looking, and that leads into other ideas. So I think being part of it makes you part of a community” (Interview 5).

A female member in her 40s placed a similar meaning on her participation: “It really does feel like being part of a community because ... I know half of the people going to pick-up their vegetables” (Interview 12). A female member in her early 30s related her social and community connections to her work on the farm: “The farm was the first place in my adult life where I felt a real sense of community with like-minded people. I had never

really felt like I did on the farm because everybody was working toward the same thing” (Interview 10).

Second, in the middle of the spectrum, there were members who knew other members demonstrating the presence of social connections. But there were also members in this range that explained participating had not resulted in the formation of a social network. A 47 year old female member explained: “I’ve known some people who have been members of the program. We will do things like pick up each others’ food when we can’t or talk about the food. I talk a lot to other people about the CSA. I tell people about it and try and connect other people” (Interview 11).

Similarly, a female member in her late 30s explained “I like that I know quite a few people that are members and so we can send an email about what did you do with your [unusual vegetable item] this week” (Interview 1). A male member in his early 40s explained that he knew members but his envisioned social network had not developed: “We have friends that are in the CSA...I have an affiliation or affection for the CSA, but I don’t have a network that has been built up around being involved in it. Some part of that has to be on me ... I could pursue it but I don’t” (Interview 18).

Finally, on the far end of the spectrum, several members explained that participating in the CSA program had not resulted in the establishment of social connections or that they did not see CSA as a social activity. A few members explained that they just did not know any other members. A single 53 year old male member explained:

I don’t know any other members. If it was [where I live] I would probably know some of the people. I would at least be acquainted with them. Otherwise, I might be more likely to chat but I don’t know these people. Maybe for the people in town it is a little different ... The ones that pick up Friday ... are not people I

know from work or anything. They are from else where in the community (Interview 17).

Similarly, other members explained “I don’t know about community among members. I don’t really know the other members” (Interview 6) and “I don’t know any other CSA members so I can’t say I feel connected to any of them” (Interview 4). On the farthest end of the spectrum a male member in his mid-30s explained that he does not see CSA as social activity:

We are into eating seasonally and having organic and natural growing stuff. That is the primary reason for us, not the community stuff. I see it as people finding a source of food. You can’t say people who go to the store are a community. I see the CSA as a substitute for a store. There just isn’t anything social there (Interview 7).

These quotes illustrate a variety of “consciousness and meanings” about member-member connections and community as it relates to their involvement in CSA. The majority of member-member connections came from preexisting relationships. In many instances throughout this chapter, CSA appears to providing opportunities for participants to enhance preexisting social connections. The presence of enhanced social connections fits well into Kittredge’s (1996: 254) argument that CSA can build “stronger and richer human connections.” Many participants suggest that CSA does not build community because they do not know other members. Using this framework, if we broaden who is included in the community framework, the opportunity for social connections and bonds increases significantly. A male member described his social connections and feelings of community in relation to the broad social network described in Dimension 1:

There are a lot of connections between myself and that organic farm. I don’t know if you are aware, there is a group called Palouse Food Project. It started about five years ago [it includes] a community group of churches,...what is now the Center for Civic Engagement ...and the CAC [Community Action Center]. It was a group that got together to address food insecurity issues in Whitman County ...

[the farm manager] was part of it [as well as] the Pullman Community Garden ... We all kind of got together and cooperated with each other ... So there is a lot of interconnections (Interview 26).

One final way a few members discussed their social connections was in relation to being involved in something with like-minded individuals. A single male member in his late 40s articulated this idea:

It is one of those things that you can be friends with someone even though you may not actually talk to them that often or at any particular great length, but you do know that you have a connection with them ... I recognize and value that I know other people who are also participating in the WSU Organic Farm CSA or the other CSAs ... In that sense I feel a connection. I feel a solidarity with them. I feel like we are basically pushing in the same direction advocating for the same thing. We have shared values ... To a pretty great degree CSA helps give me some sense that I stand with other people who share a common value set with me (Interview 14).

This idea captures an important idea about social connections discussed by Wright (1992: 205; Liepins 2000: 31) where community can be a “signifier of ideas about certain social relations [that] at times is more important than any lived relations or material demonstrations of community.”

Place-based and Environmental Connections

I now analyze participants’ “consciousness and meanings” related to place-based and environmental connections from participating in the organic farm and CSA program. The official USDA definition of CSA explains that members benefit through receiving shares “as well as the satisfaction gained from reconnecting with the land” (Adam 2006: 2). Additionally, place-based communities are in part identified by a place-based sense of connection (Liepins 2000; Flora and Flora 2008) where the material, bio-physical space plays an important role (Bryden 1994; Liepins 2000) and connections exist with both the natural and built environment (Matless 1994; Liepins; Flora and Flora 2008). Place-based

and environmental connections as a component of community has been woven throughout my community framework, but warrants further elaboration.

The majority of participants described enhanced place-based and/or environmental connections through their participation. Participants experienced and described different connections based on their role in the CSA program. The participants involved with growing food on the farm described the development of a strong connection to place and the environment. In the following quotes students described their enhanced place-based, social, and environmental connections developed through their involvement with the farm:

I associate meaning and memories with the organic farm and Pullman because that is where I grow vegetables and when I come here I know where I can go to get vegetables and see people I know. So there is definitely a sense of place for me here ... Then there is the climate, I know we have a shorter season here and it is later. I know that the WSU farm fruit comes into season a month later than it does at home, so this is a unique place that I can relate with (Student Interview 1).

Working on the farm really connected me to this place—the Palouse. I think that it is a great opportunity especially for students that have moved here from all over the world, all over the country, to garden and get their hands in the soil and to be a part of a place. It really helped ground me here and connect me here. I think it is about taking care of our places and I think being a member and working on the farm makes you a stakeholder in a place ... to me it is a way to be a good steward of my place (Interview 10).

The whole connection to the earth, respecting and valuing everything that it does for us, not just with agriculture but how it sustains us and how we are a part of the Earth ... being out there this summer really reconnected me with that ... from laying the seed, like the salad greens and the peppers, then transplanting, then tapering it off, and finally putting it into the ground. To watch the whole process and then be able to harvest it at the beginning of the year was incredible (Student Interview 2).

Participants actively engaged in working on the farm were not the only participants to develop place-based and/or environmental connections. Numerous members described enhanced connections, but for different reasons. Two female

members—one who had only lived in Pullman a few years and one who had lived in Pullman for many years—both described a greater connection to agriculture, the environment, and the Palouse as a result of their participation. The long-time Pullman resident explained:

I see [CSA] as a way that I can become a little more connected to my local environment than I've been able to be from years and years of living here ... This is an area that has a lot of farming and agriculture, but if you're not inside farming and agriculture as it's done here in the Palouse you're outside of it. I have lots of work colleagues who have families that own or operate or work on big areas of wheat or peas or lentils, but that doesn't really make me part of that. So being involved with the CSA, it etches out some space that I can participate in a bit of agriculture here on the Palouse (Interview 1).

Similarly, the more recent Pullman resident explained:

I feel more connected with the environment especially in the Palouse region ... and I'm not sure if it is just because of the CSA, but it is part of it. I've learned more about the amazing fertile soil in this area and the produce that can grow here. I didn't grow up around here. So I get a chance to tell my friends and family that are other places about this area ... I'm in the Palouse and I get food from our local organic farm ... I think it's opened my eyes to the fields that I drive by more than I have ever before (Interview 4).

In a different vein a male member in his 30s explains that his connection results from preparing locally grown food which enables him to be a part of local traditions:

I definitely brag to myself and to others that I made dinner or I made these meals or brought in food from here, from Pullman. So it has certainly made me connected with the very immediate local environment ... It makes me feel good ... wherever I am I enjoy being part of local traditions. While this might be a small program and not everyone is involved with it, it is something that is very identifiable to Pullman, this particular one: You can't live in New Hampshire and be a participant in this project (Interview 8).

A female member in her late 40s also gained her connection from eating locally grown produce, but explained her connection in relation to environmental issues and society's disconnection from how and where food is grown:

It's really much healthier for you to eat the local produce, what is grown around you. It's healthier and I think it helps you feel more a part of nature. Where you actually see it come up, it's right there ... I think that is starting to come back again into the general knowledge because we don't feel satisfied with a lot of the food we eat. I think part of it is because of the disconnect, because it has come from someplace a thousand miles away and picked unripe. More and more I think people are starting to realize the importance of our connection with the Earth and food and preparation and all that is much more important than we think (Interview 2).

While the majority of participants expressed a greater connection to place and/or the environment, several members explained that participating in the CSA program had not resulted in a greater connection. These members explained that the reason CSA did not result in an enhanced connection to place or the environment was because they were already connected. A female member in her late 40s explained: "I think I've always appreciated the land. Only that sometimes I take the land for granted because I'm around it so much. I still love it. I wouldn't live anywhere different. We have been very fortunate to find two nice jobs in this area" (Interview 11). Similarly, a male member in his mid-30s explained that his work and lifestyle kept him close to the land:

We have grown up around farming areas and I've been working with plants and plant production so I've been connected with the field for a number of years. So [participating] doesn't make me more connected to the farm ... People who have never been to a farm...for them it is an eye opener. They come and it's just like "wow, this is so different and we never knew this is where food comes from." Not for me because I know this stuff. I don't feel more connected because I'm already connected (Interview 7).

Summary

This chapter presented my research findings couched in the multidimensional community framework presented in Chapter 4. In Dimension 1, I presented the "people and organizations" involved with the WSU Organic Farm and CSA Program. The multiple stakeholders and diverse interests include: the organic farm's farmers, staff and

volunteers; CSA shareholders; Soils 480 and Cultivating Success students; WSU faculty members, departments, programs, and centers; the Palouse Food Project Network; Rural Roots; Pullman businesses and churches; and the Moscow Food Co-op. In Dimension 2, I discussed numerous formal and informal “actions and practices” and their associated “spaces and structures” where meaning, activities, and social relations that embody community can be evaluated. These actions and practices included farm work, CSA member pick-ups, farm events, additional farm sales, splitting shares, and shared meals and cooking experiences. Finally in Dimension 3, I explored participants’ “consciousness and meanings” related to three components of community: shared interests, social connections, and place-based and environmental connections. In the next chapter, I will discuss the results of my research in relation to the role of community in CSA as described in Chapter 3. I will also discuss the contributions and limitations of this study and ideas for future research.

Chapter Seven

Discussion and Conclusion

The goal of this thesis was to expand the way CSA's community-building potential is evaluated. Through my review of the community debate in the CSA literature (Chapter 3), I conclude that there is an important distinction between how 'community' is referred to by the scholars who support CSA's community-building potential (see, e.g., Kloppenburg 1996; Lyson 2004, 2005; O'Hara and Stagl 2000) and those searching for community within the "classical CSA model" (see, e.g., Cone and Myhre 2000; Russell and Zepeda 2008; DeLind 2004; Ostrom 1997, 2007). One primary difference appears to be the scale at which community is discussed. My review of the sociological literature on community illustrated that there is not one widely accepted definition, theory, or meaning of community (Chapter 4). Therefore, I suggest there is ample room to expand on how community is framed in relation to CSA. To begin the reframing process, I created the multidimensional community framework drawing from the sociological literature on community (Chapter 4). This framework is a work in progress and only begins to scratch the surface at how we can begin to reconceptualized the role of community in CSA.

To many CSA scholars community includes the establishment of bonds of trust, responsibility, partnership, collaboration, mutual and shared interests, as well as relationships of rights, obligations, and reciprocity (DeLind 2004; Cone and Myhre 2000; Russell and Zepeda 2008). In the vision of the classical CSA model these bonds of community form through CSA members taking an active role in their farm. The community-building characteristics of this model include the development of a strong core group, democratic decision making, joint-budget work, member involvement in

acquiring land, and reliance on volunteer labor (Ostrom 1997). As CSA spread across the country, the classical model presented both social and economic challenges. The majority of members were either unable or uninterested in actively participating and farmers were not being adequately compensated for their work. As a result scholars have concluded that CSA in many instances has been unsuccessful at establishing the bonds of community previously mentioned (DeLind 2004; Cone and Myhre 2000; Russell and Zepeda 2008; Ostrom 1997, 2007).

I suggest that the “classical CSA model” envisioned the creation of a relatively closed tight-knit community of members and producers, a community ideal that has proven very challenging to achieve. Community as it is discussed in relation to the “classical CSA model” is one level at which community and CSA can be discussed. But, as CSA has grown and spread across the country, numerous models have developed, many of which do not emphasize the original community-building characteristics of the “classical CSA model.” As a result, the role of community in CSA appears to have been significantly reduced if not eliminated entirely. I created the multidimensional community framework (Chapter 4) to provide another way to evaluate CSA’s community-building potential in light of the development of additional CSA models across the country. My goal was to determine if the role of community can be reconceptualized or broadened to revitalize its meaning and purpose in CSA. My framework illustrates that the formation of social bonds through active member participation is not the only way to measure CSA’s community-building potential. The framework provides a way to expand on the ideas presented by scholars supporting the

role of community in CSA (Chapter 3) by providing a way to assess community and CSA at a higher organizational level.

A very important underlying idea I conclude from this thesis is that in many cases it will likely require more than CSA members to sustain local, low-input, organic agriculture. Therefore, I suggest the boundaries around who is considered a part of CSA should be expanded. In Dimension 1 of my community framework, I called for an evaluation of the “people and organizations” closely and loosely connected to the CSA farms. Figure 2 illustrated the diversity of “people and organizations” supporting and/or involved with the WSU Organic Farm CSA Program. I argue that the diverse networks illustrated in this figure constitute the ‘community’ that supports and is supported by this agricultural program. By expanding the boundaries around who is part of CSA, we can see how “community supported agriculture” can translate to “agriculture supported communities” (Henderson and Van En 1999). The farm is supported by community networks and community networks are supported, built, and enhanced through the dynamic “actions and practices” associated with the WSU Organic Farm and CSA program.

This reconceptualization shows that local agriculture can be supported by and help build diverse community networks instead of simply building community through farmer–member connections. As illustrated in Figure 2, WSU provides the foundational support that allows the CSA program highlighted in this study to operate. The teaching aspect of the WSU Organic Farm, where farm labor is integrated with a dynamic learning opportunity, contributes substantially to the CSA program’s success. I am not suggesting that a CSA program has to be integrated with an educational institution to succeed.

Rather, when labor and capital are scarce, farms should consider reaching outside of the membership base to bring in additional participants interested in the farm. The more people and organizations involved with the farm, the more opportunities exist to create both the horizontal ties (bonding social capital) and vertical ties (bridging social capital) associated with community building.

Groh and McFadden (1997) discuss numerous types of CSA models such as congregation supported agriculture, corporation supported agriculture, college or school supported agriculture, community supported composting, tax supported farms, and CSAs involving low-income or homeless people and food banks. These CSA programs are connected to multiple “people and organizations” and in some cases the government to ensure support for the farming operation. This thesis illustrates the broad network of support that can be created by integrating CSA into a university and Table 3 includes 24 other campus affiliated programs. The Magic Bean Stalk CSA and its associated Field to Table Community Food Project (Well et al. 1999) and the Hartford Food System’s Holcomb Farm CSA (Winne 2008) are additional examples of CSA programs that work with numerous “people and organizations” to achieve the diverse tenets of CSA (see Chapter 3). While some scholars argue that CSA will be sustained by the formation of strong bonds between members and farmers (Cone and Myhre 2000; Ostrom 1997), I argue, given the reasoning explained above and using Granovetter’s (1973) “strength of weak ties” theory, that another way CSA can build community and work to sustain local organic agriculture is through networks of weak ties including multiple stakeholders and diverse interests.

The classical CSA model proposes that the bonds of community are best forged when members take an active role in the farm. Cone and Myhre (2000: 196) conclude that the community envisioned by the classical model is “difficult for CSA members to realize, given the demands and constraints of their lives.” In Dimension 2 “actions and practices—spaces and structures,” I argue, that there are numerous places, spaces, and activities associated with CSA beyond actively engaging in farm work that can be analyzed for their community-building potential (Table 6). But, first, I do want to recognize the community-building potential in farm work. Similar to “classical CSA model” studies, participants who actively worked on the WSU Organic Farm spoke of the resulting social bonds.

Other social bonding opportunities identified throughout my research include the CSA member pick-ups, reading the CSA member newsletter, participating or going to farm events, the act of splitting shares, as well as shared meals and cooking experiences inspired by the CSA’s diverse variety of produce. Kittredge (1996: 253) explains that “visits with neighbors and friends, family conversations, and time spent at family meals have all declined since mid-century.” Throughout this thesis research I have worked to illustrate how activities associated with CSA counteract these trends. I suggest that these are some of the rich community-building opportunities of CSA. The fact that these activities occur in numerous “spaces and structures” illustrates that participating in CSA encourages community building beyond the farm gate.

Many of the “actions and practices” of community I identified represent more than just social bonding opportunities. The networks between the WSU Organic Farm, Backyard Harvest, Community Gardens at Koppel Farm, and Center for Civic

Engagement allow a significant amount of produce to be donated to food banks throughout the region. These networks, I argue, represent bonds of partnership and collaboration and result in some of the best examples of community action in my research.

The notion of community “actions and practices” can be woven into the shared interests component of Dimension 3 “Consciousness and Meanings”. Participants expressed varying levels of “consciousness” in relation to seeing their involvement as a community action or practice. Despite their levels of consciousness, I argue that their shared interests and the outcome of those shared interests, as illustrated above, result in community action. For example, the majority of participants expressed interest in supporting WSU’s organic agriculture educational track. As a result of their individual yet shared interests, their collective contribution to the farm in 2007 was very significant: \$37,000+ for shares and \$1,905 in food bank donations (Interview 24).

Supporting local agriculture and local farmers in another shared interest among participants across CSA studies (Ostrom 1997; Cone and Myhre 2000; O’Hara and Stagl 2001). A few participants in this particular study suggested that by supporting local agriculture and local farmers they were supporting the local area and the local community. In this sense, I suggest that they are participating in a ‘practice of community,’ something that they can do on an individual level that contributes to community building. I propose that individual actions can become community action when individuals consciously recognize their action as part of a collective effort working toward the same goal. The same could be said for a few participants’ perspectives on organic agriculture. A few members recognized that CSA was the result of a collective

effort. Ultimately, the presence of mutual and shared interests is a key characteristic of community identified by the CSA and community literatures. I suggest that these mutual/shared interests that motivate participants to be involved have been overlooked as an important community-building aspect of CSA.

Selznick explains that more “pathways provided for participation in diverse ways and touching on multiple interests—the richer is the experience of community” (1992: 359). Merging the multiple participation opportunities discussed in Dimension 2 and participants’ multiple reasons and interests for participating, I conclude that CSA creates the opportunity for a rich experience of community. Many community scholars (see, e.g., Selznick 1992) argue that community exists to the extent that participants experience community. I argue that while this is an important component of community, community building can take place without conscious recognition as explained above.

Dimension 3 discusses participants’ “consciousness and meanings” as they relate to social connections and community. This section dealt more specifically with the traditional social connections discussed in the CSA literature including farmer-member connections and member-member connections. Participants expressed a wide range of “consciousness and meanings” in relation to social connections and community. On one end of the spectrum some members were of the mindset that CSA was a communal activity allowing them to connect with their friends, the farmers, and student workers. On the opposite end of the spectrum, some members suggested that CSA was not a communal activity because they did not know other members. One member even claimed that there was *nothing* social about CSA. By expanding the boundaries around who is

involved with CSA, I suggest we allow for more opportunities for social connections and a greater recognition of CSA's broad community-building capacity.

Emphasis on CSA's role in building place-based communities was the overarching theme of my community framework. In Dimension 3, I analyzed participants "consciousness and meanings" related to place-based and environmental connections. Cone and Myhre (2000) conclude that the active participants were the ones who established enhanced connections to the land. In my study, I inquired about broad connections to place and the environment. I found that people at all participation levels developed a greater appreciation for place, the environment, or both. The few members who did not experience an enhanced connection explained that they already had a strong connection to agriculture and the land. While Cone and Myhre (2000) conclude that CSA has succeeded in forming a community of interests, I conclude that because participants' interests overlap significantly with locality, CSA's utility is in working toward building place-based communities. This is also illustrated in participants' interests in CSA because it works to protect the environment in a variety of different ways.

I argue that CSA exhibits many characteristics that allow it to serve as a tool to build place-based communities. CSA is "a local scale of activity and a relatively bounded, place-based sense of connection" (Liepins 2000: 32). Participants' interests in CSA and local agriculture illustrate in many instances "the importance of the material, bio-physical space in which people build cultural and political meanings" (Bryden 1994: 44; Liepins 2000). Furthermore, CSA even if only through the simple act of eating local vegetables provides "relations [that] are connected to the surrounding environment" (Matless 1994:77).

Using this case study and framework I propose multiple ways to reevaluate CSA's community-building potential. Throughout my study I focus on community-building potential, an important distinction because it focuses on the Wilkinson (1991) idea that community is a process and not an end point. Therefore, when drawing conclusions about community and the WSU Organic Farm CSA Program I suggest there are numerous community-building attributes as outlined throughout the thesis. These attributes can continue to be developed, remain relatively constant and/or even diminish overtime depending on the changing dynamics around the support of local organic agriculture. Groh and McFadden (1990, 1997) suggest that the importance of the farms of tomorrow lie with their ability to create current and future well being by allowing communities to support themselves. Determining the formation of community through the WSU Organic Farm CSA Program is therefore a long and on-going process, which I argue should in-part be evaluated based on the community characteristics outlined therein and *not* solely on those characteristics attached to the "classical CSA model." I suggest only in-part because I believe the community framework developed in this study is only a starting point for expanding how we evaluate CSA's community-building potential.

DeLind (2004) argues strongly that CSA does not build community. She states that emphasizing community stands in the way of the opportunities to build a more democratic food system. With this thesis, I contribute new insights about the role of community in CSA. The multidimensional community framework (Chapter 4) provides a means for reconceptualizing and broadening how we evaluate CSA's community-building potential. While many of the critiques of CSA's community-building potential lie with the tight-knit community vision of the "classical CSA model," I had the

opportunity to research a different type of CSA model. Very little research has been conducted on college and university supported CSA programs. Therefore, my study makes a significant contribution to research on different CSA structures.

Through my complete-member-researcher role I was able to gain valuable insight into the dynamic workings of the WSU Organic Farm CSA Program. It was through a variety of qualitative research techniques that I was able to broaden and reconceptualize the community-building potential of CSA. Because I only studied one farm and CSA program it is difficult to generalize across all CSA organizations. This could be seen as a limitation of my study. However, I believe my proposed community framework is useful for reevaluating CSA community-building potential across numerous CSA models. This is another major contribution of my research. A final limitation of my study was that I called for an evaluation of the diverse “people and organizations” involved with CSA, though I interviewed only those closest to the farm (i.e., the farmer, members, and farm workers). This limitation could be remedied in future research.

In conclusion, I argue that if CSA is going to provide an alternative to the vertically integrated seed-to-shelf multinational agribusinesses, it is going to require a broad network of “people and organizations” with ties in both horizontal and vertical directions. Furthermore, if we want to sustain local, diverse, low-input, organic agriculture we need to broaden who is considered a participant in CSA to include workshare members, customer participants, as well as the consumer who buys locally grown produce at the regional co-op.

This study could be expanded upon in numerous ways. One could interview the broad network involved with the WSU Organic Farm and CSA Program and ultimately

conduct an in-depth evaluation of “civic agriculture” (Lyson 2004) and “foodshed” (Kloppenburg et al. 1996) possibilities within the region. This study could also be explored in more detail by developing a survey and/or conducting in-depth qualitative research from a sample of colleges and universities that support CSA programs. This would allow for the ability to test the utility of my community framework across numerous case studies. Finally, one could examine CSA’s contribution to the preservation of local farming knowledge and food preservation skills, as well as how these ideas contribute to greater sustainable community goals.

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Appendix A: CSA Member Interview Questions

How long have you participated in the CSA program?

How did you hear about the CSA program?

Why did you decide to become a CSA member?

What do you like about being a member of the CSA program?

Is there anything you don't like about being a member?

What does membership / participation in this program mean to you?

What are some direct experiences you've had with the farm? (Tours, Field Day, Harvest Festivals) Could you tell me about one of them?

How do you feel when you are getting ready to pick up your produce, driving to the pickup location?

What do you think of your pickup location?

How long do you usually spend at your pickup location?

What does "community" mean to you? What are your thoughts about community in relation to participating in the program?

Are you familiar with what happens to excess food grown at the farm or food not picked up by CSA members?

Will you discuss your thoughts about local agriculture production?

What stories come to mind when you think of your experiences with the CSA?

What environmental issues do you think CSA (in general) and the WSU organic farm (in particular) addresses or should address?

What does "sustainability" mean to you? What do you think about sustainability in relation to community supported agriculture (in general) and the WSU's organic farm and CSA program.

What do you think about the idea of eating seasonally?

What does "food security" mean to you? Will you discuss your thoughts about community supported agriculture and food security?

Will you discuss your thoughts about social connections / social networks in regard to your experience with the program.

In what ways if any has being apart of the CSA affected your life and your family's lives?

In what ways if any has your relationship with your food changed since you started participating in the program?

In what ways if any has your relationship with the land or your local environment changed because of your participation in the program?

In what ways if any has being a part of the CSA affected your thoughts about a "sense of place"?

What does your family think about the CSA program and the food you receive?

- How many people and who usually eat the food you get from the farm?
- How do you and your family feel about cooking the produce?
- Has your diet changed since you started participating?

What do you think would improve the CSA program or the farm?

Are there food items you would like to see more of, less of, or completely new items?

Is there anything else you would like to add or talk about?

Basic Demographics

What is your age?

What is the highest level of school you have completed?

In what city do you live?

What is the structure of your household?

Appendix B: Student Participant Interview Questions

What is your major?

How long have you been a student worker on the farm?

If not a part of your major how did you learn about farm work for credit?

Why did you decided to take the Organic Farming and Gardening Practicum Class?

How long do you usually spend working on the farm?

Are there particular things you like about working on the farm?

Are there any things you don't like about working on the farm?

Could you talk to me about some of the work you've done on the farm?

What do you think about this class and the work you do in relation to other classes?

What does community mean to you? What are your thoughts about community in relation to your experiences working on the farm?

Have you met friends or expanded your social circle though working on the farm?

Have you developed networks with professors or organizations as a result of your experiences working with the farm?

In what ways if any has participating / working on the farm affected your life?

What do you think about the community supported agriculture program the farm grows the majority of its food for?

Are you familiar with other outlets for food grown on the farm besides the CSA program?

What environmental issues do you think WSU's organic farm and CSA program address or should address?

What does "sustainability" mean to you? Will you discuss your thoughts about sustainability in relation to your knowledge about the farm?

What do you think about the idea of eating seasonally?

What does "food security" mean to you? Will you discuss your thoughts about community supported agriculture and food security?

How much food if any do you receive from working at the farm?

If you receive and eat food from the farm, has your relationship with food changed since you started working at the farm?

Who usually eats the food that you receive?

What are your experiences with cooking food from the farm?

Has your diet changed since you started participating?

In what ways if any has your relationship with the local environment changed since you started working at the farm?

In what ways if any has working on the farm affected your thoughts about a “sense of place”?

Can you think of any improvements for the farm?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Basic Demographics

What is your age?

What is the highest level of school you have completed?

In what city do you live?

What is the structure of your household?