The place of food: mapping out the 'local' in local food systems

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Abstract: 'Local food systems' movements, practices, and writings pose increasingly visible structures of resistance and counter-pressure to conventional globalizing food systems. The *place of food* seems to be the quiet centre of the discourses emerging with these movements. The purpose of this paper is to identify issues of 'place', which are variously described as the 'local' and 'community' in the local food systems literature, and to do so in conjunction with the geographic discussion focused on questions and meanings around these spatial concepts. I see raising the profile of questions, complexity and potential of these concepts as an important role and challenge for the scholar-advocate in the realm of local food systems, and for geographers sorting through them. Both literatures benefit from such a foray. The paper concludes, following a 'cautiously normative' tone, that there is strong argument for *emplacing* our food systems, while simultaneously calling for careful circumspection and greater clarity regarding how we delineate and understand the 'local'. Being conscious of the constructed nature of the 'local', 'community' and 'place' means seeing the importance of local social, cultural and ecological particularity in our everyday worlds, while also recognizing that we are reflexively and dialectially tied to many and diverse locals around the world.

Key words: community, foodshed, local, local food systems, localism, place, region, *re*localizaton, *re*spatialization, 'terroir'.

I Introduction

Produced by your neighbours. Only natural ingredients. Regionalism is smart. Minimizing processing delivers taste. Jobs for neighbours. It is a rational movement. Quality is better. Save the planet. Eat well. Splendour in diversity. Traditional craftsmanship. Good food doesn't like to travel. Think global, consume local. Made for neighbours. Get political. Stay connected to the producer. Buy this product forever. Be radical.

Act Think Eat Drink Locally – for the neighbourhood. (Label on peanuts product[1])

Food and place are intertwined in robust ways in the geographic imagination and central to our lifeworld (Kloppenburg *et al.*, 1996; Hendrickson and Heffernan, 2002; Berry, 2002; Kingsolver, 2003). On this packet of peanuts we can see that terms like *neighbours*, *local*, *regionalism*, *global*, *planet* are all

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geographically charged – from the individual out to the scale of the globe. The label's appeal initiates this examination as the packet mirrors an emergent, politically orientated set of food movements and practices largely orientated around establishing processes which *re*-localize food system production and consumption.

This variegated movement located under headings of alternative food initiatives (Allen *et al.*, 2003), alternative agro-food networks and systems (Goodman, 2003; Watts *et al.*, 2005), community food security (Anderson and Cook, 1999; 2000; Pelletier *et al.*, 2000; Bellows and Hamm, 2003), civic and democratic agriculture (Bellows and Hamm, 2001; DeLind, 2002; Hassanein, 2003), post-productivism (Whatmore *et al.*, 2003), alternative or shortened food chains (Renting *et al.*, 2003; Ilbery and Maye, 2005), the 'quality turn' (Ilbery and Kneafsey, 1998; 2000; Morris and Young, 2000; Goodman, 2003), and a variety of other permutations, will be conjoined here as *local food systems* – LFS (Feenstra, 1997; Henderson, 1998; Lacy, 2000; Hinrichs, 2003). There is some risk in the conflation of the conceptual differences associated with such alternative food system ideas (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005). However, this exploration is focused on teasing out the diverse respatialization threads among such food system permutations. Effectively, the paper uses the LFS label as a loose subsumption of alternative and oppositional food system ideas, while still highlighting specific variants of them when useful to the objectives of the work.

Central to this paper's interests are questions and ideas pertaining to the 'local' in contemporary LFS discourses, and the often conflated concepts of 'community' and 'place'. This is especially relevant given the local-global tensions underlying such movement goals. Challenges and discourses abound around the *re*spatialization of food systems in contradistinction to the conventional, globalizing food system. LFS ideas are driven by some real and significant concerns, and

their entreaties for *re*spatializing and *re*configuring agricultural systems contain powerful arguments for change – what Goodman (2003) suggests is a potentially radical and yet contentious *eco-social imaginary*. At the same time, as this paper will suggest, the ideas and advocacy around reconfiguring the 'place of food' would benifit from a deeper engagement with the geographical concepts inherent in these entreaties. The recent and contemporary deliberations on concepts of 'place', 'community', and the 'local' in geographical and sociological literature emphasizes their 'multiple and conflicting meanings' (Allen *et al.*, 2003: 63) and this yields some appropriate and necessary considerations for the progressive work of LFS activists and scholars.

II Local food systems: toward relocalization

> space has been disconnected from place in the dominant food system . . . As people foster relationships with those who are no longer in their locale, distant others can structure the shape and use of the locale, a problem that is being explicitly rejected by those involved in the local food system movements across the globe. (Hendrickson and Heffernan, 2002: 349)

The *re*localization orientation of LFS movements is partly derivative of early sustainability directives calling for decentralization, democratization, self-sufficiency and subsidiarity – all spatially referenced concepts. Both North American and European discourses on such change wear the attire of the small-scale participatory cultural economies central to the tomes from the 1970s: 'small is beautiful' (Schumacher, 1973) and 'small is possible' models (McRobie, 1981). More recently, these became inscribed in the global treatises on sustainable development, like that of WCED, (1987) containing notions of community-control, equitable access to resources, and subsidiarity (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005). A 'resistance to the agro-food distanciation' is in some key ways at the core of these past and

current food discourses (Winter, 2003b: 508), and this is echoed by Anderson and Cook (2000: 237–38) who believe that LFS processes can rework 'power and knowledge relationships in food supply systems that have become distorted by increasing distance (physical, social, and metaphorical) between producers and consumers'. The following subsections highlight the kinds of respatialization orientations located in shortened food supply chains, in foodsheds, in community food security discussions, in embeddedness and the quality 'turn', and generally as they appear in the LFS literature writ large.

1 Shortened food chains

The development of complex and increasingly global-orientated food chains can be seen as a critical juncture around which most oppositional and alternative LFS discourses have coalesced in the last 30 years. These chains exemplify, and are held as responsible for, a diversity of issues to which LFS efforts have been directed. Some like Murdoch (2000) have noted key issues of power-differences inherent to these complex globalizing food commodity chains, with writers like O'Hara and Stagl (2001) describing them and their networks as comprised of four dominant characteristics: capital concentration, spatial and temporal independence, dependence on symbols, and reliance on expert systems. They state that all of these traits are associated with spatial shifts which have 'expanded the domain of the various food systems activities well beyond the scale typical of the ecological context of its production and consumption activities' (2001: 537). Given this dynamic, *shortened food chains* (SFCs) analysis and advocacy is directly tied to *re*spatialization and localization, with Renting *et al.* (2003) contending that shortening such food system chains can alter positively the economic and social viability of regions. Their focus is on the kinds of *relations-of-proximity* shifts seen as consequent from 'short-circuiting' such lengthy industrial food chains. The invisibility of the *provenance* of the food and the

anonymity of actors which marks conventional food networks is said to be countered in SFC shifts: 'They bring consumers closer to the origins of their food and in many cases involve a more direct contact between farmers and the end-users of their products' (Renting *et al.*, 2003: 398). SFCs are visible in the forms of CSAs and farmers' markets for instance, where producers and consumers are closer both geographically and socially (Wells *et al.*, 1999; Feagan *et al.*, 2004). A specific spatial orbit is more readily identifiable with these foods transactions with respect to the distances between a local farm and a local consumer, relative to the *food-miles* (and embedded energy subsidies) associated with the average industrialized food plate (Halweil, 2002; Norberg-Hodge *et al.*, 2002).

As in the European 'quality-turn' shifts explored in more depth shortly, spatially orientated attributes of foods become contingent considerations in these transactions. That is, quality tied to trust and knowledge of such markers as the farming practices and the customs of production, become information seen as fundamental in such shortened chains (Ilbery and Kneafsey, 2000; Ilbery and Maye, 2005). This reconfiguration is also touted as impelling some manner of changed agricultural practices – a '"shortening" of relations between food production and locality, potentially configuring a *re*embedding of farming towards more environmentally sustainable modes of production' (Renting *et al.*, 2003: 398). The natural conditions of food production can be restored as inherent spatial elements in agro-food systems, in contrast to industrializing food systems which are seen as displacing nature as a factor of production (Murdoch, 2000; O'Hara and Stagl, 2001). In this vein, Marsden's (2004: 131) theoretical insights on the reworking of the places and spaces of food production are useful, as his work on the integration of ecological parameters in food systems via ecological modernization, is keenly spatial. To be *ecologically rational* requires recognition of place as a socionatural construct, calling for 'the

realignment, more specifically, between nature, quality, region and locale, producers and consumers'. In this kind of configuration, Marsden (2004) sees the local and place re-emerging as necessary elements in the integration of natural with the social, akin to Winter's (2003b) discussion on 'reconnections' in agrofood systems.

2 The foodshed

These sorts of *re*spatialization orientations also align with constructs like the 'food-shed' which Kloppenburg *et al.* (1996: 37) describe as 'a socio-geographic space: human activity embedded in the natural integument of a particular place'. Though drawing from the conceptual ideas of the *water*shed with its boundaries set by somewhat more immutable river-drainage based characteristics, foodsheds are perceived as hybrid social and natural constructs. The more 'natural' place variables of micro-weather patterns, soil types, water availability, slope conditions, etc obviously play a role in determining the potential and risks of agriculture – they are spatially bound systems (Marsden *et al.*, 1999). The foodshed concept reconstructs the geography of food systems by compelling social and political decisions on food to be orientated within specific delineated spaces. Advocates hold that 'Foodsheds embed the system in a moral economy attached to a particular community and place, just as watersheds reattach water systems to a natural ecology' (Starr *et al.*, 2003: 303). The foodshed concept is located in the more idealistic 'eco-communitarian' ethos of some North American LFS debates (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005).

3 Terroir and labels of origin

Related to the concept of foodshed, 'terroir' and 'labels of origin' add to this food and geography association. Terroir is a traditional French term referring 'to an area or terrain, usually rather small, whose soil and micro-climate impart distinctive qualities to food products' (Barham, 2003: 131). Tying food to place via 'terroir' has contemporary manifestations in 'labels of origin', the marketing and cultural branding of food through its association with place – *geographical indications or 'protected designations of origin'* – PDOs (Ilbery and Kneafsey, 1998). Barham (2003) suggests that 'geographical indications' can incite movement towards food production and consumer transactions integrated with local places. The specialty food products, SFPs of which Ilbery and Kneafsey (2000: 220) write, are premised on consumers placing 'greater value on products which they can associate with a region, pays, terroir or method of production'. 'Patrimonialization' is another term used in France to describe this mesh of authenticity, heritage and food as manifested in regional cuisine, the protection of rural landscapes, and heightened or renewed sense of *place* (Gade, 2004).

LFS advocates, or more specifically in this case, 'quality turn' research in Europe holds that 'fixing products to place' through such place-labeling helps to broaden the 'marketness' of a transaction. That is, to *re*-embed the price signal, and hence decision-making regarding consumption choices, in broader spheres of the sociocultural and environmental. Traits and character of place and of the skills of the producers and traditions of cuisine in specific places are perceived in such designation as containing more meaningful and comprehensive information about food. Barham contends that the 'terroir' label can act to entrain capital, contrary to its increasingly frictionless and placeless tendencies, because 'a label of origin connects it with a specific place, and opens the possibility that producers, as well as consumers, can be held accountable for their actions *in that place*' (2003: 130, italics in original). And, as Gade (2004) notes, this originally wine- and wine-region-associated 'patrimonial process' has broadened to include dairy products, olive oil, nuts, meat, and fruit, etc. This more recent commodification of place and region through food, with French AOC labeling (Appellations d'Origine contrôlée) a

well-known example, has taken on greater resonance with regards to perceived losses of rural tradition under modernization and a renewed search for authenticity and 'quality' (Ilbery and Kneafsey, 1998).[2] Conditions of production and place-knowledge are key to such 'turns', falling under the local cultural markers of which Kneafsey *et al*. (2001) and Ray (1998) write in their works on *cultural economies* and *endogenous* rural economic development in Europe.

It is also believed that place-labeling can induce local environmental benefits when 'a local area or region produces a series of recognizable foodstuffs, encoded in trusted brands, which bear all the hallmarks of a clean and green production environment' (Banks and Bristow, 1999: 319). Bell and Valentine (1997: 155) note the emerging associations between organic food and wine region *terroir* in the geographic imagination, where organic labeling 'tells consumers all about the conditions of its production (small-scale, chemical-free, non-intensive, locally sensitive, countercultural, etc).' Similarly, the 'culture economies' work of Ray (1998) and Kneafsey *et al*. (2001) noted earlier can be located in this realm. The *valorization* of place through food (as well as language, crafts, landscapes, etc) in the culture economy is tightly coupled to spatial ideas of the local community, economy, and territory. Place and local are integral to such commodification. The investigation by Kneafsey *et al*. (2001: 299) of four economic sectors in Wales was predicated on seeing to what extent there has been 'conscious effort to 'fix' products to place'.

4 Community in LFS as place building

This local that is inscribed in such LFS processes is often conflated with ideas of a resurrected 'community', the existence of which is held to be an important arbiter of environmental sustainability in transformed food systems (Feenstra, 1997; 2002; Marsden *et al.*, 1999; Norberg-Hodge *et al.*, 2002; Starr *et al.*, 2003; Allen, 2004). The use of the term community is notable in the LFS

literature generally, and articulated in statements like this by Lacy (2000: 3): 'Communities are the basic building blocks and foundations of our society, making critical contributions to the quality of our families, interpersonal relationships, education, health, environment, food systems, economy, and overall well-being.' The place of community for Lacy is raised with respect to its role as the container for the development of social cohesion, human endeavor, and empowerment, and in this way, place-formation. Despite this seemingly *invented nature*, drawing on 'community' as a descriptor of some socially and geographically bound place, does not detract from a role in territorial rural development (Ray, 1998).

Community-supported or 'shared' agriculture – CSA, represents an element in the LFS spectrum where notions of community and place are positioned in close proximity. A CSA is organized around a contract between a farmer, commonly an organic producer, and a set of local residents, who share the risks of the farming enterprise by contributing money up front for a 'share' of the harvest prior to the farming season (O'Hara and Stagl, 2001). In this arrangement the shareholders help bear the risks of the farming season and the potential benefits of a good harvest: 'With food as a focal point, CSA brings a growing circle of people into a closer relationship with place – farming, nature, each other' (Wells *et al.*, 1999: 38).[3] As in work on farmers' markets, community-gardens, and terroir and shortened food chains, ideas of a more embedded set of relations between producers and consumers, and the place and provenance of the food grown, are intrinsic to the arguments espoused for such LFS orientations.

'Community food security' (CFS), represents a process of respatialization of food systems orientated around the spatial delimitations of *community*. Its geneaology is traced to the world food security concerns of the 1960s and 1970s (Anderson and Cook, 1999), though its foundational principles of social

justice and participation, equitable access and availability, and food reliablity and quality (MacRae and TFPC, 1999) have subsequently been *recast* at the local and community scale. This occurs as food security advocates are drawn increasingly from community nutritionists, grass-roots environmental activists, community-development practitioners and researchers, and public-participation advocates:

> A key component of these newer definitions of food security is attention to building *local capacity* to produce and distribute food and control food supplies . . . [and] to keep decision-making power within the *community* rather than losing it through dependence on external sources of food . . . *localized food production* can meet many of the diverse *community needs* more effectively than globalized food systems because it can give priority to *community and environmental integrity* before corporate profit-making . . . while reinforcing social identity and cohesion. (Anderson and Cook, 2000: 237; italics added)

The same sorts of allusions to connection, democratic control, identity and the position that globalized systems cannot perform adequately to provide food security, are intrinsic to both the community food security movement and to LFS movements in general (Bellows and Hamm, 2003; Allen, 2004).

5 The 'quality turn' and embeddedness
There are some common ties among the LFS spatial appeals just explored with those of the 'quality turn'. Goodman (2003: 1) articulates the broad strokes of *re*spatializing aspirations associated with this 'quality turn' appeal in Europe as generally directed away 'from the "industrial world", with its heavily standardized quality conventions and logic of mass commodity production, to the "*domestic world*", where *quality* conventions embedded in trust, tradition and *place* support more differentiated, *localized* and "ecological" products and forms of organization' (italics added). Here the local is associated with ecology, differentiation and quality, with the latter being tied to relational ideas of tradition, trust and

'place', a point iterated by Ilbery and Kneafsey (2000) in their examination of constructions of quality in Britain. The 'quality turn' is associated with the recent restructuring of European Union agricultural policies and programs, and reflective of shifting values and sentiments tied to consumer fears and uncertainties about the consequences of industrializing agriculture in the European realm.

In the North American LFS arena, we see these kinds of associations between ecology, trust and place made by writers like Feenstra (2002: 101), for example, who advocates an array of spatially defined processes and programs. In LFS operations in Ohio, she lists: 'eating regionally and seasonally, locally produced and processed foods, schools purchasing from local farms, community gardens and CSAs (community supported agriculture), community farms run by community members and local university students, local food policy councils, and community food security with local sustainable farming systems, etc'. The local is front and centre in the shape of appeals to all three of these constructs of community, place, and the local, and to those inhabiting and creating those places. Similarly, Feenstra (1997) notes among an array of LFS objectives that related attributes of environmental integrity, economic viability, and social equity all converge around *particular places*.

I have already noted how notions of 'embeddedness' have increasing resonance in the LFS literature.[4] The concept is described as sociocultural processes associated with relationships between producer and consumer such that food transactions are *re*-embedded in community and place. Trust, 'relations of regard', social interaction, and more comprehensive information are said to create the conditions for this more relational food transaction environment (Hinrichs, 2000; Sage, 2003; Winter, 2003a). 'Embedding' notions arise in an array of the European LFS variants like SFCs, terroir and labels of origin, and the 'quality turn', though

they do seem to be located most visibly in the more idealistic localisms common in North American LFS positions (Ilbery and Kneafsey, 1998; 2000; DuPuis and Goodman, 2005). For example, the shortening of food chains is implicit to these reworked producer-consumer relations, with some characterization that local economies can potentially transform under this broader set of values through socially embedding the food system which Kirwan (2004) discusses as the *alterity* potential in LFS.

Another example of the embeddedness rationale in LFS is witnessed in the North American 'food circle' process. This process involves gathering local groups of people committed to reworking the dominant food systems through an emphasis on this local-social objective of embeddedness. Hendrickson and Heffernan (2002: 362) write: 'The Food Circle's perceived role is to connect all actors in the food system in a sensible and sustainable way that sustains the *community*, is healthy for both the people and the environment, and returns control of the food system to local *communities*' (italics added). The embeddedness notions of responsibility, trust, and *relations of regard* are central to the food circle process of constructing relationships more consciously integrated between the local community and its food system (Hendrickson and Heffernan, 2002). These authors contend that such processes may help 'reorder time and space' through education around the seasonality and local customs regarding food for instance: 'Food in a local system is rooted in a space that enables and constrains production and consumption through its own unique characteristics' (2002: 363). Community and its members coalesce around reconstructing food systems so as to re-embed them in place-orientated socioeconomic and ecological relations (Barham, 2003).

This section has raised the visibility of LFS appeals via their focus on concepts of local, place and community which are commonly conflated as some form of localized geographic space. It sets the context for the following section which explores these spatial concepts within the recent and contemporary geographic debates.

III Geographies of place, community and the local

> The importance of asking questions about the spatial units that define the parameters of our studies is particularly apparent when there is an explicit link between the social process under examination and a particular regional formation. (Murphy, 1991: 24)

How is the local imagined? How does it function? What are the hopes? And who is in and who is out? Determinations of the constitution of the *local*, *community* and *place* in local food systems, are conjoined here with exploration of the 'turn to the local' in geographic inquiry. The desire is to locate fruitful intersections between the *re*localization appeals within LFS works, and what this companion literature might proffer in the sense of problematizing and enriching these efforts and inquiry around the *place of food*. The scholar-advocate benefits from critical engagement in these concepts and their application to food systems research.

Place, a spatial concept with an enduring history in geographic thought and analysis is an appropriate initiation point for this discussion. I will not attempt to trace its deeper historical threads here (for some foundational and interpretive ideas, see Relph, 1976; Agnew and Duncan, 1989; Shelley *et al.*, 2003; Castree, 2004) but will focus on contemporary ideas as they tie in with the 'turn to the local' and highlight pertinent conceptual notes for this paper.

1 The modern demise of place
Place, which in the modernizing world diminished in value as a concept in social sciences and specifically for geographers during the quantitative era, has regained critical prominence in the last 15 years. This is partly associated with the pivotal work of Agnew and Duncan (1989). Their well-known work

defined it 'as the structuring or mediating context for social relations' (1989: 16) which, Pascual-de-Sans (2004) adds, is a spatial concept having no existence without people and to which a geographic identification is critical. The role of modernity in creating a world of increasing 'placelessness' moved cultural and political geographers during the last couple of decades to raise questions about the enduring significance of place in peoples' lives and the lack of a critical sense of the geographies of modernization. They argued that spaces are fluid and dynamic, but that both agency from below and difference in capital formation and mobility assert that place has not become the frictionless surface often hypothesized. That is, we see some shape of reciprocal response in the face of exogenous forces which changes the nature of place, but not its disappearance *per se*.

Harvey's more recent contributions to the discussions and debates regarding place (though see Castree, 2004, for chronological notes on Harvey's shifting positions in this realm) provide a useful starting point: 'We worry about the meaning of place in general and of our place in particular when the security of actual places becomes generally threatened' (Harvey, 1996: 291). He perceives space-time relations as having undergone dramatic restructuring and that 'place' – always at the behest of capital and social reconstruction – is even more vulnerable to the exigencies of capital mobility in this recent era.[5] This stems in part from the formal role that the nation state usurped from the local and community during the last 150 years. The state as 'naturalized' container was constructed in tandem with the emergence of the rise of the individual and those sets of rights seen as necessary to newly developing liberal social and political arrangements. Reformulations of society and economic 'order' were reflexively tied to this new state entity and its roles. Agnew describes the spatial implications of this transition like this:

It was in this context that the social sciences became orientated towards the national state as a 'natural' unit upon which to build their claims to generalization. This presupposed the diminished importance of *community* on a local scale and the social significance of *place* along with it. (Agnew, 1989: 19; italics added)

Older/traditional ideas of place and people and community were devalued as they were seen as tied to a premodern social order – irrational, traditional, and accultured. In contrast, the nation state was perceived as utilitarian, rational, democratic, and non-superstitious, in a word, 'progressive' (Connell, 2003). The concept of place in modernist sociopolitical discourse largely disappeared and the local and contingent were dismissed in the search for the universal and the general. However, geographers and others began to question this disappearance, partly in response to the fact that people were not letting go of place and community as readily as might be perceived or expected under such conditions.

Notions of place and the local are re-emerging as urgent expressions of our contemporary geographic imagination. As Pascual-de-Sans (2004: 349) submits, 'In a world that some would like to consider globalized, the presence of place in people's lives persists unyieldingly'. These expressions arise most emphatically in the face of structural changes coalescing under the rubric of globalization (Harvey, 1996; Dalby and MacKenzie, 1997; Paasi, 2002; 2003; Shelley *et al.*, 2003; Pascual-de-Sans, 2004). That is, the emergence of visible practices around the *re*creation of place – the local and the region simultaneously[6] – as tangible geographies, appears directly correlated with an emerging awareness and concern around global change (Agnew, 2000). More specifically, this seems to be occurring as forms of resistance to the complex *de*territorialization paths of modernity, and the larger structural drivers which devalue the various meanings inscribed in our lived worlds – worlds *lived in place* (Entrikin, 1989: 41). Bell's and Valentine's (1997: 147)

query is poignant in this regard; 'As regions face an increasingly globalizing world, will we witness the erosion of regional distinctiveness, or its reaffirmation?' Here, the region and the local (read *place* in most circumstances) as more consciously discursive delimitations of space are held to be containers which, though reflexive in a world of change, potentially afford some manner of protection or buttressing to *globalizing* forces (real or otherwise). And this conscious geographic realignment and search for place occurs in many instances following periods when the region or the local seemed to have lost their distinctive and 'sovereign' qualities and markers of identity for their inhabitants. As early as 1976 in his well-known tome on *place and placelessness*, Relph exhorted that:

> 'placelessness' – the weakening of distinctive diverse experiences and identities of places – is now a dominant force. Such a trend makes a major shift in the geographical bases of existence from a deep association with places to rootlessness, a shift that, once recognized and clarified, may be judged undesirable and possibly countered. (Relph, 1976: 6)

Casey's (2001) more recent work on the 'dried-out life-world' of modernity wields a similar description, prompting a search for connection, place-making, and meaning in the face of such placelessness and that which drives it. Revivifying the local in the face of what he labels the 'thinning' out of our daily geographies is focused on the *re*creation of place, and the 'thickening' of our lifeworlds – attaching social and cultural meanings to specific places once again. So the devaluation from above of the local and place finds its concomitant opposite in the valorization of the local evident in many sociological and geographic observations on resistance to globalizing forces. 'Localism provides a defensive position against the disempowering and homogenizing effects of globalization' (Allen, 2004: 169). Harvey (1996) sees the search for both imagined and real communities arizing in the face of this sense of place-insecurity.

2 New regionalism

This vein of discussion extends into the reworking of the region, what became known as the *new regionalism* emerging in the late 1980s in geographic thought (see Gilbert, 1988; Pudup, 1988; Sayer, 1989; Johnston *et al.*, 1990; Murphy, 1991; Paasi, 1991), and described as 'an umbrella term for research reflecting how regions/places can be constituted by and constitutive of social life, relations and identity' (Paasi, 2002: 802). From a much earlier geographic research era, when place and region were seen in purely descriptive and idiographic terms, to this recent period characterized by more critical reflection, contemporary regionalism engages with place below and the state above, in ways which embed it in a relational and interdependent manner – 'relatively permeable, socially constructed, politically mediated' (Jones and MacLeod, 2004: 434), but substantive nonetheless. Regions are an outcome of structural change and the contingency of local-place context and agency, both of which are products and drivers of sociospatial processes (Murphy, 1991). Further, regions are seen to be geographic units of both stability and change where internal and external forces are continuously transforming and reinforcing regions in a multitude of ways. They are reflexive but they remain significant spatial entities in the geographic imagination (Jones and MacLeod, 2004) and seem 'to be strengthening under contemporary circumstances' (Agnew, 2000: 101). The recent role of the region in EU development schemes is partly founded on this realization, admittedly under quite divergent political-economic ends (see Ray, 1998).

The fact that regions/*places* are imagined and constructed, and that they are dynamic and contingent upon both agency relations from below and structural relations from above (stable but impermanent) does not impede them from regaining both legitimacy and urgency in the face of global capitalist processes (Agnew, 2000; Paasi, 2002). And, according to Entrikin (1989: 41), this is also

true partly because of the inherent value and 'givens' of social existence: 'More specifically, attachment to place and territory remain of importance in modern society despite the increased mobility of the population and despite the production of standardized landscapes.' A close link is found here in the renewed concern (and search) for *sense-of-place*, which may be conceived as attempts to recapture spatio-cultural identity in an era of identity-confusion under globalization (Pascual-de-Sans, 2004; Windsor and McVey, 2005). That is, there is a range of concerns emerging around the loss and diminishment of uniqueness and geographic difference associated with the perceived homogenizing forces of the cultural, social, and economic under globalization. And, in this environment of concern, territories, regions, places and communities are evinced as spaces of resistance through which agency and local institutional efforts can manage change in ways which more closely meets their needs, at least under some reworked level of control from below. The inventions of community, place and region take on this more critical constructed role even though the interdependent dialectical configuration of the local and trans-local does not alter.

3 Bioregionalism
Another overlapping theme is the environmental and geographic exploration of regions – *bio*regionalism – as ecological containers around which moral and social behaviour is constructed (see writers like McTaggart, 1993; Frenkel, 1994). In simple terms, the region is seen and reworked in these imagined ways, as a semi-determining ecological space, constructed with aspirations that see human behavior and activity necessarily being shaped by, or accommodating, regional ecological conditions and imperatives (Meredith, 2005). Bioregional theorists delineate the world according to ecological attributes, imagining that human activities and decision-making can be directed in ways that are more closely aligned with

their criteria of ecological sustainability and the places they *inhabit* – living *within place* and within the ecological means and conditions of that place. The delineation of space in this ecological manner has critical political repercussions with respect to the rejection of other forms of political space which do not abide by these specific con-ditions of delimitation (Frenkel, 1994). McTaggart cites various criteria for this ideology cum praxis, exhorting that we:

> Be aware that community responsibility for place operates through the mechanism of a collective social or cultural consciousness in which are embedded a set of normative values; and that constructive bioregional activity is designed to respond to and condition these values in such a manner that actions planned or carried out will promote certain specific and desired qualities, such as community welfare, ecosystem soundness, restoration, and conservation. (McTaggart, 1993: 308)

Seeing the ecological connotations of place as having some manner of determining quality in the sociospatial affairs of humanity is integral to the *re*spatialization discussion around the production of food given that food production is held to be tied directly to environmental well-being.

IV Synthesizing moments: LFS and geographies of place

> One of the primary results – and one of the primary needs – of industrialism is the separation of people and places and products from their histories. (Berry, 2002: 7)

What might we take from the foregoing concepts and ideas with respect to a constructive synthesis? I initiate this section by suggesting that the critical positions and practices advanced in LFS literature around the need to reconstruct the 'local' in the face of industrializing and globalizing agricultural systems are paralleled, though theoretically deepened, in the discussions by geographers. This is followed by ruminations on the kinds of considerations seen as necessary to constructive LFS respatialization efforts.

Though often not easily articulated, people do develop associations between perceived losses of tradition, familiar landscapes, and values, and the complex processes of capital accumulation commonly labeled globalization. The sense that modernized space, 'the realm of a rootless, fluid, reality consisting of flows of capital, commodities, money and information' (Merrifield, 1993: 103) is *annihilating place* – fracturing, realigning, restructuring the historic places of our geographic imagination, is part of this emerging set of psychological and material practices tied to place, the local, community and food. This fracturing and loss of place or the 'thinning of the lifeworld' as Casey (2001) would describe this angst around globalization, is manifest in a myriad of ways. That is, *thinning* under modernization has culminated in concerns at the scale of first- to third-world job-shifts, loss of languages and dialects, diminishment and erasure of cultural and social traditions, as well as at the scale of community and local economic dislocation, and the depletion of regional ecosystems and biodiversity. Specific to the LFS umbrella, we see analogous critiques and concerns over rural community disintegration as systems of local control, employment, and social bonds and relations wither, over the loss of 'foodways' and accompanying cultural traditions, soil and water degradation, and reduction of ecosystem, species and genetic diversity associated with industrial agricultural practices.

The spatial realignments inherent in the modernization project writ large are held to be the degradation and loss of place, the local, and community. Such 'thinning out' and diminishment of meaning and attachment associated with humanity's arguably age-long relationships with *place* compels consideration and understanding of LFS efforts. Local food systems are orientated around some form of geographic delimitations of space variously labeled the local, place and the community. These are key spatial containers within which LFS practices of farmers' markets, community-shared agriculture, food-box schemes, community gardens, farm-to-school programs, food-circles, etc. are emplaced and where their much reduced food-mile radii provide a sharp contrast to that common to the agro-industrially produced food-plate. The more geographically proximal boundaries tied to these LFS elements are said also to contribute reflexively to the reconfiguration or reconstruction of industrialized food spaces, into places and communities with associative identities of food between the producers and the consumers.

LFS efforts would appear to be clear examples of this resistance to change, calling for a realignment of human social interaction in the context of place and food. This appeal is accompanied by those who hold that food and its powerful sociocultural and geographic associations are arguably more critical symbolic determinants of identity than many other elements of cultural consumption (Kingsolver, 2003). DeLind's (2002) notes on 'inhabitation' and *place-making* are developed in the spirit of this sense of attachment which, she argues, is as integral to social and individual needs, and what these mean for the creation of a 'civic and democratic agriculture'. Even Harvey (1996), who is clear about the difficulties he sees in attaching 'rootedness' to the 'experience of place' and the privileging of such sentiments to the individual versus the collective, holds that there is transformative potential inherent in resistance to the perceived loss of place in the geographic imagination – 'local protests [that] can build outwards to a more universal ecological politics' (1996: 305). Such a 'militant particularism' 'seizes upon the qualities of place, reanimates the bond between the environmental and the social, and seeks to bend the social processes constructing space-time to a radically different purpose' (1996: 306).

1 Boundaries of the 'local'
The LFS literature itself increasingly raises the issues of 'boundaries' and its localizing terminology and aspirations. For instance,

Anderson and Cook (1999: 146) note in their work on community food security (CFS) that 'The most fundamental problem impeding clear definitions of CFS is the vagueness of the concept of "community"', and that issues of definition are spatial, moral, and functional – by no means mutually inclusive in their manifestations. They also note that what community comprises is sometimes 'confused with the question of what is "local," perhaps because both have a spatial dimension', and though community must be defined for appropriate food security policy, 'whether various aspects of food systems are local or not is part of a range of options for implementation'. Writers like Hinrichs (2003) and Ilbery and Kneafsey (1998) help to raise the visibility of the diverse spatial attributes associated with the differing elements of LFS. For example, the geography of niche and specialty foods is intrinsic to their status and success involving the valorization of the local, also seen in the 'quality turn' and in discussions of cultural economies (Ray, 1998; Kneafsey *et al.*, 2001). Their profiles are tied to the provenance of the foods grown and/or the character of the processing standards employed in their production. Organic food – and its often dual association with specific geographic regions and ecologically sensitive conditions of production – is a common example (Ilbery and Kneafsey, 2000). Importantly, though this 'local' attribute is key to its commoditization, it is sold on both local and global markets. PDI and PDO labelling schemes, and ideas of 'terroir' are, as noted earlier, along with 'Tastes of . . .' organizations, examples where a sociospatial character is inscribed through a geography based on its place of production but not necessarily in terms of the geography of its consumer market (Telfer and Wall, 1996; Bessiere, 1998; Vision Niagara Planning and Development, 1998; Kneafsey *et al.*, 2001; Barham, 2003). This kind of respatialization around food systems would fall into Ray's (1998: 6) Mode II and III of a 'cultural economy' using territorial markers for branding its

food. The local here is intrinsically tied to the extra-local such that their interdependence complicates the delimitation of boundaries. These questions need to be addressed in LFS debates.

There are other difficulties that we encounter in research focused on the local and community. For example, Allen *et al.* (2003) and Allen (2004) point out there are many complex and conflicting meanings tied up in the discourse of the 'local' with respect to food, and, as Hinrichs (2003: 36) notes, the local is not neat nor easily containable in the range of potential LFS elements: 'Specific social or environmental relations do not always map predictably and consistently onto the spatial relation.' As the spatial becomes even more concretely bounded in the shapes of bioregional place appeals, and the notion of the foodshed (Kloppenburg *et al.*, 1996), we encounter fundamental concerns regarding what is in and what is out in these constructed terrains (Cresswell, 1996). We also need to understand that the local and community (regions for that matter) are not islands unto themselves, but interdependent and dynamic in their constitution. LFS work must bear in mind with respect to spatially bound concepts like foodsheds, that the types of food grown, how it is grown, where it is grown, by whom and according to what sorts of cultural, social, and economic needs are tied, in complex and somewhat indiscernible ways, to sociocultural factors at the macro economic and political levels. Murdoch's (2000) discussion of rural economic development is useful for shifting our gaze on food systems from local nodal places, to that of interdependent networks in a landscape, as is Ray's (1998) account of culture economies and the articulation of local/extra-local interdependencies in their development.

2 Local and global?
As seems apparent, the commonly constituted binary of the local and the global in terms of LFS efforts is problematic. The two ends of this binary must be seen as

interdependent, and not in simplistic *either-or* kinds of end-states (Hinrichs, 2003). Notions of glocalization, understanding the local and the global as dialectical, means as Gombay (2005: 430) holds: 'places, scales, and identities ought to be understood not as discrete things but as events or processes that are embedded within one another and are in constant relationship, movement, and interaction.' For example, as contemporary Inuit communities struggle with the encroachment of the 'other' into their world via sociocultural traditions and the allocation of traditional 'country food' (Gombay, 2005), LFS advocates are encouraged to imagine place-based and community-orientated ways of thinking about food chains on this less-than-global scale that appeals to people in place, while circumventing the brands of militant particularism tending to *conservative parochialism* (Harvey, 1996). DuPuis and Goodman (2005: 369) advance an 'inclusive and reflexive politics in place' as an appropriate ethic and direction for LFS construction of the local, noting the regressive realities of localist geographies which can allow 'a way for local elites to create effective territories for themselves' (2005: 364). In terms of progressive LFS purposes, objectives such as community food security and local resilience, environmental integrity, and forms of sociocultural embeddedness need to be constructed in ways that are 'diversity-receptive' (Hinrichs, 2003).

However, as well as recognizing that LFSs are ineluctably tied to the global system, we need to listen carefully to those who 'contend that food systems that are more concentrated at the local scale can build some level of resistance to market hegemonies' (Bellows and Hamm, 2001: 271). In this context, the notes by Renting *et al*. (2003: 399) on shortened food supply chains, are instructive: 'SFSCs are not the results of some kind of external, elusive "free market". They result, rather, from the active construction of networks by various actors in the agrofood chain, such as farmers, food processors, wholesalers,

retailers and consumers.' Aspects of community food security analysis have also demonstrated some recognition of the necessarily integrated nature of the global and the local: 'While local food systems cannot be expected to replace larger-scale agricultural production and trade as the world's primary source of food, they can supplement and complement larger-scale food systems in urgently needed ways' (Anderson and Cook, 2000: 244). Bellows and Hamm (2001: 275) concur – 'the realities of a "local food system" necessitates an integration of "local and non-local" and "conventional and sustainable" in local food systems'. Expressing agency in such ways can confront neoliberal and economistic rationales with more comprehensive formulations of food-production and consumption decisions via local network arrangements which are more sustainable, while also attending to the realities of interdependence with other spatial scales.

This of course muddies the clarion call of the naïve 'local', but it does make clear that the local is critically inset within larger-scale spaces nested in diverse ways out to the global level. Whether LFS processes must pitch a message of less-permeable boundaries around the local in order to achieve their goals – radical respatialization of food systems through foodsheds for instance or whether, as is evident in food-labeling schemes for example, some porosity is a tenable element in LFS formulations – remains to be seen. For example, Watts *et al*. (2005) qualify the 'quality' and labeling schemes as 'weak' elements in AFS-LFS because of their integration with the conventional and international food systems (FS). It is also why DeLind (2002: 219) ponders the spatial implications and the local in 'virtual CSAs and opportunities to buy fresh produce 'on-line' from organic farmers'. Some orientations of LFS see a critical role for extra-local actors in the valorization of the local, while more spatially focused versions would see this as undermining the long-term processes necessary for real transformation. These represent some of the complex issues

around the creation of the local and place in LFS construction, and their more durable contributions to food system sustainability.

3 Complications

At this juncture, it is also important to signal other issues tied to some of the imagined geographies of the local, especially those associated with more determinant ecological criteria. For instance, though Harvey (1996) sees the local impacts of modernization on the environment, he is not sanguine about the positions of the bioregional or foodshed people-place projects and its associations with better ecological stewardship. He holds that the scale of place experienced by individuals is not translatable to the larger scales at which progressive and transformative politics is possible. This is a kind of ecological fallacy. Writings on ecological sustainability also raise this with respect to the advocacy for environmental resources to be decentralized and managed at the local level: 'The local network does not 'see' the ecosystem, but only the resources of the ecosystem connected with the local system' (Cavallaro *et al.*, 1998: 38).

It also bears repeating that the 'local' is neither simple nor uncontentious as Harvey (1996) and others have noted (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005) and that this appeal requires serious caution. The divisive and elitist implications of *defensive localism* and the potential xenophopia inherent to it must be seen in the light that there is no automatic resolution of equity, race, and environment via simple spatial delimitations of the local through food (Winter, 2003a; Allen, 2004). Issues of protectionism, resistance to the 'other', privileging the local, minimizing internal difference, and separation are of real concern – 'defensive food system localization tends to stress the homogeneity and coherence of "local", in patriotic opposition to heterogeneous and destabilizing outside forces, perhaps a global "other" . . . [and thus] localization becomes elitist and reactionary, appealing to narrow nativist sentiments'

(Hinrichs, 2003: 37). This kind of localism or 'bourgeois regionalism' cannot be dismissed lightly in progressive LFS deliberations (Jones and MacLeod, 2004).

On the other hand, it is critical to acknowledge the powers of capital, and the difficulties of developing LFS practices when they are in various ways tied to the dominant food system. Alternative food systems practices are appropriable (everything has its price?) and this needs to be considered with respect to LFS work. The appropriation of the original conception of organic farming with its strongly local-spatial connotations, and recent trends to conventionalization ('organic lite'), is an example (Guthman, 2004; Raynolds, 2004). LFS in its various permutations is susceptible to the ability of the dominant system to appropriate non-conventional models of farming like organic. This 'penetration' helps to problematize LFS aspirations. The local – which was once intrinsic to the organic conceptual narrative – is compromised (Lockie *et al.*, 2002). Hall and Mogyordoy (2001) raise scenarios which suggest that *de*localization is already at play in the reworking of organic production from its seemingly innate local incarnation:

> organic farming is becoming a slightly modified version of modern conventional agriculture, replicating the same history, resulting in many of the same basic social, technical and economic characteristics – smaller farms become bigger, debt loads increase with increasing capital intensification, labour is replaced by mechanization and other industrial inputs, and marketing becomes *export-orientated rather than local*. (Hall and Mogyordoy, 2001: 399; italics added for emphasis)

Similar concerns can be raised around the 'quality turn' and food-origin labeling designations: 'The production both of "quality" foods and those protected by labeling schemes relies on spatially extensive (often international) FSCs . . . in order to be viable economically' (Watts *et al.*, 2005: 30). 'Terroir', too, demonstrates the complexities

of food and place associations, and their potential within the LFS umbrella, as its spatial valorization through *produits de terroir* (Barham, 2003), may effectively contribute to regional rural development only at the expense of other rurals. This commodification of place via specific values (historic, cultural, economic) must come with some realization, as Watts *et al.* (2005) note, that not all places have an established culture of 'terroir', and are less likely to benefit from such a branding. Pitting the local against the local is another consequence in the realities of global capital fluidity.

However, it may be possible to imagine simultaneous translations of these sorts of LFS practices. Barham (2003) submits that one translation amounts to an inward-looking and xenophobic enclosure of place – a kind of defensive localism noted earlier (Hinrichs, 2003). The second more hopeful translation suggests an enhanced rootedness that can reflect universal values of place, attachment, and ecology, in the face of placeless powers – neither exclusionary nor rigid. And, in the case of criticisms that see such labeling schemes as potentially mere market-segmentation techniques (Winter, 2003), Barham (2003) counters that such agency-incited practices may actually increase the plausibility and ethic of accepting food-ways that recognize and adhere to ecological, historical and social limits. In this sense, the spatial boundaries implied in some LFS positions can be reworked to imagine the importance of place while constructed in ways which reflect a 'cosmopolitan localism' (McMichael, 2000) or, in Sheppard's (2002) terminology, a 'global sense of place'. Echoing these ideas, Jones and MacLeod (2004) hold that a transformative spatial ethics must be tied to recognition of a sense of place which is relational, open and permeable.

4 Reattachment to place
Acting in opposition to the 'thinning-out' of the place-world involves, it is argued by LFS proponents, in shifting food choices such that they result in re-engagement with people through relations of regard, with local places and environments, and with knowledge of place-histories and cultural customs – hence 'thickening' place through agency choice. As our identi-ties are seemingly threatened by physically lengthening food chains and the place-disruption that ensues with modern agricultural systems, the LFS movements portend or offer some psychological solutions or antidotes to this 'thinning' – the reconstitution of homo-geographicus. This figure might be described as the outcome of a conscious *re*attachment to place: as 'places come to be embedded in us, they become part of our very self, our enduring character' (Casey, 2001: 688), ideally committing ourselves, economically and politically, to those places.

This requires us to think about boundaries which are sometimes merely implicit in the call to the 'local'. As boundaries are largely human constructs, they have implications for a range of social, cultural, economic, and political debates and actions – how we live in this world. Given this, Pascual-de-Sans (2004: 351) writes that boundaries are important, even as we acknowledge the difficulties and dangers of delimiting 'place': 'As vague as a place may be, it needs boundaries. These may be flexible or diffuse, but, by definition, they must exist. A place without boundaries is not a place.' The same kind of recognition is required in LFS efforts. That is, there is both a call to materialize these limits or boundaries, giving sharper geographic relief to the idea of place and community in our lived worlds, while simultaneously heeding the realities of interdependence and relatedness where the local and the global are not separate but entwined in this kind of dynamic flux (Sheppard, 2002). LFS efforts are truly difficult under such dialectical conditions and circumstances, but they are more plausible, radical, and enriching when they take sufficiently into consideration the grounded implementation of these ideas of *re*localization.

V Concluding thoughts

> Thus these new spaces of action and publicity may finally affect the distribution of resources and the life of the people in the regions. (Paasi, 2002: 805)

Food, community and place are complexly intertwined in our lived worlds and across time (Duruz, 2005). Configurations change of course but, as Casey (2001) would contend, the social self and place are intrinsically constitutive of one another. The global-local is recognized as a dialectical pair in the contemporary world: inseparable, though different and often conflicting. For those involved in LFS, there is an urgent imbalance here. The modern globalizing food system contributes to Casey's (2001: 684) 'thinning-out' of place regarding homogenization and increased blurring with 'every other place in global space'. For LFS advocates, '[T]his great physical and psychological distance between food production and consumer creates a tragic disconnection between the general public and the social and environmental consequences of the food being grown and eaten' (Kimbrell, 2002: 1). The geography of the modern food system reveals that, as food chains become stretched further and in more complex ways across space, we experience both the physical and psychological displacement of production from consumption, and all of the other disconnections and *disembedding* which follow in that stead – loss of rural agricultural resilience and diversity, degradation of the environment, dislocation of community, loss of identity and place. The irony is that the global north is   more connected than in any other age yet, simultaneously, increasingly detached and alienated. Local food systems advocates see profoundly negative ecological, sociocultural, and economic manifestations in the trends of dominant food systems and believe the 'localization trend shifts the focus back to the context specific ecological and social factors global markets tend to externalize' (O'Hara and Stagl, 2001: 535). The increasingly placeless and frictionless 'production platforms' of transnational agricultural corporations belie the geography of food, soil, climate, and the people who tend the fields. Given this assessment, they posit that efforts to *re*localize our food systems, to rework or 'thicken' the place-world via place-imbued food system associations, choices, and customs – both new and re-established – can lead to more sustainable systems of human organization and sustenance. Hence, even quite cautious and critical commentary on this theme by writers like DuPuis and Goodman (2005: 360) will hold out that '[P]lace has a role in the building of alternative food systems', while simultaneously appealing to a 'reflexive localism' in such food system turns.

These hopes are tightly coupled with notions that community and the local are spatial delimitations which can contribute to, or set the context for, transformative place-based politics. However, democratic and equitable social relations must be intrinsic to such spatial shifts or we risk a kind of exclusionary and reactionary politics of the local (Hinrichs, 2003; 2000). This orientation must also see past the ephemeral and positional character around which the consumer turn to local foods sometimes elicits.[7] LFS efforts, perhaps inadvertently, are coincident with contemporary geographic assessments of these spatial concepts – *place* is important and integral to peoples lived worlds (Agnew and Duncan, 1989; Casey, 2001). As much as it may be difficult to articulate the 'local' and community and a place in the world, there is an almost visceral urgency to *re*territorialize space in the efforts of LFS advocates, practitioners, writers, and consumers. The needs and sentiments around the *re*-engagement of *place* – the ambiguity and invention of the local and community notwithstanding – are deeply apparent in social, cultural, political and ecological lives (Ray, 1998).

Yes, it is clear that global interconnectedness and some level of permeability is and will be the norm. It is also true that culture is not static and that drawing lines around places of food production and consumption and the

contemporary social systems coincident with these is a moving and variable target, both embedded and disengaged at the same time (Duruz, 2005). How we determine the local in LFS will have to be contingent on the *place* – the social, ecological, and political circumstances which circumscribe it (as '*The local is not everywhere the same*' – Allen *et al.*, 2003: 63), while also cognizant that any localism is dialectically and relationally tied to the global in diverse ways. In order for such LFS aspirations to bear progressive fruit, such constructions must be wary of xenophobic, place 'purity', and anti-democratic orientations, while also developing spatial delimitations which mitigate against and confront the larger structural issues which gave rise to such resistance and counterpressure in the first place.

Notes

1. Produced by Ernie & Nancy Racz of Kernal Peanuts, RR#1, Vittoria, Ontario – 'For the Neighbourhood Group in Guelph Ontario'.

2. Barham also notes that 'terroir' as a 'translation of local ecology' (2003: 131), traditionally carries semi-determining attributes. That is, particular regions are said to have influence on their inhabitants, inducing a kind of spiritual reverence for the places which they inhabit. In contempory terms, the *produits de terroir* are symbolic of both particular places, and periods – a 'taste of history'.

3. Community and place are also raised as critical to 'agrarian movement' principles. Wirzba (2003) argues that western philosophical tenets have alienated society from place attachment and towards 'otherworldliness' – what he sees as a postmodern quest to 'free us from the concerns of place'. Wirzba's agrarian sentiment holds that moral values should be constructed around traditions and economic practices directed by a place's natural environmental character and capacity – as a means to 'place our soul' and as an 'abiding connection between ourselves and our world' (Wirzba, 2003: 92). Agrarian *community* is the means to this connection.

4. 'Disembedding' notions as they apply to LFS analyses in this area are tied to Karl Polanyi's seminal work on *disembedded markets*, though are generally used in this realm to denote agricultural shifts which remove the particular geosocial and economic context of food production and consumption (O'Hara and Stagl, 2001).

5. It is useful to keep in mind that, in this context of fluidity, 'place' – and by extension the 'local' – are first of all themselves outcomes of capitalist social relations, and that the *permanence* we accord such places is continually 'within the flux and flow of capital circulation' (Harvey, 1996: 295).

6. Though, as Paasi (2002) notes, place seems to have taken on a larger role, almost usurping region in geographic inquiry as of late.

7. The kinds of communitarian self-sufficiency and democratic notions sometimes held as inherent in such localization must contend with the realities of 'clear asymmetries of power and privilege embedded within small communities' (Allen, 2004: 172).

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