MEDIATING THE CRITIQUES OF THE ALTERNATIVE AGRIFOOD MOVEMENT: GROWING POWER IN MILWAUKEE

by

Kathleen Elizabeth Doherty

A Thesis Submitted in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in Geography

at

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ABSTRACT

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Kathleen Elizabeth Doherty

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2006

Under the Supervision of Dr. Nik Heynen

The Alternative Agrifood Movement (AAM), characterized by farmer's markets, organic food, sustainable production, Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs), and local foods, has been on the rise in the United States since the early 1970s. The AAM is noted for its opposition to the conventional food system (ie. mass produced food, food that travels long distances, pesticide and herbicide use, and grocery retail conglomerates) and its support of an alternative food system emphasizing fresh, local, organic and "direct from the farm." Specifically, the AAM seeks to create a "foodshed" that is localized, just, and ecologically sustainable. (Whatmore, 1995; Murdoch et al. 2000; Whatmore and Thorne, 1997; Gottlieb and Fisher, 1998; Henderson, 1998)

Both the conventional and alternative food systems offer clear and distinct advantages for global producers and consumers. However, while critiques of the

conventional food system are well documented in AAM research and practice (Allen, 2003, p. 63), AAM's critiques are less well known. Though the AAM espouses economic, social, and ecological justice, both theoretical and empirical research questions the complete accuracy and authenticity of this underlying premise.

This research addressed two main questions: 1) What are the economic, social, and ecological critiques of the Alternative Agrifood Movement? and 2) How does a non-profit community food organization mediate those critiques? These questions were designed not to negate the substantive efforts of the AAM, nor to over esteem the goals of the conventional food system; rather, this research provides theoretical justification and empirical evidence for the possible collaboration between the two capitalizing on the merits of both systems.

Contextualizing the broader literature surrounding the movement, a case study of a Milwaukee-based alternative food initiative, Growing Power, was examined. The findings clearly demonstrated the opportunity for food organizations to be economically accessible, ecologically sensitive, and socially inclusive.

Major Professor Date

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Chapter 1. Introduction

One rarely opens a newspaper, shops for groceries, surfs the Internet or watches cable TV without encountering promotions espousing "ethical eating," gourmet cooking, or sustainable, slow, locally grown, farm-fresh, or organic foods. Indeed, a burgeoning interest in "quality" food has snowballed into a full-fledged Alternative Agrifood Movement (AAM) that spans industries, regions, and populations. A look at the growth in organic food sales is a telltale sign of the movement. "Growth in retail sales has equaled 20 percent or more annually since 1990. Organic products are now available in nearly 20,000 natural foods stores, and are sold in 73 percent of all conventional grocery stores" (Dimitri and Greene, 2002, p.3). Growth on the production side of the movement is exploding also. "According to the most recent USDA estimates, U.S. certified organic cropland doubled between 1992 and 1997, to 1.3 million acres (Dimitri and Greene, 2002, p.3). Community Food Projects such as community gardens, farmer's markets, and food policy councils are another sign of the movement's growth. Federal passage of the Community Food Security Act included in the 1996 Farm Bill, funded such projects to the tune of $2.5 million per year. That amount doubled in 2003 to $5 million. Between 1996 and 2003, more than $22 million in grants were awarded (Tauber and Fisher). The movement's growth is a welcome boon to its supporters. Indeed, according to some, this movement offers eaters a remedy for just about everything:

> "Alternative agricultural and food models ought to strike a particularly responsive chord among those committed to a renewal of community because they are fundamentally local, grass-roots and egalitarian institutions that reflect the desire of many for both greater autonomy and responsibility for one of life's most basic needs. AAFMs if successfully networked and coordinated, hold the potential to secure a degree of equity for many of the least among us by providing for greater access to high quality foods and a reduction in the social isolation which poverty, race, and aging produce in society….These models are a more convivial socially

> embedded and environmentally responsible option to the globalization, consolidation and industrialization of the world's food system" (Lapping, 2004, p. 148).

Conversely, according to the AAM, the conventional food system has left a host of gastronomical destruction across the nation's foodshed including urban areas without supermarkets, junk-food meccas, and biological wastelands. More generally, the globalization of marketing, growing, harvesting, and producing food has become a lightening rod for the conventional system's critics. Specifically, the AAM contends the conventional food system's inherent iniquity stems from its overuse of ecologically-damaging chemicals; its lack of concern for family farmers; and its distribution through large retail conglomerates of cheap, mass-produced, highly-traveled and processed food. Even as conventional food-retailing giants like Wal-Mart begin increasing their sales of organic rather than conventional foods, AAM's critiques of the system are unwavering. An organic farmer in southwestern Wisconsin explains his concern "that the company will use its market strength to drive down prices and hurt U.S. farmers." He suggests that "Wal-Mart has the reputation of beating up on its suppliers," and says he doesn't "see 'selling at a lower price' as an opportunity" (Gogoi, 2006, p. 1). On the contrary, advocates of the conventional system cite its affordability, accessibility, and its ability to create jobs as evidence of its long-term success.

However, the AAM is not without its critics. Though put forth as a democratic and socially just movement (Allen, 1999), its critics contend it can be a socially and economically exclusive movement for white, middle class participants. In terms of food consumption for example, if organic foods cost more than double the price of conventional foods (Oberholtzer, et al., 2005) how accessible is it for low—income

families? In terms of food production for example, how practically and financially accessible has farmland been to African American farmers over the past one-hundred years?

So which food system is in fact a sustainable one? Which system is more "socially just and democratic?" Is there room for collaboration between the two? Such research is significant for two primary reasons. First, it is important to dispel common notions that the AAM is a "more convivial socially embedded and environmentally responsible option to the globalization, consolidation and industrialization of the world's food system" (Lapping, 2004, p. 148) without fully understanding the social and economic price society pays for that option. If the AAM as it is currently operationalized and understood is only available to a subset of the population, it should not be allowed to parade itself as "democratic and socially just" (Allen, 1999). Secondly, as the AAM takes center stage as the means where communities rather than individuals are to become more food secure, it is imperative that such a fundamental need be broadly accessible.

In order to better understand an analysis of both the conventional and alternative food systems, a concise definition of a food system is needed. Robert Gottlieb in his 2001 book *Environmentalism Unbound: Exploring New Pathways for Change,* defines a food system as "identifying the stages of a production system from planting and growing, to the development of food products, and the marketing, selling and consumption of those products" (Gottlieb, 2001, p. 186). Both the AAM and its conventional counterpart are replete with private, public and non-profit organizations addressing one or more of the food systems' stages. More unique are those organizations addressing all of them.

Growing Power Community Food Center (known hereafter as Growing Power), in Milwaukee Wisconsin is one of those unique organizations and is at the center of research presented here. Growing Power sits on a 2-acre parcel of land in the 5500 block of W. Silver Spring Drive on the north side of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This land parcel is host to the City's last working farm, the last from a "legacy of 'Greenhouse Alley,' a stretch of small farms that fed Milwaukee in the early decades of the 20th century" (Ramp, 2005, p. 15).

Growing Power, while clearly grounded in the AAM, simultaneously interfaces with the conventional food system. This interplay allows Growing Power to successfully avoid the exclusivity critiques made of the AAM. Indeed, this collaboration between the two systems is at the heart of the research presented here. I argue that Growing Power successfully mediates the tension between the AAM and the conventional food system through six specific channels:

1) its creation, location, and operation of Will's Roadside Stand
2) its creation, distribution, and accessibility of the Market Basket program
3) its creation and operation of the Rainbow Farmers' Cooperative
4) its commitment to making organic food accessible to both consumers and producers
5) its growth and sale of both local and regional foods
6) its design and provision of training and technical assistance workshops

Growing Power was created in 1995 as a non-profit organization encompassing a range of programs including its Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)-style Market Basket program, Will's Roadside Stand, and its Rainbow Farmers Cooperative (RFC).

Access to "safe, healthy, affordable produce to all Milwaukee residents" is the mission of Growing Power's Market Basket program. The Market Basket program serves as a yearlong outlet for RFC to offer its produce to city residents. Each week, the Market

Basket program delivers pre-ordered baskets of produce to neighborhoods throughout the city. Will's Roadside Stand serves as a retail outlet for produce grown onsite and for members of its RFC. Its membership includes 300 small farms who also sell their goods to stores, restaurants and individuals throughout the Milwaukee area (Garza, 2005, p.B7). Growing Power also includes an extensive greenhouse and farm-based operation complete with vermicomposting and hydroponic growing systems. Each greenhouse serves a distinct purpose ranging from raising tilapia and fresh herbs to housing storage bins where worms turn compost into the nutrient rich soil known as Milwaukee's "Black gold." Other greenhouses are used to grow sprouts, tomatoes, and greens, with others being used for community meeting space and domestic plant propagation. In the nearby town of Burton, Growing Power also owns a 30-acre farm whose crops are sold through the RFC.

Mediation between the alternative and conventional food systems is necessary because of the limitations and critiques of each system. Growing Power has emerged as a small-scale, non-profit model for possible collaboration between the two systems. The research presented here will reveal this organization's approach to that mediation and establish its necessity and potential. Before delving into the research and its accompanying findings, a literature review will first situate the AAM within the context of other social movements before detailing its goals and reasons for being.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Research on food spans nearly every discipline from geography, gastronomy, and medicine, to business, biology, and agriculture. This literature review takes a deliberate geographic path in exploring food, analyzing the broad systems in which it is produced and distributed. It categorizes the predominant food system as "conventional" and the initiatives set out to oppose that system as "alternative." This review begins by analyzing the critiques of the conventional food system, continues with establishing the alternative food system as a social movement, then goes directly into identifying the contentious issues of the conventional system and the corresponding AAM's response to them. It concludes with identifying the typically unreported critiques of the AAM.

a) General Critiques of the Conventional Food System

i) Lack of Access to Groceries in Urban Areas

Food provision is one of the "oldest problems confronting political institutions" (Hopkins and Puchala, p. 3-4). The relevance for doing food access research is substantiated by one of the permanent goals of communities, which is to ensure food security for its residents. The Community Food Security Coalition, a North American nonprofit organization dedicated to building strong, sustainable, local and regional food systems defines food security as the ability for "all persons obtaining, at all times, a culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through local, non-emergency sources." Ensuring food security is a goal of paramount importance.

Despite food security being an important community goal, research chronicles the decline in supermarkets since 1980 showing a net loss of 2,300 stores nationwide

(Cotterill, 1992). Research suggests that this overall loss of supermarkets has been disproportionately shouldered by low-income, urban, and minority communities (Dalton *et al*., 2003; Shaffer, A., 2002). Often cited is the lagging service to Detroit residents who can patronize only 8 large chain supermarkets for its 900,000 resident population (Dalton *et al*., 2003). Ensuring food access to all inner city residents, especially those traditionally underserved, (i.e. minority and low income families), remains crucial.

Compounding the problem of decreasing numbers of supermarkets available was the lax horizontal merger policies of the 1980s (Cotterrill, 1992). Indeed, mergers and leveraged buyouts affected 16 of the 20 supermarkets nationwide (Tourque et al., 1992).

The consolidation in food retail has had two related effects. First, the relationship between market concentration and price has been consistently found to be *positive* (Chih-ching *et al*. 2002). Secondly, this consolidation exacerbated the decreasing numbers of inner city supermarkets as the larger markets were created and built outside of the city. Worse still, within more recent years, increasing numbers of remaining supermarkets are converting to superstores characterized as more than 100,000 square feet, clearly out of scale for an inner city neighborhood (Jekanowski *et al*., 2000).

The results of changes nationally have been felt in Milwaukee as national chains (i.e. Kohl's Food Emporiums) have closed, and others have simply left the central city (Heynen, 2004). Of the 12 Kohl's grocery stores that have closed in Milwaukee over the past two years, only eight remained grocery stores, while others were converted to discount stores (i.e. Big Lots or Always .99) or remain vacant (Daykin, 2004). Lena's Food Markets, adding to their solid, second-generation family-owned grocery stores, bought three of the former Kohl's supermarket properties. Outpost Natural Foods

Cooperative built their third location on one of the former Kohl's sites, with three of the other sites sold to conventional grocery stores—Pick 'n Save and Sentry Foods. El Rey, the strong local grocery store chain primarily serving the Latino community, bought the only remaining Kohl's site still devoted to groceries.

Because of the fewer numbers of supermarkets in central cities, residents are forced to purchase groceries from small, corner stores. Low-income residents are relegated to using food stamps at small grocery stores as evidenced by studies finding negative correlations between per capita square footage of grocery retail and percentage of residents on public assistance (food stamps) (Cotterill et al., 1995). Often low-income resident's grocery purchases are supported by the federal food stamp[i] programs. Nationwide, this program has experienced a 10.1% increase in the number of households participating in the program (United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food & Nutrition Service).

Studies have shown that prices at these smaller markets can exceed those at supermarkets by as much as 76 percent (Wilson, 1994). Additional studies in Milwaukee, New York City, Los Angeles, Hartford, Knoxville, and Minneapolis indicate low-income residents pay significantly more for food than those cities' higher income residents. This is due to the residents' forced reliance on small grocery stores, convenience stores, and grocery/gas station combinations that serve as inner city resident's main food retail centers (Johnson et al., 1996; CFRC, 1993; Kaufman et al., 1997; Kantor, L. 2001). Arguably, low-income households[ii] are forced to use their average monthly food stamp benefits of $194.92 on groceries that are more expensive than average.

There is research that explains the increased costs inherent in operating retail grocery stores in urban areas. In addition to replacing carts taken by patrons with no other way to get their groceries home, other operating costs can be expensive as well: security, bad checks, and high labor costs due to employee turnover. Indeed, the Jewel Grocery Store manager[iii] at 35th and North Ave. in Milwaukee, cited replacement of shopping carts (each more than $100) as a significant operating cost. There are also issues that simply make operations more complicated: food-shopping patterns that are skewed toward the beginning of the month and heterogeneity of a population with unique cultural food demands (Ashman, 1993).

Regardless of the explanations for why food prices may be higher in urban areas, there are economic repercussions to low-income, urban residents lacking access to competitively priced supermarkets. The term used to describe the resulting food retail landscapes is 'food desert' (Wrigley et al., 2003). Food deserts represent the notion that inner city residents lack access to retail food distribution centers that offer diverse and affordable food.

There are those who dismiss the 'food desert' debate suggesting that while food deserts do occur, people overcome access burdens (i.e. transportation) to shop at the larger chain stores where lower prices are realized (Dalton, E., Ehrlich, S., Flores, M., Heberlein, E., and Niemeyer, M., 2003).

Still other researchers suggest that poor inner-city residents actually pay *less* than their suburban affluent counterparts. Lashawn Richburg Hayes, a Princeton University researcher explains, "Although there are many ways to define the poor, I find that independent of classification, the most deprived neighborhoods in the U.S. do not face

higher market prices for goods. In fact, I find that the poor face discounted net prices that can be as much as 6.1 percent lower than those faced by the more affluent" (Hayes, unpublished).

Continued research on food security in cities, specifically grocery store access, signifies the ongoing importance such access has for inner city residents. The potential existence of food deserts underscores the need for continuing core political and economic research regarding the issue.

ii) Conventional Agriculture: Biological, Economic, & Ecological Impacts

Agriculturally, the conventional food system has been dominated by mono-cultural crop production, that is, fields boasting miles of soybeans, corn, or wheat rather than a plethora of crop varieties. This system has created three particular dilemmas: 1) a reduction in biological diversity; 2) economic subsidies for commodity producers; and 3) increased use of chemical fertilizers and levels of toxic nitrogen production.

1) Biological Impacts

One does not often consider Iowa and Wisconsin biologically diverse wastelands, and certainly if they were, that agriculture, each state's "hometown darling," would not be the leading cause of it. However, within the past 150 years through the evolution of modern agriculture, prairies, forests, clear streams, pastures with wildflowers and grassland birds, prairies, meadows and livestock in pastures have been replaced with monotonous rows of corn and soybeans to feed the growing consolidation in the livestock industry (Jackson, 2002). This decreased plant diversity allows insect pests and blights to

prey upon a crop of homogenous plants where they can quickly spread from one plant to another. In 1970, more than ten million acres of U.S. corn was destroyed when a maize blight struck, destroying the corn whose genetic heritage was shared by 80% of the total corn crop (Norberg-Hodge et al., 2002). Mass production on farmland has resulted in a gaping loss of agricultural diversity. In China, for example, 10,000 wheat varieties were being grown in 1949. By the 1970s only 1,000 remained. Domestically, the U.S. has lost 95% of cabbage varieties, 91% of maize varieties, and 81% of tomato varieties (Norberg-Hodge et al., 2002). Decreasing biodiversity also exhibited negative consequences through the spread of Mad Cow disease, which affects only Holstein cattle. The Holstein cattle breed is the most common globally, prized for their milk production capacity (Petrini, 2002). Some consider these transitions the ecological sacrifice needed to feed the population. However, it seems the sacrifice is not transforming hunger as 790 million people remain undernourished worldwide (FAO, 1999).

2) Economic Impacts

Besides of the loss of biological diversity from monocropping and intensive chemical use, government supports for corn and soybeans have essentially been a welfare check for companies producing high fructose corn syrup and partially hydrogenated soybean oil (Quaid, 2005), both leading contributors to obesity and Type II diabetes in the U.S. Subsidies allow food and beverage manufacturers to flood the market with cheap processed food. Lower income citizens less able to afford the products of the unsubsidized fruit and vegetable industry routinely consume such processed foods more frequently (von Hoffman, 2006).

3) Ecological Impacts

In addition to the loss of biological diversity, the transition to modern industrialized agriculture dominated by monocultural crop production has produced other negative environmental impacts. Coupled with government supports for growing corn and wheat, and the increased affordability of tractors rendering increased acreage of corn and wheat possible, livestock were removed from cropping operations and housed instead in more profitable large-scale confinement operations. Livestock are fed with the corn and soybeans planted in the fields. Indeed, 80% of U.S. grown corn is made into animal feed for both domestic and foreign use (NCGA, 2000). However, this concentration of livestock produces huge amounts of manure threatening both ground and surface water while hydrogen sulfide fumes render nearby areas undesirable for humans or animals (Jackson, 2002).

This does not mean that the manure's nutrients are not ecologically needed; indeed they are. However, so much manure is produced today that the result is considered a toxic chemical creating hypoxic[iv] zones such as those in the Gulf of Mexico. In 2000, a five-year average of hypoxic waters in the Gulf of Mexico was 5,454 square miles, up from 1993-1996 when the average was only 4,000 square miles (EPA, 2001). Clearly, modern conventional farms produce commodities and profits for agribusiness while simultaneously generating external costs to the ecosystems and rural communities.

With post-World War II's advent of chemical fertilizers, farmers no longer needed the inherently fertile and pest averse characteristics of diverse cropping rotations and instead monocropping became the norm (DeVore in Jackson, 2002). Farmers became dependent on chemicals to take care of their crops. Essentially, it was decided that

privately-owned corporations producing pesticide and herbicides such as Roundup™, would be more reliable--or controllable--than Mother Nature.

Perhaps expectedly, there are real environmental concerns regarding the long-term and pervasive use of products like Roundup including weed characteristics, chemically resistant weeds, and changes in soil composition. These concerns are suspected to materialize initially in Argentina where GMO-HT [genetically modified organisms-herbicide tolerant] are planted on more than half their acreage. The threat is real, causing a leading pesticide manufacturer to issue voluntary restrictions on the use of selected glyphosate applications for U.S. farmers" (Benbrook, 2002).

Clearly, reliance on modern monocropping agriculture has impacted the conventional food system biologically, economically, and ecologically.

iii) Highly Traveled Food from Large Conglomerates

Finally, from a global warming perspective, this conventional agriculture system has also perpetuated a substantive dependence on fossil fuels. Transportation of food accounts for nearly twenty percent of all commodity travel in the U.S.: 566 billion-ton miles in 1997 (Norberg-Hodge, 2002). A conservative estimate of corresponding CO2 emissions reaches nearly 120 million tons every year (Norberg-Hodge, 2002). The conventional food system's distribution system is driven by Transnational Corporations (TNCs) whose geographic distribution of offices allow them to globally source inputs (Sanderson, 1985) for production while simultaneously marketing the outputs worldwide (Herrernan and Constance in Bonanno et al., 1994). Marketing involves travel. The Leopold Center at Iowa State University conducted a study comparing 16 locally versus conventionally sourced pieces of produce detailing food miles of each. "The sum of all

16 food mile averages for local produce to reach Iowa institutions was 716 miles, slightly less than the distance from Des Moines, Iowa to Denver, Colorado. The sum of the average food miles from conventionally sourced produce to reach those same Iowa institutions was an estimated 25,301 miles; nearly 400 miles further than the circumference of the earth (measured at the equator)" (Pirog, 2004, p. 3).

The TNCs dominating the conventional food system are deeply entrenched in the psyche and wallets of eaters. In 1989, two important researchers in the globalization of the food industry, Friedmann and McMichael, articulated an emerging food regime defined by U.S.-based TNCs, whose international division of labor was, by definition, global. Because inputs are decentralized, TNCs are able to pit nation-states against one another in pursuit of the labor force that provides maximum profit.

The ability for TNCs to acquire, organize and disseminate information globally enables their powerful dominance throughout the global food system. This power renders itself, rather than the nation-state, the required unit of analysis in production-oriented global food systems research. Two TNCs, Cargill and ConAgra, reveal an example of the global influence in food systems by transnational corporations.

In 1988, Cargill owned over 800 operations in 49 countries (Herrernan and Constance in Bonanno, et al., 1994). TNC's operations increasingly blur distinctions about exactly which countries are defined as "core" and "periphery," instead reframing the question as which TNC is core, and which peripheries is it using to remain there. A second leader, ConAgra, owns more than 56 companies in 26 countries distributing through the brand names of ACT II, Armour, Banquet, Blue Bonnet, Brown 'N Serve, Butterball, Chef Boyardee, Cook's, Crunch 'n Munch, Eckrich, Egg Beaters,

Fleischmann's, Gulden's, Healthy Choice, Hebrew National, Hunt's, Knott's Berry Farm, La Choy, Lamb Weston, Libby's, Life Choice, Lunch Makers, MaMa Rosa's, Manwich, Orville Redenbacher's, PAM, Parkay, Peter Pan, Reddi-wip, Rosarita, Ro*Tel, Slim Jim, Snack Pack, Swiss Miss, Van Camp's, Wesson, and Wolf, among others. Put into perspective, six cents out of every American food dollar goes to ConAgra, while another 10 cents spent goes to Phillip Morris. Phillip Morris's share alone dwarfs that of all U.S. farmers put together (Norberg-Hodge et al. 2002). Additional consolidation is apparent in the listing of other acquisitions and mergers in the food industry between 1999-2001: Philip Morris's acquisition of Nabisco, General Mills acquisition of Pillsbury, Kellogg's acquisition of Keebler, and Unilever's acquisition of Ben & Jerry's, Best Foods, and Slim Fast foods (USDA, 2002). Thus supermarkets' well-stocked shelves mask real diversity, for though the labels are different, the products are still owned by the same food conglomerate (USDA, 2002).

In addition to transnational corporations having control over mass production and food-away-from-home consumption, consolidation in grocery retailing has solidified companies' abilities to customize consumption, thereby cementing their global success as winners. Consolidation in the 1990s due to reduced regulation is dramatic in food retail.

The CR5 measures the top five retailers' share of the entire food retail market.[v] In 1997, the CR5 was 24%. In only seven years, that CR5 had nearly doubled. In 2004, Wal-Mart, Kroger Co., Albertson's, Safeway, and Ahold USA account for 46% of the food retail market.

The fact that half of all grocery sales are controlled by five private companies may not seem concerning for some. Yet, what are the implications of a food system

controlled by companies who have no apparent nation state to oversee them (Herrernan and Constance in Bonanno et al., 1994)? Who upon encountering strict environmental regulation or unionized labor simply can move its operations to another country? What happens to a food system that relies so heavily on fossil fuels to move its food around? Does free trade simply mean sourcing from developing countries and selling to developed countries? "Opponents of this form of globalization fear that the growing power of capital and its pursuit of neo-liberal reform will increasingly disenfranchise the mass of people, excluding them from the decisions that determine the course of globalization" (Purcell, 2004, p. 3).

In response to the conventional food system's rampant destruction, the AAM supports pervasive deployment of Alternative Food Initiatives (AFIs), including farmer's markets, community gardens, Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs), food cooperatives, localized food purchasing, and organic farming methods as a means for having food that is fresh, local, organic and direct from the farm. More generally, the AAM seeks to create a foodshed that is geographically localized, economically and socially just, and ecologically sustainable (Whatmore, 1995; Murdoch et al. 2000).

AFIs exist across all economic and political sectors including public, private, and nonprofit. Specific examples include Italy's nonprofit "Slow Food" organization boasting more than 80,000 members worldwide and New York City's bustling Greenmarket, to the rapid proliferation of the insanely profitable Austin, Texas-based *Whole Foods* grocery stores as well as national "Buy Local" campaigns. Near-daily evidence of these trends is found in major news publications. Indeed, "Whole Foods Market" is referenced more than 110 times in a one-year period (April 12, 2005-April 12, 2006) in the *New York*

Times alone. Not to miss out on this hot trend, the fastest growing grocery store in the U.S., Wal-Mart has begun selling organic food in attempts to woo more affluent and ethical shoppers (*LA Times, March 25, 2006*).

Despite the raging popularity of the AAM, it is not without its critics, nor should it be. While the movement does take both necessary and admirable strides towards improving the conventional food system, it fails in attaining many of the democratic principles it claims to support. Though the AAM's AFIs espouse economic, social, and ecological justice, both theoretical and empirical research questions the complete accuracy and authenticity of this underlying premise. However, AFI's critiques are less well-known. While many of its organizations and supporters embrace principles of fairness (ie. fair trade coffee and chocolates) and ecological preservation (ie. organic), they also dabble in exclusivity, excess, shortsightedness, and hypocrisy.

Both the conventional and alternative agrifood systems offer clear and distinct advantages for global producers and consumers. What the AAM needs most are organizations and supporters who address the problems of the conventional food system without incurring the critiques of the AAM. The research presented here embraces that challenge in its analysis of a Milwaukee, Wisconsin-based nonprofit organization founded to improve food access to urban residents while modeling ecological sustainability. Through exploration of its mission, vision, and programs, the study sought to understand the way Growing Power mediates the critiques of the AAM (exclusivity and excess) while capitalizing on the strengths of the conventional food system (affordability and abundance).

Specifically, the research addresses two main questions:

1) What are the economic, social, and ecological critiques of Alternative Food Initiatives?
2) How does a nonprofit community food organization successfully mediate those critiques?

These questions are not designed to negate the substantive efforts of the AAM, nor to over-esteem the goals of the conventional food system; rather, this research provides theoretical justification and empirical evidence for the possible collaboration between the two, capitalizing on the merits of both systems.

b) Social Movements

Historically, social movements have organized efforts to remedy specific injustices outside of the "formal state or economic spheres" of society (Johnson, R.J. et al, 2000, p. 758). Many of the conditions social movements seek to reverse are created by longstanding "structural, social, and economic inequalities" (Young, 2000, p. 141). For example, "classic" social movements in the United States have organized on behalf of working class laborers and the civil rights of racial minorities to remedy poor, unsafe working conditions and to combat discrimination in hiring. Contemporary social theorists have expanded this theoretical concept, suggesting the emergence of new social movements: those that alter earlier concentrations on specific classes or groups of people and instead address a multiplicity of issues and goals without a "singular unifying focus…" (Buttel, 1997, p. 353). As well, these new social movements embrace a range of organizational forms, strategies, and actions (Hassanein, 2003). Thus new social movements address both a range of issues and organize multiple groups of people employing a range of strategies and actions.

An example of such a new social movement is the AAM which is concerned with a range of issues encompassing both food security and sustainable agriculture, while galvanizing multiple groups including environmentalists, alternative farmers, farmer worker unions, consumer groups, urban food interests, sustainable agriculture proponents, farmland preservation groups, and rural development advocates (Hassanein, 2003; Allen, 1999).

Its distinction as a new social movement is further solidified because of the wide range of forms, strategies, goals, and actions it incorporates. For example, one of the movement's core issues is promoting community food security. Community food security (CFS)[vi] advocates emerged in the late 1980s seeking a more comprehensive approach to food security than the reactionary, individualistic, singularly-focused, emergency anti-hunger efforts characteristic of previous decades. Instead, CFS emphasized communities over individuals and prevention strategies over reactive ones; CFS focuses on self-reliance, local decision-making, and local food production as means for achieving long-term food security (Allen, 1999; Gottlieb, 2001). Building on the definition of CFS is Lapping's wide-reaching description of alternative food initiatives which he suggests are:

> "alternative production systems or direct marketing projects that seek to bring farmers and consumers closer together to promote locally grown and raised foods, to expand the knowledge and understanding of how foods are produced, and to increase the economic viability of farmers who seek to fully or partially disengage from the large corporate food production and distribution systems. In many cases, there is an organic and a sustainable agricultural dimension to these undertakings" (Lapping, 2004, p. 143).

The AAM can be considered a new social movement rather than a classic one due to its diverse actors, multiple goals, and varied deployment strategies.

Whether classic or new, the importance of widespread representation and participation in social movements to accomplish goals persists. Too often social movements foster political exclusion and marginalization masking "…processes that claim to be democratic but which some people reasonably claim are dominated by only some of those whose interests are affected by them" (Young, 2000, p. 13). Such political exclusion is particularly damaging and misleading because social movements are often marketed as democratic and socially just. Indeed, the AAM advertises itself as "dynamic and multi-dimensional, involving various groups of people situated in particular places, who create and implement assorted strategies, participate in diverse forms of action, and encounter a variety of obstacles and opportunities" (Hassanein, 2003, p. 80). Furthermore, "Community food security offers the possibility of developing a deep and democratic understanding of and action around issues of food access, quality, and control" (Allen, 1999, p. 119).

Community Food Security advocates promote Alternative Food Initiatives such as organic food, farmers markets, and Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs) as successful methods for increasing community food security (Kantor, 2001). To achieve its diverse mission and to solidify its characterization as a social movement, CFS advocates both participation and representation in redressing citizen's "lack of control over the food production and distribution system" (Poppendieck, 1997, p. 175). Thus ensuring access to and participation in such AFIs is of significant importance. Because 45.4% of U.S. residents deemed "food insecure" were either African American or Hispanic (Nord et al, 2005), it is critical to specifically determine AFI's accessibility to ethnic and racial minorities.

To the extent that the AAM markets itself as a democratic and participatory movement through broad participation (i.e. a range of political actors) and systemic redress (i.e. specific changes in the food system itself), critical analysis of these claims is warranted. The research that follows applies Young's contention regarding social movements' tendency toward political exclusivity to contemporary discourse on the AAM, specifically its foci on sustainable agriculture and community food security. The two guiding lines of questioning (inspired by Allen, 1994) surrounding representation in *production* (sustainable agriculture) and participation in *consumption* (community food security) will be:

> Who are the farmers whose agriculture we seek to sustain?
> (i.e. representation in production)
> Which communities are participating in "food-securing" Alternative Food Initiatives (AFIs)?
> (i.e. participation in consumption)

The conventional food system has been credited with making food abundantly available to people of all incomes, races, and cultures, and doing so in a way that is scientifically beneficial. After all, calories can be purchased cheaply and farmers have options for chemically regulating their fields and livestock. However, those in the alternative food movement see more costs than benefits and thus offer the following alternatives.

c) AAM's Response to the Conventional

AAM proponents critique the conventional food system on a range of issues. This section will look at specific AFIs including farmer's markets, CSA programs, organic food, local food and agricultural practices put forth to address those issues. It will also look at the critiques of these initiatives. In other words, who is able to participate in these

initiatives? Who can afford to shop at Whole Foods, the nation's leading organic and natural food store? After all, people's willingness and ability to pay for "ethical eating" enables Whole Foods Market to boast a shockingly high grocery store profit margin of 34.5% (Rozhon, 2004) compared with the typically low profit margin of the grocery industry at 2% (Arellano, 2004). And who is subsidizing the small "family farmer" and patronizing the multitude of AFIs? Key researchers in the field echo these concerns:

> "We are concerned that alternative AFIs (agro-food initiatives)…through their silence about social relationships in production, inadvertently assume or represent that rural communities and family farmers embody social justice, rather than requiring that they do so. Only a symmetrical attention to the embedding in food commodities of social and ecological relations of production and consumption can fully support the transformative goals of environmental sustainability, economic viability and social justice to who so many in this movement aspire" (Allen, P., FitzSimmons, M., Goodman, M., and Warner, K. 2003, p. 74).

i) Farmer's Markets

Contemporary and historical research on farmer's markets illustrates a wide range of definitions for what actually constitutes a farmer's market (Wann, Cake, Elliott, and Burdette, 1948; Pyle, 1971; Jack and Blackburn 1984; Connell, Beierlein, and Vroomen, 1986, Burns and Johnson, 1996). While common notions of a farmer's market may include roadside stands, municipal markets, farm shops, farm stands, flea markets or curb markets, a traditional farmer's markets is defined by a recurring market at a fixed location where farmers sell produce they've grown themselves (Brown, 2001). This excludes a range of wholesale markets that aggregate farmer's produce for distribution to retailers or wholesalers. Currently there is a growing political and economic debate within the market community regarding this traditional definition. Brown further proposes a market classification system for use by researchers and government officials

alike. The system would include: Terminal Markets, Public Markets, Farmer's Markets, Wholesale Farmer's Markets, and Retail Farmer's Markets (Brown, 2001).

It can be argued that the vendor-only arrangement mutually benefits both the farmer able to sell his products and local residents able to purchase locally-grown produce (Todd, 1996). However, others who demand a "free-market" market where *any* produce can be sold, regardless of who grew it or its place of origin, contest this regulation (Todd, 1996). Such deregulation, it is argued, would allow farmer's markets to compete more aggressively with other produce markets, including supermarkets.

The number of farmer's markets has grown from 340 in 1970 to nearly 3000 in 2001[vii] (Brown, 2002). This growth in the number of markets is largely attributed to the U.S. Congress passage of Public Law 94-463, The Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976, which among other things, authorized direct-marketing initiatives to be promoted by the Cooperative Extension Services within the USDA. Few rigorous studies of farmer's markets exist. Those which have been done have been largely non-Western, and primarily economic (McGrath et al., 1993). Though widespread research has not yet been done on the social or political impacts of contemporary farmer's markets, evidence to date has show a positive economic multiplier effect from markets (Brown, 2002). This effect results in the strengthening and diversification of regional agriculture, an increase in the number of new jobs and businesses, and increasing farm profitability (Brown, 2002). Smaller studies of farmer's markets recently have focused on market consumer's attitudes on issues ranging from organic and sustainable agriculture to food safety and waste food recovery (Brown, 2002).

Increasing numbers of farmer's markets also comes at a time when imports of fruits and vegetables are on the rise. In 1970, the U.S. imported four percent and 21% of its vegetables and fruits, respectively. By 2001, those numbers had grown to 12% and 39%.

Farmers markets offer benefits to consumers, farmers, and the community at large. Farmers estimate earning between 25-80% more at a farmer's market than they would selling to wholesalers or distributors (Hughes and Mattson, 1995). This is due both to reduced costs for packaging and the ability to sell as a retailer (Abel et al., 1999). Customers cite the freshness of food at farmer's markets as their primary motivation for shopping there (Hughes and Mattson, 1995). Communities benefit both in terms of keeping earnings within the local region and drawing people to a downtown area who would otherwise not be there (Abel et al., 1999).

The local community farmer's markets circulate capital and provide an ever-growing multiplier effect within the local economy. These multipliers reflect the reality that alternative approaches create both demands for certain inputs and generate outputs into the greater local economy (Lapping, 2004, p. 144).

Despite benefits to many, exclusion issues arise when analyzing participation in farmer's markets. Though no studies exist that document the demographics of producers at markets, studies of customers reveal that patrons are generally "white females with above average incomes, age, and education," (Abel et al., 1999 p.6).

The effective exclusion of racial and ethnic minorities from farmer's markets can be explained in part by two factors: federal subsidy program structures and the limited selection of food products at market. First, only 58% of farmers' markets nationwide

participate in WIC coupon, food stamps, local and/or state nutrition programs (USDA, 2000). To the extent racial and ethnic minorities comprise a majority of program participants, exclusion again is a primary concern. Due to lack of technical infrastructure, farmer's markets' ubiquitous participation in the food stamp program has declined since states have adopted the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) method of distributing benefits. In Wisconsin, the "Quest" card replaced the paper-based food stamp program. For example, the Fondy Food Farmer's Market in Milwaukee saw a reduction in food stamp participants purchasing produce despite its central location in a highly food-insecure neighborhood. Once a place where local residents could purchase healthy produce with food stamps, the conversion to EBT method forced many residents to stop shopping at this convenient farmers market (Fondy Food Market, 2003).

The second barrier to farmer's market participation, particularly low-income racial and ethnic minorities, revolves around limited market selection. Studies showed that these individuals were "not inclined to make as many stops [for food purchases] because of the extra time and gasoline involved," (Hughes and Mattson, 1995, p.2).

ii) Community Supported Agriculture

The idea beyond the direct-marketing method of CSA is that urban residents share the risk of farming with rural farmers. By purchasing a "share" of the farmers' impending crop at the onset of the season, farmers are assured income for the year, and shareholders are "assured" a steady stream of fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the season. Beyond the economic, social benefits include a reconnection between urban residents and the farmers growing their food. CSAs, beyond offering just food, may also offer the opportunity for shareholders to work on the farm, becoming reconnected with the land

and helping preserve farms within the broader community. CSAs have grown significantly since the late 1980s to nearly 1,700 farms feeding about 340,000 families a week (Weise, 2005). It will be shown that both the economic (shares of a year's crop) and social (reconnection to land) goals of CSAs can be exclusionary towards lower-income individuals and racial/ethnic minorities.

Studies have demonstrated that the majority of members of a CSA typically earn more than $40,000/year and are predominantly white (Lawson, 1997; Cohen et al., 1997; Festing, 1997). According to a CSA study conducted on the central California coast, European-Americans made up more than 90% of the CSA membership despite comprising only 51% of the study area, (Perez et al., 2003). Besides cultural differences between the farmers themselves and prospective shareholders, there are structural issues that may account for the difference. The majority of federal food stamp recipients are non-white (USDA, 2004) and are precluded from using their benefits to pay for a share in a CSA. CSAs by definition are a speculative venture; members presume they will receive food for their share, but if a crop fails, shareholders are expected to assume that risk along with the farmer. Such a risk is "anachronistic" except for those who can afford to purchase their food elsewhere (Allen, 1999, p. 125).

In terms of working on the farm itself to reconnect with nature and the food supply, this opportunity is limited to individuals with spare time to give the farmer. It is doubtful the farmer would return to the city to assist shareholders with *their* employment obligations. Other barriers to participation for low-income families include the time required to prepare and process the food share once it is brought home, and the very act

of accessing the food in the first place. Most farms are not located within walking distance or public transportation access, thereby creating a further barrier to participation.

iii) Organic Food

Organic food has a variety of common meanings ranging from pesticide-free and natural, to fresh and local. The USDA however, has specific requirements for food to be called organic. If a product is labeled 100 percent organic, it means it has no synthetic ingredients and whose "production processes" meet federal organic standards. Other variations on the label include simply "organic" which means no less than 95 percent of the ingredients have been organically produced; while "Made with Organic Ingredients" requires that at least 70 percent of the product be organic (USDA, 2002).

Organic food is considered to be more healthful, nutritious, and good for the environment (Goodman and Goodman, 1999). Researchers have concluded that organic food is more nutritious in part because of the soil in which it is grown. "Studies have shown that organic vegetables have significantly higher amounts of vitamin C, iron, magnesium, and phosphorous" (Worthington, 2001). Other studies have corroborated that claim. "A study in the January 2003 Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry found 52 percent more ascorbic acid, or vitamin C, in frozen organic corn than in conventional corn, and 67 percent more in corn raised by sustainable methods -- a combination of organic and conventional farming. Polyphenols were significantly higher in organic and sustainable marionberries compared to conventionally farmed ones" (Burros, 2003).

Because of these benefits, organic consumption is prized among the alternative food movement for encompassing all that is good about eating or "reflexive eating *par*

excellence" (Guthman, 2003, p. 46). Its claims of increased nutrition and political superiority suggest that all those who are food insecure should have access to it.

The federal Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) offers low-income residents subsidies for purchasing "nutritious food." The Food and Nutrition Service of the USDA describes the mission of the program: "To safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutrition risk by providing nutritious foods to supplement diets, information on healthy eating, and referrals to health care."

First, it is important to establish that participation in the federal WIC program is overrepresented by racial and ethnic minorities. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, though the U.S. population is 12.3 percent African American and 12.5 percent Hispanic (US Census, 2000) their combined participation in the federal WIC program is 58 percent, more than double their expected rate (USDA, 2003).

The federal government establishes minimum nutritional guidelines for state WIC programs to follow, with eligible foods including: juice, iron-fortified cereal, eggs, cheese, milk, peanut butter, dried beans or peas, iron-fortified infant formula, tuna, and carrots. States then determine specifically what is excluded. In Wisconsin for example, any foods marked as "organic" are ineligible. Ironically, two of the biggest dairy-producing states in the country, Wisconsin and California, exclude organic milk and eggs from their list of eligible foods in the WIC program. Thus, though the government-sponsored WIC program is designed to promote healthy and nutritious eating, the "organic foods" that purportedly fit that bill best are categorically excluded.

In addition to the ecological and social issues surrounding organic food, it's important to note that organic foods command a higher price premium than conventional foods. Such premiums can be more than double that of conventional prices (Oberholtzer, et al., 2005) leaving persons restricted by price either not affording organic food, or having to spend a higher proportion of their income on food (Allen, 2004). These price premiums can exclude low-income families from choosing organic. Such exclusion seems irrelevant for one organic industry official who said "The mainstream consumer is voting with her pocketbook for a better world for her and her children" (Nachman-Hunt, 2002, p. 40) dismissing organic's added cost as immaterial. Tragically, this dilemma increasingly befalls the nation's poor families who are disproportionately African American (24.2 percent) and Hispanic (22.5 percent) (DeNavas-Walt et al, 2005).

iv) Local Food

The promotion of local food is pervasive in AAM literature. Though often conflated with the term organic, many people support the notion of eating "locally." Indeed, purchasing food from local markets does accomplish two things: it reduces the number of food miles traveled and consumers get a healthier, tastier, product due to its ability to reach the consumer quicker. How quickly produce can reach the consumer, and as a measure of "local" food, a Weighted Average Source Distance (WASD) can be calculated. The WASD takes into account information on the distances from producers to consumers and amount of food product transported (Pirog, 2004). Often though, local food is not found in conventional supermarkets.

For some, "local" simply suggests a geographic scale used in analysis, ie. distance food travels. But for the "buy local" movement, it is more than just a scale; it is a

political, social, economic, and environmental statement. The argument goes that buying local food supports one particular community and economy; and in doing so, certain values, lifestyles, and cultures are preserved. But this reasoning begs the question, "How local is local enough?" First and foremost, local is a relative term. Is buying cheese produced 200 miles away local when it is also available from 20 miles away or 2000 miles away? Indeed, the local scale is socially constructed. It is created by a certain segment of a certain locale as a means of promoting one area or region over another. By definition, local is exclusive. Such exclusivity is at the root of its critique for the AAM.

Politics of scale research addresses the concept of local, emphasizing caution when embracing the "local" bandwagon. Because local arrangements can either be just or unjust, democratic or tyrannical, equating local with good is ill advised (Purcell and Brown, 2005). Purcell explains the common misperception: "As a consequence, local-scale food systems, since they are not global, are assumed to be inherently desirable. Local food is conflated with just, organic, sustainable, secure, fresh, or healthy food" (Purcell, unpublished, p. 7).

Indeed, the concept of "localism" has undergone intense scrutiny. Two main critiques of localism have emerged: 1) "it [localism] denies the politics of the local with potentially problematic social justice consequences" meaning that who gets to define what is desirable is an exclusionary process; and 2) "it can lead to proposed solutions, based on alternative standards of purity and perfection that are vulnerable to corporate cooptation" as happened in the organic produce industry in California (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005, p. 360).

Harvey's (2001) critique of the "local" scale echoes others' concern suggesting localist tendencies are based on the interests of a "narrow, sectionalist, even authoritarian elite" which DuPuis and Goodman (2005, p. 360) call "unreflexive politics." In particular, it details two related problems with localism. First, localism excludes outside knowledge necessary to understand the "broader socio-ecological processes" that contribute to "local" problems (Harvey, 1996, p. 303.) Second, this localist focus "while it enhances certain kinds of sensitivities, totally erases others and thereby truncates rather than emancipates the field of political engagement and action" (Harvey, 1996, p. 353). Such exclusion creates the prevailing attitude in community food security projects where leaders are uninterested in the negative effects local food movements have on produce truck drivers or non-local small farmers (Allen, 1999). It also suggests a patent disregard for a more globally equitable food system. In sum, Hinrichs (2000) cautions against localist assumptions, contending its advocates are simply conflating spatial relations with social relations.

v) Agricultural Practices

In response to large corporate farms, the AAM promotes small family farmers and sustainable agricultural practice. This section looks critically at how such promotion privileges white farmers in particular.

The AAM esteems idyllic family farms for their organically green rolling pastures, their ability to keep money circulating in the local economy, and for the perceived social benefits of retaining a farming cultural landscape. Family farmers should be paid "fair wages" and direct marketing opportunities for farmers should be created as

rural development tools. Two national "family farmer" organizations substantiate these goals:

> 1. The ***National Family Farmer*** organization (http://www.nffc.net/) promotes the following voice on their home page:
> We're the National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC). We provide a voice for grassroots groups on farm, food, trade and rural economic issues to ensure fair prices for family farmers, safe and healthy food, and vibrant, environmentally sound rural communities here and around the world.
>
> 2. The mission of the "***Family Farm Defenders***" organization (http://www.familyfarmdefenders.org/) cites this as their mission:
> Our mission is to create a farmer-controlled and consumer-oriented food and fiber system, based upon democratically controlled institutions that empower farmers to speak for and respect themselves in their quest for social and economic justice. FFD has worked to create opportunities for farmers to join together in new cooperative endeavors, form a mutual marketing agency, and forge alliances with consumers through providing high quality food products while returning a fair price to farmers.

According to the AAM, these "family farmers" don't support nature's transformation practiced by modern, industrial farmers. Considered post-modern in approach, the sustainable agriculture movement is encouraging the development of a patchwork of farms with natural habitats rather than biologically desolate and chemically-dependent farms of industrialized agriculture. Techniques such as management intensive rotational grazing, grazing cattle, and nitrogen from manure rather than chemical fertilizers, simply an overall concern for ecosystems development are being explored as alternatives to promote ecological harmony and avoid the negative externalities associated with industrial farming (Jackson, 2002). Farmer's desires to interact less destructively with the environment are being met with a growing number of consumers interested in supporting such practices.

Unfortunately, the sustainable agriculture movement in particular, has tended to be homogenously European American and affluent in its composition (Allen, 2004). Instead of discourse addressing this racial and class imbalance, farms are held up for ecological preservation regardless of the associated economic, political, or social cost.

While sustainable agriculture organizations peddle grassroots and democratic rhetoric, absent from their literature or fact sheets is any history of the U.S. government or its related agencies' systematic removal of African American farmers from their farmland. From a century high (1900-2000) of 14 percent in 1920, today less than one percent of the 1.9 million U.S. farmers are African American. The USDA acknowledges that discrimination played a role in that decline. The report by the National Small Farmers Commission states that "Discrimination has been a contributing factor in the dramatic decline of Black farmers over the last several decades. (USDA, 1998, p. 26)" Thus efforts to support the "family farmer" are specifically supporting white farmers. To the extent that the movement is growing, the privileging of whites continues. Three key events led to that staggering decline, beginning most critically with post-Civil War policies. Despite Reconstruction promises of land for all "freedmen" via the Freedmen's Bureau Act, only limited amounts "of confiscated federal property passed into African American hands" (Mittal and Powell, 2000, p.3). Instead, without the social, legislative, or economic means to acquire land, African American farmers primarily reverted to their antebellum status as sharecroppers and tenants on white-owned plantations.

Many who did farm grew what they knew: cotton. Such monocropping made African American farmers economically vulnerable, unlike white farmers who could diversify their operations. Though Blacks' land ownership peaked in 1910 at an estimated

15 million acres, the ultimate decline in Black farmers began around 1920 with the onset of World War I and the emergence of boll weevil virus. The virus decimated crops and farmland, yet government and philanthropic aid went "almost exclusively to whites" and Blacks began fleeing North in record numbers (Mittal and Powell, 2000, p.4).

Despite agricultural progresses embedded in the civil rights movement of the 1960s, the number of African American farmers continued to decline into the 1990s. Indeed, "between 1982 and 1992, the number of Black farmers in the U.S. fell 43 percent… disappearing at a rate almost five times greater than whites" (Mittal and Powell, 2000, p. 6). Black farmers who remain experience discriminatory lending practices, including Black farmers waiting nearly three times as long for loan decisions, and at that receiving only 56 percent of loans compared with an 84 percent acceptance rate for white farmers (Mittal and Powell, 2000, p. 6). Furthermore, discrimination in lending complaints against the USDA and the Farmers Home Administration were stunted when President Ronald Reagan financially crippled the Civil Rights division of the USDA in 1983. After it was rebuilt in 1997, Black farmers filed a class action suit in the United States District Court (Pigford v. Veneman, formerly known as Pigford v. Glickman) against the USDA claiming racist administration through discriminatory lending and benefit practices. The $200 million settlement represented a historic acknowledgement that the USDA "discriminated against African American growers for years in awarding agricultural loans and ignored their complaints of racial bias" (Rosen, 1999, p. A6) though it garnered little national press despite the seemingly landmark nature of the lawsuit.

Compounding the egregious nature of the systemically driven decline of African American farmers during the twentieth century is the patent invisibility of ethnic minorities from most of the discourse surrounding sustainable agriculture, particularly information about farm worker conditions (Allen, 2003, 2004). Such absence is particularly troublesome given that nationwide, two-thirds of farm workers are foreign-born (Villarejo, and Baron, 1999). In California, one of the country's largest agricultural states, foreign-born ethnic minorities (mainly Hispanic) make up 95 percent of farm laborers (Kumminoff et al., 2000). Their high numbers reflect their significant contribution to the industry. For example, California farmers are outnumbered on the farm by farm workers nearly 18 to 1 and perform nearly 80 percent of the work on a farm (Villarejo, 1990).

Ultimately, when considering the limited range of actors involved in the AAM, it's imperative to see the way such efforts to preserve the farmers' "family farm" furthers white privilege through systematically excluding non-whites from any form of representation in the production side of the movement.

Chapter 3. Research Methods

a) Introduction

The research methods detailed here were used within the Growing Power Community Food Center organization. Growing Power is a Milwaukee nonprofit organization devoted to creating sustainable food systems. (For more significant details on the organization, see the Discussion Findings section.)

Selecting appropriate research methods is the key to having a rich, thorough, and productive research analysis. To that end, this section focuses on three aspects of the primary research methods used in this study: definitions of research methods, why methods were chosen, and the data format in pre- and post-analysis.

The research was conducted across two populations of participants: Growing Power staff members and Growing Power's Market Basket customers. The methods used with these groups were selected to achieve breadth, depth, and integrity of data collection while respecting the time and professional responsibilities of parties involved.

Both the interview and survey methods grounding this study were ethnographically informed by my role as a Growing Power volunteer during the fall 2005 semester. The part-time role consisted of weekly visits lasting approximately 4-6 hours to assist with a range of organizational duties from processing sunflower sprouts for restaurant distribution to assisting with an elementary school field trip to Growing Power. The part-time volunteer role allowed me to develop relationships with Growing Power staff members and to witness firsthand how the organization operates on a daily basis. Such relationships enhanced my ability to identify appropriate populations and personnel

for the study's participation while helping identify critical questions based on observations and common experiences.

b) Research Methods Used

Though research was informed by both my time as a volunteer and critical reading of Growing Power literature, the two primary research methods in this study were semi-structured interviews and mixed method questionnaires.

i) Definitions

Interviews are broadly defined as conversations between interviewers and informants (Dunn, 2005, p. 79). Generally, interviews are categorized as either structured, semi-structured, or informal depending on whether the interview's driving force is a set of formalized and predetermined questions (structured) or centered on the informant's own stories and thought processes (informal). The semi-structured interview falls between those two interview types using a blend of both characteristics. Semi-structured interviews were used in this particular study.

Independent of its category, interviews offer strengths as a research method in human geography by filling gaps in knowledge left from other methods; investigating "complex behaviours and motivations"; collecting a range of often-divergent opinions and beliefs within a group; and the ability to validate and reflect on the views and experiences of informants while offering them an opportunity to learn more about the research being conducted (Dunn, 2005, p. 80).

Complementing the methodological use of interviews in the study is the incorporation of questionnaires. Questionnaires ask consistent, formal questions of people thought to be representative of the broader population (McGuirk and O'Neill,

2005). Mixed-method questionnaires ask both qualitative and quantitative questions as a means for gathering original data from people.

c) Why methods were chosen

Interviews were used to collect a range of understandings, perspectives and meanings (Dunn, 2005, p. 80) from a broad range of persons connected to Growing Power and their ability to understand the complexities of insight and behaviors. Key concepts and themes from the alternative food movement were used to develop the interview guide. Open-ended questions were created for each interviewee, with some basic affiliation questions asked of everyone. This structure allowed for responses unique to the individual person while ensuring baseline data for all interviewees. Questions tailored to individuals were developed with background knowledge of the person's role within the Growing Power organization. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using a blend of primary and secondary questions. Sixteen in-depth staff member interviews were conducted over a six-month period, including follow-up interviews with key personnel.

Questionnaires were selected for quite a different reason. The short mixed-method questionnaire sought to gather both quantitative and qualitative data from Growing Power's Market Basket customers. The goal of these questionnaires was to understand how customers experience their affiliation with Growing Power. These populations were thought to be a representative sample of the broader population involved in the alternative food movement. One-hundred surveys were distributed in February 2006 with a return rate of 34 percent. The majority of quantitative analysis was done based on a sample size of 34. However, there were a few survey respondents who did not answer all

of the questions which accounts for the sample size being smaller than 34 in some analyses.

d) Data Format

i) Pre-analysis

Study interviews were collected via two methods: face-to-face and via the telephone. All interviews with Growing Power staff members were semi-structured, face-to-face, and conducted on three separate occasions at Growing Power. Each interview was digitally recorded and complemented by interviewer notes; at a later date each interview was transcribed. Interview duration ranged from 20 minutes to 100 minutes per session depending on the staff member. Interviews with staff members were lengthy due to it being the sole form of data collection from this group. See Appendix A for sample interview questions.

Study questionnaires for Market Basket customers were conducted via paper-based surveys and distributed via the standard mode of communication already established between Growing Power and its customers. See Appendix B for a copy of the survey distributed.

Creation of the questionnaire was guided by three themes present across the alternative agrifood literature critiques: economic justice, social exclusion, and ecological sustainability. Questions were written to be direct and answerable within a relatively short period of time (five to ten minutes for the Market Basket).

Questions used on the questionnaire for the Market Basket customers centered on:

1. Reasons why customers purchased Market Baskets from Growing Power
2. Duration of their Growing Power affiliation
3. Typical buying pattern of Market Baskets

4. Demographic information including income, race, ethnicity, age, household size

Market Basket questionnaires were returned at a rate of 34 percent to the researcher via attached postage-paid envelopes provided to respondents. Using the researcher's home address as both where the survey was mailed to and the return address preserved respondents' anonymity.

ii) Post-analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods were used once data collection was completed. Analytic coding was used primarily with interview data while pattern analysis and descriptive statistics (including mean, median, and range) were used for the questionnaire data.

Qualitative data analysis using analytic coding was done with all of the interview transcripts. Because each interview question was designed to inform different aspects of the overarching research question, comments were sorted and analyzed accordingly using analytic codes to code text. The broad categories gleaned from both the literature and researcher's experience centered on economic, social, and ecological issues within the AAM. Analyzing interview transcripts for comments directed at these themes helped identify data patterns and relationships (Cope, 2005). Such analysis was done until category saturation was realized. For example, this question asked Growing Power staff members to address the alternative food movement's issue of *social exclusion* without explicit mention of the term:

> Are there particular groups of people (based on economic status, size, race, ethnicity, geographic location or some other factor) who hold more power than others in our food system--either the production side or the consumption side?

Staff member responses then confirmed or negated the AAM's social exclusion literature or provided a mediation of both its critiques and merits. This coding helped to both reduce the quantity of interview data and to establish an organizational structure for analysis (Cope, 2005).

Quantitative data collected from the questionnaires was analyzed for two purposes: descriptive statistics and pattern identification. Initially, select quantitative data garnered from the Market Basket survey painted a demographic picture of who Market Basket customers were and what their consumer-buying pattern was. For example, did African American customers tend to purchase more monthly Market Baskets than did Whites? Subsequently, pattern analysis was used to detect relationships between those demographic characteristics and reasons for Growing Power affiliation and participation. Both purposes strongly complement the more in-depth qualitative research, while also suggesting areas for future research.

e) Conclusion

The use of both interviews and questionnaires helped determine the mediation of critiques of the AAM through exploring the complex behaviors and motivations of its participants. The nuances found in interview transcripts coupled with the raw quantitative questionnaire data provided the necessary foundation for the rich analysis detailed in the following section.

Chapter 4. Discussion of Findings

a) Introduction

This section details the research I conducted at Growing Power Community Food Center (known hereafter as simply, Growing Power). Located on Milwaukee's northern fringe and directed by Will Allen, Growing Power is a nationwide nonprofit organization where people can learn sustainable practices to grow, process, market and distribute food. Its mission identifies several core activities around which it is organized: food production, food distribution, and professional training.

In terms of food production, Growing Power[viii] is Milwaukee's last fully functioning farm. Its acreage is devoted to growing conventional crops, demonstrating aquaponics, beekeeping, biological worm growing systems (vermiculture), rain gutter gardening, animal husbandry, and year round growing in cold-weather climates. Fortunately, the techniques used on the farm are low-cost and not capital-intensive, allowing budget-conscious nonprofits and individuals affordable implementation of the techniques. Incredibly, the farm produces over 100,000 pounds of chemical-free vegetables annually.

In terms of food distribution, the organization coordinates distribution of more than 150,000 pounds of food gathered from Midwest organic and conventional farmers (Penn, 2003). Food is packed into "Market Baskets" (similar in structure to a CSA[ix] – CSA– program) and sold to urban consumers for $13, half the market value. This supports urban food security for residents including those least able to afford it.

Lastly, in terms of education, Growing Power provides tours and workshops for everyone from community groups and farmers to inner city teenagers and elementary schoolchildren. In a single weekend workshop, Growing Power can be host to more than 75 workshop attendees. In 2003, over 3,000 people from more than 12 countries visited the facility in approximately 147 separate public tours. Additionally, Will Allen, Growing Power's director, has taught farming and food processing to thousands of students and helped launch more than 25 urban gardens. Growing Power is also heavily involved in helping neighborhood groups convert vacant city land into garden plots.

b) Growing Power as a "New" Social Movement

Growing Power is part of a "new" social movement. Unlike other singularly focused food-related organizations or nonprofits such as Slow Food, Buy Local, or National Family Farmer, Growing Power addresses the food system as a whole both in theory and practice. Each of the employees interviewed was asked which of the goals that Growing Power addresses is the most important. Employees consistently said that no one could be isolated. "I don't necessarily think that there is one thing....I look at it more as a system with food access being a priority." Or "Growing Power is different because it uses a full-circle approach where you're working on all aspects of the puzzle you are trying to complete." In other words, Growing Power "offers a balance between the education side and the production side."

Growing Power customers were also cognizant of this range of goals. Survey respondents identified the full spectrum of goals Growing Power works towards as reasons why they participate in its programs. Specifically, they identified "fresher produce," "year round access to healthy food," "affordability," "supporting

grassroots/local efforts," "belief in sustainable agriculture," "urban farming," "supports community food systems," "organic produce," and "contribute to farmers" as reasons for participation. These reasons for ordering Market Baskets were grouped into categories. For example, if a respondent said they ordered Market Basket because it was affordable, that would be considered an Economic reason. Figure 1 shows the breakdown by category with Social reasons being the most often cited. Social reasons included comments such as improving a family's health or supporting community members you know. Additional descriptions of these categories are outlined in Figure 2.

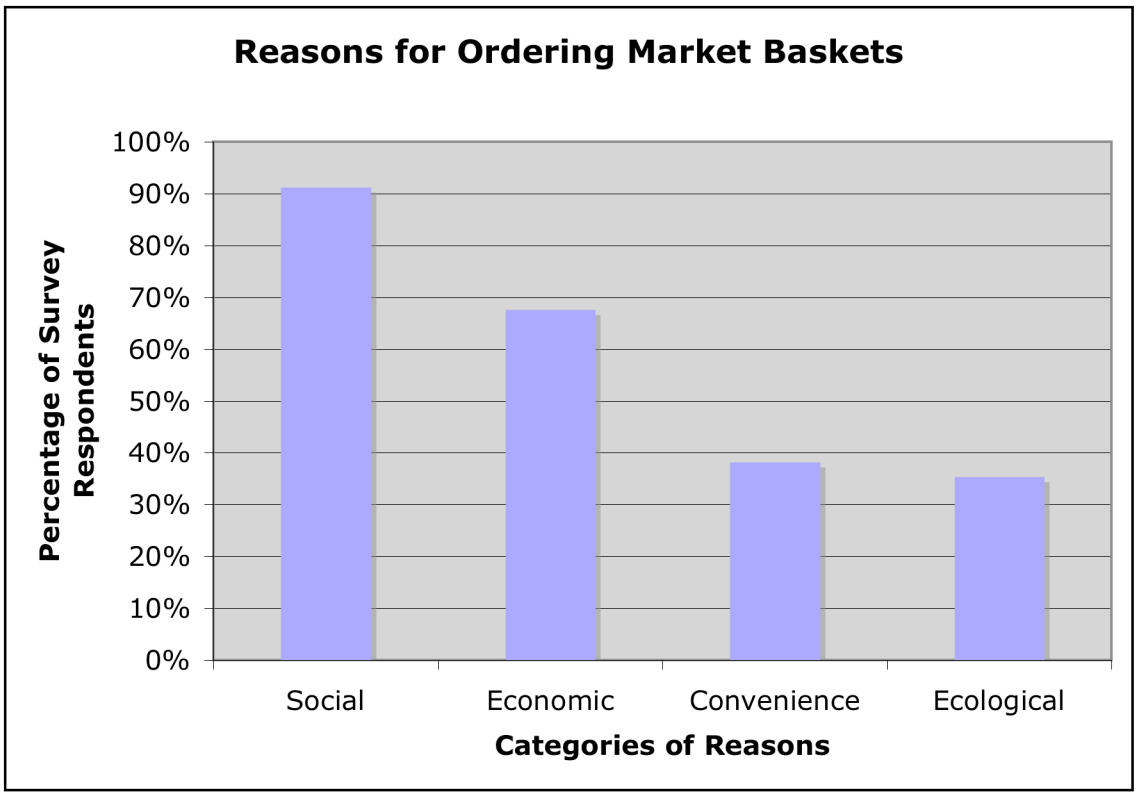

Figure 1. Survey respondents' reasons for ordering Market Baskets.

Social Reasons	Economic	Convenience	Ecological
• Health • People you know • Local foods • Support community food system	• Affordability • Local economy • Support farmers	• Provided easy access to produce • Offered variety	• Fresh foods • Organically grown • Sustainably grown

Figure 2: Survey responses were categorized into four categories.

The driving force behind any social movement is its people, and at Growing Power that is no exception. Accordingly, many employees interviewed referenced the "family-like culture of the staff" as an important part of the organization's success. This feeling extended to employees' children as well. "Even my kids who do not work here anymore…he comes here, this is his family. You can always go back home and this is home to them. They'll get hugs, they'll get scolding when they're wrong, and they'll get praise." The camaraderie among staff members is evident to outsiders as well. Each of the days I spent there I witnessed staff members eating together, discussing strategies, tag-teaming giving tours, and shoveling manure together--all having a good time. Their willingness to include volunteers as integral members of their operation only solidifies their commitment to inclusivity and teamwork.

Yet the clear foundation of the organization lies in the passions of its director. Repeatedly in interviews, employees stressed the absolute importance of Growing Power's director to the organization. And they said it succinctly: "He's awesome," "he's irreplaceable," "he has instilled in us what he believes," "he's the 'father' of urban agriculture," and "we know he's not in it for himself." And yet from his perspective, his

job is simply about "growing your passion…figuring out how to grow your passion like you do vegetables." The logistical, physical, economic, and agricultural challenges are not daunting to him. Will Allen explains, "The challenge is for me personally, is what drives me to do the stuff I do trying to make what a lot of people say is not possible." His ingenuity and determination made him the 2005 recipient of a Leadership for a Changing World award from the Ford Foundation. He received $100,000 to support Growing Power and a $15,000 award for personal education opportunities.

Yet true to the nature of being a team-based organization, employees stressed the importance of being able to do anyone else's "job" taking on whatever needed to be done at the time. Indeed, employees are extremely satisfied with their jobs at Growing Power.

This comment echoes a common sentiment: "It's probably one of the best jobs I've ever had because when I leave at the end of the day I feel like I'm contributing to something that is very important. It's hard, it's frustrating, not everything goes our way, but the goal is good. What we strive for is good." Another employee expressed it this way: "I'm always learning something new while I'm working here. And then this is just what I love."

What is it that makes working at Growing Power so unique? The director notes how there are "few, if any multicultural organizations in America…" making it unique, if not unparalleled "in the food movement in general." To that end, most employees stated how important it was that those who worked at Growing Power were multicultural, multigenerational and just generally different from themselves. They each spoke of how much they learned from one another simply because they had different backgrounds, were from different parts of the city or different parts of the world. So while those in the

Alternative Food Movement may generally be monocultural, Growing Power stands out as a beacon of difference.

c) Embracing the Alternative Agrifood Movement & Addressing its Critiques

The strength in what Growing Power does is the way in which it addresses pitfalls of the conventional food system, while mediating the critiques made of the AAM. This section specifically explores the ways in which Growing Power implements its AFIs. Four core initiatives will be explored: Farmer's Markets, CSAs, and Agricultural Practices.

i) Farmer's Markets

While Farmer's Markets can provide customers with potentially fresher produce and a more socially embedded experience than what they otherwise might find at a conventional grocer, their accessibility to all demographic groups has been limited. Growing Power's operation of Will's Roadside Stand, a particular type of farmer's market, both improves access to produce in the city, maintains social embeddedness, all while maintaining accessibility for all demographic groups.

Improving Access to Fresh Produce.

Growing Power operates "Will's Roadside Stand" as a daily farmer's market for selling their Rainbow Farmer's Cooperatives produce. The Market's existence substantively improves access to fresh produce, eliminating at least some semblance of a neighborhood food desert. The store began as a Southern food Store, selling produce not easily obtainable in Milwaukee such as okra and fresh peas. A simple layout facing Silver Spring Drive, a bustling arterial street providing easy access by foot, car, bike, or bus to

Milwaukee's North side, the market now offers fresh meats and produce and a small selection of specialty groceries such as hot sauce and corn meal. A Growing Power employee explains the benefit of its current location: "Either you live in a neighborhood where there's a lack of grocery stores, or at this point a lot of organic and healthy foods are more expensive than others. So I think sometimes your economic status keeps you from accessing both by geography and by price." Growing Power helps change that because it offers convenient geography and affordable foods.

Staff members routinely cited the importance of neighborhood customers having access to a storefront offering fresh produce within walking distance in a neighborhood where you're more likely to "see liquor stores and nail salons, you know, and Valvoline Oil changes and more cell phone stores than you would see fresh food sources" commented one employee. All staff members interviewed cited the location of Growing Power as particularly important whether for historical, geographic, or social reasons. One employee explains the location's social importance: "So its no secret that Milwaukee is divided by race and economic status so I think that being sort of in the middle of a neighborhood that can benefit from what we're doing and the lower cost of healthy produce and the access to it. It's [location] pretty important." Indeed, Ninety-six percent of the residents are African American, 37 percent are under the age of 17, and 34 percent live below the poverty line.

The store also offers a place to publicize Market Baskets, Growing Power's CSA-style initiative. One of the employees explains that she likes "to have the market baskets on Friday sitting out for those people that don't know about it that's the first thing they do is walk up to that basket and say "is that for sale, can I buy this?" And then we tell

them “no, you can’t buy that one but you can place an order to get one.” Current customers can also restock on produce they run out of in their Market Basket. “This is a local place you can walk in. That takes away the geography and the price because it’s a reasonable cost for the healthy food and they can walk here, and this is a close place compared to some other grocery stores.”

A Place for Social Embeddedness.

However, the storefront offers more than produce…it offers a community social connection. The social connection available through the Store offers a powerful advantage over traditional markets. Many supporters of the AAM buy food because they know there is a story behind it. Indeed, the small but growing national chain, Trader Joes embraces that notion. “The stores are small, they don't rely on national brands, you can't do price comparisons and they definitely don't offer one-stop shopping. But every product has a story." At Growing Power, many of its customers know its story and the products’ stories and is why they support the organization.

Customers often stop to talk with Growing Power employees, many who have worked there for years. During the interviews, employees each regaled stories from their regular customers. And because the race, ethnicity, and age range of employees reflects that of the neighborhood at large, customers feel more comfortable sharing stories. One employee who grew up in the South recounted her days using a particular kind of flour for baking… She explained that Growing Power offered that type of flour and was “something her customers couldn’t get at Pick and Save.”

The care shown by Growing Power employees to its customers is also reciprocated. When one of the Growing Power employees had two deaths in her family, "customers were coming in wanting to leave cards and condolences and messages" saying "tell her I'm thinking about her."

The storefront is also used for customers stopping in to pickup their Market Basket; it also celebrates community.

> "But it's not just the food, then, either. That goes back to what Will is always saying is building community around food. Well there's your community. And when she knows everybody who comes in the door and knows their stories and what's going in their lives because they're here to pick up their market basket. That's a perfect, tangible example of building community around food, and good healthy food."

The small and intimate nature of the store also offers the opportunity to talk and educate customers. Growing Power staff can educate the customer and their children about fruits and vegetables. This is particularly important with children. "Normally when I have kids I give them a little sample and I say to them "you want a couple grapes? You want a strawberry?"" Such personal connections inspire children to want healthy foods.

Improved Accessibility for All.

The Market is also available to customers bringing in their federal government "farmer's market" check, usually valued at 15 to 20 dollars. Also, unlike some traditional Farmer's Markets, Will's Roadside Stand accepts WIC program vouchers and EBT cards. Finally, because the Market is staffed by a demographically diverse group of people, including people of color, and a wide range of ages, customers tend to represent a wide spectrum. The market's manager explained …" You know what? It never ceases to amaze me the kind of people that come through here… you get some of everybody here."

But unlike a conventional grocer, making the store profitable is not the most important part of Growing Power; quite the contrary. For the first few years the store was open, there were lines out the door on a regular basis. For some, that would be an indicator that they needed to expand operations. The director though instead took it as an opportunity to reflect on the organization as a whole. While doing so he saw an unmet need and thus turned attention it: education. He believed there was an opportunity to educate youth in the importance of healthy food and sustainable agriculture. As the store manager remembers it: "I watched the store go under but then I watched something else blossom. He [the director] used to always tell me, 'Karen you can't see the forest. Look at the big picture.'"

Will's Roadside Stand helps remedy reduced access to healthy foods and produce on Milwaukee's North side, while democratizing the social embeddedness of the AAM.

ii) CSA's

Traditional CSA programs offer eaters access to fresh, seasonal produce, and an opportunity to learn more about farming. Yet their speculative structure, program costs and their partial year produce distribution leaves a gaping hole in terms of who can realize the program's benefits. Conversely, Growing Power runs a CSA-*style* program called Market Basket, which attains the educational, and health goals of traditional CSAs, while expanding and democratizing access to the program. This increased participation has yielded additional public health and social benefits.

Year-round distribution

The Market Basket program coordinates distribution of produce supplied by their own Rainbow Farmer's Cooperative to neighborhoods throughout Milwaukee, Madison, and Chicago. Its weekly deliveries are made to neighborhood centers where residents pick up their box. Customers may also pick up their Market Basket from Growing Power's storefront. Available year-round, customers may choose how often they order the basket. Its mission is to supply "safe, healthy, and affordable whole foods, vegetables, and fruits to communities at a low cost." This year-around availability eliminates the speculative nature of traditional CSAs whose produce is a) not guaranteed; and b) only available during the growing season. Market Baskets are guaranteed because they are stocked from a variety of sources both local and national.

Produce is delivered in bulk to Growing Power or its warehouse where employees and volunteers assemble the Market Baskets. Assembling the baskets demonstrates an absolute commitment to the program. Flattened paper bags are manually folded into a "basket." Contents of the assembly line created Market Baskets differ from week to week based on seasonal changes and the particular size and type of baskets ordered. Folding the bags alone, can take up to four hours each week. The weeks I observed Market Basket assembly, I witnessed a physically demanding and logistically complex task, carried out with determination, efficiency, and humor.

CSAs are generally established to provide shareholders produce for the duration of the growing season, however long that may be. The Market Basket program is different in that it provides food year-round. Many of the customers surveyed indicated that the year round feature was one of the reasons for ordering Market Baskets. Survey

comments such as “So that my family has the opportunity to have farm fresh vegetables year round,” and “to have fresher product during the winter season” were not uncommon.

Increased Accessibility

Growing Power has increased produce accessibility to all groups: “farmers, to youth, to almost every type of organization, …whether its rural, suburban, schools, institutions…because you want to get food to all of those groups…regardless of who they are. Whether they are millionaires or they make 5000 a year, you should still be able to access the food, healthy food.” Therefore, by design, Market Baskets are to be available to anyone including what many of Growing Power’s employees identify as the importance of providing access to lower income urban residents.

Low-income is defined as households earning up to double what is considered poverty in this country. The federal poverty level for a family of four (2004) is $18,850. At Growing Power, this low-income access to produce actually occurs. Because the food is guaranteed to customers, unlike with traditional CSAs, WIC and the Quest Card (food stamps) may be used to purchase the Market Basket. Furthermore, contrary to traditional CSAs where the majority of participants are middle class and white, 70% of Market Basket customers have household incomes of less than $50,000 with 47% having incomes of less than $35,000. Figure 3 shows the distribution of income levels for Market Basket customers responding to the survey.

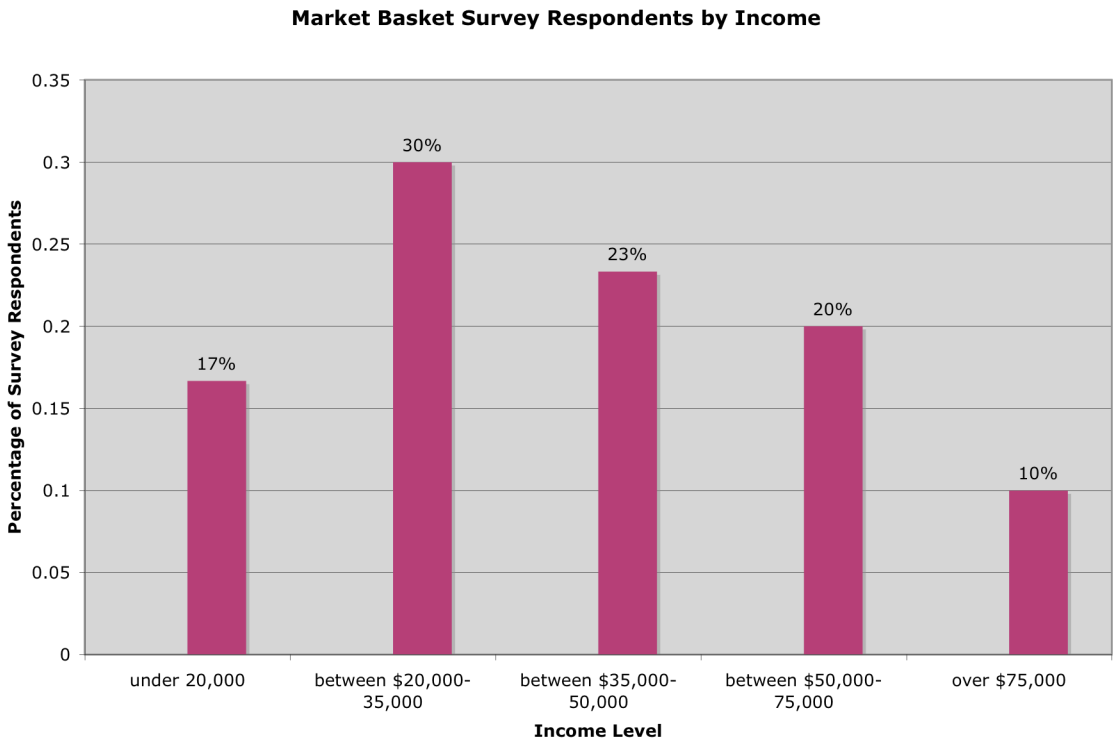

Figure 3: Market Basket Survey Respondents by Income

Demographically, 18% of customers are African American and 80% are White according to survey data. Compounding this finding is the fact that lower-income households are typically less likely to complete a survey than those with higher incomes. This suggests the findings are likely to be understated.

Growing Power also makes its resources available to those who have none or are people "falling on hard times." One employee reiterates how much they all look out for one another, emphasizing that no one who shows up would ever be turned away hungry.

Inherent in the design of traditional CSAs is the notion that costs are to be shared between urban and rural residents. The Market Basket on the other is explicitly designed to be affordable to urban residents. The Rainbow Farmer's Cooperative supplying the

food are guaranteed a fair price, but not at the expense of the customers. As one Growing Power employee explains, "it's a value of much over $15 worth of food. So it's a very intentional step, making healthy produce affordable." This fact is not lost upon Market Basket customers. More than 48% of survey respondents indicated affordability as one of the reasons they order the basket. The affordability of the Market Basket coupled with value of its contents was cited again and again by surveyed customers explaining it's a "Good bang for my buck."

Furthermore, 88% get the baskets 2 or more times per month (Figure 4), hence, they are committed to the source as a regular part of their shopping routine. It does not have to be a "special" treat as shopping at a specialty store might be.

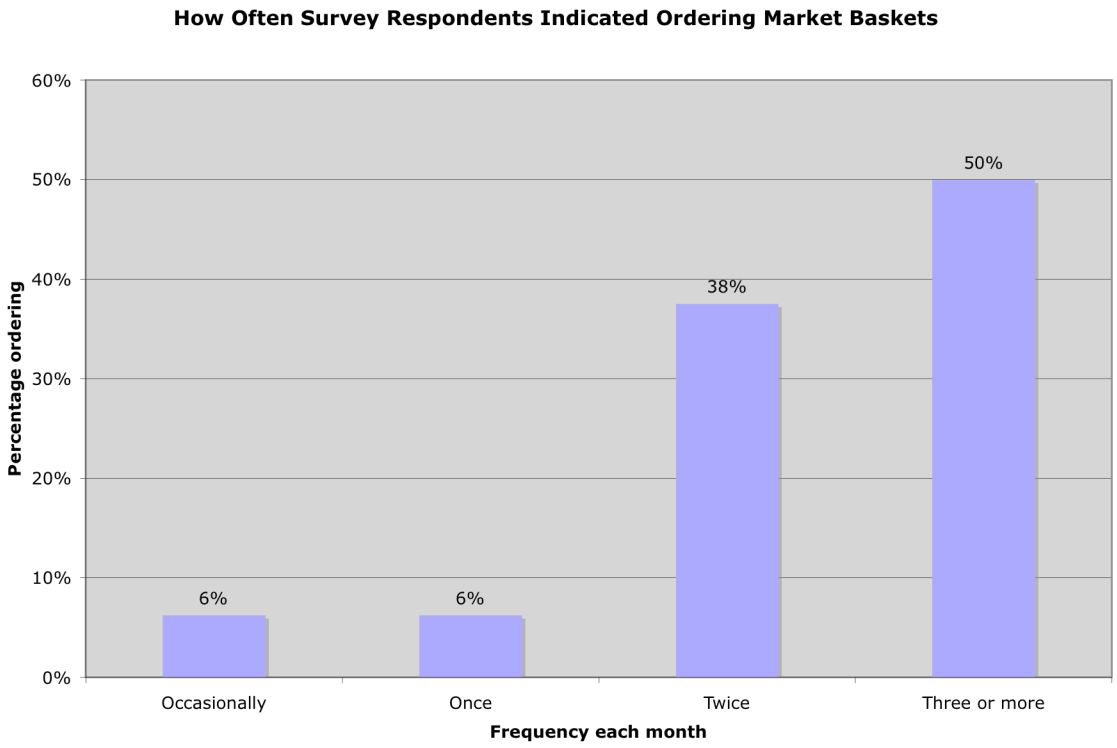

Figure 4: Frequency of Survey Respondents Ordering Market Baskets.

Improved Community Health

Increasing access to the Market Basket program has yielded additional benefits as well, namely improving the health of community members. One Growing Power employee recounted stories of women previously not consuming a healthy pre-natal diet but once she "started the program [Market Basket] when they were pregnant and the doctor said they ate better, they were healthier, after having the baby, the baby gets here and it's a healthy baby." Another said that while she was carrying the baby she was "actually eating my fruits and vegetables out of the basket. And I'm looking at her like 'yeah, right' and sure enough the baby came, the doctor commenting her on her health and how she didn't gain the weight like she did with the other kids and she said this pregnancy was totally different because she ate the basket!"

Other health-related benefits came from cancer patients ordering the basket. The Growing Power employee continues with another success story: "There were cancer patients that come in and said 'since I've been getting this market basket my cancer counts (or whatever) has gone down and my blood pressure is lower.' And when you hear this you look at the person like "really? We're helping you like that? I'm helping you sustain your life?" In the Market Basket survey, respondents routinely (32%) cited improving their own and family's health as a reason for ordering the Market Basket.

Customers surveyed commented that the Market Basket "forces me to eat healthy" and "encourages us to eat more fruits/veggies than we otherwise would." These benefits could also be realized through conventional sources as well; however, the

convenience and social embeddedness of Growing Power makes the desire of many to be a reality.

Additionally, customers cited appreciating the opportunity to expand their food horizons. They repeatedly said the Market Basket "encourages us to try new items I wouldn't otherwise purchase (for example collard greens!)" or enjoying the "Surprise of 'you'll never know what you'll get' kinda like Christmas!"

Clearly, customers order Market Baskets for a range of reasons. This customer sums them up well:

> "We order the market baskets because we are interested in alternate economies and supporting local businesses. We try to get our food from local and independent sources whenever possible. When I first heard about Growing Power I thought it was the neatest idea. It is close to home, we know where the food is coming from, and we know where our money is going. It also gives us the opportunity to try food that we normally wouldn't buy at the grocery store It is also so much food for such a little price that we couldn't do any better at a grocery store."

iii) Organic Food

The organic food market is growing rapidly and has been for the past 5 years. Yet routinely its costs are often double that of conventional produce. Thus despite its apparent health benefits, it is cost prohibitive for many. Through its Market Basket program and the Rainbow Farmers Cooperative, Growing Power capitalizes on the health benefits of organic food while simultaneously making it affordable and accessible.

Increasing Affordability

Growing Power offers its customers the option of an all-organic Market Basket. Twenty-six percent of Growing Power customers typically order the Organic Basket while 21% of survey respondents indicated that organic food was one of the reasons they ordered Market Baskets from Growing Power. Customer reasons for ordering the Organic

basket included wanting to "decrease our exposure/ingestion of chemicals/pesticides" and "supporting growing practices [that are] sustainable for the earth, planet and population." Though still under market value, it does cost more than the standard Market Basket. However, as a sign of its relative affordability, Organic basket customers were evenly divided across all income groups, both at the lower and upper levels. Adding to the affordability of the organic basket is its flexible nature that allows customers to order Organic baskets one week while ordering conventional the next.

Supporting Farmers in Transition

Another reason Growing Power is able to make organic food affordable is because it buys produce that is organically certified or simply organically grown. Since the federal government instituted organic certification, the costs for becoming certified have risen. This has disproportionately hurt small farmers. One employee explains it this way:

> "… the small family farmer can't afford to be certified by the government..[I] think they have some kind of grant they can apply for to get certified. But that was the biggest issue they couldn't afford it, but at the same time they're growing just like the certified ones. So then we came up with the word sustainable, so that makes it just as good."

Growing Power is good at supporting ideas and practices without needing programs and labels.

Thus, though Growing Power grows food that's "organic cause you know how he feels about chemicals and stuff. He's not using those" they aren't certified. That too reduces the cost of organic production making it more accessible. Likewise, Growing Power offers its business customers (ie. local restaurants and cooperatives) various organic options. "If their interests and their requests are for primary certified organic we

do that. So I would say now, as far as my work is concerned, most of my customers at this point are looking for organically grown, not necessarily certified organic, although that is starting to grow…" Growing Power is flexible with its purchasing power because its main interest is in food accessibility and ecological responsibility, not in rigidly adhering to one particular method.

Believing in the notion of organic production and wanting to increase organics' accessibility, Growing Power seeks to buy from farmers seeking to transition to organic methods. The main buyer for the Rainbow Farmer's Cooperative explains it this way: "…there's farmers we work with that are in the process of improving their product and improving their method but we're working on selling their items to help them increase their income and transition [to organic] and have a more sustainable livelihood for themselves."

Increasing Organic Access through Education

The educational component of Growing Power that teaches people how to grow organically, adds to the increased accessibility of organic food. This education extends to local Milwaukee Public Schools. Growing Power is developing partnerships with local schoolchildren interested in learning about sustainable and organic agriculture. One employee describes a recent school visit:

> "It's not very far from here, 76th and Congress, and they have a small greenhouse section, and they built a worm-bin, and I went and delivered their worms today. They've been collecting their lunch scraps and everything. The kids are great, excited, interested in it, and it's just wonderful to see them get into it as well. Growing Power isn't interested in developing dependency on their organic produce and training, contrary to a for-profit organization. We're a good example, but I also want people to start replicating it. It is really cool to see these kids taking that ownership and running with it."

These educational opportunities also help change the notion of organic. Because most grocery stores sell produce that looks perfect, often people make disparaging remarks about the appearance of organic food. “My feeling was all natural is ugly, because everything that was organically grown to me was ugly. But everything that had chemicals on it was perfect, perfect size, perfect in shape, just too perfect! So that stuff was pretty where the other stuff to me…….someone would say to me ‘this is all natural’. And I would say ‘it’s ugly. It’s organic.” Changing public perceptions of organic foods, indeed of many facets of food systems is challenging according to Growing Power staff. “Probably I would say educating the public is the most challenging. Not physically doing the stuff that needs to be done but educating the people.”

iv) Local Food

The concept of “local food” remains an elusive, if not ambiguous term; everything is local to somewhere. Fortunately, Growing Power’s concept of local is broader than most.

Balancing Local with National

Because they have a multiplicity of goals including local and providing year round access to fresh produce, they need to network nationally. Through national conferences and their web site, Growing Power has networked with farmers from across the country “from Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, [and] farmers right here in Wisconsin that we didn’t know existed.”

This concept of “local” is apolitical and stands to benefit both Milwaukee area residents and the farmers and communities of the states from where produce is purchased.

The local critique says that restricting purchases to local producers privileges one group of people over another. Growing Power doesn't do that. Instead they strive for balance.

"Local" advocates have also sought to banish non-local retailers from the food system mix. Yet, Growing Power is working with the international market giant, Texas-based Whole Foods to develop their emerging "Wisconsin Only" section of their upcoming Milwaukee location. Some AAM organizations would revolt at the idea of working with such a large conglomerate; Growing Power sees it as an opportunity to take advantage of the structure of the larger businesses to help small, local farmers.

Growing & Selling Local Produce

Growing Power keeps its local options open, sourcing from local producers when possible. "It depends on what it is people are looking for. If their interests are local, we work with folks that are just growing local but not organic." This flexibility differs from other AAM organizations. For example, a Growing Power employee explored the idea of expanding the Market Basket program into the Madison area. When contacting a key AAM organization in that area, the idea was met with resistance because the foods were not "local." The cool reception Growing Power received in the Madison area was disappointing…especially since those organizations "talk a good game, but they don't actually do farming."

In Milwaukee though, Growing Power sells its own "local" produce to restaurants, in particular sprouts, greens, and herbs. "A lot of times we do have products available that are not available elsewhere. For example, fresh sprouts right now. [December] If you wanted fresh local sprouts grown under sunlight, we are the only place

to find them." Growing Power's reputation in Milwaukee is solidified through several partnerships with key businesses.

Lastly, its storefront offers "local' residents access to "certain culturally appropriate food and a certain quality of food." Not to be exclusive though, it is of course open to "residents from outside of the mediate vicinity who either are coming for the market basket or again for those real specialty items that you just can't get anywhere else."

v) Agricultural Practices

The AAM has focused on two main issues surrounding agricultural practice: patronizing small, family farmers and practicing sustainable agriculture. While neither issue has an explicitly defined agenda or strict definition, their basic tenets are relatively understood: support the little guy and protect the environment. Indeed supporting smaller, family farmers does assist them in competing against the larger corporate farms and accompanying retail conglomerates. Likewise, supporting those who practice sustainable agriculture does enhance the ecological status of the fields. Yet because of the disproportionate numbers of white farmers nationwide, this support stands to serve as an unfair advantage for many. Furthermore, strictly adhering to scale guidelines may obscure farmers who indeed are practicing ecological stewardship. This section addresses how Growing Power has sought to support small and ecologically responsible farmers, while at the same time reducing the effects of racial and economic discrimination through education and financial support.

Supporting small-scale farmers

Growing Power does continue to focus on smaller, family farmers as is consistent with other AAM organizations. In practice, Growing Power's supplier base is the Rainbow Farmer's Cooperative. The Cooperative was founded by Growing Power's director as a means of allowing the small, individual farmer a way to compete with larger, corporate farmers. A Growing Power employee explains that the cooperative is for "small family farmers, not corporate farmers, cause they got a place to sell, to get their goods out there."

In fact, identifying themselves as "both a support agency and a wholesaler," Growing Power sources its produce from a range of farmers. "I'll always try to support people who are limited in their outlets and working with us is one of the major contributors to their yearly income. I'm going to favor them over somebody else that just has some extra stuff to move but has other avenues for that."

Besides the marketing support realized through the Rainbow Farmer's Cooperative, Growing Power offers significant training opportunities. As one of the trainers explains, "We want to teach people how to do what we're doing and complement their current farming practices with some more sustainable methods. But then we want to try to help people make money at it. So that they can continue to do it. We want to help build the movement that people can make a living, help sustain themselves as working farmers." The practical, intensive, hands-on training workshops are offered several times each year and include workshops on:

- Community Project Design. Developing actions plans for your food system including Community Food Centers.
- Living Biological Worm Systems. Vermiculture and Composting

- Aquaponics/Aquaculture. Learning to build indoor fish and plant systems for food production.
- Marketing Solutions. Participate in a group discussion focused n strategies to market your products and programs such as Farmers Markets, Box Programs and CSAs.
- Beekeeping. Learn the ABCs of urban or rural beekeeping without the use of chemicals
- Hoop House Construction. Learn how to construct a hoop house and do extended season production.

Growing Power offers workshops because they're interested in improving systemic accessibility to sustainable agriculture and healthy food. One Growing Power employee explains it this way: "So I think we're trying to approach it on two ends. One giving the actual, already-grown product.. giving them more access to that and then two, helping to train them as a producer, and that's their direct access to it as well." Some AAM organizations are trying to support farmers, but do so at the expense of the consumer. Instead, Growing Power again tries to mediate this. As one employee explains it, "I would say that I try to come up with a balance between what I think is the going sales rate is what people are going to pay if they buy from somebody else, and then trying to make it worthwhile for the farmer."

Such training opportunities are extended to all community members and farmers, including those who are economically disadvantaged. Not only does Growing Power try to purchase produce from small farmers with limited marketing capacity, but they offer subsidized workshops for these farmers to help them become self-sustaining. As one Growing Power employee explains it, "some farmers enter farming from the business world and thus bring to their field a base of economic stability not enjoyed by other farmers."

The assistance Growing Power provides farmers also extends to farmer cooperatives from other regions, in particular the South. Workshops are offered for Southern farmers not only to benefit Growing Power's relationship with them, but to assist in their own local communities. Growing Power's willingness and indeed interest in helping those outside of Milwaukee extends their concept of local and eliminates the exclusive, narrow definition of local other AAM organizations use.

One of the key sustainable agriculture concepts taught to farmers and community members alike is based on Growing Power's "Milwaukee Black Gold." This soil, developed with the help of vermicomposting[x] is "so powerful and nutrient rich that Allen can grow at $5 a square-foot yield, while the average farmer grows at less than $1. "His two acres can produce enough food to feed 2,000 people because the soil can support extremely intensive farming---more plants on less ground." (Ramp, 2005) The development of this soil is done without chemicals, rather with worms and waste from local coffee powerhouse Alterra and local brewery, Lakefront. This ecologically responsible method for improving yields is both good for the environment and an inexpensive alternative to chemical fertilizers.

Addressing discrimination

Agriculture in the US has a long history of racial discrimination. Growing Power's director explains a potential reason for the discrimination against minority farmers in lending specifically: "Because of the system that they had in place. The system was controlled locally, it wasn't controlled at the federal level. In other works, the farm-service agencies were all local people…the people on those committees that determined who gets funded…" were local people with little accountability to anyone. Such

discrimination in loan distribution is clear evidence of David Harvey's critique of local. Growing Power's director explains the past, "I think it's [been] a power or privilege kind of society that we live in, primarily, I think that it's been that way for a long time. It'll take a lot of time for that to change." But he articulates the need for change advocating to "get more people of color involved in the movement."

To that end, as part of the National Immigrant Farming Initiative, Growing Power has established the Southeast Wisconsin Immigrant Farming Initiative, which trains new immigrants, mostly Hmong and Somali Bantu, in sustainable agricultural techniques. One of the reasons for targeting immigrant farmers is to "help build their infrastructure so that they can participate in the coop and provide product for the coop." Though the work with Hmong farmers has been going on since the early 1990s, the initiative was established to formalize that work and to target additional immigrant and refugee groups including recently arrived Somali Bantu refugees and Latino farmers. Milwaukee boasts the second largest population of Hmong citizens in the country. Growing Power helps farmers make use of its own resources including greenhouse access, training, and marketing. Growing Power's collaboration with this national initiative has also allowed it to provide training to immigrants outside of the Milwaukee area. "The hands-on training will equip both immigrant farmers and those working with immigrant farmers in worm composting and raised bed techniques, small- and mid-scale organic farming methods, and marketing strategies."

Thus Growing Power's policy to work largely with traditionally underserved populations and to systemically teach and educate others how to farm sustainably,

garners the advantages inherent in improving agricultural practice, while avoiding the critiques characteristic of the AAM.

vi) Moving Forward

Though in many ways Growing Power is a model organization, there are areas for it to consider as it continues to grow. This section will approach those issues, which were garnered both through interviews with staff and my own research. These are explored through the lens of three AAM critiques explained in detail throughout this work: income exclusivity, lack of racial diversity, and lack of urban residents' access to fresh produce.

1) Urban Residents' Access to Produce

For all the value that the Market Basket program offers, its reach is limited. From a year round average low in the summer of 150 to a peak high during the winter months of 200-300, there is clearly room for growth. When asked what she hoped would be different in five years with the Market Basket program, one employee replied,

> "I would not like to packing them! (laughs)….In five years I want to be at ten thousand bags a week…..OK, let's go with five thousand bags……..A thousand bags maybe. ……OK so at least be at a thousand bags a week and distribution, I want it to be greatly (sic) and wider, I want it to be increasing by a hundred bags a week, ……..I don't even know, just to make more people happy, more people discovering that we're doing this and wanting to be part of the program."

Clearly from a marketing standpoint there is room and a desire for growth in the program. But simply increasing its numbers is not all should be done as echoed by another Growing Power staff member who also identified the need to reach more of the Milwaukee community in particular. Indeed, those living outside of the city primarily use the current Market Basket program. Only forty-five percent of survey respondents reside

within the city limits. This is in contrast to whom Growing Power employees indicated they wanted to primarily serve: Milwaukee residents. Ironically, the survey respondents who do live in city are those in zip codes not bordering Growing Power. Granted, those living close to Growing Power may be using Will's Roadside Stand instead of the Market Basket program, but increased participation from local residents would further solidify Growing Power's regular place in neighborhood residents' lives.

One of the strongest ways Growing Power management sees to increase participation in the Market Basket program is through word of mouth. She explains: "I don't care what nobody says, Word of Mouth for our Market Basket program. Some woman (would) get it, and tell someone else about it, it's amazing…..(like)…'I was a friends house, and they had this basket of fruits and vegetables and said they got it here for $13…I want to get one!'" One of the dilemmas though with this approach is if they're trying to increase participation from local neighborhood residents, that's not likely to happen through word of mouth when so many of their current customers aren't Milwaukee residents. Incidentally, for those who did provide Milwaukee zip codes, several could have been villages (ie. Glendale, Brown Deer) rather than the central city.

2) Racial Diversity

The lack of Market Basket participation by those nearby Growing Power is also reflected in their customers' racial composition. Despite Growing Power being located in the heart of the predominantly African American parts of the city, Growing Power's African American participation in the Market Basket program is low.

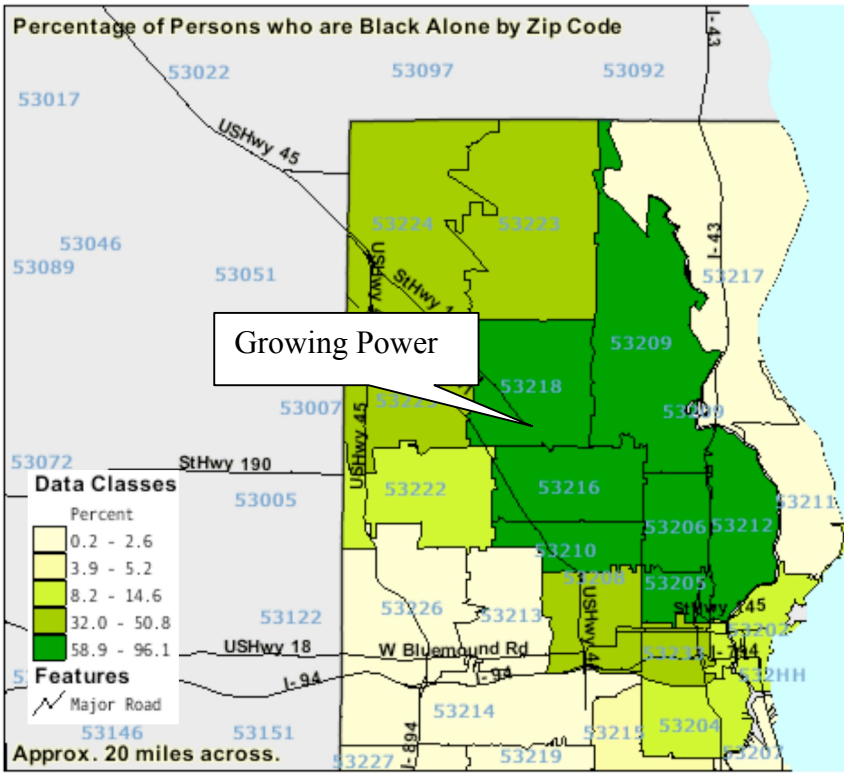

Figure 5: Growing Power is located in the 53218 zip code, in the heart of Milwaukee's African American neighborhoods. Map is based on US Census 2000 SF1 data.

Granted, with an18% participation rate it serves more African Americans than many CSAs; yet its potential to serve significantly more has yet to be realized. Compounding that lack of diversity is the virtual invisibility of Latinos participating in the Market Basket program despite their prominent presence on the City's south side.

3) Income Exclusivity

Furthermore, the program should be expanded to target more of the low-income individuals the organization seeks to help. One employee explained it this way: "I would love for lower income families and low income children to receive more of these baskets because that's healthier eating than what they're eating." Given the zip codes where current customers live, this may not be happening as often as they like. Thirty-six percent

of Market Basket customers are coming from Milwaukee or Madison suburbs whose zip code-based data finds the median household income averaging $65,368. Another nineteen percent cited Madison zip codes where the average median household income was $33,331. The average median household income for the Milwaukee zip codes was $32,935.

Supporting that notion was the prospect of making the Organic basket more affordable. Though a good value relative to what one would spend at a store like Whole Foods, it still is close to double the price of the standard basket. One employee echoed this concern and commented that she would like "to be able to make the sustainable basket more affordable for all people." Granted customers who order the Organic basket are spread evenly across all income levels, still, the majority of those customers (71%) have a household income of more than $35,000.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

Growing Power's story is a unique one. Whether you look at its promotion of vermicomposting and sustainable agricultural practices, its support of Hmong and Somali farmers, or its culturally and racially diverse makeup of staff and customers, you are unlikely to come across a comparable organization regardless of where you are. Beyond acknowledging its distinctive practices, I argued that Growing Power was able to successfully mediate the critiques of the AAM while simultaneously tapping into select characteristics of the conventional food system. In doing so, it is able to improve food security in the Milwaukee area. In many ways the evidence supports that notion.

Growing Power operates an exceedingly intentional organization. Each of its programs and daily activities are performed for a specific social, ecological, economic or logistical reason. The delicate dance it does between the two food systems benefits those associated with Growing Power. Consumers benefit because organic food is more affordable. Producers benefit because organic production techniques are taught in comprehensive and subsidized outreach programs. Its staffing and community location help address the racial imbalance in the AAM while its use of regional producers maximize the transportation network characteristic of the conventional system. Rather than sticking to "local food" only, it supports local farmers when possible. Rather than only selling or procuring organic food, it supports farmers practicing those methods even when not organically certified. Rather than simply supporting "small farmers" it supports farmers traditionally marginalized in contemporary agriculture. The awareness of the

complexity and importance of food access for all consumers and producers is at the root of Growing Power's success.

Yet, Growing Power has room for growth and improvement. While all of their programs are designed with complete accessibility in mind, their full reach has yet to be realized. Both their overall customer numbers and the specific groups of people they are targeting are below where they want them to be. Thus, the potential for expansion and growth at Growing Power is unlimited. Receipt of the $100,000 2005 Ford Foundation grant by its director is certain to facilitate that growth. Yet, even with such growth, it is doubtful that such a small-scale non-profit would have the reach necessary to substantively alter food security for the thousands of food insecure families in Milwaukee. Some would question whether it should even be expected to. Despite its potential scale limitations, Growing Power offers a model for both private and public organizations to address the myriad of issues affecting the community's food system and does so in a way more equitable and balanced than most in the AAM.

To that end, Growing Power's programs can be used as starting points for improvements to both food systems. If the conventional system adopted Growing Power's practice of ecological responsibility and sustainability, and if the AAM adopted Growing Power's social and political inclusiveness, the public's food security needs would be better met.

The significance of the research presented here is undoubted. Indeed, the AAM offers a theoretically sound alternative to the conventional food system. Hassanein (2003, p. 79) argues that:

> "these alternatives can, to a degree enhance 'food democracy' whose core 'is the idea that people can and should be actively participating in shaping the food

> system rather than remaining passive as spectators on the sidelines…[and] having power to determine agro-food policies and practices locally, regionally, nationally and globally."

However, research is showing that in practice, the AAM is not living up to its word. This research documented the limited participation and representation the movement offers racial and ethnic minorities, while continuing to privilege white farmers and consumers. Additional studies are needed to document the AAM's political and social exclusivity and identify more public/private solutions like Growing Power. Such solutions can both address and remediate the weaknesses of the conventional system while advancing the otherwise worthwhile goals of the AAM. Attaining food security for all members of a community is too fundamental a mission to leave to a movement not committed to both de jure and defacto equity.

The research presented here sought to examine the rising popularity of the AAM and how it sought to remedy the problems of the conventional food system. Digging deeper, it looked at a Milwaukee, Wisconsin nonprofit, Growing Power to see whether their AAM remedies offered solutions that were more socially and economically just than other AAM organizations.

Discussions about food are rampant today in political circles, corporate boardrooms, grocery stores, and dinner parties. Criticisms of the conventional food system are met with the purportedly ideal solutions of the AAM. The movement's participating organizations are obligated to broaden their mission and activities to establish an infrastructure that includes the operationalization of the social and political justice goals it so forcefully advocates.

* * *

The promotion of "local, quality, farm-fresh and organic food" is indeed everywhere around us. Hopefully, the intended audience for much of that promotion can become more inclusive, more democratic, and ultimately, more just.

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7. Appendix

Appendix A: Interview Questions

While some interview questions varied depending on the individual, the following questions were used with all Growing Power staff members.

1. How long have you been with Growing Power? In what capacity do you work with Growing Power?

2. How is Growing Power different from other sustainable agriculture initiatives state or nationwide?

3. Are there particular groups of people (based on economic status, size, race, ethnicity or some other factor) who hold more power than others in our food system---either the production side or the consumption side? How does GP affect that balance?

4. How important is your location in the city?

5. Growing Power offers "youth development," training, and marketing opportunities for small independent farmers. What goals of the sustainable agriculture movement are you most interested in promoting? (Ecological, economic, social, etc.) How would you prioritize these goals? Through what specific programs do you see this being most successful?

These interview questions were samples of ones unique to individuals working within a particular Growing Power program:

1. What role does achieving economic benefits for farmers play in the pricing and marketing of their produce? How do you weigh the needs of farmers and clients in determining a price for the produce you sell? How do you decide on what price is fair for farmers and affordable for clients?

2. Can you tell me the history of the Market basket program? What drove its creation? Where does it hope to be in 5 years?

Appendix B: Market Basket Survey

GROWING POWER, INC.

5500 W. Silver Spring Dr.
Milwaukee WI 53218
Phone: (414) 527-1546
Fax: (414) 527-1908

Please complete this survey and return it in the attached envelope at your earliest convenience. If the envelope is misplaced, please mail survey to: Growing Power Survey, c/o Kathleen Doherty, 146 Harding Street, Madison, WI 53714 or e-mail your responses to: kdoherty@uwm.edu

1. DESCRIBE REASONS WHY YOU ORDER GROWING POWER MARKET BASKETS.

2. MARKET BASKET PARTICIPATION

***** I usually order a: _____ Market Basket ($13) _____Half Basket ($7) _____ Organic Basket ($25)

* I order market basket(s): ____Only occasionally ____1/month ____2/month ____3+/month

3. PLEASE TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF:

Your zip code: _____ **Number of people in household:** ____ 1 ____ 2 ____ 3+

Your age: ___ under 21 ____ 21-28 ____ 29-38 ____ 39-50 ____ 51-61 ____ 62+

Your household income:
____ under $20,000 ____ between $20,000-35,000 ____ between $35,000-50,000
____ between $50,000-75,000 ____ over $75,000

Ethnicity/Race:
____ African American ____ Latino ____ White ____ Asian American ____Native American ____Other (please specify)

4. (OPTIONAL) Please contact me to confidentially discuss my Market Basket participation.

Your Name_____

The best way to contact me is by:
Phone_____ (The best time to reach me is:)
E-mail address_____ Mailing Address _____

[i] The federally administered Food Stamp Program serves as the first line of defense against hunger for low-income families who can buy nutritious food with coupons and Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards. Food stamp recipients spend their benefits to buy eligible food in authorized retail food stores. (From the USDA FNS web site: http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/)

[ii] Household is defined as 4-persons.

[iii] An interview was conducted with Paul Gale, the General Manager of the Jewel Grocery Store at 35th and North Ave. in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, October, 9, 2004.

[iv] Hypoxic: Deficiency in the amount of oxygen reaching body tissues.

[v] Data for this table is from* 2001 CR5 is from Progressive Grocer Annual Report of the Grocery Industry (April 2001) and * 2004 CR5 is from Progressive Grocer's Super 50 (5/1/04) Progressive Grocer reports only grocery sales from supermarkets, and does not report general merchandise, drug or convenience sales.

[vi] The Community Food Security Coalition defines food security as: "all persons obtaining at all times a culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through local non-emergency sources."

[vii] Studies on the number of markets dating from the early 1900s to 1990 are inconsistent, unverified, or missing. Few studies were done that definitively said how many markets existed (let alone where they were located) and several of the ones that were seem to have "lost their data." The author argues for additional study on farmer's markets. (Brown, 2001)

[viii] Growing Power, formerly Farm City Link before merging with Hope Finkelstein's Growing Power.

[ix] CSAs are arrangements made between community members and a local farm. Community members purchase a "share" of the farm, which entitles them to a weekly share of the farm's production.

[x] Vermicomposting is the process by which worms feed on decomposing organic waste (ie. banana peels) and subsequently produce a nutrient-rich soil "fertilizer."