

2019

## Super-Localizing Food as Tourism Development™: Producing the 30 Mile Meal™ in Athens, Ohio

Jed DeBruin

West Virginia University, [jmd0052@mix.wvu.edu](mailto:jmd0052@mix.wvu.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/etd>



Part of the [Human Geography Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

DeBruin, Jed, "Super-Localizing Food as Tourism Development™: Producing the 30 Mile Meal™ in Athens, Ohio" (2019). *Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Problem Reports*. 3859.

<https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/etd/3859>

This Thesis is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by the The Research Repository @ WVU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Thesis in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you must obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This Thesis has been accepted for inclusion in WVU Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Problem Reports collection by an authorized administrator of The Research Repository @ WVU. For more information, please contact [researchrepository@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:researchrepository@mail.wvu.edu).

**Super-Localizing Food as Tourism Development™:  
Producing the 30 Mile Meal™ in Athens, Ohio**

**Jed DeBruin**

**Thesis submitted  
to the Eberly College of Arts & Sciences  
at West Virginia University**

**in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

**Master of Arts in  
Geography**

**Bradley Wilson, Ph.D., Chair  
Jonathan Hall, Ph.D.  
Jamie Shinn, Ph.D.**

**Department of Geology & Geography**

**Morgantown, West Virginia  
2019**

**Keywords: 30 Mile Meal™, Appalachia, food justice, tourism, rural development, values-  
based labeling, agrarian imaginary, local, parallel alternatives, governance**

**Copyright 2019 Jed DeBruin**

## Abstract

### Super-Localizing Food as Tourism Development™: Producing the 30 Mile Meal™ in Athens, Ohio

Jed DeBruin

Geographers have played a leading role in the theorization and critique of local food initiatives, raising critical questions about why they are advanced, how they work, and who benefits. Central to geographic critique of local food initiatives is how “the local” is framed, valued, and fetishized. The 30 Mile Meal™ (30MM) is one of these local food initiatives that seeks to rebrand local food in Appalachia through tourism development, as well as expand this model to other communities. In this paper, I explore how the 30MM is distinctive in relation to other local food initiatives, how the 30MM constructs and represents an agrarian imaginary about farming and food, and identify the benefits and barriers to participating in the 30MM for farmers. The major concern centers on the implications of scaling up this model across Appalachia.

Through this study, it becomes evident that the 30MM works to create a regional brand (Boynes and Hall, 2004) emphasizing values-based labeling (Barham, 2002) that markets difference in place (Ilbery et. al, 2005). This branding, however, is not wholly representative of southeast Ohio’s past or current agricultural endeavors, erasing or obscuring “parallel alternatives” (Gibb & Wittman, 2013) and reproducing whiteness in alternative food (Slocum, 2007). Lastly, the limited benefits to participation for farmers points to issues of governance in local food systems (Mutersbaugh et. al, 2005; Cañada & Vázquez, 2005; Higgins et. al, 2008). What would a shift from emphasizing local food to emphasizing equitable food look like in practice?

## Table of Contents

1 - Introduction to the 30 Mile Meal™ - pg. 1	
2 - Research Questions, Design, and Methods – pg. 7	
2.1 Research Questions – pg. 7	
2.2 Research Design and Methods – pg. 7	
2.3 Case Study – pg. 8	
2.4 Sample – pg. 8	
2.5 Key Informant Interviews – pg. 10	
2.6 Producer Survey – pg. 11	
2.7 Discourse Analysis – pg. 12	
2.8 Data Analysis – pg. 12	
2.9 Archival Research - pg. 14	
3 - Literature Review – pg. 15	
3.1 Place-based Development through Tourism and Food – pg. 15	
3.2 The Tourist Gaze and Food Labeling – pg. 18	
3.3 Critique of the Local – pg. 25	
3.4 Addressing the Gaps in the Literature – pg. 29	
4 - 30 Mile Meal™ as a Rural Redevelopment Strategy – pg. 31	
4.1 “A Food Destination”: Imagining the 30 Mile Meal™ – pg. 31	
4.2 “There is Only One Black Farmer”: Conjuring the Agrarian Imaginary – pg. 40	
4.3 “Not My Choice”: Farmers and Governance of the 30 Mile Meal™ – pg. 48	
5 - Discussion – pg. 58	
6 - Conclusion – pg. 69	
Appendix A – pg. 73	
Appendix B – pg. 74	
Bibliography – pg. 80	

## 1 - Introduction to the 30 Mile Meal™

Over the past several decades, local food has moved from the margins to the mainstream of rural development thought. Farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture (CSAs), gardens and other food-related initiatives are now front and center across the United States as a means of promoting rural communities, viable farm livelihoods and more vibrant small towns. Geographers have played a leading role in the theorization and critique of local food initiatives, raising critical questions about why they are advanced, how they work and who benefits. Central to geographic critique of local food initiatives is how "the local" is framed, valued and fetishized. My research explores these concerns through a relatively new initiative in the Appalachian region called the 30 Mile Meal™ (30MM hereafter). The 30MM seeks to rebrand local food in small towns in Appalachia. The 30MM is the result of a 2010 collaboration between the Appalachian Center for Economic Networks (ACEnet hereafter)<sup>1</sup> and the Athens County Convention and Visitors' Bureau (Visitors' Bureau hereafter). Per the Real Food, Real Local Institute's website, the goal of the project was to create an explicit economic development model that opens more market opportunities for farmers, food producers, and local food businesses (Real Food, Real Local, n.d.). The initiative also sought to promote local produce and farm culture in the area surrounding Athens as a means of making the small town and surrounding county a tourist destination.

Athens is located on land that was formerly the home of the indigenous peoples of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), the Osage (<https://native-land.ca/>) and the Shawnee, before Athens was colonized in 1797 by European invaders (City of Athens, 2012). It is unclear if there was a

---

<sup>1</sup> ACEnet is an economic development organization whose mission is "to grow the regional economy by supporting entrepreneurs and strengthening economic sectors" in all 32 Appalachian Ohio counties (Appalachian Center for Economic Networks, n.d.).

treaty made that facilitated this takeover, as historical records are unclear (City of Athens, 2012). Traditional settler economic activities in Athens and Appalachia more broadly have included agriculture, timber, manufacturing and the mining of salt, ore, gas, coal and clay (City of Athens, 2012). However, most of this wealth was extracted alongside the natural resources, and rampant disinvestment led to widespread poverty and disenfranchisement. By the end of the 20th century, there were twice as many Appalachian counties classified as “distressed” than in the United States as a whole, including Athens County (Black and Sanders, 2004).

The 30MM is emblematic of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)’s turn towards tourism development as a form of economic revitalization and redevelopment<sup>2</sup>. Many of these tourism ventures highlight Appalachia’s diverse cultural heritage, history and natural beauty (ARC, Tourism Development, n.d.). Several tourism ventures in the region were developed through the Asset-Based Development Initiative which helps communities to “identify and leverage local assets to create jobs and build prosperity while preserving the character of their community” (ARC, Tourism Development, n.d.).

Locally in Athens, the Visitors’ Bureau is tasked with attracting tourists to the region. A few of these tourism initiatives include the Windy 9 motorcycle trails, Brewed on the Bikeway craft brewery and bicycling trail combination, and the 30MM ([www.athensohio.com](http://www.athensohio.com)). For the 30MM initiative, the Visitors’ Bureau teamed up with ACEnet to market local food sourced from within thirty miles of Athens and sold in area restaurants and other food businesses. Through this initiative, the Visitors’ Bureau and ACEnet have played a major role in shaping and defining the local food scene. Four of the five communities that have followed in Athens’ footsteps are in Appalachia (Mahoning/ Shenango, Ohio outside of Youngtown, Perry County, Ohio,

---

<sup>2</sup> *The ARC is the federal commission in charge of economic development in the thirteen-state region officially recognized as Appalachia (Appalachian Regional Commission, n.d.)*

Huntington, West Virginia, and Fayetteville, West Virginia), with the fifth residing one county outside of Appalachia (Licking County, Ohio) as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC, Home, n.d.). Athens' 30MM has matured from branding local food production and consumption solely in Athens to expanding and disseminating the brand to other communities as a catalyst to building a regional food system.

The 30MM's branding of local food highlights localness above all other potential ethical concerns, including food system labor rights and working conditions (Holmes, 2013; Schwartzman, 2013), individual versus structural constraints for food access and health (Guthman, 2011), or race (Slocum, 2007). The stated goal is to produce or make food using only ingredients from within this thirty-mile radius. Touting its uniqueness as a local food initiative, the 30MM is described affectionately by its founders as "the most local of locavore initiatives" (Real Food, Real Local, n.d.). Non-profit brand leaders suggest that the 30MM unites multiple stakeholders under "one exclusive identity" that points to "truly local food" (Real Food, Real Local, n.d.). And they argue that buying local through the 30MM helps to "preserve rural livelihoods, creative dreams, and opportunity for small scale entrepreneurship" (Real Food, Real Local, n.d.). Originally, the initiative sought to bring local farm products into Athens' restaurants but has since grown to include restaurants, bars, stores, breweries, mills and anyone in a food-related business. Participating businesses hang banners, posters and stickers highlighting the farmers that they are sourcing from, complete with a 30MM logo. Brand leaders even offered a local foods app for smartphones that served as a "passport" for visiting all the businesses participating in the program, as well as all partners in the program being displayed on a web-based map (see Figure 1).

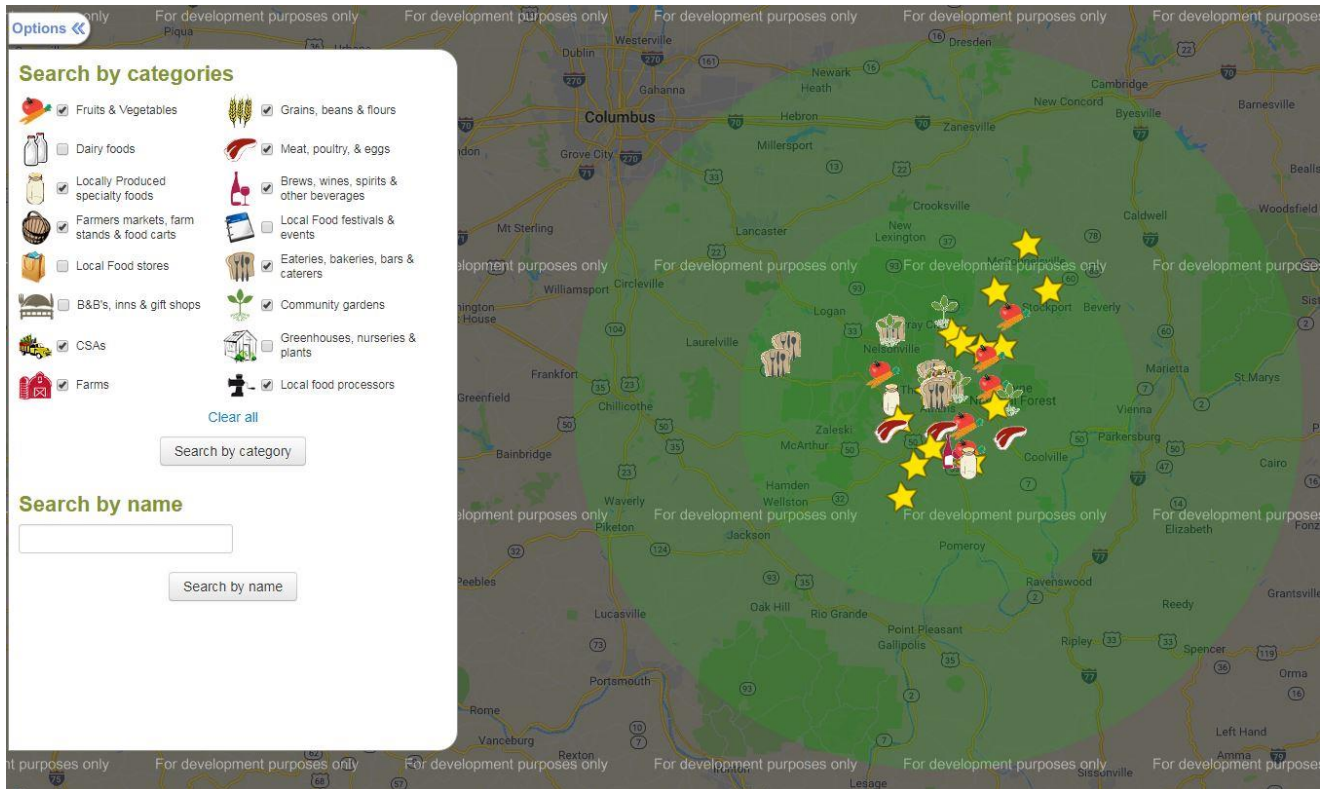


Figure 1. Screenshot of the web-based map from <http://realfoodreallocalinstitute.org/>

The project has been geared towards the “growing interest of our region’s consumers,” and these tools and advertising facilitate access to local food destinations (Real Food, Real Local, n.d.). At the same time, the 30MM is growing beyond Athens. In 2018, it was also introduced in Huntington and Fayetteville, West Virginia, and many more small towns are turning to this initiative to combine local foods with tourism development goals. My research investigated the implications of scaling up the 30MM across Appalachia.

In my research in Athens, Ohio I have found that the 30MM is rooted in a paradox. The 30MM is built on a romanticized image of local production by farmers who often question its



benefits. To unpack this paradox, I investigated three lines of inquiry for geographic analysis of local food branding initiatives.

First, the 30MM distinguishes itself from other local food initiatives by promoting a single unified brand or “one exclusive identity” (Real Food, Real Local, n.d.) to be used by small towns as a means of consolidating local food stakeholders to promote tourist consumption. This focus on tourist consumption is distinctive as it seeks to package “the local” as a sign of authenticity for non-locals. In my research I theorized the 30MM in relation to other local food initiatives, highlighting its distinctive tourism branding approach.

Second, the 30MM is constructed around what Laura-Anne Minkoff-Zern calls an “agrarian imaginary” that seeks to draw boundaries around who and what is included and excluded in representations of farmers (Minkoff-Zern, 2014). In my research I analyzed branding materials to explore what ideas and values are communicated by 30MM branding about farmers, farming and local food. Ideas and values are communicated through narratives that are constructed and represented through discourse. These narratives have material consequences that result in who is represented and who is not, what foods are included or excluded, and what lifestyles are supported and deemed valuable. In an economic sense, this construction and representation of an “agrarian imaginary” is the most important aspect for the marketing of local foods and foodways. The conjuring of an “agrarian imaginary” turns towards the spectacle rather than the production of anything of material consequence (Debord, 2012).

Third, the 30MM is ultimately more than a brand, it is materially produced— food must be harvested on the farm and arrive on the plate— through the production of local foods by farmers and coordination by non-profits and restaurants who drive the 30MM project. This production and coordination places area farmers in connection with restaurants, non-profits,

schools, hospitals and other area wholesale buyers who advertise on behalf of the 30MM. In my research I conducted eight key informant interviews with non-profit leaders, local government officials, and restaurant owners as well as conducted quantitative and qualitative surveys with 22 farmers to understand how benefits from participation in the program accrue to and are perceived by farmers. I used the WVU Food Justice Lab's baseline survey from their statewide report on specialty food crop production in West Virginia (Wilson et. al, 2018), with an additional section specifically about the 30MM.

This research thesis details the objectives, conceptual framework, and methods I used for the study of the 30MM initiative. In addressing my lines of inquiry, I used qualitative and quantitative research methods. These methods include key informant interviews, a producer survey, discourse analysis and archival research as part of a larger case study design focused on Athens, the first city to implement the 30MM project. I draw from the literature on the political economy of tourism, rural development and food justice to explore the spatial and geographical project of branding local food. The political economy of tourism literature focuses on how tourist spaces are crafted and facilitate unevenness and inequality, while the rural development literature addresses the changing economic conditions in the region. Lastly, the literature on food justice presents critiques of alternative food spaces and networks and offers ways to transform food systems in a more equitable and just way.

## **2 - Research Questions, Design, and Methods**

### *2.1 Research Questions*

1. *What makes the 30 Mile Meal™ distinctive in relation to other local food initiatives?*
2. *How does the 30 Mile Meal™ construct and represent an agrarian imaginary?*
3. *What are the benefits and barriers to participating in the 30 Mile Meal™ for farmers?*

### *2.2 Research Design and Methods*

Before embarking on this study, I began with three primary research aims or goals. One, I wished to understand and theorize the 30MM in relation to other local food initiatives, highlighting its distinctive branding approach. Two, I wished to analyze branding materials to explore what ideas and values are communicated by the 30MM branding - who or what is included, excluded, or obscured - and how this results in the production of an “agrarian imaginary” (Minkoff-Zern, 2014). Three, I wished to understand barriers to participation in the initiative for producers, how benefits from participation accrue to farmers, and how these are perceived by farmers. Ultimately, I wanted to know the implications of scaling up this local food tourism model across Appalachia.

I used qualitative and quantitative research methods to address my research goals. These methods include a case study, key informant interviews, a producer survey, discourse analysis and archival research. To address my first research goal on understanding and relating the 30MM to other local food initiatives, I used a case study and key informant interviews. Using these methods, I situated Athens, Ohio as one example of multiple sites of the program. Then, I used the key informant interviews to learn about the origins and history of the 30MM from the organizations that spearheaded efforts to start up the program. To address my second research

goal on what ideas and values are being communicated and how an “agrarian imaginary” is produced, I used discourse analysis and archival research to understand not only the modern representations but also the erasure of the agricultural history of the region from these representations, which I was pointed to through sifting through historical records. Lastly, I used a producer survey with both qualitative and quantitative elements to understand who local food producers are, what they produce, and where they sell and why.

### *2.3 Case Study*

I used a case study to investigate production, organization of the 30MM, and tourism. Athens was the main case study of operation and is a crucial starting point as the home of the original 30MM.

### *2.4 Sample*

I used a purposive sampling technique for my discourse analysis. As Teddlie and Yu (2007) write, purposive sampling is typically small so researchers can pick specific cases to garner the most information (84). Additionally, this technique focuses on depth over breadth - I was not simply interested in the number of words, phrases and expressions used by the 30MM organizers, but rather in understanding why such words, phrases and expressions are coupled with certain images and used, and for what purposes. I chose to focus exclusively on the 30MM blog for the discourse analysis. The blog served as one of the most direct links to the public in communicating what the 30MM is, what the goals of the program were, and introducing producers to the broader community through profiles and highlighting local events.

I also used purposive sampling for my key informant interviews and producer surveys. I chose community leaders to interview for my key informant interviews based on the positions they currently hold or have held in local food development in Athens, such as nonprofit and governmental leaders. These individuals have some of the most intimate knowledge of the local food scene, and many of them assisted in the development of the 30MM. Therefore, learning from them about their experiences in the development and transformation of the program over time was vital to this study. Additionally, I used purposive sampling for my producer surveys. Discussing local food with those who do not sell in the local community would not be worthwhile to this study. This pushed me to focus my surveys on those producers selling locally, such as those found at the farmers' market, at the county fair, and at the produce auction.

For the farmers, I attempted to use snowball sampling. This technique takes advantage of relationships between interviewees sharing or knowing of others who would be willing to take part in research (Biernacki and Waldorf, 141). Additionally, snowball sampling produces a "unique type of knowledge" (Noy, 331) that helps the researcher to understand a social system or network such as the 30MM. Relying on referrals from the key informant interviews helped provide an entry point for identifying other participants.

However, Biernacki and Waldorf (1981) point to five problems with snowball sampling: finding respondents initially and starting the snowball, verifying respondent eligibility, engaging respondents, controlling types and numbers of cases in the snowball, and "pacing and monitoring" snowballs and data quality (144). I mitigated these issues by preparing a clear and concise guide that explained the type of respondent that I was looking for and what I was expecting from potential interviewees. I also used my positionality as an insider from the area

and embedded in Community Food Initiatives (CFI hereafter) (a partner organization of the WVU Food Justice Lab, of which I am a member), as a starting point for the snowball.

### *2.5 Key Informant Interviews*

I conducted structured interviews with a total of eight individuals. I used structured interviews because I was learning the origins and history of the 30MM. These individuals include the director of ACEnet (also the current director of the Real Food, Real Local Institute (RFRL)), the director of Rural Action's Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry division, the current director of the Visitors' Bureau, a former Kellogg Foundation Fellow who served with the Visitors' Bureau, the then-current, now former director of CFI, the longtime owners of a locally-sourcing restaurant, and a former leader of the 30MM in Huntington, West Virginia.

I purposefully selected the organizational leaders I interviewed due to their strategic roles in developing my understanding of the 30MM and how the initiative functions. The director of RFRL oversees the 30MM blog and website (part of RFRL's own website), therefore she is a gatekeeper of 30MM organization, messaging, and branding. The RFRL Institute serves as the consulting and outreach arm for the 30MM brand. Notably, the director of RFRL is also the director of ACEnet. Whereas RFRL is strictly food- and agriculture-based, ACEnet seeks to more broadly grow the regional economy of Ohio's 32 Appalachian counties (ACEnet, n.d.). Next, the director of the Visitors' Bureau was a must interviewee because tourism is a fundamental part of the local foods experience through the 30MM and the broader goals of the ARC's economic transition for the region (ARC, Tourism Development, n.d.). Additionally, Rural Action and CFI are crucial because of their role in early agricultural education and food access (CFI) and later stage agricultural production and land management (Rural Action).

Interviewing the longtime owners of a locally-sourcing restaurant enabled me to see how restaurants are reacting to the changing landscape of the program. Lastly, I interviewed a former leader of the 30MM in Huntington to gain perspective on how the 30MM came to, was articulated in, and has evolved outside of the original model in Athens.

## *2.6 Producer Survey*

I reproduced the survey used by the WVU Food Justice Lab in their report on specialty food crop production in West Virginia (Wilson et al., 2018). In addition to the base survey, I included questions about the 30MM. These include perceived benefits and barriers to entry and participation in the program, thoughts about the 30MM's structure and usefulness, and why the emphasis on production for restaurants. This survey was useful for me in developing my understanding of benefits and barriers for farmers.

I began with the goal to survey 20 farmers participating in the 30MM, and survey 10 farmers not participating in the program. In all, I had expected to conduct a minimum total of 30 surveys that I would manually code and analyze, though I had decided to do more if I had not reached saturation. I completed 22 surveys with farmers. The breakdown of non-participating farmers to participating farmers was 15 to 7. This did not reach my goal of a 50/50 split. However, there was the unforeseen complication of several known 30MM participants refusing to participate when initially asked to complete a survey. Others stopped their participation upon reaching the income section of the survey, with a few expressing concerns over the confidentiality of that information. This concern was primarily limited to those farmers participating in the program, as some of those that are participating refused to answer income information in the paper version of the survey as well.

### *2.7 Discourse Analysis*

I used discourse analysis to examine the words, phrases, expressions and images used by the 30MM program. I used Alvesson and Kärreman (2000)'s first version of discourse analysis, the micro-discourse approach. The micro-discourse approach examines "social texts calling for the detailed study of language use in a specific micro-context" (1133). This is an appropriate form of discourse analysis that emphasizes the "close-range" (1134).

I situated the micro-discourse approach into the broader food justice discourses that critique how food is produced, for whom it is produced, and why it is communicated about in different manners. This micro-discourse approach is also situated within discourses on tourism as economic development, particularly within the Appalachian region. For the sake of this analysis, which relies on the blog posts by the Real Food, Real Local Institute, the micro-discourse approach is best suited.

### *2.8 Data Analysis*

I draw from Srivastava and Hopwood (2009)'s "iterative framework" for qualitative data analysis. Srivastava and Hopwood (2009)'s framework follows Berkowitz (1997)'s description of qualitative analysis as a "loop-like pattern of multiple rounds of revisiting the data" (para. 4). This "reflexive iteration" helps to elucidate insights from the data for improved focus and understanding (Srivastava and Hopwood, 2009: 77). Weston et al. (2001) also use an iterative process for developing codes that helped in analyzing my survey results (386).

Transcription is a "powerful act of representation" that can have significant impacts on how data are conceptualized and utilized (Oliver et. al, 2005: 1287). Oliver et al. (2005) present two approaches for transcription analysis: naturalized and denaturalized. I used denaturalized



transcription analysis, which removes “stutters, pauses, nonverbals, involuntary vocalizations” (Oliver et. al, 2005: 1274) for my eight key informant interviews for the following reasons. One, I sought to understand how the discourses on agrarian lifestyles and foodways were embodied and informed the work of the farmers in the 30MM, and critical discourse analysis pulls out the “ideological dimension” of speech (Cameron, 2001: 123 in Oliver et al., 2005: 1277). Second, my interest was in understanding the content of the interviewees’ responses rather than how the information was being articulated to me (Oliver et al., 2005: 1277). Third, Oliver et al. (2005) note that power relations are revealed in the content rather than the mechanics of conversation (1278). In transcribing my key informant interviews using a denaturalized transcription analysis, I garnered insight into how the 30MM was conceptualized, organized, and practiced.

Additional data analysis was completed for the producer surveys. From these surveys, I was able to determine producer-identified barriers to both farming and participation in the 30MM. I also learned about the quantities of what is being produced, farming acreage and market participation. Additionally, I acquired qualitative data regarding how the farmers came to this region, their motivations for getting into farming, and their perspectives on the 30MM, regardless of their participation in the program. I analyzed these responses to create a profile of farming within the 30MM (including participants and non-participants). This profile helped me determine benefits and barriers to participation for the producers.

I used the results from this discourse analysis of the blogs to compare what the participants and the non-participants say about the 30MM, compared to what the RFRL Institute says about the program. This helped me to establish and understand similarities and differences and revealed barriers to participation in the 30MM. I used manual coding due to the relatively

small sample size and the appropriate amount of time that I had available to complete the data analysis (Basit, 2003).

### *2.9 Archival Research*

While endeavoring on my research, I heard a few things that sparked my interest in the agricultural history in southeast Ohio. One, there seemed to be an understanding in the local food scene that the agricultural history of the region only was noteworthy from the emergence of the Athens Farmers' Market in the 1970s. Two, there also seemed to be a limited understanding of farmers in the region historically. In seeking answers to these questions, I visited the Southeast Ohio History Center in Athens and the Multicultural Genealogical Center in Chesterhill to work with their historians and examine their records. From this archival work, I was able to review agricultural records in the region back to the middle of the 1800s up to the present day and unearth a legacy of black farmers in the region, both of which added crucial details to this study.

### **3 - Literature Review**

#### *3.1 Place-based Development through Tourism and Food*

Food tourism is currently extremely popular and has an excellent outlook for future economic success (Henderson, 2009: 323). Location plays a crucial role in the interplay between food and tourism (Henderson, 2009: 323). In place, food and tourism are coalescing at the theoretical, strategic and applied levels (Boyne et. al, 2003: 131). These levels are present in many place-based development initiatives, as both the tourism and food-related industries can benefit via an enhanced “overall tourism product” and improving the “viability of the local primary production and processing sectors” (Boyne et. al, 2003: 132). Engaging with regional specialties also elicits a “moral ‘feel-good’ factor” for locals and tourists alike (Sims, 2009: 328). These benefits are realized through the influx of tourists and visitors as a market mechanism (Boyne et. al, 2003: 134). Maximizing tourism’s benefits requires “stronger links between tourism and sectors such as retail, food and drink, and transport” (Scottish Executive, 2002: 19 in Boyne et. al, 2003: 137). However, maximizing these benefits may necessitate a shift in rural development governance from a “sectorally-based approach, to a territorially-based one” (Boyne et. al, 2003: 132). This shift focuses on building up multiple sectors to present the region’s potential to outsiders instead of investing primarily in one industry or sector.

The 30MM is unique to Athens, but the models of certified rural products, protected designations of origin, and governance of local food systems are not new in rural development studies (Boyne et. al, 2003; Cañada & Vázquez, 2005; Mutersbaugh, 2005; Higgins et. al, 2008). Rural products certification schemes have been on the rise since the end of the 1990s (Mutersbaugh et. al, 2005: 382) and are part of the move towards territorially-based governance

(Boyne et. al., 2003: 132). Traditionally, these certification processes have centered on four main components:

“(i) a published, public norm or standard that defines certified qualities within the system, (ii) an inspections process, carried out by third-party inspectors, that determines whether goods conform to published standards, (iii) a quality label or seal that alerts consumers to the presence of certified qualities, and (vi) a network of institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, operating at local and transnational scales, that govern labels and inspections, and set standards for certification practices (Mutersbaugh et. al, 2005: 381).”

The success of the best of these certification schemes - those that provide the maximum value, happiness, and success for farmers - work to help local producers gain competitive advantages over industrial agriculturalists (Cañada & Vázquez, 2005: 476). This includes increasing the added value of the product (Valceschini, 1999 in Cañada & Vázquez, 2005: 477), quality assurance and protecting reputations (Cañada & Vázquez, 2005: 477). These outstanding products can help “build a ‘brand’ that can be used to distinguish the region from its competitors” (Urry, 1995 in Sims, 2009: 330). It is necessary to point out that the most beneficial models for farmers include them in the governance structure, as evidenced by models in Spain and Australia (Cañada & Vázquez, 2005; Higgins et. al, 2008). This inclusion is visible in farmers having a say over what is being produced, where their products are being sold, how products are being produced, and how money gets back into the producers’ pockets. Farmers desire “control over the commodities produced, including the establishment of a closer relationship with buyers,” and see the construction of alternative supply chains as a way to “appropriate increased value” and “avoid the costs (economic, environmental and social) of

‘conventional’ markets” (Higgins et. al, 2008: 21). Furthermore, certification can lead to a “possibility of resistance” to globalization and industrialized agriculture and help farmers leverage their social and cultural differentiation for greater returns (Mutersbaugh et. al, 2005: 384).

“Fair and trusting relationships” need to be prioritized between actors in alternative food networks and certification schemes (Barbera & Dagnes, 2016: 325) if farmers are to leverage their social and cultural differentiation for greater returns. These actors include producers, consumers, non-governmental and governmental organizations. Imbalanced or other unfair relationships can limit network success, leading to questions of who actually benefits and has a say in the direction of the network. Within networks, it is important to examine who has control over what stories are being told about food (Morris & Kirwan, 2010: 142). When producers do not have a say in the governing network, trust can be broken and “inevitably a veil remains or is re-created; continuing the disjuncture between the production and consumption of food” (Morris & Kirwan, 2010: 142).

We can potentially lift this veil via an examination of the “experience economy” and the “intimacy” model (Sidali et. al, 2015: 1179). In an experience economy, “experience has its own ‘status’... the experience is the new deliverable (which, however, does not mean that services and goods are not sold anymore) and the service acts as its stage” (Sidali et. al, 2015: 1184). Furthermore, in experience economies, experience itself has its own “status” as the commodity being bought or sold (Sidali et. al, 2015: 1184) rather than the experience being used to “sell it [something] better” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998 in Sidali et. al, 2015). The “intimacy” model pairs with the “experience economy” by “focusing on the individual pursuit of close or intimate relationships” (Sidali et. al, 2015: 1185). The desire for close relationships stems from the sense

of disconnectedness that globalization brings about, where we as consumers are separated from the labor processes and places where the products we purchase are created (Sidali et. al, 2015: 1186). Combining these two theories can help facilitate the elevation of food to a “culinary niche” (Sidali et. al, 2015: 1187). This “culinary niche” serves to differentiate these food products and labeling can help guide tourists and others to this niche. This niche combines food as a commodifiable experience that reassures consumers that they have a semblance of control and understanding of where their food is coming from.

### *3.2 The Tourist Gaze and Food Labeling*

Conceptions of a “sense of place” can be tied to conceptions of culture. Culture is “symbolic, active, constantly subject to change and riven through with relations of power” (Mitchell, 1995: 103). In this way, culture is produced and is not a stagnant entity. Culture instead exists as an “*idea... developed under specific historical conditions*” (103, italics in original). This idea of culture attempts to make situated knowledges with partial historical perspectives into universal, whole truths (Haraway, 1991 in Mitchell, 1995: 110) in which certain narratives are given dominant status and deemed representative of all people and history in a place. This idea of culture is grounded in a “political economy of culture” which Mitchell (1995) says produces a specific “representation of culture” (110). The 30MM is emblematic of this political economy of culture as it takes the idea of local food production and consumption as representative of the Athens area, and strives to structure a local foods-based economy.

As Mitchell (1995) wrote, culture is an idea that is produced and wielded. Culture is not something that simply exists and is stagnant. Similarly, there is nothing “natural” or inherent about a “sense of place” (Castree, 2005), which is often communicated through understandings

of a place's culture. Instead, much like culture, a "sense of place" is based on the social relationships and understandings between people, institutions and their physical environment (Castree, 2005). Food and heritage tourism help craft a sense of place (Fox, 2007 in Henderson, 2009: 321), as well as present an aspect of a place's culture.

Localness and sense of place are not simply natural or preexisting conditions. Narratives and actions are not accidental either. These feelings can be actualized through the purposeful crafting of space. Crafting of space does not deal with just the physical configuration of space, but also how space is socially conceptualized through physical (re)configurations (Wolford, 2004). This dialectic enables scholars to better understand how different groups have different motivations for how to socially construct and spatially constitute spaces. While the 30MM initiative itself is a social construction of space – artificially creating a boundary for local food production and consumption – these boundaries have real implications for the social relationships between producers, consumers, business owners, and workers. As Pascual-de-Sans (2004) writes, "as vague as a place may be, it needs boundaries. These may be flexible or diffuse, but, by definition, they must exist. A place without boundaries is not a place" (351).

Tourism plays an important role in the crafting of space. Tourism is an "important avenue of capitalist accumulation" (Britton, 1991: 451). The capitalist nature of tourism relies on both production and consumption, and tourism is part of territorial competition and economic restructuring (451). Britton (1991) argues that initially tourism arises as an outlet for leisure, noting that leisure in modern capitalism is organized around "privatization, individuation, commercialization, and pacification" (Rojek, 1985 in Britton, 1991: 453). He elaborates that many cultural and recreational pursuits "have been transformed into experiences which are bought and sold as commodities" (Britton, 1991: 453). These sought-after experiences are

understood of as signs of an authentic experience (Culler, 1981; Urry, 1990; Reynolds, 1993; Sims, 2009), including local food. The internal contradiction, however, is that the tourist experience typically does not live up to the expectations of tourists due to one of two reasons: one, the experience is not actually an authentic one, or two, the experience does not fulfill the described promises that were made (Britton, 1991: 455). Furthermore, a “consumption-biased (rather than demand-led) development” is emerging, as consumption spaces are being purposefully produced for tourist consumption over the demands and needs of the local population (Britton, 1991: 469). Additionally, this authenticity-seeking through experience commodification is resulting in “the *valorization* of place through food...tightly coupled to spatial ideas of the local community, economy, and territory” (Feagan, 2007: 27, italics in original). This commodification is facilitated by “values-based labeling” which factors in non-market values in determining the worth of a product (Barham, 2002). Values-based labeling is prevalent in localizing economies.

Food tourism and the valorization of place through food (Feagan, 2007: 27) has been projected to be the “‘next big thing’ to rival ecotourism” (Center for Hospitality Research, 2005 in Henderson, 2009: 320). Targeting consumption spaces towards particular groups leads to contestation over the right to space, and local food economies are not absent from this discussion. Contestations around local food economies question for whom local food culture is for. Local food can be a “major draw and primary motivator” for some tourists (Tikkanen, 2007 in Henderson, 2009: 317). For others, before they express “*interest* in a product or service... their *attention* must be drawn to it” (Boyne et. al, 2003: 149, italics in original). Tellstrom et al. (2005) note the “economic value of cultural expressions” (Urry, 1990, in Tellstrom et al., 2005) in local food. Local food is being branded and marketed as such because it is profitable. Included



in this is not just the food itself, but also the sense of place and the story that is behind it. Tellstrom et al. (2005) cite a harvest festival manager who asserts that local food “isn’t something that you eat every day” (350) - it is something exclusive, something special, something worth spending extra money on, something worth traveling for. Dining options, especially for local food, are often a factor in tourists choosing where to travel (Henderson, 2009: 319). However, this creates unevenness in the customer base. Local food is interpreted, commercialized, innovated and invented for specific purposes by specific actors and institutions for specific reasons. Restaurants, nonprofits and local governments know that local food is popular and is something in demand by travelers, therefore there are opportunities to attract tourists to come eat, participate in agro-tourism, and purchase locally produced products from local people. In doing so, actors and institutions enact “authentication” (Jackson, 1999) which is “the process whereby people make claims for authenticity and the interests that those claims serve” (Jackson, 1999; Sims, 2009: 324). Importantly, local food marketing cannot neglect local residents in their efforts to draw in tourists, as residential support keeps these businesses viable during the offseason for tourism (Henderson, 2009: 320).

Local food spaces, like other tourist spaces, can become all-encompassing experiences and encounters that exist beyond tourism season. These experiences and encounters range from picking up a locally produced product at a grocery store, to visiting the Saturday farmers’ market, to dining at local foods-focused restaurants. This is emblematic of what Gibson (2009) describes as the “trick” of tourism capitalism - “embodied consumption of ‘experiences’ and ‘encounters’” are able to “commodify entire places and all they contain” resulting in “you and everything in your town [becoming] part of its commodification potential as a tourist destination” (529). This is similar to Britton (1991)’s “tourism production system” which

emphasized the transition from a single sector to Gibson's all-inclusive industry. However, "few destinations can rely on the allure of their food alone and it is best presented as one ingredient" of a broader tourism agenda (Henderson, 2009: 323). Gibson (2009) also highlights labor within tourism, pointing to gender relations, mobility, pay rates and the "complex and sometimes confronting collisions" between workers and tourists (530). The restaurant industry is notorious for all these interactions, particularly around harassment and wages. The mobility question is particularly central to tourism - wealthy individuals and groups can afford to go and be tourists and chase the authentic local experience, while many others cannot escape their everyday local experience (Black, 2001).

Tourism is not limited to the cultural side effects, such as who is moving through certain spaces and not other spaces. More accurately, these cultural side effects are symptoms of a broader structural inequality. Bianchi (2009) offers a Marxist political economy approach that focuses on the organization of production and laborers' relationship to production mechanisms (488). He urges tourism critiques to examine power through these production practices with a keen eye to how power "permeates the 'micro-practices' of everyday life" (Bianchi, 2009: 491). This is because the postmodern gaze towards culture and subjectivities "often occludes substantive interrogation of structural power" (Bianchi, 2009: 496). Who gets to decide what or who to highlight in local food and tourism initiatives? What is included or excluded in these highlights and why? Bianchi (2009) stresses that a radical critique of tourism studies must examine the "material inequalities, working conditions, ecological degradation and patterns of social polarization" (498).

Rural development of the past couple of decades is responding to the neoliberal capitalist economy which has decimated traditional economic activities such as farming, mining, and

manufacturing through consolidation and offshoring. Furthermore, local communities are being expected to make do with even less financial support from local, county or state government entities. These conditions have forced local community developers to turn to a “more market-oriented outlook” often through attracting tourists’ dollars. Central to these efforts are regional branding initiatives (Barham, 2009: 1). Barham argues that regional branding goes beyond “simply a marketing exercise” and that the true goal is to create a “geographical indication” which affects both entrepreneurs within the region who seek to build value as well as attract tourists (Barham, 2009: 1). Regional economic and environmental sustainability can be supported through “sustainable agricultural practices, supporting local businesses and building a ‘brand’ that can benefit the region by attracting more visitors and investment” (Sims, 2009: 322). The organizational structure behind a “geographical indication” seeks to sustain and improve on key regional products through the combined efforts of local producers, government and non-governmental organizations and universities, with the ultimate goal of attracting tourists (and retain businesses and encourage new residents) as a form of capitalist investment that can drive demand for the production of local products (Barham, 2009: 1).

Regional branding such as a geographical indication can be thought of as emblematic of “values-based labeling” (Barham, 2002). “Values-based labeling” consists of all the “explicit messages about a product’s value in registers that are usually considered to be non-market by economists” (Barham, 2002: 350). Two important aspects of “values-based labeling” are concerns for process and quality, both of which are found in the ideas that guide the 30MM and other local food initiatives (Barham, 2002: 350). These values include social justice, equity, production practices, moral obligation(s), and democratic participation (Barham, 2002: 352). Barham (2002) further writes that “values-based labeling” is part of a greater effort to create

“ethically and spatially situated alternative economies” (350) that seek to “shape, institutionalize, and reproduce norms” (355) around what a society should value and support.

Shaping, institutionalizing, and reproducing these norms and creating new ethically and spatially situated alternative economies requires participation from individuals from key sectors (Barham, 2009). Most importantly, this process needs to connect individuals within the prescribed region from producer to consumer (Barham, 2009). To establish a values-based label or brand for rural development initiatives such as the Regional Flavor Collaboration - a 2006 report that emphasized the development of a regional brand for southeast Ohio development, and served as the inspiration for the 30MM - Barham recommends a roundtable concept in which collaborative groups of stakeholders set goals and work to provide direction for the program, especially regarding vision, purpose, and values (Barham, 2009).

Barham (2009) argues that increasing visibility and regional reputation through mapping is also key to values-based labeling for regional development. In the Mississippi River Hills case study she cites, tourism increased over 10% in the region after the release of a tourist map in 2005 (Barham, 2009). Creating a logo is another important element to branding the region and helps tourists to recognize the region’s products (Barham, 2009). Both Holley (2006) and Barham (2009) argue that non-profit organizations, policy-makers and economic development professionals play key roles in building these regional projects, and networking across sectors is crucial to programmatic success. These concepts, which were identified in the Regional Flavor Collaboration report by Holley (2006) as well as values-based labeling for geographic indication by Barham (2009), were used in the development of the 30MM in Athens. These concepts laid the framework for using geographic indicators for local food as a rural economic development or revitalization tool centered on tourism in the rural U.S. after seeing success abroad. However,

every location needs to “develop a range of goods and services that will distinguish it”, which Urry (1995) terms “tourism reflexivity” (Sims, 2009: 322). However, we should be cautious about localness, and address some of the critiques of the local as a concept for rural and food-based development. Localness is being touted as a commodifiable experience to be crafted specifically for outsider tourists, but this often does not result in an authentic experience or one that lives up to the promises of a tourism advertisement. Additionally, this focus on commodifying the local for outsiders ignores the experiences of those living the everyday who are not as privileged. Furthermore, the drive for regional branding strives to create a geographical indication that is representative of a particular set of values about what a place is and what a place stands for. However, this set of values may not be representative of the entirety of a local place. It is with these concerns in mind that we now turn to a critique of the local.

### *3.3 Critique of the Local*

The 30MM is a local food branding effort that is part of the broader “eat local, buy local” discourse. Included in this discourse are themes such as food miles (Halweil, 2002; Norberg-Hodge et. al., 2002 in Feagan, 2007: 25), shortened food chains (Renting et. al, 2003), food-sheds (Kloppenburger et. al, 1996: 37 in Feagan, 2007: 26), knowing where your food is grown, freshness (Freidberg, 2009), supporting local businesses and celebrating regional culture. Many regional food networks, often alternative agri-food-focused, aim to reestablish “‘closer’ relationships between food producers and consumers” (Holloway et. al, 2007; Kneafsey, 2010), thus resisting the dominance of powerful national and global players in the food sector” (Sidali et. al, 2015: 1179). All these concepts have been useful in addressing the pitfalls of a globalized, industrial agricultural system.

But, alternative agri-food movements do not present major threats to the consolidated giants of the agribusiness industry (Allen, 2004). In fact, vulnerable immigrant farmworkers and meatpackers have been pitted against locally displaced residents through free trade deals such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (Holmes, 2013; Schwartzman, 2013). These neoliberal projects also serve to place the onerous yoke of health on the individual, as detailed extensively in Guthman (2011). In that work, Guthman (2011) details how eating healthy and nutritious food and getting enough exercise is made into an individual responsibility. Individuals are made responsible for their health, and the structural limitations or constraints that make this a Sisyphean task are construed as individual failures and not intrinsic systemic flaws. Guthman (2011) writes that “local” food systems can potentially “bring wealth to certain places at the expense of others” (150), resulting in “sites of accumulation” (Harvey, 2004).

Alternative food movements and local food efforts often incorporate elements of sustainability and organicism in response to globalized food production which is perceived as neither sustainable nor organic-focused. Alkon (2013), however, is critical of local organic agriculture efforts, as the producers often promote the food that they produce as “simultaneously social and the product of human labor” (663). Alkon (2013) writes that local organic, alternative food systems end up with this “eco-agrarian ethic” that valorizes environmental sustainability, community and an anti-corporate attitude (664). This ethic is present in the 30MM’s imaginary - “community” is used extensively in blog posts and localness is tied to reducing pollution. However, this ethic is short-sighted. The “eco-agrarian” does not truly embody the food justice framework as the “eco-agrarian” separates local organic food from the global food regime and fails to confront and engage with industrialized agriculture (665).

The deeply embedded social discourses around local food draw us to examine embeddedness itself. What is embeddedness, and how does it manifest itself within local food? Hinrichs (2000) writes that embeddedness is a “sense of social connection, reciprocity and trust,” and that embeddedness is often seen as a “hallmark” of direct agricultural markets (296). These elements of embeddedness also work to “more consciously integrate...the local community and its food system” (Hendrickson and Heffernan, 2002 in Feagan, 2007: 29). These “sociocultural processes” work to “*re-embed*” food transactions in community and place (Feagan, 2007: 28, italics in original). But Winter (2003) notes that the turn towards local food may be more of a reification of a local sense of place rather than a connection to the food and farming itself (30). This results in a “conservative celebration of the local as the supposed repository of specific meanings and values” (Holloway and Kneafsey, 2000: 294), or as Winter terms “defensive localism” (31). Local food production and consumption becomes part of a political culture rather than a food culture (Winter, 2003).

Social connection, reciprocity and trust are some of the elements that comprise the community spirit, the glue that binds people together. Alternative food and local food movements often adopt community as a signifier of their ideals. However, the word “community” has been problematized (Broad, 2016). Many local alternative food systems state that they aim to sustain a “community,” with programs that are implemented as agents on the static community. Broad (2016) extends his critique of the local and the community as inherently benevolent, depoliticized spaces by situating them in context to broader national and international crises wrought by capitalism through neoliberal methods. This is largely in response to small-scale participatory cultural economies that incorporated themes of “small is beautiful” (Schumacher, 1973 in Feagan, 2007: 24) and “small is possible” (McRobie, 1981 in

Feagan, 2007: 24) but were uncritical of the local. Broad (2016) notes how overemphasizing the local community can prove to be myopic, as only “locally specific” reasons for injustice are found in the food system (109).

Understanding localness moves towards an understanding of the local as a sense of place. What defines the local? Who is included or excluded? The contested nature and “the ambiguity about what local means... allows it to be about anything and, at the margin, perhaps very little at all” (Allen & Hinrichs, 2007: 269). It can be argued that localness is “socially constructed according to a person’s beliefs and circumstances” (Sims, 2009: 332). Advancing towards an understanding of local food in crafting a sense of place, Trivette (2015) attempts to determine the boundaries of local food in practice. Trivette (2015) notes how local by proximity emphasizes distance (476-478), which is limited. Who decides the boundary? Local by relationship further complicates local food, as relationships are “difficult to measure” and are “challenging to empirically demonstrate” (477). Trivette (2015) instead pushes for a contextualization of local food. How is local embedded in “place-based social networks, physical context...[or] accounting of participants’ positions and roles within the food system” (479)? These variables move beyond a simplistic definition of local by proximity or relationship, demonstrating that a geopolitical boundary cannot be the only definition. Hinrichs (2003: 36) cautions that “specific social or environmental relations do not always map predictably and consistently onto the spatial relation,” further complicating conceptualizations of localness.

Not all relationships are created equal, and local food movements and systems are no exception. Many actors are present, and control over the narrative of who is included in local food and for whom local food is for is not distributed equitably. Instead, “parallel alternatives” may exist, as certain producers, images and ideas are given greater visibility and resources than



other narratives. Gibb and Wittman (2013) note how Chinese-Canadian farmers are “less commonly” represented in Vancouver’s local food discourses and institutions, even though Chinese-Canadian farmers have perhaps the longest legacy in the region (2). They also establish how this is problematic for food justice. Food justice necessitates “benefits and burdens are shared fairly...equal opportunities to participate in food system governance and decision-making...diverse perspectives and ways of knowing about the food system are recognized and respected” (3). This problem exists anywhere in which certain actors are excluded from the local food narrative. We must ask: Who is excluded? And, for whom is local food for?

### *3.4 Addressing the Gaps in the Literature*

The 30MM helps to fill multiple gaps in the literatures on local food spaces, tourism and rurality. First, the 30MM founders claim that this initiative is the first to explicitly combine local food with a county tourism board. This distinctive partnership opens a new stream of revenue, marketing and connections for local food and regional development. In creating this new partnership, the 30MM fits in the history of food and tourism initiatives but adds a new perspective by having this initiative occur in an Appalachian context and being used as a model for other communities in the region. Second, the 30MM brings farmers, food businesses, consumers, nonprofits and governmental agencies all under “one exclusive identity.” Instead of operating individually, working solely under their own labels and partnerships, they are brought together behind a brand which is supposed to raise economic prospects on the production end and enhance cultural value on the consumption end. However, this brand is demonstrative of the narrowness that the brand represents, and the brand works to reproduce historical injustices. Third, the 30MM is moving beyond an individual local food space in one community, and

becoming a model for other communities, albeit adjusted to place-specific needs. However, it is important to understand how producers are impacted by this initiative, as farmers are at the root of local food systems and without their buy-in it is difficult for local food initiatives to succeed.

#### **4 - 30 Mile Meal™ as a Rural Redevelopment Strategy**

This chapter begins by examining the history of economic activity in Athens, Ohio. Next, I lay out the framework that informed the development of the 30MM before discussing the process of creating the 30MM. Following that section, I examine how the 30MM has evolved since its inception yet is still proving to be distinctive in regard to other local food initiatives that have traditionally focused on increasing local food production. I also examine representation through images, words, expressions and phrases. Lastly, I will discuss the results of surveying farmers about the 30MM and its impact on their income, and production and marketing decisions.

##### *4.1 “A Food Destination”: Imagining the 30 Mile Meal™*

According to Paige Alost, the executive director of the Athens County Convention and Tourism Bureau, the 30MM initiative was launched after a four-year community study called the “Regional Flavor Collaboration” which was led by June Holley, the executive director of ACEnet from 1984 to 2006 (P. Alost, July 25, 2018). The concept of the “Regional Flavor Collaboration” was to develop “microregions where tourism, artisan, food, recreation, and heritage *organizations* work together on a continual stream of region-building projects” (Holley, 2006: 1, my emphasis). Holley (2006) argued that that Regional Flavor initiatives must go beyond solely tourism efforts because these initiatives also focus on “helping businesses innovate, set up new systems, and expand” (1). The Regional Flavor initiative, as Holley explained, was a new approach to developing rural communities by identifying and incubating new opportunities for regional products and services (Holley, 2006: 2).

The Regional Flavor initiative, as a rural and regional redevelopment initiative, sought to “revitalize” rural communities in Appalachia impacted by disinvestment. As Holley argued in her report many rural regions, particularly Appalachia, have suffered from “unsettling economic forces” such as farm consolidation, the shuttering of locally owned businesses, and the offshoring of manufacturing overseas (Holley, 2006: 2). In response, Holley (2006) argued that regionally produced and sourced products could be a means of reinvestment in the region, and that pushing “*local* businesses... to become *regional* businesses” would be a necessary mechanism for meeting demand and building up entrepreneurs in rural regions (2, italics in original).

Holley (2006) argued that scaling up local businesses into regional businesses through the Regional Flavor initiative was rooted in a four-step process. First, a collaborative of organizations needed to identify natural, heritage, and place-based assets and add value to them. An example of this was recognizing that pawpaws grow in the wild in Athens County, therefore the collaborative began to work on creating an annual Ohio Pawpaw Festival. The Ohio Pawpaw Festival has since become a major draw to southeast Ohio (Holley, 2006: 3). Second, the collaborative must assist every locally owned business or place be world-class, unique, continually innovating, and a quality job creator (Holley, 2006: 3). Holley (2006) writes that ACEnet’s Kitchen Incubator - “a licensed processing facility where farmers can rent the use of equipment to process their produce into high-value products” - had helped southeast Ohio producers take the next step in developing their businesses (3). Third, they would need to catalyze collaborations that weave regional businesses and assets together. Fourth, they needed to make urban areas feel they are part of the region (Holley, 2006: 5). Holley (2006) notes that

when urban residents develop a sense of place within the region, they are more willing to “consciously spend” more of their money within the region (5).

Around the time of the program’s launch in 2010, the term “locavore” was being regularly used in relation to local foods. A book titled the “100-Mile Diet” (Smith & MacKinnon, 2009) was inspiring local food advocates everywhere to examine their own “foodsheds” (Kloppenber et al, 1996). The founding trio of the program - Paige Alost, Leslie Schaller (executive director of ACEnet and the RFRL Institute), and Natalie Woodruffe (a Kellogg Foundation grant fellow with the Visitors’ Bureau at the time) - collectively agreed that there were more than enough resources available in an even narrower radius. Schaller added that the Visitors’ Bureau was limited by the county border but looking at the entire foodshed with the Athens Farmers’ Market, the ACEnet Food Ventures Center, and the current locally-owned and locally-sourcing restaurants the group decided that thirty miles would be apt (L. Schaller, July 20, 2018). According to Alost, this “more intimate food ecosystem” (P. Alost, July 25, 2018) was demonstrative of how “local food can happen in a very small context” (L. Schaller, July 20, 2018).

The added value to this “more intimate food ecosystem” came through an “umbrella identity” in which the various collaborating partners would “not surrender [their] own identities” but instead would be amplified by a holistic, integrated approach to local food branding (N. Woodruffe, July 12, 2018). Alost echoed Woodruffe, adding that this “framework” created a space for local food stakeholders to “collaborate, interact and share products and ideas” with a focus on catering to not only tourists but residents too (P. Alost, July 25, 2018). Schaller, the main individual tasked with grant writing and securing funding for the program, more generally

addressed how this combination of food and tourism worked to preserve farmland, increase tourism, and garner support for local food and farm businesses (L. Schaller, July 20, 2018).

The key partners in imagining and developing the 30MM program were Woodruffe, Schaller and Alost. Schaller and Alost are still actively involved in the initiative, as their current positions have not changed since the beginning of the program. Woodruffe, however, has since moved away from region.

Alost said that Schaller is “the single most important influence in this entire project, and for so many other things that happen in our region” (P. Alost, July 25, 2018). Tom Redfern, a local agricultural leader, highlights that the “revolutionary outcome” of the program is the collaboration between local food advocates such as Schaller and the county tourism board, which would not have been possible without Alost’s strong support and efforts in developing the initiative (T. Redfern, July 25, 2018). Woodruffe added that this program would not have been possible without the participating restaurants and farms in helping to produce and distribute the local food products, and Schaller also pointed to the Real Food, Real Local conferences that sparked initial conversations around developing the local food system (N. Woodruffe, July 12, 2018; L. Schaller, July 20, 2018). These conferences closely resembled the Regional Roundtable concept as elucidated by Barham (2009).

The trio realized that many different partners would be needed for the initiative to be successful. They would need local farmers to produce the food, and local restaurants and businesses to buy and serve the food. In addition, Alost and Schaller had to figure out the specific roles of their respective organizations. “Essentially, they (ACEnet) provide the technical assistance to food and farm businesses and we (the Visitors’ Bureau) provide the marketing and

promotion” (P. Alost, July 25, 2018). Schaller explained how there was a lot of learning that played out through the recruiting process (L. Schaller, July 20, 2018).

Recruiting participation in the program required several collaborations with other organizations working on food and economic development issues in southeast Ohio. An element of these collaborations was changing the discourse around traditional sectoring of development work (Boyne et. al, 2003: 132) in the region. Part of this discursive change has been the “blurring of the boundaries” between those doing social service or justice work in addition to food access work (N. Woodruffe, July 12, 2018). This more integrative approach highlights working across sectors in the building up of a regional identity focused on territory (Boyne et. al, 2003; Barham, 2009). Alost wrote that “traditional economic development pays very little service to ‘quality of life’ sectors” and that the Visitors’ Bureau’s collaboration with ACEnet has been transformational because quality of life sectors are major boosts to “shaping the culture, and the future” of southeast Ohio (P. Alost, July 25, 2018).

Schaller pointed out that strengthening Athens as a “food destination” required collaboration across the multitude of sectors, from working with the farmers, to working with the restaurants, to increasing capacity for both the Athens Farmers’ Market and the Chesterhill Produce Auction (CPA hereafter). The CPA runs twice weekly April through October and hosts special additional market days throughout this period. The CPA is also a major rural social hub, with a communal atmosphere that is much different from the farmers’ market, which is a highly individualized and much quicker experience. Additionally, the CPA is a lynchpin in the farm-to-school revitalization in the Athens area. Through Rural Action and the Hocking-Athens-Perry Community Action Program (HAP-CAP), fruits and vegetables are purchased at the auction and then processed at Hocking College. Volunteers wash, cut and package the fruits and vegetables

before they blast freeze the food. This process, which takes place the day after auctions, enables Rural Action to a) get locally sourced food into area schools but also b) guarantees a market for wholesale growers in the region. The CPA is a major contributor for CFI's Donation Station program, in which they buy produce at subsidized rates for redistribution throughout the surrounding counties. Lastly, the CPA is utilized by Rural Action to buy produce on behalf of area restaurants and businesses before transporting the produce to those businesses. This process saves businesses time by not having to send someone to the auction, but it also ensures that locally sourced food is getting into the wholesale markets. It would be a mistake to overlook these multiple social relations that the CPA maintains and sustains in the local food economy.

Schaller has seen the changing consumer tastes and demands since the 1980s and 1990s, particularly with consumers looking for and valuing locally sourced and produced foods (L. Schaller, July 20, 2018). More generally, it has been noted that consumers are overall more interested in consuming regionally produced products (Barham, 2009). Continuing this shift has been facilitated by working with farmers on social media and entrepreneurship trainings because "telling the story is so important" (L. Schaller, July 20, 2018). Helping the farmers to buy into the program through helping the farmers understand how to take advantage of these changing tastes and demands was a major component of recruitment.

So, what makes the 30MM a unique project different from other local food initiatives in the past and in the present? The major consideration is the collaboration between a local economic development organization with a focus on local food systems and a county-level tourism organization to market local foods as a tourist attraction. Secondly, the 30MM is primarily focused on the *marketing* of local food, not necessarily facilitating the creation of food hubs, new markets, or land access, though elements of these do exist. The CPA is a market



within the 30MM, however it is organized and run by Rural Action and not by ACEnet. Third, the 30MM funnels monies from the program towards the founding organizations, ACEnet and the Visitors' Bureau, as well as towards the participating food businesses, but not towards the farmers themselves. The largest financial gains are not seen by the producers of the actual local food, merely those further down the line that add value to the raw products (more on this later). Lastly, the marketing of the 30MM represents a specific and narrow farmer profile that is not emblematic of the agricultural history in southeast Ohio.

The 30MM model originated in and was developed in a specific context in Athens, and there was initial uncertainty about the transferability of the model. However, as one person reported, "based on our success [in Athens] we were willing to share the model" (P. Alost, July 25, 2018). The other 30MM initiatives are primarily located in the Appalachian region, with programs in Perry County (OH), Mahoning/ Shenango outside of Youngstown (OH), Licking County (OH), Huntington (WV) and Fayetteville, West Virginia (beginning in the fall of 2018).

Schaller discussed how the first few Real Food, Real Local conferences were beneficial to getting these other communities on board. Schaller and Woodruffe also worked together on creating "community toolkits" with press releases, food photography, and social media examples templated with fonts and designs to help start up the 30MM in these other communities. Schaller pointed out that these toolkits were especially necessary for those communities working primarily with volunteers or staff with limited resources (L. Schaller, July 20, 2018). Schaller and Woodruffe conducted two-day workshops that discussed introducing or revisiting grant-writing and how to find resources for developing their own initiatives. Woodruffe also explained how there was a network building process that came out of these workshops, as her and Schaller worked on helping these other communities produce their own searchable maps and websites

that were then incorporated into the main 30MM website within the RFRL Institute (N. Woodruffe, July 12, 2018). Integrating these efforts helped to build up interest in local foods in Appalachian Ohio and West Virginia, as well as increasing regional visibility.

Lauren Kemp has seen firsthand how these efforts have worked on building up interest in local foods in West Virginia. Kemp works for two organizations in Huntington - Unlimited Future, a small business incubator, and the Wild Ramp, a social enterprise that offers a year-round venue for farmers to sell at in exchange for a commission from the profits. At first, Kemp served as a volunteer coordinator for the Huntington version of the 30MM. Kemp describes Schaller helping with technical assistance and advertising in the initial stages, noting how the 30MM brand helped to get restaurants to engage in the idea of building up the area's food system (L. Kemp, December 17, 2018).

Initial efforts by the Huntington 30MM group included several buyer and grower mixer events in partnership with regional and state groups. These events assisted in the creation of a directory via surveys about volumes being used and what restaurants were buying or looking to buy. Additionally, a dozen or so restaurants bought lifetime memberships in the first year or agreed to sell local food (L. Kemp, December 17, 2018). Kemp also pointed to the value of the conferences and events that brought her peers together, adding that the partnership with Schaller and ACEnet was particularly fruitful due to the organizations being "far enough to not compete with each other but close enough to apply for grants together," enabling them to collectively "cover more ground" together (L. Kemp, December 17, 2018).

Another aspect of the evolution process has been the time to reflect on the new directions and past actions of the program. While the 30MM brand may not be as strong now as it was in the initial years (as mentioned by several of the interviewees), the food sector has grown by

“leaps and bounds,” and the “educational component of the project has created a better community of producers. . . now, almost every partner is engaged in the promotion, collaboration [of the initiative]” (P. Alost, July 25, 2018). However, Schaller also stressed the fragility of the initiative with a dependence on grants and staff time for print advertising and social media (L. Schaller, July 20, 2018).

Back in Huntington, Kemp discussed how the initiative has evolved into a new food hub. Kemp stressed the importance of the 30MM in helping to lay the foundation of relationships in the community, as well as with grants. The 30MM emerged roughly at the same time as the Wild Ramp, and Kemp noted how there was more energy directed towards the Wild Ramp’s success. The purpose changed towards more food hub work and building producer and buyer networks in southern West Virginia, with a new entity called Turnrow Appalachian Farm Collective (<http://www.turnrowfarms.org/>). Therefore, the 30MM brand did not gain traction in Huntington. A deeper understanding of the dynamics of 30MM in Huntington was outside of the scope of my study however the challenges faced by farmer stakeholders which I describe in the third section illustrate some of the internal contradictions of this regional branding initiative, particularly for the farmers who serve as its key protagonists.

As the 30MM initiative has developed and aged, different degrees of evolution occurred. In Athens, the initial focus of the program was on attracting tourists to the region via supporting and uplifting local producers and restaurants, encouraging them to connect to create regionally-produced meals. However, after the initial push, the efforts of the organizers turned towards consulting and working with other communities to expand the concept and branding model to help them develop similar programs. This led to a drop-off in the branding efforts in Athens, as the number of blog posts, events, conferences and marketing all decreased. As discussed above,

the Huntington initiative competed with another initiative that emerged around the same time, and greater efforts were made to support the growth of the Wild Ramp. These efforts towards generating markets for local producers catalyzed the development of the Turnrow Appalachian Farm Collective, and the 30MM concept fell to the wayside in favor of this producer cooperative.

#### *4.2 “There is Only One Black Farmer”: Conjuring the Agrarian Imaginary*

During my process of surveying farmers and conducting key informant interviews, I asked if anyone knew of any farmers of color in the region. One of the staff members at one of the history centers was able to direct me to a relative who knew of a retired farmer of color, but I was not able to schedule a time to speak with them. Another one of my key informants was uncomfortable when I asked what they knew about farmers of color in the region, and they mentioned that they only knew of one farmer of color still working in the region. I found no other farmers of color. This sparked my interest in learning why there were no other known farmers of color in these local food spaces, as well as questioning who and what is represented when we think of farmers in southeast Ohio.

When we think of farmers, we conjure an image or imaginary in our minds. Laura-Anne Minkoff-Zern has theorized this as the “agrarian imaginary” that alludes to a historized idea of the “yeoman farmer... working the land with his own hand... labor[ing] seemingly alone to produce wholesome food for the nation’s citizens... [this imaginary] persists to disguise the messiness of real agricultural practice and its inherent injustices” (Minkoff-Zern, 2014: 89).

In this section, I want to challenge the reader to critically examine the images that follow. These images are conjuring or presenting a specific imaginary of what we as consumers are being asked to think what farming is or represents.



<sup>3</sup> Athens Farmers' Market logo

The first image is the Athens Farmers' Market logo. Here, we see an apple with endless green fields and an idyllic clear blue sky.



<sup>4</sup> Snowville Creamery logo

This second image shows Snowville Creamery's take on the agrarian imaginary, with a young white milkmaid pouring white, pure milk from a white ceramic vessel.

<sup>3</sup> Taken from <http://valleyreality.org/the-athens-farmers-market-a-community-experience/>

<sup>4</sup> Taken from <http://www.madewithpassion.com/snowville-creamery/>



<sup>5</sup> King Family Farm logo

This third image shows King Family Farm's representation of the agrarian imaginary. We see a young daughter and her father walking through a field, carrying chicken waterers.



<sup>6</sup> 30 Mile Meal™ logo

This fourth image is the 30MM's logo. The logo shows a rooster, a symbol of awakening and the dawning of day, perched on a traditional style weathervane that has transformed into a spoon and fork.

<sup>5</sup> Taken from <http://www.kingfamilyfarm.com/>

<sup>6</sup> Taken from <https://athensohio.com/category/30-mile-meal/>

All these images harken to an idea of simplicity, tradition or heritage, and family. There is a cleanliness to all the images, disguising the “messiness of real agricultural practice” (89) as Minkoff-Zern (2014) says. But these images are narrow in conjuring a narrow representation that alludes to whiteness, simplicity, cleanliness, and heritage and excludes other “parallel alternatives” (Gibb & Wittman, 2013).

One of the parallel alternatives that is excluded in the marketing materials for the 30MM is the Amish. The Amish, which comprise a significant population near Chesterhill, sell many of their products at the CPA. The CPA is located near their community, making this market easily accessible for them. Amish men assist in the weekly auctions, often holding up the wares during the bidding. After, they label the products with the purchaser’s number and sometimes pass those items out to the individual buyers. Occasionally Amish children help with this process as well.

The CPA is notably discriminated against within the 30MM. Whereas the organizers of the 30MM insist that the CPA is a valuable part of the overall local food system, other local food participants are not so keen that the CPA is a valuable part. Commentary included, “where is the money from the CPA going?” and that the revenues generated there are not being reinvested in the local economy because the “Amish are the ones who mostly sell out there, and they do not pay for their labor [their children].” Another person noted that the CPA model is “exploiting local, not supporting local.”

These claims are dubious, for the most part. The Amish are not the ones who mostly sell at the CPA. According to Redfern, non-Amish farmers comprise the larger number of farmers overall. Many of these non-Amish farmers use the CPA to get rid of their surplus products, though some use the auction as their primary market as well. However, the Amish do sell a larger percentage of the overall products being sold. This includes not only the fruits and

vegetables, but the flowers, livestock and wood products, too. These concerned citizens are correct in the assertion that the Amish do not pay for their labor, but this is due to the Amish way of life which more broadly operates outside of Western industrial society than this specific population's refusal to support the local foods movement. Therefore, in addressing the first concern, "where is the money from the CPA going?", we do know that it is going to area farmers, Amish or not. The Amish women also operate a tiny store at the auction which sells clothing, pastries, soaps and crafts. Supporting local artisans and farmers, whether it is at the farmers' market or at the produce auction, is supporting the local economy. Regardless of how or where those farmers choose to spend their profits.

The 30MM brand depends on the idyllic sense of place, one in which farmers, producers, tourists and locals all work together. It also depends on "conscious capitalism." O'Toole and Vogel (2011) note that characteristics of conscious capitalism include a higher purpose, stakeholder orientation, integrated strategies (ethics, social responsibility and sustainability), healthy cultures (sense of "community") and values-based leaders (61). Many of the participating organizations seek to emulate these characteristics.

In addition to the images used by the 30MM and producers who sell as part of the 30MM, the 30MM's blog has also helped to craft an agrarian imaginary and a sense of place through its postings. The blog actively posted from the beginning of the initiative up to 2016; however, there is a disparity in the distribution of the blog postings over that period. For example, 30 of the 59 total posts since the 30MM program's inception occurred in either 2010 or 2011 (17 and 13, respectively, see Table A below). This makes sense, as initially there is a push to garner excitement for the project and what it is about. Notably, there was a severe drop in the number of blog posts in 2012, with only four posts. It is unclear what happened that caused this aberration.



The following two years, 2013-2014, displayed a level of blog posts on par with 2010-2011. There were 24 total posts, with twelve each year. But then again, 2015 was another year featuring a significant drop, with zero (0) postings. This begins a three-year trend from 2015-2017, in which only one post was uploaded to the site. Understandably, the drop in postings over time is a limitation to my study of discourse analysis. However, it is crucial to include these postings in my analysis as the words, phrases and expressions used in these postings have had a tremendous influence in communicating what the 30MM is supposed to represent about itself and farming, especially when paired with the images from the farmers and the 30MM branding.

Table A. Years of the 30 Mile Meal™ versus Number of Blog Posts per Year

Year	Number of Blog Posts
2010	17
2011	13
2012	4
2013	12
2014	12
2015	0
2016	1
2017	0

The most commonly stated words, phrases and expressions were “local” or “locally” (135), “community” (33), “fresh” (19), and “sustainable” or “sustainability” (17). Other less common words, phrases and expressions were “healthy” (7), “traditional” or “heritage” (6) and “food security” (4). These words, phrases and expressions are all emblematic of efforts to craft a particular image and project particular values about farming and food in southeast Ohio.

“Local” or “locally” was the most common descriptor by far. These adjectives were used in reference to “local foods,” “locally-sourced,” “purchased locally,” and “local economy” (Real

Food, Real Local Institute, n.d.). “Community” was the second most common descriptor, and it was typically used to describe the Appalachian region, those involved in the 30MM, or the greater Athens area. “Fresh” was the third most common descriptor, and this was almost always used to describe prepared foods at restaurants, auctions or farmers’ markets. “Sustainable” or “sustainability” were most likely found with descriptions of business practices and in reference to the economy.

Table B. Blog Descriptor versus Number of Instances

Descriptor	Number of Instances
Community	33
Food Security	4
Fresh	19
Healthy	7
Local/Locally	135
Organic	12
Sustainable/ Sustainability	17
Traditional/ Heritage	6

There is evidence that this economic development project has created a “sense of place” through its micro-discourse, as the number of dollars in sales, number of paid employees in food and drink, and the number of local food businesses have all increased in Athens County (U.S. Census, 2007; U.S. Census, 2012). It must be cautioned, however, that these increases cannot be solely traced to the 30MM or its discourse, and other factors may be involved. We should be wary of the impact of these words, phrases and expressions, and consider how they work to impact those producing the food for the initiative - the farmers.

We should also be wary of how these images, words, phrases and expressions work to (re)produce whiteness in the 30MM and in local food in southeast Ohio more broadly. Whiteness

has been addressed in both alternative food spaces (Slocum, 2007) as well as in the United States as a whole (Vanderbeck, 2006). Whiteness, as Slocum (2007) writes, references not only physical skin color, but also how bodies perform in particular ways in particular contexts (521). This is important because the focus moves from not whether participants themselves are all white or not (and in the 30MM, overwhelmingly the bodies are white or white-presenting), but to how “white bodies remain in relation to everything else” (Slocum, 2007: 521). Whiteness is also “reproduced through multiple material and imagined spatializations” materials (Vanderbeck, 2006: 643) which is visible in the 30MM’s marketing materials. By focusing on the relations of how white bodies relate to everything else, we come to notice how the longing for food, jobs and stability is not inherently white but becomes white through these relations (Slocum, 2007: 521).

One pertinent manner in which whiteness manifests itself in these relations is through distance. Dwyer and Jones (2000) note that whiteness works to produce the maximum distance possible from other racial groups (212; in Slocum, 2007: 523). As part of this process, whiteness also “builds its own close spaces” (Slocum, 2007: 523). These close spaces in the 30MM are evident in the Athens Farmers’ Market, in which many of the producers are white or white-presenting, as are the consumers. The CPA is another one of these spaces, though there is visibly more racial diversity there. The restaurants’ consumers are notably white or white-presenting as well.

The food culture of the 30MM has been “made white” (Slocum, 2007: 526). “How this food is produced, packaged, promoted and sold - engages with a white middle-class consumer base that tends to be interested in personal health and perhaps in environmental integrity” (Slocum, 2007: 526). The 30MM is made white through the narrow representation of the agrarian imaginary that is produced through its imagery, words, phrases and expressions. In the

imagery, we see themes of purity, whiteness, family, simplicity and heritage. We see these themes articulated in the writing on the blogs about the initiative - the harkening to “community,” “fresh,” “local,” “sustainable,” and “traditional/ heritage.” These “white dietary obsessions” are invoked through this narrow agrarian imaginary, making these products desirable to an economically mobile tourist class. Whiteness is being “(re)imagined and (re)configured” (Vanderbeck, 2006: 642) as something palatable but also profitable. Athens is “*made* to be seen as” a region where local food, tourism and “white faces fit together naturally in the same scenic tableau” (Vanderbeck, 2006: 645) (*italics in original*). The 30MM’s whiteness becomes a marketing tool, just as Vermont’s whiteness (Vanderbeck, 2006: 645).

#### 4.3 “*Not My Choice*”: *Farmers and Governance of the 30 Mile Meal™*

Farmers are at the root of local food systems. Before we worry about selling, buying, distributing or consuming food, we must look at food production. This section will investigate survey responses from 22 farmers participating in the local food scene in the Athens area. Participants include both those partaking in the 30MM as well as those that are not. Analysis will look at both quantitative and qualitative measures.

Farmers in this survey represent a small subsection of overall farming in southeast Ohio. Most of the farmers that participated in the survey regularly attend the Athens Farmers’ Market, with other participants being connected to the author through some sort of a personal relationship. The goal of these surveys was to pull back the curtain and provide a snapshot of the on-the-ground experience of farmers in the local food system, and to learn about farmers’ knowledge and interactions with local food initiatives, particularly the 30MM.

To understand local food production, farm viability and market participation in southeast Ohio, it is critical to start with farmers. Many studies in rural development begin from the assumption that farmers approach agriculture based solely upon conventional economic rationales including profit-making, enterprise growth, and wealth accumulation. However, in Wilson et. al (2018)'s study, which this thesis is an extension of, we found that farmers articulate complex rationales and make non-market-based decisions that complement and deviate from these economic assumptions. Indeed, many of these farmers grow food for their local and regional economies despite low economic returns. Explaining farm viability and market participation therefore requires a broader analysis that accounts for motivations.

Farmers referenced a range of non-market-based rationales for growing, ranging from their family dynamics, lifestyle choices, ethical reasons, and the promotion of personal or community health. These non-market-based rationales serve as key motivations that are clearly significant to farmers for starting and sustaining their farm operations. Many of the farmers described farming as an aspect of their heritage either in the past or the present. Farmers also described experience in agriculture, a desire to produce healthy food for their family or community, wanting to be self-employed and enjoying working in the outdoors as key reasons why they got involved in farming.

Many respondents also described their motivations as a lifestyle decision. For many of the interviewees, farming is a joyful activity that enhances the quality of their lives. Some described farming in terms of "an ethical profession," an "opportunity to be creative and problem-solve," access to "quality food," and "self-sufficiency." Furthermore, these farmers described an "itch" that sparked their interest in farming, from watching or working with older

relatives or friends on farms while growing up to improving their diets or having greater control over their own labor.

These sentiments were balanced with economic rationales as well. However, it is crucial to recognize, as will be discussed below, the uneven incomes and returns from farming. Financial motivations for farming included the profitability of commercial operations, new market opportunities, supplemental household income, paying a mortgage, saving money, and supporting a spouse or a parent. As I will elucidate below, economic motivations and entrepreneurial visions must be understood in the context of structural constraints from the difficulty of producing food for local markets. Many of these farmers started small and grew incrementally, experimenting with producing and marketing over the course of a few years. Many growers also referenced learning through participation in educational activities such as GAP (Good Agricultural Practices), agricultural extension classes, Master Gardener programs and conferences. These experiences led farmers to scale up slowly, expanding their operation from year to year. This accumulated experience translated into changing rationales, from increased profit-making goals to cases where producers decided to scale back to bring their farm work into better alignment with lifestyle goals and labor capacities.

For many farmers in the southeast Ohio local food scene, farming is not a lucrative endeavor. Starting at the national level, the median household income in 2017 was \$60,336. However, the median household income for Ohio was over six thousand dollars less at \$54,021 (Ohio Household Income, n.d.). There is an even more precipitous decrease to the county level, as the median household income for Athens County is \$37,191 (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). These farmers are well positioned relative to the median household income of Athens County, as they average roughly \$51,270 a year. Strikingly, surveyed farmers reported earning only

approximately \$22,815 of that total household income from their farms. These are not wealthy farmers, and it is difficult to advocate for farming as a profit-generating field in southeast Ohio, just as it was difficult to advocate for farming as profit-generating field in the West Virginia study which featured an average of \$31,505 from their farms (Wilson et. al, 2018).

On average, surveyed farmers reported that 44.5% of their total household income came from their farm enterprise. A significant chunk of farmers' incomes is not coming from the farm enterprise at 52.7% of their total household income. So, what other income sources comprise that 52.7% of farmers' incomes? These non-farm sources include other employment by the farmer themselves, spousal/ partner income, or retirement funds.

The farmers noted that they have another part or full-time job that contributes just over 25% of their overall household income. Another 22% comes from a spouse or partner bringing in a supplemental income, which is slightly less than the 26% of farmers reporting spousal income in the West Virginia study (Wilson et. al, 2018). Intriguingly, only 1% of total household income comes from retirement funds for this group of farmers, which is a massive change from the West Virginia farm study of similar producers in which 31% of farmers reported retirement income (Wilson et. al, 2018).

Southeast Ohio farmers sell in a diverse range of markets. In most cases, producers are supplying multiple markets simultaneously. In most cases farmers participated in two or more markets to diversify, leverage benefits and to "balance out" their sales across various outlets due to the varying characteristics of the clientele, transaction costs, potential prices, and sales volume. While diversifying market participation is time consuming, farmers argued that it is vital to reduce risk and such risk reduction strategies have become particularly critical as farmers' markets have become more saturated with growers without a concurrent increase in customers.

The following tables show which market types are most popularly accessed by farmers and the average percentage of farmers' sales from each market type. The second of the two tables further breaks down "wholesale" into restaurant, grocer, food hub and large institution sales to demonstrate the unevenness in how farmers access different wholesale markets.

*Market Participation (n=22)*

Market Type	#Participating Farmers	% of Producers	% of Sales (Average)
Farmers' Market	18	82%	78%
Direct Sales	7	32%	20%
Wholesale	15	68%	14%
CSA	2	9%	50%

*Wholesale Market Participation (n=14)*

Wholesale Type	Participating Farmers	% of Wholesale Producers	% of Sales (Average)
Restaurant	11	79%	13%
Grocer	5	36%	7%
Food Hub	1	7%	20%
Large Institution	5	36%	14%



*Most Profitable Markets (n=21)*

Market	Pros	Cons
Farmers' Market (n=15)	Lots of customers, more money individually per product, best advertising, most convenient for clients, direct contact with clients, good customer base, better price than selling to a wholesaler	Lack of space, restricted number of vendors, cost to vend, competition, licensing
Direct Sales (n=2)	No positive attributes listed	Harder than the farmers' market
Wholesale (n=2)	No positive attributes listed	Required quantity/ volume, price point
CSA (n=1)	No positive attributes listed	Competition from other CSAs, delivered meal programs
Restaurants (n=1)	Year-round steady bulk orders, chefs eager to support local farmers	Can't meet price point, some order sporadically/ seasonally, delivery, quantity

Farmers' markets were deemed the most profitable by most of the participants. Reasons included the large customer base, higher retail prices and advertising. However, many participants noted that farmers' markets lack space, cap the number of vendors, have an entry fee and licensing regulations, in addition to competition with other similar vendors. Direct sales and wholesale were the second most profitable market types according to the participants but no "pros" were listed by these four respondents. They did say that selling directly is harder than selling at farmers' markets in general, and that wholesale quantities/ volume are difficult for achieving a profitable price point. Only one farmer said that CSAs were most profitable, but they

did not list any positive attributes to support that claim. They did point to increasing competition from other CSAs as well as meal delivery programs. Lastly, one farmer said that restaurants were the most profitable market due to “year-round steady bulk orders” and “chefs eager to support local farmers.” However, other farmers complained about sporadic or seasonal ordering, questions over quantity and delivery options with restaurants.

The order of which markets are most profitable matched the much larger West Virginia study step-for-step. The sole difference was that the West Virginia study listed grocers fourth, but no producers in southeast Ohio listed grocers as the most profitable market, therefore it is not on this list. Perhaps the most major takeaway from these rankings is that restaurants were listed as the least profitable market type by southeast Ohio farmers. Much like their counterparts in West Virginia, farmers stated that restaurants tend to only purchase specific crops at specific times of the year, and that this irregularity makes it difficult to consistently depend upon them (Wilson et. al, 2018). This is a glaring contradiction in that the 30MM initiative is structured around increasing local food into restaurants, yet it is the least profitable market as identified by the producers themselves. Were farmers included in the discussions on which market types they would like to see supported? It appears the 30MM organizers attempted to push a market type that is not conducive to supporting farmers and increasing farm viability.

Of the twenty-two respondents, only five stated that they actively participated in the 30MM. Notably, I had difficulty in getting known 30MM participants to participate in my survey (I was able to identify these farmers from 30MM marketing materials). Reasons for this include those farmers being skeptical of my reasons for doing the survey and being uncertain around my questions regarding income. However, this limitation does allow me to better understand what nonparticipants think about the program.

What can be garnered from participating farmers being so reluctant to speak on the record about the 30MM? While some of the known participating farmers replied simply that they “don’t do surveys” or were “not interested,” others bristled at some of the sections once they started the survey. Particularly, the section on income was the point where a farmer was either going to continue with the survey or stop their participation. Many of the refusals were due to concerns over confidentiality of the income figures, even though I was asking for estimates and must keep the numbers confidential per the IRB arrangement. Others did not want to discuss their role in the program. It is difficult to know if this reluctance is tied to a sense of loyalty to the program, or not being confident in being in a spokesperson role. Further, perhaps there was a reluctance tied to farmers wanting to maintain an agrarian imaginary that they profit off of, rather than critiquing the 30MM program.

There were a variety of responses to my question on what attracted the farmers to participate in the program, or why they are choosing to not join. For the participating farmers, reasons for participating include the “extra outlet,” “less transportation costs, less packaging and fuel consumption, closer storage” and “they [chefs] come to us to buy.” One farmer noted a lack of agency in the process, stating that participating was “not my choice” because they are selling to participating restaurants. Lastly, one farmer noted that a shortcoming of the program has been the lack of participation by restaurants following the “amazing” original marketing and promotions that have since disappeared. For those farmers not participating, several chose to not answer the question. The farmers that did answer listed being not interested, being “leery of any obligation to produce” or “not having enough” to sell, not selling at a wholesale level, and not being sure where to participate.

For those farmers participating in the program, there are several potential food businesses that are buying local produce. The Village Bakery & Cafe was listed by four of the five participating farmers as a customer, and this is not surprising considering the Village Bakery & Cafe's noted commitment to year-round local sourcing. Other restaurants still participating include Chelsea's Food Truck, Zoe Fine Dining, Fluff Bakery, Casa Nueva, Fluff, Sol, Lui Lui's, and Salaam.

It is difficult to assess the benefits of participating in the 30MM from my survey, as only six farmers answered the question. However, there are some insights to be garnered from those six. Benefits include farm name recognition. As one said, participation "only helps to increase overall familiarity and sales." Other benefits included a good advertising opportunity, not having to ship or transport, and saving money on expenses. Other farmers were not as enthused, as two farmers noted that they did not see any benefits to participating. Partly, the perceived lack of benefits due to the more successful farms having more employees; those farms in question can achieve the scale and price points necessary to make selling to restaurants a worthwhile endeavor. One farmer also pointed out that they could increase their sales through the initiative, but they do not see the need to participate due to their current stable economic standing.

Once again, my direct question regarding barriers to participating in the 30MM provides a very limited window into farmers' minds. Most of the farmers chose not to answer this question as well. The only identified barriers were the "chefs want the same product," "keeping the relationship after the promotion is over," having a product that is "readily usable to a restaurant," "price point" (with no further elaboration), and perhaps most troubling, "not knowing about it [the program]".

Not knowing about the 30MM is a major barrier to the success of the initiative in general and in gaining producer buy-in. In the section on suggestions, this barrier was made clear by several respondents. Even some of the participating farmers noted that they “don’t know much about it” and are participants “in name only.” Nonparticipating farmers added that they do not know much about the program, either. They stressed the need for “more information made public,” “more visibility to know about it,” “more encouragement to support those venues,” and “more outreach/ advertising.” Only one farmer pointed out a profit issue with the program, stating that if they got more money from participating it would be worthwhile for them. This comment on profit proved to be a foreshadowing moment to perhaps the greatest concern of the 30MM.

Perhaps the greatest concern for the long-term success of the initiative is that none of the surveyed farmers said that the 30MM influenced their production decisions or market decisions. Many simply wrote, “no” for both, providing no further context. One farmer did qualify their no by pointing out that they sell “everything local already” and therefore the program is not influential on their decision-making process. However, two farmers offered a glimmer of hope, with one noting that the program “possibly” could be of influence if they were actually participating in the program while the other hopes to start participating in the near future but still cited “no” regarding the influence of the program on their decision-making. While this survey only reached a small subset of producers in the area, and an even smaller proportion of 30MM participants, there is cause for concern for the marketers of the 30MM in that the farmers do not see the program having any influence on their production and marketing decisions. Clearly, there is a disconnect between those organizations and individuals organizing and marketing local food schemes and those that are tasked with producing the food that makes the program happen.

## 5 - Discussion

In this chapter, I discuss the 30MM within the framework of rural gentrification (Phillips, 1993) and rural development (Barham, 2002; Holley, 2006; Barham, 2009); I focus on capital investment through developing a tourism-based local foods economy to increase regional income. The 30MM initiative is a prime example of place-based development through tourism and food, which is increasingly popular and is projected to have major future economic success (Henderson, 2009: 323). This initiative is emblematic of the coalescing of the theoretical, strategic and applied levels of food-related tourism (Boyne et. al, 2003: 131), from its roots in rural economic development theory (Barham, 2002; Boyne et. al, 2003; Cañada & Vázquez, 2005; Mutersbaugh, 2005; Holley, 2006; Higgins et. al, 2008; Barham, 2009) to the policies enacted by the Visitors' Bureau and ACEnet, to the implementation of the initiative on the ground through marketing materials, conferences, and events. The 30MM brand is another rural product certification scheme (Mutersbaugh et. al, 2005) working to distinguish southeast Ohio from other tourism competitors (Urry, 1995).

The 30MM has had several positive impacts. Chiefly, tourism revenues have increased in Athens County from prior to the implementation of the program to after it was underway. This is evidenced in the increases in number of dollars in sales, number of paid employees in food and drink, and the number of local food businesses from 2007-2012 (U.S. Census, 2007; U.S. Census, 2012). Additionally, there is a notable increase in the recognition and valuation of locally sourced products. One interviewee quipped that visitors now assume that all of Athens' locally owned and operated restaurants only source local products, despite this not being entirely factual. This does demonstrate that consumers are aware of the efforts being made by restaurants to buy local products and support area farmers. Furthermore, the 30MM has served as a critical

connection between the Visitors' Bureau and ACEnet. Both institutions have benefitted from this partnership, with ACEnet advancing its economic development goals and the Visitors' Bureau seeing success in its tourism ventures. ACEnet has seen the further development of other value-added ventures such as the Kitchen Incubator and the Nelsonville Food Hub, and the Visitors' Bureau has seen the recent success of Brews on the Bikeway which highlights the Hocking-Adena Bikeway and the local craft breweries. Additionally, Athens is the home of Ohio Brew Week, the annual celebration of craft beer brewing in the state.

The program's success is emblematic of its ability to market "difference" through a place-based labeling scheme (Ilbery et. al, 2005). This place-based labeling scheme differentiates locally produced products from those products that are "mass-produced and readily available," something which consumers are eagerly purchasing (Ilbery et. al, 2005: 118). The 30MM label follows the "territorial development rationale" which emphasizes connecting products and place in order to "protect livelihoods, build territorial identity and secure community cohesion" (Ilbery et. al, 2005: 118). This is in line with the transition to a territorially-based rural development (Boyne et. al, 2003: 132). The number of instances of particular keywords used on the 30MM's blog demonstrates the efforts that the brand managers went to emphasize "local," "community," and "sustainable." The images used by the 30MM and by farmers participating in the local food scene work to reinforce "local," "community," and "sustainable," as well as "family," "heritage," and "purity." Furthermore, the 30MM takes a broader, less regulated approach to their marketing of local food which draws attention overall to the appeal of the region. Importantly, the Visitors' Bureau and ACEnet provided invaluable technical, financial and administrative support for the program, from their planning roundtables to securing funding and getting restaurants' participation. These efforts have resulted in price premiums for vendors at the Athens Farmers'

Market through higher retail prices, increased consumer loyalty and awareness of the role of local food systems, and the development of value-adding initiatives such as the ACEnet Kitchen Incubator and the Nelsonville Food Hub.

Part of this consumer awareness can be attributed to the success of the 30MM “virtual reconnection” of farming and food through the RFRL Institute website (Bos & Owen, 2016: 12). This online presence has been a “low cost and efficient strategy” for promoting the program, mapping local food resources and showing what is happening in other 30MM communities in Appalachia (Bos & Owen, 2016: 12). This scaling up of the program to other Appalachian communities is emblematic of the potential of the 30MM as a rural redevelopment model. Communities in both Appalachian Ohio and West Virginia are seeking to capitalize on the surging interest in locally produced foods and tourism in the region, and the 30MM in Athens has provided a blueprint for how to make this leap. The online presence is assisting in helping to craft this regional brand (Boyne and Hall, 2004: 80), in addition to the conferences, materials and consulting work by ACEnet and the Visitors’ Bureau. These collaborative efforts are encouraging because it shows how many people are committed to changing the dominant narrative in and about Appalachia of one of despair and hopelessness (Vance, 2016) towards one of opportunity and diversity (Harkins & McCarroll, 2019).

This food-focused tourism initiative crafts a “sense of place” that is closely related to the conception of a regional culture (Mitchell, 1995). This regional culture that the 30MM seeks to articulate is grounded in a “representation of culture” (Mitchell, 1995: 110) through the myriad images, words, phrases and expressions within the brand. The “sense of place” in the 30MM is based on the social relationships and understandings through food and tourism (Castree, 2005; Fox, 2007 in Henderson, 2009: 321).



Tourism in particular plays a critical role in crafting a sense of place. In the past couple of decades, tourism has worked to transform cultural and recreational pursuits into “experiences which are bought and sold as commodities” (Britton, 1991: 453). The 30MM creates these purchasable experiences in which tourists can engage in what they think is an authentic experience of the region (Culler, 1981; Urry, 1990; Reynolds, 1993; Sims, 2009). Local food is a “major draw and primary motivator” for some tourists (Tikkanen, 2007 in Henderson, 2009: 317), and what better way to engage those tourists than through a food-focused regional experience - it “isn’t something that you eat every day” (Tellstrom et. al, 2005: 350).

Despite the program’s myriad successes around drawing attention to local food and boosting the regional economy, there are several limitations of the program to note. Primarily, who is represented in the “agrarian imaginary” (Minkoff-Zern, 2014) that the 30MM seeks to show through their “virtual reconnection” (Bos & Owen, 2016) and the material reconnection of farming and food. Who is excluded from these imaginaries, and who exists in the “parallel alternatives” (Gibb & Wittman, 2013)? What histories and representations are presented to others about this region’s agricultural history?

The framing of the 30MM brand erases much of the agricultural past of Athens County and the surrounding region, as well as many present-day agriculturalists. This lack of historical understanding has erased the legacy of the Albany Enterprise Academy, which was the first trade school owned and operated by people of color in Ohio, as well as ignoring the influx of black farmers following the Civil War (Combs, 1994). It ignores the black farming families who produced on these lands before being forced off through institutional racism of the USDA and other agricultural agencies (Daniel, 2007). Some of these families that I want to highlight from my archival research include the Braxton, Tabler, Norris, Hedgepath, Griffin, Dalton, Moss,

Singer and Parsons families, some of which still have descendants in the area today (United States, 1972; United States, 1920). And it ignores how the original inhabitants of this region were dispossessed of their ancestral lands by the new United States government gifting this area to Revolutionary War veterans.

In the modern day, we see the erasure of Amish and conventional farmers in the region who exist as “parallel alternatives” to the 30MM (Gibb and Wittman, 2013). The farmers participating in the 30MM and in the specialty crop scene more broadly in southeast Ohio do not lay the only claims to agriculture in the region. Notably, there are many conventional agriculturalists that eschew the farmers’ market. There are families who have raised sheep and cattle in the Athens area for generations and there are multiple 4-H clubs and FFA programs teaching traditional conventional agriculture methods. These are the farmers that are lost in the discourse surrounding the 30MM, as these farmers often rely on longstanding networks and markets separate from the local food scene as conceptualized through the 30MM. Furthermore, Amish farmers and the CPA are demonized as hurting the local food system by some. The Amish farmers are seen as not truly supporting local because they are not reinvesting their profits into the local economy, and because of their reliance on familial labor. However, the Amish farmers are able to produce on a large enough scale to make the wholesaling of local food possible in the region in a manner which many of the farmers at the farmers’ market are not able to do.

The CPA is proving that wholesaling of local food is possible in southeast Ohio, despite other local food actors being skeptical of the auction because of its Amish participants (which comprise less than half of the producers selling there, though they contribute a larger proportion of the overall products). But the CPA does succeed in many roles, primarily, as one of the few

wholesale markets for specialty crops in the region. Discounting the CPA's role in sustaining the local food economy leads to questions regarding local food "citizenship," or who belongs. Part of the discourse perpetuated by the 30MM centers on inclusivity in building the brand - this is evidenced by Woodruffe's statement on the brand being an "umbrella identity." However, in practice, this "umbrella identity" or regional branding initiative (Barham, 2009) is clearly strained across sectors. These strained relations are noticeable in the interactions between restaurants sourcing locally year-round versus the summer months, the restaurants that support the farmers' market but not the CPA (and vice versa), the farmers that sell at the different markets and the consumers at the markets and the businesses in town. Furthermore, there is major conflict over the CPA's role within the program's branding. The CPA developed in parallel to the 30MM but exists outside the mainstream perception of who is included in the program. There is no tourist gaze or agrarian imaginary within the CPA, as the bulk purchasing model obscures who the farmers are unlike the Athens Farmers' Market. However, the CPA serves as perhaps the most important cog in the local food system, as their products reach schools, hospitals, restaurants and individual citizens. This capitalist investment driving demand for local products (Barham, 2009) is producing uneven results and benefits.

Returning to my survey on the benefits and barriers to participation in the program for farmers, we see a disengagement by the farmers. The farmers articulated that they were not sure how to participate, and all of them stated that this "values-based labeling" (Barham, 2002) scheme had no impact on their production or market decisions. The internal contradiction is that local food is being leveraged for regional redevelopment in response to industrial decay, but the farmers do not really benefit from this process. These beliefs point to the question of governance within the 30MM, and whether farmers were stakeholders in the process of setting goals and

providing direction for the program (Barham, 2009). Regardless, there are three glaring contradictions specifically for farmers. One, many farmers do not know that the 30MM exists. Two, farmers are not making money from the program. Three, maybe this local food as regional redevelopment process is not driving farm viability, which throws the base of the program in flux. If the farmers are not benefiting, then who is benefiting from the 30MM?

Governance includes both “administrative and juridical relationships within and beyond specific certified-products networks” (Mutersbaugh et. al, 2005: 381). At its root, governance is about drivenness - who benefits from the structure, and who participates in the structure. The 30MM is NGO and consumer driven, leaving limited political power for producers. This leads to an unrootedness in which the 30MM and its organizers fail to work through the inequalities present in the label - from the lack of acknowledgement of the region’s agricultural history, to the erasure of indigenous peoples and people of color farming the land, to excluding Amish and conventional farmers in the modern day, ignoring how restaurants are the least profitable market identified by farmers (Wilson et. al, 2018), and not working to solve large scale food insecurity in one of the poorest counties in one of the poorest regions of Ohio (Larrick, 2017). The 30MM does not grapple with these issues, instead keeping a narrow focus on restaurants and tourism. This label also fails to include farmers in the governance structure, which studies have shown results in the most economic benefit for producers (Cañada & Vázquez, 2005; Higgins et. al, 2008).

The shortcomings of the 30MM can be seen in the lack of a third-party regulator of the label (Higgins et. al, 2008). There is no accounting infrastructure in place to check how much and how often restaurants and other food-related businesses are sourcing locally, which obfuscates benefits of participating for farmers. This lack of an accounting mechanism was

mentioned by a few of the interviewees. Furthermore, farmers did not have a say in which markets should be prioritized or explored, therefore there is little incentive for them to participate knowing that they have a limited voice in the direction of the program. The lack of control over the stories being told about local food and farming, particularly the narrow “agrarian imaginary” being produced by the 30MM, further erodes opportunities for a more equitable and historically accurate food system. Turning towards food hubs (Cleveland et. al, 2014) and cooperatives (Higgins et. al, 2008) provide an opportunity to work towards a more equitable local food system. An inspiring model in the Appalachian region is West Virginia’s Turnrow Appalachian Farm Collective, which has linked producers across the southern portion of the state to access markets in a collective manner to increase capacity and production. In this model, producers have a say in the governance structure, which is appealing to their participation.

We must return to the critique of the local in our assessment of the 30MM. The local is heavily fetishized within the initiative, as the boundary of thirty miles is really the only consideration for participation. However, this sole requirement reifies the local as inherently benevolent (Holloway et. al, 2007; Kneafsey, 2010; Broad, 2016). Despite this reification of the benevolence of the local, the 30MM does successfully work to “re-embed” food transactions in community and place (Feagan, 2007: 28) but with such a limited set of criteria the initiative ends up being more of a “conservative celebration of the local as the supposed repository of specific meanings and values” (Holloway and Kneafsey, 2000: 294). In this way, many other ethical concerns are left out. Among these ethical concerns includes the production of whiteness in this local food tourism initiative, from all the white faces producing and consuming the food (Slocum, 2007) to the conjuring of whiteness through the production of an “agrarian imaginary” (Minkoff-Zern, 2014). This whiteness is evident more broadly in alternative food (Slocum, 2007)

but also the greater American imaginary (Vanderbeck, 2006). These ethical concerns also include how the food is being produced, by whom, and for whom. The 30MM fails to account for “participants’ positions and roles within the food system” (Trivette, 2015: 479), from how farmers are impacted by the initiative, to the engagement of food-related businesses to whom is eating the food being marketed through this initiative.

So, what could a more equitable 30MM look like, and how could the program move beyond just NGO investment and truly include producer and community investment? The brand has proven itself to be larger than the actual structures being materialized on the ground. The label seeks to reassure consumers that we should not be concerned about these larger concerns around history, race, governance and production, and that buying a product with a “community” or “local” label is enough. But it is not, because the community and the local are not inherently benevolent (Broad, 2016), nor is the “eco-agrarian ethic” (Alkon, 2013). Food justice necessitates that “benefits and burdens are shared fairly... equal opportunities to participate in food system governance and decision-making... diverse perspectives and ways of knowing about the food system are recognized and respected” (Gibb and Wittman, 2013: 3).

So, while the 30MM is not emblematic of food justice, it is important to remember that the initiative was never meant to center food justice. The primary goal of the initiative was to super-localize food as tourism development for a region facing industrial decay through decades of economic restructuring. Tourism development fits within the broader goals of the Appalachian Regional Commission as a response to this economic restructuring, and the 30MM seeks to piggyback off those goals. Local food was chosen as the driver, with territoriality serving as the landscape on which local food production and consumption occurs. With financial support geared towards marketing and consulting work, it is no surprise that market opportunities for

farmers were not centered in the initiative. The brand of the 30MM is easily applied to pre-existing ventures, such as the Athens Farmers' Market and the local independent restaurants which predated the emergence of the initiative. The brand can also be loosely applied to even those producers who are not farming within the thirty-mile boundary, as the objective is to boost revenues within the region over enforcing a hard boundary for participation. The food insecure and impoverished are not benefiting either, as the food being sold is going to an already wealthy population with the means available to travel to another locale and consume specialty products. This is particularly glaring in southeast Ohio and Athens County specifically, which are near the top in the state for rates of food insecurity and poverty. The 30MM instead is leveraging locally produced food as yet another extractive economy in Appalachia. With these considerations in mind, the 30MM has been successful for what it is despite lagging in more transformational ways such as providing new market opportunities and support for area farmers, representing and acknowledging all members of the agricultural community, and addressing food insecurity and poverty within the region.

Returning to the literature, the 30MM is representative of many of the themes previously discussed. Speaking of tourism, the 30MM is entirely focused on producing a “culinary niche” (Sidali et. al, 2015: 1187) through an “experience economy” (Sidali et. al, 2015: 1184) of local food consumption. These local food experiences are bought and sold as commodities by tourists. Furthermore, the 30MM is emblematic of “values-based labeling” (Barham, 2002). Non-market features, such as the assumed inherent benevolence of romanticized local production, as well as food as an experience and not for nutritional purposes, are part of the initiative's labeling.

Additionally, different stories and ideas about farming in the region are not made visible through the 30MM marketing, therefore obscuring or ignoring “parallel alternatives” (Gibb &

Wittman, 2013) of different ways of producing and selling. There is a gatekeeping element of who belongs and should participate (read white, middle- to upper-middle class) versus those that are not deemed to be desirable for the tourist gaze (read the poor and the marginalized).

This romanticization of local production also recalls the discussion on proximity and relationships within our understanding of localness (Trivette, 2015). How are we defining local, and who gets to decide? There is also “great ambiguity” about what the local and the 30MM means (Allen & Hinrichs, 2007: 269). Many of my interviewees noted that the supposed boundary is not a solid boundary, but rather a concept that is useful for drawing attention to what can be produced and sold in a context that is more intimate than the nebulous globalized food system.

Lastly, the 30MM wades into the messy concepts of governance and participation in rural development (Boyne et. al, 2003; Cañada & Vázquez, 2005; Mutersbaugh, 2005; Higgins et. al, 2008). There is a real, palpable disconnect between farmers and the 30MM brand. This is primarily due to the lack of producer say over the 30MM brand and how it is used. What would the 30MM look like if producers were involved in the governance structure and creating a tangible certification process as detailed by Mutersbaugh et. al (2005)?



## 6 - Conclusion

This study was structured through three primary research questions which sought to address what makes the 30MM distinctive in relation to other local food initiatives, how the 30MM constructs and represents an agrarian imaginary around farming and local food, and identifying the benefits and barriers to participating in the 30MM for farmers. These questions were developed after an extensive literature review of readings investigating the political economy of tourism, rural development and food justice. Through these literature fields, I gained a greater understanding of how tourism ventures and service-based economies more broadly impact a geographic region, how these ventures are narrow and specific in scope, and are utilized in particular ways by particular actors for particular reasons. Additionally, I further developed my understanding of food justice and local food systems, probing questions of why we should localize food production, who belongs, and who is represented within food production and consumption.

This promotional, tourism-focused agricultural initiative is distinctive in regard to other local food initiatives, and this is manifest in a few different ways. First and foremost, this program is the first explicit relationship between a county tourism board and local food system developers. Second, the program is mostly based in the *marketing* of consumption of local foods, not necessarily the production end. In this way, there is a disconnect and misunderstanding of who benefits from the program, as value-added food businesses, the Visitors' Bureau and local food consultants see more advantages and profits than the farmers who produce the food. Third, the program has become a model for other communities, and the materials used to craft the Athens 30MM are influencing how other local food systems are being branded within Appalachian Ohio and West Virginia.

Contextually, the 30MM is an initiative with roots in rural economic development theory (Barham, 2002; Boyne et. al, 2003; Cañada & Vázquez, 2005; Mutersbaugh, 2005; Holley, 2006; Higgins et. al, 2008; Barham, 2009). Furthermore, it is an example of how local food is being utilized as a form of tourism development in the Appalachian region through a regional brand (Boynes and Hall, 2004) emphasizing values-based labeling (Barham, 2002) that markets difference in place (Ilbery et. Al, 2005). “Virtual reconnection” (Bos & Owen, 2016) through the RFRL Institute and the 30MM’s blog has been instrumental in representing local food culture in southeast Ohio (Mitchell, 1995). This “virtual reconnection” is drawing and motivating tourists (Tikkanen, 2007) to come to Athens for a supposedly authentic taste of the region (Culler, 1981; Urry, 1990; Reynolds, 1993; Sims, 2009).

However, this initiative has also fetishized the local in its attempts to market food and an authentic experience. The “agrarian imaginary” (Minkoff-Zern, 2014) of the 30MM’s marketing materials are not representative of the region’s past and current agricultural endeavors, as these materials instead represent a narrow, whitewashed image of farmers and local food. In doing so, the 30MM erases or obscures the “parallel alternatives” (Gibb & Wittman, 2013) in the Athens area, particularly the CPA, the Amish and the conventional farmers. This production of the “agrarian imaginary” also works to (re)produce whiteness in this local food system, which is a common theme in local and alternative food systems (Slocum, 2007) but also reinforcing whiteness at a region and national level in the United States (Vanderbeck, 2006). Farmers are seeing uneven benefits and results from this initiative; they are not the only ones though as there is unevenness in the customer base as well with those who already have access to food being prioritized.

Farmers are aware of their disadvantages and lack of profits overall from the 30MM initiative. Not only do many of the surveyed farmers not see a benefit to participation, but many non-participants are not even aware of the program's existence. Furthermore, none of the surveyed farmers (n=22) said that they have altered their production or market decisions based off the program, drawing attention to the lack of benefits for the farmers in this program. These perceived lack of benefits for farmers within the 30MM draws us towards the question of governance of local food systems (Mutersbaugh et. al, 2005; Cañada & Vázquez, 2005; Higgins et. al, 2008): who owns the 30MM brand? Who controls it? Who defines it? In asking these questions, we can question how much input farmers had in the design and implementation of this initiative which appears to be NGO and consumer driven.

What can be changed to gain more benefits for farmers in this program, creating a more just meal? A local food audit could help farmers as there would be an accounting tool for measuring how much local food is being utilized in area food business. Alternatively, this auditing mechanism could backfire, as restaurants could be unwilling to be audited for this voluntary program. We need to develop a local food system that expands in a more holistic manner across all sectors of society, ensuring food for all not just for an elite few. This is an opportunity for producer-driven cooperatives (Cañada & Vázquez, 2005; Higgins et. al, 2008) and food hubs (Cleveland et. Al, 2014) such as the Turnrow Appalachian Farm Cooperative to emerge. However, steps must be taken to create a pathway for farmers of color to be included and supported in these cooperatives and food hubs not just in Athens or Appalachia, but in the United States. These are just a few starting points for next steps for the 30MM. We could also examine questions beyond the local, and question subsidies for commodity crops but not for specialty crops, look at the historical processes that dispossessed black and brown farmers, and

the genocide and dispossession of indigenous peoples to allow for white colonizer agriculture. Hopefully this study has provided a provocative launching pad for the further investigation of these processes and held up a mirror to the 30MM a decade after its birth. May we learn and understand the implications of scaling up this program across Appalachian Ohio and West Virginia, noting how the 30MM has been successful in many ways yet exclusionary in others such as questions of representation and shared governance. And through this understanding we can work to address historical injustices and work towards a more just food system not just in Athens, but in the state, country and world.

## Appendix A

### *Survey conducted with the key informants*

1. How did you end up in southeast Ohio, or what drew you to the region?
2. What role do you (or your organization) play in the 30 Mile Meal™?
3. Why thirty miles, and is this a specific distance or a relative distance?
4. Please give your assessment of the 30MM: what is its value? Its meaning?
5. What factors or people influenced the development of the 30MM?
6. Describe the process of recruiting people to partake in the program.
7. What impact do you think the 30MM has on your work?
8. How has the 30MM served as a bridge connecting your organization with other food and economic development organizations?
9. What was the process for extending the 30MM into other communities?
10. How has the 30MM evolved from its inception in 2010 to its current state in 2018?

## Appendix B

### *Adjusted WVU Food Justice Lab survey with special section on the 30 Mile Meal™*

1. Research Consent
  1. Do you give myself (Jed DeBruin) and the West Virginia University Food Justice Lab permission to display the location of your farm on a local foods map?
    1. Yes/ No/ Other
2. Contact Information
  1. What is the name of your farm?
  2. What is the name of the primary contact person?
  3. What gender do you identify as?
    1. Female/ Male/ Prefer not to say/ Other
  4. What race do you identify as?
    1. Native American/ Black/ Asian/ White/ 2 or more/ Other
  5. Primary contact title
  6. Primary contact phone number
  7. Primary contact email address
3. Address Information
  1. Which county is your farm located in?
  2. Physical Address (site address of farm)
    1. Site address line 1/ site address line 2/ site address city/ state/ zip
  3. How would you direct a person to your farm? (Please describe your farm's physical location as best as possible including names of roads and other landmarks in the space below. This information will be used to locate your farm on a map if the site address you provided is not sufficient.)
  4. Mailing Address (if different from site address)
    1. Mailing address line 1/ mailing address line 2/ mailing address city/ state/ zip
4. Land Use
  1. What is the total acreage of the property on which your farm is located?
  2. Do you own the land you farm on?
    1. Yes/ No/ If both, please explain.
  3. How did you come into the land that you are farming on?
  4. How many acres of your farm are in use?
  5. How many acres of your farm are dedicated to the following uses?
    1. Crops? Forest? Grazing? Orchard? Fallow? Other?
  6. Do you produce: (Checklist)
    1. Vegetables/ fruits/ livestock/ eggs/ canned goods/ baked goods/ mushrooms/ honey/ other
  7. What percentage of your production is for the market and what percentage do you keep for your own use?

5. Labor & Income

1. What is your total household income? (Select one)
  1. Less than \$24,999/ \$25,000-49,999/ \$50,000-74,999/ \$75,000-99,999/ \$100,000-119,999/ Greater than \$120,000
2. What percentage of your total household income comes from the farm?
3. What percentage of your total household income comes from other sources?
4. What was your total revenue from farm sales in 2017? (In dollars for calendar year. Please estimate if exact figure unknown)
5. Have you received state or federal assistance for your farm enterprise? If so, please explain. (Examples include NRCS funding, USDA funding, WVU or WVSU Extension funding, etc.)
6. Are you a full-time farmer with no other forms of employment?
  1. Yes/ No
7. What is your other occupation?

6. Employment

1. Do you have on farm paid staff (including family)?
  1. Yes/ No
2. How many employees does the farm have?
3. Of your employees how many are apprentices?
4. Of your employees how many are from organizations such as WWOOF, AmeriCorps, etc.?
5. How many volunteers do you have? (if any)

7. Income 2

1. Do you have any other sources of on-farm income? (Hay rides, pumpkin patch, farm-to-table events, etc.)
  1. Yes/ No
2. Do you have any other sources of off-farm income? (This can include Social Security, pensions, spousal income, or any other income not related to your personal employment)
  1. Yes/ No

8. Off-farm Income (For each type of off-farm income source, please estimate the percentage it contributes to your total household income in a year)

1. Other Employment (if you previously indicated that you have more than one occupation)/ Spousal Income/ Retirement Funds (Pensions, Social Security, IRA, etc.)/ Other Sources (please list the source and the percentage)

9. Farm Info

1. How long have you been farming?
2. Why did you begin farming?
3. How do you choose what to produce each year?
4. What barriers do you face to ensuring a viable farm enterprise?

5. Has your farm enterprise been adversely impacted by natural disasters or unfavorable weather conditions? If so, how? (Examples include flooding, late/early frost dates, severe storms, droughts, etc.)
6. Has your farm been adversely impacted by human caused disaster or development? If so, how? (Examples include acid mine drainage (AMD), fracking, logging, strip mining, wind farming, housing, industrial, or infrastructure development projects, etc.)
7. What do you need to have a successful farm enterprise?
8. What (if any) training or certification classes have you participated in related to your farm? (Examples include GAP/ GHP, Master Gardener classes, Extension classes, incubator farm programs, etc.)

#### 10. Markets

1. Do you participate in any farmers markets?
  1. Yes/ No
2. Do you participate in any direct sales markets? (Direct sales markets describe any transaction in which you as a producer are selling directly to a client. This includes but is not limited to: roadside stands, on farm stands or sales, U-pick, or non-CSA deliveries to individual clients.)
  1. Yes/ No
3. Do you offer a CSA (community supported agriculture) program?
  1. Yes/ No
4. Do you participate in a wholesale market? (Such as food hubs, restaurants, grocers, or large institutions)
  1. Yes/ No

#### 11. Farmers Markets

1. How many farmers markets do you attend?
2. Names and locations of the farmers markets you attend?
3. Which farmers markets (if any) are producer only?
4. Do you attend the markets every week?
  1. Yes/ No
5. How long have you been vending at these markets?
6. How much does it cost to vend at each market?
7. Which (if any) of these farmers markets require you to attend vendor meetings? If so, how often?
8. What barriers exist for a producer who wants to start vending at farmers markets?
9. What percentage of your total sales come from farmers markets?
10. What are the main products that you bring to farmers markets?
11. How would you rate your overall experience in vending at farmers markets in general?
  1. 1-5 scale (poor = 1, great = 5) Please elaborate on your rating above.



## 12. Direct Sales

1. What are the main products you offer through direct sale?
2. What percentage of your total sales comes from direct sale?
3. Direct sales types (Please indicate the percentage of your on-farm income that each corresponding direct sale market type contributes. If you do not use one of the market types simply put a "0" (zero) below the name.)
  1. Roadside farm stand/ On farm stand or store/ Delivery to individual (non-CSA)/ U-pick or pick your own/ Other direct sales (Please describe and include percentage)
4. How would you rate your overall experience in selling directly to customers?
  1. 1-5 scale (poor = 1, great = 5) Please elaborate on your rating above.

## 13. CSA (Community Supported Agriculture)

1. Is your CSA program administered by a food hub?
  1. Yes/ No
2. What is the average cost for your CSA?
3. What is your payment schedule?
  1. Deposit/ full amount/ weekly/ other
4. What sort of an agreement do you have with each stakeholder?
5. How many shareholders do you have?
6. What percentage of your total sales comes from CSA shares?
7. What (if any) barriers do you or other producers face in operating a CSA program?
8. Do you offer a drop-off location?
  1. Yes/ No
9. Do you accept SNAP as payment in your CSA program?
  1. Yes/ No
10. Do the shareholders have the option to harvest?
  1. Yes/ No
11. Do you offer home deliveries?
  1. Yes/ No
12. How would you rate your overall experience in working in this type of market?
  1. 1-5 scale (poor = 1, great = 5) Please elaborate on your rating above.

## 14. Wholesales

1. Do you have a wholesale market with any food hubs?
  1. Yes/ No
2. Do you have a wholesale market with any restaurants?
  1. Yes/ No
3. Do you have a wholesale market with any grocers?
  1. Yes/ No
4. Do you have a wholesale market with any large institutions?

1. Yes/ No
5. Food Hubs
  1. How many food hubs do you work with?
  2. Names of the hubs?
  3. Main products sold?
  4. What percentage of your total sales comes from food hubs?
  5. What barrier (if any) do you face working with food hubs?
  6. How would you rate your overall experience working with food hubs?
    1. 1-5 scale (poor = 1, great = 5) Please elaborate on the rating above.
6. Restaurants
  1. Do you sell to restaurants through a food hub?
    1. Yes/ No
  2. How many restaurants do you work with?
  3. Types of restaurants you work with?
  4. Main products sold to restaurants?
  5. What percentage of your total sales comes from restaurants?
  6. What barriers (if any) do you face working with restaurants?
  7. How would you rate your overall experience working with restaurants?
    1. 1-5 scale (poor = 1, great = 5) Please elaborate on the rating above.
7. Grocers
  1. Do you sell to grocers through a food hub?
    1. Yes/ No
  2. How many grocers do you sell to?
  3. Types of grocers that you sell to?
  4. Main products sold to grocers?
  5. What percentage of your total sales is from grocers?
  6. What barriers (if any) do you face selling to grocers?
  7. How would you rate your overall experience selling to grocers?
    1. 1-5 scale (poor = 1, great = 5) Please elaborate on the rating above.
8. Large Institutions
  1. Do you sell to large institutions through a food hub?
    1. Yes/ No
  2. Which of the following do you currently sell to? (Checklist)
    1. Schools/ Prisons/ Hospitals/ Other
  3. Which of the following have you sold to in the past? (Checklist)
    1. Schools/ Prisons/ Hospitals/ Other
  4. Which of the following do you wish to sell to in the future? (Checklist)
    1. Schools/ Prisons/ Hospitals/ Other
  5. What percentage of your sales comes from these institutions?
  6. What (if any) barriers do you face in selling to large institutions?

7. How would you rate your overall experience in selling to large institutions?

1. 1-5 scale (poor = 1, great = 5) Please elaborate on the rating above.

15. The 30 Mile Meal™

1. Do you participate in the 30 Mile Meal™?

1. Yes/ No

2. What attracted you to participate in the 30 Mile Meal™, or what is not appealing for you to join the 30 Mile Meal?

3. Who do you sell your products to that participate in the 30 Mile Meal™?

4. What are the benefits for participating in the 30 Mile Meal™?

5. What are the barriers for participating in the 30 Mile Meal™?

6. Do you have any suggestions for improving the 30 Mile Meal™ for farmers?

7. Has the 30 Mile Meal™ influenced your production decisions or market decisions?

16. Additional Market Questions (For the following questions please compare the different types of markets that you participate in (CSAs, whole, farmers markets, direct sales), NOT individual farmers markets)

1. Which types of markets are the most profitable to you and why?

2. Why do you not produce for the markets you do not participate in?

3. What market barriers are you facing?

4. Any markets you wish to access in the future?

5. What percentage of your total sales comes from selling outside of Ohio?

6. Do you donate any of your products? If so, who or what are you donating to?

7. Are there any of your products that are going to waste? If so, how much is going to waste?

8. Are there any markets that you access that we did not ask about? (Examples include contract production, livestock auctions, spot markets, etc.)

17. Additional

1. Is there any additional information you would like to share?

## Bibliography

- Alkon, A.H. (2013). The Socio-Nature of Local Organic Food. *Antipode*, 45(3), 663-680.
- Allen, P. (2004). *Together at the table: Sustainability and sustenance in the American agri-food system*. Penn State Press.
- Allen, P., & Hinrichs, C. (2007). Buying into 'buy local': Agendas and assumptions of US local food initiatives. *Constructing alternative food geographies*, 255-272.
- Alost, P. (2018, July 25). Personal correspondence.
- Alvesson, M., & Kärreman, D. (2000). Varieties of discourse: On the study of organizations through discourse analysis. *Human relations*, 53(9), 1125-1149.
- Appalachian Center for Economic Networks. (2018, August 22). Welcome. Retrieved from <https://acenetworks.org/>
- Appalachian Regional Commission. (n.d.). Home. Retrieved from <https://www.arc.gov/>
- (n.d.) Tourism Development. Retrieved from [https://www.arc.gov/program\\_areas/index.asp?PROGRAM\\_AREA\\_ID=22](https://www.arc.gov/program_areas/index.asp?PROGRAM_AREA_ID=22)
- Barham, E. (2002). Towards a theory of values-based labeling. *Agriculture and human values*, 19(4), 349-360.
- (2009). *The Missouri Regional Cuisines Project: Geographical Indications as a Rural Development Opportunity* (Vol. 20, pp. 1-8, Rep.). Macomb, IL: Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs.
- Barbera, F., & Dagnes, J. (2016). Building alternatives from the bottom-up: The case of alternative food networks. *Agriculture and agricultural science procedia*, 8, 324-331.
- Basit, T. (2003). Manual or electronic? The role of coding in qualitative data analysis. *Educational research*, 45(2), 143-154.
- Berkowitz, S. (1997). Analyzing qualitative data. In J. Frechtling & L. Sharp (Eds.), *User-friendly handbook for mixed method evaluations*. Arlington, VA: Division of Research, Evaluation and Communication, National Science Foundation.
- Bianchi, R. (2009). The 'critical turn' in tourism studies: A radical critique. *Tourism Geographies*, 11(4), 484-504.

- Biernacki, P., & Waldorf, D. (1981). Snowball sampling: Problems and techniques of chain referral sampling. *Sociological methods & research*, 10(2), 141-163.
- Black, D. A., & Sanders, S. G. (2004). *Labor market performance, poverty, and income inequality in Appalachia*. Washington, DC: Appalachian Regional Commission.
- Black, S. (2001). Life and debt. [Documentary]. *Jamaica: Tuff Gong Pictures Production*.
- Bos, E., & Owen, L. (2016). Virtual reconnection: The online spaces of alternative food networks in England. *Journal of rural studies*, 45, 1-14.
- Boyne, S., Hall, D., & Williams, F. (2003). Policy, support and promotion for food-related tourism initiatives: A marketing approach to regional development. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 14(3-4), 131-154.
- Boyne, S., & Hall, D. (2004). Place promotion through food and tourism: Rural branding and the role of websites. *Place branding*, 1(1), 80-92.
- Britton, S. (1991). Tourism, capital, and place: towards a critical geography of tourism. *Environment and planning D: society and space*, 9 (4), 451-478.
- Broad, G. (2016). *More than just food: Food justice and community change* (Vol. 60). Univ of California Press.
- Cameron, D. (2001). *Working with Spoken Discourse*. Sage.
- Cañada, J. S., & Vázquez, A. M. (2005). Quality certification, institutions and innovation in local agro-food systems: protected designations of origin of olive oil in Spain. *Journal of rural Studies*, 21(4), 475-486.
- Castree, N. (2005). *Nature: Key ideas in geography*. London: Routledge.
- Center for Hospitality Research. (2005). *Food Tourism: The Next Big Thing?*, Center for Hospitality Research, Ithaca, NY, available at: [www.hotelschool.cornell.edu/chr](http://www.hotelschool.cornell.edu/chr) (accessed 20 September 2005).
- City of Athens. (2012). History, Culture & Image. Retrieved from ci.athens.oh.us
- Cleveland, D. A., Müller, N. M., Tranovich, A. C., Mazaroli, D. N., & Hinson, K. (2014). Local food hubs for alternative food systems: A case study from Santa Barbara County, California. *Journal of rural studies*, 35, 26-36.
- Combs, I. L. (1994, December 5). Albany School Pioneered in African American Education. *Athens NEWS*.

- Culler, J. (1981). "Semiotics of Tourism." *American Journal of Semiotics*, 1(1), 127-140.
- Daniel, P. (2007). African American farmers and civil rights (Pigford v. Glickman). *Journal of Southern History*, 73 (1), 3-27.
- Debord, G. (2012). *Society of the Spectacle*. Bread and Circuses Publishing.
- Dwyer, O. J., & Jones III, J. P. (2000). White socio-spatial epistemology. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 1(2), 209-222.
- Feagan, R. (2007). The place of food: mapping out the 'local' in local food systems. *Progress in human geography*, 31 (1), 23-42.
- Fox, R. (2007). Reinventing the gastronomic identity of Croatian tourist destinations. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 26(3), 546-559.
- Freidberg, S. (2009). *Fresh*. Harvard University Press.
- Gibb, N., & Wittman, H. (2013). Parallel alternatives: Chinese-Canadian farmers and the Metro Vancouver local food movement. *Local Environment*, 18 (1), 1-19.
- Gibson, C. (2009). Geographies of tourism: critical research on capitalism and local livelihoods. *Progress in Human Geography*, 33 (4), 527-534.
- Guthman, J. (2011). *Weighing in: Obesity, food justice, and the limits of capitalism* (Vol. 32). University of California Press.
- Halweil, B. (2002). *Home grown: the case for local food in a global market* (Vol. 163). Worldwatch Institute.
- Haraway, D. (1991). "Situated Knowledge: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective" in D. Haraway (Ed.) *Simians, cyborgs and women*. New York: Routledge. 183-201 (Ch 9).
- Harkins, A., & McCarroll, M. (2019). *Appalachian Reckoning: A Region Responds to Hillbilly Elegy*. West Virginia University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2004). The "new imperialism": Accumulation by dispossession. *Actuel Marx*, (1), 71-90.
- Henderson, J. C. (2009). Food tourism reviewed. *British food journal*, 111(4), 317-326.

- Hendrickson, M. and Heffernan, W. (2002). Opening spaces through relocalization: locating potential resistance in the weaknesses of the global food system. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 42 (4), 347-369.
- Higgins, V., Dibden, J., & Cocklin, C. (2008). Building alternative agri-food networks: Certification, embeddedness and agri-environmental governance. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 24(1), 15-27.
- Hinrichs, C. C. (2000). Embeddedness and local food systems: notes on two types of direct agricultural market. *Journal of rural studies*, 16 (3), 295-303.
- (2003). The practice and politics of food system localization. *Journal of rural studies*, 19 (1), 33-45.
- Holley, J. (2006). *Regional Flavor: The Creative Power of Communities*.
- Holloway, L., & Kneafsey, M. (2000). Reading the space of the farmers' market: a preliminary investigation from the UK. *Sociologia ruralis*, 40 (3), 285-299.
- Holloway, L., Kneafsey, M., Venn, L., Cox, R., Dowler, E., & Tuomainen, H. (2007). Possible food economies: a methodological framework for exploring food production–consumption relationships. *Sociologia ruralis*, 47(1), 1-19.
- Holmes, S. (2013). *Fresh fruit, broken bodies: Migrant farmworkers in the United States* (Vol. 27). Univ of California Press.
- Ilbery, B., Morris, C., Buller, H., Maye, D., & Kneafsey, M. (2005). Product, process and place: an examination of food marketing and labelling schemes in Europe and North America. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 12(2), 116-132.
- Jackson, P. (1999). Commodity cultures: the traffic in things. *Transactions of the institute of British Geographers*, 24(1), 95-108.
- Kemp, L. (2018, December 17). Personal interview.
- Kloppenburg, J., Hendrickson, J., & Stevenson, G. W. (1996). Coming in to the foodshed. *Agriculture and human values*, 13(3), 33-42.
- Kneafsey, M. (2010). The region in food—important or irrelevant?. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 3(2), 177-190.
- Larrick, D. (2017). *The Ohio Poverty Report* (February 2017, pp. 1-96, Rep.). Columbus, OH: Ohio Development Services Agency.
- McRobie, G. (1981). *Small is possible*. London: Abacus, Sphere Books.

- Minkoff-Zern, L.A. (2014). Challenging the agrarian imaginary: Farmworker-led food movements and the potential for farm labor justice. *Human Geography*, 7 (1), 85-101.
- Mitchell, D. (1995). There's no such thing as culture: towards a reconceptualization of the idea of culture in geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 102-116.
- Morris, C., & Kirwan, J. (2010). Food commodities, geographical knowledges and the reconnection of production and consumption: The case of naturally embedded food products. *Geoforum*, 41(1), 131-143.
- Mutersbaugh, T. (2005). Just-in-space: Certified rural products, labor of quality, and regulatory spaces. *Journal of rural studies*, 21(4), 389-402.
- Mutersbaugh, T., Klooster, D., Renard, M. C., & Taylor, P. (2005). Certifying rural spaces: quality-certified products and rural governance. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 4(21), 381-388.
- NativeLand.ca. (n.d.). Retrieved April 20, 2018, from <https://native-land.ca/>
- Norberg-Hodge, H., Merrifield, T., & Gorelick, S. (2002). *Bringing the food economy home: Local alternatives to global agribusiness*. Zed Books.
- Noy, C. (2008). Sampling knowledge: The hermeneutics of snowball sampling in qualitative research. *International Journal of social research methodology*, 11 (4), 327-344.
- Ohio Household Income. (n.d.). Retrieved February 19, 2019, from <https://www.deptofnumbers.com/income/ohio/>
- Oliver, D. G., Serovich, J. M., & Mason, T. L. (2005). Constraints and opportunities with interview transcription: Towards reflection in qualitative research. *Social forces*, 84 (2), 1273-1289.
- O'Toole, J., & Vogel, D. (2011). Two and a half cheers for conscious capitalism. *California Management Review*, 53(3), 60-76.
- Pascual-de-Sans, A. (2004). Sense of place and migration histories - idiotopy and idiotope. *Area*, 36 (4), 348-57.
- Phillips, M. (1993). Rural gentrification and the processes of class colonisation. *Journal of rural studies*, 9(2), 123-140.
- Pine, B. J., & Gilmore, J. H. (1998). Welcome to the experience economy. *Harvard business review*, 76, 97-105.



- Real Food Real Local Institute. (n.d.). Retrieved September 25, 2017, from <http://realfoodreallocalinstitute.org/>
- Redfern, T. (2018, July 25). Personal interview.
- Renting, H., Marsden, T. K., & Banks, J. (2003). Understanding alternative food networks: exploring the role of short food supply chains in rural development. *Environment and planning A*, 35 (3), 393-411.
- Reynolds, B. J. (2002). *Black farmers in America, 1865-2000: The pursuit of independent farming and the role of cooperatives* (pp. 1-24) (United States, Department of Agriculture, Rural Business - Cooperative Service). Washington: United States Rural Business-Cooperative Service.
- Reynolds, P. C. (1993). Food and tourism: towards an understanding of sustainable culture. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 1(1), 48-54.
- Rojek, C. (1985). *Capitalism and Leisure Theory* (Tavistock Publications, Andover, Hants).
- Schaller, L. (2018, July 20). Personal interview.
- Schumacher, E.F. (1973). *Small is beautiful*. London: Abacus.
- Schwartzman, K. C. (2013). *The chicken trail: Following workers, migrants, and corporations across the Americas*. Cornell University Press.
- Scottish Executive. (2002). *Tourism Framework for Action: 2002-2005*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.
- Sidali, K. L., Kastenholz, E., & Bianchi, R. (2015). Food tourism, niche markets and products in rural tourism: Combining the intimacy model and the experience economy as a rural development strategy. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 23(8-9), 1179-1197.
- Sims, R. (2009). Food, place and authenticity: local food and the sustainable tourism experience. *Journal of sustainable tourism*, 17(3), 321-336.
- Slocum, R. (2007). Whiteness, space and alternative food practice. *Geoforum*, 38(3), 520-533.
- Smith, A., & MacKinnon, J. B. (2009). *The 100-mile diet: A year of local eating*. Vintage Canada.
- Srivastava, P., & Hopwood, N. (2009). A practical iterative framework for qualitative data analysis. *International journal of qualitative methods*, 8 (1), 76-84.

- Teddle, C., & Yu, F. (2007). Mixed methods sampling: A typology with examples. *Journal of mixed methods research, 1* (1), 77-100.
- Tellstrom, R., Gustafsson, I. B., & Mossberg, L. (2005). Local food cultures in the Swedish rural economy. *Sociologia Ruralis, 45* (4), 346-359.
- Tikkanen, I. (2007). Maslow's hierarchy and food tourism in Finland: five cases. *British food journal, 109*(9), 721-734.
- Trivette, S. (2015). How local is local? Determining the boundaries of local food in practice. *Agriculture and human values, 32* (3), 475-490.
- United States., Bureau of the Census. (1920). Fourteenth census of the United States, 1920--Population.
- United States Census Bureau (2007). *Accommodation and Food Services: Geographic Area Series: Summary Statistics for the U.S., States, Metro Areas, Counties, and Places: 2007*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office. Retrieved from <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>
- (2012). *Accommodation and Food Services: Geographic Area Series: Summary Statistics for the U.S., States, Metro Areas, Counties, and Places: 2012*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office. Retrieved from <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>
- (n.d.). *Athens County, Ohio Selected Economic Statistics: 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*. Washington: United States Census Bureau.
- United States., United States., United States., United States., United States., & United States. (1972). *Federal non-population census schedules, Ohio, 1850-1880 in the custody of the State Library of Ohio*. Washington: National Archives and Records Service.
- Urry, J. (1990). *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. Sage.
- (1995). *Consuming Places*. London: Routledge.
- Valceschini, E. (1999, April). Les signaux de qualité crédibles sur les marchés agroalimentaires: certifications officielles et marques. In *Signes officiels de qualité et développement agricole*. Louis Lagrange, coord. Actes de colloque SFER (Vol. 14, pp. 147-166).
- Vance, J. D. (2016). *Hillbilly elegy* (p. 238). New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Vanderbeck, R. M. (2006). Vermont and the imaginative geographies of American whiteness. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 96*(3), 641-659.

- Weston, C., Gandell, T., Beauchamp, J., McAlpine, L., Wiseman, C., & Beauchamp, C. (2001). Analyzing interview data: The development and evolution of a coding system. *Qualitative sociology*, 24 (3), 381-400.
- Wilson, B., DeBruin, J., Higgins, A., Gross, T., Gum, H. and Cannon, T. (2018). *Bringing Our Foodsheds into Focus*. Charleston, WV: West Virginia Food & Farm Coalition.
- Winter, M. (2003). Embeddedness, the new food economy and defensive localism. *Journal of rural studies*, 19 (1), 23-32.
- Wolford, W. (2004). This land is ours now: Spatial imaginaries and the struggle for land in Brazil. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 94 (2), 409-424.
- Woodruffe, N. (2018, July 12). Personal interview.