How Alternative are the Alternatives? A Conceptual Framework for Analysis of Control and Value Distribution in Alternative Food Networks

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ABSTRACT

The conventional food system can be characterized by long intermediated supply chains, industrialization, corporatization, and concentrated ownership. A movement towards an alternative system that reconnects producers with consumers through a shared commitment to sustainability and community has developed as a result. As the alternative food system scales to meet growing consumer demand, however, many alternative food networks (AFNs) appear to be following conventional logic and economic models, which begs the question: how alternative are the alternatives? This research introduces and develops the Alterity Framework to analyze the distribution of control and value across the supply chains of five AFN models: CSA, farmers' markets, wholesale distribution, food hubs, and multi-stakeholder cooperatives. Developed through literature review, critical discourse analysis, and participatory action research, the conceptual framework combines several principles of the Diverse Economies, Extractive/Generative Economies, Value Chain, and Food Sovereignty frameworks to assess AFN models based on: 1) the *links* of the supply chain that connect stakeholders; 2) the *relationships* among stakeholders; 3) the ways in which economic *value* is produced, appropriated and distributed; 4) the distribution of *risks* assumed by stakeholders; and 5) the structure and mechanisms that *govern* supply chain activities and stakeholders. This research suggests that the Alterity Framework can help to distinguish the differences between extractive and generative practices, suggest ways to structure value chains that incorporate sustainable *and* efficient activities, and provide a new perspective on how we think and act about the diverse political economy of food. Overall, it demonstrates that it is necessary to address underlying ownership structures in order to scale sustainable and just local food systems.

Keywords: alternative food networks; community supported agriculture; farmers' markets; wholesale food; food hubs; multi-stakeholder cooperatives; diverse economies; ownership

Chapter 1: Introduction

Think about the last time you went grocery shopping in a supermarket. As you meandered through the aisles you probably saw several people holding a product, looking down, meticulously reading the packaging as they try to decipher whether or not the food inside meets their nutritional, environmental or philosophical standards. This scene is becoming the new normal across the U.S., and is an indication of increased access to information about our food and food systems. What is everyone looking for and will they find it by reading labels in a supermarket? Is it the product's provenance, the growing and processing practices used, distinguishable ingredients, the company's ethics, or all of the above? As consumers, we're now more concerned with what is behind our food than ever before; we are shopping more consciously and purposefully; we are actively searching for products that represent and companies that share our values. We are trying to improve our personal health, to return to our community roots, to decrease our individual carbon footprint, and actively choosing not to be complicit in a system fraught with inequality.

The fundamental problem in our quest for food righteousness, however, is that our decision to buy one product over another has very little effect on the system that perpetuates the problems we're hoping to avoid (Allen & Kovach, 2000). When we look beyond the labels, we see that our available options are really not a choice at all. Today, the average grocery store in the U.S. carries close to 40,000 products, and while this abundance gives us an illusion of choice, the reality is that nearly all of those brands and products are owned by just a handful of corporations (Hoffman, 2013). This type of concentrated ownership and industrialization is not isolated to the conventional food industry either; from 1995-2005 the percent of independent organic processing companies in the top 100 shrank from 81 to just 15, a result of persistent

corporate acquisitions (Howard, 2009). Although organic and fair-trade labels lead us to believe that our purchases make a difference, the increased corporatization of these 'ethical' choices dilutes and often negates our efforts to be more sustainable or just regardless of which products make it from the grocery shelves into our homes (Jaffee & Howard, 2009).

The emergence of an alternative food movement, characterized by sustainable agriculture and local value chains, is providing market opportunities outside of the corporate-controlled system for local food producers to connect directly with local consumers through popular models like farmers' markets and community-supported agriculture (Allen, 2004). Greater awareness of and access to alternatives is precipitating development of local food systems across the U.S. that prioritize ecological soundness, social justice, and communal economic prosperity. But as they scale to meet growing consumer demand, many locally based alternative food networks (AFNs) seem to follow traditional growth patterns that distance relationships between and extract value from producers and consumers for the sake of greater financial gains for intermediaries (King et al., 2010). The types of social and economic interactions between supply chain participants are indications of an AFN's efficacy in creating and sustaining a food system that achieves the objectives it prescribes; and it is within these spaces that equality and justice is either upheld or depressed. At the current stage of the alternative food movement, it seems appropriate to begin exploring whether or not these alternatives can substantially and sustainably address and ameliorate the inequities that typically occur across conventional food supply chains.

Considering the increasing corporatization of our food system, it also seems plausible that many modern food system inequities may be caused by the dominant structures of consolidated and concentrated ownership (Heffernan, 2000). The hegemonic capitalist structure, which favors financial gain over social prosperity, seemingly provides individuals and

communities little to no choice of who produces what, from where and for whom (Gunderson, 2014). When we lack a choice in the processes of the food system, we also lack control of the outcomes. In other contexts, the destruction of our ecosystems, public health, and financial security may be attributable to the hegemonic ownership structures that prevent us from thinking and acting in heterogeneous ways (Gibson-Graham, 2006). But are the ubiquitous capitalist methods of value appropriation and distribution limited to the conventional food system? Have AFNs effectively created alternative economic structures in addition to alternative production and distribution methods? Would focusing on the structural economic underpinnings help determine AFNs efficacy in addressing issues that constrain goals of equity, sustainability, and viability? This research confronts the conventional and alternative food economies in order to untangle the nuanced interactions that occur between stakeholder and across supply chains.

Tracing the methods and amounts of value exchange that occurs from farm to plate may help reveal how extensive conventional economic practices are within the growing alternative food system. Thus, this research analyzed ownership structures that are currently modeled within AFNs in order to evaluate how control and value are distributed across supply chains. In Chapter 2: Background and Significance, a brief discussion of capitalist development in the conventional food system was used to identify the economic rationalities, models and associated repercussions that exist in traditional modes of food supply. This provided the foundation for an analysis of AFNs' common economic organization, actions and the associated outcomes for producers, consumers and intermediaries. As explained in Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods, this research offered a comparative study of popular AFNs and used several social and economic frameworks to identify advantageous features. Additionally, participatory action research

informed analyses of one AFN model in particular and helped ground the analysis in an active process of transformation occurring in the dynamic and forward-looking Oregon food system.

In Chapter 4: Results, Analysis and Contribution, I assessed how control and value are distributed throughout production, distribution and consumption activities of five AFN models: community supported agriculture (CSA), farmers' markets, wholesale distribution, food hubs, and multi-stakeholder cooperatives. Drawn from several existing frameworks, I develop a new conceptual framework, the Alterity Framework, which indicates alternative principles and qualities that foster social and environmental well-being *and* strengthen community-based economies. Then, an analysis of alternative food supply chains using the Alterity Framework provides insight into barriers that could be inhibiting systemic change. A case study of Our Table Cooperative (a new multi-stakeholder cooperative that brings producers, workers, and consumers together) illustrates how a collectively owned AFN is materialized. Finally, in Chapter 5: Conclusion, critical reflection on research outcomes highlights several possibilities for future research and action that build on the identified need to develop alternative food systems that can be more than just alternative.

Chapter 2: Background and Significance

Throughout the 20th century, rapid advances in technology paired with productivist and market-driven policies transformed the food system and produced an industrialized and consolidated global capitalist food economy that continues to seek exponential growth through ever increasing scale and efficiency (Heffernan, 1998). An alternative food system, driven by sustainable agriculture, healthy eating, and efforts to address food justice and insecurity, developed in response to environmental, social, and economic imbalances generated by the conventional corporate-controlled system (Goodman & Redclift, 1991). Despite the emergence of alternatives, however, the dominant economic structures that occurs in either food system do not appear to be meeting the needs of society in ways that foster social justice and ecological sustainability through viable and just financial relationships (Goodman, DuPuis & Goodman, 2011).

On one hand, the conventional system is comprised of consolidated multinational corporations that utilize contractual supply chains to move bulk commodities around the world, extracting value from and capitalizing on each link in the chain (Stevenson et al., 2007). While on the other hand, the alternative food system encompasses diversified small-scale and localized direct marketing farms, food enterprises, and community efforts, but struggle with limited reach and systemic impact (DeLind, 2011). In an effort to understand the theories, methods, and effects of ownership that could result from the ways in which capital is controlled and allocated throughout food supply chains, this research first considers the economic models and discourses embedded in the American conventional food system to ground the proceeding analysis of how AFNs with the U.S. organize ownership structures and operationalize control and value distribution, asking the question: how alternative are the alternatives?

2.1 Understanding Control and Value in the Conventional Food System

The hegemonic structures of ownership and power in the conventional food system, which are built to minimize financial risks and maximize profits as a primary purpose (D'Agostino, 2012), reify and dictate practices of control and value distribution across stakeholders in supply chains (Gibson-Graham, 2003). Particularly, the growing corporate concentration of the agrifood system- achieved through industrialization, consolidation, globalization, and deregulation- has led to the steady destruction of community-based agricultural economies across the world (Heffernan, 2000). Resulting injustices, from the oppression of the workforce, to the marginalization of consumers and the degradation of the environment (Holt-Giménez, 2009), are all consequences of capitalism, which as Wood (1999) defines it, is based on exploitation. Conceptualizing capitalist modernity—including its changing forms of accumulation, power dynamics, value relations and institutional organization on a world scale (Campbell & Dixon, 2009)—elucidates four primary issues for food system transformation: expanding neoliberalism; the increasing power of a corporate food regime; an evolving oligopolistic democracy; and exorbitant financialization throughout food supply chains. Here, I look more closely at how each simultaneously creates and thrives on inequality before analyzing how AFNs either replicate or oppose the capitalist structures of the conventional food system.

The dynamics within the political economy of food systems have given rise to a powerful corporate food regime that structures production and consumption systems for unlimited financial accumulation for multinational corporations (Friedmann, 1995). Food regime theory is based on historical analyses of the relationships between agriculture, capital and the state system (McMichael & Buttel, 1990). Food regimes rely on the legal appropriation and exploitation of land, labor and capital to amass power and resources (Holt-Giménez and Wang, 2011). The

corporate food regime uses capitalism to reorganize world agriculture for financial advantage through, specifically, the politicization of global value relations (McMichael, 2009). Several scholars claim that we are currently in the in the midst of the Third Food Regime, where agriculture and capital are controlled by a neoliberal state system that relinquishes power to vertically-integrated and multi-sectoral corporations (McMichael, 2009; Burch & Lawrence, 2009; Campbell & Dixon, 2009). Interactions between public policy, the market economy, production processes, and class segments continue to define and shape the food system and the rules by which it is governed (Winders, 2009). Neoliberal policies that support the objectives of the conventional food system have encouraged corporate agribusiness consolidation in order to accelerate food circulation globally and restructure food production and retailing across corporate lines (McMichael, 2009). In this context, it is evident that the global agricultural regulatory agenda is an outcome of neoliberal governance, obscuring and often destroying local economic practices devalued or invisible as non-market and non-capitalist (Cameron & Gordon, 2010).

Since shifts in economic power lead to shifts in political influence (Winders, 2009), a neoliberal-capitalist economy ultimately undermines democracy, as systems are controlled by and benefit very few through the exertion of political and financial power (McMichael, 2005). The effects of the corporate food regime are not confined to the market mechanisms that control the food supply chain; the disproportionate political influence of corporations over the U.S. government is ostensibly corroding our democracy. In fact, a 2014 Princeton study systematically and quantitatively tested four major political theories against 1,779 policy issues to determine which set(s) of actors have influence over public policy (Gilens & Page, 2014). The authors conclude, “economic elites and organized groups representing business interests have

substantial independent impacts on U.S. government policy, while mass-based interest groups and average citizens have little or no independent influence" (Gilens & Page, 2014, p. 3). The theory of Economic Elite Domination is substantiated by this research and clearly indicates that "when a majority of citizens disagrees with economic elites, they generally lose" (Gilens & Page, 2014, p. 23).

As a particular class segment within the market economy leverages its capital to embed their interests within the state, the system and the injustices it produces are strengthened. Through direct payments, the federal crop insurance program, and tax breaks, agribusinesses specializing in commodity crop production annually receive billions of taxpayers' dollars to lock in huge revenues, regardless of crop yields or sales (Goodman & Redclift, 1991). In fact, in 2009 alone, under the provisions of the Farm Bill, commodity crop subsidy payments totaled $7.8 billion, dwarfing the $856 million of funding for specialty crop programs (Hamerschlag, 2010). This structure of the heavily subsidized agribusiness food system not only means producers receive low prices for their products, but also suppliers, traders, processors and retailers are in a position to raise food prices, affecting the end consumer's purchasing power (McMichael, 2009). In this context, we see how neoliberalism created conditions that moved the pendulum of control from the state to the private sector so policy decisions made across agrifood supply chains are now made based on profit motives, not on the well-being or security of society nor the environment.

Foundational to this type of neoliberal capitalism is the commodification of products, activities, and participants in ever-expanding markets (Magdoff, 2012). The developing literature on the financialization of food highlights the emerging interest of multinational corporations and other financial actors in agricultural commodities and resources as a source of financial

diversification and profit production (McMichael 2012). Several authors have linked financial speculation of agricultural commodities and land to the food crisis of 2007/2008, and resultant food price spikes (Clapp, 2014; Burch & Lawrence, 2013; Fairbairn, 2014; Isakson, 2014; McMichael, 2012;). The increased role of financial institutions and instruments in the agrifood system leads to separation of ownership and control, increased land concentration and results in reduced access to land, unsustainable, short-term thinking, and volatile land prices (Fairbairn, 2014). Financialization through speculation and derivatives markets, particularly, obfuscates rights and responsibilities as the number of actors involved across commodity chains is increased and dispersed (Isakson, 2014). Ultimately, this type of distancing between those that control the conventional food system and those left powerless is illuminating the consequential realities of the systemic and structural design that creates and perpetuates inequality at a global scale (Clapp, 2014).

Through a political economy lens, we see that the convergence of neoliberalism, the corporate food regime, a skewed democracy and an extractive financial system has created the conditions for a food system that externalizes consequences of capitalist practices, which results in social, economic and environmental injustices.

2.2 Alternatives Embedded in Conventional Systems

Although alternative food networks (AFNs), as DuPuis, Harrison and Goodman (2011) describe, have different visions, emphases and effects, many can easily and unintentionally reconstruct inequitable practices reminiscent of the conventional food system, and even the most well intended AFNs frame their ideas of social justice around neoliberal principles of market-based solutions and promotion of individual consumer choice. Harvey (2000) explains that most politics and collective forms of action actually preserve and sustain the existing system, and even

deepen some of its internal contradictions ecologically, politically, and economically. In fact, the dominant strategies of the alternative food system increasingly align with the prescriptions of neoliberal governance, which emphasizes market interventions and fails to address structural underpinnings (Harrison, 2011).

The transformation from a place-based to an individual-based focus distances the alternative food system from its systemic roots as local is not being defined from within the context of the larger community or system but rather from individual behavior (DeLind, 2011). Particularly, the new locavore discourse, as represented in both language and practice, emphasizes market-consumer exchanges, the adoption of 'local' by mainstream commerce, and the rising proselytization by celebrity food writers. All of these, as DeLind (2011) argues, are antithetical to the objectives of the alternative food movement. Additionally, Allen et al. (2006) point to the concentration on individual consumer behavior and the departure from issues of social justice as working against systemic food system reform. While the ethical consumption literature frequently promotes market-focused behaviors, such as "shopping for commodities from more humane, just, and environmentally friendly origins" (Gunderson, 2014, p. 110), as a 'win-win' for both producers and consumers, in reality the 'vote with your fork' proclamation conflates self-interest and social responsibility. The focus on ethical personal consumption "reinforces the [neoliberal] idea that social change is a matter of individual will rather than something that must be organized and struggled over in collectivities" (Allen and Guthman, 2006, p. 412).

Asking critical questions about who owns the food system and how value is appropriated and distributed throughout may help do the necessary work to alter the trajectory of the food system and restore power and control to communities- goals often professed by those working in

and studying the alternative food system, but seemingly difficult to achieve. Economic considerations such as this, however, have received only cursory reference within either the alternative food system or the ethical consumption literatures (Little et al., 2010; James, Hendrickson, & Howard, 2013). While definitions of social justice are included in most alternative food system literature and programs, the market actions commonly promoted can frequently align with conventional economic models, which elicits the need for deeper investigation into how AFN economic models affect stakeholders.

The diversity of actions within the alternative food system, and the lack of consensus amongst those living, working, and studying it, is an indication of the challenges to large-scale systemic change that seem to exist today. In order to conceptualize and assess the economic and social realities of AFNs, following a common framework could help align the different approaches to alternative food system development. However, there exists no single, unifying articulation of best practices when it comes to ownership structures and economic actions in AFNs. Since conventional and alternative food systems continue to operate in a competitive economy, the creation, appropriation, and distribution of control and value are integral features to consider when looking for ways to coordinate the production, distribution and consumption of food through more sustainable, viable, and equitable practices.

A review of economic models and frameworks within and outside of food system-specific literature may help decipher typical designs and methods of ownership and value distribution and indicate important analytical categories. This research focuses its review on four existing economic frameworks (Diverse Economies; Extractive/Generative; Value Chains; and Food Sovereignty) and looks for tools within each that can be used to evaluate the 'alternativeness' of various AFN models. The Diverse Economies Framework (see Table A1)

suggests that the prevailing hegemonic discourse prevents people from recognizing potentialities outside dominant practices and restricts the development of diverse economies that are rooted within communities (Gibson-Graham, 2010). Understanding the food economy through a perspective of diverse economies, this research looked for possibilities to create economic value outside of hegemonic capitalocentric discourse and practice, as suggested by the work of J.K Gibson-Graham (2003, 2006, 2008, 2010). This framework and perspective is a useful addition to food system discourse, proposing a way to recognize economic practices outside of the experiences of neoliberal capitalist industrialization. A framework for diverse economies also encourages economic experimentation with alternative transaction, labor, and enterprise structures and relationships (Gibson-Graham, 2006), which places AFNs in an advantageous position to explore.

Additionally, the Extractive/Generative Framework (see Table A2) helped categorize AFNs based on effects to the people and ecosystems across supply chains by evaluating the economic relationships established and impacts on participants. Extractive economic models are singularly focused, remotely and mechanically controlled, and devoid of real relationships that make consequences visible (Kelly, 2012). Conventional economic rationalities represented in the conventional food system can be critiqued as extractive due to the pervasive siphoning of natural, human, and economic resources for shareholder gain. Identifying any extractive qualities present in AFNs could point to the ways in which they replicate the conventional system and therefore fail to achieve long term, systemic change. A generative design, on the other hand, is about forming the institutional framework for creating beneficial outcomes for all involved; generative enterprises and economies create a symbiosis between the social, financial, and environmental systems by nurturing them with just enough of what they need (Kelly, 2012). As

this research explored, a generative paradigm is often the objective of AFNs, which is why assessing true alignment could provide practical insight.

Stevenson and Pirog (2008) advance the discourse of value chains as a framework that "emphasizes a...structure that integrates various conventional supply chain management techniques with more explicitly 'alternative' goals of creating equitable social and economic benefits for all chain participants" (Bloom & Hinrichs, 2011, p. 14). The Value Chain Framework (see Table A3) offers a unique and constructive perspective into AFN development as it holds potential for regenerating local food systems by strengthening the agriculture of the middle- that is, to create interconnected market relationships that support the needs of upstream and downstream participants in mid-scale agricultural production. Through several key evaluative elements, this framework provides a blueprint for local and regional food systems to reach the level of scale and efficiency necessary to overcome barriers to long-term economic viability that currently exist for many AFNs.

Additionally, this research is informed and guided by the principles of the food sovereignty movement, considering its demand for democratically and locally controlled food systems. Food sovereignty is a complex and nuanced framework that was created in response to the failings of the dominant global food regime (Fairbairn, 2012), and can be synthesized as "the right of people to determine their own food and agricultural policies" (Schiavoni, 2009). Originating from the peasants movement of the Global South, which opposes liberalized agricultural trade that undercuts and ultimately displaces local producers (Rosset, 2009), Food Sovereignty provides the language to dismantle the industrialized global food system and advocate for redistributive economic and land reform (Holt- Giménez & Wang, 2011).

While, there is a growing body of research on sustainable agriculture, community food systems, food security, food justice, and other AFN models and principles, there is "a lack of consensus and clarity on what is wrong with the American food system and what steps are needed to make things 'right'" (Benbrook, 2003, c.f. Stevenson et al., 2007). The problematic features of AFN research, including limited cross-pollination, divergent ontologies, and few rigorous empirical studies, are a function of how AFNs are collectively conceptualized and investigated (Tregear, 2011). Here, I suggest that developing new knowledge about ownership models that equitably represent the interests and values of all community members may reveal opportunities for greater experimentation and engagement with the way we structure our food supply chains entirely.

Employing frameworks as tools with which to define transformative principles and actions will help analyze how alternative modes of food production, distribution, consumption and surplus allocation affect goals of equality and justice. A central objective of this research is to identify spaces that can sufficiently scale the alternative food system to fairly generate and distribute economic value to support all supply chain stakeholders. The theoretical and practical outcomes of this analysis could also be used to help move the alternative food system from being just alternative to the conventional system to a catalyst for more oppositional and transformative social change.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

The landscape of the U.S. alternative food system and the alternative food networks within it are increasingly diverse. In asking the question, "how alternative are the alternatives?", this research aims to understand whether or not prevailing ownership structures and economic actions are truly distinct from their conventional counterparts. Doing so requires reflecting on AFN ownership and economic models and drawing on new perspectives and analytical frameworks. In Chapter 3 I discuss my epistemological stance and explain how it informs my research approach before elaborating the particular methodologies and methods used.

3.1 Epistemology

I identify my epistemology as transformative and postmodern. Through research, I seek to formulate approaches that are appropriate for contemporary social, economic, cultural and political conditions (Schostak, 2005). I question the possibility of a single truth, and therefore do not subscribe to any collective metanarrative and believe there are many versions of social reality, all of which are equally valid (Burns & Walker, 2005). Although capitalism can certainly be considered a metanarrative, I do not give it the authority to commodify all aspects of exchange and look for opportunities outside the narrow economic definitions it offers. Following this type of pluralistic epistemology, my research will examine the myriad factors that determine or influence the social and economic relationships and structures of power within the alternative food system, specifically looking for diverse and heterogeneous ways for communities to build their own processes of food production, distribution and consumption. As an outcome, I aim to develop an action agenda that can help illuminate effects of marginalization by hegemonic economic models by following a transformative approach characterized by Creswell (2014). Finally, I see the potential of social movements, like the alternative food and new economies

movements, using problem-driven, action-oriented and applied research (Jensen & Glasmeier, 2010). This research has the potential to provide a new perspective for local food system redevelopment, in which control and value distribution are at the forefront of transformation strategies.

Through a reflexive approach, I situate myself and the knowledge gained from the research process overtly in the context of my positionality and perspective as a middle-class white female raised between a conservative family and a liberal community. While balancing that contradiction has not always been easy, my staunch belief in justice and equality guide my corporeal, intellectual, social, political and economic choices. The type of double reflexivity that I engage "looks both `inward' to [my] identity as researcher, and `outward' to [my] relation to [the] research and what is described as `the wider world'" (Rose, 1997, p. 309). In situating my research in the context of both hegemonic and diverse economic models used by AFNs, it is important that I understand how macro-level power relations are constituted by the everyday micro-level experiences of people, and recognize that these interpretations are a reflection of my own agency, unique insights and discernable limitations (Rose, 1997). However, the goal remains to "produce non-overgeneralizing knowledges that learn from other kinds of knowledges" (Rose, 1997, p. 315), thus I draw extensively on literature and discourse in addition to empirical evidence.

My perspective is influenced by a diversity of personal experiences and positions, which have prepared me to evaluate the transformative potential of various economic models used in the alternative food system and produce new knowledge and/or perspectives. This research is informed by several academic and professional positions held over the last decade. First, my undergraduate studies in Supply Chain Management provide the practical tools to understand the

intricate flows of products and capital across spatial-temporal enterprise-driven landscapes. Then, as the program coordinator of a farmers' market incentive program that increased access to local, healthy foods for low-income communities of color, I helped provide individuals and families with affordable alternatives to their highly processed, conventional subsistence diets. This engagement helped me understand the many injustices caused by concentrated control and ownership in the food system. When I transitioned to manager of the farmers' markets, I saw firsthand the economic struggles of small and mid-scale farmers trying to survive in the face of the capital driven industrial food system. Now, as the Aggregation & Distribution Manager of a new multi-stakeholder cooperative, I work to fully integrate the people and processes of the alternative food system through collectivities that strive to meet the social, environmental and economic needs of the region.

3.2 Methodology

My chosen methodologies, as the fundamental principles that conceptualize the subject matter and how the subject matter will be investigated (Lazar, 1999), reflect the diversity of topics and participants involved in the food system. Following epistemological pluralism, I recognize the value of multiple methodologies and approaches to gaining knowledge and conveying compelling information through critical analyses. As cited in Lazar (1999), Feyerabend argues that “the world we want to explore is a largely unknown entity [and] we must, therefore, keep our options open” (p. 12) by using a diversity of methods. As researcher, I must therefore consider various theoretical frameworks and approaches when situating new knowledge in existing discourse.

The discursive formations of the conventional and alternative food system research agendas shape the knowledge of participants and the activities they pursue (Allen, 2004); this is

why new research is needed in order to provide pathways for transformation. This research was therefore based on an exploratory design method, through which insights gained will be used for further investigation and action. Furthermore, coalescing diverse frameworks clarified concepts, generated tentative theories and developed new ways of conceptualizing approaches to redeveloping the food system overall. It was also grounded in critical research, which incorporates "ideas of critiquing and resolving social inequality, and adds that people can and should consciously act to change their social and economic circumstances" (Bhattacherjee, 2012, p. 8). Following critical research theory, it was important to understand the systemic problems of the conventional food system in order to evaluate new models and theories of social change. By engaging, rather than simply observing the community of the multi-stakeholder cooperative of which I am a worker-member, I directly participated in the collective-formation of the new economy and, as a critical social scientist, this action served as both the source and the validation of research theories (Comstock, 1994).

3.2.1 Conceptual Literature Review. This research began by asking the question: *How do models within alternative food networks structure ownership and operationalize control and value distribution?* In order to initiate a new conversation about control and value distribution in the food system, it was important to define and discuss the terms and concepts used to characterize power dynamics and value exchange in AFNs. I used a conceptual literature review of food system literature from various disciplines to compare and contrast the different ways in which authors conceive ownership paradigms (Jesson et al., 2011).

3.2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis. This research also sought to answer the question: *what elements and tools from economic frameworks within and outside of food system literature are helpful for understanding effects of ownership structures and methods control and value*

distribution across local food supply chains? Critical discourse analysis (CDA) sees discourse as a form of social practice, as a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and all of the diverse elements of the situation(s), institution(s), and social structure(s) that frame it (Fairclough et al., 2011). Since discourse shapes the conceptualizations of the social world and inherent structures of power, using it to examine control and value distribution within the food system highlighted the economic ideologies embedded in both language and practice. Applying a critical lens provided a way to both explain and subsequently change social phenomena (Fairclough et al., 2011). This research aimed to reveal ways in which communities can transform their food system from one that is corporately and remotely controlled to one that is defined and operationalized from within. Specifically, I used critical discourse analysis to understand how the discursive practice of control and value distribution in the alternative food system is shaped by the discourse that frames it, and to make more visible the discursive economic strategies it uses (Dijk, 1997).

3.2.3 Participatory Action Research. To analyze the potential of the emergent multi-stakeholder cooperative model, this research asked, *how do multi-stakeholder cooperatives operationalize control and value distribution across the supply chain of shared local food systems?* To understand the lived experiences of those active in the redevelopment of local food systems and economies, participatory action research (PAR) helps tie theory to application. As a reflexive and emancipatory approach to research, PAR seeks to "understand the struggle of those made invisible or subordinated by more powerful elements in their society to take control of their life trajectories and social and economic destinies" (Glassman & Erdem, 2014). Through participant observations, this research examined the approach to control and value distribution of a multi-stakeholder cooperative, which represents a new community-based food system model.

3.3 Methods

To gather evidence necessary to answer the research questions, I based my inquiry on the assumption that collecting diverse types of data will best provide a more complete understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2014). In what follows I explain the methods utilized to answer the following research questions:

1. *How do models within alternative food networks structure ownership and operationalize control and value distribution?*
2. *What elements and tools from economic frameworks within and outside of food system literature are helpful for understanding the effects of ownership structures and methods of control and value distribution used in local food supply chains?*
3. *How do specific models within the alternative food system measure against the categories identified in the frameworks?*
4. *How do multi-stakeholder cooperatives operationalize control and value distribution across the supply chain of shared local food systems?*

Question 1: *How do models within alternative food networks structure ownership and operationalize control and value distribution?* To assess how AFNs operationalize control and value distribution, I conducted a review of literature that both supports and critiques models within the alternative food system. I selected the following search terms to find relevant literature through the EBSCO database: alternative food system; alternative food networks; alternative food initiatives; local food; local food supply chains; ownership; values; and value. Grounding this research in a conceptual review of AFN literature provided a basis for further interrogation of how they construct approaches and achieve goals. I analyzed the concepts and discourse describing the flow of control and value between stakeholders of AFNs. A primary

goal of this research was to operationalize the concepts of ownership so that future analyses can be grounded in a common framework.

Question 2: *What elements and tools from frameworks within and outside of food system literature are helpful for understanding the effects of ownership structures and methods of control and value distribution used in local food supply chains?* To determine what known constructive elements can help create a new food economy, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) facilitated identification of various theoretical and practical frameworks that are commonly used to describe economies outside of the conventional conceptions of capitalism. I used the EBSCO database to find and select appropriate publications using the following search terms: diverse economies; new economies; community economies; ownership; value; values; value chain, food system, and food sovereignty. Four frameworks were chosen for their alternative approaches to economic activity and clear prescriptions for community-driven transformation. First, several works of J.K. Gibson-Graham (2003, 2006, 2008) were selected as an ontological guide to discussing and conceptualizing diverse economies. Then, the Extractive/Generative framework established by Marjorie Kelly (2012) was considered a useful tool to codify individual economic actions, rather than generalizing systems in their entirety as positive or negative - a common phenomenon in alternative food system literature. This framework was employed during analysis of the activities and interactions between stakeholders within AFN models. Next, the Value Chain Framework, as developed by Stevenson and Pirog (2008), provided an enterprise-driven lens into future food system development that marries conventional supply chain rationale with goals of social and economic equity. The key elements of the framework were assessed based on how control and value distribution is framed. Finally, much like the ontological distinctions provided by the Diverse Economies Framework, the Food Sovereignty Framework was used to

support the language that calls for redistributive social and economic justice and builds solidarity across communities. Utilizing CDA provided the tools to identify and then articulate a new ontological project that supports the recognition of multiple forms of ownership and economic action grounded in a common framework.

Question 3: *How do specific models within the alternative food system measure against the categories identified in the frameworks?* Next, the new framework was applied to produce a comparative analysis of five AFN models (CSAs, farmers' markets, wholesale distribution, food hubs, and multi-stakeholder cooperatives), providing a foundation to assess how AFNs operationalize control and value distribution. These five AFN models were selected based on three primary conditions: first, they represent the most common forms of AFNs; second, they follow the typical growth pattern of AFNs; and third, they are models that I have professionally engaged with over the last several years, which provided a participatory perspective in analyses. I searched for publications that address concepts of ownership and resource allocation throughout AFN models and supply chains; search terms included: food supply chain; food value chain; value distribution; resource distribution; food sovereignty; alternative food initiatives; alternative food networks; local food; food hubs; farmers' markets; community supported agriculture; CSA; multi-stakeholder cooperatives. The data were analyzed according to each category of the new framework; specific economic structures and actions were analyzed in order to determine how control and value are created, appropriated, and distributed across AFNs.

Question 4: *How do multi-stakeholder cooperatives operationalize control and value distribution across the supply chain of shared local food systems?* Understanding the economic configurations and realities of the alternative food system is necessary in order to explore new paradigms and models on which limited research exists (Francis et al., 2013). Therefore, I

supplemented the data gathered and analyzed through literature review and discourse analysis with participatory action research to build a case study of a multi-stakeholder cooperative, a new economic configuration in the food system. I was particularly interested in understanding how the division of control and resources affect the social, environmental, and economic goals of participants. Our Table Cooperative (OTC), a multi-stakeholder cooperative in Sherwood, OR, was created in response to the social, political, economic, and environmental conditions produced by the inequitable power of the conventional food system. Participant observation, approved by Marylhurst University's Institutional Review Board, provided supplementary data and perspective to these analyses. I evaluated the degree to which participants were able to make decisions and the ways in which value was created and distributed to them. This portion of the research was carried out independently by the author from July 2014 - February 2015, and included observations during cooperative operating and governance activities. The purpose of the action research was to identify how communities put into practice the complex task of coordinating supply chain activities through the multi-stakeholder cooperative model.

By utilizing mixed methodologies, I am hopeful that this research may support the development of a new food system framework and set a future research agenda. A broad review of literature paired with critical discourse analysis helps paint a picture of the strengths and limitations associated with traditional and contemporary economic models, while participatory action research provides an opportunity to evaluate the new economic frontier.

Chapter 4: Results, Analysis and Contribution

The recent growth of the alternative food movement can be seen as a response to conventional food systems- characterized by industrialization, homogenization, concentration and market-led governance- and has galvanized commitment to environmental sustainability, public health, and social equity (Lyson, 2007). These commitments have, ostensibly, led to the creation of ethical or alternative food networks across the United States. Alternative food networks (AFNs) are often celebrated for their ability to both shorten the supply chain by removing intermediaries and to redistribute value through transparent and direct relationships between producers and consumers (Bloom & Hinrichs, 2011). AFNs seek to develop a food system that prioritizes ecological practices, the need for producers to earn sufficient incomes to maintain fair livelihoods, and readily available access to that food, geographically and financially, for consumers (Feenstra, 1997). This move towards ethical food practices means that the local food movement has the "potential to be an immediate 'here and now' way to build a different world" (Allen & Wilson, 2008, p. 538).

While efforts to expand the values of AFNs have led to increased awareness of and consumption of local foods by consumers, on the one hand, and greater economic opportunities for producers on the other, the development of scalable market-based alternatives can lead to the replication of conventional processes of accumulation (Jaffee & Howard, 2010). Replicating the conventional food system's supply chain is damaging to the original intentions of the alternative food system because it "shift[s] local food (as a concept and a social movement) away from the deeper concerns of equity, citizenship, place-building, and sustainability" (DeLind, 2011, p. 273). Looking towards the growth of the alternative food system, the threat of conventionalization means that "localized foods...are still subject to the inherent dynamics and

power-relations of the dominant food regime" (Lutz & Schachinger, 2013, p. 4479), which could hinder goals of long-term systemic change.

Critiques of AFNs help bring to light the fact that while alternatives offer communities ways to develop new, localized food systems, success cannot be assumed based solely on implementation. Though they tend to embrace progressive ideologies and are more inclusive of democratic processes than their conventional counterparts, AFNs can exhibit oppressive practices that obstruct full realization of social, economic, and environmental justice (Guthman, 2008). Wilson (2013) summarizes several authors' critiques of AFNs into three tendencies that occur within research and practice: first, the dichotomization of conventional/alternative; second, a failure to include production *and* consumption in analyses; and third, a lack of meaningful engagement with equality and justice. Within much of the same discourse, we see that AFNs also tend to foster neoliberal governance in three basic ways, as they: 1) locate social change potential in consumer market behavior rather than collective action; 2) enable a neoliberal state by assuming functions that were formally its responsibility; and 3) produce neoliberal subjectivities in ways that mirror and support the market (Alkon, 2013). Overall, the critiques point out myopic contradictions within and across AFNs, and as Allen et al. (2003) conclude, social justice or systemic transformation does not inherently exist in all AFNs.

Often limited by hegemonic capitalocentric discourse, the individuals and communities that develop and implement alternatives fail to see the replication of conventional ownership structures as problematic or contradictory to their missions (see Gibson-Graham, 2006). Since, for example, "it is difficult to know what something outside of neoliberalism might look like when all is seen as neoliberalism" (Guthman, 2008, p. 1181), capitalistic reification within AFNs seems inevitable. Specifically, if AFNs focus on market potential and measure success in profits

garnered through efficiency and scale (DeLind 2011), they will be unlikely to develop into something other than simply alternative to the conventional system. These types of assessments help illustrate that in comparison with the conventional food system, AFNs are "equally [as] likely to be just or unjust, sustainable or unsustainable, secure or insecure" (Lutz & Schachinger, 2013, p. 3). Analyzing the structural underpinnings of popular AFNs may show the limitations that arise when disjointed supply chains do not explicitly incorporate considerations of ownership into structures and systems, illuminating that when under pressure to compete, AFN supply chains can fail to deliver social and economic equity across stakeholders (Mount, 2011).

Here, I offer evidence to suggest that unless control and value distribution are explicit and central principles of AFNs, replication of conventional and neoliberal models is possible and, perhaps, even likely. Analyzing where decision-making power lies and how value is appropriated highlights the promising and limiting aspects within individual AFN models. While the alternative food system is largely regarded with romantic reverie, and rightly so in many cases, blind accession can hinder or skew goals of effective, long-term social change. In fact, constructive critical analyses-such as the works studied by Wilson and what is offered here- are the best contribution academia can make to the counter-hegemonic movement (DuPuis & Gillon 2009). As Tregear (2011) articulates in an extensive review: "When any literature reaches a point in knowledge development, where a growing body of work opposes prevailing wisdom and challenges its assumptions, it is appropriate to take stock, reflect critically on the evidence and consider what it means for the focus and direction of future research" (p. 419). Building on existing critiques, this research digs deeper into the ownership structures of popular AFNs to examine the discourses and practices of alterity and asks how AFNs are positioned to confront the underlying problems of conventional food economies.

4.1 Results

As a new way of conceptualizing how AFNs distribute economic and social benefits to producer, consumer and intermediary stakeholders, I develop a conceptual framework drawing on literature both within and outside food system discourse to identify existing frameworks that critically engage issues of ownership and offer theoretical pathways to food system redevelopment. The preceding discussion provided insight into how AFNs commonly structure ownership and explained that replication of conventional economic organization is probable. To produce a deeper analysis of how AFNs operationalize control and value distribution, I first examine four existing frameworks for evaluative characteristics for: 1) providing ways for communities to develop alternative economic, social and political languages; 2) providing tools for evaluating ethical alignment; and 3) promoting collaboration to achieve a sufficient scale but also maintain equitable and sustainable practices. The four frameworks I draw on here are: Diverse Economies, Extractive/Generative, Value Chain, and Food Sovereignty.

Subsequent to explaining principles of diversity, fairness, and efficiency derived from these frameworks, in section 4.2 I apply an amalgamated conceptual framework (the Alterity Framework) to popular AFN models, explicitly analyzing through a new lens how they organize ownership and distribute control and value across supply chains. Then, in the Analysis section (4.3), I reflect on the findings to identify promising opportunities to move AFNs and the alternative food system forward in a way that is strengthened by greater engagement with innovative, scalable and sustainable ownership structures. Finally, in the Contribution section (4.4), I offer a case study, with data collected through participant observations, of Our Table Cooperative in order to provide and a more in-depth analysis of the multi-stakeholder cooperative model.

4.1.1 Building a Conceptual Framework. Examining the defining characteristics of the Diverse Economies, Extractive/Generative, Value Chain, and Food Sovereignty frameworks, five categories emerge as fruitful points for analyses when considering applicability to AFN development and implementation: 1) the *links* of the supply chain that connect stakeholders; 2) the *relationships* among stakeholders; 3) the ways in which economic *value* is produced, appropriated and distributed; 4) the distribution of *risks* assumed by stakeholders; and 5) the structure and mechanisms that *govern* supply chain activities and stakeholders. In the following subsections, each category is further defined and explained in order to build a conceptual framework that incorporates the principles, values, strategies, and/or practices drawn from the existing frameworks. Guided by this new framework, the next section assesses five AFN models based on the comprehensive effects associated with applied ownership structures.

4.1.1.1 Links. Although the size and infrastructure of food supply chains varies by region and industry, the links typically describe the "processes, participants, and product flows as a product moves from producers to consumers" (King et al., 2010, p. 6). The characteristics of the links, and specifically the power relations that exist within them, play a significant role in assessing the level of equality that exists across a supply chain. Power of any one stakeholder is determined by the dependency they have on others, where "dependency is the state of relying on the actions of others in order to achieve some objective" (James, Hendrickson & Howard, 2013, p. 101). By establishing links within and across supply chains that emphasize interdependence and cooperation, AFNs may avoid replicating conventional practices and the consequences they engender. Since the conventionalization theory tells us that AFNs tend to adopt conventional supply solutions such as increased scale, concentration, capital costs, and debt levels as a way to meet the growing market demand (Mount & Smithers, 2014), a foundation of interdependency

could help AFNs distribute power more equitably across all stakeholders and operationalize shared objectives as they scale.

Deciphering the extractive or generative qualities that are present in the links of AFNs, as outlined by the Extractive/Generative Framework (Kelly, 2012), points to the ways in which they may or may not replicate the conventional system, and the feasibility to achieve long term, systemic change. For instance, links established under extractive strategies function for a sole financial purpose and disregard the well-being of other stakeholders for the sake of profit for *some*, while a generative design is about forming an institutional framework for creating beneficial outcomes for *all* (Kelly, 2012). Generative links within enterprises and economies create symbiosis between social, financial, and environmental systems (Kelly, 2012). Prioritizing generative characteristics within links may be helpful in developing AFNs, particularly, and conceiving a more just food economy in general.

The Value Chain Framework explains how scale in the alternative food system might be sustainably and equitably achieved by rationalizing the characteristics that emphasize interdependence and embedding mechanisms to ensure social, environmental and economic benefits within and across food supply chain links (Bloom & Hinrichs, 2011). While the links within a supply chain logistically function interdependently, practicing interdependence in order to create a fair and resilient system is not inherent in all AFNs. Value chains, particularly, create interconnected partnerships that support the needs of upstream and downstream stakeholders by "maximiz[ing] value for the partners *and* end customers of a particular product or service" (Stevenson & Pirog, 2008, p. 120, emphasis added).

Achieving generative links with fair control and value distribution in the food system requires coordination across all links of the supply chain to create economic relationships that do

not subordinate one's needs over another's. Establishing these types of links in AFNs is the foundation for local and regional food systems to reach the level of scale and efficiency present in the conventional system, but without degradation and exploitation as pillars of success. Value chains based on interdependent links increase coordination, which creates opportunities for reducing the costs of product development, production, and procurement as well as increasing the speed to market and overall product quality throughout the entire supply chain (Stevenson and Pirog, 2008). Promoting this type of vertical and horizontal collaboration amongst stakeholders presents an unconventional business paradigm based on integrated *and* generative supply chain links. Vertical integration can be described as the merging of one enterprise with another from which it buys inputs or which it sells output (Hendrickson, James & Heffernan, 2014); horizontal integration occurs as multiple enterprises that produce similar products form collectivities to supply upstream or downstream stakeholders (Manning & Baines, 2004). Adapting smart business strategies to a more interdependent system could provide AFNs a significant competitive advantage over their corporate counterparts with ability to effectively operate at regional levels.

4.1.1.2 Relationships. In addition to recognizing and building interdependent functional links, it is important for stakeholders within AFNs to move from transactional to relational marketing that treat recognizes one another as strategic partners and uses cooperation rather than competition to increase value chain efficiency and benefit (Bloom & Hinrichs, 2011). The prioritization of ethical, transparent and trustworthy relationships marks a key differentiation between AFNs and the conventional, corporate driven food system, however, commitment to those principles must be consistent throughout exchanges since our capitalistic conditioning can easily divert actions towards self-interest (Gibson-Graham, 2006).

Establishing ethical networks, as defined by the Extractive/Generative Framework, is a crucial step in building a generative food economy that garners collective support for social and ecological standards and that supports stakeholders beyond product and capital exchange (Kelly, 2012). Developing and following a living purpose for conducting business uses a whole systems approach and considers the well being of the people directly involved, the surrounding communities, and the natural environment to build connectedness, equality and democracy into everyday practices. This type of living purpose is the core of generative design and is based on principles of sustainability, fairness, and prosperity (Kelly, 2012). The relationships across AFN supply chains should be predicated on a culture that nurtures the living purpose of both the network overall and each stakeholder individually. While power may not always be distributed equally, "successful value chains are built on long-term partnerships" (Kumar, 1996, p. 95, c.f. Stevenson & Pirog, 2008, p. 131) that instill "trust in the fairness, stability, and predictability of the procedures and agreements among strategic partners" (Stevenson & Pirog, 2008, p. 125).

4.1.1.3 Value. Economic viability is a fundamental objective of most AFNs, as it can be used "as a means to ensure the social well-being of all participants along the supply chain" (Bloom & Hinrichs, 2011 p.15). Both the amount and methods of value appropriation and distribution that occurs as a process of exchange are considered important indicators of social and economic justice. AFNs that are successful in creating shared value amongst all stakeholders include mechanisms for fair, stakeholder-driven distribution of profits that were achieved through "adequate margins above production costs and adequate returns on investment" (Bloom & Hinrichs, 2011, p.15). This principle emphasizes the difference between profit making and profit maximizing, and does not extract value from one link in order to uplift another (Kelly, 2012). The intentional decision to structure an AFN this way means that stakeholders "also take

into account the need to provide a living wage and benefits to employees" (Bloom & Hinrichs, 2011, p. 15). Shared interest in the value of the entire supply chain can also address the power imbalances that result when control of value is concentrated in certain links. This type of dispersed stakeholder finance places capital as friend, not master, to stakeholders individually and collectively (Kelly, 2012). A sustainable approach to AFN development would focus on reorganizing value creation through collective forms of appropriation that are based on shared control and surplus distribution (Marsden & Franklin, 2013).

A language of diverse economies can reframe both the visible and obscure possibilities that already exist within local communities and food systems by analyzing the characteristics of the transactions, labor, and enterprise structures of AFNs through market/capitalist, alternative, and nonmarket/noncapitalist lenses (Gibson-Graham, 2006). In addition to the need to establish fair value in market-based capital exchanges, positioning AFNs outside the mainstream capitalist economy altogether can help us begin to map the complex diversity of economic relationships that exist across their supply chains and identify spaces of value exchange that do not replicate the destructive ethos of modern capitalism. Diverse economies offer AFNs alternative market activities, or ways to generate value, that contribute to both social well-being and environmental sustainability (Gibson-Graham, 2008). Value diversity exists within any one enterprise as a range of transactions are enacted, different forms of labor are used, and various processes of production, appropriation, and distribution can coexist, creating opportunities to recognize the dynamics engendered by ethical relationships, rather than by mechanistic logics (Gibson-Graham, 2006). Recognizing the present and potential diverse economies within the food system can liberate the creativity and foster resilience of individuals and communities as they pioneer the new frontier of AFN development and implementation.

4.1.1.4 Risk. Producers, particularly, know that risk is an inherent factor in food production; whether it is assumed during the production or distribution stages, risk can often determine the economic outcome of a food or farming business. The development of this category in the conceptual framework is informed by supply chain risk factors and draws on, specifically, the Diverse Economies and Value Chain frameworks to assess the risks assumed by stakeholders within AFNs. There are numerous conceptions of risk associated with food supply chains and the targets and effects are largely dependent on the stakeholders involved. Risk can be generally codified into the following categories: weather related; natural disasters; biological and environmental; market-related; logistical and infrastructural; management and operational; and institutional/political (Jaffe, Siegel, and Andrews, 2010). Each of these risk categories are considered important factors of AFN efficiency and efficacy, but here I focus on the economic risks associated with the latter three categories to determine the beneficial practices of risk mitigation that AFN stakeholders can employ.

The dominant market structures of the food system have created power imbalances in market relationships, resulting in unequal distribution of risk across supply chains (King et al., 2010). Risk materializes differently for different stakeholders, but essentially, AFN risk is constructed from the levels of social or economic power appropriated by one from another. The ways that AFNs address and mitigate risk indicate whether stakeholders instill competitive or interdependent relationships in how they navigate market risks, which "are related to issues affecting price, quality, availability, and access to necessary products and services" (Jaffe, Siegel, and Andrews, 2010, p. 12). Prioritizing interconnectedness between stakeholders by building strategic alliances, identifying distinctive competencies, and developing collective knowledge and resources, as prescribed by the Value Chain Framework, can help balance the

risks experienced by AFN stakeholders both individually and collectively (Stevenson & Pirog, 2008).

As mentioned earlier, emphasizing generative relationships across supply chains can help to construct strategic alliances within the value chain, rather than the often adversarial supplier-buyer dichotomy that occurs in the conventional food system. Conventional supply chains tend to rely arms-length relationships between links so that individual interests are protected from volatile markets, but more integrated relationships in the value chain model are based on active coordination and cooperation to identify distinctive competencies and achieve overall efficiency and adaptability (Bloom & Hinrichs, 2011). Distributing the demands, responsibilities, and benefits across the supply chain helps alleviate the risks taken on by any one stakeholder. Multilateral and bilateral linkages use this type of collective coordination and decision making to "assemble sufficient volumes of product to move through significantly scaled food chains" (Stevenson & Pirog, 2008, p. 124). Risk can thus be collectively mitigated by dispersing responsibility across the entire supply chain of AFNs and instilling mechanisms so that stakeholders work as partners, developing trust and recognizing mutual interdependence (Bloom & Hinrichs, 2011). Specifically, the value chain framework provides useful tools to evaluate the power dynamics and risk distribution across AFNs.

Additionally, a language of diverse economies can also create opportunities to identify "sites where ethical decisions can be made, power can be negotiated, and transformations forged" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. 77). This type of congruence is antithetical the the hegemonic understanding of the capitalist economy that emphasizes competition and self-interest even when decisions "impede the functioning of the chain as a unity" (Bloom & Hinrichs, 2011, p. 15). In addition to developing more resilient and efficient individual AFNs, "the act of recognizing and

creating interdependence can be an important contribution to a counterhegemonic politics of strengthening the community economy" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. 77).

4.1.1.5 Governance. Developing interdependent AFNs that share in the risk, management and reward of value chain activities is no small task. The links, value, relationships, and risks must be supported by a strong and thoughtful governance structure that attempts to mitigate the complexities of bridging multiple stakeholder interests (Gray, 2014). AFN governance refers to the situations and mechanisms of regulation within groups, systems, or organizations and incorporates informal and formal structures for communication and coordination (Leviten-Reid & Fairbairn, 2011); the emphasis of governance is on the "processes through which goals and values come to be shared" (Mount, 2012, p. 115). In the Extractive/Generative framework, Kelly (2012) suggests that membership in a value chain be centered on an established mission that acts as a guiding principle for operations, which is continuously agreed upon by mission-controlled governance. This keeps AFNs focused on the living purpose so that the monetary interests never outweigh stakeholder interests. Through membership grounded in spatial relationships of AFNs, ownership is held in the hands of the people that have a direct stake in the well being of the business, community, and environment (Kelly, 2012).

Fair and just governing means that all stakeholders, regardless of power levels, feel that the mechanisms for operations and surplus allocation are agreeable and equitable. Establishing a shared vision, transparent information sharing and fair reward mechanisms through governance both builds trust amongst stakeholders and fosters partnerships that ensure equity along the supply chain (Bloom & Hinrichs, 2011). Formal and informal agreements, such as minority ownership, quality assurance systems, third party certification and long-term agreements, can help set the policies and "procedural mechanisms for establishing inter-organizational trust"

(Bloom & Hinrichs, 2011, p. 15). Sharing information and making collective decisions enables all stakeholders to have a say in development and on-going operations as well as benefit more equitably. With fair, transparent, and effective governance structures in place, AFNs can respond to changes that occur along the supply chain in ways that the conventional food system cannot. Developing interdependent relationships within AFNs requires all partners to share a common vision of principles, standards, and practices that accurately represent and support all stakeholders.

In addition to establishing specific governance structures of AFNs through the Value Chain and Extractive/Generative frameworks, the Food Sovereignty framework could be used to guide broader AFN development in a way that critically challenges existing political order and decision-making on food and agriculture and the neoliberal perspective of food as a mere commodity (Hospes, 2013). Utilizing this framework to create new governance and economic structures for AFNs will incorporate mechanisms that support "the right of people to determine their own food and agricultural policies" (Schiavoni, 2009). Participatory decision-making, particularly, enables each stakeholder to have an authoritative voice in the management of the AFN in a way that protects their interests without exploiting another's. The principles of food sovereignty can inform the governance structures and mechanisms established by AFNs that seek to build fair, democratic, and equitable food systems that foster resilient, efficient, and diverse economic and social relationships.

4.1.1.6 Alterity Framework. Alterity, or "alternative modes of interaction" (DuPuis & Gillon, 2009, p.44), is an important conceptual tool to use when considering new economic structures in AFNs. A framework of alterity encompasses the diversity of principles *and* processes that determine and shape the "objects and ideas that affect the exchange of

commodities along the value chain" (DuPuis & Gillon, 2009, p. 45). By combining the Diverse Economies, Extractive/Generative, Value Chain, and Food Sovereignty frameworks and categorizing several principles to describe the links, relationships, value appropriation, risk factors and governance mechanisms involved, a new way of conceptualizing ownership structures and control and value distribution within AFN models emerges. Connecting the qualities and characteristics of each framework builds recognition of the effects of control and value distribution across food supply chains and brings economic and social realities of product and capital exchange to the surface of analyses. A framework for that movement (see Table 1) would foster social relationships built on interdependence, transparency and trust, and create coordinated linkages of ethical economic activities as a way to bring prosperity to all involved in shared risk and shared reward of local food supply chains. While increasing the scale of AFNs to enhance local economies should certainly be a primary goal, the work should not be solely profit-driven; the next system should not be constrained by a mandate that it has to grow (Alperovitz, 2014).

The concept of alterity helps to inform the efforts of the alternative food movement, as it "needs to be adept at challenging appropriation and co-option, as much as it needs to be flexible and accommodating to the rigors of hybridity and potential convergence" (Marsden & Franklin, 2013, p. 640). Alterity creation and recognition requires the need for alternative representations- in this case of the political economy of food- to become the new medium of thought and actions that are both socially constituted and individually engaged (Kadianaki, 2015). The transformative potential of the alternative food movement exists in the diversity of stakeholders and the coordinating mechanisms they use to move food through the supply chain. While analysis of AFNs should be done per individual network, generalizing the impacts on types

stakeholders through this framework can highlight the common benefits and limitations of general models.

Table 1

Alterity Framework

	Links	Relationships	Value	Risk	Governance
Characteristics of Alterity	*Interdependent* *Generative* *Regional/local trading systems* *Horizontal and vertical value chain linkages*	*Living purpose* *Transparent* *Ethical* *Reliable* *Loyal* *Mutual trust* *Cooperative*	*Fair profit margins* *Fair and livable wages* *Community-based surplus appropriation and distribution* *Stakeholder finance*	*Partnerships* *Distinctive competencies* *Collective knowledge/ resources* *Shared cost-savings*	*Democratic participation* *Mission-controlled* *Rooted membership* *Shared vision, information and decision making* *Transparent reward mechanisms*

Table 1. Alterity Framework. Categories coalesced from the Diverse Economies, Extractive/Generative, Value Chain and Food Sovereignty frameworks to create the Alterity Framework for alternative food network (AFN) research and practice.

4.2 Model Comparisons

Here, I examine the ways in which control and value are distributed across supply chains of five AFN models (CSAs, farmers' markets, wholesale distribution, food hubs and multi-stakeholder cooperatives) by applying the conceptual framework described above and depicted in Table 1. This analysis asks about the ownership configurations that currently exist within the alternative food system and assesses the transformative potential of AFNs based on the characteristics of the Alterity Framework. In the following subsections, I apply the Alterity Framework to five AFN models and use the characteristics of each category to analyze the

approach to alternative food system development taken by each AFN model. This analysis incorporates considerations of the links, relationships, value, risk and governance structures and mechanisms, as indicated by the Alterity Framework developed above.

4.2.1 Direct Sales. Direct-to-consumer is perhaps the most simple and commonly used model in the alternative food system (Lutz & Schachinger, 2013). This includes both on-farm and off-farm sales; community support agriculture (CSA) directly engages customers with on-farm activities while farmers' markets provide opportunities to reach a wider market both geographically and demographically off the farm. The following analysis examines two popular direct-to-consumer models, CSA and farmers' markets, assessing how common conceptualizations fit into the Alterity Framework.

4.2.1.1 Model: Community Supported Agriculture. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) varies in size, commodities sold, and structure, with the basic premise that consumers receive a portion of a farm's harvest in exchange for capital provided in advance of the growing season (Brown & Miller, 2008). The model is predicated on the localization of sustainable agriculture through a direct connection of production and consumption (Feagan, 2014). Many benefits and potential for the model exist, however, the Alterity Framework also points to challenges, from both the producer and consumer perspectives, that are important to identify and discuss.

4.2.1.1.1 Links. CSA requires and depends on a shared commitment between producers and consumers in order to produce, distribute and acquire food; this level of interdependence sets CSA apart from many other AFN models (Moore et al., 2014). CSA allows producers and consumers to "act intentionally on values and principles that are not feasible within the dominant system" (Feagan, 2014, p. 1); and, from the perspective of control and value distribution, this

model presents the straightest and most transparent line from producer to consumer with only a single link in the supply chain. This vertically integrated model facilitates coordination of production and distribution without intermediaries, resulting in direct, interdependent, alternative market links.

4.2.1.1.2 Relationships. For consumers, CSA is "about the establishment of connections between food consumption and food production" (Schnell, 2013, p. 625), while producers benefit from consumer commitment to sustainable and local food. In this sense, CSA can be characterized as an ethical model for economic exchange that incorporates "such things as pleasure, friendship, aesthetics, affection, loyalty, justice and reciprocity in addition to the factors of cost...and quality" (Kloppenburg, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996, p. 37). The interdependency that exists between producers and consumers means that CSA is a model that cultivates an "economic transaction suffused with trust" (Hinrichs, 2000, p. 300) and focuses on the living purpose of the exchange, beyond economic transactions. This provides consumers with a consistent supply of products and in-depth knowledge of the people, practices and provenance involved.

4.2.1.1.3 Value. The original principles of the CSA model are based on a capital relation, in which capital investment is made by community members to facilitate production and divide risk; in other words, members share in the *risk* of production in exchange for a *share* of the production (Galt, 2013). CSA offers producers the most control of production since capital is secured at the beginning of a season, the individual consumers are relatively invariable, and the season is set for predetermined number of weeks. The predictability of sales, achieved through a reorganization of the economic relationship between producer and consumer, makes CSA an attractive model for many producers (Galt, 2013). Additionally, producers tend to "come out

ahead when comparing CSA-financed returns to those obtained [in the] wholesale market and using conventional… financing" (Brown & Miller, 2008, p. 1299).

CSA also allows farmers to capture surplus value from the direct relationship by either placing a premium price on their commodities higher than grocery stores and/or cultivating crops that consumers may not have normally purchased (Galt, 2013). However, in order to gain or maintain a competitive advantage in an increasingly saturated CSA market, many producers engage in self-exploitation, either by undervaluing the CSA share or not optimizing their production and accounting techniques to capture earnings above costs of production (Galt, 2013). As Galt (2013) concludes, "these farmers are providing an economic subsidy to their members by transferring surplus value and not receiving enough monetary compensation in return" (p. 13). So although CSA offers a single link chain, there can be an inequitable distribution of value that prevents producers from scaling up and earning an adequate livelihood. Additionally, "with growing urban populations offering a concentrated market for large-scale [organic] production, economies of scale tend to swamp individual local producers" (Adam, 2006, p. 12), ostensibly reducing the viable market share for CSA producers since many consumers' food purchases are dependent on price and convenience (Hinrichs, 2000).

4.2.1.1.4 Risk. For producers, the barriers to entry in this model are low and present a relatively low-risk, supportive social context for small business development (Lyson et al., 1995, c.f. Hinrichs et al., 2004). Since both capital and customers are secured ahead of the growing season, CSA producers tend not to rely on conventional financing, as noted above. There is, however, less risk sharing than originally intended and both producers and consumers encounter value tradeoffs. On the one hand, producers often undervalue their CSA shares by not incorporating operating costs (as indicated by the discussion on self-exploitation). The social

embeddedness of CSA is a valuable and defining characteristic of the model, but the close relationships that producers often have with consumer members can cause an unfair exchange to the producer's economic detriment if they add extra products to members' shares or provide refunds for harvest shortfalls (Galt, 2013).

On the other hand, consumer risk is relatively high since there is no guarantee of product delivery after the initial investment. While risk sharing is certainly part of the CSA ethos, it is a far departure from traditional food procurement methods, such as shopping at grocery stores, which guarantees food in exchange for money. To participate in CSA, consumers must make intentional decisions about sourcing food directly from local farms, which often means sacrificing convenience and paying more than food procured through conventional means, and even losing the investment altogether (Brown & Miller, 2008). In their study of an Irish CSA, Moore et al. (2014) found that "when [consumers] end up with what they think of as not enough vegetables, in what they think should be a time of abundance, tensions inevitably rise" (p. 149). Navigating these tensions through the relationships and governance mechanisms thus becomes very important for the CSA model to be successful.

4.2.1.1.5 Governance. Through the lens of the Alterity Framework, the governance structures and mechanisms of CSA, albeit informal, appear to fare well. Direct participation and cooperation, to some degree, means that CSA follows civic rather than market governance mechanisms. With only a single link and direct connections between the rooted members (producers and consumers), reflexive communication helps each stakeholder group understand the conditions at the other end of the food system; that is "producers adjust to consumers' expectations, while also imparting information on the realities at their end, and vice versa" (Moore et al., 2014, p. 138). As a socially embedded AFN, successful CSA governance requires

producers and consumers to navigate compromises and adjustments by focusing on commonalities and mutual benefit (Anderson et al., 2014), as well as recognizing diverse goals and values (Mount, 2012).

4.2.1.2 Model: Farmers' Markets. Farmers' markets, as an off farm direct-to-consumer sales channel, have exponentially increased in popularity and prevalence over the last two decade; the number of farmers' markets in the U.S. has risen from 1,755 in 1994 to 8,268 in 2014 (Low et al., 2015), which suggests a significant jump in local food purchasing by consumers (Gunter, Thilmany & Sullins, 2012). However, through the Alterity Framework, farmers' markets pose significant challenges for both producers and consumers and don't appear to be an effective approach to larger systemic change, although they are prolific.

4.2.1.2.1 Links. Praised as a model to connect consumers to local, sustainably produced food, farmers' markets provide a single link food chain that provides producers with access to consumers who share a common interest in their food and allow consumers a central location to support many small, local producers (Hinrichs et al., 2004). As market arrangements, farmers' markets are "settings for exchanges embedded in social ties, based on proximity, familiarity and mutual appreciation" (Hinrichs, 2000, p. 298). They require commitment from both producers and consumers; producers must harvest, pack, transport, and attend the market in order to earn revenues, and consumers need to travel to the market during the limited market days and hours to procure food. This type of interdependency is unique to farmers' markets since producers are dependent on consumers to support their incomes, and also rely on other vendors to make a desirable market for consumers; on the other hand, consumers that attend the market are dependent on producers to purchase food at the market, but consumers are not wholly dependent on market producers for their food needs (Griffen & Frongillo, 2003).

4.2.1.2.2 Relationships. While farmers' markets are primarily a place of economic exchange, the social interactions are what make them valued community institutions (Brown & Miller, 2008). They are often viewed as “making a place for social activity and promoting a sense of community” (Brown & Miller, 2008, p. 1296). The relationships that form between producers and consumers at farmers’ markets are informal and tend to rely on sentiments of familiarity, trust, and a perception of value on both sides (Hinrichs, 2000). However, “many direct agricultural markets, [such as farmers’ markets], involve social relations where the balance of power and privilege ultimately rests with well-to-do consumers” (Hinrichs, 2000, p. 301).

This type of neoliberal call to “solve social problems through the buying and selling of goods...helps to relieve the state of its responsibility to provide environmental protection and a social safety net” (Alkon, 2013, p. 5). In this case we see the neoliberal notions of personal choice, consumption focused interventions, and relegation to market-based solutions and the non-profit sector represented in the farmers' market movement. Furthermore, the fetishization of farmers' markets provides a false connection between producers and consumers, as farmworkers and their working conditions are hidden from consumers who believe they ‘know’ their farmer (Allen, 2004; McIntyre & Rondeau, 2011).

4.2.1.2.3 Value. As a direct marketing opportunity, farmers’ markets bridge the formal and informal economies and demonstrate potential to drive economic development through innovation (Hinrichs et al., 2004). In this setting, producers and consumers agree on an exchange value for products that meet mutual benefit; prices at farmers’ markets are typically set by producers and are not linked to commodity market prices (King et al., 2010). Without intermediaries, producers receive the full retail value for their products (Allen et al., 2006) and are more likely to account for their costs of production when setting prices (Feenstra et al.,

2003). For mid-size producers that have opted out of commodity production, income from farmers' market sales is an important contribution to the stability of their enterprises and often augments or diversifies revenue streams (Feenstra et al., 2003). Small-scale producers tend to derive more than economic value from farmers' markets; although they may not achieve large financial gains, small producers can acquire valuable entrepreneurial and business skills and develop a market niche in a community (Feenstra et al., 2003). The informal relationships that form amongst producers and between producers and consumers "have been found to produce social *and* economic benefits through the exchange of knowledge and skills, the fostering of new friendships, and providing of relief at other's stalls" (Anderson et al., 2014, p. 81). However, farmers' markets continue to "remain firmly rooted in conventional exchange relations" (Hinrichs, 2000, p. 301), and while they can create genuine social ties based on familiarity and trust, this "does not necessarily lead to a situation where price is irrelevant" (Hinrichs, 2000, p. 299).

It has been widely noted that access to farmers' markets is inequitable, as the spending power of low-income communities is significantly dwarfed by that of wealthy, predominantly white neighborhoods (Alkon, 2008). The upsurge in farmers' markets in low-income communities in the last decade reflects the common perception that they are an effective method to connect food insecure consumers to fresh and healthy food that was produced locally (DeLind, 2011). Research from Allen et al. (2006), however, explains that while farmers' markets can provide many things, they are not currently positioned to meet the goal of food security. And while the increase of SNAP accessible markets and the introduction of SNAP incentive programs have helped offset the cost of food for low income consumers, they are temporary fixes to larger systemic and institutional issues. Farmers' markets focused on food access are increasingly

managed by non-profit organizations that have a stake in the community well being and are supported by outside funding to maintain operations and incentives (if applicable) (Allen et al., 2006).

4.2.1.2.4 Risk. Due to their seasonality, vulnerability to weather, and dependence on consistent customers, farmers' markets present a particularly risky distribution channel for producers. Without assurance of sales, producers can lose significant value through product, time and resource waste. While farmers' markets provide producers control of production, they relegate control of sales to consumers. In this case, too much control falls on the consumer because although producers retain much of the exchange value, they receive no value if customers do not come or choose to shop with another producer. As indicated in the discussion on farmers' market links, this model does not result in guaranteed satisfaction for any stakeholder. Despite the inherent economic risk, farmers' markets foster a space for collective knowledge and resource sharing by providing producers the opportunity to learn business management, marketing, communication and leadership skills (Feenstra et al., 2003).

Although farmers' markets are on the rise, 99.2% of all food is still purchased through traditional channels that support the conventional food system (Martinez, 2010, c.f. Gunter, Thilmany & Sullins, 2012). Developing innovative marketing strategies is unrealistic for most farmers, as planning and implementation can be time-consuming and challenging (Hinrichs et al., 2004). Farmers' markets can be a sort of 'catch-22' for producers; with greater success comes greater demands (Feenstra et al., 2003). The distribution costs that producers incur via farmers' markets are significant and ultimately reduce the overall profits (King et al., 2010). The time and resource demands on producers involved in farmers' markets can prohibit enterprise expansion, specifically, and greater engagement in AFNs overall (Anderson et al., 2014).

4.2.1.2.5 Governance. Farmers' markets offer a theoretical and practical space for civic agriculture, offering opportunities to build non-market relationships between producers and consumers (Lyson, 2004). Organized and managed by producers/producers groups, community-based organizations, and nonprofits, the governance structures of farmers' markets are as diverse as the stakeholders involved. Most farmers' market managers will instill guidelines, rules and regulations for producers to follow. Some farmers' markets function very informally as a space to bring the community together through personal exchanges between producers and consumers. There are few mechanisms that dictate interactions or decision-making. Others function more formally through established procedures for participation, which may include mandatory meetings and involvement in other market activities. The governance structures in farmers' markets typically dictate the interactions between producers, customers and market staff, but do not generally offer democratic participation in operational decisions. Higher levels of democracy are seen when a farmers' market is managed by a nonprofit organization. In this case, there is often a board of directors made of producer, consumer, volunteer, and staff representatives. It is difficult to develop a general depiction of farmers' market governance since there are so many determining factors to the level and ways that different stakeholders participate in the model.

4.2.1.3 Framework Summary: Direct-to-Consumer. While direct-to-consumer sales offer producers fair or surplus exchange value, consumers relatively simple access, and foster a local food community, the limitations of equitable access, scale, and economic sustainability present barriers to meeting the material, social, and ecological needs of society. The supply chains are short, but often include control and value trade-offs for both producers and consumers. On one hand, producers relinquish some value to consumers through self-exploitation and insufficient cost accounting, while on the other hand, consumers pay premium pricing and spend

more effort accessing local food in comparison to conventional procurement methods. Through "their use of individual market actions as the essential pathway to social change" (Alkon, 2013, p. 3), CSAs and farmers' markets seem to be a neoliberal attempt to reorganize agriculture and "apply market logic to social life" (Alkon, 2013, p. 5).

Additionally, the lack of distribution infrastructure limits market access and makes direct-to-consumer sales a moderately risky model for producers that need to increase the number of customers in order to retain value that more accurately represents their production costs and provides a sufficient income. Scalability and efficiency achieved through coordination across the value chain are crucial for addressing the problem of low margins in many agricultural production systems and achieving economic viability for small to mid-scale farms (Bloom & Hinrichs, 2011). Given the benefits and challenges of direct-to-consumer models, such as CSAs and farmers' markets, direct market chains only represent a small percentage of food sales (King et al., 2010). Even with the rise of the alternative food movement, *most* consumers continue to purchase food through intermediated supply chains. Although better prices and closer relationships with consumers can ameliorate conditions for producers, they still require sufficient outlets for their product volumes (Lutz & Schachinger, 2013).

4.2.2 Model: Wholesale Distribution. Another popular model used in the alternative food system is wholesale distribution, where a producer sells products to local restaurants and retailers with whom they have a direct relationship. Wholesale distribution offers producers a way to diversify revenue streams, increase production and sales volume, and build brand recognition throughout the local community. As producers scale, marketing agricultural products through wholesale distribution is a progression from direct marketing models.

4.2.2.1 Links. This model entails two links in the supply chain between producer and end consumer. The scale and volume of producers that sell through wholesale channels varies and most farmers that engage in wholesale distribution do not do so exclusively, including direct-to-consumer activities in operations as well (Feenstra et al., 2003). The links in wholesale markets become less interdependent as products from local producers compete with industrialized and globalized organic commodities for the same market share. This situation elicits a shift towards 'green capitalism' where corporate retailers are restructuring supply chains of 'localized foods' by providing flexible and traceable supply chains and quality standards of 'food from somewhere' (Lutz & Schachinger, 2013). Tensions between retailers and producers emerges in this elongated supply chain, while consumers are essentially removed from supply chain considerations and they are not seen as anything outside of their consumer position.

4.2.2.2 Relationships. Introducing additional actors in the supply chain can improve logistics coordination and increase both the supply of and demand for local food (Hand, 2010). The increased reach of wholesale distribution means that more than just loyal direct-marketing consumers have access to local foods. However, the relationships become quite muddled in wholesale distribution, since the addition of supply chain intermediaries makes it more difficult to convey information to consumers (Hand, 2010). Wholesale distribution is where we begin to see higher levels of distancing between producers and consumers, and not only because of the additional supply chain link. Specifically, for corporate retailers there is a tendency to use connections to local producers as a marketing tool that attempts to connect consumption with an idealized agrarian mode of life (Johnston et al., 2009). Additionally, while wholesale distribution can provide producers with more sales stability and predictability than farmers' markets, it still requires energy and resources outside of production to build and maintain close relationships

with buyers. Retailers also feel competitive and antagonistic toward direct marketing models as they argue the success of these AFNs negatively impact their sales (Ilbery & Maye, 2006), leaving little incentive for greater cooperation with local producers.

4.2.2.3 Value. Intermediated supply chains provide distribution infrastructure to producers that can sell higher volumes of product to a single entity rather than smaller quantities to multiple consumers. While expansion into wholesale markets may increase a producer's sales volume, the margins they receive are lower than direct-to-consumer channels (King et al., 2010). Because it adds another link in the chain from farm to plate, buyers use markups to cover their costs and obtain a profit by extracting some amount of value from the product; the value producers receive is a fraction of the retail price (King et al., 2010). Particularly because of the conventionalization of organics, the industrialized market has determined wholesale prices, which make it nearly impossible for small-scale farmers to meet the prices required by retailers (Johnston et al., 2009). This environment has become quite onerous for small to mid-sized farms, as they must compete with large farms that can achieve economies of scale in production and distribution due to technological advances and corporate contracts (Diamond & Barham 2011). Additionally, with increased pressure from wholesale buyers to meet price points, producers' "economic necessity and survival often have to override any ideological stance towards environmental and social dimensions of sustainability" (Ilbery & Maye, 2005, p. 342).

4.2.2.4 Risk. It is essential to consider the power dynamics of wholesale distribution when assessing the model. Control and value becomes disproportionately held by wholesale buyers, pitting producers and consumers on opposite ends of the value chain. Wholesale intermediaries of AFNs do not necessarily prescribe to the social, ecological and economic commitments important to the producers and consumers that actively choose to participate in

local food supply chains. Capitalocentric conditioning amongst wholesale buyers can veil the realities of the conventional food system and will often place local food on the same price standard as food acquired through more traditional means, i.e. organic agro-corporations (Lutz & Schachinger, 2013). If wholesale buyers, as powerful actors in this AFN model, do not identify or experience inequities, they will continue to reproduce the underlying problems and structures, or advocate for only minor changes that do not affect the inherent power dynamics (Lutz & Schachinger, 2013). For small-scale producers, wholesale distribution can offer a channel to move higher volumes of product, however, the informal and competitive relationships with this type of intermediary makes it a relatively risky pursuit that does not guarantee sales or price points above costs of production.

4.2.2.5 Governance. Assessing the governance structures and mechanisms in wholesale distribution through the Alterity Framework points to significant shortcomings when it comes to participation and cooperation. First, the commitment of retailers and chefs to source local, sustainable food is often price dependent. The very competitive nature of the wholesale environment often means that fidelity to one producer may wane if another producer, local or otherwise, is able to offer the same product at a cheaper price (Ilbery & Maye, 2005). The distancing of social relationships that occurs in wholesale models affects the flow of control and value, as retailers and restaurants often put their individual economic needs ahead of both producers and consumers.

The lack of mission-controlled governance and shared vision, information and decision-making is resulting in disparities between local production and distribution. Across the U.S., larger retailers and supermarkets are interested in increasing their selection of local food, but face a number of challenges including: (1) limitations on local production capacity, typically

from small-scale producers; (2) lack of distribution infrastructure; (3) issues of product quality, consistency and traceability; (4) lack of wholesale knowledgeable amongst farmers; and (5) regulatory uncertainties (McIntyre & Rondeau, 2011). In their study of Scottish retailers, Ilbery and Maye (2005) found that local food accounted for less than 5% of retailers total purchases and pointed to the lack of quality food producers and a void of intermediaries to process and transport local products. An obvious disconnect in the governance of AFNs is preventing producers from supplying more product through local intermediated food chains.

4.2.2.1 Framework Summary: Wholesale. As a progression from direct marketing models, wholesale distribution provides producers an intermediated supply chain through which to sell larger volumes of food. The additional link in the supply chain between producers and consumers, however, diffuses the important connections between production, distribution and consumption indicative of AFNs. With competition from larger producers and agro-corporations, wholesale distribution can be a risky venture for producers. Informal arrangements with wholesale buyers do not guarantee sales as local producers are subject to competition with conventional food supply chains. Additionally, the lack of infrastructure limits a producer's ability to increase sales volumes and revenues, ultimately inhibiting enterprise growth. While there are benefits of the model, wholesale distribution does not address the underlying problems with the extractive ways that control and value are distributed across supply chains.

4.2.3 Model: Food Hubs. Local food aggregation and distribution is becoming more prevalent across the U.S. as a means to scale AFNs to meet consumer and institutional demand (Fischer et al., 2013). Most commonly referred to as 'food hubs', local actors take on the aggregation and distribution of local food from multiple farms and processors, then distribute to large buyers, such as schools, hospitals, business campuses, and retail grocery chains.

4.2.3.1 Links. Today there are growing numbers of intermediary initiatives that are seeking to involve, particularly, mid-scale producers that want to move beyond direct marketing (Mount, 2012). While there are many variations of the model, the general concept entails three or more links in the supply chain, where producers sell to the aggregator, the aggregator distributes to institutions or retailers, and then the product is either resold or provided to consumers. The recent development of four main food hub structures (retail-driven, nonprofit-driven, producer-driven, and consumer-driven) (Diamond & Barham, 2012) provides evidence that greater supply chain coordination is needed to address the capacity limitations of segregated AFNs. Small to mid-sized producers face the largest obstacles of scale and efficiency to be competitive in the market dominated by larger operations. The consistent and high product volume that is required by distributors and institutions limits the producers that are able to participate in this model. The conventional tendency to eliminate sourcing inefficiencies results in the homogenization of suppliers, as buyers will favor producers that can independently meet demand.

4.2.3.2 Relationships. In theory, coordination of local food, with goals that center on social or ethical missions rather than *exclusively* profitability, means that increased production and profits for local producers can "directly impact a local community through the retention of local dollars" (Matson & Thayer, 2013, p. 46). The generative living purpose inherent in most food hubs means that they are established and operate under social or ethical missions rather than financial profitability (Matson & Thayer, 2013). By reintegrating supply chain stakeholders, food hubs are valued for creating spaces for and subsequently building social capital (Blay-Palmer et al., 2013). However, with multiple intermediaries, the social relationships between actors become disconnected and make it more difficult and costly to convey information, such as production practices and geographic origin, to consumers (Hand, 2010). The loss of producer

identity that occurs in long supply chains dilutes the original mission of the alternative food system to promote connections between the people that grow and raise food and those that eat it.

4.2.3.3 Value. As an AFN, food hubs are situated in the "intersection of social values and consumer demand to simultaneously increase consumer access to local foods and increase the value and profitability of local food producers" (Matson & Thayer, 2013, p. 46). Integrating local production with aggregation and distribution can contribute to building a fair, local food system in the face of the heavily subsidized commodity conventional system (LeBlanc et al., 2014). Food hubs offer solutions to some of the prominent barriers to scaling the local food system in order to meet broader demand, but this model tends to replicate the common practices and economic rationalities of conventional supply chains (Mount & Smithers, 2014). With the introduction of multiple intermediaries, control and value can be appropriated from products, leaving producers with less than retail value and imposing inflated prices for consumers (Mount & Smithers, 2014). Additionally, many food hubs across the U.S. are run by nonprofit organizations that are: 1) supported by outside funding, and 2) lack the business skills to efficiently manage the operational and logistics intensive model (LeBlanc et al., 2014). This raises the question of how economically viable and sustainable the food hub model is if outside funding is needed to cover operating costs and overhead.

As supply chains become both more intermediated and interdependent, as is the case with food hubs, regulation and certification requirements, such as NOP (National Organic Program), GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) or FSMA (Food Safety Modernization Act), prohibit producers from entering larger markets. Cost and regulatory constraints may have adverse effects for small producers, who often cannot afford or comply with mandated standards (King et al.,

2010). Thus, access to participating in food hubs favors large-scale producers that can meet lower price points and pay for regulatory standards and additional certifications.

4.2.3.4 Risk. Food hubs provide infrastructure for local food systems that often lack the logistics coordination that is prevalent in the dominant food system. Through collective aggregation and marketing, food hubs also provide smaller producers access to markets they would not have individually (Borst 2010) or "serve as stepping stones for communities that have saturated existing consumer and producer outlets via farmers' markets and traditional CSAs" (LeBlanc et al., 2014, p. 127) Many food hubs build distinctive competencies by aggregating a variety of local products and offering other services to producers such as storage and marketing (Fischer et al., 2013). Producers that do well in intermediated supply chains, such as food hubs, often have the capacity to make investments in and develop their own processing and distribution infrastructure, or rely on facilities that also serve mainstream supply chains (Hand, 2010). However, building infrastructure and adjusting to stakeholder needs, food hubs often struggle to balance supply and demand (Fischer et al., 2013). Operational and management challenges within food hubs make the model risky for producers that may come to rely on the distribution channel but do not have shared access to information and lack decision making authority.

4.2.3.5 Governance. A strong governance structure that incorporates democratically controlled and organized food production, distribution and consumption could help ensure that food hubs retain the local principles that inspired the model (Johnston et al., 2009). Fischer et al. (2013) claim that new food hubs will need to go "beyond simply providing local food" (p. 5) and grow businesses in ways that allow for financial viability. If food hubs "have great potential to meet the needs of midsized agriculture" (Fischer et al., 2014, p. 7), it seems a slippery slope to introduce commodity products into local food supply chains. Although conventionalization is

most likely to occur in this model because of the increased distance between producers and consumers and capitalocentric conditioning, or conventional tendencies, that push for profits over people, food hubs are differentiated from traditional supply chains because they "foster relationships based on trust, frequent personal communication and information sharing" (Hand, 2010). However, without membership rooted in communities and a governance structure that creates mechanisms for shared decision-making, it seems that food hubs will follow conventional distribution paths as they succeed and grow.

4.2.3.6 Framework Summary: Food Hubs. Food Hubs attempt to combine the ethics of the alternative food system with the efficiency of the conventional infrastructure and present a new paradigm for scaling up AFNs. However, in their attempts to aggregate locally produced food through intermediated supply chains, they often reproduce conventional methods of control and value appropriation. Following Stevenson and Pirog's (2008) value chain framework, Bloom and Hinrichs (2010) dichotomize the alternative (value) and conventional (supply) chains but depart from Stevenson and Pirog's (2008) assumption that value chains, which reduce the number of intermediaries and spatial distance, create equitable social and economic benefits for all chain participants. Food hubs, representing a value chain based on these authors' analyses, do not inherently support the social and economic needs of communities, nor do they necessarily appropriate and distribute surplus fairly.

4.2.4 Model: Multi-Stakeholder Cooperative. Cooperatives are businesses owned and controlled by the people who use them (Rasmussen, 1995). Cooperatives generally operate according to the same seven core principles and values which include: voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; members' economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training and information; cooperation among cooperatives; and

concern for community (NCBA, 2013). Cooperatives aim to draw on the expertise and resources of their membership, promote collaboration, reduce competition between members, and build resilient community enterprises (Borst, 2010). While most cooperatives in food and agriculture are formed to support a single stakeholder group, multi-stakeholder cooperatives (MSCs) are amongst the most recent additions to the U.S. food system; at the time of this research, there exist only eight US food and agricultural multi-stakeholder cooperatives (see Table A4). At this point, limited research about MSCs has been conducted, so the information here is informed by my own participatory action research.

4.2.4.1 Links. Multi-stakeholder cooperatives are vertically and horizontally integrated organizations that use collaboration to effectively scale AFNs to meet the needs of all supply chain stakeholders. Although they can be comprised differently, the through line of all multi-stakeholder cooperatives is the efficient coordination of upstream and downstream supply chain activities to support the stakeholders that represent a diversity of interests but share a commonality of need within the production, distribution, and consumption/access stages of AFNs (Lund, 2011). The number of links between producers and end consumers varies depending on the stakeholder configuration, however the key difference in this model is that the entire supply chain is communally owned and operated, making the results of the minimally increased distance between production and consumption not necessarily extractive.

4.2.4.2 Relationships. The types of relationships that MSCs develop set the model apart from other AFNs. Beyond the fact that identifying and building strategic partnerships is foundational to the success of MSCs, members join in communal ownership of the business. The partnerships formed are much more integrated than in non-cooperative models because of the shared value that stakeholders have in the enterprise. MSCs seek long-term relationships that are

based in both diversity and equity (Lund, 2011). Rather than seeing difference as a barrier to achieving goals, MSCs embrace it as the building blocks of a heterogeneous membership base. Members come together for larger socio-economic goals and a desire to actively participate in in building organizational resilience (Gray, 2014). Transparent relationships mean that a cooperative arrangement fosters commitment and trust amongst all stakeholders.

4.2.4.3 Value. MSCs reject the conventional investor-driven, market-governed food system by prioritizing long-term relationships and also looking beyond immediate short-term returns (Lund, 2011). That does not mean, however, that economic considerations are not important to stakeholders of MSCs. In fact, the coordination between production and consumption can result in improved returns for farmers and lower prices for consumers since the intermediary extraction is removed and prices need only cover fair prices for producers and distribution costs (Gray, 2014). Many MSCs also use co-branding or shared labels to make it easier for consumers to recognize their cooperative products, and often share logistics and supply chains to reduce individual marketing costs (Lutz & Schachinger, 2013).

A marked difference between MSCs and traditional ownership models is the incorporation of multiple owner groups, including those that are typically left out of the economic benefits of ownership, such as workers. In many MSCs it is important to include workers as co-owners due to the "central role they play in the execution of the co-op's vision and implementation of its strategy" (Lund, 2011, p. 7). Therefore, any surplus value accrued during operations is distributed amongst the member owners of the MSC based on proportionate patronage. Many organizations have instilled profit-sharing mechanisms "according to a formula that would seem out of place in the corporate world" (Lund, 2011, p. 28).

4.2.4.4 Risk. With several generative principles and practices designed into the organization, common externalities may be diminished because cooperatives are established by and governed from within communities (Gray, 2014). Risk is distributed across the supply chain of MSCs since all stakeholders make a commitment to the welfare of one another by sharing the value of the entire network (Lund, 2011). In addition to the interdependency that MSCs foster and thrive off, the flexibility of the cooperative model is the key to risk mitigation for the model. There is a shared interest in the success of the business so when one area of the cooperative is in need, be it an operational or member need, stakeholders call on the membership of the co-op to find the necessary resources to solve a problem. Identifying distinctive competencies amongst the membership and working cooperatively to share collective knowledge and resources can build social capital as well as financial health and overall resiliency of the business.

4.2.4.5 Governance. Through communally developed bylaws, or the guiding principles and practices of the organization, multi-stakeholder cooperatives have clear governance structures and mechanisms that allocate rights between different stakeholders (Lund, 2011). Smart governance thus becomes the essential foundation of multi-stakeholder cooperatives in order to effectively operate in accordance with the diverse values, interests, and goals of all participants. Formalizing the shared economic, social or cultural interests in the objectives of an organization, cooperative legislation can be used to support the development of multi-stakeholder cooperatives. Finally, the key to success of this innovative organizational configuration is dependent on democratic involvement in the formation and reformulation of rules that dictate how the group functions and how the resources are managed (Leviten-Reid and Fairbairn, 2011).

Addressing common predictions that the high decision-making costs and cumbersome processes of multi-stakeholder cooperatives will cause them to fail, Leviten-Reid and Fairbairn (2011) examine how the complex governance structures of multi-stakeholder cooperatives are not necessarily barriers to operational success. They point out that inefficiencies often arise because different groups of individuals are considered to have fundamentally divergent interests, and may be apt to resolve issues and pursue strategic directions in a manner that advances their own well being versus the well-being of the larger group (Leviten-Reid and Fairbairn, 2011). The governance structure of MSCs, which must account for representation from multiple membership groups, emphasizes democratic and participatory decision-making (Gray, 2014).

4.2.4.6 Framework Summary: Multi-Stakeholder Cooperatives: Similar to the work of food hubs, multi-stakeholder cooperatives operate at larger scales than traditional direct-to-consumer models; in fact, "food hubs can be viewed as a natural progression in the application of...cooperative principles and ideas" (Matson, Shaw and Thayer, 2014, p. 5), so the emergence of the multi-stakeholder cooperative model in the food system seems logical. MSCs present an innovative approach to instill generative ownership structures in AFNs that seem to ameliorate many of problems associated with other models, be it structural barriers to scaling up to meet consumer demand or risks of conventionalization when scale is achieved. Through the lens of the Alterity Framework, MSCs build interdependent and integrated links across food supply chains that are based on transparent and cooperative relationships with multiple stakeholders. The value that is created as an output of production, distribution and consumption is kept in the hands of those directly involved in and dependent on the success of the business. Governed by a central mission and democratic decision making processes, MSCs appear to be developing sustainable and uniquely generative AFNs.

4.3 Analysis

It is evident that the alternative food system has created several methods to connect producers with markets and, conversely, consumers to local food. In digging deeper into the ways AFNs distribute control and value across supply chains, following the Alterity Framework helped assess the links, relationships, value, risks and governance of five AFN models, and the results point to challenges of scale, efficiency and adherence to alternative principles in most models (see Table A4). While direct-to-consumer models provide producers and consumers relatively high levels of control and share of value, and create the most transparent value chain, the lack of infrastructure and barriers to scale limits potential for growth. Similarly, without aggregation and distribution efficiencies, wholesale channels limit the potential production volume that comes with greater supply chain coordination. Additionally, with another link in the chain, wholesale actors do not necessarily have the interests of producers or consumers as a priority and tend to inequitably appropriate control and value from other stakeholders. Although food hubs take on many of the activities that make it more feasible to meet scale and efficiency needs, producers lose a significant portion of product value and connection to the community of eaters. While increased scale is commonly achieved through land, labor and capital resources expansion, it is more difficult to scale up enterprises predicated on direct, personal relationships (King et al., 2010). Following a community ownership model, multi-stakeholder cooperatives appear to hold potential as a democratically controlled AFN that builds social and economic capital for the benefit of its stakeholders.

This research corroborated other critical research that identified that AFNs are struggling to organize in ways that "allow for strong civil engagement, and which avoid assimilation into the dominant global food system" (Lutz & Schachinger, 2013, p. 4780). In scaling the alternative

food system enough to meet growing consumer demand, AFNs tend to default to conventional models of production, distribution, and capital accumulation (Jaffee & Howard, 2010). Although the need for scaling up the alternative food system is evident in the literature, the threat of conventionalization and cooptation must be considered during development and implementation in order to avoid reproducing the externalities that are at the core of the fight for a just, sustainable, and viable food system.

Analyzing the similarities across the various AFN models, tensions between participants become evident. Particularly, and somewhat alarmingly, we see producer-consumer, producer-buyer, and producer-distributor tensions in the direct-to-consumer, wholesale, and food hub models, respectively. We see that the interests of supply chain participants become dialectical to one another, as each strives to achieve and retain control and value of local food products. With neoliberal and capitalist conditioning, the needs of producers are subordinated to consumers and the conventionalization of logistics leads to downward pressure on producers from wholesalers and distributors (Johnston et al., 2009). Although civic participation is a common emphasis of AFNs, conventional economic rationales such as "intense competition and the resultant needs for investment, returns on investment, and growth are central to continuing operations" (Gray, 2014, p. 24) shift them away from their democratic and sustainable ethos.

Tensions also arise from the distancing of social relationships between participants and replication of arms-length partnerships within supply chains (Stevenson & Pirog, 2008). As suggested, distance, which includes the geographical expanse from farm to plate as well as knowledge gaps about the social and environmental impacts of food production, affects the distribution of power and influence over the governance of the food system (Clapp, 2014). Through uneven appropriation of value from producers and consumers and to intermediaries, the

discursive tendencies present in the U.S. food system externalize many of the costs that accrue as products move across the supply chain (Goodman & Redclift, 1991). Addressing the social, economic and political realities of small and mid-sized producers is essential to the analysis of control and value distribution across AFNs. In each of the models studied, producers are often to group made to sacrifice for the benefit of others. If the alternative food system is to scale generatively, it is imperative that there be a thriving farming population that is supported by a community of other producers, consumers and intermediaries that each recognize the amount and type of work it takes to produce sustainable food. Squeezing farmers out of existence has been the modus operandi of the conventional system, and will continue to happen if the alternative food system does not prioritize fair partnerships across entire supply chains. Alternative economic models that are built on diversity, fairness, and efficiency within the food system have the potential to significantly improve the lives of individuals and communities by placing their well being as a central purpose.

Although these tensions currently exist, they can be managed and mitigated through the conscious development of AFNs that prioritize relationships based on fair and ethical social, economic, and ecological principles as part of their business practices. Though the landscape of the alternative food system is progressive and diverse, few models reflect the principles of a generative food economy in its entirety. Through this research, we see that a framework for that movement would foster social relationships built on interdependence, transparency and trust to create coordinated linkages of ethical economic activities as a way to bring prosperity to all involved in the shared risk and reward. It is increasingly evident that greater cooperation is needed to retain and sustain connections to our communities and ecosystems.

For the U.S. food system, a ray of potentiality exists in the cooperative movement. Cooperatives "offer much greater potential for the development of food supply systems that are more economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable" (Ilbery & Maye, 2005, p. 343). Multi-stakeholder cooperatives, particularly, represent a new approach to AFNs because it incorporates the diverse range of members in a community-owned business. MSCs are differentiated from other AFNs in their approach to food system development and their response to the following questions: who owns it?; who controls it?; who benefits from it?, (Lund, 2011). In the next section, I explore the MSC model in greater detail by using data collected through participant action research at Our Table Cooperative. Analysis of AFN models through the Alterity Framework provided a surface-level understanding and generalizations about the economic structures and impacts on stakeholders, but the insights of the Framework are clearer when applied to specific AFNs, businesses, or communities.

4.4 Contribution: Case Study of Our Table Cooperative

Multi-stakeholder cooperatives present a new AFN paradigm to internalize the costs of production, distribution and consumption of local, sustainable foods by linking producers, intermediaries and consumers in a collective system that is based in participation and cooperation. Although the model is a recent addition to the U.S. food system, we can coalesce the existing research to identify the central principles of multi-stakeholder cooperatives and promote ongoing engagement and future development. Transforming the relationships between supply chain participants from purely transactional to interdependent, multi-stakeholder cooperatives can internalize the benefits and costs of food production, distribution and consumption (Gray, 2014). Altering the structures of ownership through decentralized power, social capital can be redistributed more equitably for social purposes rather than exclusively

economic reasons. This integration through generative ownership design may help solve the problem with scale often faced by AFNs.

Our Table Cooperative (OTC) is using the multi-stakeholder cooperative model to build an integrated and sustainable food system in the Pacific Northwest. Portland, Oregon boasts a metropolitan population of more than 1 million people (OregonMetro.gov, n.d.) and a culture that proudly supports local and artisanal products. Located 15 miles south of Portland, in Sherwood, OR, OTC is situated in the nexus of three communities along the urban growth boundary, and is uniquely positioned to meet the diverse needs of the nearby rural, suburban and urban populations. The cooperative, which brings producers, workers, and consumers together through the multi-stakeholder model, officially incorporated in 2013 and subsequently rolled out farming, aggregation, distribution, and retail operations. OTC is a "new paradigm for a more localized food system based on a new form of agriculture that blends the wisdom of the past with the science of the present" (Our Table, n.d.). The multi-stakeholder cooperatives model provides the foundation for OTC's governance and operational principles, which prioritize social relationships and communal benefit.

4.4.1 Cooperative Structure: Shared Risk, Management and Reward. Inspired and driven by the challenge to redefine the food system and "enable a truly sustainable and economically viable regional food culture" (Our Table, n.d.), founders Narendra and Machelle Varma gathered a team of experts with experience and knowledge in permaculture design, cooperative development and law, biodynamic agriculture, architecture, and sustainability to form an innovative model that would meet the diverse objectives and needs of all stakeholders within the food system. Our Table Cooperative was born from that collective work and the wheels put in motion to implement the strategic development plan set forth by the design team.

In 2010, a 60-acre parcel of land was purchased by the Cooperative's sister organization, which acts as a not-for profit land trust (see Figure B1). Community By Design, LLC protects the agricultural land that supports the operations of OTC, guaranteeing its agricultural use in perpetuity even if the cooperative shutters. Over the next four years, the land was transformed into a certified organic multi-crop and species farm with infrastructure for aggregation and distribution, as well as a retail on-farm grocery. The third arm of OTC is the Manav Foundation, a 501(c) 3 non-profit foundation dedicated for future agricultural education and food systems support (see Figure B1).

As a multi-stakeholder cooperative, OTC is comprised of producer, worker and consumer stakeholder groups and governed collectively by a representative board of directors. As a cooperative value chain, OTC is a certified organic farm, as well as an aggregator, wholesaler, distributor, and with the recent opening of the on-farm grocery, a retailer (see Figure B2). The Co-op's farm, coordinated by the worker-members, operates a CSA, participates in farmers' markets, and distributes wholesale products to local restaurants and retailers. In 2014, regional producer and consumer members were added to round out the multi-stakeholder cooperative model in its entirety (see Figure B3). The ownership structure of OTC creates a network of participants by making a space in their local food system for the sharing of resources, skills and knowledge among a community of growers, producers, and consumers. The cooperative model unites and gives equal emphasis to each part of the food system, and by doing so, OTC is facilitating a communal investment in the health and vitality of the community food system (Our Table, n.d). The links, relationships, value, risk and governance are all based on principles of interdependence, transparency and trust, which supports the living purpose and mission of the organization. Additionally, by building a loyal consumer-member base for the direct sale of local

foods and developing a community-scale aggregation and distribution system that combines and strengthens the efforts of independent regional producer members, OTC supports paying living wages to worker-members on the farm.

It is the goal of OTC to create a thriving local food system by facilitating dynamic connections between producers and consumers. The cooperative cultivates an ethical network between the workers, producers and consumers that make up the membership, demonstrating that they're all in it together (Our Table, n.d.). It is the role of the Cooperative to support the production of quality, local food by alleviating the marketing, sales, and distribution demands for small-scale producers. Although it is early in the development process, OTC represents a promising new paradigm for the future food system, and presents opportunities for further research and experimentation with alternative ownership models.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

To reframe our understanding of the food economy is to change the way we conceptualize the human, environmental, and financial interactions that occur across supply chains. The alternative food system has been immensely successful in developing AFNs that connect producers to consumers and strengthen local, diverse economies, but when considering their ability to be efficient, sustainable *and* fair, limitations of their ownership structures emerge. This research analyzed the alterity of AFNs by identifying and analyzing their economic rationalities and the resultant effects of their operations on all supply chain stakeholders in terms of control and value distribution. In order to examine where power and economic value fall, a new Alterity Framework was applied in a comparative analysis of five models in the alternative food system (CSAs, farmers' markets, wholesale, food hubs, multi-stakeholder cooperatives. The Alterity Framework helped to distinguish the differences between extractive and generative practices, suggested ways to structure value chains that incorporate sustainable and efficient activities, and provided a new perspective on how we think and act about the diverse political economy of food.

The results of this analysis pointed to inequitable appropriation and distribution of control and value across several AFN supply chains, and highlighted the need to develop models that are based on principles of diversity, fairness and efficiency, along with the recognition of interdependencies across food supply chains and the creation of coordinated linkages based in ethical economic activities. One particularly important finding pointed to tensions that arise between producers, consumers, and intermediaries and result from disjointed supply chains and local food economies that replicate the conventional food system’s extractive and inequitable relationships. When the dynamics are reframed as ethical, interdependent actions and supported

by generative ownerships designs, we can begin to identify ways to move forward that mitigate the typical dilemmas and externalities of a strictly capitalist food system. The key principles of this reframing challenge the reigning economic configurations and prioritize social relationships as a development pathway to communal prosperity.

Through this exploratory research, which examined models that follow the typical growth pattern of AFNs, it became evident that our conventional capitalist conditioning influences the ways in which producers, intermediaries, and consumers interact as food and value move across supply chains. CSA and farmers' markets create direct links and relationships between producers and consumers, allow for fair value and control distribution, but place a heavy burden on producers that need to wear many hats to be successful, and require somewhat cumbersome procurement efforts from consumers. As producers increase scale of operations, wholesale distribution is an accessible channel to sell higher volumes of product to fewer customers; however, they enter a highly competitive market that places the needs of intermediaries above those of producers or consumers. Food hubs, as central aggregating sites that distribute bulk food to large buyers, do achieve levels of efficiency that are lacking in other models, but operate on low margins (which results in lower prices paid to producers) as they compete with more conventional food distributors. Through the lens of the Alterity Framework, this macro-assessment of how AFN models distribute control and value highlights the strengths and limitations of local food system development, causing us to take pause when implementing and promoting specific models over others.

This analysis does, however, indicate the promising potential for AFNs in the multi-stakeholder cooperative model. Although creating an organization that allows for governance from multiple stakeholder groups is complex and can be difficult because "consciously choosing

to focus on commonalities rather than differences does not necessarily come naturally to people" (Lund, 2011, p. 2), the case made for multi-stakeholder cooperatives is based on the need to create new business opportunities and new markets that have not been envisioned before. The success of an enterprise, and thus the economic health and vitality of a community, requires bringing together a wide range of participants and ensuring each has fair representation, agency and rights. As Gray (2014) indicated, multi-stakeholder cooperatives "may be able to set a community development template for addressing various social, economic, and ecological needs, with a more inclusive and hopefully enduring democratic organization" (p. 23). By internalizing the various relations of use in terms of production, ownership, investment, and consumption, along with the benefits and costs, multi-stakeholder cooperatives collectively mitigate externalities typical of disjointed, extractive economies (Gray, 2014).

Since there seems to exist such potential in the multi-stakeholder cooperative model, and yet there is a dearth of research and information, future research needs and opportunities emerge. Although the literature discussed here presents a range of perspectives and examples of the model, there is currently no review including all multi-stakeholder cooperatives in the U.S food system. An assessment of existing cooperatives would consider the ownership configuration, operational processes, and governance practices that shape outcomes and the relationships and actions of those involved. Additionally, this research pointed to strengths and limitations of four other AFN models, but only achieved a surface level understanding. In order to continue to understand AFNs through the Alterity Framework, subsequent research could examine to what extent each framework category determines conventional or alternative ownership alignment.

The growing food movement in the U.S. is at an important stage of development where scale and efficiency are at the heart of the work required to transform the way we produce,

distribute and consume food to be more economically viable, socially just, and environmentally sustainable. As a way to develop solidarity in discourse and practice, the alternative food system should address the economic viability of AFNs premised on scalable, ethical, and equitable activities. Ultimately, this work will involve an ideological shift in the way we think, talk and act about the food economy.

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APPENDICIES

Table A1

Diverse Economies Framework

TRANSACTIONS	LABOR	ENTERPRISE
MARKET	WAGE	CAPITALIST
"Free"	*Salaried*	*Family firm*
Naturally protected	*Unionized*	*Private unincorporated firm*
Artificially protected	*Nonunionized*	*Public company*
Monopolized	*Part time*	*Multinational*
Regulated	*Temporary*	
Niche	*Seasonal*	
	Familial	
ALTERNATIVE MARKET	ALTERNATIVE PAID	ALTERNATIVE CAPITALIST
Sale of public goods	*Self-employed*	*State enterprise*
Ethical "fair trade" markets	*Cooperative*	*Green capitalist*
Local trading systems	*Indentured*	*Socially responsible firm*
Alternative currencies	*Reciprocal labor*	*Nonprofit*
Underground market	*In-kind*	*Producer and consumer cooperative*
Co-op exchange	*Work for welfare*	
Alternative credit		
Barter		
Informal market		
NONMARKET	UNPAID	NONCAPITALIST

Household flows	*Housework*	*Communal*
Gift giving	*Family care*	*Independent*
Indigenous exchange	*Neighborhood work*	*Feudal*
State appropriations	*Volunteer*	*Slave*
State allocations	*Self-provisioning labor*	
Gleaning	*Slave labor*	
Hunting, fishing, gathering		
Theft, poaching		

Table A1: Diverse Economies Framework. J.K. Gibson-Graham developed the Diverse Economies Framework to create an alternative language for how to observe and then discuss various forms transaction, labor, and enterprise.

Table A2

Extractive/Generative Framework

PURPOSE	**MEMBERSHIP**	**GOVERNANCE**	**FINANCE**	**NETWORK**
EXTRACTIVE *Financial*	EXTRACTIVE *Absentee*	EXTRACTIVE *By Markets*	EXTRACTIVE *Casino*	EXTRACTIVE *Commodity*
GENERATIVE *Living*	GENERATIVE *Rooted*	GENERATIVE *Mission Controlled*	GENERATIVE *Stakeholder*	GENERATIVE *Ethical*

Table A2: Extractive/Generative Framework. Marjorie Kelly created The Extractive/Generative Framework to dichotomize individual enterprises rather than entire systems.

Table A3

Value Chain Framework

Economies of Scale and Differentiated Products	**Cooperation and Competition**	**High Levels of Performance and Trust**	**Shared Vision, Information and Decision Making**	**Support for Strategic Partners**
Product character and quality	*Vertical and horizontal linkages/ collaboration*	*Interdependence*	*Information visibility*	*Transparent reward mechanisms*
Regional/local production	*Collective knowledge/ resources*	*Reliability*	*Distributive and procedural justice*	*Fair profit margins*
Market competitiveness	*Distinctive competencies*	*Fairness*	*Bilateral communication*	*Fair and livable wages*
Fair value for all	*Similar values and goals*	*Competence*	*Impartiality*	*Community investment opportunities*
Controlled production levels		*Goodwill*	*Refutability*	*Shared cost-savings*
Brand recognition		*Loyalty*	*Explanation*	*Performance-based contracts*
		Respect	*Familiarity*	
			Courtesy	

Table A3: Value Chain Framework. Developed by Stevenson and Pirog (2008), the Value Chain Framework promotes a reinvigoration of mid-scale agriculture for local food production.

Table A4

US Food and Agricultural Multi-Stakeholder Cooperatives (As of February 2015)

NAME	LOCATION	MEMBERS	Year Founded
Fedco Seeds	Waterville, ME	Workers; Consumers	1978
Oklahoma Food Cooperative	Oklahoma City, OK	Producers; Consumers	2003
Weaver Street Cooperative	Hillsborough, NC	Workers; Consumers	2004
Nebraska Food Cooperative	Belgrade, NE	Producers; Consumers	2005
Idaho's Bounty	Boise, ID	Producers; Wholesalers; Consumers	2007
Sandhills Farm to Table Cooperative	Southern Pines, NC	Workers; Producers; Consumers	2009
Fifth Season Cooperative	Viroqua, WI	Producers; Producer Groups; Processors; Distributors; Buyers; Workers	2010
Our Table Cooperative	Sherwood, OR	Workers; Producers; Consumers	2013

Table A4: US Food and Agricultural Multi-Stakeholder Cooperatives. A list of the eight existing multi-stakeholder cooperatives in the U.S. food and agriculture system.

Table A5

Alterity of AFNs

CSA	**Description: Consumer investment in farming operations in exchange for a share of harvest**
Links	*Direct, vertical link with no intermediaries; interdependent local trading system*
Relationships	*Personal relationships/connections between producers and consumers; tend to be reliable, trustworthy and loyal; builds community*
Value	*Community-based surplus appropriation and distribution; producer self-exploitation does not reflect the true cost of production; stakeholder finance exists to some degree-consumers have little say in how member capital is allocated*
Risk	*Relatively risky for producers and consumers; removes supply chain efficiencies; barriers to scale*
Governance	*Rooted membership; mission-controlled governance through informal mechanisms; ability to instill high levels of communication; relatively transparent reward mechanisms*
Farmers' Markets	**Description: Many producers selling to consumers in a common space**
Links	*Vertical and somewhat horizontal (because of proximity not necessarily coordinated integration); direct single chain link established in local trading system; limited interdependence*
Relationships	*Tend to be loyal and reliable and mostly transparent; farm realities often hidden, i.e. farm worker conditions, production methods; highly competitive environment for producers; requires many people holding up their end to be successful*
Value	*Producers set their own prices but receive no value if customers don't patronize their stand or the market entirely; high time, labor, product costs severely impacts revenues*
Risk	*High risks for producers and consumers-lack of formal interdependence can have deleterious effects on both; supply chain efficiencies removed; highly dependent on external factors (weather, competing events; vendor absence, etc)*

Governance	*Governance established by managing organization; diverse governance structures across the model depending on the stakeholders involved*
Wholesale	**Description: Producers sell to restaurants and/or retailers who then sell to consumers**
Links	*Vertical, regional/local integration; additional link added to supply chain*
Relationships	*Direct relationships between producers and buyers but increased distance from consumers; not necessarily transparent or loyal- competing interests between buyers and producers; lack of transparency to consumers*
Value	*Significantly reduced value for producers unless they are able to achieve economies of scale; extraction by intermediaries*
Risk	*Producers enter into commodity-driven environment that prioritizes lowest prices over producer viability; pits producers against each other in competitive pricing*
Governance	*Relationships stop at point of exchange and are not governed by any shared mission or mechanisms*
Food Hub	**Description: Local aggregation and distribution, typically for institutions, schools, hospitals, and large retailers**
Links	*Horizontal and vertical integration; 3 or more links between producers and consumers; interdependent supply coordination; local/regional to start but can be easily lured towards expansion and growth to attain more profit*
Relationships	*Requires high levels of coordination; not necessarily transparent, reliable, loyal or trustworthy; often put in place to support and increase local agricultural production; coordinating organization holds a lot of power*
Value	*Distributor pricing demands; requires large-scale producers that can meet supply needs; no additional value for producers beyond initial exchange; greater extraction by intermediaries*
Risk	*Use of contracts/agreements can secure sales for participating producers; distinctive competencies through integration but not necessarily collective knowledge and resources; can be competitive and not collaborative*

Governance	*Producers and consumers not necessarily included in decision making; more stakeholders with divergent interests muddles operations and can cause unequal power dynamics*
Multi-stakeholder Cooperative	**Description: Community owned supply chain that uses formal cooperation to meet the needs of all stakeholders**
Links	*Unbroken supply chain links established through cooperative structure*
Relationships	*Integrated; long-term; diverse; transparent*
Value	*Fair margins for producers; fair prices for consumers; community based surplus appropriation and distribution*
Risk	*Internalization of risks by identifying distinctive competencies and collectively sharing knowledge and resources*
Governance	*Membership led governance processes focused on communal mission and democratic participation and decision making*

Table A5: Alterity of AFNs. Synthesis of the application of the Alterity Framework to five alternative food network models.

Figure B1: Our Table Cooperative legal entities and relationships

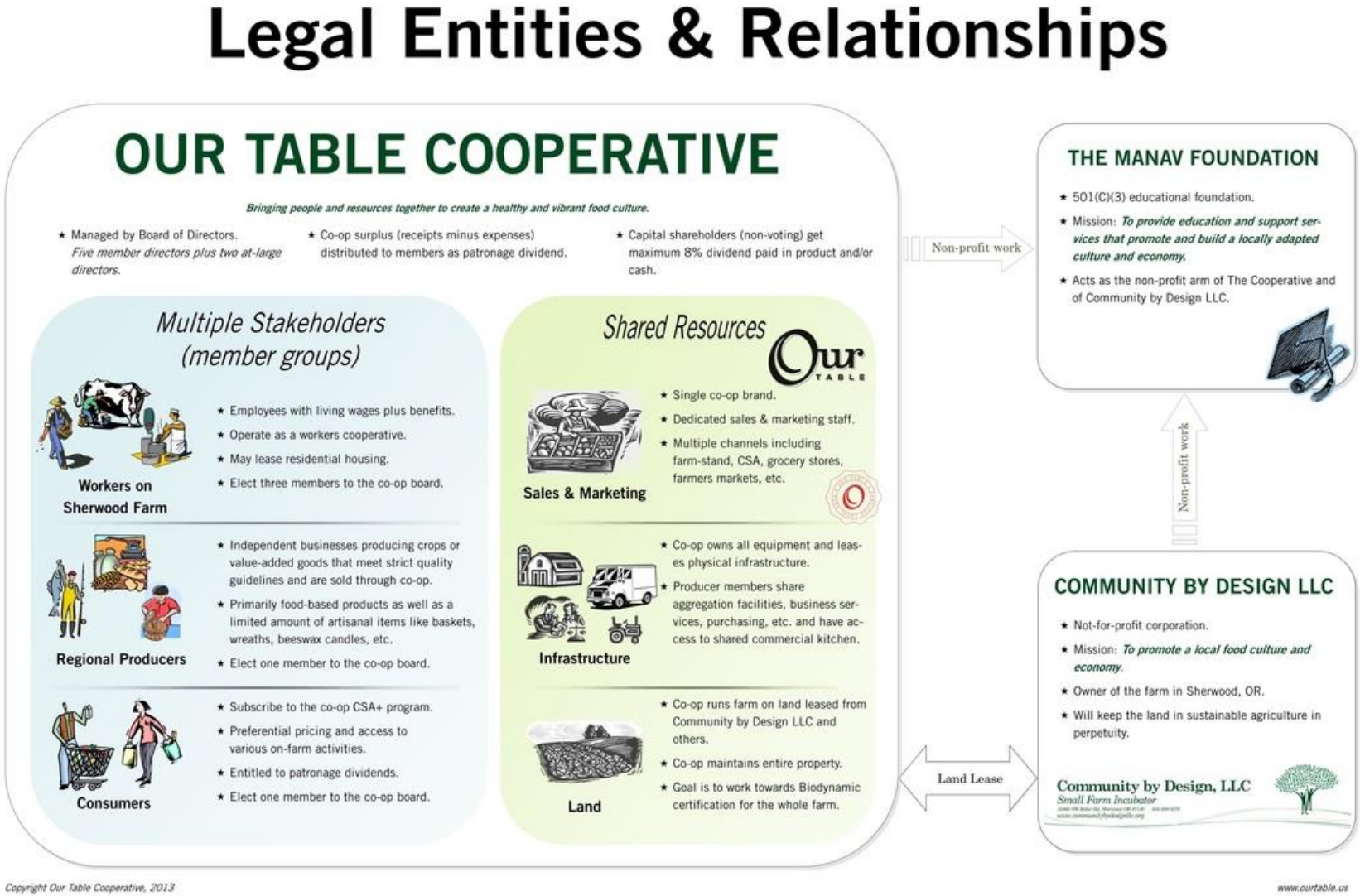

Figure B1: Our Table Cooperative legal entities & relationships

Figure B2: Our Table Cooperative value chain structure

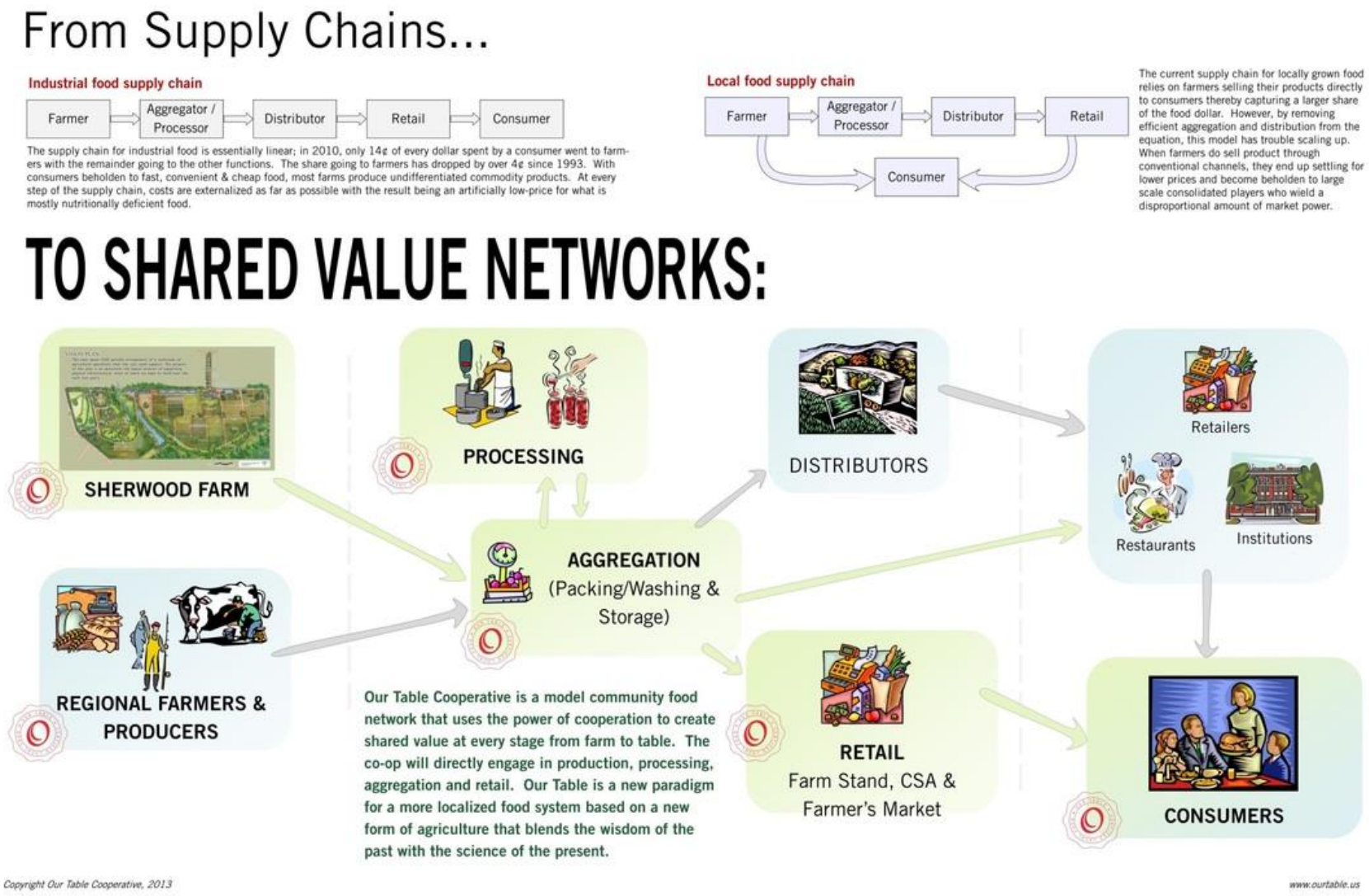

Figure B3: Our Table Cooperative governance structure

Figure B3: Our Table Cooperative governance structure