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An Analysis of Farm Labor Depiction:
Is The Local Food Movement Perpetuating Farmworker Injustice?

by

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CSA – Community Supported Agriculture

FCWA – Food Chain Workers Alliance

KYF – Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food

USDA – United States Department of Agriculture

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ABSTRACT

The food system is made up of a diverse labor pool. Those responsible for growing food are known by many different terms. Within the local food movement there is a major focus on *knowing your farmer*. This research helps identify the importance of farm labor so that future policies and local food initiatives can integrate more equitable and sustainable practices. The results from my inquiry help to provide an in-depth evaluation of how scholars and the USDA describe labor. I argue that when creating policies and practices that support the sustainability of local food, both farmworkers and farmers need to be included. I examine two questions: (1) According to scholars, how do diverse initiatives within the local food movement depict farmworkers and farmers? (2) How does the *Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food* (KYF) initiative depict farmworkers and farmers? I use discourse analysis to detail the history of the local food movement, the different representations of farmworkers and farmers, and how social justice should be linked to farm labor. Analysis methods include utilizing a discourse analysis with a scoping review to assess and collect data. I conclude with several recommendations to address labor within the local food movement; including: the definition of local needs to be expanded to establish the necessity of labor and ensure equal depiction of farmworkers and farmers so that local food initiatives include the concept of social justice.

Keywords: farmworker justice, farmer, local food movement, local food initiatives, social justice, sustainable farming, equitable food system

Chapter 1: Introduction

According to Paul Harvey in 1978 (Franke-Ruta, 2013):

God said, I need somebody strong enough to clear trees and heave bails, yet gentle enough to tame lambs and wean pigs and tend the pink-combed pullets, who will stop his mower for an hour to splint the broken leg of a meadow lark. It had to be somebody who'd plow deep and straight and not cut corners. Somebody to seed, weed, feed, breed and rake and disc and plow and plant and tie the fleece and strain the milk and replenish the self-feeder and finish a hard week's work with a five-mile drive to church. So God made a farmer.

This sentiment evokes respect and awe for the sheer magnitude of work that is required to farm. However, when Dodge/RAM used these words in a super bowl commercial to sell trucks (Ram Trucks, 2013), the imagery and words were missing a key component of farming: farmworkers. Glorifying the labor of agriculture does not adequately convey the working conditions that are endured, and instead provides a skewed depiction of the realities of farming.

My introduction to farming looked very different from the idealistic images portrayed in this commercial. As a teenager, I started volunteering at a small, organic farm that grew vegetables and raised animals. This initial experience fueled my interest in studying community food systems. Once I graduated from college, I started working at a nonprofit organization that hosted a summer program for inner-city youth. The summer program revolved around farming and with the help of the youth I managed a quarter of an acre of land growing vegetables for farmers' markets. The following year, the program expanded and we started a small Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operation and increased our production by expanding to an acre of land. Although the crew and the land mass grew, there was no additional help outside of the 12 youth enrolled in the program. They would help weed, plant, and harvest for about 20 hours a

week. After the second year of growing under these conditions, I developed carpal tunnel and back problems. If I continued farming in this manner, I knew I would be crippled well before I reached old age. The transition away from farming was extremely challenging for me. Following my last season, I started to wonder about the viability of farming as an occupation where one can make a living wage and maintain decent health. I began to question why working on a farm is so underappreciated. Is it because it is mostly done by low paid farmworkers who have to work long hours just to make a decent wage? Is the exploitation of farm labor a necessary aspect of farming? These questions led me to investigate the forms of farm labor to understand what might hinder one's success in making a career in agriculture.

Through reading and learning more about farming as a career, I noticed that farm laborers are left out of many discussions. As a supporter of local agriculture, and having been part of the labor force behind farmers' markets and CSAs, I started to wonder why *farmers* were always featured prominently within the local food movement¹ as the owner, worker, and sole proprietor of their farms. Always focusing on the narrow vision of a *farmer* obscures the rest of the labor force working in the fields. In order to explore these questions, I decided to investigate the discourse and representation of *farmworkers and farmers* within the local food movement. In order to narrow my focus, I chose to analyze how the USDA and food system scholars describe labor under the umbrella of the local food movement.

One purpose of this investigation is to better understand the representations of farm labor so that future policies and local food initiatives can integrate more equitable and sustainable practices, to promote the livelihoods of farmworkers and farmers, and address farm labor injustices. In order to accomplish these goals, this research details the history of the local food

¹ I use the phrase *local food movement* to describe all food and farming initiatives that bring consumers and producers together who are within the same proximity, regardless of geographic area.

movement, the different representation of farmworkers and farmers, and how farm labor can be understood through the lens of social justice.

The context, methods, and results are previewed below. Beginning with the *Background and Significance* section, I establish the history and rise of the local food phenomenon, the fine distinction between farmworkers and farmers, and how social justice is often overlooked within the local food movement. The *Methodology and Methods* section describes my personal epistemology, how I approach the inquiry process and how the results are analyzed. I utilize a pragmatic methodology combined with a scoping review to assess and collect data, by using discourse analysis. These methods offer an analysis of 37 scholarly articles and the USDA's "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food" (KYF) Compass document. There are two main questions and several sub-questions that are posed in order to assess how scholars and the USDA address labor within the local food movement.

1. According to scholars, how do diverse initiatives within the local food movement depict farmworkers and farmers?
 - a. How are the goals of the local food movement defined?
 - b. What terminology is used to describe farm labor?
 - c. In what context is farm labor discussed?
 - d. Is there a distinction between farmworkers and farmers?
2. How does the KYF initiative depict farmworkers and farmers?
 - a. What are the goals of the KYF initiative?
 - b. Which local food efforts are included in the KYF initiative?
 - c. Does the KYF initiative incorporate social justice?

The *Results, Analysis, and Contribution* section provides the answers to these questions and presents several recommendations as to how the local food movement could better address labor. These recommendations include: standardizing the benefits of local, ensuring equal depiction of farmworkers and farmers, and addressing the lack of social justice within the sustainability premise of local food initiatives. The analysis includes an in-depth evaluation of how scholars and the USDA describe and depict labor. I argue that understanding this viewpoint

is vital to create a more equitable food system. In order to address labor inequalities between farmworkers and farmers, it is important to identify the current discourse. I conclude by showing that the language used by scholars and the USDA has the potential to encourage these same terms being repeated throughout society. This research provides a foundation of knowledge that will help broaden the dialogue of sustainability and equity within the food system.

Chapter 2: Background and Significance

This section outlines the local food movement and the social justice issues that impact the agricultural industry. Addressing the differences between *farmworkers and farmers* helps to frame the issue of labor within the local as a farmworker injustice problem. The injustices experienced by farmworkers decreases the likelihood of a long-term career in agriculture.

2.1 Local Food as a Movement

The popularity of local food can partly be attributed to a need to create an alternative to the globalized food system. According to Johnson & Endres (2011) the local food movement is a consumer driven movement to purchase products from areas where they reside (p. 56). The local food movement is about connecting people to their food sources in order to strengthen the community (DeLind, 2006, p. 123). This movement is fueled by different initiatives, which “have blossomed as a sector of activity with a specific focus on expanding alternatives and transforming the conventional approach to the way we produce and consume food” (Connelly, Markey, & Roseland, 2011, p. 313). Local food initiatives often focus on highlighting the benefits to farmers and consumers without addressing many other food system participants and workers. Within the scholarly community, there are many food system scholars who caution others against forgetting to analyze the benefits and effectiveness of the local food movement. Cautioning others to conduct a thorough analysis is extremely important, although these scholars rarely include farm labor when discussing inherent issues within the local food movement (Born & Purcell, 2006; DeLind, 2011; Giombolini et al., 2011). According to Hines (2000), LaTrobe and Acott (2000), Pacione (1997), Pretty (1998), and Shuman (1998), local food advocates often

describe local agriculture as the solution to the problems of the industrialized food system (as cited in Hinrichs, 2003, p. 34). Differentiating between locally and industrially produced foods will only perpetuate the discrepancies between these two production methods. Distinguishing something as “local” does not guarantee fair labor practices or incorporate the premise of sustainable agriculture. The fact that local does not guarantee fair labor practices, while local food is often promoted as being sustainable and better for everyone is a contradiction within the discourse of the local food movement.

The benefits of local food are promoted through local food initiatives and often encouraged through campaigns such as, “vote with your fork” (Pollan, 2006) and the idea that consumers are able to simply purchase their way to a more sustainable food system. This is problematic because it prohibits many from participating based on their income levels and also encourages the public to provide a short-term solution instead of a long-term vision that includes everyone. Within the local food movement, the concept of sustainability has become a focal point and a response to the degradation of the industrialized food system. However, relying on the concept of sustainability without identifying the underlying assumptions embedded within terms such as “local,” the local food movement could be recreating the unsustainable practices it is trying to change that are inherent within the industrialized food system.

Local food has become an increasingly popular trend demonstrated by the fact that from 1994 to 2014 there was a 371% increase in the number of listed farmers’ markets (USDA-AMS-Marketing Services Division, 2014). There has also been a substantial increase in the number of CSA enterprises. In 2008, there were just under two thousand farms listed as operating CSAs (C. Brown & Miller, 2008, p. 1296) and as of 2014 there are just over six thousand farms operating CSAs (LocalHarvest, 2014). These numbers establish that the local food movement has gained

momentum over the past few years, with a substantial increase in farms marketing directly to consumers at the local scale. According to the USDA (Martinez et al., 2010, p. 33), the benefits of local food include:

- Locally grown foods have higher or better quality.
- Locally grown products are fresher.
- Positive relationships have developed with producers.
- Customer requests have been received for locally grown products.
- The availability of unique or specialty products.

These benefits are all geared toward the consumer and community, although they do not seem to be tailored to farmworkers. The local food movement focuses on the sustainability of local food for consumers and the farmer, thus overlooking any issues around farm labor practices. The discourse around the local food movement often does not include farm labor concerns, which seems to contradict the efforts of the movement to create a better food system. Brown and Getz (2008) have hypothesized that domestic fair trade² could address issues of injustice within farm labor practices. This is a potential solution to some parts of labor injustices occurring on farms as the focus of domestic fair trade is on fairness and justice (“Domestic Fair Trade Association,” n.d.); unfortunately, the concept of domestic fair trade is far from being realized as there are many questions left unanswered. Specifically, Brown and Getz (2008) acknowledge the need for further research before this concept can become a reality (p. 20). The Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA) (2012) has identified the importance of farmworker rights and is working to end food labor injustices. FCWA lists some of the food labor injustices as low wages, part-time and temporary work, health and safety concerns, and dangerous working conditions (FCWA, 2012, p. 35). Efforts of both domestic fair trade initiatives and FCWA do not focus on the

² The domestic fair trade “primary goals are to support family-scale farming, to reinforce farmer-led initiatives such as farmer co-operatives, to ensure just conditions for agricultural workers, and to bring these groups together with mission-based traders, retailers and concerned consumers to contribute to the movement for sustainable agriculture in North America” (“Domestic Fair Trade Association,” n.d.).

specific issues facing farmworkers employed on farms that participate in the local food movement. This demonstrates that even within farm labor campaigns, those employed on farms participating in the local food movement remain invisible.

The local food movement is not without its critics, and the rampant expansion of the movement has increased the degree of scrutiny on local food initiatives. One example of a critique is the “local trap”, which indicates the over-emphasis on local and the idea that “local is presumed to be desirable” in comparison to other distribution scales (Born and Purcell, 2006). Similarly, DeLind (2006) cautions others against failing to analyze the effectiveness of the local food movement and “letting our critical guard down” (p. 273) as there is still much work that must be done to create a sustainable food system. DuPuis and Goodman (2005) echo this cautionary message and articulate the need for “democratic local food politics” (p. 360). These scholars have stressed the importance of further inquiry into the local food movement and highlighted the vital work of continuing to question the foundation and promises of the local paradigm. The questions that these scholars have voiced include: asking about who benefits from localization and what are the most likely outcomes from utilizing a specific scale such as local (Born & Purcell, 2006, p. 205) and how to ensure localism is malleable and based on the process instead of strict standards (DuPuis & Goodman, 2005, p. 369)?

Local food has become the goal of sustainable food systems, because the benefits include stimulating local commerce, saving the environment, helping farmers, and increasing access to affordable food (Schiff, 2005, p. 17). Consumers who participate in the local food system through CSAs and farmers’ markets support small “farms that are the most idealized...[but are] not required to offer the same labor protections as larger enterprises in the industrial agricultural system” (Gray, 2013, p. 49). However, since small-scale farming and sustainable agriculture is

seen as superior to industrial farming within the local food movement, these farm labor issues have not been addressed. While there are significant benefits to sustainable agriculture systems that include local food initiatives, the omission of labor practices is a significant oversight.

Within the local food movement, the assumption is that if a small-scale local farm is sustainable then it must also utilize sustainable labor practices. This idea is reinforced through the common promotion that consumers can “get to know their farmer” at farmers’ markets and CSAs.

However, without addressing labor within the benefits of local, results in a consumer that is unaware and thus unable to question the working conditions of farmworkers. The omission of labor results in an unsustainable system, which is the opposite of what local activists are working to support through the concept of buying local.

2.2 Questioning the Sustainability of the Local Food Movement

The local food movement is not without shortcomings and the most prominent issue includes social justice. The concept of a local food system is founded upon sustainable agriculture, focused on farming practices that must include the three “E’s” of sustainability: Equity, Environment and Economics as their overall framework (Allen, 2004, p. 211). Economic interests and environmental issues feature highly in the promotion of local food, but social equity has up until now only included community and consumer benefits (Gray, 2013). Farmworker injustice demonstrates an unfortunate deviation from the social equity component of sustainability. I argue that the local food movement cannot be part of the sustainable agriculture food system if it does not include the three “E’s” for sustainability and without social justice for farmworkers and farmers, the local food movement should not be considered sustainable. According to Allen et al. (2003), there is a combined effort “to create food systems that are environmentally sustainable, economically viable, and socially just” (p. 61). The continued

omission of the farmworker and promotion of the farmer aligns with the goal of increasing the economic viability of a farm. The economic viability of a farm could increase due to the expansion of local marketing efforts of CSAs and farmers' markets; but it is unclear if these efforts include social justice or is only economically focused. The inconsistency has been identified before as "farmers' market participants negotiate contradictions between economic strategies and their just sustainability goals" (Alkon, 2008, p. 497). Justice, social equity, and economic sustainability need not contradict each other.

2.3 Farmworker and Farmer Distinction

The distinction between farmworkers and farmers is a social issue because farmworkers are often excluded within the value system of agriculture. One of the major barriers to increasing the value of farm labor within agriculture is the distinction between the identities of a farmworker versus a farmer. There has been much discussion over what actually constitutes "real farming" and Clark, Munroe, and Mansfield (2010) interviewed farmers to determine a definition. They state:

The interviews indicated that on the whole, real farmers have been defined as growing the 'right' things, conducting appropriate activities around production, making a living off the farm, carrying on a legacy of family production and being able to pass it down to the next generation. (p. 256)

According to this definition, I was not involved in "real farming" as my personal experience included a range of positions: farm manager, production manager, and hourly farmworker. This narrow definition further exemplifies my interest in questioning the sustainability of farm labor practices within the local food movement. Focusing on the farmer and defining "real farming," without addressing farmworkers, creates a skewed depiction of how our food is grown.

Differentiating between the term farmworker and farmer may seem insignificant, however, these

titles can signify both the importance and status of the individual or the lack of wealth and knowledge. There would not be a distinction unless there was a significant difference.

2.4 Impact on Farmworkers

Including farmworkers in the local food movement could help demonstrate the significant impact and contribution these individuals have in producing local food. Justice for farmworkers is important, as their wellbeing is a reflection of their working conditions as many farmworkers experience a range of health issues (Allen & Melcarek, 2013). One study by Borre, Ertle, and Graff (2010) lists food insecurity and obesity as severe issues that many farmworkers experience (p. 459). Further issues that farmworkers encounter are documented by the U.S. Dept. of Labor, which finds that farmworkers are exposed to high levels of toxic chemicals such as pesticides and fertilizers (as cited in Lo & Jacobson, 2011, p. 66). These issues can have significant negative consequences for farmworkers and their families. As stated above, a sustainable food system should be sustainable for consumers and producers alike. Without justice for farmworkers, local farms could embody very similar labor standards to large-scale industrial farming operations. Within the local food movement, it is important to ensure that local food initiatives do not lead to an increase in inequity between farmworkers and farmers or poor working conditions. Sub par working conditions include below minimum wage, no sick days, inadequate housing (employer provided), and general exclusion from most labor laws (Gray, 2013). The local food movement should promote more equitable and fair labor practices that align with their overall goal of food system reform and sustainability. Scholars discussing the sustainability of local agriculture should consider both farmworkers and farmers when discussing the importance of “knowing your farmer.” Without ensuring that sustainable practices and policies are included, the long-term career potential of farmworkers might be compromised.

Instead of focusing only on farmers, farmworkers should also be included by the local food movement when highlighting the benefits of local food.

2.5 Farmworker Injustice

The industrialized food system established the foundation for a structure where farmers own or manage the land, and the majority of the work is completed using machinery and seasonal wage labor. The industrialization of farming has led to the current reality where the farmer is often the center of attention. One example of this conventional wisdom is an advertisement for Dodge/RAM trucks. The commercial first aired in the 2013 Super Bowl (Ram Trucks, 2013) and featured an original speech articulated by Paul Harvey in 1978 “So God Made a Farmer” quoted at the beginning of this thesis. The message portrayed through the speech and images honors both the hard work and the dedication required for a successful career in agriculture, while simultaneously obscuring the realities of farm work. The Dodge/Ram commercial encourages the glorification of farmers and promotes an ideal image of farming. Gray (2013) discusses this concept when summarizing the food movement as the “American romance with farming... [where] those who choose to work the land are seen as returning to nature, redeeming nutritious food, and shaping community” (p. 6). The example from Gray (2013) demonstrates how challenging it is to identify where the romance with agriculture ends and where the realities begin. While farmers are featured in a positive way, it seems as if farmworkers are not included in the romantic image of agriculture.

Excluding farmworkers may be purposeful or simply the result of the industrialization of agriculture where some commodity crops are fully mechanized. The exclusion of farmworkers could stem from their lack of rights and high exposure to extreme conditions such as “excessive heat with inadequate shade or water” (Allen & Melcarek, 2013, p. 4). Depending on the type of

crop (e.g. vegetables and fruits) the tasks associated with farm labor are similar on both small, local, sustainable farms and large-scale industrialized operations. Off the farm, these similarities end and the perception by many is that food from a small local farmer is superior to anything that could be produced by the industrialized food system. Gray (2013) articulates the perception that produce from a small local farmer is superior as “Food movement advocates and consumers, driven to forge alternatives to industrial agribusiness, have neglected the labor economy that underpins ‘local’ food production” (p. 2).

2.6 Addressing Farmworker Injustice

Understanding who is responsible for the work of growing food is one of the reasons that consumers choose local, with the idea that they can “know their farmer.” There is a lot of promotion of the farmer within the local food movement, and yet highlighting the work of farmers does not address the efforts of farmworkers. I examine scholarly depictions of the local food movement and the local food policy initiative created by the USDA: *Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food (KYF)*. Farm owners and farm businesses are very well placed to benefit from the creation of a movement that supports their business and sells their products through the concept of KYF. In 2009, the USDA created the KYF initiative to help promote local foods which “strengthens the connection between farmers and consumers to better meet critical goals, including reinvigorating rural economics, promoting job growth, and increasing healthy food access in America” (USDA, 2012, p. 17). Specifically, I ask the following research questions:

- According to scholars, how do diverse initiatives within the local food movement depict farmworkers and farmers?
- How does the KYF initiative depict farmworkers and farmers?

This research examines how farm labor is addressed by scholars within the local food movement to better understand the importance of farm labor so that future policies and local food initiatives

can integrate more equitable and sustainable practices, to promote the livelihoods of farmworkers and farmers, and address farm labor injustices. I hope to help direct future inquiry and policy efforts within the local food movement to create more sustainable and equitable practices that increase the visibility of all who labor in the field.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

This section describes my epistemological approach and an explanation of the research design. I define the reasoning, research questions, study design, and data collection methods used in this inquiry.

3.1 Epistemology

I hope to expand current and future inquiry by conducting research to broaden the dialogue of sustainability. Because of my personal experience with farm labor and the local food movement, I employ a pragmatic epistemological approach. This includes relying on the consequences of actions and situations, in which the solution is the ultimate goal while ensuring that my research questions are based on facts and data (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, I focus on the data and on determining solutions to issues that become apparent during the research process. The pragmatic approach allows me to create observations, identify theories, and address these theories through action (Morgan, 2007, p. 71). Combining this approach with a scoping review of the literature (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005) allows me to focus on the consequences of current depictions of labor within the local food movement.

Having been a farmworker, consumer, and local food activist, the concept of sustainability and social justice within the food system is a particular interest of mine. As food is a necessary requirement for life, the topic of food systems change is very personal. Therefore, the results are reviewed through a problem-centered approach, but due to the personal nature of this topic, it is challenging to eliminate all bias. However, it is important to recognize where bias might influence the research process. I strive to be especially diligent about forming conclusions

exclusively based on sound analysis. Working as a farm manager and farmworker really impacted my understanding of the food system. The following results and analysis section includes my personal experience within the food system as an active participant in the local food movement.

3.2 Methodology

In order to understand how labor is depicted within the local food movement, these two questions guide my inquiry:

- According to scholars, how do diverse initiatives within the local food movement depict farmworkers and farmers?
- How does the KYF initiative depict farmworkers and farmers?

Using a qualitative discourse analysis in tandem with a scoping literature review, allows for the omissions, descriptions, and intent of the examined texts to emerge. This analysis enables me to focus on themes that emerge through the research process, the context of the findings, and how to interpret the data based on my personal experience (Creswell, 2014, p. 18). Discourse analysis is about “how language is used...what is made available and what is excluded” (Rapley & Flick, 2008, p. 2). Scoping reviews are used across disciplines following different formats (Anderson et al., 2008). My inquiry closely follows the framework and stages described by Arksey and O’Malley (2005) as a research method aimed at identifying gaps in the existing evidence base (p. 7). The stages for this method of research includes (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005):

1. Identifying the research question
2. Identifying relevant studies
3. Study selection
4. Charting the data
5. Collating, summarizing and reporting the results

According to Creswell (2014) “literature helps substantiate the research problem, but it does not constrain the views of participants” (p.48). The use of written scholarly work and the KYF Compass document allows me to examine the local food movement as a whole, instead of focusing on the individuals within the movement. While inclusion of individual interviews could provide valuable insight into the individual perspectives on labor, I only examine literature as it provides a better understanding of how labor is depicted through the promotion of the local food movement. Using a discourse analysis enables me to focus on the language, opinions, and context of each article while identifying omissions. Interviews provide a more personal interpretation and do not provide the general overview of labor that written work can provide. It is also important to fully understand the literature and identify gaps (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005) so that future inquiry can address these omissions. The major drawback to discourse analysis is that I “must be fully aware of the origins, purpose and original audience of any document” (Grix, 2010, p. 80) and without this awareness the interpretation could be too narrow. In order to ensure this information is included in the analysis, I categorize the data and thoroughly review the articles to determine the overall purpose and motivations behind each scholar’s inquiry.

3.3 Methods

Combining a pragmatic worldview with inquiry based in scholarly articles and a report created by the USDA provides a practical approach to the issue of labor within the local food movement. Data collection provided the foundation for inquiry and Creswell (2014) states that literature “provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study as well as a benchmark for comparing the results with other findings” (p. 28). Below, I explain how I answer each of the following research questions.

3.4 Question One

1. According to scholars, how do diverse initiatives within the local food movement depict farmworkers and farmers?
 - a. How are the goals of the local food movement defined?
 - b. What terminology is used to describe farm labor?
 - c. In what context is farm labor discussed?
 - d. Is there a distinction between farmworkers and farmers?

In order to answer these questions, I conducted a scoping review of the relevant academic literature. The literature was collected through EBSCO Host focusing on five databases: Academic Search Complete, Agricola, Business Source Complete, Environment Complete, and GreenFILE. The search parameters included only full text, scholarly (peer reviewed) articles from 2000 to 2014. Each article had to include either the terms *Local food* OR *Farmworker* AND one or more of the following: *Farmer, Goals, Initiatives, Farm, Labor, Policy, Federal, Farming, or Worker*.

The initial search returned 1,922 articles (after removing duplicates), to further narrow the data, I reviewed titles to eliminate the irrelevant articles including those that mention farm-to-school, food deserts, health concerns, or countries other than the United States. I included only relevant scholarly articles with titles that pertain to local food movements, local food initiatives, farm labor, farming, farmworkers, and farmers. The remaining articles were deemed somewhat relevant, totaling 125. Reviewing the abstracts for relevant content enabled me to eliminate 39 articles leaving a total of 86 articles. In order to further narrow the number of articles, I focused on only the most recent articles published from 2010 to 2014 to create a more manageable sample size and to ensure only the most up-to-date research was reviewed. Including only the most recent articles resulted in a final total of 37 articles.

Narrowing my focus to only include academic literature and peer-reviewed scholarly articles helped to provide a specific sampling of how scholars discuss farm labor within the local

food movement. Since policy stems from academic inquiry, these articles provided a specific snapshot of the conversation on farm labor within the context of the local food movement.

The following questions were posed to each article identified through the above search terms.

- How is *local* defined?
- In what way do scholars mention *labor* and what terms do they use?
- What *local food initiatives* are mentioned and how are they described?
- How is the concept of *social justice*³ depicted?

Each article was closely reviewed in order to answer each of the questions. The responses and overview of each article was organized in a chart to ensure that the information was presented clearly and easily understood. In order to track the data, I reviewed each article to identify terms and definitions then recorded the results in a chart. Using a spreadsheet to tabulate the answers enabled me to articulate the results in an organized manner. Recurrent themes and alternative responses emerged organically through the coding process. The results are detailed in the appendix and the summary is included in the *Results, Analysis, and Contribution* section.

3.5 Question Two

2. How does the KYF initiative depict farmworkers and farmers?
 - a. What are the goals of the KYF initiative?
 - b. Which local food efforts are included in the KYF initiative?
 - c. Does the KYF initiative incorporate social justice?

The review of the academic literature provided a broad understanding of how scholars view the local food movement, but provided only part of the picture. There are vast differences between local and state government regulations and their promotion of local food. In order to conduct a relevant and focused review, I scrutinized the USDA's KYF program. The KYF

³ I identified the concept of *social justice* as including any inequities or inequality that the authors' specifically addressed, this could range from food access issues to discrimination based on race, class, and gender.

program provides a snapshot of the movement at the national level through the lens of the federal government.

The USDA created the Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food (KYF) initiative aimed at promoting local food throughout the US. Part of this initiative included the creation of a guiding document to help outline the programs purpose and goals. Within this document there are just over 80 pages detailing the current initiatives, stakeholders, and opportunities for local food. In addition to this document, there is a highly interactive website that helps to provide more recent information about KYF.

Restricting the data to a single document (the KYF Compass document) enabled me to focus on the efforts of one program run by the USDA, dedicated to marketing and raising awareness of local food. Utilizing only one document not only increases the feasibility of this analysis, but the KYF Compass document is an excellent example of the USDA's efforts to promote a local food system. This single source provides a detailed representation of how the federal government, through the arm of the USDA, interacts and participates in the local food movement.

The following questions were posed to the KYF Compass document:

- How is *local* defined?
- In what way does the KYF initiative mention *labor* and what terms are used?
- What is the *purpose* and *goal* of the program?
- What *local food initiatives* and projects are mentioned?
- How is the concept of *social justice* depicted?

The KYF Compass document was closely reviewed in order to answer each of these questions. Specifically, I assessed the concept of *social justice* by identifying any inequities that were highlighted by the KYF Compass document. Within this document, the lack of equity included anyone who is disadvantaged or without access to food. I reviewed the document and

identified terms and definitions in response to my research questions. Recording the answers was important to ensure that the results were thorough and detailed.

Chapter 4: Results, Analysis and Contribution

This section describes the results acquired through the collection and analysis of the data. My analysis focused on the depiction of farm labor by scholars and the KYF Compass document in order to understand how farmworkers and farmers are highlighted or hidden within the literature pertaining to the local food movement. The overall research questions highlighted how scholars and the USDA address (or fail to address) farm labor within the local food movement. With a greater understanding of how labor is portrayed, future policies and local food initiatives could integrate more equitable and sustainable practices to promote the livelihoods of farmworkers and address farm labor injustices.

There are several scholars who recognize that the local food movement has become exceedingly popular and that many are seemingly fixated on the benefits that local food initiatives provide. These same scholars caution against continuing blindly without further investigation, although they fail to mention farm labor among their list of concerns (Born & Purcell, 2006; DeLind, 2006, 2011; DuPuis & Goodman, 2005). Since these scholars have left labor and social justice out of their discussions on local food, I intend to insert labor and social justice into the local food conversation.

The following research questions were used to interrogate scholarly and USDA discourse around local foods. The answers to the research questions helped to assess how scholars within the local food movement describe farm labor and how much emphasis and importance is placed upon those who labor to grow food for the consumption of others.

1. According to scholars, how do diverse initiatives within the local food movement depict farmworkers and farmers?
 - a. How are the goals of the local food movement defined?
 - b. What terminology is used to describe farm labor?
 - c. In what context is farm labor discussed?
 - d. Is there a distinction between farmworkers and farmers?
2. How does the KYF initiative depict farmworkers and farmers?
 - a. What are the goals of the KYF initiative?
 - b. Which local food efforts are included in the KYF initiative?
 - c. Does the KYF initiative incorporate social justice?

Answering these questions helped to create a picture of how scholars and the USDA depict farm labor within the local food movement. The results below provide a baseline description of how much importance is placed upon local food, farm labor, and social justice.

4.1 Scholarly Article Analysis: Labor and Local

Using the steps outlined in the *Methodology and Methods* section, the selected articles were coded for relevant responses. In each article, the definition of local was identified and whether scholars assign a geographical limit to local food or focus more on the benefits of local. The next step included identifying terminology used and the context in which labor was articulated in each article. Following the assessment of labor, the inquiry included determining which local food initiatives were included and in what context these initiatives were discussed.

The first category of analysis I examined is how scholars define *local*. I found that scholars define *local* in a variety of ways and these distinctions appear to diverge into two groups. The first group explicitly outlined the parameters of local and the second group extolled the benefits of local food. Within the first group, the concept of consuming food only grown within one hundred miles was summarized by many (Farmer, 2012; Farmer et al., 2011; Fernandez et al., 2012; Jefferson-Moore et al., 2014; Mount, 2012; Peterson, 2013; Rudy, 2012; Schindler, 2012) while others placed more emphasis on the product being grown within the same general area it is consumed, such as the community, state, region, or foodshed (Angelo, 2011;

Campbell, Carlisle-Cummins, & Feenstra, 2013; Conner et al., 2013; Curtis et al., 2010; DeLind, 2011; Jefferson-Moore et al., 2014; Johnson & Endres, 2011; Reynolds-Allie & Fields, 2012; Rudy, 2012). Moving beyond the strict definition of local food, several scholars expanded on the reasons and benefits of choosing local food; the most popular responses included nutrition, health, and the environment (Angelo, 2011; Berlin, Schattman, & Hamilton, 2012; Campbell et al., 2013; DeLind, 2011; Eubanks II, 2013; Francis et al., 2013; Mallory, 2013; McEntee, 2010; Peterson, 2013; Rudy, 2012; Schindler, 2012; Shirley, 2013; Thomas & McIntosh, 2013). In eight out of the 37 articles, the definition of local signified centered around providing producers with different direct marketing solutions (Beckett & Galt, 2013; Boys & Hughes, 2013; Eubanks II, 2013; Fazzino II, Loring, & Mohammadi, 2013; Mount, 2012; O'Hara & Pirog, 2013; Reynolds-Allie & Fields, 2012; Thilmany et al., 2013) while seven articles outlined a major benefit of local food as the relationship between the farmer and the consumer (Conner et al., 2013; Curtis et al., 2010; Johnson & Endres, 2011; McEntee, 2010; Rudy, 2012; Thilmany et al., 2013; White, 2013). One article specifically included "fair treatment of farm laborers" within their list of the benefits of local food (Schindler, 2012, p. 235).

The second category of analysis I examined is how scholars describe *labor*. Through the process of examining each article, it is evident that scholars label local farmers in a variety of ways. These articles provided a general overview of the terminology used to designate the sentiment toward farm labor and I found that scholars used many different words to describe farm labor within each article. Scholars vary in their choice of words used to describe labor within the local food movement. Every article used the term *farmer*, while the majority of the scholars also included *producer* as a descriptor (See Figure 1, Appendix, p. 50). Fourteen articles used the word *grower* to describe an individual engaged in agricultural work, while only six

articles mentioned *farmworkers* when discussing labor within the local food movement (Beckett & Galt, 2013; Campbell et al., 2013; Galt, 2013; Guilbault, Yee, & Schmidt, 2014; Pilgeram, 2011; White, 2013). There were a few scholars who deviated from these terms and instead differentiated between types of labor, including *wage*, *un-paid*, or *farm laborers* (Eubanks II, 2013; Lang, 2010; Pilgeram, 2011; Schindler, 2012; White, 2013). Alternatives to traditional labor models included the use of volunteers and interns to accomplish the farm tasks, and there were six articles that described a free or cheap labor pool to various degrees depending on their overall topic (Albrecht et al., 2013; DeLind, 2011; Farmer et al., 2011; Galt, 2013; Janssen, 2010; Lang, 2010; Mallory, 2013; Pilgeram, 2011; White, 2013). In 14 out of 37 articles, scholars chose to use the general descriptor of *labor* to represent individuals engaged in agricultural work.

The third category of analysis I examined is how scholars discuss *labor* within the context of their article topics. I found that outside of word choice, scholars highlighted labor very differently; some of them focused on farm labor issues, while others briefly mentioned labor and instead focused on their main topic without fully addressing agricultural labor. Many scholars signified the importance placed upon the relationship between the farmer and the consumer (Albrecht et al., 2013; DeLind, 2011; Farmer et al., 2011; Jefferson-Moore et al., 2014; Johnson & Endres, 2011; Mallory, 2013; McEntee, 2010; Mount, 2012; Peterson, 2013; Rudy, 2012; Schindler, 2012). The relationship between the farmer and consumer was highlighted in nine out of 37 articles, as the scholars described that farmers and producers benefit economically from the market opportunities that local food initiatives provide (Farmer et al., 2011; Fazzino II et al., 2013; Guilbault, Yee, & Schmidt, 2014; Johnson & Endres, 2011; McEntee, 2010; O'Hara & Pirog, 2013; Reynolds-Allie & Fields, 2012; Shirley, 2013; Thilmany et al., 2013). There was no

mention of the importance of the relationship between the farmworker and the consumer. The concept of scale and how the size of the farming operations affected production methods and labor practices was mentioned in 10 out of 37 articles (Albrecht et al., 2013; Boys & Hughes, 2013; Campbell et al., 2013; Farmer, 2012; Francis et al., 2013; Mount, 2012; Peterson, 2013; Schindler, 2012; Shirley, 2013; Thomas & McIntosh, 2013). Few scholars examined the “self-exploitative” practices of farmers⁴ that are common within local food systems (Beckett & Galt, 2013; Galt, 2013; Pilgeram, 2011) and the concept of exploitation such as overworking, underpaying, and the lack of employment benefits within agricultural labor (Beckett & Galt, 2013; Pilgeram, 2011; White, 2013).

The fourth category of analysis I examined is which local food initiatives scholars discussed throughout their articles. I found that there are many different types of local food initiatives and these scholars primarily focused on initiatives that predominately impact producers. These initiatives included: CSA; farm-to-family; farm-to-institution; farm-to-plate; farm-to-restaurant; farm-to-school; farm-to-table; farm-to-work; field-to-fork; field-to-plate; field-to-table; and farmers’ market. There was a high level of agreement across the articles examined that farmers’ markets provide a direct market for producers and consumers. The agreement is demonstrated by the fact that 34 out of 37 articles mention farmers’ markets as a major component of the local food movement market venues. The analysis also showed that CSA operations were a key component of the local food movement as 26 out of 37 articles mentioned CSAs. The scholars varied in their account and representation of these local food initiatives. There were a smaller number of scholars who used the concept of local food initiatives as a whole to describe the local food movement. Only 12 out of 37 articles used local

⁴ Farmer self-exploitation is when self-employed farmers work in excess without adequate compensation for their labor (Galt, 2013, p. 347).

food initiatives to signify the local food movement, since these initiatives are components of the movement (Boys & Hughes, 2013; Campbell et al., 2013; Curtis et al., 2010; DeLind, 2011; Eubanks II, 2013; Farmer, 2012; Fernandez et al., 2012; Janssen, 2010; Mallory, 2013; McEntee, 2010; Mount, 2012; O'Hara & Pirog, 2013). A few articles highlighted how local food initiatives represent a response to the globalization and industrialization of the food system (Angelo, 2011; Francis et al., 2013; Johnson & Endres, 2011; McEntee, 2010; Rudy, 2012). The economic benefits were important in 11 out of 37 articles as these scholars demonstrated how local food initiatives are economically beneficial to both producers and consumers (Beckett & Galt, 2013; Boys & Hughes, 2013; Farmer et al., 2011; Fazzino II et al., 2013; Fernandez et al., 2012; Galt, 2013; Pilgeram, 2011; Reynolds-Allie & Fields, 2012; Thilmany et al., 2013; Thomas & McIntosh, 2013; White, 2013).

The final category of analysis I examined is how scholars address social justice. I found that these scholars either identified social justice concerns or did not address any aspect of social justice. On the topic of labor within the local food movement, social justice is extremely important and several of the scholars demonstrated this importance and identified issues within the food system as social justice issues. Specifically, Albrecht et al. (2013) noted that "The reliance of many alternative food enterprises on migrant workers, interns, volunteers, or self-exploitative and/or family labor suggest that ideals of social and economic justice in alternative food systems are not easily achieved" (p. 154). This realization acknowledges the current problem and addressed the limitations in working towards a more socially just food system through alternatives to the industrialized food system. Similarly, Galt (2013) discussed the inequity between producers and consumers, arguing that farmworkers and farmers earn much less than their customers (p. 361). The discrepancy between class was further examined by Katz

(2010) as eating “local and organic or sustainably raised food is pronounced time and again as an elitist endeavor, barely attainable by the middle class and only comfortably attainable by people of wealth” (p. 376). The division perpetuated through local food initiatives impacts both producers and consumers. Differences exist due to “racial, gender, and class discrepancies in who participates in practices of locavorism⁵ and the local food movement” (Mallory, 2013, p. 175) are allowed to continue without being rectified. These examples of inequity and inequality are further solidified by scholars who noted separate but similar issues such as food access, food sovereignty, and food justice (Angelo, 2011; Berlin et al., 2012; DeLind, 2011; Fazzino II et al., 2013; Francis et al., 2013; Guilbault et al., 2014; Katz, 2010; Mallory, 2013; McEntee, 2010; Thomas & McIntosh, 2013). Even though the majority of the articles mentioned social justice, 14 out of 37 articles did not address any aspect of social justice (Conner et al., 2013; Curtis et al., 2010; Farmer, 2012; Farmer et al., 2011; Janssen, 2010; Jefferson-Moore et al., 2014; Johnson & Endres, 2011; Lang, 2010; Mount, 2012; O’Hara & Pirog, 2013; Reynolds-Allie & Fields, 2012; Schindler, 2012; Shirley, 2013; Thilmany et al., 2013).

Table 1. Five categories of scholarly article analysis.

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5
How do scholars define local?	How do scholars describe labor?	In what context to scholars discuss labor?	What local food initiatives do scholars mention?	How do scholars address social justice?

4.2 Scholarly Article Discussion

As shown in Table 1, the five categories of analysis prompted the following discussion. I found that the concept of local appears to be fluid, one that fluctuates depending upon the

⁵ According to Mallory (2013) “Locavorism supports local economies, offers a more intimate and ecologically-aware relationship with our food, and promotes eating practices that enhance rather than degrade environmental and human health, while also providing meaningful consumer participation in practices of ecological stewardship, access to healthier food, and opportunities for robust engagement in civic and community life.” (p. 172).

intentions and motivations of the individuals involved or the movement itself (Campbell et al., 2013, p. 129). Therefore, the benefits and reasons to promote a local food system also adhere to the same fluidity as the definition of local. The purpose and audience of each article clearly determines how the scholars approach the subject of local, as well as highlights the terms used to describe farm labor. Since farmers are mentioned in every article, scholars associate *farmers* with the local food movement. *Farmer* is the most common descriptor, although scholars also included *producer*, and *grower* when discussing farm labor. Few scholars described the differences between *farmworkers* and *farmers*, resulting in a skewed representation of who actually is engaged with farming within the local food movement. According to the most common terms used by scholars, *farmers* are the ones who mainly work to provide local food for consumers. This notion is further strengthened by the emphasis that scholars placed upon the relationship between the farmers and consumers. Relationships between farmers and consumers are possible because of the construct of local food initiatives, which disproportionately included farmers' markets and CSA operations (See Figure 2, Appendix, p. 50). These initiatives do not acknowledge *farmworkers*, which perpetuates the invisibility of agricultural labor outside of the *farmer*.

Twenty-three out of 37 articles addressed social justice issues and many of these emphasize diversity such as class, race, and gender when comparing farmworkers, farmers, and consumers. Inequality still exists and is perpetuated within the local food movement, as the distinctions between *farmworkers* and *farmers* demonstrate the strikingly different respect each position garners. The scale and size of the farm does not change the infinite diversity that can be found among agricultural workers and yet I found that instead of a diverse labor pool with many

different positions, the terms used to describe those who labor in the food system mainly represent *farmers* only.

4.3 KYF Analysis: Local Food and Labor?

The KYF initiative is outlined on their website within the umbrella of the USDA, and further explained through the 80-page KYF Compass document detailing the goals, mission, and purpose of KYF. The KYF Compass document is a guide filled with several case studies of farmers involved in local food. The KYF Compass document serves as a visual aid to inform the reader about the benefits of local and regional food production. The research process entailed reviewing the KYF Compass document in order to identify the definition of local, the terminology used, and the context in which labor is described. Following the assessment of labor, it was important to review which local food initiatives were included and how these initiatives were discussed. Recurrent themes and responses emerged organically through the coding process. Table 2 outlines the five main categories that I investigated within the KYF Compass document.

Table 2. Five categories of KYF Compass document analysis.

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5
What are the KYF program goals?	How is local defined?	How is labor described?	Which local food initiatives are highlighted?	How is social justice addressed?

The first category of analysis is how the KYF Compass document describes their program goals. I found that the KYF Compass document introduced the concept of local, the increase in popularity of local over the past few years, and why local food is important. The KYF initiative was created “to share information, collaborate on joint projects, communicate transparently with the public, and fulfill mandates related to local and regional food as

effectively as possible” (USDA, 2012, p. 9). In order to accomplish this goal, the program aims to promote local food initiatives and bolster programs that facilitate connections between consumers and the people who grow our food (USDA, 2012, p. 5). The KYF Compass document described its purpose to be a “guide to help stakeholders navigate USDA resources and efforts related to local and regional food systems” (USDA, 2012, p. 6). This guide provided the reader with several personal farmer and producer stories and it “supports new efforts, and coordinates USDA’s work to harness the enthusiasm for local and regional food and develop new market opportunities for all of agriculture” (USDA, 2012, p. 79). These representations included the term *workers* in only two instances in the entire document (USDA, 2012, p. 14, p. 38). My analysis suggests that these goals were aimed at beginning farmers and caters to their entrepreneurial spirit. The KYF initiative described several case studies that demonstrate the feasibility and popularity of local food. This further promotes local as being beneficial to the producer and the KYF initiative assists by compiling resources; fostering collaboration, efficiency and responsiveness; and encouraging the national conversation about where our food comes from (USDA, 2012, p. 18-19).

The second category of analysis is how the KYF Compass document defined local. I found that the KYF Compass document extensively detailed the initiatives that comprise the local food movement. This document examined the connections between consumers and producers which could be likened to the value webs described by Block et al. (2008)⁶. Specifically, the KYF Compass document stated that “Local and regional food systems typically centralize within a specific region all of the activities associated with producing, processing, distributing and marketing foods” (USDA, 2012, p. 7). One interesting aspect about

⁶ “Value webs” depict the connections and actions that arise in the expansion of the local food movement (Block et al., 2008, p. 380). Unlike a typical supply chain, the concept of a web allows for movement of goods, services, and benefits from all directions.

the definition of local is that the KYF Compass document stated that regional and local are synonymous terms which can be used interchangeably (USDA, 2012, p. 7). The KYF document stated that communities can gain from a local food system, as the benefits included increased employment, access to fresh produce, a healthier economy, more business ideas, and ensuring that the money stays in the community (USDA, 2012, p. 79). In terms of defining local, KYF did state that it is up to each community and area to decide what local means to them (USDA, 2012, p. 8). This sentiment highlights an observation that “there is no clear agreement on exactly what counts as local food” (Campbell et al., 2013, p. 129). According to the KYF Compass document, the definition of local changed depending on the circumstances.

The third category of analysis is how the KYF Compass document described labor. I found that throughout the KYF Compass document there were several different words used to describe agricultural labor. These included: *farmers*, *ranchers*, *producers*, *agri-business owners*, *workers*, and *family farmers*. The most prevalent terms included *farmer*, *rancher*, and *producer*. These titles were used consistently and in many different contexts. Unlike the scholarly articles, the KYF Compass did not use the word *labor* to describe the general concept of agricultural work. There was a focus on the many benefits of a local food system, both to producers and consumers. The KYF Compass document presented photos and stories describing the amazing feats of farmers and ranchers, which I interpret as giving the impression that they were glorifying the lives of farmers. The glorification was evident in this pronouncement:

All of America's farmers and ranchers are stewards of the land. Local food producers play a unique role as agricultural ambassadors through their direct interactions with consumers, and by helping non-farming Americans understand and appreciate the role that all farmers and ranchers play in protecting natural resources (USDA, 2012, p. 39).

There are several featured individuals and organizations promoted throughout the document that demonstrated the reverence and significance placed upon their identity. The concept of meeting

a farmer is encouraged within local and regional food systems as they allow “Americans [to] reconnect with all of agriculture” (USDA, 2012, p. 11). *Labor* is mentioned through the increase in jobs, although the conditions and long-term employment options of these jobs are not discussed. Local food might bring more jobs, but these jobs may not be permanent, well-paying positions. The premise behind KYF is the promotion of anyone who produces food. Promoting workers in agriculture is exactly what is needed within the local food movement. KYF promotes the idea and concept of labor, and continued to highlight how important it is to converse and understand the people behind the food (USDA, 2012, p. 19).

The fourth category of analysis is which local food initiatives are highlighted by the KYF Compass document. I found that many different local food initiatives are represented throughout the document including: CSA programs; farm-to-institution; farm-to-school; farm-to-table; and farmers’ markets. These initiatives were presented by the KYF initiative as methods or strategies that could help improve infrastructure and increase the capacity of food systems across local and regional areas (USDA, 2012, p. 21).

The final category of analysis is how the KYF Compass document addressed social justice. I found that the KYF Compass document did not specifically address social justice in relation to local food. Examining the text further, I found nuances of social justice issues that are highlighted within the document. There is one paragraph that described how local marketing opportunities could help “disadvantaged farmers” (p. 13). Using the term “disadvantaged farmers” demonstrated to me that the KYF Compass document considers local as a solution to help those in need that might not survive or prosper without a local market. The only other reference that I could link to an aspect of social justice issues is when the KYF Compass continued to promote local because it can provide healthy food to those without access (USDA,

2012, p. 36). Therefore, according to the KYF Compass document, local food systems create markets for all farmers, including “disadvantaged farmers,” in conjunction with providing access to individuals in need of food. Although the main goal of the KYF initiative is to promote and provide resources for the increase of local food systems, the lack of social justice references demonstrates that local does not result in a sustainable food system. Providing resources for the expansion of the local food movement is important and these resources should be made available to all and ensure that social justice issues are addressed instead of omitted. The omission of social justice concerns within the context of local food demonstrates one of the issues surrounding the promotion of local food.

4.4 KYF Compass Document Discussion

To summarize, the KYF Compass document:

- Works to promote building a local food system and facilitates and encourages collaboration between growers and consumers.
- Detailed how their efforts are focused on working to help increase and expand local food initiatives.
- Provided a persuasive argument for expanding the local food system through the vivid depiction of the benefits to farmers and consumers.
- Does not incorporate social justice concerns in their depiction of the local food system.

Discussing these main points is important. Especially since these statements are authored by the USDA. Who can disagree with the romanticized vision of a better and local food system, especially when it is promoted by a Federal government agency? The authority of the USDA could prevent disagreement with an initiative that helps communities become self-sufficient and encourages them to strengthen their economy. Especially since the programs and grants depicted by the KYF Compass seem to increase the livelihoods of farmers and producers and encouraged them to start new businesses, thus expanding their efforts for the benefit of all. The local food

initiatives that are mentioned match many of those listed by scholars described above. However, there is not a focus on social justice within the KYF Compass document. There are a few places that recognize disadvantaged individuals, producers and consumers alike. The short acknowledgement of varying levels of social equity does not adequately address the problems within the food system. Highlighting the positive benefits of the KYF initiative is potentially problematic because it does not address any negative aspects of local food. The KYF initiative has the potential to address inequalities within local food, such as providing a much more comprehensive depiction of how labor is impacted by initiatives within the local food movement.

4.5 Discussion

Several themes emerged within the scholarly articles and the KYF Compass document. This section outlines the overall themes identified in the analysis including: the local food movement focuses on the farmer without mentioning farmworkers; how the concept of “knowing your farmer” does not result in an equitable and socially just food system; and the observation that social justice is often overlooked by scholars and the USDA when discussing the local food movement.

The analysis highlighted the inclusion of farmers and exclusion of farmworkers in local food discourse. The most common term used to describe labor within the local food movement is *farmer*. The terms used throughout all of the examined scholarly articles is visually displayed and interpreted in Figure 1 (Appendix, p. 50). Since the relationship between producers and consumers is often the focus among scholars and the USDA, this is an area of opportunity. Understanding the current depiction of labor allows all involved stakeholders (scholars, practitioners, activists, government, etc.) to work toward a more balanced and equitable approach to promoting local food. The terms used to describe labor within academic articles and the KYF

Compass document too often minimized the importance of farmworkers. The focus was on the farmer, while farmworkers need to be included as well. Farmworkers and farmers are integral to the production of food and it is time that both are acknowledged for their labor. A farmer is ultimately responsible for the agricultural production process, and it is the farmworkers who carry out the daily tasks necessary for a bountiful crop

The lack of social justice within the local food movement is most troublesome, as social equity is listed among the benefits and reasons for the alternative food movement. Without social equity, the local food movement could replicate the social stratification that occurred with the rise of the industrialized food system. Farmworker injustices can occur at all scales and it is important to address these inequities when contemplating the overall benefits of local.

Although the local food movement mainly depicts the farmer, there are many more individuals who are responsible for getting the food from the field to the table. Simply “knowing your farmer” does not guarantee that the farmer actually grew the food, or practices effective food safety techniques. The farmer is only a representative of who takes financial responsibility for the farming operation. There are farmworkers, apprentices, laborers, and multiple growers who are also responsible for growing local food. Building trust with the farmer does not guarantee that the farmworkers and farm laborers are treated properly; although the customer usually assumes that by “knowing the farmer” they can gauge their character and farming practices. Ideally, scholars, practitioners, and activists should move beyond just “knowing their farmer.” I argue that by including farmworkers in the depiction of labor within the local food movement one can benefit even more from acknowledging their farmworkers in addition to their farmers.

4.6 Contribution

There is an increased effort to improve the food system through local food. However, this is problematic because local rarely includes the concept of labor. Nonetheless, local food systems have been presented as a viable option, which has sparked a larger movement to promote local as a lifestyle. This increase in the number of local food initiatives should increase the overall sustainability of the food system, but it is unlikely to unless local food initiatives are founded upon the three “E’s” of sustainability, Equity, Environment and Economics, as Allen (2004, p. 211) notes. Following this premise of sustainability, local food initiatives must include labor if agricultural operations are to comply with the equity component of sustainability. Without addressing labor concerns, local may only be sustainable for the owner/farmer and the consumer. The main issue with focusing on farmers is that there is too much value placed upon them while simultaneously, the efforts of farmworkers remain hidden from public view. This section outlines my contribution and recommendations for addressing the issue of labor within the local food movement. I recommend expanding the definition of local food to be more inclusive and that future research should incorporate the experiences of farmworkers.

My research shows that the language and terminology used by scholars and the USDA is problematic because they have the potential to “set the tone” for the local food movement as they influence the participants and proponents of local. I think that in order to address these issues, scholars, practitioners, and activists need to change the conversation and advocate for more relevant descriptors. The first step in addressing inequity is to identify these issues. This research provides an accurate identification of the current situation. The academic literature and KYF Compass document use similar language when referring to the men and women who grow food for consumers. A possible solution would be to use promotion tactics that include more than a

farmer or producer, so that the local food movement could establish sustainable practices for all. Because advocates of local mostly emphasize the relationship between the producer and consumer, it makes it more difficult to question who actually grew the food alongside the farmer. In short, the current limited definition of local acts to further obscure, rather than illuminate, oppressive labor structures.

Few scholars described the predicament and experiences of farmworkers or farmworker and consumer connections (Beckett & Galt, 2013; Campbell et al., 2013; Galt, 2013; Guilbault et al., 2014; Pilgeram, 2011; White, 2013). One scholar described local as “supporting fair treatment of farm laborers” (Schindler, 2012, p. 235) which was echoed by Campbell et al. (2013, p. 124) but there needs to be more collective action. Unless an expanded definition of local becomes standard, there will continue to be a lack of support for farmworkers, and farmers and producers will continue to be the featured heroes of the local food movement. Expanding the definition of local to include of farm labor within the local food movement would enable all involved stakeholders (scholars, practitioners, activists, government, etc.) to create more equitable policies and initiatives. This expanded definition would ensure that social justice is included within local food initiatives across the U.S. The geographic definition of local must be defined in a way that works for each locale, however the benefits of local should be redefined so that each location could adhere to the expanded definition. This recommendation is one of many methods that could help increase the sustainability of the food system. Local food has many benefits, but local food should not be promoted without including labor concerns. Utilizing an expanded definition of local and including labor could help create a more viable and socially just food system. This can be accomplished by promoting socially just local food, instead of just focusing on locality as the main goal.

Although there were common themes between scholars and the KYF Compass document, expanding the definition of local and recognizing the actual benefits of local based in research could reduce the false promises and obscurities within the promotion of local food. This could also help guide future initiatives to reduce farmworker injustices. Utilizing an expanded definition of local would help ensure that each area adhered to guidelines that ensured environmental, economic, and social sustainability. Without redefining local, the discrepancies between different areas' understanding of local could continue to perpetuate a stratified system.

Additionally, an expanded definition of local allows for an expansion in the relationship between the farmer and consumer. I found that the benefit of the relationship between the *farmer* and consumer is one sided, since “knowing” a customer only results in a personal connection with a direct market. Consumers reap the rewards and benefit from establishing a relationship with a *farmer*. The transparency established by creating this bond, provides a face and story about the food, which builds trust and understanding of inherent food safety. Using an expanded definition of local that includes labor issues would increase customer' awareness of the benefits and challenges of local food. Practical application will require that customers, farmers, farmers' markets, and CSAs address the important role of farmworkers within the definition of local.

Without addressing labor in the local food movement, the three “E's” of sustainability will be difficult to achieve. Establishing which benefits of local are experienced, researchers need to investigate each benefit within various communities to establish if the claims align with reality. This is important in order to ensure complete sustainability for all and to promote equity in the local food movement. Future inquiry should include those working in agriculture. These articles are missing the many voices from the field. Including more perspectives from farmworkers would help to increase awareness about the hardships of farming. Local food could

not exist without the hard labor of farmworkers and farmers. Up until now, the overwhelming emphasis is on the farmer and including farmworkers within an expanded definition of local will help to create a more equitable system.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This thesis used a pragmatic methodology combined with a scoping review to assess and collect data. The results were reviewed through qualitative discourse analysis. I surveyed how scholars within the local food movement addressed farm labor to better understand the importance of agricultural work. Understanding the significance of farm labor provides a foundation to better address farm labor injustices by identifying the gaps in the literature. This study shows that many scholars cautioned against promoting local food without fully understanding the benefits and consequences of a local food system. My aim was to address farmworker injustices by examining the discourse around the concept of *local*. There is much more to a food system than the distance from field to table. I examined the depiction of farmworkers and farmers to assess if these terms need to be addressed within the local food movement.

The *Results and Analysis* section detailed the findings from reviewing scholarly articles. The overall message is that the definition of local varies greatly between scholars. Some focused on the geographical proximity while others highlighted the benefits they believe local food provides, such as improved nutrition, better health, and a healthier environment. For some, local was a marketing solution with the added benefit of local food initiatives fostering relationships between farmers and consumers. Within these definitions of local, there was barely a mention of equitable and just treatment of farmworkers. However, the description of labor was not as varied, since all articles used the term *farmer* and many used *producer* when discussing farm labor. These were the most predominant terms as only six articles out of 37 used the term *farmworker*. Many scholars focused on the relationship between the farmer and the consumer while other

scholars focused on the scale of the farming operation and how it affected labor. Very few scholars examined the “self-exploitation” of farmers and the exploitation of farmworkers. Scholars mention farmers’ markets and CSAs most often when describing the local food movement. Social justice issues did not feature highly in scholars’ discussions and mainly addressed class discrepancies and issues such as food access, food sovereignty, and food justice.

The KYF Compass document listed several program goals that included the promotion of local food initiatives and strengthening programs to encourage the forming of connections between consumers and producers. This guide helps stakeholders understand the varied resources that are provided by the USDA to encourage new venues to sell local and regional food. The definition of local food included regional food and the KYF Compass document specified that the geographical distance that food travels from field to table needs to be defined by each location. The descriptors used to portray farm labor mainly focused on the *farmer* and *producer*, and although scholars used *labor* to articulate the topic of agricultural work, the KYF Compass document did not mention *labor* once in the entire document. The context in which *farmers* and *producers* were mentioned mainly focuses on how important these individuals are to their community and society. There was also an emphasis placed upon how the local food movement provides more job opportunities and that *farmers* enable all of America to connect with agriculture. The most important aspect to note is that the concept of social justice was not addressed by the USDA within the KYF Compass document.

Understanding how scholars and the USDA identify labor within the local food movement establishes future areas of opportunity to address how farmworkers and farmers are treated throughout the food system. Farm labor cannot be addressed without first understanding the current discourse. The terms that I identified are used throughout the local food movement

and perpetuate the treatment and opinions of both farmworkers and farmers. The depiction of farm labor needs to be adjusted and it is imperative to expand the definition of the benefits of and expectations for the local food movement. Without change, the local food movement may repeat some of the adverse effects of the industrialized food system. Utilizing a discourse analysis was limited in that it relied on data interpretation and data collection from scholarly articles and the KYF Compass document. Without detailing personal accounts of farm labor within the local food movement this serves as a preliminary inquiry. Future research could include interviews to provide more specific results based on “an individual’s or group’s perspectives, feelings, opinions, values, attitudes, and beliefs about their personal experiences and [the] social world” (Saldana, 2011, p. 32). These endeavors should include an analysis of the terminology used within the local food movement outside of scholarly depictions and the KYF Compass document.

Changing how labor is valued will help to enact social change within the local food movement. This can be accomplished by expanding the definition of local to ensure that the sustainability premise of local food includes social equity for farmworkers. Raising awareness and describing the hardships of farmworkers and farmers provides the foundation for creating a more equitable food system. Local food proponents call for transparency within the food system and demand to know where their food comes from. It is not enough to “know your farmer.” Scholars, practitioners, and activists should push for transparency within the food movement that includes increasing the visibility of farmworkers. Exploring the discourse of farm labor provides a solid foundation to integrate more equitable and sustainable practices within future policies and local food initiatives.

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APPENDIX

Figure 1. Farm labor descriptors. This image demonstrates which terms are most used by scholars to describe labor and which terms are the least popular for scholars.



Figure 2. Local food initiatives. This image demonstrates which local food initiatives were most important to scholars and the least used by scholars.

