

Diversity and the Farmers' Markets of Central Iowa

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Farmers' markets have sprung up across the United States in record numbers over the past several decades. While they are all known uniformly as "farmers' markets," these markets are incredibly diverse. Some are large, featuring hundreds of vendors, while others have twenty vendors or less. Markets are oftentimes held in parking lots or on closed streets, although others take place in parking ramps or pavilions and buildings intended for the market alone. Some markets allow resale and others require all produce to be locally grown. Not all markets allow crafts, jellies, and other value-added products, but many do. No two markets are the same, but all are founded in support of the basic idea that local farmers should have a place to come together and sell their products to local consumers. The diversity inherent to markets has ramifications for their role as social arenas as well as various meanings that the farmers' market assumes for the vendors who sell there.

Markets represent the interplay of forces on a local, national, and even global scale. Markets embody their communities on a local scale, being primarily comprised of local producers, populated by nearby residents, and managed by a local citizen or vendor. They rely on good relationships with their host cities to facilitate street closings and advertising and depend on sponsorship by area companies for financial support. Markets must follow local, state, and national laws, demanding that they respond to these varied levels of authority. They are also affected by local and national moods about local foods and food safety and impacted by food safety scares and the supply and price of foods on a global level. This complex web of forces at work on markets reinforces their inherently diverse nature, presenting too complicated a picture for two markets to ever evolve the same way.

Farmers' markets are interesting but challenging to study as a result of their transitory nature and unique characteristics. These factors, among others, explain why the literature on farmers' markets is oftentimes limited. During the summer of 2011, my academic advisor and I sought to unravel the diversity that makes markets unique and important within their communities. In order to further understand the forces at play in farmers' markets, we conducted interviews to attempt to unravel the ways diversity makes itself known in farmers' markets, the significance of this diversity, and the varied motives of the market vendors.

Farmers' Markets in the United States

Farmers' markets have a long and storied history in the United States. The first market on record took place in Boston in 1634, with a wooden market building erected for the market in 1658. Markets could be found elsewhere in the United States as early as 1700, although it is difficult to count and track their existence in this early period (Pyle 1971). The farmers' market tradition in the United States is thought to mirror the European model, having spread to the United States through European settlement. City officials encouraged public markets during this era because they gave the local government a high level of involvement and control over "conditions of trade" (Sanderson, Gertler, Martz, & Mahabir, 2005, p. 2) Before the Industrial Revolution, most people participated directly in food production, or lived in a community where fresh foods were readily available. However, the Industrial Revolution accelerated the growth of the urban population at the expense of rural areas and created new challenges for supplying food to America's cities. (Friedland 1994). When cities outgrew their ability to feed themselves, there became two options for feeding people. One, the creation of farmers' markets where rural residents transport fresh food to cities, has fluctuated in popularity over time. The other, a

globalized food system that depends on shipments from all over the world to densely populated centers, has become the dominant food paradigm in the United States.

Farmers' markets continued to grow and change over time, although their evolution was uneven. Oftentimes markets experienced dramatic resurgences in one part of the country long before they flourished in other regions. In addition, markets experienced several seemingly universal ups and downs throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Most important for our purposes are the recent fluctuations in market popularity. Farmers' markets began to decrease in popularity in the post World War II era when technological advancements and improvements in transportation infrastructure such as improved roads and the availability of high speed transport changed the produce market irrevocably, undermining markets while supporting the expansion of wholesale networks (Brown 2001; Sanderson et al. 2005). This evolution distanced consumers from their food and laid the foundation for the globalized food system of today (Sanderson et al. 2005).

By 1970, only 340 farmers' markets existed in the United States, a testament to the destructive force of new technologies on markets (Brown 2001). Many people, such as Jane Pyle in her 1971 work *Farmers' Markets in the United States: Functional Anachronisms*, thought that farmers' markets would persist on a very small scale, sustained only by the protections given them by local agencies (Pyle 1971). However, with the passage of Public Law 94-463, the Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976, markets began to rebound, aided by the new resources that the law provided (Winne 2009, p. 40). These resources include federal funds to be used by the Secretary of Agriculture and various state departments of agriculture to promote direct marketing by providing technical training to groups interested in starting a direct marketing operation, sponsoring conferences about topics relevant to direct marketing, and

compiling relevant laws and regulations pertinent to participants in markets, among other things. Farmers' market growth was also aided by the popularity of the local foods movement and other political forces during the turbulent 1960s and 70s (Brown 2001). As a result of these new developments, the past two decades in particular have seen phenomenal growth for markets as the estimated number of markets within the United States increased from 1,755 in 1994 to an astounding 6,132 in 2010 (United States Department of Agriculture [USDA] 2010).

Iowa has been heavily impacted by this increase. The number of markets in Iowa is thought to have increased 75% between 1994 and 2009, a figure which represents a significant shift in the availability of local food to consumers (Otto 2010). The number of farmers' markets in Iowa has outgrown that of most other states with an estimated 231 markets operating in Iowa last year, the most markets per capita in the nation (USDA 2011; Otto 2010). This is particularly compelling given the strong associations people hold about Iowa's relationship to row crops such as corn and soybeans and agribusiness. The presence of both industrial agriculture and small-scale farms on Iowa's landscape make the state particularly interesting as a site for the examination of farmers' markets. The augmentation of farmers' markets in Iowa indicates the growing impact they have on the areas they serve. Farmers' markets in the state generated approximately \$38.4 million in sales in 2009 alone, with many secondary effects stemming from the employment of local labor and the indirect consequences of vendor profits being reinvested in the local community (Otto 2010). These figures are a testament to the increasing popularity of markets among consumers and the growing economic importance of farmers' markets to Iowa's food system. East central Iowa is particularly interesting given that the region contains several of the state's largest markets—those centered in Des Moines, Iowa City, and Cedar Rapids—as well as many local markets in towns of varying sizes.

Although farmers' markets have rapidly increased in popularity in recent years they have remained fairly unexplored in the scholarly literature (Brown 2002). Part of this void in academic literature likely stems from the historical difficulty of defining farmers' markets. One of the principal difficulties in studying farmers' markets is the lack of consistent definitions. Allison Brown notes: "Counting farmers' markets is difficult...The nature of farmers' markets has changed over time, and the producer-only retail farmers market of today was uncommon until recently" (Brown 2001, p. 658). Farmers' markets are nearly identical to terminal markets, municipal markets, and public markets, all of which share the characteristics of farmers' markets but also have a secondary characteristic. For instance, terminal markets are usually at the end of a rail line or truck route and are generally for reselling food to distributors. Municipal markets are city run and public markets are run by business organizations (Brown 2001). Studying farmers' markets is challenging not only because the markets have changed over time, but also because there has never been one standard definition for farmers' markets, "everything that is called a farmers' market may not be one, and other names are given to meetings that have the form and function of a farmers' market" (Pyle in Brown 2001, p. 658). A unified definition is difficult to achieve, but fortunately "all definitions of farmers market embrace the idea that several farmers selling their own products are vendors in a periodic marketplace" (Brown 2001, p. 658). This definitional difficulty is unimportant for the purposes of this essay. All the markets are self-identified as farmers' markets and meet Brown's threshold for the most basic characteristics of a farmers' market. The definitional complexity of farmers' markets is important; it demonstrates the drastic differences between some markets and emphasizes their diversity. In some ways, this definitional question is an expression of diversity instead of a debate about semantics.

While scholars have partially remedied the academic void surrounding farmers' markets, several opportunities for studies remain. Much recent research has focused on the economic, rather than the social, meaning of marketplaces in various locales (Claro 2011; Otto 2010). Oftentimes, consumer motivations to support farmers' markets and other institutions focusing on local food distribution stem from outside the realm of economics. The allure of social interaction, community building and environmental responsibility may often be at the heart of consumer food choices. For instance, Nousiainen, Pylkkinen, Saunders, Seppinen, & Vesala (2009) suggest that farmers' markets enhance social sustainability, a benefit that is almost entirely independent of the sale of agricultural products. These types of studies suggest that other research should focus on the non-economic face of markets. Our aim is to understand some of these social dimensions, as well as untangle the motivating factors that cause people to sell their goods there. The expanding popularity of local food has a heavily social component that makes a non-economic and qualitative study of farmers' markets particularly relevant.

Many studies emphasize a particular region, although literature reviews featuring studies from many regions or states are also common (Otto 2010; Hinrichs 2001a; Robinson & Hartenfeld 2007; Stephenson 2008). For example, several studies have focused on the attitudes of Iowa customers, vendors and managers (Hinrichs 2001a; Hinrichs 2001b; Otto 2010). These studies provide a convenient reference and opportunities for further research, but lack the holistic perspective that is necessary to fully describe markets. While it is unrealistic to think that any one study could satisfactorily describe the complex nature of farmers' markets, further study is needed to balance the economic and local studies with social and national ones.

Diversity and Continuity

Farmers' markets are diverse; each one is distinguishable from other markets based on the conditions created for the market. They may or may not allow craft vendors, have music and other non-commerce activities, or be indoors or out. Markets also differ based on who manages them, how many vendors they allow (or are able to attract) and how much they charge for vendor stalls. These differences arise because farmers' markets are rooted in the specific set of surroundings from which the market arises. Many factors such as socioeconomic conditions, different local subcultures, varying government regulations, the health of local agriculture, and microclimates in the area surrounding the market can dramatically change the way a market functions (Stephenson 2008, p. 16). Other decisions made by managers and market personnel will also affect the market's appearance. Market managers have the complex job of making decisions about operations within a market while concurrently responding to conditions outside the market, such as government regulations and the other factors listed above (Stephenson 2008). This complex interplay of forces and factors makes each market a unique place.

At the same time, however, markets share some fundamental characteristics that demonstrate their similarity to one another across space and time. Robinson and Hartenfeld (2007) state this eloquently in their book about the market in Bloomington, Indiana:

Even a quick perusal of farmers' markets shows that they emerge from both innovation and tradition. While each market arises uniquely from its local context and time, it also shares a common character with other markets around the world and through history. For this reason, a field study of one market can ground a discussion of the common and differing experiences of growing food and cultivating community. (p. 18).

All farmers' markets have farm fresh products. Nearly all require that those products be local, and it is generally the case that the vendor selling is intimately involved in the production of their product. These fundamental similarities go a long way in linking farmers' markets in disparate places, a critical step to being able to discuss the benefits, similarities, or differences of farmers' markets in disparate areas.

The Benefits of Farmers' Markets

Similarities across space and time allow for some consideration of the benefits farmers' markets provide, even though they are unique spaces. These benefits are varied, but fall under several larger categories; farmers' markets provide communities with economic, social, and nutritional benefits.

Farmers' markets are a local phenomenon, focusing on local producers and consumers. This entirely local center of commerce makes farmers' markets incredibly beneficial for the economies of small towns and cities in which the markets take place. Many of the economic benefits of farmers' markets relate to the vendors themselves. The market allows vendors to take advantage of value capture on a local level, taking returns that would otherwise go to corporations outside of their area (Nousiainen et. al 2009; Sanderson et al. 2005). By taking control of the production, distribution, and retailing of their products, the vendors are able to net more profit than if they depended on middlemen. Farmers realize a 40%-80% increase in returns when they use direct marketing techniques. They further are able to sell products that may not meet strict wholesale guidelines, allowing them to profit from a larger yield (Sanderson et. al 2005). There have also been studies of farmers' markets indicating that they may play a role in supporting vendor entrepreneurship and the expansion of their small businesses, although the

results of these studies have been mixed (Sanderson et. al 2005, Hinrichs, Gillespie, & Feenstra 2004).

These economic benefits are shared throughout the community, with secondary effects of farmers' markets adding further to their profitability (Otto 2010). In 2009, Iowa's farmers' markets are estimated for have totaled \$38.4 million in sales. Although this figure is thought to have benefited the five largest urban centers in Iowa disproportionately, with these cities netting 72% of the total, small communities have also seen farmers' market revenues increasing in recent years (Otto 2010). The survey estimates that including the indirect or induced effects of farmers' markets (the value of goods purchased by vendors to support their business plus household effects), the gross sales transactions total around \$59.4 million. These figures prompt Otto to describe a multiplier effect of 1.55 for the money within the community. The vendors are investing in other parts of the local economy. Further, farmers' markets are believed to bring business into the area around the market, boosting sales for local businesses and creating more sales tax revenue for communities (Brown 2002). These represent just a few of the ways in which farmers' markets benefit communities economically.

Markets also provide communities with a valuable social arena. Many see the market as a meeting place for friends and family, as well as a place to form direct relationships with producers (Sanderson et. al 2005). This social component is likely the most important in deciding to shop at a farmers' market instead of a grocery store. The prices at farmers' markets are not always lower than at supermarkets, but the market provides a service that the big box store cannot with its space for social interactions (Brown 2001; Sanderson et al. 2005). Robinson and Hartenfeld (2007) once again provide excellent commentary on what markets mean to their communities:

Based on an ancient hallmark of society, farmers' markets today sate a hunger not calculated in the FDA's recommended daily allowances. They incorporate patterns of community and exchange that feed us deeply. The recent resurgence of farmers' markets nationwide signals a desire among many for a sense of authenticity and locality that is not found in the high-tech supermarket experience. Buying local potatoes with traces of soil from a grower who still has the same dirt on his boots apparently provides a kind of sustenance not accounted for in the latest nutritional pyramid (2-3).

Farmers' markets are a place to connect with the local environment and the people who feed us. These beneficial links between the rural and urban communities promote understanding and offer city dwellers a chance to connect to their food in a very real way, a benefit recognized by Sanderson et. al (2005, p. 12): "The farmers' market provides a mechanism and atmosphere that allows urban dwellers to capture and share a sense of farming, rural life, and a traditional marketplace." Americans have long romanticized the rural life of small town America (Lewis 1972). Farmers' markets are a way to live out this dream vicariously through the farmers and forge connections between communities that would otherwise not exist (Sanderson et. al 2005, Winne 2009). Consumers look to markets for their special atmosphere and the high quality of local produce relative to supermarket offerings. The unique atmosphere at farmers' markets distinguishes them from other retail food outlets and helps attract customers because of a combination of good food and a fun, social atmosphere (Stephenson 2008).

Farmers' markets also provide an outlet for fresh and nutritional food. Markets provide consumers with a way to access food that they perceive as fresher and healthier than is available at supermarkets (Sanderson et. al 2005). Consumers feel that they are getting better produce and producers benefit from the increased local support. Furthermore, farmers' markets are oftentimes

linked to social justice efforts that aim to increase the accessibility of fresh foods to lower income families (Winne 2009). Programs such as the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) and Women, Infants, and Children's Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (WICFMNP) have brought in new customers and provided access to many families (Stephenson 2008). The advent of markets in inner cities and programs to support access to them has provided foods to neighborhoods and populations that otherwise go without.

These are only a few of the numerous benefits that markets provide. Their ability to support local communities makes farmers' markets an institution that any community should embrace and suggests that communities should be willing to fight for their survival. However, survival for a market is not guaranteed. Stephenson (2009) discusses many of the most common reasons for market failure. Many of them stem from poor management or inconsistent financial support. While farmers' markets have increased in popularity, their newfound recognition has not saved them all from the potential to fail. Understanding the qualities vendors seek in markets and the various ways in which markets can be run is important for ensuring their survival.

Methods

Due to time and resource constraints, we limited our study to the vendors and managers at five markets in central Iowa. Focusing on a small region ensured that we would be able to visit each market multiple times and limit our study to a unique geographic region. We used in-person or take-home questionnaires to interview 38 vendors and 6 market managers, administrators, or masters. We chose to use in person interviews for the project because of its strength in providing qualitative information and the extensive amount face-to-face interaction with the vendors. Surveys have also been the traditional form for studying markets, as demonstrated by Holeva

(2009), Otto (2010), and Hinrichs (2001a; 2001b). However, studies such as Holeva (2009) indicated that a poor response rate may become problematic when pursuing this strategy, and we felt that an in-person technique was the most promising for garnering a response. Thus, we chose to personally talk with the vendors about the project and their participation when at all possible. We also relied on informal conversations, research about the markets and the cities in which they are located, and participant observation in the markets. We took field notes about each market visit and in many cases the informal conversations we had were as rich as the formal interviews. These secondary methods allowed us to triangulate our results, improving our understanding of each market and the similarities and differences between them further.

We intentionally selected markets of different sizes in towns or cities with different population sizes and socioeconomic situations in order to create an interesting basis for comparison. This selection was based on our previous experience in the region. After selecting four markets—the Grinnell Farmers' Market, the Downtown Farmers' Market in Des Moines, the Iowa City Farmers' Market, and the Marshalltown Cartwright Pavilion Farmer's Market—we visited each to see if our method was feasible and our instincts about their differences were correct. The markets were unmistakably distinct in terms of size, amenities, customer base, and setup. We decided that our instincts about market selection were correct. In addition, we visited several other markets in central Iowa for the sake of comparison. These markets included the Jasper County Farmers' Market in Newton, the Valley Junction Farmers' Market in West Des Moines, the Southridge Mall Farmers' Market in Des Moines, and the Farmers' Market on Main Street in Marshalltown. These markets provided insight about the diversity of markets in the region and enhanced our understanding of the differences between markets.

During these initial visits, it became clear that the markets in both Des Moines and Iowa City needed special consideration given their heavy customer traffic. Vendors at these large markets were very busy and did not have the time to talk with us for more than a short while. To overcome this problem, we decided that at all four markets, we would offer interested vendors several ways to participate including an in person interview, a phone interview, or providing written answers to our questions. We then secured the approval of the Institutional Review Board at Grinnell College. This approval required us to get a signed informed consent form for each participant.

Our questionnaire focused on three main types of questions (Appendix 1). We began with basic biographical questions and inquiries about the practices of the vendor. In this section we attempted to understand who is selling at farmers' markets and what their operations are like. Next, we asked several questions relating to the social components of farming and networking with questions about how the vendor learned their skills and any potential cooperative arrangements, among other things. The last section of the questionnaire addressed the personal values of the vendor. These questions focused on the vendors' beliefs surrounding local food, the environment, the government, and also asked why they continue to sell at the market. This questionnaire provided information that allowed us to better understand each person's market experience and analyze his or her motivation behind being a vendor. We also designed a questionnaire for market managers and masters that focused on their background and their impressions of the markets that they manage (Appendix 2).

We visited each market at least three times in the months of June and July to interview vendors and recruit other participants to complete surveys at home or by telephone. We felt strongly that we should not interrupt sales for the vendors, and given that the markets are

generally busy and that some vendors can be busier than others, we decided to use a method of opportunistic sampling at the markets. We began at one end of the market and stopped at booths that were experiencing a lull in customers or that had more than one individual selling product. Pursuing this technique ensured that we did not prevent producers from talking with customers or selling their goods. We also organized several interviews with vendors we knew personally and the managers of the various markets outside of market hours to preserve time for vendor interviews and garner more information from market participants. While we were most interested in the reflections of produce vendors, we included all types of vendors in our study if they were willing. This ensured that we got a more representative sample of the various stakeholders in the market.

Upon selecting a vendor to speak with, we introduced ourselves and our project, offering them a card with our contact information and the project goal written on it. We then asked if they thought they might have time to talk with us, or if they would be willing to take home a copy of the questionnaire to complete in their own time. This method was by far the most successful at the smaller markets where an interrupted customer flow allowed for in-person interviews. Many of the vendors at the larger markets were too busy to consider any of the options. This method was least successful at the larger farmers' markets given their high level of customer traffic; nearly all of the vendors remained busy throughout the market day. Convenience sampling, while not perfectly random, did provide a mix of vendor types and was successful in securing interviews.

Each market day, we took field notes about our experience, noting valuable contacts and informal conversations as well as the character of the market itself. These notes, while not important for statistical analysis, provide an in-depth look at the market from day to day.

At the Marshalltown Cartwright Pavilion Farmers' Market, we had great success in garnering interviews. We conducted six formal interviews over two market days in late June and early July. We also informally conversed with several other vendors and talked with the two co-managers of the market on those days. Several of these vendors also sell at the Grinnell market and were interviewed there on different market days. We followed up with one of the market co-managers at the Grinnell market several times when questions arose about the market's structure. The market has 26 stalls total—the number of vendors actively selling is even smaller than that—so we decided to focus on the other, larger markets after finishing this set of interviews. During interviews at this market it became clear that there was an interesting dynamic between the three different markets in this town of 26,000, so we decided to incorporate the Marshalltown Downtown Farmers' Market into the study in a secondary sense. We visited that market on two different occasions, having informal interviews with the market manager and several vendors and one formal interview with the market master, who is also a vendor. While we did not complete a full survey of the Marshalltown Downtown market, it provided an interesting comparison point with the Cartwright Pavilion Market.

We visited the Grinnell Farmers' Market over a series of four market days. Given the market's proximity to Grinnell College and its fairly slow pace, we were able to interview 19 vendors, the manager, and a Chamber of Commerce employee. Many of these vendors currently sell or have sold at other markets as well, so this sample of interviews gave us not only a representative sample of Grinnell, but helped strengthen our understanding of the larger markets as well.

We visited the Iowa City Farmers' Market a total of three times. Two of these days were focused entirely on interviews. The market manager agreed to help us promote the survey and

sent it to her vendor email list, which covered all but 25 of the Saturday vendors. We only successfully carried out interviews with four vendors and two market managers on site, but we did get five additional questionnaires returned through the mail or via email. This sample is less representative than the others given that Iowa City has 118 vendors on Saturday mornings, but the interviews did give us good insights into the workings of this popular market.

We visited Downtown Des Moines Farmers' Market two times in June and July. As noted earlier, we needed to adopt take-home questionnaires for the Des Moines vendors and we had the worst response rates for questionnaires here. One Saturday in mid-July, 25 of the 50 vendors that we approached agreed to do the survey, and only one was returned. In addition, we were able to conduct a phone interview with the market director. Fortunately, several vendors at other markets currently sold at Des Moines or had sold in the past, so we have other interviews with relevance for that market.

Each formal interview was typed into a Microsoft Word document for easy comparison. At the end of the survey, the answers to the different questions were compiled and compared overall and between markets to look for trends and differences. Some of the basic demographic and descriptive information was processed using basic statistics. We feel that the greatest value in this study is the qualitative data provided by the vendors. While the sample size was not large enough to truly separate the sample and compare the different markets or for robust statistical analyses, the answers of individuals provide a wealth of information about the vendors and their role in the markets.

Describing Markets

Each market in our study is unique. They all have different policies, histories, and vendors. Examining these structural and managerial differences is critical to understanding the diversity of markets in general and contextualizing the opinions and motivations of the market vendors.

The Grinnell Farmers' Market is run by the Grinnell Area Chamber of Commerce and takes place on the outskirts of the town's central park each Thursday evening and Saturday morning. There are two market masters, one for the Thursday market and one for the Saturday market. The market also receives support from the Chamber for advertising and logistics. The market managers are volunteers, although they do receive free stall rental in exchange for their time. In Grinnell, the market is limited to 30 vendors. While the market management is willing to maintain a wait list, they do not place an emphasis on filling all of their stalls each week. The market manager expressed a preference for full-season vendors. The market has a high weekly fee, \$30, to incentivize being a full-season vendor. Compared to the season fee of \$110 for Thursdays, \$100 for Saturdays, or \$190 for both, this weekly fee is quite high and likely discourages hobbyists and small-scale growers from participating. It is not uncommon to see several empty stalls at the Grinnell market, but the season vendors seem to appreciate the fact that their stall is open for them regardless of the day and time.

The Marshalltown Farmers' Market, located in the town's Cartwright Pavilion, is an independent market, run by a Board of Directors comprised of a select number of senior vendors. The market operates twice weekly—Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings. The Board is in charge of all the oversight and decision-making at the market and is closed, although they have begun to accept nominations for Board members. The Board chooses two market co-managers, as well as a Treasurer and Secretary. The managers and the treasurer are paid for their

efforts. The market has space for a total of 26 vendors, 22 under cover and 4 outside. The given number for any day is not to exceed 26 vendors, and only 9 of them can sell baked goods. The cost for a stall there is \$125 for the season. This equates to only \$2.60 per market day for season vendors. This figure is very low relative to many of the other markets. The weekly fee is a slightly higher \$10 per day, but still remains lower than at other markets. During our visits, there were empty stalls, although the market has enough vendors paid in full to fill the stalls on a market day when all are present. The Marshalltown Market generally maintains a wait list, however this year their wait list has gotten smaller with the presence of a Thursday market located on Main Street.

The Iowa City Farmers' Market is run by the Iowa City Department of Parks and Recreation. It occurs Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings in the Chauncey Swan Parking Ramp. One full-time Parks and Recreation staff person is charged with organizing the market on top of several other responsibilities within the department. There are also four part-time employees who put in a combined 60 hours per week for the market, including being on-site during market hours. The farmers' market is fairly autonomous, although the managers must consult the Parks and Recreation Commission in the case of large changes. In Iowa City, there are 142 stalls for the Saturday market, although the manager reported that there are usually only about 118 vendors at the market. The stalls are generally all full, however, because of the number of vendors who rent multiple stalls for a market day and the efforts of a part-time employee who dedicates between 10-15 hours per week to filling stalls. The Wednesday market is markedly smaller with approximately 60 stalls. The daily stall fee for either market is \$11, or just slightly higher than the \$9 per day that season vendors pay. The fee is \$234 for 26 markets on either Wednesday or Saturday, or \$468 for both days. Iowa City maintains a wait list in

several capacities. Season vendors who are not able to make the market have their stalls leased to non-season vendors for that week. While one vendor described a process for full-season vendors to get a refund for weeks that they lease their stall, the market management did not include this in their description of the fees. There is a list of approximately 120 vendors that wait to fill spots when season vendors are absent. There is also a wait list for vendors waiting to become season vendors. In that case, some vendors have waited for three or more years before receiving a spot. Iowa City tries to maintain a balance of 70% farm products of some sort and to 30% crafts and prepared food. This means that farmers get priority for season vendor status and that some specialties may have to wait more than three years for a full-season slot.

The Downtown Farmers' Market in Des Moines is run by the Downtown Community Alliance, a non-profit that promotes downtown development. The market sets up on nine city blocks in Des Moines' Court District each Saturday morning. The market has two full-time employees that are dedicated to organizing the market, securing sponsorship, and maintaining its day-to-day operations. Two additional part-time seasonal staff are also on-site at the market each week. The market is financially independent, but answers to the Downtown Community Alliance. Des Moines' Downtown Farmers' Market has 200 vendors each week, although they come from a list of 340 vendors who sell at the market over the course of the season. The market does not maintain a wait list, but rather accepts or rejects each vendor at the beginning of each season. Sellers who are accepted as occasional vendors are informed at the beginning of the season the day or days on which they have a spot. The market also closely regulates the proportions of certain goods that are allowed at the market. The goal is for 80% of the vendors to sell local farm products, including produce, honey, meats, cheeses, and value-added products such as jam and salsa. The other 20% comes from vendors re-selling produce (e.g. from out of

state) or selling prepared foods or non-food items. The fee structure at the Downtown Farmers' Market is complex. At a minimum, the seasonal fee is \$400. However, based on the type of good the vendor is selling and the location of the stall, the seasonal fee can reach upwards of \$800. The average weekly fee for an occasional vendor is \$46.

The Farmers' Market on Main in Marshalltown is run by the Marshalltown Central Business District (MCBD), a Main Street Iowa program organization that focuses on economic development. This is the market's first season. It takes place each Thursday evening. The market coordinator is also the president of the MCBD and has many other responsibilities unrelated to the market. A volunteer market master is on-site as well and doubles as a market vendor. The Marshalltown market is unique because it has no limits on the number or type of vendors it accepts. However, only a few spaces have electrical hookups; this limits the number of vendors needing electricity on any given day. Otherwise, anyone with interest and a minimum of 65% locally-produced goods is allowed to sell. The market manager estimated that they have generally had between 30-45 vendors on a given market day. The daily fee for the market is \$15; the seasonal fee is \$125 early-bird or \$160 after March 1.

Table 1: Basic characteristics of the markets in our study

Market	Hours	Location	Fee	Number of vendors
Downtown Des Moines Farmers' Market	Saturdays 7 am - Noon	Court Avenue District in Des Moines	~\$46/week, but variable based on goods sold	200
Grinnell Farmers' Market	Thursdays 3 – 6 pm Saturdays 10 am - Noon	Broad Street and 4 th Avenue adjoining Central Park	\$200/season for Thursdays and Saturdays or \$30/week	30
Iowa City Farmers' Market	Wednesdays 5 pm – 7 pm Saturdays 7:30 am - Noon	Chauncey Swan Parking Ramp	\$468/season for both Wednesday and Saturday or \$11/week	60 on Wednesday 140 on Saturdays
Market on Main Street in Marshalltown	Thursdays 4:30 – 7 pm	Main square near Courthouse	\$125/season (early bird rate) or \$15/week	30-45
Marshalltown Farmers' Market	Wednesdays 4 - 6 pm Saturdays 8 – 11 am	Cartwright Pavilion	\$125/season or \$10/week	26 max.

Every market that we visited had at least one extra event designed for entertainment on at least one market day throughout the week. The most common extra event was live music, which

occurred each week at every market that we visited. At Grinnell, the music began near the end of the market day each Thursday and took place in an adjoining park. The Downtown Marshalltown Market similarly started the live music later in the market day in the grassy area around their courthouse, although the market also had a radio broadcast playing throughout the market. Iowa City's music was also set apart from the vendor stalls, in an area with benches and tables outside the parking ramp every market day. In Des Moines and at the Marshalltown pavilion the music was more integrated into the market itself. Marshalltown had music only on Saturday mornings, but the musicians play in a stall within the market. Des Moines similarly has musicians operating at various points throughout the market, many of them mixed in with the other vendors or playing prominently at street corners.

At both Grinnell Farmers' Market and the Marshalltown Cartwright Pavilion, music was the only entertainment available to guests. The other markets, however, had a variety of activities aimed at families and other patrons. In Iowa City, Des Moines, and Marshalltown's Downtown Market, various groups arranged activities for children. They ranged from planting seeds to water games. Marshalltown's Farmers' Market on Main and the Iowa City Farmers' Market occasionally have cooking demonstrations by professional chefs using farmers' market produce. These types of activities are lauded by management and vendors alike as a good way to keep customers at the market, incentivizing purchases and building loyalty. As one vendor put it, these activities "bring people in who might not otherwise buy something." All the markets except the Marshalltown Farmers' Market at the Cartwright Pavilion also serve prepared food in some form. The amount of prepared food available differs greatly between markets, with the smaller markets offering much less selection than the larger ones.

The management at Marshalltown's Main Street market, the Grinnell Farmers' Market and Des Moines' Downtown Farmers' Market acknowledge that they strive to create an experience for their customers, while maintaining an emphasis on sales. As one manager told us: "The market is about commerce. We want customers to come down ready to buy and support their local farmers. Commerce is number one for us." At the same time, however, they reported wanting customers "to have a town square event... I want them to feel like they're in a small town. Everyone is invited....It's a place where people go to meet up with neighbors, friends, family. We have crafts, kiddie activities, cooking classes. It's more of an experience- more enticing to visit." The market is an important economic tool, but has the potential to set the stage for much more than that. The management of these three markets explicitly refers to the market as a "community event" or "special event." While that belief may be implicit in the management styles of the other managers, the special emphasis on its status as an event clearly has ramifications for the way the market is treated.

We asked vendors about the characteristics that make markets appealing for them. Their responses varied from very specific qualities of certain markets to larger observations about what makes a "good" market. While all these remarks are interesting, there is not room to address them all here. A more complete list of responses is available in Appendix 3.

Primarily, vendors are looking for a market with easy logistics and quality management. They generally do not like parking off site, but enjoy easy setup and a short driving distance from their home. Grinnell Farmers' Market and both Marshalltown markets allow vendors to park immediately adjacent to their stalls, something that vendors love. Iowa City allows this for some vendors, but not others, and all of Des Moines' vendors park off-site. (The two smaller markets in Des Moines did have on-site parking for vendors, but the main market in our study—

the Downtown Farmers' Market—did not.) Parking off site is not optimal for vendors, however their continued presence at these markets indicates that other factors outweigh this inconvenience. Vendors appreciate having a roof provided at the markets, as we witnessed in two of the markets, Cartwright Pavilion and Iowa City. One vendor went so far as to say shade is the “most important physical factor” he looks for in a market. Generally, vendors felt that shade or cover makes a market more consistent as crowds and vendors are not deterred by rain or high heat when they know they will be shopping under a roof. A market such as Des Moines that is subject to weather can be “a carnival” on good days, but practically empty if it rains. Furthermore, it saves vendors the cost of the awnings, which can cost several hundred dollars and need replacing every couple years.

Several vendors specifically cited an appreciation for assigned stall spaces. This allows vendors to know exactly where they need to go and helps prevent the disorder that can be caused by confusion over stall assignments or late arrivals. Vendors also appreciate supportive management that can efficiently deal with complaints. While the management at all the markets is clearly effective, Iowa City oftentimes received compliments about their commitment to their market and how “very well organized” the market is for vendors. Markets whose management is committed to advertising and recruiting outside support and sponsorship are also conceived of as good. Oftentimes vendors cited a need for improved advertising as the most important change that markets could undertake. Several managers also recognized this deficiency. Additionally, many vendors do not sell at markets that they perceive as failing to enforce their Iowa Grown rules, a common complaint about several of the larger markets in the state. Interestingly, two of the markets we visited—Marshalltown Farmers' Market and the Downtown Farmers' Market in Des Moines—do allow resale of produce from outside the state. In Marshalltown, we never

witnessed this and it seems more like an omission from the rules than a real practice. In Des Moines, however, resellers are present, which frustrates some vendors who sell at markets that “keep the produce local, unlike in Des Moines.” It should be noted that Des Moines has limits on the number of resale vendors each year, just as they limit other types of vendors such as produce or meat, and that vendors reselling items represent a small minority of all vendors.

The mix of customers and producers is also important to vendors when selecting a good market. Vendors value markets that have a balance of loyal consumers and diverse vendors. Good customers are perceived as regulars at the market who are educated about food, appreciate quality, and are willing to buy. Vendors particularly mentioned that Iowa City and Grinnell had a well-educated, very supportive customer base. Vendors also appreciate having a diverse pool of fellow vendors who are consistent and support conviviality at the market. One of the stark differences between the two Marshalltown markets we visited is the presence of more diverse types of vendors at the Main Street market. As one vendor who is familiar with both markets told us, the Wednesday market “doesn’t change” and has had the same product mix, mostly produce and baked goods, year after year. At the Thursday market, however, “they have people selling candles up there- candles, meat- they had a guy selling stained glass last week. They had someone selling soap.” He thinks that this changing mix of products brings in new consumers and will allow the Thursday market to grow. At the same time, however, he sees room for both markets in Marshalltown and does not think either of their futures is in question. As one Marshalltown patron told us: “It’s not either/or, it’s and/both.”

Markets that are high-traffic with an appropriate number of vendors are also high on the list for vendors. Des Moines is undoubtedly the highest traffic market we visited, a fact acknowledged by nearly all the vendors, most of whom appreciate its crowds. Some older

vendors reported that they had sold at Des Moines in the past, but did not currently sell there. Respondents also reported that they prefer markets that make efforts to enhance the social atmosphere. Having fun activities and entertainment, as well as a space that supports social exchanges—with seating areas for customers, music, large, open spaces, etc—is important to vendors. Des Moines is perceived as an “entertainment source” that has many of these amenities. Vendors also prefer to sell at “friendly” markets where the customers, other vendors, and management are all social and friendly towards one another. Iowa City is recognized as very friendly because of the city’s expansive support. At the markets in Grinnell and Marshalltown, vendors cited knowing many of the local residents as part of the reason the market was so fun and friendly. Some vendors are even willing to sell at markets that they consider “money loser[s]” if they are social and entertaining for the seller. Vendors also feel that providing this type of environment plays a role in attracting a steady customer base.

These factors were present in some form at each of the markets we visited. However, the strengths of each market were varied. These qualities are created through a series of management decisions, as well as the local conditions at the market. It is clear that these characteristics drastically affect the workings of each market, making it important to evaluate the ways in which their diversity reflects the reality on the ground.

The Results of Market Diversity

Every market is unique and has its own feel. Even when two markets are located in the same city, each one will be unique, with a different blend of customers and vendors, as well as its own location. Each community reacts to and supports their markets differently and each market is changed by the choices of the people involved. This diversity reflects the range of

vendor motivations and experiences, differentiates the markets from one another, and has significant ramifications for the markets' atmosphere and success.

The markets themselves have different structures, brought on by different rules and management styles, as well as by basic characteristics such as size and location. Examining examples of the structural differences and their relevance to the market helps explain how these differences impact the market's day-to-day function and success.

One of the primary differences between markets is the emphasis that managers place on the presence of non-commercial activities. Vendors and managers alike commented on their value in attracting patrons and keeping customer at the market for longer periods of time. One market manager told us "the longer you keep people, the more they buy." Markets that encourage the whole day experience, offering music, activities, and prepared food for consumption, come to be viewed as destinations rather than shopping trips. Vendors expressed a belief that this shift in the atmosphere brings in people who would not normally shop at the markets and makes loyal market customers stay around longer. These types of activities also likely impact the perception of the market as a social avenue in which people can expect to see family and friends and get to know members of their community. Some markets, such as the Marshalltown Farmers' Market on Main Street, intentionally try to cultivate a vibrant social atmosphere. While we did not perform any surveys of consumers as to whether or not they spend more time at the markets that have this atmosphere, there is little doubt that they would. When families stay and eat food, watch music, and play at kids' game stations, they are spending time at the market that they otherwise most likely would not have invested. These are common sights at the markets with extra activities, supporting the idea that people do respond to the availability of prepared food and other diversions.

Similarly, choices about the physical structure and location of a market can have ramifications for social interactions and the success of the market. For example, the presence of a parking ramp for cover in Iowa City and a pavilion for cover at the Marshalltown Cartwright market makes the market more consistent, a valuable quality for vendors who count on the market for weekly income. If people can come rain or shine, it encourages consistency. For example, one vendor talked about the Des Moines market, explaining that it can be a phenomenally busy market on sunny days, but also risks being slow under the threat of bad weather. This lack of consistency also threatens social interactions at the market. When people are made anxious by the threat of bad weather, a perfectly good market day and a chance for many social interactions is lost.

The location of the market is also important. Having a central location not only makes the market easy to access for a large pool of consumers, but also makes the market easier for vendors, who oftentimes come from outside town. Many of the markets we visited were downtown. This gives the markets high visibility, as well as easy parking, and a central location for customers living in the city. Furthermore, a central location increases the chances that customers happen upon the market in the course of their other errands, drawing in new customers. While not all markets are downtown, many of them adjoin the downtown area or are situated near another attraction. The Valley Junction Farmers' Market is in a central part of that neighborhood. The Cartwright Pavilion Market is just one block off of Main Street. The Southridge Farmers' Market is in the parking lot of a large mall. These locations make the markets convenient for customers to do their shopping and support the market's survival.

For the larger markets, there are further considerations about location and logistics that managers must confront. Iowa City's market director, for example, has been working to create a

ten-year plan for the market and test different means for the market to expand, such as moving the market downtown, expanding the market an additional block, and eventually building a permanent location on the riverfront. The market's current location gets extremely crowded and has limited room for the market's expansion, even though it is popular with market vendors. The Downtown Des Moines Farmers' Market staff has worked hard to make changes in recent years to improve the safety and convenience of the market. In the past, the shoppers walked on the fairly small, crowded sidewalks abutting Court Avenue in downtown Des Moines, sharing the small space with the vendors themselves who parked in the street and set up on the sidewalks. The management at Des Moines began to shift the system, making incremental changes such that the customers now walk in the middle of the streets or on the sidewalks and the vendors park off-site, opening up space that was once off limits and relieving congestion. Similarly, the market negotiated with the city to close 3rd Street that runs through the market, a great change for the convenience and safety of market patrons. These changes are lauded by the managers of the market as making the market even better to visit than in past years. This type of dedication to improving the market experience and the logistical decisions made by managers are important in the success of the market.

Stall fees are yet another regulation that plays a role in shaping the market. In Grinnell, the weekly stall fee is nearly a third of the season fee. This is an uncommonly large discrepancy between the price per day for a season vendor (\$110 per season) relative to the price per day for a non-season vendor (\$30 per day). This decision was made by the market's season vendors at their annual meeting, even though some vendors do not agree with the change. Vendors in support of the change think that hobby gardeners undercut prices and take away business from people who need to make a living. The group of dissenting vendors feels that the high weekly fee

drives out hobby farmers and prevents newcomers from testing the market. This means fewer vendors getting involved. In Iowa City, the stall fees average \$9 per day for a full-season vendor and \$11 for a non-season vendor, a cost that the managers and vendors at that market think is low for the amount of sales they can expect. The manager of the market feels that these fees encourage new vendors, something that can help a market evolve over years. Des Moines has the highest fees of any of the markets we visited; an occasional vendor can expect to pay about \$46 per week for the market. This fee is much higher than any other market, although the sales that vendors can expect also exceed that of any other market. These high fees likely discourage hobbyists and other small-scale producers from participating in the market. However, given the pressure and work necessary to compete in that market, it is unlikely that hobby gardeners would participate in that market in any case.

These various structural forces play themselves out in the creation of markets that are truly unique. The amalgamation of all the forces acting on a certain location into one community event can be powerful. In their very existence, farmers' markets can represent the communities they call home. Because farmers' markets "[blend] the resources at hand (sites, vendors, and customers), markets resemble the communities in which they operate" (Stephenson 2008, p. 155). I would add market managers, sponsors, and local organizations to that list as well. Each farmers' market "[embodies] what is unique and special about local communities and [helps] to differentiate one community from another" (Stephenson 2008, p. 78). Market managers, who take pride in the strong links between their markets and towns, readily understand this fact. One manager explained that the market in Grinnell is unusually large for the size of its town due to the support of a very special community: "The community is engaged. We have a worldly, progressive community and that creates demand for a market in a way that doesn't happen in

other places.” A Des Moines market manager told me: “I really like that [the market] represents the community as a whole. Not Des Moines proper but the greater Des Moines area. We support the farmers from across the state. Our market is inclusive, not exclusive. We want to be for everybody, not just for high or low income families.” By engaging all members of the community, or at least attempting to, markets create an open and accepting space in a public area that represents community resources put to productive use.

The Importance of Scale

The question of scale in markets deserves consideration in its own right. Nearly every aspect of a market is impacted on some level by the size of the market. In our study, we noticed that scale impacts the markets of central Iowa in two main ways. Primarily, the size of the market has implications for its management structure and the necessary resources for its functions. Additionally, scale impacts the level of product diversity and niche marketing available at markets.

Stephenson (2008) indicates that many parts of a market system, most notably the management structure and the market rules, are impacted by scale. The necessity of a complex market structure increases with the size of the market, a simple principle that can have far-reaching effects for the market itself. Stephenson gives numerous examples of how this change may come to be. For instance, a micro-sized market of only a few vendors does not need a market master, being capable of running semi-autonomously. A slightly larger, yet still small, market needs a master, although that person may not need financial compensation. Once the market grows to be a large size, a market such as the Iowa City Farmers’ Market or the Des Moines Farmers’ Market, it is necessary to have a person who is paid to attend to market needs.

As more vendors participate in the market, a need arises for written rules to establish basic market standards for behavior and a fair basis for conflict resolution. As a market grows there is a greater need for an application process, firm rules, and an outside coordinator who can direct the entire operation. As one manager put it: “you have to be more organized and structured when you’re working with a bigger market.” Stephenson’s explanation of market failures in some ways also focuses on poor adjustments to the issues of scale, namely the issues of poorly compensated managers and an inability to achieve financial sustainability.

We did not observe a perfect translation of Stephenson’s principles, although the markets did follow the trend on some levels. Des Moines, by far the largest market we visited, had far more managerial man-hours dedicated to the market than any other. The market has two full-time staff and two part-time seasonal staff, on top of a crew of volunteers who work the market every weekend. Logically, Iowa City had more employees than the smaller markets, with a full-time Parks and Recreation employee devoting the majority of her time to market planning and four part-time employees working on-site at the market each week, but still fell behind Des Moines in personnel. Grinnell and the Farmers’ Market on Main Street in Marshalltown had volunteer masters and support from paid employees of other organizations. These four markets fall into the categories that Stephenson establishes, with smaller markets needing less complex management structures. Interestingly, the Marshalltown Farmers’ Market, at least superficially, does not seem to follow this trend, at least in part. While they did not have the support of an outside organization or any full-time employees, the market had a fairly high level of self-imposed organization. The Board of Directors oversees the co-managers, treasurer, and secretary, who all take care of day-to-day activities and oversee the vendors themselves. At least four of the twenty-six vendors at the market are involved in the leadership team, a large

proportion of the market. Three of these individuals, the co-managers and the treasurer, receive compensation for their work during the market season. The complexity of this arrangement is unexpected for the small size and relatively slow pace of the Marshalltown market.

However, the market seems to have succeeded where Stephenson points out that many do not—paying their market managers enough to make the work worth their while. One of the many ways that Stephenson suggests for markets to fail is an overworked manager. The lack of external support for the Marshalltown market demands that the co-managers take on more responsibility than one in a place such as Grinnell or the Main Street market. The managers recruit vendors, take care of all registration and fee collection, and run the market daily. In Grinnell, many of these tasks are assigned to employees of the Chamber of Commerce. In Iowa City and Des Moines, there are full-time market employees to complete these duties. For all of these markets, people are collecting financial compensation for their time and the management structures get more complex than they first appear, involving people from multiple organizations and the masters themselves. While Marshalltown pays their managers more than some vendors might like, they are likely being compensated in a fair way for the amount of work their position entails. Thus, on the surface, it seems as though the Marshalltown market has a much higher level of organization than larger markets in the region. In some ways, this is definitely the case. However, the market has succeeded for 26 years, indicating that this larger market structure is not preventing the market's success.

Scale also affected the ease of studying different markets. The scale of the Downtown Des Moines Farmers' Market and to some extent the Iowa City Farmers' Market prevented our interview from being successful. This is by no means a criticism, but seems to indicate several things about markets of a large scale. First, that the larger markets are faster paced, have far more

traffic than the small markets, and are likely more stressful for the vendors. Des Moines, with its 200 vendors and 18,000 customers, is a carnival relative to the 30 vendors and several hundred patrons at the Grinnell Farmers' Market. These large markets in city centers seem to draw people in from around the state. One Marshalltown Main Street vendor confirmed this by telling us that nearly all of his acquaintances in Marshalltown make the drive to visit the Des Moines market each year. Vendors are simply busier on market days and must have a different way of interacting with customers given the size of the crowds. We believe that the poor response rate may be due to a depersonalization of the market at a larger scale. As the markets increased in size, we got less of a response. It may be that a market like Des Moines becomes too large for it to function as a social sphere in the same way markets do in smaller cities, even if it functions perfectly well in the other capacities of a market. Perhaps the bonds between producer and consumer are less strong, as consumers treat it more like a traditional shopping experience.

The scale of the market also has implications for the level of control that vendors exercise over the market's operation. All of the markets we visited have some mechanisms for vendor input, but they vary immensely. The Marshalltown Farmers' Market is entirely vendor run, making it unique in our sample and also ensuring that vendors have complete control over the market. While not all vendors exercise the same level of control, only people who are vendors have authority in the market. In Grinnell, there is an annual meeting, where the market masters, the Chamber of Commerce president and personnel, and the vendors all discuss the market season and potential changes. While the Chamber of Commerce does have decision-making power and can sometimes prevent vendor policies from being instated, the vendors generally have control. They decided to limit the market to its current level and they decided the fee structure for the market. Many of the policies of the brand new Farmers' Market on Main in

Marshalltown are not entirely set. The market master explained that he believes they will have a vendor meeting at the end of the season, but since this is the market's first year of operation, it has not happened before. There were some vendors involved in the planning stages for the new market, but it is unclear how much power they will have.

In Iowa City and Des Moines, vendors still have some power, but it is limited. The market takes on more of a life of its own, especially with the presence of full-time market directors. In larger markets, there is a large enough pool of vendors that the opinion of each single vendor is somewhat diluted. Iowa City has an annual vendor meeting and does take vendor opinions into account. However, the major decisions regarding the market are made by the Parks and Recreation Department as well as an advisory body to the city council. This includes decisions about the fee structure of the market and the market's location. While the managers are working with vendors to make the market experience good for them, something that they are successfully doing, according to vendors, the vendors themselves do not get decision-making power.

We have less information regarding the power of vendors in the Des Moines market, but what we do know suggests that they also do not have direct decision-making power. When the Des Moines market managers changed the market's fee structure in 2009 they did take the ideas of the vendors into account. It was important to the market administrators that the vendors were in agreement with the new structure. That year they held a meeting with what ended up being about 75% of their full-season vendors to discuss the fee changes. This is an example of a high level of vendor input on a serious market issue. However, it seems as though an annual vendor meeting is not the norm and that 2009 may have been a special case. While the market administrators have honest relationships with vendors that help them gauge the popularity of

certain policies, the market managers are going to act in a way that supports the market's success. As the people charged with that responsibility, the managers must always consider both what is good for the vendors and what is good for the market in constructing policy. While the two will likely tend to overlap, the vendors lose decision-making power with this large market scale.

Scale also becomes an important issue when evaluating the diversity of goods available at markets. While our evidence is anecdotal, there is reason to believe that the larger markets can support a greater variety of products and niche goods than smaller ones. This assertion is fairly elementary, but it indicates important lessons for vendors. At larger markets there are stalls filled with artisan cheeses, specialty meats, numerous wineries, and so on, instead of stalls filled with produce baked goods, and crafts. While markets such as Grinnell may have one or two specialty marketers, for instance one vendor sells homemade beauty products made with emu oil, there are unlikely to be many. In particular, it is unlikely that you would find more than a couple vendors selling *only* niche products at a smaller market. It is not uncommon to find individuals selling a certain variety of tomato or a particular kind of honey, or even a specialized craft or food item at the smaller markets. However, it would be difficult for a vendor selling only a niche item to make reasonable profits at a small market. The crowds are limited and the smaller the pool of customers, the less likely that there will be a large following for one particular specialty good.

On the other hand, larger markets are likely able to support more niche and specialty goods. They draw crowds from a large surrounding area and have enough specialties that they become known as a source of a particular good. Patrons can come looking for artisan foods and other specialties that cannot be found in local grocery stores. Similarly, larger markets cannot and do not risk becoming oversaturated with a narrow selection of goods. At a market such as

Des Moines, with 200 vendors, it is unlikely that 100 produce vendors could all sell out their goods. By diversifying their products, vendors make a unique niche for themselves and increase the draw of the market to interested consumers.

This ability to support niche marketers also likely expands over time and as markets grow in size. As established markets of a reasonable size continue to mature, they need to evolve in terms of product diversity to maintain interest and continue to grow. Simply adding more vendors is not an option. To do so, particularly at smaller markets, is dangerous because it threatens to disrupt the critical mass that the market has, with enough vendors to entice customers and enough customers to draw in old and new vendors. If this balance is disrupted markets can “often experience a *circular condition* in which they cannot attract sufficient customers because they do not have sufficient vendors, but they cannot attract sufficient vendors because they do not have sufficient customers” (Stephenson 2008, p. 6). The Grinnell Farmers’ Market, already rather large at 30 vendors in a town of 9,000, is trying to avoid this problem now. As a Grinnell market administrator told us:

The place where I see [the market’s] potential for growth is really in the artisan area. We have that issue of critical mass. We’re not a town of 100,000, we’re a town of 9,000 and half of them are too old or too young to come down- you know with the nursing homes and the people with young children. We can’t add more produce vendors to the market. The expansion to be had is in the artisan area.

The size of Grinnell as a town prevents its market from supporting ten additional tomato vendors, but the market may be able to expand to offer interesting art or house wares that are not available anywhere in town without hurting the business of the existing vendors. This type of expansion may actually enhance the market further by drawing in new customers based on the

existence of the specialty product. Iowa City has experienced a similar evolution in the past several years. The market administration does not see a clear path forward to increase the number of vendors at the market at this time (although they have plans for future expansion) but does see a chance for expanding product availability. This year Iowa City has been able to attract a chicken vendor who sells whole chickens and eggs, something that is uncommon at farmers' markets. The market manager is incredibly pleased to offer such a unique product and thinks that the presence of rare vendors is great for their market.

Balancing the challenges of increasing scale, building a successful market while changing the structure to accommodate the needs of a larger operation, is a hard task for both vendors and market administrators. It seems that regardless of the size of the market, each one encounters difficulties relative to its size.

Vendor Characteristics

We interview 38 vendors, 19 women and 19 men. Twenty-nine of the vendors were born in Iowa, and all of them currently live within state borders. The average age of a vendor at any market was 53 years. The oldest vendor in the sample was 82 years old, while the youngest was 21. The largest age cohort was people between the ages of 66 and 75, with the second largest being 56 to 65 year olds. The oldest and the youngest individual in the sample both sell their goods at the Grinnell farmers' market. Our survey anecdotally suggests that vendors at the smaller markets in our study (Grinnell, Marshalltown) are on average older than the larger ones (Des Moines, Iowa City), a fact supported by the analysis of Otto (2010).

Table 2: Vendor ages

Ages	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66-75	75+
Number vendors	3	4	5	6	8	8	2

Sixteen of our vendors purchased their seeds from catalogs only, with the most popular being Johnny’s Selected Seed. Five combine catalog purchases with local stores and greenhouses and two use only local stores such as Earl May Seed and Nursery in Marshalltown. One referred to their sources as “conventional” and one vendor saves all his own seed from the year before. Another vendor saves seed and supplements using catalogs. Clearly, there is immense variation with more than twenty specific seed sources being given, although the majority of vendors choose to purchase their seeds online or from a physical catalog.

The vendors we interviewed sold a wide variety of products. Oftentimes a vendor sold a mix of several product types. Twenty-two vendors (or 57.8% of our sample at the five markets) sold at least some produce. Five of vendors we interviewed sold baked goods; four sold arts/crafts, including three that sold crafts exclusively. Thirteen sold a niche or specialty good including honey, meat, special varieties of produce, or particular types of pies such as vegetable. Three vendors sold non-food, non-craft good such as cleaner or beauty supplies. Four were selling jams or jellies; we did not interview anyone who was selling jam as their sole product.

Of the 38 vendors that we interviewed, 19 of them vend their products at Grinnell. Three sell at the downtown Marshalltown market and eight sell at Marshalltown’s Cartwright Pavilion. Fourteen of the vendors sell at Iowa City, four at Des Moines’ Downtown Farmers’ Market and eight at Cedar Rapids’ Downtown Market (which we did not visit, but is a well-known large

market). Several other vendors used to sell at Grinnell, Des Moines, or Iowa City in years past, but had stopped, generally as a result of scaling back because of age or other commitments. Many other vendors also sell at their local farmers' market in places such as State Center, Albion, Mount Vernon, or Oskaloosa. Two of the vendors we interviewed attend as many as five different markets over the course of the market season, but no one attended that many different markets in a given week. The average number of different markets attended over the course of the season was 1.9, although 19 of the vendors only sell at one market over the course of the season. Some of the markets, such as the Marshalltown Pavilion, Grinnell, and Iowa City have more than one market day in a week, and as such nearly all vendors attend more than one market day in a given week. One interviewee reported selling at markets 8 times *per week* in his heyday, although he has since had to cut back due to health concerns. These figures demonstrate a highly varied picture in the lives of the vendors. Half of the vendors are only selling at one market, a sign that they are likely not depending on it as a sole, or even major, source of income. While this may be a result of our low response rate from Des Moines, a market where high profits can be realized, it is still unlikely that anyone can make a living wage working at only one market. Others, selling at three or four markets per week over the course of five or more days, seem to take the markets more seriously as a livelihood.

We asked vendors if they rely on any sources of income beyond farmers' markets for their livelihood. No one in the sample was making a living selling at farmers' markets alone. As one vendor said "You can't be supported by it- by Grinnell alone. Some of the value added people might be able to do it but selling produce there's simply no way that you can make it work." Three of the vendors were living entirely on farm income from a variety of sources including community-supported agriculture (CSAs), wholesale, row crops, or Conservation

Reserve Program (CRP) contracts. One of these vendors told us that the farmers' market was third on their list of sources of income, after their CSA and wholesale. Five additional vendors relied on other income from agriculture (CSA, wholesale, etc) to make a living, but also relied on a job or other non-farm income for their livelihood. On top of these five, thirteen other vendors worked at least part-time, with eleven working full-time jobs. In fourteen cases, or 36.8% of all the vendors we surveyed, the vendor or their spouse was retired and relied on retirement savings, a pension, or social security. Two of the vendors also relied on real estate investments to support them, although only one of these vendors cited his property rentals as his only other income aside from the market. One of the vendors, the youngest vendor in the sample, had no other source of income but is still partially dependent on her parents. Two of the interviewees were full-time farm employees during the growing season.

When asked the question "What keeps you selling at farmers' markets?" the answers of the vendors were diverse. We counted each vendor's answer under all the categories in which it fell, so while 35 vendors responded to the question, the number of answers for all the categories adds up to more than 35. The top reason for their continued presence at the farmers' market was socializing or visiting with friends and customers, cited by 37.2% of vendors as something that keeps them selling at the market. A New York survey of vendors cites the most important reasons for their participation as social, a fact that we demonstrated for Iowa vendors as well (Sanderson et. al 2005).. In a close second, 12 (or 34.3%) vendors reported money or profits as a motivation for their continued presence at the market. This was singled out by Robinson and Hartenson (2007) as the most important motivation for vendors in their study. While it was not the top reason in our study, it is clearly a dominant force in the mindset of the vendors. Farmers' markets are, after all, a place for buying and selling. There were many other reasons cited for

selling at the market. Seven vendors cited liking to grow or produce their product and/or a loyalty to established customers as two reasons they continue to sell (20% of the sample). An additional 17.1% of vendors reported continuing at the market because they needed an outlet or had an excess of product. Another 14.3% of vendors told us that they like how the market keeps them busy. Other reasons for selling at the market include product research, learning entrepreneurial and business skills, providing a connection between consumers and their food, and customer feedback.

With respect to the growing methods used by produce vendors in our study, many expressed concerns about the environment as a consideration. Farmers' markets are oftentimes thought of as a good outlet for organic, natural, and chemical-free products. Our survey supported the idea that farmers' market vendors are oftentimes using these methods. Twenty-three of the 38 vendors in the sample, just over 60% of the interviewees, cited the environment as a concern that impacts their methods. The majority, 65.2% of those vendors citing the environment as a concern, chose to avoid sprays and chemicals or use organic growing methods as a means to be environmentally responsible. This represents nearly 40% of the entire sample, and keeping in mind that the sample includes only 21 vendors who sell produce at all that means that 71.4%, of the vendors growing produce opt out of heavy chemical use or choose organic methods. Although a hefty majority of produce vendors use chemical free or organic methods, only one vendor in our sample is actually certified. Other vendors cited the high cost and "rigmarole" associated with the certification process as reasons they did not become certified. Another eight vendors or 34.7% of the respondents cited a general commitment to green living as a way that the environment impacted their operation. Several other explanations for environmental concern included erosion, plastics, and working with the local environment.

Vendor Motivations and Their Importance

The diverse responses to several of our questions about the market lend insight into what farmers' markets mean to the people who sell there and what motivates their participation. In assessing the markets' importance to the vendors we looked closely at the answers to several questions on our survey:

- Why did you first choose to sell at the farmers' market?
- Do you or your family have other sources of income? (what?)
- How important is it for you to be directly involved in selling your products to customers?
- What keeps you selling at the farmers' market?
- How well do you like the farmers' markets at which you sell, and for what reasons?
- Is your approach to production affected by your views about the environment or your religious beliefs?
- What role do and should local foods play in the U.S. food system?

Our interviews indicate that the motivations for selling at farmers' markets are incredibly varied. However, parsing apart the various motivations of the vendors lends specific insights into the ways in which vendors view the market and the plurality of meanings that the market takes on for its vendors. In evaluating the ways in which vendors view the market, several dominant motivation types begin to emerge which we will refer to as: social sellers, businesspeople, lifers, hobbyists, and idealists. The majority of vendors tend to have some characteristics of several of these types, however there are a few vendors who exemplify each given category. These categories in turn indicate the function that the market fulfills for the vendors. While each type has a need clearly satisfied by the market, the idealists present perhaps the most compelling basis

for understanding the importance of markets on a larger scale. As such, their case will be given extra attention.

Social Sellers

One of the most common profiles of the vendors is the social seller. This is a person who thinks of the market as their social time and does not stop vending because they love interacting with people at the market. They view the market as a way to connect with the community and form bonds between the producer and consumer. We interpreted responses such as “the market is our social hour” and “I enjoy meeting the people” to mean that people consider the social aspects of the market as a part of its importance to them. Vendors who discussed friends that they had made through the market and the bonds that they had made with regular customers also fell into this category. Other vendors discussed enjoying “the social aspects, the community.” One vendor in particular talked about how he loves to ask questions about how people are going to use their farmers’ market finds in “those short, noncommittal interactions” where “you don’t need names, but you can discuss how much you love kale.” It gives the vendors a window into the community in which they live or visit. One woman relayed her experience at having moved all over the country in the course of her life, and needing a way to figure out the community around her. She started selling at the farmers’ market and found a set of eyes into the city around her: “I’ve lived all over the country in the last 25 years before coming home, and this direct link is missing everywhere I’ve been.” Vendors who look to the market for this kind of social interaction are common, a fact made obvious by the high percentage of people citing social reasons as their motivation to keep coming back year after year.

For these socially driven vendors, the market functions as a social gathering. It brings them personal satisfaction because of the human contact the market provides. This is perhaps unsurprising given the historical role of markets. For centuries marketplaces of all kinds have acted as a meeting place. Farmers' markets in particular have achieved this social function by linking urban and rural residents. One vendor told us: "You get out and you meet people. You gotta understand that when I was a kid I lived on a farm. I knew my mom, my dad, my brothers and sisters, my aunt, uncle, and their kids. You didn't get out to see people." This vendor is recognizing something that others have also noticed- farmers' markets offer a valuable opportunity for rural residents to come together and socialize. While this opportunity for a social life may have been more important in years past when transportation was less advanced, today's vendors recognize it as well. Social sellers are fulfilled by the market's ability to foster social relationships, something that everyone needs.

The farmers' market also satisfies the broader community need for a space in which social interactions can take place. Patrons can come and interact with each other, as well as the vendors, in a safe and open public space. This function is supported by the addition of non-commercial activities to markets. By offering music, prepared food, and other festivities, the market becomes an even stronger forum in which community connections can be built and residents from all walks of life can fulfill their need for sociality. For both residents and vendors, the market functions as a social sphere, which gratifies a need that everyone has.

Businesspeople

Another very common type of vendor is the businessperson. Perhaps unsurprisingly, 73% of the vendors we surveyed discussed market profits as a key benefit, referred to the market as a site

for market research or product development, or discussed their stall in terms of a small business. These types of sentiments indicate that the financial aspect of the market is important. Several of the vendors we interviewed exemplified this type. For instance, one small-scale farmer who vends at many of the markets we visited discussed the importance of financial sustainability and said this about why he continues to sell at the market: “Cash flow. It’s served us well for meeting people who later do CSA with us or who later work for us.” For this vendor, the market is part of a much larger agricultural business. Another vendor told us “the market is not just a hobby, I need to make money.” While many people have shadows of this sentiment, only a select few count markets as an important part of their livelihood, while the rest appreciate the supplement to their normal income or retirement savings. One vendor explained that for him and his wife “it’s a good retirement supplement. Our Medicare payments keep getting higher but our security payments stay the same.” Some of the vendors, including the ones attending as many as five market days a week, are clearly trying to make a living from selling fresh produce. The importance of profits is much more notable for them than for those who see the market as a supplement to a full-time job or retirement income. While many mention income, not everyone emphasized it, and several informants did not mention money at all when asked why they participated in farmers’ markets.

For businesspeople, the market is a means to fulfill their need for income. The market sustains their finances and feeds their families. Our evidence anecdotally suggests that the people truly making a living off of small-scale farming also tend to be more ideological, although this result may be skewed by the small sample size in Des Moines and Iowa City, where we expect more of the farmers pursuing a livelihood to sell. Regardless, the base function of markets as a site for commercial activity is the most important for these vendors.

Lifers

Some of the vendors we interviewed are what we term lifers. They were raised in farming households and made the decision to stay in the business on their own. At least two of the so-called “lifers” reported that their parents were in the truck farming business, while several others had parents who raised row crops or livestock. Either way, these vendors have made the decision to stay in the farming world. They keep coming to markets because they are “addicted” and it’s “in [their] blood.” They learned the secrets of farming, gardening, or crafting from their parents and have always kept it up, even when they held other full-time commitments. One of the oldest people we interviewed, a 76-year old man who still lives on the farm he grew up on and sells at markets twice a week, told us: “When I was teaching I prepared for this. I wanted to stay active physically and mentally.” He always wanted a hobby for his retirement and his lifetime on a farm taught him “the work ethic” to keep gardening. He gardened throughout his teaching career and continues to the present. Many of the lifers are older retirees who keep going at the market because they would experience “withdrawal symptoms if [they] didn’t get to play in the dirt.” These vendors have always been involved at markets and cannot imagine what it might be like without it.

Lifers are people for whom the market provides a rhythm and a ritual. For them, selling at a farmers’ market expresses the continuation of a lifetime of hard work and ties these individuals to their community. In many cases the same community in which they were born and raised. The farmers’ market is a way to continue life in a way they have always known. The market links these vendors to an activity they love and a community that they do not want to part from. While the lifers share characteristics with both the social sellers and the hobbyists, the market takes on a new dimension as a symbol of family tradition and the rich heritage of the agrarian lifestyle.

Hobbyists

Like the lifers, hobbyists appreciate the market as a way to keep busy and enjoy the distraction of their craft. But in contrast to the lifers, hobbyists are oftentimes new to the game. All the same, the hobbyists derive pleasure from engaging in their craft or the art of gardening and love the market and the way it makes them feel. They need something to keep them busy and like how the days of the market and leading up to the market provide them something to do. The market is “fun” and keeps them busy. One woman selling baked goods said that she keeps selling at the market because she “loves to bake” and she can “get a couple days of enjoyment out of it” as she prepares for and then goes to the market each week. Other people acknowledge very directly the fact that the market is merely a hobby for them; “for us it’s a hobby and a tax write-off” one vendor said. These vendors very much enjoy the activity that leads to their presence at the market. One woman said “I love to be outside and I like to grow beautiful healthy food.” Yet another vendor answered the question of what keeps someone participating in the farmers’ market by explaining that his presence was less about the market itself than the gardening he does to create his produce: “Its an art form for me. I like colors – the aesthetics. If it weren’t for the beauty and the art, I wouldn’t garden.” Clearly there is an entire class of vendor that sells at the market for the joy of their craft and the activity that the market provides.

For hobbyists, the market is primarily an outlet for their product. A vendor with an overgrown garden uses the market as an inexpensive way to distribute their fresh produce; a jewelry maker needing an audience brings their work to the market to get it off their hands. For some people, the hobby turns into a social good when they provide nutritious food or delicious snacks to patrons, some of whom are in need of better access to fresh foods. One woman told us that she “loves to grow beautiful, nutritious food,” while another man indicated that he thinks

farmers' markets are "a great way for Iowans to get fresh food." For these vendors, none of whom are trying to make a living from selling at markets, creating a healthy product is a part of their passion. Their hobby supports the fulfillment of a greater need in society while simultaneously providing them enjoyment. Our evidence anecdotally suggests that many hobbyists also tend to be social sellers, potentially as a result of the clear benefit their hobby provides for market patrons. The market also has a financial component for some hobbyist vendors. For this group, selling at the market supports the viability of their hobby, providing the financial backing to continue doing what they love. One couple told us that selling their honey at the market "helps pay for the cost of the bees," which "are addicting" for them. They continue to market their honey to support their beekeeping hobby. In a way, the market validates the hobby by providing a greater purpose to the activity and supporting the vendors financially.

Idealists

The last vendor motivation type is the idealist. These vendors have an ideology about food and their involvement in the local foods industry. Oftentimes, these vendors expressed beliefs that fit into a broadly agrarian thought system, by advocating local foods as a "sustainable" alternative to industrialized food. This is in line with what Wendell Berry suggests agrarianism means: "What agrarian principles implicitly propose... is a revolt of local small producers and local consumers against the global industrialism of the corporations" (The New Agrarianism- Berry 75). There were other signs of agrarianism in the comments of the vendors. Twice vendors discussed the importance of soil and preventing erosion. The importance of healthy soil is central to the agrarian belief system: "the soil is the great terrestrial connector of life, death, and new life, the very medium of resurrection" (Freyfogle 2001, p. xx). Soil nourishes us and is critical for agriculture, a belief reflected in the thoughts of some vendors.

Others gave indications of mildly agrarian patterns of thought by advocating that industry should be locally based and that supporting any part of the local economy is worthwhile. This aligns with the agrarian belief that “any manufacturing enterprise should be formed and scaled to fit the local landscape, the local ecosystem, and the local community and that it should be locally owned and employ local people” (Berry 2001, p. 74). Agrarianism is unsurprisingly present in the belief systems of the vendors at farmers’ markets.

One vendor who exemplified this idealist type was working at a corporate job before he “got sick of it,” quit, and started his own operation. He thinks that “food is a mission,” that “food should not be trucked in from 1,000 miles away,” and that farming is about “making sure food is healthy and feeds you, not just fills you up.” These beliefs arose on top of his ideas that organics have been co-opted by the same large corporations that control conventionally produced food and that nothing but knowing the producer can ensure that food was produced satisfactorily. There were several other vendors who clearly viewed the market as an outlet for produce or other products that they view as created in a superior fashion. Even vendors who did not take the ideology as far as the man above almost always had something to say on the topic of the environment or local food. When asked the question “What role do and should local foods play in the U.S.?” we received thirty-five responses, with all of them overwhelmingly supportive of local foods. Nineteen interviewees began by saying that local food should have a larger role than it currently does. Nearly every respondent provided multiple reasons for the growth in the importance of local foods. However, the most popular was that local foods support the local economy and their community, an answer given by 34% of respondents. Other answers included improved taste and eating fresher, more nutritious foods. Several respondents also pointed out

the unsustainable nature of the conventional food system, at one point calling local foods “the only sane way into the future!”

The farmers’ market is a symbolic place for these ideological vendors, a place that represents resistance to conventional food supplies and corporations and a means to live out their ideologies. Many Americans are alienated from the dominant food system as a result of its dependence on industrial production methods. However, this disaffection is not felt equally among all members of the population. We argue that the idealist vendors at farmers’ markets, especially those selling fresh produce, feel this alienation more poignantly than most. Even these advocates of the local foods movement, however, seem disproportionately distressed by some sectors of the globalized markets. Farmers’ markets are an apt response to the most stressful component of the globalized food system for these vendors: the fresh fruits and vegetable market. These vendors have taken steps to act out their beliefs, through the local production of fresh fruits and vegetables and the marketing of that produce through farmers’ markets. The symbolic resistance of vendors at farmers’ markets, along with the increasing popularity of farmers’ markets, makes them an important site for the resistance of industrialized food. After discussing why globalized food is so alienating, we will attempt to explain the ways in which farmers’ markets respond to the conventional food system and why ideological vendors in particular are responding to industrialized food.

We asked vendors for their thoughts about the importance of local foods. Nearly every vendor clearly articulated the appeal of local foods in contrast to their globalized counterparts, which in some sense is not altogether surprising. What was more interesting was that when vendors talked about “foods shipped in from 1,000 miles away” they were often talking about fruits and vegetables. Complaints about “apples from Chile” and “tomatoes from Argentina”

were common. Many of them were selling the local counterparts to these globalized industries. Vendors are responding to the fresh food market with strength, something matched by consumers. A 2009 survey of Iowa farmers' market consumers by Otto (2010) indicates that some 84.4% of farmers' market shoppers purchase produce when they visit, with 30% of shoppers only purchasing produce at the markets.

There are likely practical reasons why this is true, given the short shelf life of produce, but it seems as though this perfectly reasonable explanation hints at a deeper reason for this distaste. Claude Levi-Strauss, a noted anthropologist, once posited that there exists a culinary triangle, which helps to explain the ways in which humans conceive of food and cooking. This triangle is made up of three points indicating different food states: raw, cooked, and rotted. In Levi-Strauss' theory, cooked represents a cultural transformation, rotted a natural one, and raw remains the unmarked pole, the state of food before transformation took place. In this system, raw is neutral, waiting for transformation to take hold. The problem with the globalized produce market as it exists today is that raw food is no longer untransformed. In today's system, fresh produce is picked before ripe, shipped hundreds or even thousands of miles, and artificially ripened before being presented to consumers at grocery stores. Tomatoes, for example, are "harvested when 'mature green,' shipped to local ripeners who [heat] the tomatoes and gas them with ethylene gas, a natural plant ripener" and then "the fruit [turns] red and [looks] ripe" (Friedland 1994, p. 176). This process, undoubtedly laden with cultural associations given its high tech chemistry and food science, represents a transformation of the food. After the process is complete, however, the food remains raw. It is not cooked. It is not boiled. It does not make sense that a food at the unmarked point of the culinary triangle has been transformed and yet been returned in the same state. In the human mind, raw foods should be just that, something that the

industrialized food system cannot provide. This simple fact does not compute, and the result is a reaction to the industrialized fruit and vegetable market with the purchase of local produce en masse. Produce should be picked when ripe, and buying these foods, fresh at the source, is a confirmation of the way that things ought to be.

Adding to this distaste of industrialized produce is the fact that this food oftentimes comes from what Inglis and Gimlin (2009) call “non-places.” These “decontextualized and deterritorialized” locales, akin to “international hotels and airport departure lounges” for their lack of local cultural flavor, are oftentimes the source of the foods we eat (Inglis and Gimlin 2009, p. 25). They provide the particular example of aquafarms, of “how farmed salmon is an entity that belongs to no particular place, because it has been bred in ways that make it substantially different from wild salmon whose biological characteristics root them in particular environments” (Inglis and Gimlin 2009, p. 23). This is increasingly the case with fresh foods as well. Tomatoes, lettuce, bananas- their production is timed around the world to be available for year-round consumption in certain places. The problem, as the authors point out, is that we “have been brought up on the idea that creatures which [we] eat are supposed to be from *somewhere*” and that as such we “would probably not take kindly to facing up to the fact that this is a fish that is radically delocalized, unrooted, and in that sense ‘global’ because it fits everywhere—and nowhere—at the same time” (Inglis and Gimlin 2009, p. 23, emphasis original). As Berry aptly pointed out, industrialization demands this separation of products and their histories. Industrialized food cannot have a history and as such must stem from these “non-places,” big box stores and aquafarms. As one vendor told me, “I have a personal feeling that when people live in a place they’re meant to eat what comes from the land there.” The industrialized food system robs customers of this satisfaction, and farmers’ markets are a very natural place to

reclaim it. Farmers' markets are inherently local, and vendors take pride in telling the stories of their food. More than once, vendors offered to give me tours of their gardens or fields, proud of where their produce comes from. No such story can be told for produce from grocery stores. Farmers' markets return the history to our food. They ensure us that the tomato we purchased today was picked yesterday and has not been processed to give the appearance that it is fresh off the farm.

Farmers' markets and the other venues for farmer-to-consumer interactions are reactions to our globalized, industrialized food supply and the things that it represents, namely, the loss of our food's history and the lack of control over and knowledge of the growing process. This loss of history is inevitable in an industrialized food system:

One of the primary results- and one of the primary needs- of industrialism is the separation of people and places and products from their histories. To the extent that we participate in the industrial economy, we do not know the histories of our families or our habitats or of our meals. (Berry 2001, p. 64)

Farmers' markets restore the relationships between producers and consumers that industrialization disrupts, allowing people to meet the vendor responsible for their food and hear from a person's mouth the story of its existence. As farmers' markets have grown in popularity, the vendors who sell at them have become "the vanguard of the local food movement, veritable while nights in the battle against the industrial food system" (Winne 2009, p. 46). They have come to be recognized as a haven for local foods and alternative production methods. This status has likely contributed to the widespread success of markets and their phenomenal growth over the past several decades.

Farmers' markets have grown as a means to oppose the consolidation of food resources into the hands of a select few corporations (Stephenson 2008, p. 2). In the process, the US has developed two separate food streams. One is industrial, dominated by a few firms and the other represents growers with direct links between producer and consumer (Grey cited in Stephenson 2008). Nousiainen et al. (2002) describe how farmers' markets represent an alternative mode of distribution rather than an alternative mode of production. Farmers' markets create a horizontally integrated food system, where local producers become involved in all steps of the food production process from production to retail. Local vendors take control of the distribution of their product, righting some of the wrongs that industrialized food creates and reconnecting customers to the food that they eat.

Most vendors likely feel the pressures of the industrialized food system; most members of the population at large are likely affected by the problems with the industrialized food system. However, we argue that vendors clearly articulating an ideology about local foods and the role of the local producer in the food system are in general the most affected by the alienation that accompanies globalized food. Ideology is a tool for these vendors to situate themselves within the food system and provides an outlet for some of the pressures that small-scale, local producers inevitably feel. Clifford Geertz (1973), in his classic essay "Ideology as a Cultural System," suggests that "Ideology is a patterned reaction to the patterned strains of a social role.' It provides a 'symbolic outlet' for emotional disturbances generated by social disequilibrium" (Geertz 1973, p. 204). The strains endured by small-scale farmers over the past several decades would be enough to prompt anyone to develop an ideology to support their work. Further, the recognized stresses and detachment of industrialized food from nature may be enough for even

non-farmers to stress over the seeming lack of balance in our food system, helping explain the prominence of the local foods movement in society at large.

Geertz writes that the mechanisms through which ideology provides an outlet for social stresses are multiple. Three of his explanations are likely pertinent to the case of farmers' market vendors. The first, his "cathartic explanation," suggests the construction of a unified enemy in globalized food. Geertz believes that "emotional tension is drained off by being displaced onto symbolic enemies," a role fulfilled by agribusiness and transnational corporations in this case (1973, p. 205). This explanation describes one of the deeper purposes of the local foods movement; it represents a unified front against agribusiness and provides an outlet for people harmed or distressed by the industrialization of food. Farmers' markets are a gathering place for local foods enthusiasts of all kinds and celebrate the advantages local foods have over a symbolic enemy—the industrial food market.

Another important component of his argument is his "morale explanation" for ideology. Here he explains that ideologies are capable of "[sustaining] individuals (or groups) in the face of chronic strain either by denying it outright or by legitimizing it in terms of higher values" (Geertz 1973, p. 205). It helps to "[bridge] the emotional gap between things as they are and as one might have them to be" and provides strength to the farmers and vendors who endure stress and hardship (Geertz 1973, p. 205).

Lastly, Geertz offers us a "solidarity explanation" that is perhaps the most relevant to the farmers' market. In this frame, ideology is a tool to "knit a social group or class together" and thus provide solidarity and strength for individuals (Geertz 1973, p. 205). The farmers' market is an avenue where idealists can act out their ideologies, providing a confirmation of the worth of

their social role and releasing some of the tension otherwise associated with it. Vendors express a joy in hearing the compliments of their produce and the admissions by customers that “they didn’t know produce can taste like that.” Farmers’ markets are a place for people to gather and show solidarity for other members of their community.

Vendors driven by ideology benefit immensely from its power. Ideology provides a sense of solidarity as well as a justification for the hardships of the small-scale farmer. In this way, the farmers’ market becomes a symbolic outlet for these vendors and the patrons who frequent it. This, in turn, helps vendors and patrons alike combat the forces of globalized food in their lives. In this way, idealist vendors represent one of the most compelling market types, with clear ramifications for the health of markets and their capability to act as a point of resistance for globalized food.

Vendor Motivations and Market Diversity

These five different types—social seller, businessperson, lifer, hobbyist, and idealist—encapsulate nearly all the motivations we witnessed for selling at the market. Beyond simply explaining their motives to return, however, these categories also provide insight into the multitude of meanings that the market takes on for vendors. In turn, these meanings can be translated into an understanding of the benefits farmers’ markets provide to society. While many of the benefits these types imply are already well known—community building, local economic support, etc—the confirmation of these effects in local communities is an important step in affirming the role of markets in Iowa. The support of local farmers becomes more than a theoretical point when vendors at local markets speak to the benefit they experience from selling at the market. The fact that vendors take pleasure in the social atmosphere indicates that some

form of community building is occurring. Their stories put a face on the sometimes-amorphous benefits that are attributed to markets and proves their value to Iowa towns.

The different ways in which the vendors regard the market also have implications for the market and its functions. For instance, a market with older vendors, many of whom see the market as a hobby or way to keep busy, will likely have a different atmosphere and rules than a market that is profit driven. We hypothesize that this may contribute in part to the difference between a market like the Cartwright Pavilion, generally populated by older, retired vendors, and a market like the Downtown Des Moines Farmers' Market whose vendors are more diverse and that has the possibility for incredible sales. The attitudes and the efforts of the vendors are truly at the heart of most markets. While vendors depend on the presence of customers for the markets' success, the very reason for the markets' existence is the presence of vendors who need an outlet for produce. Markets are affected by many factors, but the combination of vendors and their products is unique at each one, ensuring that even if all other things remained constant, no two could ever be the same.

Conclusions

Diversity is at the heart of understanding farmers' markets. Only by acknowledging the diverse conditions regulating farmers' markets and the unique individuals involved in all levels of their functions can these spaces be understood. The markets themselves reflect the management decisions of the market administration and the market rules. Further, vendors have a diverse set of beliefs and motivations that reflect the various functions and benefits of markets, as well as the meanings that the market takes on for the vendors. Perhaps the most compelling of these functions is the value of the market as a point of symbolic resistance to globalized foods

and an outlet for the stresses of small-scale farmers. In this case and others, markets functions as an outlet for other individual and community needs. This community-wide importance necessitates an understanding of the processes underlying the markets, improving their chances of survival and providing evidence of their benefits to the communities in which they take place.

While we have interpreted the motivations of the vendors and the implications of market rules and management styles by using a qualitative approach, opportunities for research remain. Our study was limited by time and resource constraints. In the future, a more in-depth study could allow for statistical comparisons among several markets, potentially quantifying differences we believe exist between the various markets we investigated. Further, the literature lacks intermediate studies that make comparisons between a large set of markets without reaching the level of a literature review or national survey. Filling this gap may provide detailed knowledge about the diversity of markets on a regional scale and offer new examples of how to make farmers' markets successful. Farmers' markets provide communities with a public space of incredible worth and further study should be undertaken to protect this institution.

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Farmers Markets in Central Iowa

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our study of farmers' markets in central Iowa. Please respond to the following questions. You may skip any you do not wish to answer. We hope that the information gathered from this study can be used to understand the significance of farmers markets in Iowa and the ways in which they could be improved for vendors.

A. Vendor Profile:

1. What is your age/gender?
2. Where were you born? Where do you currently reside?
3. How long have you been raising products for farmers' markets?
4. Why did you first choose to sell at the farmers' market(s)?
5. What do you grow/produce? Do you produce anything unusual or uncommon?
6. How did you decide to grow/produce these things?
7. Do you sell at farmers' markets all the types of things you grow/produce?
8. How much land do you have in production?
9. What methods do you use? (chemical free, minimal chemical, hormone free, local inputs, certified organic, animal welfare approved, certified humane raised and handled, free-range)
10. What are your seed sources?
11. At which farmers' markets do you sell? How far do you have to drive?
12. Do you have other outlets for your product? (CSA, restaurants, schools)
13. Do you or your family have other sources of income? (what?)
14. How do you set prices on the products that you sell?

B. Knowledge and Social Aspects of the Farm Operation:

1. How did you initially learn farming skills? (family tradition, social networks, publications, organizations, state extension service, other)
2. What sources of information about farming or production methods do you rely on at present?
3. How is the labor for your operation accomplished? (self, family members, volunteers, hired help, other)
4. Do you participate in any cooperative arrangements with other producers?
5. How important is it for you to be directly involved in selling your products to customers? (how important is the social interaction aspect of the farmers' market to you?)
6. Is there information you do not have that would help you better market your products?

C.Values:

1. What keeps you selling at the farmers' market(s)?
2. How well do you like the farmers' markets at which you sell, and for what reasons? (cost, convenience, rules, ambience, etc.) Do you think that some markets are better than others? If so, what makes for a better market?
3. Is your approach to production affected by your views about the environment or your religious beliefs?
4. Have government programs or regulations affected your participation in farmers markets?
5. What role do and should local foods play in the U.S. food system?

Farmers Markets in Central Iowa

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our study of farmers' markets in central Iowa. Please respond to the following questions. You may skip any you do not wish to answer. We hope that the information gathered from this study can be used to understand the value of farmers markets in Iowa and the ways in which they could be improved for vendors.

A. Manager Profile

1. What is your age/gender?
2. Where were you born? Where do you currently reside?
3. How long have you been managing this market? Did you manage any other markets before this? If so, which ones and for how long?
4. How did you first get involved in the farmers' market? How did you become manager? Were you ever a vendor? If so, what did you produce?
5. Who runs the downtown market?

B. The Manager Position and Market Logistics

1. Who "hires" the market manager?
2. What are your responsibilities as market manager?
3. Are there other employees that work on the farmers' market?
4. Are you at the market each weekend?
5. Is the manager position paid? If so, who pays the salary and who decides the amount?
6. Does the manager answer to the needs and requests of a particular group or organization?
7. How many vendors sell at this market? Is this the number you would like? Is there a waiting list? Do you have plans for expanding the number, and if so, how would you do this?
8. Are there limits on the number of each type of good at your market?
9. What is the cost for a stall per season and per week? What are the fees used for? Who decides these costs? Do the vendors have any influence over the process to set the costs? Do you think these costs are appropriate and/or good for the market?

10. Is there a budget for the farmers' market? Who creates the budget and where does the money come from?

11. Is there a formal set of rules for vendors? If so, is it possible for us to have a copy?

C. The Market

1. What do you like about this market? What could be better about it?

2. Have you noticed a change in the popularity of this market since you became involved here? Have you noticed a change in the popularity of farmers' markets in general since you became involved?

3. What role do or should local foods play in the U.S. food system?

Appendix 3: Characteristics of Area Farmers' Markets Based on Vendor Response

What makes a market good? Below is a categorized list of the vendors' responses to the question: "How well do you like the farmers' markets at which you sell, and for what reasons? Do you think that some markets are better than others? If so, what makes for a better market?"

A "Good Market": These responses come from vendors who were responding generally to the question of what makes a market best (or worst) for them.

Positive:

Conviviality, a good social base between the vendors and between vendors and consumers

Getting direct feedback from customers

Hearing compliments on product quality and drawing repeat customers

A consistent customer base

A consistent pool of vendors

Quality products

Comfortable driving distance

Good central location in the city

Assigned stalls and consistent vendor location

Good advertising

Managers and market personnel accessible to help

Cooking demonstrations, live music and other activities to attract customers and enhance the market atmosphere

Provides shade

Negative:

Difficult set up (no on-site parking, needing to haul goods in)

Far from home

Community members don't appreciate the food/don't know how to use it

Poor enforcement of market rules, especially Iowa Grown rules

Iowa City Farmers' Market

Positive:

Parking ramp offers shade and protection from the weather

They consistently fill the stalls with part-time vendors

Responsive, efficient, and generally "good" management

The community is receptive to local food and supportive of the market

Customers are interested in a quality product

Profitable

Lots of traffic

Activities attract people: music, cooking demonstrations, prepared food

Organized market

Good size

Well-known in the community and advertised well

Low stall fees

Negative:

Need a lot of stock to succeed

Ramp can get crowded

Ramp is not a picturesque place for a farmers' market

Des Moines Downtown Farmers' Market

Positive:

An entertainment venue for customers

High sales

Heavy traffic

Negative:

Don't appear to enforce Iowa Grown rules

Need to park far away and haul in goods

Generally a bit disorganized/difficult to find vendors from week to week

Variable attendance based on weather

High fixed costs

Profit-chasing mindset

Less organic

Neutral or Mixed Response

Widespread availability of finished goods and prepared foods

Full-time non-vendor management

Grinnell Farmers' Market

Positive

Popular with vendors

Supportive administration

Enforces locally grown rules

Good traffic and a diverse customer base

Assigned stalls

Adjacent to Central Park

Easy parking and good setup

Good size at 30 vendors

Diverse base of goods

Vendors oftentimes know their customers

Close to Grinnell College

Grilling and music in the park

Reasonable cost

Centrally located

Trees give good shade at some times of the year

Negative

Vendors oftentimes do not sell out/oversaturated

Some trouble with market administrators

High weekly stall fee

Subject to weather

Less profitable than some

Music comes too late, some people don't stay

Marshalltown Pavilion Farmers' Market

Positive

Easy parking

Assigned stalls

Pavilion space is free to the market

Good location in town

More vendors than the smaller
Marshalltown market

Good customer base

Roof

Has enough vendors to draw customers

Close to home for many of the vendors

Most vendors accept WIC

Negative

People don't linger

Has not evolved in recent years

No support from city or another outside
organization

Poor management structure

Don't find space for new vendors

Needs better advertising

Marshalltown Downtown Farmers' Market

Positive

More vendor diversity than the other
Marshalltown markets

Higher traffic than other Marshalltown
markets

Good media coverage and advertising

Has prepared food and activities

Backed by the city and the Marshalltown
Central Business District

Good sales

Negative

Need to bring own cover

More expensive than the other Marshalltown
marker

Fears that the fees will increase

Neutral or Mixed Reactions

No waiting list, everyone able to join

Younger, more family-oriented

Cedar Rapids Downtown Farmers' Market

Positive

Well-run

Large- many vendors and customers

Negative

Customers less receptive to local foods than
in other cities

Customers not willing to pay a premium for
local or organic/customers want a deal

City run so that stall fees don't support the
market

Less consistent customer base than other
markets

State Center Farmers' Market

Positive

Live Music and prepared food available

Social for vendors and customers

Negative

Difficult parking

No assigned stalls

Marshalltown Linn Street Farmers' Market

Positive

No fee

Negative

Few vendors

People do not come

Competition from other markets

Toledo Farmers' Market

Positive

Social for vendors and customers

Lots of community members visit the market

Negative

Clannish against vendors

Not a money maker

Have to haul products in

Loud music can make conversation difficult

Appendix 4: Area Farmers' Markets

Following is a list of farmers' markets in central Iowa. This is not a complete list, but represents all the markets we were told about or visited over the course of our study.

<p>Des Moines</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Downtown</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">Saturdays 7 am – noon</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Court Avenue District</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Valley Junction</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">Wednesdays 4 – 8 pm</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Fifth Street and Railroad Ave</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">West Des Moines</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">West Glen Shopping Center</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">Saturdays 9 am – 1 pm</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">5465 Mills Civic Parkway</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">West Des Moines</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Southridge Mall</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">Mondays 4 – 7 pm</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Southridge Mall Parking Lot</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">1111 E Army Road</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Drake Neighborhood Farmers Market</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">Wednesdays 4 – 7 pm</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">First Christian Church, 25th & University</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Eastside Farmers Market</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">Tuesdays 4 – 7 pm</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">3200 Delaware Ave.</p>	<p>Parks Neighborhood Market</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Tuesdays 3 – 6 pm</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Highland Park Lutheran Church parking lot</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Wesley's Farmers Market</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Tuesdays 5:30 – 7:30 pm</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">800 E. 12th Street</p> <p>Iowa City</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Downtown</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">Wednesdays 5 -7 pm</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">Saturdays 7:30 am – noon</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Chauncey Swan Parking Ramp</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Sycamore Mall</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">Tuesdays 3 – 6 pm</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">1660 Sycamore Street</p> <p>Coralville</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Mondays and Thursdays 5 – 8 pm</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Coralville Community Aquatic Center</p> <p>Albion</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Saturdays 9 am – 1 pm</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Courthouse Square</p> <p>State Center</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Fridays 5 – 7:30 pm</p>
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Historic Lincoln Highway	Saturdays 10 – noon
Mount Vernon	Broad Street and 4 th Avenue
Wednesdays 11 am – 4 pm	Knoxville
Skagit Valley Hospital	Tuesdays noon – 5 pm
Saturdays 9 am – 1 pm	Town Square
On the river downtown	Marshalltown
Cedar Rapids	Pavilion
Every first and third Saturday	Wednesdays 4 – 6 pm
7:30 am – noon	Saturdays 8 – 11 am
Downtown Cedar Rapids	2 nd Avenue and State Street
Union	Main Street
Mondays 4 – 6 pm	Thursdays 4:30 – 7 pm
406 Center Street	Courthouse Square
Grundy Center	Linn Street
Thursdays 4:30 – 6:30 pm	Fridays 4 – 6 pm
7 th Street East of Courthouse	203 E. Linn Street
Hiawatha	Newton
Sundays 11 am – 3 pm	Jasper County Farmers' Market
10th Ave Parking Lot	Tuesdays 3:30 – 6:30 pm
Vinton	West 2 nd Street North
Thursdays 5 – 7 pm	Oskaloosa
Vinton Train Depot	Tuesdays 4 – 6 pm
Marion	East side of Town Square
Wednesdays 3 – 6 pm	Pella
East End Shopping Center	Thursdays 3 – 6 pm
Grinnell	Saturdays 9 – 11 am
Thursdays 3 – 6 pm	

First Reformed Church

Toledo

Fridays 5 – 7 pm

East side of Courthouse Square

Traer

Wednesdays 4 - 6 pm

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