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(RE)LOCALIZING FINLAND'S FOODSHED: GRASSROOTS MOVEMENTS IN FOOD
DISTRIBUTION AND URBAN AGRICULTURE

By

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Bachelor of Arts, California State University, Sacramento, CA, 2006

Thesis

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Sciences
Geography

The University of Montana
Missoula, MT

December 2015

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ABSTRACT

Albov, Sophia Elizabeth, M.S., Fall 2015

Geography

(RE)LOCALIZING FINLAND'S FOODSHED: GRASSROOTS MOVEMENTS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION AND URBAN AGRICULTURE

Chairperson: Dr. Sarah J. Halvorson

Finland's agricultural landscape and food production systems have deep societal roots and intimate connections to the Finnish cultural identity. The thesis explores this cultural heritage through an examination of grassroots food distribution networks rapidly diffusing across Finland and an examination of urban agricultural practices in the capital city of Helsinki. This thesis aims to address the following questions: (1) What is the role of grassroots food distribution networks in Finland, and to what extent are they creating alternative farmer-consumer linkages that support eating local? (2) How is urban agriculture structured and organized in Helsinki and within the broader context of the Finnish foodshed? (3) How do Finnish people express and reinforce their food heritage and cultural values through engagement with and participation in the urban agricultural sector?

Data drawn from fieldwork, numerous interviews, and policy analysis suggest that grassroots food distribution networks and the Helsinki urban agricultural sector are enlarging and working to overcome economic and environmental limitations with creative utilization of new strategies and reinvigoration of existing projects. Food distribution networks operating outside of the dominant food chain serve to (re)localize food procurement choices in Finland and honor the cultural values associated with food. In addition, urban agriculture is steadily emerging as one of the agricultural activities in Finland that supports the concept of eating local, which is perceived as being integral to the Finnish food heritage and to maintaining cultural sustainability.

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to three important people active in my life and one gone from my sight but not from my heart. I am so fortunate to have people in my life willing to listen, problem solve, and help me maintain perspective.

Sarah Halvorson, my thesis advisor, committee chair, and mentor: thank you for your guidance and mentoring throughout my master's career. You introduced me to opportunities that were beyond my wildest dreams. Your boundless enthusiasm inspires me.

Pascal, my husband to be, my life has only gotten richer since I met you. Thank you so much for your willingness to trek all over Helsinki to garden after garden. You are the best grill man I know, and I am sure the urban farmers of Helsinki would agree.

Elizabeth Albov, my mother, you are such a lovely woman and I am so fortunate to have you by my side. This last year has been difficult and I am floored by your ability to keep moving forward. Please always be you and know that you are not just my mother but also my friend.

Last, but certainly not least, Michael Albov, my father - you have been my biggest inspiration and my biggest support. Your life and death has impacted every facet of my existence and I am so grateful to have had the pleasure to be your daughter. Thank you for your tireless proofreading, discussing, and gentle, but firm pushing. You helped me find the bravery to change my world. I love you. I miss you.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research would not have been possible without the funding support of the Fulbright U.S. Student Program and The Fulbright Center in Finland. This research was also partially funded by the Finlandia Foundation Graduate Student Grant, the Delta Gamma Graduate Fellowship, and the American Geographical Society's Graduate Fellowship. I deeply appreciate the counsel and assistance of Juha Helenius from the University of Helsinki, Minna Piipponen from the University of Eastern Finland, Jaakko Nuutila from MTT Agrifood Research Finland. I would like to extend my thanks to the farmers, researchers, and policy professionals who took the time and effort to participate in this research. Thank you also to my thesis committee, Sarah J. Halvorson, David Shively, Kevin McManigal, and Josh Slotnick, for their support and mentoring through this formidable thesis process.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

We were together in the formal sitting room of her farmhouse which was located at the very edge of the land in Southern Finland. From the window beside our armchairs you could see her potato field to the right and the sea to the left. Winter was in full force outside and the wind blew sparkling, dry snow in long gusts along the road and up the garden path. The lamps were all low which created a heightened sense of intimacy in the warm room. A small smile played at the edges of her lips as she described her thoughts about Finland and the reasons for the food values I had heard articulated in previous interviews. “We are not the country that the people and animals and stuff are going all the time through. If someone is coming here, he is lost or he is coming here on purpose, but not going through to somewhere. And that is a reason I say that we really have good choice possibility to grow our organic production, keep our farming out of the GMO. Keep our farming and husbandry from animal diseases and those other problems than southern countries are facing all the time. Let’s keep it. Let’s enjoy that we are on a corner in the middle of nowhere.” She continued to muse on Finland as a safe place for food production because it is so remote from the other countries in the European Union, which she described as a club. This is the clearest articulation of the spatial-social underpinnings of the concept of Finnish food as “clean” that I have heard thus far in my research. (Field notes January 14, 2014)

The Finnish agricultural landscape has undergone significant changes in the past twenty years. These changes are associated with a number of important trends affecting the food and agricultural environment including the decline in the total number of small farms, the increase in individual farm size, and the introduction of new and influential agricultural policies. Similar to elsewhere in the Global North, the total number of Finnish farmers has decreased over time. Nearly 72,000 Finnish farmers have shifted away from agriculture-based livelihoods since 1995 as reported by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (2014a, 7). Yet, the organic and alternative agricultural sectors have expanded, and local, sustainable food and agriculture social movements have gained momentum. The result of these factors and their dynamic interactions is that new spaces have opened up for agriculture and social engagement around food

production in the streets, neighborhoods, parking lots, and communal spaces of Finnish cities (Luokkala, 2014). The purpose of this thesis is to examine these trends shaping the contemporary agricultural landscape in Finland through a specific focus on the emerging urban agricultural sector.

In Finland the agricultural sector accounts for 8% of land use (Orpo *et al.*, 2014). Agriculture in Finland is shaped by several geographic limitations related to extreme climate and remoteness from global markets which reduces production options and land productivity. Compared to other European countries, Finland is relatively large and these limitations can vary regionally along the country's latitudinal gradient.

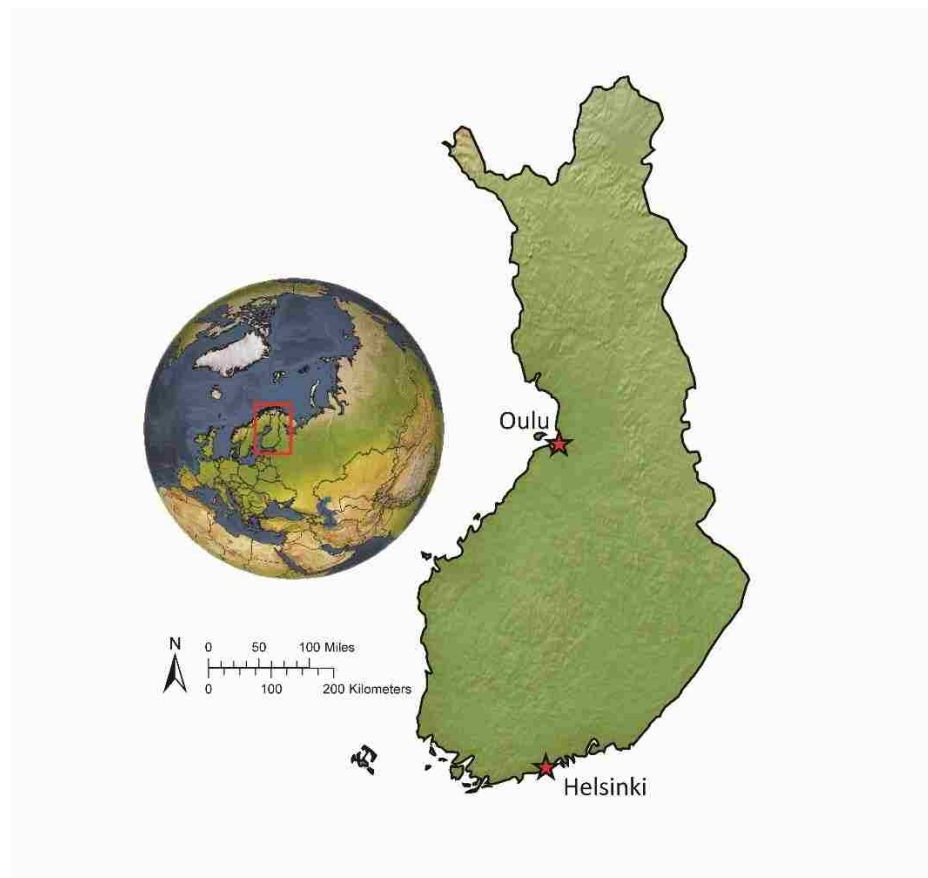


Figure 1: Finland and locator map showing its geographic position in the world. (Map by S. Albov, 2015)

For example, a farm in Helsinki which is in the *Uusimaa* region in the southern part of the country, approximately 60 degrees north latitude, is less affected by severe cold than a farm in *Pohjois-Pohjanmaa* region at 65 degrees north latitude (please see Figure 1 above; Oulu is starred as it is the population center of the aforementioned region). The Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (2010) identifies the main weaknesses in its agricultural sector as low yields, long transportation distances, and small farm units. In spite of these weaknesses and limitations, the Finnish government is firmly aimed at supporting and enhancing Finnish agricultural production. Indeed, one of the central tenets of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's (2010) agricultural policy for Finland is aimed at maintaining access to food produced in Finland at a price which is reasonable for consumers.

The Finnish agricultural sector is overseen at the state level by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The power of the Ministry over the implementation of the European Union's (EU) Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) regulations in the Finnish agricultural context is described by the following quotation: "The Ministry is divided into two [substantive] departments – one is in charge of food and that means food safety, food security, food quality and the whole package of agriculture. So from field to fork as we say in Europe" (Interviewee A-14). The power structure between the CAP and the Finland was further clarified as such:

[I] mean the rules are coming from the EU and the standards are coming from the EU. But the policy decisions to which extent we want to promote

that and the driving forces and the means – the budgetary means and all that. They may now come from the Finnish government. (Interviewee A-21)

Recently, the changes in the Finnish agricultural landscape have occurred that are influenced by Finland's own internal agricultural policies as well as the EU CAP. The Finnish government, in response to policy goals developed at the EU level, has put forth a concentrated effort to encourage a shift in farming practices from conventional methods to organic methods as defined according to CAP parameters.

For this thesis project, a mixed-methods approach was adopted and will be described in greater detail below. For the purposes of this introduction, it is relevant to note that statistics published by the Finnish government were used to gain a macro-level quantitative understanding of the agricultural sector and as a compliment to the qualitative data collected through interviews and fieldwork. Some of the trends in the Finnish agricultural sector are in step with other agricultural sectors in Europe, for example the drop in the total numbers of farms in Finland. Interestingly, unlike other areas of Europe, Finland has not experienced wide-ranging farmland abandonment (Brouwer *et al.*, 2008). Farms, both conventional and organic, are consolidating operations and creating larger farms. For example, the average size of an organic farm has almost doubled since 1995 (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry 2014a, 11). Additionally, since Finland's 1995 entry into the EU, the number of hectares under organic production has increased by 161,474 hectares, and 1,422 farmers have converted

to and continue to practice organic methods (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry 2014a, 11). The growth of the organic agricultural sector and alternative food networks are compelling topics of public and scientific interest given Finland's unique geographic constraints on agriculture and locational proximity to the Arctic Circle.

Previous Research on Agriculture in Finland

Much of the scientific and scholarly literature on agriculture in Finland to date centers on investigating the future of Finnish agricultural policy or Finnish agricultural policy and its relation to the CAP. For example, Rikkonen and his co-authors have implemented forecasting models to anticipate what the future agricultural agenda in Finland will be and how it will affect key players in the agricultural sector (Rikkonen, 2005, Rikkonen *et al.*, 2006). Hyytiä (2014) evaluates the instruments available through the CAP and their effectiveness to help Finnish rural regions reach the EU level development targets. Törmä and Lehtonen (2009) also use modeling to assess the changes in agricultural support payments in 2006 and their effects on farmers' incomes. There is also a body of literature that addresses consumer attitudes and ideas about the agricultural sector (Hyytia and Kola, 2006, King, 2008). One important finding of this researcher underscores Finnish consumers' desire for locally produced food, a finding that is confirmed and elaborated in this thesis. As Hyytia and Kola (2006, 17) state, "Finnish people are willing to support domestic agriculture, first and foremost, as a producer and provider of safe and high-quality food. The other functions of agriculture

are still secondary.” It should be noted that there is some academic literature which critiques the blind faith in the utility and healthful properties of locally-produced food (Born and Purcell, 2006). Further, concepts of local and trust as facets guiding decision-making in the agricultural sector have been explored in the Finnish context of animal farming (Jokinen *et al.*, 2012).

In addition to the research identified above, there is some literature that relates to the environmental conditions and the impacts of practicing both conventional and organic agriculture. The socio-geographic perspective on the organic and alternative agricultural sectors has also been addressed. One interesting inquiry is whether the administrative inspections to determine organic certification actually line up with the social values connected to organic production. This case study pointed to the importance of both dialogue and negotiation as a basis for effective redesign in inspection practices (Seppänen and Helenius, 2004). Pietola and Lansink (2001) utilized a modeling method to determine farmer response to the various implemented policies which promote organic farming technology. Their work suggests that “economic incentives play an important role in the farmer's decision to choose between organic and standard farming technologies” (Pietola and Lansink, 2001, 13).

The aforementioned studies contribute to building an understanding of the agricultural sector in Finland as well as the interplay between the conventional and organic sectors. Less attention has been given to urban agriculture, new food

distribution networks, and the consumer communities that have worked to develop these networks. Nousiainen *et al.* (2009) have examined the social sustainability of alternative food systems, specifically organic food systems and systems set up to encourage local food procurement. However, this work was published in 2009 which is prior to the surge in the grassroots food distribution networks and urban agricultural experiments described in this thesis. These authors also concede that, “The importance of ‘local’ in fulfilling sustainability objectives is widely espoused, but little studied” (Nousiainen *et al.*, 2009, 567). The research presented herein specifically addresses the lacuna in the literature on these topics.

Conceptual Framework

Urban agriculture is taken to mean activities that consist of plant production or animal husbandry situated in urban or peri-urban areas (Tornaghi, 2014). Urban agriculture in Finland must be considered within the context of the short growing season, the social systems, cultural priorities and traditions, and the local-global policy interactions. As discussed later in the thesis, urban agriculture is fundamentally formed through social, community, consumer networks, and direct farmer-consumer relations.

Finland’s agricultural landscape and food production systems have deep societal roots and intimate connections to the Finnish cultural identity. The idea of ‘foodshed’ serves as a dynamic conceptual framing device for this thesis. Foodshed is a creative reimagining of the long established term watershed and is described as a “unifying and

organizing metaphor for the conceptual development that starts from a premise of unity of place and people, of nature and society” (Kloppenburg *et al.*, 1996, 34). While there is a spatial component to the foodshed concept, it is developed through a flexible examination of the spatiality of the social relationships in each specific foodshed. The term foodshed was brought into popular use in the 1990s and provides a conceptual framework to “facilitate critical thought about where our food is coming from and how it is getting to us” (Kloppenburg *et al.*, 1996). The foodshed concept is described, “Not as a doctrine to be followed, but a set of principles to be explored” (Kloppenburg *et al.*, 1996). The vision of a foodshed, as opposed to a food economy, integrates concepts and values which extend beyond the economic drivers associated with a globalized food system (Kloppenburg and Lezberg, 1996).

For this thesis the conceptualization of grassroots draws on Ingram’s (2015) work on innovation networks in sustainable agriculture. Her conceptualization of grassroots is as follows: “[They] include non-regime actors and hybrid, diffuse networks (municipalities, NGOs, activists, volunteers etc.) who are concerned with food but in a wider setting than agriculture” (Ingram, 2015, 69).

Research Questions and Approach

My research into the food system and the urban agricultural sector reveals the importance of particular cultural values associated with the Finnish foodshed. In considering the theoretical concept of foodshed this thesis addresses the following

questions:

- (1) What is the role of grassroots food distribution networks in Finland, and to what extent are they creating alternative farmer-consumer linkages that support eating local?
- (2) How is urban agriculture structured and organized in Helsinki and within the broader context of the Finnish foodshed?
- (3) How do Finnish people express and reinforce their food heritage and cultural values through engagement with and participation in the urban agricultural sector?

This thesis will address these research questions through two primary lines of inquiry. The first line of inquiry probes the development of grassroots food distribution networks and the role they play in promoting local food and Finnish food heritage. The second separate, but related, line of inquiry drills down to the local scale by examining how forms of urban agriculture are transforming Helsinki's foodshed. While there are different theoretical frameworks and literatures that accompany these ideas, the two lines of inquiry both address different aspects of Finnish food heritage and its linkages to the evolving foodshed. The production and consumption of food is one of the few acts that is common across the whole of humanity. Food heritage, simply put, is the collection of tangible and intangible traits that are inherited from past generations, practiced by the present generation, and passed onto the future generation (Brulotte,

2014). While food is consumed on an individual level the activities that surround the production of food are often communal and this positions food as a marker for identity even within a globalized world (Brulotte, 2014). By analyzing grassroots food distribution networks and emerging urban agricultural enterprises through this lens, more effective policies related to the developing sector and consumer opportunities could be created, which honor the values embedded in Finnish food heritage.

This thesis draws upon data that were collected over a 15 month period of using a variety of qualitative and field research methods. To unpack the Finnish foodshed, I developed a multi-scalar approach, national, regional, and local, to address the guiding questions of this study. I conducted three series of interviews that aligned with these different scales and dealt with the three different, but inter-related driving questions of my thesis. The first series of interviews which comprised my Fulbright project consisted of 66 interviews with farmers, policy players, and organic researchers. These interviews are denoted in this thesis with the letter A and the interview number. I was specifically looking at the organic agricultural sector which is the direction I thought my thesis project would develop in, but when I went to Finland I found some of the regional and local questions dealing with institutionalized and non-institutionalized agricultural experiment were actually more innovative and tied in more closely with concepts of Finnish food heritage. I did a regional scale project conducted through e-mail interviews with 18 producers and consumers participating with grassroots distribution

networks. These interviews are denoted in this thesis with the letter E and the interview number. Finally, I returned to Finland to conduct more interviews on a local scale through a close examination of the Herttoniemi CSA. These interviews are denoted in this thesis with the letter F and the interview number. All interview projects used the snowball method to gather interviewees. My fieldwork for both the nation and the local scale project entailed traveling to Finnish farms, field observations in major agricultural areas of the country, and attendance at agricultural and food-centered events.

Thesis Structure

In addition to this introductory chapter, the thesis entails three substantive chapters followed by a concluding chapter.

Chapter Two provides the historical and social context of the Finnish agricultural sector. This exploration includes a brief exploration into the recent history of the agricultural sector constructed from narratives relayed during the interviews with farmers, policy actors, and agricultural researchers in 2013-2014. In addition, the trends in agriculture, including the emergence of and debates around organic agriculture are highlighted. The discussion of organic is warranted given that the issue of “organic” has become problematized and politicized in Finland. In addition, almost all grassroots networks and urban agricultural projects are closely aligned with organic agricultural methods.

In Chapter Three I address the questions: What is the role of grassroots food

distribution networks in Finland? Are these networks meeting the objectives of creating alternative farmer-consumer linkages that support eating local? This chapter explores the existing and emerging food networks in Finland and the ways in which eating local are getting (re)embedded in the Finnish cultural consciousness. The chapter draws on qualitative data collected during fieldwork that I conducted from 2013-2014. Data and field observations shed light on transformations of the Finnish food consciousness and the role of social networks, like Facebook, within the food system to enhance organic agricultural production and to expand options for eating local.

Chapter Four presents an analysis of forms of urban agriculture in Helsinki, the largest city as well as the capital city of Finland. The chapter addresses two inter-related questions: How is urban agriculture structured and organized within the Finnish foodshed? How do the Finns express and reinforce their food heritage and cultural values through the act of urban agricultural practice? This chapter draws upon fieldwork conducted during summer 2015 at the Herttoniemi Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project, located about 30 km from the city center of Helsinki. This chapter also draws on research interactions with other urban agricultural projects in Helsinki, such as allotment gardens and box gardens. Beyond this, the chapter aims to situate the role of urban agriculture within the broader Finnish food environment and track the ways in which urban agriculture stands against the dominant food channels in Finland.

The concluding chapter will tie together the distinct elements of the research and illustrate how the two topics, urban agriculture and food networks, intertwine to provide a view into recent farming strategies, agricultural diversification, and new networks for eating local. This chapter will discuss some of the barriers encountered while conducting and analyzing the research, including an evaluation of the method chosen for gathering interview data. In addition, the final chapter will explore areas for further research in the field and other ways the data collected as part of this thesis project could be analyzed.

CHAPTER 2: FINLAND'S AGRICULTURAL GEOGRAPHY: FROM LOCAL FOOD TO GLOBAL FOOD AND BACK AGAIN

Their house was modest, tidy, and inviting. The kettle was on in the kitchen and the wife and husband mentioned they were excited to talk to me about their farm. I was looking around the room, and I noticed a series of aerial photographs hanging prominently on the wall. These photographs were of the farm property stretching back for the last 60 or so years and showed the many changes that had occurred. I was impressed that the farm had such a well-documented history. Later during the interview, I brought up the photos and asked about the heritage of the farm, if the photos dated back to when their family started the farm. The farmer laughed and said no. He told me that his family can trace their heritage on that farm back to 1616. This was the first time I learned about such deep ties on a family farm. (Field notes – November 26, 2013)

Introduction

Longstanding ties to agricultural and rural heritage are embedded in the Finnish culture; the proximity to the countryside and nature extends beyond the spatial sense. Historically, even among the Nordic countries, Finland has remained focused on an agricultural economy, in part owing to circumstance, and has been slow to industrialize and urbanize (Ljungberg and Schön, 2013). Today, city dwelling citizens speak of feeling not too far removed from their ancestral agricultural roots. A major wave of migration from the countryside and rural areas to more urban and industrialized areas began in the 1960s and continued well into the 1970s (Jarvenpa, 2008). As one of the key informants in this research poignantly stated in a written correspondence:

Most of us younger people have connections to 'real' food via grandmothers or grandfathers – potatoes and vegetables from their own produce, fish straight from the sea, berries and mushrooms from the forest...as such it fits Finnish food culture and the Finnish spirit/mood (simplicity, independent). (Interviewee E-10)

As evident from the above quotation, the food heritage and the agrarian past is still salient in the country's modern context.

This chapter seeks to provide the historical and cultural context of the Finnish agricultural sector. The chapter draws on data from three different sources: statistical data from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 66 in-person, semi-structured interviews conducted with farmers, policy actors and agricultural researchers in 2013-2014, and 18 semi-structured e-mail interviews with participants in Finland's grassroots food distribution networks. The chapter consists of three main sections. It begins with a discussion of the periodicity of agricultural development and change during the 20th century. Next, I delve into Finnish narratives around food, giving attention to interpretations and meanings associated with the food categories of local, organic, and urban. This chapter seeks to establish an agreed upon definition of these terms and will then explore the potential meaning of these words through the lens of Finnish cultural values. The last section presents a discussion of Finnish food culture.

Finnish Agricultural History

The process of urbanization and the history of socio-economic change in Finland in the 20th century has been described as three main time periods of economic growth by Finnish economist Hannu Tervo (2010). There is the slow growth pre-World War I period which saw a largely non-industrial and immobile countryside. The beginnings of industrialization began between the wars, but did not hit the height until the 1960s and

continued until the economic recession of the 1990s. Tervo's articulation of these periods roughly corresponds to the important agricultural trends and shifts in the rural economy as conveyed in the interview data and oral narrative recorded during fieldwork. The following paragraphs trace the periodicity of these agricultural changes and shifts, drawing in part on Tervo's historical framework of analysis of the economic growth and spatial patterns in Finland. The following narrative, constructed from stories relayed by study participants, traces the history of agricultural development and broad changes in the agricultural sector over the 20th century.

Early Decades: Pre-chemicalization

Prior to the Second World War, Finland's countryside was composed of family farms and organized around a village structure. In the early 20th century Finland saw very little industrial activity, which was reflected in the agricultural sector through a low usage of chemical fertilizers. Most food was produced by the family or near the home, and there were informal but deeply embedded networks of trade among neighboring farms. In this time period, agricultural production was decentralized and small scale. This period was often associated with high quality, home-grown food products.

Second Period of Change: The Chemical Era

Many social and economic changes in Finland occurred after the Second World War. Despite its proximity to Russia, Finland never became incorporated into the Soviet

Union. There was a marked increase in industrialization and a large wave of people moving from the countryside to population centers. This period is also associated with the start of the widespread use of chemical fertilizers and the growth of the grocery business as Finns moved away from growing their own food. This was the era in which the grocery sector began to develop into a monopolistic model, which caused repercussions throughout the food production and processing chain. The squeeze in the distribution of agricultural production served as one of the main catalysts for the decline of the small family farm as contracts were only made with farms that were productive enough to fill large orders. This also caused a consolidation in other agricultural sectors as enterprises such as the small village slaughterhouse were edged out in favor of larger operations which could handle the volume needed by the grocery groups. Finland's 1995 entry into the EU turned the Finnish agricultural landscape upside down and had a monumental impact on Finnish agricultural geography. While there were wide ranging effects, for the purposes of this thesis I focus on the globalization of available agriculture and also the emphasis on organic production, which is manifesting in a perceived (re)localization of consumption practices.

Third Period of Transition: (Re)discovery of the Local

During the early 1990s, the transformations set into motion during the previous period continued to affect the values that surround food production and procurement in Finland. Though on the surface the agricultural geography still reflects the changes

made in the chemicalization period, it is also marked by the many signs of change: wider selections of fruits and vegetables in the supermarket, more choices in organic meat and processed products, the emergence of food circles focused around local production, and the development of labels and brands that represent Finnish-made food.

Gravitation back to the local has been driven in part by movements and trends in other parts of Europe and in the broader global context (Trobe, 2001). Based on observations I made during my extensive fieldwork, it is apparent that trends in localization such as eating local, eating organic, and small scale production are coming back into the common culture in Finland. The Finnish local and organic food trend is underscored by the perception that this is a return to how food culture used to be expressed in the countryside. It has been a wide arc through the chemicalization period to return to a mentality where food values revolve more around locality and seasonality and less around increased variety and cost.

Local Views and Interpretations

“Organic,” “local,” and “urban:” these words were used by the interviewees in this project; however, these words can be problematic because, while they have formal definitions, the meanings and connotations of the terms are intimately connected to the producers’ and consumers’ personal experiences. As such, these words represent social constructions and cannot be easily or even definitively defined. Further, what

constitutes food heritage in the Finnish context also requires attention to producer-consumer relations and interactions. This section briefly explores the literature connected to the ideological underpinnings of the practice of urban agriculture and the concept of the geographical imagination. Each of these terms must be evaluated in the context of existing literature to interpret the results of the interview data collected.

Defining Organic and Local

Finland has been a member of the EU since 1995. In light of this membership, Finland must adopt the framework of the CAP to govern the domestic agricultural sector. This produces a situation in which the specific cultural idea of a concept does not always perfectly align with the technical definition of the concept. According to regulations in the CAP, it is the responsibility of the member state to develop a specific system and administrative mechanisms to implement the regulation. This approach can lead to different cultural ideas about the same larger concepts because there are different state-level entities implementing the regulations (Kortelainen and Albrecht 2013). Hence, the terms “local” and “organic” that are integral to this study need to be considered on the level of the EU, the Finnish state, and the perceptions of study participants.

According to the EU, the working definition of organic agriculture is as follows:

Organic production is an overall system of farm management and food production that combines best environmental practices, a high level of biodiversity, the preservation of natural resources, the application of high

animal welfare standards and a production method in line with the preference of certain consumers for products produced using natural substances and processes (European Commission, 2014, 24).

The Finnish state has adopted the EU definition of organic as described above and as expressed in detail in European Council Regulation 834/2007 (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry 2014b). Organic, as a word, has more than one function; even the EU definition above leaves room for interpretation by member states. In Finland the Finnish Food Safety Authority (EVIRA) is the organization responsible for regulating organic production. The regulation in Finland is achieved through a rigorous certification process and continuing inspections for compliance.

The organic sector in Finland has experienced significant shifts since entry into the EU, including the establishment of 1,400 organic farms since 1995 (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2014a). It is important to note that these are not all new farms and that most of the farms had been operating using conventional agricultural production methods and subsequently transitioned to organic methods. The total percentage of land under agricultural production in Finland has remained stable over the same period of time during which these new farms were developing (Orpo *et al.*, 2014).

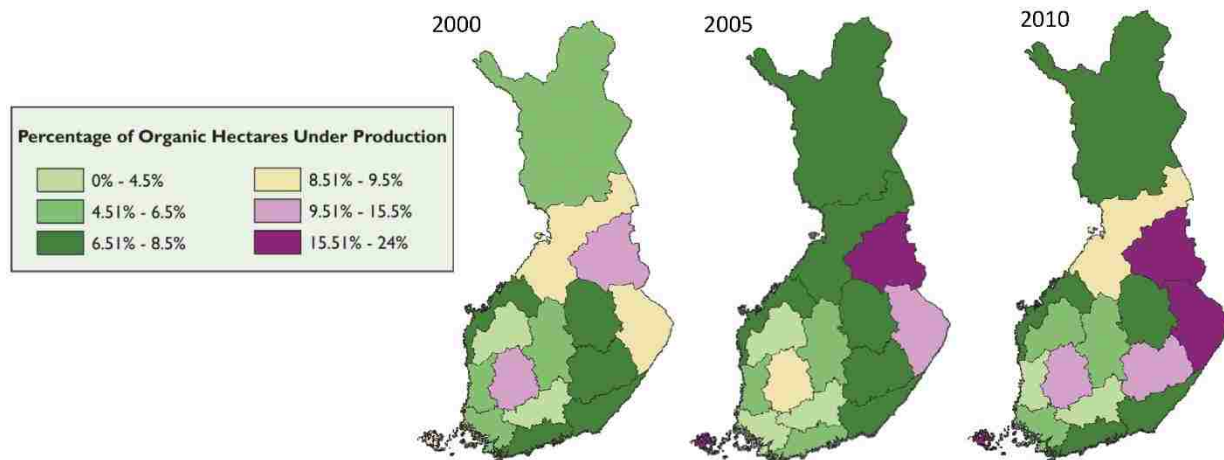


Figure 2: Maps representing the shift in the organic agricultural sector on a *maakunta* or regional scale between 2000 and 2010 (Albov, Halvorson, and McManigal, 2012).

The choropleth maps above illustrate the shifts that have occurred in the organic agricultural sector at the *maakunta* (regional) level over a 10 year period. There has been an increase in the percentage of hectares under organic production in many regions and specifically in the eastern part of the country. Even the most northern region of Finland, which lies primarily above the Arctic Circle, has seen an increase in implementation of organic production methods. While these maps are not able to tell the whole story of why shifts are occurring in the organic agricultural sector, they are a compelling illustration of the fact that changes are occurring in the number of hectares under organic production.

The theme of Finnish food as pure or clean food was frequently mentioned by interviewees when trying to explain the perception of the organic sector and the conventional sector.

I also think that they [the government] misinterpreted the public understanding about the state of agriculture in Finland. Because normally people see the Finnish agriculture as something which is, well if not excellent, something which is very good or good as such – as it is currently. And much better than the agriculture in let's say Central Europe or in Southern Europe. So they think it the food is so clean and the soil is so clean and the air is so clean. (Interviewee A-7)

Given this emphasis on the quality of Finnish produce many interviewees indicated that this was a reason that organic as a concept was late arriving to Finland. As one study participant put it this way:

Finns they don't [know] the point why they should pay more when you know Finnish agriculture is almost organic. And that is one of the biggest problems we have. Because we think that all agricultural and farming and food production in Finland is organic already. So why should you buy more expensive food when there is no difference. (Interviewee A-58)

Even when difficulties in the agricultural sector were acknowledged, there was a quick return to the emphasis on the purity of Finnish-produced food.

Although we have certain difficulties and we have low yield level in comparison to many European countries, we have our specialties concerning purity. (Interviewee A-52)

This perceived purity of the food produced in Finland was often related by interviewees to both the concept of trust in the government system and the farmers. As one study participant noted, "...we trust on our system and we trust on our farmers" (Interviewee A-9). Trust is a concept that is socially constructed; it is described in the existing Finnish agricultural literature as, "a multidimensional notion bound to various cultural meanings" (Jokinen et al., 2012, 107). There are many values in Finland which

contribute to the cultural concept of what is considered good or trustworthy, including hard work and an ethos of respect for the natural environment (Silvasti, 2003). The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry speaks to the concept of Finnish food culture extensively in its government program on local food, indicating that the unique food culture is closely tied to the northern location, the climate and special variation of produce which grow in it, the long distances between settlements and the high degree of regionalization in food practices (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2013). These sentiments were expressed by the interviewees and also focused on the concept of purity or cleanliness as it related to food produced in Finland.

Similar to the concept of “organic,” the concept of “local” is also socially constructed; there are many values which need to be unpacked to fully appreciate the meaning of local within a particular context (Feagan, 2007). The concept of local does not mean the same thing to one person as it does to another person because on an individual level, local, which is a facet of place, is tied up in the geographic imagination. Food is also intimately associated with place in the geographic imagination (Kloppenborg *et al.*, 1996). The subjectivity of local has the potential to create ambiguity when assigning meaning to the term.

Finland has recently institutionalized the concept of local through the development of food initiatives which specifically promote the use of local food in state run cafeterias (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2013). The state-run *noutopöytä* or

cafeterias feed approximately 75% of the Finnish population on any given weekday as these cafeterias are found in schools, universities, and public offices (Bradley *et al.*, 2010). The Finnish National Food Strategy characterizes procurement of local resources as follows: “Innovative action founded on local resources is an indispensable counterforce to the diminishing diversity in the food chain” (Bradley *et al.*, 2010, 11). However, while the importance of local food was stressed as a strategy for sustainable development and served as a cornerstone of the Food Strategy, there is not one bold definition of what constitutes local within the 2010 publication. The articulation of what constitutes local was not made official until the initiation of the government program for local food in 2013. At this time the government defined local as food which is produced and supports the local economy and culture at the *maakunta* or regional level. Clearly, local is an important concept in Finland, and the procurement of local food was often described as a priority, even over the procurement of organic food. For example, one individual expressed this concern for local in this way:

I would personally prefer local and organic then again I would prefer local rather than organic that comes from anywhere. If I have local conventionally produced mutton meat sheep meat so I would prefer that to buy from the local producer than the New Zealand organic. (Interviewee A-5)

The map in Figure 3 illustrates the administrative divisions in Finland at the *maakunta* level which is the level the Finnish government uses as for the definition of a local food item. Helsinki is located in the *maakunta* labeled with the number 1, on the

south eastern coast.



Figure 3: Finland divided by maakunta or the unit by which the government considers an item to be local (Albov, Halvorson and McManigal, 2012).

Defining Urban

There are many considerations when deciding what criteria define a city and what should constitute an urban area. These can include objective and numerical measurements such as total population and population density. The definition can also

be more subjective, for example, based on historical function. The differences in the criteria used to define “city” has led various European countries to use different methodologies to define their cities. In 2011 the European Commission developed a methodology to uniformly determine what constitutes a city. This methodology serves to create a definition for “city” that is largely undistorted by national conceptions (Dijkstra and Poelman, 2012). This new definition of a city is not a straightforward verbal definition, but instead relies on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and the interpolation of urban areas around ‘urban centers’ based on the population density within grid cells. The specifics of how the European Commission developed the methodology is beyond the scope of this thesis; however, this particular method determined that there are a total of 7 cities in Finland in which 34 percent of the total population resides. The metropolitan regions of the 7 cities in Finland as quantified by the European Commission contain another 15 percent of the population. Taken together, these demographic figures suggest that a total of 49 percent of the population lives in or adjacent to a city in Finland (Dijkstra and Poelman, 2012). It is interesting to note that the percent of the population which lives in urban areas as determined by the European Commission methodology is markedly different than the 70 percent which is estimated by the Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy (2013).

This discussion is salient to this thesis because it highlights the reality that the notion of urban is a social construction, and what is urban to one population may not be

considered urban to another population. The urban agricultural projects which are taking place in Finland are not necessarily similar to urban agricultural projects occurring in other parts of the world, especially places which are more densely populated. For example, in some densely populated areas rooftops gardens are in vogue and in some global cities such as Chicago, Toronto, or Berlin (Litichevskaya, 2011). In these places these rooftop gardens are one of the dominant expressions of urban agricultural practice. In a location like Helsinki large allotment garden plots are widespread given the available open space. This point is further explained by one of the proprietors of a CSA project in one of Finland's smaller cities:

My biggest impression in Finland is that there is so much space, so there are huge opportunities for food growing in and near urban centers. In my town we looked for instance into aquaculture and that whole technology is very exciting but it's developed for tight urban spaces. Why go that route when there is so much land available!?! (Interviewee E-4)

The available space and low population densities even within the various urban areas of Finland have implications for the types of urban agriculture which are adopted. As the above quotation illustrates, there is not a great emphasis on particular strategies that would be found in densely populated urban areas as there are plenty of open spaces available within the existing urban fabric. As a result, the prominent projects within the portfolio of urban agricultural projects in Helsinki, for example, are the allotment style gardens which exist on parkland within the city.

Finnish Food Culture

Ahhhh the Finnish people are very proud, I think, they are very proud of their own food culture. It's every day. It's what you eat and with whom you eat and how you prepare it, but using the Finnish raw materials and the Finnish people are very proud of their own food culture. (Interviewee A-5)

Food is connected to place and food is connected to culture (Feagan, 2007). As Kloppenburg and Lezberg (1996, 94) explains in their writing on the importance of the foodshed concept, "Food is still wrapped up with family, ethnic, and community traditions that remind us of who we are, where we are, and what we value." This sentiment rings true in the context of the Finnish food system. The dominant food chain was characterized in the interviews as having distanced consumers from the source of their food, and I theorize based on this research that this removal or disconnection from the source has caused a pushback in Finnish society toward localization. In this thesis the food chain is conceptualized as the set of processes a food item is put through as it travels from producer, to processor, to consumer (Kottila, 2010). Each discrete food item will travel through its own specific food chain; an agricultural product or food item within the dominant food chain would move from farmer, to processor, to one of the commercially preeminent grocery chains.

Local food has a high value in Finland, as does the perception that Finnish-produced food is "clean" or "pure." When describing Finnish-produced food the word

puhdas is used which translates directly into English as “clean.” Significantly, there are deeper cultural meanings to this word that are beyond a straightforward definition:

Finland has done a lot of work to promote the cleanliness "*puhtaus*", for example different systems to trace the food and it is always a huge shock for us when media gives us news about food safety problems from abroad, I think it has to do with the fact that we are so honest people that we demand honest behavior from our food chain. (Interviewee E-1)

The strong desire for Finnish-produced local food was a continuing theme throughout the interviews, as was the assertion that honesty is inherent in social and market interactions. The desire for local food often trumps a desire for organic food. The word for “pure” in Finnish is *puhtaasti* and is connected to Finnish food through a label which is called “*puhtaasti kotimainen*” which translates to purely homegrown. This word can only be used for food that is 100% Finnish grown. One of the informants indicated that this mark is often confused with the mark for organic even though it does not necessarily mean that the product is organic. However, a continued or complete discussion of the labeling systems that are used for food products both within Finland and the EU is beyond the scope of this thesis. Even without mention of any specific or descriptive product labeling, it was not uncommon for interviewees to connect the concepts of local and organic, and some even noted the interconnectedness of these concepts as a stumbling point for the Finnish consumer in his or her understanding of the food chain:

In the beginning people really thought that if it is not local it can't be organic. Now the situation has changed and people also, like this young

generation...don't make the connection...they make more the connection healthy and organic I think. (Interviewee A-20)

The overarching food movements in Finland are organic food and local food. These two concepts have often been conceptually linked both by the Finnish government and the market. As one interviewee put it:

Well, both are trends that are growing and I think for many consumers it is confusing. Or many consumers confuse the two that if it is local food it's probably organic as well... sometimes even the opposite – that if it is organic consumers presume that it is local...I would say that the organic sector has not been too active to correct that confusion because most of the producers...are also supportive of the local food idea. So they are organic, but they also support the local food idea. And in a way would like to see that organic would be local or at least Finnish. (Interviewee A-19)

The intertwining of local and organic food, however, is beginning to be untangled. Within the last few years the Finnish government has developed differentiated governmental support programs for local food and organic food, while previously these concepts were often linked. This change is not only happening on the governmental level, but also on the consumer level. For example,

[Organic] has been really a minor sector in Finland before just some curiosity really because the conventional sector is so strong in Finland. We have thought that our agricultural is so much better. Our practices are so much better than for example somewhere else in Europe because we have northern climate and we don't have to use so much pesticides and we are efficient and we don't the remote location – we don't have so much diseases- animal disease and things like that. So that the tradition, the conventional tradition, the agricultural tradition has been very strong. So it has been hard to find a place for organic agricultural to take that place. (Interviewee A-37)

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to provide context on the history and processes of agricultural change as well as to draw attention to local views and interpretations of the connotations of the terms organic, local and urban. The agricultural data, policy examination, and interviews together support the importance of food quality for Finnish consumers, with special attention and trust in locally grown food. Finnish food culture reflects a distinct place-ness or geographic orientation and prioritization for localization. In the next chapter, I will delve into the development of grassroots food distribution networks and the ways in which they are serving to (re)localize food procurement in Finland.

CHAPTER 3: (RE)LOCALIZING THE FINNISH FOODSHED THROUGH GRASSROOTS NETWORKS

It was March, there were a few inches of snow on the ground, and the air was bitingly cold. I was invited by the founder of the REKO Circles to accompany him to the weekly pick up scheduled to take place in the midafternoon, which at that latitude was right before nightfall. We arrived shortly after the start of the event at a parking lot that was in a forgotten corner of Pietarsaari. Cars were parked every few spaces and there was a group of people clustered around each car. The temperature hovered around freezing and products were exchanged quickly and efficiently through open trunks or out of backseats. As I watched the scene unfold in front of me, I was amazed to realize that 30 minutes ago this had been an empty parking lot and in another 30 minutes all the producers and consumers would be gone. The parking lot would be cold and silent again; the only hint of this “instant” market would be the trampled snow. (Field notes – March 20, 2014)

Introduction

Finland, like many other areas in Europe and the Global North more generally, is experiencing a reinvigoration of the local food sector. This resurgence of active interest in obtaining locally produced food is evident in Finland in two primary ways. First, the Finnish government has supported a variety of approaches to institutionalize eating local. This trend is apparent with the development of state-sponsored programs to promote the use of local food in public institutions such as municipal kitchens, kindergartens, primary, and secondary schools, universities, hospitals, and public cafeterias (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2013). Second, recent consumer-led grassroots actions and efforts have aimed to develop the infrastructure and networks needed to support and expand local food procurement. These grassroots networks are operating outside of the dominant food procurement system. Institutional programs and grassroots networks are changing the ability of Finnish consumers to (re)localize

their food supplies. However, for the purposes of this chapter, the perceptions, local narratives, and history of the grassroots networks will be considered for their role in shifting the conversation about localness within the Finnish foodshed.

In 2013 around 50 percent or more of Finnish citizens lived in or around urban areas. Despite the fact that the majority of Finnish people physically reside in these urban areas, there are still strong cultural and economic connections to the country's agrarian roots. Connection and respect for the agrarian tradition was specifically articulated as an integral aspect of "Finnishness" by the victorious side in the Finnish Civil War in 1918 (Salmela, 2007). In the first half the 20th century, outside of Helsinki, Finland remained predominantly agrarian with the shift to urban living began only in the 1950s. Even so, the countryside retained the majority of the population until the 1960s (Heikkilä and Järvinen, 2002, Paunonen, 2011). During my fieldwork in summer 2015 when I asked CSA members to characterize modern urban Finland, many replies were along the following lines: "I think it is [a] mental issue what you think [is] urban. What is not urban? Because in Finland there are hardly any cities here - I mean it is very small scale cities" (Interviewee F-17). This observation reinforces the thought that what is or is no urban is linked to the geographical imagination. Another CSA member expressed the idea of the prominent countryside when asked to characterize Finnish cities. "The whole Finland is kind of this semi-urban environment. We have only few cities and it is mostly about growing forest and cultivating fields" (Interviewee F-6). The

population distribution is uneven in Finland. The majority of the population lives in the southern and western parts of the country. The largest metropolitan region is the Helsinki *maakunta* (region) which is located in a jurisdiction called *Uusimaa*. Even in Helsinki, which is the largest city in Finland, the boundaries and zones of agricultural land, forest land, and residential land are blurred.



Figure 4: Walking path through the urban forest near the historic Helsinki City Center. (Photo by S. Albov, 2013)

This chapter explores the grassroots networks which have (re)emerged in Finland as a response to consumer demand for local food sources. I examine the broader literature on food movements, local food, and the ties to cultural heritage

expressed through food consumption choices. After a discussion of the specific research strategies and methods used to interrogate these linkages, I report on the perceptions of the producer and consumer members of these grassroots networks. I use the narratives they shared about their practices and participation to reflect the influence of Finnish cultural food heritage in reshaping the Finnish foodshed.

Food Movements

Finland's entry into the EU was highly contentious within the country. The main opponents were farmers and other participants in rural industry, for example meat or dairy processing operations (Rantamäki-Lahtinen, 2014). Finland's citizens approved entry into the EU by a vote of only 57 percent, which is theorized to be a result related to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent Finnish recession (Peter, 1996). The impacts of entry into the EU were immediate for farmers, as it meant a switch from the domestic system of price supports to the CAP subsidy system and a complete reorganization of both the institutional and subsidy system for farmers (Pietola et al., 2000). Research has shown that choices in production methods—conventional or organic—are closely tied to the levels of economic support and subsidies offered by the Finnish government (Pietola and Lansink, 2001).

There is an established body of academic literature which set the groundwork for the assertion that food and consumer choices in food consumption can serve as a source of societal transformation. Much of this research focuses on urban agricultural as a

strategy for disenfranchised populations to combat political or social ills (please see McClintock, 2010, White, 2011a, White, 2011b). This chapter focuses on alternative food networks as well as examines the ethos of the foodshed in the modern Finnish context. The term foodshed has been traced back to the early 20th century, but it was not brought into common usage until the 1990s when it was widely popularized by Jack Kloppenburg and his co-authors as a framework for considering all the diverse aspects which contribute to the trajectory of a food item from production to consumption. This framework is especially appropriate to examine the context of grassroots movements in Finland because there is a backtracking from the global to the local which involves emphasizing socio-geographic (socio-spatial) relationships in addition to the more economic focused producer and consumer decisions made in the dominant food chain. The alternative agricultural endeavors based in grassroots development of personal relationships between the producer and consumer are an integral building block in the basis for foodshed development (Kloppenburg and Lezberg, 1996).

Research Methods

The analysis presented in this thesis was initially informed by 66 semi-structured interviews with organic farmers, policy actors, and agricultural researchers. I conducted these interviews in English between fall 2013 and spring 2014. The focus of these interviews was the recent history of Finnish farming, the emergence of the organic sector, and agricultural policy at the scale of the state and the European Union (see

Appendix A). The themes of trust and importance of local produce emerged during coding of these interviews and led me to focus on the topic of grassroots food distribution networks as an agent of (re)localization in the Finnish foodshed. The original research questions regarding EU and Finnish state interactions over organic policy was not the compelling topic as anticipated prior to arriving in Finland; however, interviewees were passionate about sharing their food heritage and expressions of food values through consumption of local food, as well as their dissatisfaction with the dominant food chain. To further explore this topic, I conducted an additional 18 semi-structured interviews with farmers and consumers participating with grassroots food distribution networks in Finland. These 18 interviews were conducted via an email format. This approach to these interviews was ideal and also necessary owing to the fact that I was not physically in the country at the time and phone interviews would have been unreliable and potentially expensive. In addition, the email format allowed the interview respondents sufficient time to consider their responses to the questions. All of the respondents expressed no hesitation when invited to participate in an email-based interview.

These 18 interviews in conjunction with participant observation and site visits form the core of the data used for the analysis in this chapter. The most interviewees participated in the networks which are called REKO Circles (shortening of *Rejäl Konsumtion* in Swedish which translates to “fair consumption” in English). These

interviews were conducted in English during fall 2014 and spring 2015. The questions addressed the interviewee's involvement and introduction to the REKO Circles, how the Circles are structured, and what makes them different from other types of grassroots food distribution networks. These interviews also explored how the REKO Circles are connected with existing or traditional cultural ideas about food in Finland. In addition to the interview data, I visited important physical sites in which network actors come together and exchanged money and product at a REKO distribution point. Further, I joined three REKO circles and observed communication and social interactions over their main communication platform, Facebook. These data sources were further supplemented through my participation in three academic conferences and meetings centered on urban agricultural network building. The main speakers at these conferences were practitioners in the process of developing and building new avenues of interaction in the agricultural sector, both in Finland and in other areas of Europe. Finally, in summer 2015, I was able to go back to Finland to conduct additional participant observation, conversation, and site visits to areas where activities outside of the dominant food chain are taking place.

Finnish Food Distribution Networks

The need for a market which does not confuse the concepts of local and organic was expressed several times in the interviews. The vision for this market is one in which the two concepts are delineated as separate but could be combined to produce a

product with an even higher value added. This sentiment was expressed by the following interviewee:

Well there is lots of people they gave quite a high value for local food, but also for organic food and many people mix them. So they don't they can't make a clear difference between these two different things. And in Finland the local, organic local food market, is not very well developed. And it would be nice to develop more strongly organic local food markets. (Interviewee A-22)

The opportunities to find local and organic food have been somewhat limited in Finland unless consumers are willing to operate outside of the dominant supply chain. The founder of the REKO Circles indicated that in Finland procuring food outside of the dominant food chain is something that has always happened in the countryside to a certain extent, through neighbors trading or selling food at a small scale, it was not an option which was readily available to people living in urban centers. This is now changing through the development of distinct grassroots organized movements, which work to connect farmers directly to consumers outside of the dominant supply chain. The occurrence of this shift was articulated by one of the interviews during a discussion of how the new distribution networks tie into traditional Finnish food values:

It's like local market, not to get food from a store, but face to face from a producer. Reminds [of] an old agricultural village style of living (Finnish city life is quite young, Finnish people moved from countryside to towns about 50's - 60'). We also have now a great downshifting- boom, back to cooking food [for your] self, buying fresh ingredients, slow cooking, thinking ecologically. (Interviewee E-15)

There are two other types of grassroots food distribution networks which need to be mentioned in brief in this chapter, as they are part of the portfolio of grassroots networks operating in Finland focused on the (re)localization of food production. The first is the network created through the operation of a CSA project, one of which will be discussed in depth in Chapter 4. The CSA movement in Finland was born out of Helsinki approximately five years ago and was started by private citizens who were already involved with a food circle. The CSA promotes local and organic eating in the most direct way available in that the fields are chosen and cultivated in as close proximity to the members of the CSA as possible. In the CSA the farmer, who is hired directly by the CSA members, is portrayed as a personal farmer who connects the members or shareholders directly to the source of their food. Members often even work in the fields of the CSA alongside “their farmer” as part of the mandatory work hours which are a requirement of their membership.

There are also networks which are called *Ruokapiiri* or food circles. While the REKO and *Ruokapiiri* both contain the word “circle” in the English translation of their name, it is important to note that these concepts are related but distinct. *Ruokapiiri* is a loose term which is applied to a variety of ways to shorten the supply chain up to and including direct contact between producers and consumers. In its most organized form the *Ruokapiiri* members have created a storefront which is open twice a week and where members of the food circle can come in to buy products chosen for the store based on

their local and organic nature. Less organized *Ruokapiiri* are loosely structured groups in which a single producer offers a product and members of that circle can order it directly from the producer. This concept is related but separate from the REKO Circle arrangement for two main reasons. The primary reason is that the REKO Circle creates a diverse market with many sellers which manifests in a physical space once a week when all the producers and consumers meet up to exchange goods. This communal event does not always accompany the interactions of a *Ruokapiiri*. Secondly, the *Ruokapiiri* is a much looser term, whereas the REKO Circle describes an informal association but one with a particular formula in how it is administered and actualized. While organization for the *Ruokapiiri* varies, it often includes communication over social media similar to that of the REKO Circle.

The REKO Circle grassroots movement, which is the main focus of this chapter, is also organized primarily through social media and focuses on connecting producers directly to consumers. The REKO Circles were the brainchild of a Swedish-speaking Finnish organic beef farmer, Thomas Snellman, in a small city in Western Finland. He was inspired by the Associations for the Preservation of Peasant Farming (AMAP) system during a visit to France in November 2012. The AMAP system follows what in the US would be known as a box system consisting of consumers buying several weeks' worth of produce boxes in advance, usually a complete growing season (Curtet and Girard, 2012). This is akin to a CSA, but instead of all the produce originating from a

single diversified farm, it brings together several local and organic producers to contribute toward the assembly of each box. However, the REKO founder deviated from the AMAP system by designing his circles without any long-term contract. The act of participation in the REKO Circles is free for both the producers and the consumers. Money only changes hands when a specific product is bought, and this exchange happens directly between the producer and consumer. This means there is no professional administration for the groups. The communication between the producers and consumers occurs almost exclusively through Facebook as described by one of the participating members as follows:

The idea of REKO that there will be no management - everything takes care of itself through the Facebook page. Producers put themselves, their products [on the Facebook page] before each delivery and customer orders [through Facebook] during the producer's post (Interviewee E-8).

There is a benefit to being part of the REKO Circle for both the producers and consumers. From the consumer side the main benefit discussed was reinserting the concept of trust back into the food purchasing process, as described by a REKO consumer:

REKO is an answer to consumers concern about food safety - as you get to know the producer you build trust, you learn where it comes from, you can ask about growing etc. Thus it also strengthens the value of the food. (Interviewee E-10)

From the producer side there is the benefit of knowing how much of each product will get sold to which consumers before arriving at the selling point. It is

a strategy for smaller producers to access a market and minimize the risk because all the products are presold. There are also no middlemen involved in the process so the producer and consumer can interact directly.

For me as a producer this is actually the best part of the concept. I don't have to guess how much potatoes I need to bring to the market and I don't risk having to bring half of it back home. The consumer on the other hand doesn't risk going to the market and returning emptyhanded because the potato farmer had underestimated the demand. (Interviewee E-9)

The only requirement to start a REKO Circle is a group of enthusiastic consumers who are ready to gather producers to sell directly. A Facebook group is set up and all consumers and producers join the group. The group is closed, but anyone is allowed to submit a request to join. These requests are then approved by a volunteer administrator. Producers advertise what they have for sale that week through a posting on the Facebook page. Consumers are able to respond directly to each post from producers when they would like to make a purchase, indicating how much they would like of the item offered for sale. There is a predetermined meeting time where all consumers and producers come together to exchange the money and products as they have prearranged through the Facebook group. The pickup location is usually in a parking lot and looks like a farmers market upon first glance. However, unlike a farmers market, the pickup time is very limited (half hour to an hour) and all products are already presold. There is no usually specific signage as there would be at a farmers market, but the scale of the events allows for consumers to quickly understand which

producers are selling specific products. The process of the REKO transactions is summarized by a REKO group organizer as follows:

At REKO...customer orders products [in advance] via a Facebook page. This means that the producer knows exactly how much the goods to be taken to the time of delivery, which means there is no waste. Delivery lasts for only 1 hour, which is advantageous for producers who do not need to stand a whole day as is the case in an ordinary market. (Interviewee E-8)

The REKO Circles are answering a need for locally produced food that is not perceived by consumers to be filled through the dominant grocery chains. To get to the heart of its revolutionary nature, one must understand the state of the supply chain in Finland. While there is not a shortage of food or grocery stores per se, choice is constrained because there are only two main supermarket chains which hold a 78.8% market share of the grocery business in country (Kesko, 2015). The grocery chain dominance effectively limits local and small-scale producers from participation and overt selection by these grocery giants. One of the farmers described producers' frustration with the commercial grocery chains in this way:

They even say that the size of farms has been controlled by the two grocery companies. Farms have to have the amount of animals [or] size of crop that one of the two major companies is willing to buy. (Interviewee A-15)

Only very recently has the Finnish grocery sector been infiltrated by grocery stores which are outside the two dominant chains. The food in these markets does not tend to be organic and oftentimes is imported from areas other than Finland. Even

when there is a food product which is produced in Finland, a store's supply will often come from abroad or there will be a less expensive version of the product from abroad alongside an offering from Finland. This happens not only with produce but dairy and other processed food. This process expressed by the interviewees and then confirmed through numerous site visits to the two main Finnish grocery stores and a documentation of the production source of specific products, for example, cabbage, milk, and eggs.

Many want to make their food from scratch, preferably organic and since the supermarkets have been slow in responding, REKO is filling that need embedded in this cultural shift. (Interviewee E-14)

The idea that Finnish consumers want to know where their food is coming from was also expressed over and over in the interviews. One of the REKO consumers mused about REKO's role in creating trust in the food chain:

REKO is an answer to consumer's concerns about food safety – as you get to know the producer you build trust, you learn where it comes from, you can ask about growing, etc. Thus it also strengthens the value of the food. (Interviewee E-10)

The two key points in this statement are the added value of local and "known" food and the concept of interpersonal trust as an important consideration in food decisions. Trust is a theme often discussed in context of Finnish consumer food decisions. This focus on trust could be a lingering result of the upswing in food safety issues which accompanied Finland's entry into the EU. Finland, long regarded as a peripheral country, experienced previously unknown issues in food safety in the early

2000s, for example the discovery of diseases affecting sheep and goats in 2001. These events perhaps have served to make consumers wary of unknown or non-Finnish food sources (Raento, 2010). The dissatisfaction with the current grocery system was reiterated by interviewees in this set of interviews, as well as in the previous interviews on the organic sector. There was a strong iteration of the desire for consumers to be able to interact with the producers; as one interviewee expressed, “REKO is a way to put a face behind the products” (Interviewee E-8).

The REKO Circles have spread very quickly through the Swedish speaking part of Finland. The first delivery occurred in Jakobstad (Pietarsaari) on June 6, 2013. At the time of writing, as reported by the founder of REKO model, approximately 100 circles have been established throughout Finland and more are being founded regularly. The circles are mainly in Swedish speaking areas in the western part of Finland. However, circles are beginning to be established in Finnish speaking areas and have extended all the way across the country to the eastern edge, encouraging “a new way to shop” (Interviewee E-8). The simplicity with which the Circles are set up has helped the diffusion across Finland. The REKO concept has even been recognized by the Finnish government and active leaders within the REKO Circles are being asked to share their expertise on local food marketing with the government. The following is a description of the REKO trajectory which speaks to the activism of leaders, ease with which new circles can be developed, the excitement over the access to local food, and the interest

from the government in the activities of the REKO Circles. It should be noted that currently the extent of government interest in the REKO Circles is limited to a discussion of the usefulness and innovation of the idea. The government has not yet designed any regulations which directly affect the REKO Circles ability to operate, but there is acknowledgement that such oversight could come into play at some point if the circles continue to grow.

REKO is growing very [quickly] all the time. This week we will have at least three new circles. Last Thursday I was...presenting the REKO concept to twenty project workers from [the] southwest. No-one of them had heard about REKO before, but they were very enthusiastic about this, and this morning a lady called me and said, they have already started the preparation at two places. Two days ago [someone]...called me from the Finnish Agricultural Ministry [Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry] and asked me to participate in a debate about local food the first of December, together with very important people from the administration. (Interviewee E-13)

Implications for Finnish Farmers

The advent of these grassroots food distribution networks and the development from the bottom up is a deviation from the typical flow of agricultural development in Finland. In numerous discussions with interviewees about the policies surrounding agricultural regulation, there was a perception among respondents that while there were some grassroots efforts within the organic agricultural sector, the majority of the rules and regulations in organic and conventional agriculture were developed from the top, EU and ministerial level, and handed down to the farmers. This policy flow was articulated by 74 percent of the farmers interviewed (N=27). One farmer expanded on

his thoughts and intimated that there is a component of trust between the policy makers, the farmers, and the consumers.

It comes from the top down, farmers don't have much to say to the policy...It is the same in conventional farming. And it is the same in every European country, but I do not think all European countries obeys them as much as Finland does. (Interviewee A-45)

However, in spite of the feeling that Finland's farmers are prepared to obey the rules, 55 percent of the 18 farmers who were asked this question, indicated that they had little or no voice to influence this policy or the overall functioning of the agricultural sector. Of these farmers (N=6) conceded that they had some influence through their local association. "There is an organic association as well. Through these there is of course some way of getting your voice heard. But yeah as a single farmer, no, not really" (Interviewee A-62). There were also an equal number of farmers (N=6) who indicated that they felt like they could make an impact on organic policy as an individual farmer. Even with some farmers perceiving that they had a voice in the policy making, 56 percent of the farmers asked (N=23) indicated that the government regulations make it harder to be an organic farmer, while 26 percent indicated that the government influence sometimes made it harder.

Maybe it is hard for one or individual...I think it is a very good thing to have this regulation, but when you look at one farmer then you see that it is quite much of paperwork I think. (Interviewee A-55)

Only 4 percent indicated that they make it easier and 13 percent didn't know or felt there was no answer between the choices offered.

In addition to a perceived lack of political power there is a notable concentration in the grocery sector and a further complication for farmers especially small scale farmers who do not produce enough for the large grocery chains to be willing to carry their products.

I wanted to become involved because me and my colleague had discussed the need for a direct channel to the consumer, specifically a channel that made it possible to sell smaller quantities of various products (meat, potatoes etc.). If you try to approach the larger food store chains you have to be able to deliver a lot of goods right from the start and this is sometimes a problem for a smaller farm, especially if you are in a startup-phase. (Interviewee E-9)

While the interplay between the institutionalization of the agricultural sector and the grocery sector has removed some of the autonomy from the farmer – alternative food movements in Finland are perceived as a way for farmer's to regain their autonomy and exercise some power over the way they distribute their products. The need and benefit of the space for direct interaction between producers and consumer is summarized in the following quotation:

Finland is a very special country when you see how is it is built up in the agricultural area. We have very few actors...that totally dominates the market. And the farmers don't have a tradition lately to sell direct to consumers. So they are depending on very few actors and they can't – they don't have a big impact on their decision. So I would like that the farmers starts to think in other ways to sell their products, even if it will take time. By selling direct by, to find small scale partners if it is possible to cooperate with the society nearby, if it is possible. And that's my wish for the nearest future that we start to develop other possibilities for marketing than through our big companies, cooperatives. Because they aren't any more on the farmers side. It is only profit. (Interviewee A-32)

Conclusion

This chapter sought to uncover facets of emerging Finnish grassroots movements that aim to shorten the distance between farmer and consumer. In some ways these movements' ideologically parallel grassroots food movements in the Global North as described by several geographers (Please see for example, Galt, *et al*, 2014, Gray *et al.*, 2014, Morgan, 2010, Morgan and Sonnino 2010, McClintock, 2010). The chapter uses narratives from participants from one movement in particular: REKO Circles. Interview data and observations demonstrate that these grassroots networks are meeting the consumer demand of local food and are supporting the (re)localization of the Finnish food sector. In the next chapter the discussion will turn to urban agriculture and its effects on the Finnish foodshed.

CHAPTER 4: FARM FRESH IN HELSINKI: TRANSFORMING THE FINNISH FOODSHED THROUGH URBAN AGRICULTURE

The bus drove through some forest on the way between the university and the local mall. After about a year of taking this route, one day I happened to glance out the window at exactly the right moment. I caught sight of some berry bushes between the trees, and it dawned on me that there was an allotment garden running next to the road. As with many other allotment gardens, it was hidden in plain sight just beyond the tree line. I got off at the next stop and walked back to check out the garden. I wandered up and down the rows of plots and looked at the abundance of vegetables and flowers. Here and there people were tending their verdant gardens. One woman greeted me with a “hei” and fell into an easy conversation. I told her about my research and she told me about her 15 years of experience as an urban farmer in Helsinki. She explained that she had a stressful job, and she said she maintained her garden as a way to “put her stress into the ground.” She smiled and gave me some purple gooseberries as a snack and welcomed me to share her berries anytime I returned. (Field notes – August 4, 2015)

Introduction

Urban agriculture (UA) that thrives at the edge of the Arctic Circle is conceptually rather unexpected. Nevertheless, urban agriculture even at far northern latitudes serves to supplement and transform foodsheds. The aim of this chapter is to bring into focus urban-based engagement with food production in Helsinki, Finland’s capital city, at 60.1 degrees north latitude.

There is a perception of “institutionalization” of urban agriculture in Europe, due to a longstanding acceptance of urban gardening activities by state, regional, or municipals powers, particularly in the form of allotment gardens (Bassett, 1981, Ernwein, 2014). There are not yet policies regarding urban agricultural practice on the state level in Finland. Nevertheless, at the *kaupunki* (city) scale, there are urban agricultural projects which fall into the realm of institutionalization. However, there are

also new experiments in urban agriculture which would not be described as institutionalized given that they operate outside of municipal control and regulation. Urban agriculture in the form of allotment and cottage allotment gardens has a hundred year history in Finland; these two forms of urban agriculture have been integrated into the urban fabric of Helsinki and other Finnish cities such as Turku, Tampere, and Oulu, through their inclusion in the respective city plans. These projects that are institutionalized entail oversight and regulations that are issued from the city government level. Some more recent experiments in the Finnish urban agriculture realm – for example, box and sack gardens and community supported agriculture (CSA) - are not yet formally institutionalized. In general, urban agriculture is not considered when assessing the needs of the broader agricultural sector. There is a gap between the municipal institutionalization and legitimacy on the state and EU levels.

Urban Agriculture in the Global North

Urban agriculture in the far northern latitudes frequently escapes scholarly attention and analysis due to its remoteness and perceived municipal-scale institutionalization. For the purposes of this thesis, the urban agriculture described falls into the category of plant production, as there are no apparent urban agricultural activities found within the municipal boundaries of Helsinki that incorporate animal husbandry. Urban agriculture, while a long standing tradition in many European countries, does not have a place in the EU's CAP and is not yet addressed at the EU

level. A large-scale EU-sponsored research project conducted by the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) was set into motion in 2012 to develop a European perspective on urban agricultural practice and actively work toward the inclusion of urban agricultural practices in the policy fabric of the CAP (Lohrberg, 2013). COST Action TUD 1106 situates urban agriculture as one of the primary strategies to provide both healthy food and move urban development in the direction of both sustainable and resilient cities. Both of these outcomes are articulated in the EU policy as desirable, but no cohesive program utilizing urban agriculture as a means to these ends has been enacted (Lohrberg, 2013).

Urban agricultural projects in post-industrial Helsinki manifest in many innovative forms that fall primarily within two broad categories: urban gardening and community supported agriculture (CSA). Urban gardening captures a range of often over-lapping or intersecting activities. As McClintock (2014, 149) points out “for example, a non-profit or institutional urban agriculture project may operate their garden as a collective rather than as an allotment, or a residential gardener may be involved in commercial marketing.” In the context of Helsinki, urban gardening includes a dynamic array of private home gardens and community garden plots as well as rooftop, box, and sack gardens. CSA is a production strategy which shortens the food chain by facilitating direct contact between the farmer and the consumer (Jarosz, 2008). There is no definitive way to implement a CSA project, but generally consumers join a

CSA and pay for their membership fee before the growing season in exchange for a weekly share of the harvest. The guiding principle of the CSA is that consumers share with the farmer in the possible bounty or risks of the growing season. This type of agriculture fosters a very direct relationship between the producer and consumer, and often consumers will even participate in the actual act of cultivation or harvest (Sproul and Kropp, 2015). As McClintock (2014) suggests, urban agriculture is not in and of itself an end, but rather it can be viewed as a means to bringing agriculture into the interstitial spaces of the city. This observation certainly holds true for Helsinki where urban agriculture reflects a diverse portfolio of agricultural enterprises and activities that are aimed at enhancing the quality of food, local food growing, and the socio-cultural experiences around growing food.

This chapter probes urban agriculture in Helsinki through an emphasis on two types of urban agriculture: the allotment garden projects and the Herttoniemi CSA program. These examples are both urban-based, yet they are founded from different motivations, perpetuated by different philosophical and practical approaches, and provide a different set of benefits to participants. Even with its extreme northern geographic setting there are themes in the urban agriculture sector of Helsinki that reflect those of urban agricultural practice found at mid- and lower latitudes. This chapter explores how effective these initiatives are at achieving their aims. What is the role of urban agricultural projects in Helsinki? What type of opportunities do urban

agricultural projects provide Helsinki residents to (re)connect with food production? How are grassroots efforts to establish food growing experiments and to maintain urban food commons regarded by city and national governments?

This chapter first reviews the literature on urban agriculture, citing pertinent examples of motivations for such participation and societal benefits from the Global North and the Global South. Much urban agricultural research has focused on CSAs and community gardens, particularly their contributions to social cooperation, economic development, and human health (Ackerman *et al.*, 2014). Then, after discussing the research methods, I explore the urban agricultural environment of Helsinki and highlight the emergence of projects that are actively working to transform the Helsinki foodshed. I use narratives from the members of the Herttoniemi CSA to show how their participation, level of interest, and perceptions of food and urban space further shape the conversation about the foodshed in Helsinki. I used the narratives of the CSA members because it was a more accessible population of urban gardeners and given the limitations in the amount of time for fieldwork, it made sense to tap into the structured CSA. I found that the experiences of the CSA members highlight the benefits to the community similar to those documented elsewhere in the urban agriculture literature.

Background on Urban Agriculture

The practice of urban agriculture is not a new phenomenon. However, it has been receiving increased academic and media interest as it is often tied to trends in sustainable development and a recent 'sustainability-environmental turn' (Moore, 2006, Tornaghi, 2014) At the same time, sustainable development is not the sole reason why people choose to engage in urban agricultural practices; there is also the interplay between urban gardens and politics (McClintock, 2014). The act of urban agricultural practice can be interpreted as a process to support and further urban development and green planning initiatives (Colasanti et al., 2012, McLain et al., 2014). Researchers have also looked at urban agriculture as a livelihood strategy and a means to the development of social capital (Gallaher, 2012, Gallaher et al., 2013). In addition, gender roles and family structure can be examined through the lens of urban agricultural practices (WinklerPrins and Souza, 2005, WinklerPrins, 2002, Murrieta and WinklerPrins, 2003). In the literature which focuses on the Global South, urban agriculture has been framed as an expression of gender roles, serving as a space which allows the tension between genders to be expressed (Murrieta and Winklerprins, 2003). This line of thinking is further expressed in the conceptualization of the home garden as a female-constructed place and a coping mechanism integral to survival in urbanized spaces (Winklerprins and Souza, 2005). The right to the city as expressed through concepts of food justice and alleviation of food insecurity are also common themes

(White, 2011a, Shillington, 2013). There is a delineation between urban agriculture in the Global North and the Global South present in the literature analyzing trends in urban agriculture (WinklerPrins, in press).

The theme of community building as a goal or byproduct of urban agricultural enterprises is discussed at length in case studies undertaken in both the Global North and Global South (White, 2011a, Gallaher et al., 2013a, Gallaher et al., 2013b). In addition, the social spaces of urban agricultural practice have been characterized as politicized and representative of ways to gain political agency within the context of the city (Shillington, 2013, White, 2011a). White (2011a, 409) defines political agency as “social actors’ ability to create and enact options necessary to shape their future.” Home gardens can be a way to link urban dwellers with their countryside heritage or carry the traditions of the country into city life (WinklerPrins, 2002). The garden is not simply a garden; it is an extension of the living space and the social interactions of family, household, neighborhood, and community (WinklerPrins and de Sousa, 2009).

The case study of urban agricultural in Helsinki, Finland is a vibrant example of the (re)localization movement and a reconnection of food, people, and place. Both the innovation and institutionalized segments of the portfolio of urban agricultural activity in Helsinki are working to (re)localize food and are a reflection of a deeply rooted Finnish food heritage.

Policy and Programs Affecting Urban Agriculture in Finland

A first step for understanding urban agriculture in Helsinki is to track its place within the broader agricultural policy context at the regional, national, and local scales. Agricultural policies are articulated through the European Union's (EU) Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), national ministerial, and municipal policy frameworks. The CAP does not yet address the issues of urban agricultural practice. This void implies that at the ministerial level in Finland, there are not specific policies in place guiding the form and management of urban agriculture. The policies that are directly related to urban agriculture are situated at the local scale. Thus, the municipal level or city government is the main policy body which regulates urban food production and planning for urban food-growing spaces. The decision-making power over land tenure for urban agricultural projects resides at the municipal level. The administrative activities of urban gardening projects are the responsibility of management associations or volunteer boards of the individual urban agricultural enterprises.

The EU's CAP defines an agricultural area as "any area taken up by arable land, permanent grassland or permanent crops" (European Commission, 2014, 2). The CAP is fundamentally tied to agriculture in the context of rural economic activity. However, the CAP does not currently provide specific mechanisms to develop policy around the continued growth of urban agriculture and urban food-growing initiatives. As the CAP is the main directive for Finnish agricultural policy, the exclusion of urban agriculture

in the CAP creates a subsequent exclusion of urban agriculture at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and other entities which operate at the ministerial level in Finland. This leaves questions of urban agricultural policy to be handled at the municipal level, but this is poised to potentially change in a future iteration of the CAP as urban agriculture gains traction both popularly and in the research agenda.

This situation is not unique to Finland. The questions surrounding the role and importance of urban agriculture are one of the motivating factors for a research effort supported by the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (known by its acronym COST) that is underway to assess urban food regimes and concomitant planning systems. COST is an intergovernmental framework allowing for coordination of national research agendas at a European level (COST, 2015). One of the main goals of the COST Action is to develop a European understanding and agenda on urban agriculture. This coordination of national research agendas helps to ensure that research efforts are productive while not duplicative and are also helping to identify gaps in the overarching regional research agenda. COST does not set research priorities or directly fund research efforts (COST, 2015). While Finland is eligible to participate in this COST Action, no Finnish researchers chose to participate in the Action on Urban Agriculture (COST, 2015). The reason for Finland's non-participation is not specifically articulated; however, Finland's absence indicates that, at the time the Action was initiated, there were not interested researchers prepared to commit to the COST Action.

While there are no direct policies on urban agriculture at the ministerial level due to its omission from the CAP, there are other ways in which a government can actively promote programs which inspire urban agricultural efforts. For example, in Finland as of 2013, there is a government program for the promotion of local food and another for the promotion of organic food. The government program on organic food is beyond the scope of this project and will not be discussed. The local food program, administered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (2013, 8), defines the concept of local food as follows: “local food means locally-produced food that promotes the local economy, employment and food culture of the region concerned, has been produced and processed from raw material of that region, and is marketed and consumed in that region.” The program also includes a detailed discussion of the importance of short supply chains and support of small producers. It is important to note that even within this document, urban agricultural endeavors are not mentioned as a way to develop or support local food. The program is built towards support for small farmers and producers who are trading commercially and not for food production methods that operate outside of the dominant supply chain.

The omission of urban agriculture on the ministerial level is not reflected at the municipal level. The city government of Helsinki is actively supportive of urban agricultural endeavors and promoting the cultural heritage which surrounds food and agriculture in Finland. This support is evidenced through the active identification of

interstitial areas appropriate for agricultural experiments and inclusion of spaces for allotment gardening, both historically and presently, in the city plan (Rinne, 2014). The city of Helsinki ideologically supports the idea of urban agriculture and has included it as a facet of the Helsinki Culinary Culture Strategy. This Culinary Culture Strategy entails a set of efforts developed and implemented by the city of Helsinki municipal authorities in an effort to cultivate the food culture in Helsinki (City of Helsinki, 2009). The city specifically supports urban agriculture through the long-term provision of space which has proved to be a limiting factor to urban agricultural endeavors in both the Global North and South, historically and in the present day (Moore, 2006, Gallaher, 2012). In the case of the allotment gardens the contracts with the city have been signed through 2026, but the city does not manage the gardens (City of Helsinki, 2014). However, in 2012 members of the City Council set up their own urban gardening crew, and City Hall opened a small balcony garden to serve as a way to symbolize support for urban agricultural endeavors (City of Helsinki, n.d.).

Research Methods

My approach to this portion of the research has been qualitative in nature, with the goal of combining several different kinds of qualitative data; a short description of each method follows along with a description of the facet of the research which employed that method. I have engaged in urban agriculture as a researcher, volunteer, and observer both in the United States and in Finland. I initially began work on

agriculture in the Finnish context in 2013 which led me to focus on urban agriculture in Helsinki beginning in 2014

Semi-Structured Interviews

The qualitative analysis for the project relied on data drawn from interviews. The use of interviews helped to distill the factors in the growth of the urban agricultural sector which are relevant and important to the interviewees (Hay, 2005). I conducted interviews with members of the CSA (N=23). Herttoniemi CSA was chosen as a representation of CSA because it is the only CSA operating in Helsinki and it is the first CSA in Finland. Since the founding of the Herttoniemi CSA five years ago, nine additional CSA projects have been started in Finland. Only members of the Herttoniemi CSA were interviewed because it is the only CSA operating in Helsinki which was the site for this fieldwork. The CSA has 200 members, and I interviewed just over ten percent of the membership. New themes did not arise in responses provided by the last few interviewees, suggesting that a level of saturation had been reached. The period of time dedicated to this fieldwork was one month, and interviews were undertaken in conjunction with site visits at the CSA and its pick-up locations, site visits at the allotment gardens, participant observations at both locations, participatory mapping, and implementation of digital photography. The interview protocol was approved by the University of Montana's Institutional Review Board. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were then subjected to coding and analysis to

determine key themes. The themes which emerged from the multiple series of interviews included the following: perceptions of organic and local foods and Finnish cultural heritage values as expressed through the practice of urban agriculture; it's the contributions of urban agriculture to cultural heritage; and the role of geographic proximity and trust in food procurement decisions. I also had numerous in-depth conversations with key informants involved in other facets of the urban agricultural sector such as allotment administrators, allotment members, and box garden participants.

Participant Observation

I made multiple visits to the CSA produce pickup locations; of the five pickup locations I conducted observations at four. I also visited the farm fields several times both during volunteer work parties and regular working days. I spent a great deal of time in and around Helsinki's urban box gardens, allotments, and cottage allotments, including the yearly harvest festivals which are integral to the social culture of the cottage allotments. During the participant observation I practiced digital storytelling techniques through digital photography.

Participatory Mapping

Participatory mapping played a small but informative role in the data collection process. The members of the CSA participated in the mapping exercise during a volunteer day at the fields of the CSA. Three questions with corresponding blank maps

were posed, and participants were asked to mark the maps to indicate their spatial perceptions based on the questions. Out of approximately 30 CSA members present for the volunteer day, 16 participated in the mapping exercise. Only one mapping participant had previously participated in my research by giving an interview. The maps served as a visual representation, and while only a small sample, these maps reinforced the perceptions of what constituted “local” which was a concept discussed during the semi-structured interviews.

Urban Agriculture Field Sites

In addition to the focused research discussed above with the Herttoniemi CSA, I also interacted with key informants from each of the other three types of urban agriculture. These interactions consisted of in-depth conversations and tours of the garden areas. I was able to spend a great deal of time exploring the city with the intent of finding spaces of urban agriculture during semi-structured, independent walks. During these walks, the urban agricultural practices in Helsinki began to slowly reveal themselves to me. These walks and independent explorations occurred mainly during the summer months of 2015. The urban gardens of Helsinki are largely hidden from the road and not well advertised. I walked one urban garden by almost daily during my fieldwork in 2013-2014, and I was unaware of its existence and purpose until I returned in summer 2015. This is due in part to the large amount of green, open, and forest spaces within the city of Helsinki. Based on my observations, Helsinki is a city that it is

not ostentatious or showy; it is subtle and understated to the casual observer. These sentiments were also reflected in interviews and informal conversations. To paraphrase a longer explanation given by one of the volunteer administrators of an allotment garden, Helsinki is like the Finnish soul: it is slow to reveal itself but deep.

Urban Agriculture Sites and Spaces in Helsinki

There is an abundance of space for urban agricultural production within the urban spaces of Helsinki, which is both the largest city and part of the most populous metropolitan area in the country. There are two main categories of urban agricultural endeavors in Helsinki: those which are institutionalized at the municipal level and those which have arisen as a result of grassroots organization efforts. Allotment gardens and cottage allotments are both considered to be institutionalized as they have long standing connections to the city government and are integrated into the city plan. The other types of urban agricultural activities which are associated with consumer-driven grassroots organizations are box or sack gardens and CSA activities. A short description of each of these dynamic sites and spaces of urban food production is provided in the following paragraphs. The description of each type of urban agriculture in Helsinki sheds light on how urban agriculture is structured and organized within Helsinki's foodshed.

Allotment Gardens



Figure 5: Allotment garden in Helsinki nestled among apartment buildings. (Photo by S. Albov, 2015)

There are 39 allotment gardens (*Viljelyspalsta* in Finnish) in the city of Helsinki. The gardens are composed of approximately ten square meter plots of land to grow flowers and edible items. The garden areas are owned by the city and fall into the land use category of parkland, which means they are open to the public. However, the public cannot enter the space of the garden without express permission of the owner (Sipari and Lehtonen, 2014). Despite the absence of fences or guards, this does not present a problem in the Finnish context because there is a high level of honest interaction in Finnish society, deeply ingrained as a cultural value (Zook, 2008). While the land for the

gardens is owned by the city, the city takes no role in the daily management of the allotments. The gardens are each managed by their own board, which is not connected to the city and usually comprised of elected volunteers. The arrangements of the management boards vary by garden and some have much more developed and structured boards than others. However, the overall duties of the board remains the same, they are tasked with the day-to-day administration of the gardens.

All of the allotment garden areas in Helsinki are specifically written into the city plan and are currently leased to their respective management board or association until 2026 (City of Helsinki, 2014). The membership for the allotment gardens is diverse in age, gender, and motivation for joining. Each garden is allowed to have its own criteria for assigning plots, but generally the only requirements are to be a resident of Helsinki and yearly cultivation on the garden plot. There are usually quite long waiting lists for the allotments, resulting in a general perception of inaccessibility to people not already participating. Once a space has been assigned, the occupant can keep it in perpetuity as long as they pay the yearly fee. The amount of this fee varies by garden but generally between 30 and 60 euros per year, and cultivation begins by late spring or early summer. There are generally not formal social goals of these programs, as they were originally established for increased food security for the working class. However, they are generally regarded as a hobby for urban residents who do not have garden space connected to their homes.

Cottage Allotments



Figure 6: Lush gardens in front of a cottage. (Photo by S. Albov, 2015)

There are nine cottage allotment gardens in Helsinki and a total of 1,926 individual plots. These garden are called *Siirtolapuutarhat* which translates directly in English to “colony gardens,” but in casual speech they are called cottage allotments. It is important to note that while allotments and cottage allotments sound similar when translated into English, in Finnish they are quite different sounding words and they describe fundamentally different urban agricultural activities. The average plot size is about 350 square meters and contains a garden space and a cottage space. The

management of the allotments is handled through an association, but the land is owned by the city of Helsinki.



Figure 7: Map of the “Marsh” Cottage Allotment Garden which is proximate to the city center and has over 100 separate allotments representing over 100 families. (Photo by S. Albov, 2015)

As with the non-cottage allotments, the public is allowed on the paths that run through the garden and in any community spaces, but they are not allowed in the garden areas or the cottage areas. Cottage owners are encouraged to live in their cottage during the summer months, but are not allowed to stay overnight during the winter months (Finland Allotment Association, 2014). The cottages generally have bedrooms and kitchen areas but no indoor plumbing. The oldest cottage garden in the city has

been in continuous operation since 1918. They were originally established as retreats for factory workers and spaces to provide opportunities for the working class citizens in Helsinki to connect with nature. These cottages are indicative of a distinct *mökki* or “summer cottage” culture and are viewed as recreational getaways within the city (Henkel, 2015).

Box Gardens



Figure 8: Box garden at the University of Helsinki, Viikki campus. (Photo by S. Albov, 2015)

The box and sack gardens are some of the more recent urban agricultural projects to emerge in Helsinki. An organized attempt to integrate multiple box or sack gardens

into the Helsinki landscape began in approximately 2010. Many of the box and sack gardens are the result of the efforts of an environmental organization called Dodo focused on working with urban dwellers to advance the creation of a sustainable and livable urban area (Dodo, 2010). Not all box and sack gardens in the city are a direct result of Dodo, but this organization was an influential player along with the



Figure 9: Sack garden in a reimagined industrial area in downtown Helsinki. (Photo by S. Albov, 2015)

Herttoniemi CSA in getting conversations started about urban agriculture within the Finnish media. The boxes are generally semi-permanent installments whereas the sack gardens are mobile on a year-to-year basis. The land is not under a long-term lease and there are a variety of management structures for these gardens. They are not generally

on park or city land but tend to be on private property either in retail, industrial, or residential spaces. However, the city of Helsinki has recently published a comprehensive list of interstitial spaces which it has preapproved for urban agricultural installations (Rinne, 2014). The box and sack gardens are associated with a broader social push toward sustainable development and a desire for local food.

Herttoniemi Community Supported Agriculture Project



Figure 10: The fields of the CSA. (Photo by S. Albov, 2015)

The Herttoniemi CSA is a food cooperative which was formed in 2010 by members of the Herttoniemi food circle. The Finnish name is the *Ruokaosuuskunta* which in English translates directly to “food cooperative.” The Herttoniemi part of the name

comes from the section of the city where the food circle and subsequent CSA were founded. Herttoniemi is a suburb of Helsinki, made up of four neighborhoods, located east of the downtown area and easily reachable by metro. The idea for the CSA came from a single member, but the actual work to set up the CSA was completed by several members as the project started with a well-attended brainstorming meeting. The CSA currently has approximately 200 members, and the CSA fields are located in Vantaa, which is one of the three cities which makes up the Helsinki urban center or 'greater city' (Dijkstra and Poelman, 2012). The land where the fields are located is privately owned and leased on a ten-year term to the CSA. The fields are quite close to the international airport and under the Finnair flight path, with houses visible along one of the field edges. The area is considered peri or even suburban. Herttoniemi CSA is considered to be the first CSA in Finland and is often discussed in the media in connect to the discussion of local food. This CSA could be described as prominent because it is widely known beyond its immediate membership due to the amount of media coverage. Since the initial founding of the Herttoniemi CSA, at least five CSAs have been established in other areas of the country outside of Helsinki. These are all characterized as employing the same consumer-driven model as the Herttoniemi CSA.

Many of the members of the CSA have limited interaction with the physical fields and interact only at the pickup locations. There are four pickup locations in the city of Helsinki. Two are in library areas, one at a coffee shop, and one at a recently

redeveloped downtown retail and industrial complex. All pickup locations are easily reached via public transportation. The members of the CSA range from young professionals to retired people; the unifying thread between the members is an interest in local food. The members must pay for the season share before the start of the season and are required to donate ten hours of work each season or to pay a fine for any volunteer hours not completed. The members of the Herttoniemi CSA indicated several reasons they have chosen to be involved with this organization ranging from political motivations to environmental concerns. These motivations will be further explored below through a collection of narratives from the members of the CSA.

In the CSA food is grown by one farmer for distribution to the members of the CSA. The farmer is hired by the members of the CSA; the land being farmed is under lease to the CSA and does not belong to the farmer. This is an interesting nuance because both of the farmers of the CSA cited this as one of the reasons the CSA concept really worked for them because it changed their relationship to the land. Both farmers indicated that if the land was solely theirs then the CSA might not work as well because they might have interests that are different than the interests of the members. The CSA members pay for their share in advance of each growing season and during the growing season they receive their share of the vegetables harvested that week. The members do not get to pick which vegetables they receive, whereas in a food circle you only purchase what you want. This CSA was the first of its kind in Finland and has

often been used as a model for other CSAs across the country. There are approximately nine CSA experiments in Finland at the time of this writing, all founded within the last five years.

Narrating the Effects of Urban Agriculture

In this section, I present the perceptions of the interviewees from the Herttoniemi CSA. Three substantive themes were interwoven throughout the interview responses. These dominant themes are cultural values, agency within the food system, and upholding environmental values. Study participants often reflected on their concerns about the quality of food available in the dominant food chain, especially in reference to the increasing amount of imported food. The increase in foreign origin food is not unique to Finland and is a wide reaching result of the globalization of the food system (Trobe, 2001). The local accounts of the benefits of CSA participation, beyond the obvious member benefit of receiving vegetables in exchange for money, suggest that constructions of well-being and contentment with food choice are undergoing a redefinition in Finland. Here the notion of benefits is drawn from participants' perceptions that highlighted the connections between food growing and cultural values.

Expressions of Cultural Values

The first perceived benefit was most clearly illustrated through a discussion of the values considered when purchasing a food item. Interviewees described the set of values they attach to food and then connected these values to their choice to participate

as a member of the CSA. Out of the 21 interviewees 10 different values were expressed, these include seasonality, ethical production, personal health, sustainable production, organic, localness of food, economic limitations, freshness, "Finnishness," and taste. The locality of food products (N=9), economic consideration (N=8), and organic (N=7) were the three considerations which were most often mentioned when making a decision to purchase a food item. The following quotations provide insight into these values:

You mean in a store in general? Well I the foremost thing for me is how healthy it is. Then I like to buy domestic food, local food, and organic food. You know if I have the money. If I am not too tight on money well I mainly think about fresh food and healthy food. (Interviewee F-8)

I usually try to buy local and stuff that is in season. I try to avoid products that come from far distance. Yeah so it is mostly that it is local and I try to buy as much organic as I can. (Interviewee F-6)

The experience of being a member of the CSA has also helped some of the participants to refine their thinking about food and the considerations they find important. As one participant explained,

I didn't think it so clearly before I joined this coop, but nowadays I think that it is pretty important to know where my food comes from. And when I am producing it myself as a part of this coop and all the other persons working here. So I know what I eat and how it is grown, produced. (Interviewee F-7)

The relationship between local food and organic food was further explored through a line of questioning which assessed whether the member would prefer to buy a bag of Finnish conventional carrots or Swedish organic carrots. This question revealed

an interesting correlation between the perception of quality and proximity of production for the members of the CSA.

Over half of the interviewees indicated that they would prefer the Finnish conventional carrots over Swedish organic carrots due to a trust for the Finnish produce even if it is conventional.

Conventional Finnish ones [carrots] because they are Finnish and I consider Finnish carrots and most other Finnish produce to be clean enough that I don't have to buy organic. I trust the Finnish produce to be healthy and clean even if they are not organic. I prefer organic of course, but I don't mind eating regular ones. (Interviewee F-9)

Increase of Individual Agency within the Food System

Well, I think my first thought was perhaps that it is a bit too hippy for us, but I don't know. But then again it is nice. It is like organic farming and nice and we have really...twisted market in wholesale products in Finland. Because we are basically [have just]...two major [grocery] chains and there is not too much going on outside of those two. And I think it is nice to support some...alternative ways of producing. (Interviewee F-2)

In the Finnish grocery system there are two main grocery groups – the S Group and the K Group. The S Group has a market share of 45.7% and K Group has a market share of 33.1% for a combined share of 78.8% (Kesko, 2015). While these are two different companies with two different boards of directors, interviewees often gave the impression that they felt the two companies worked very closely together. One interviewee described the idea of consumer choice in Finland as extremely limited, whereby choice comes down to whether one would prefer his or her meat to be in S

paper or K paper. Given this grocery climate, many of the interviewees described their participation in the CSA as a way to distance themselves from the S and K dominated grocery market. One interviewee elaborated in this way:

Well I have tons of reasons [to participate as a CSA member]. I have political reasons, I have actually reasons, and then health reasons I guess as well. Mostly it is because I want to support the cause. Small local farms, biodynamic farming, and also the political side of things is that I want to resist these big chains. (Interviewee F-6)

The political reason this individual brought up as a desire to avoid the large chains was reiterated many times throughout the interviews. For example:

I think at least for me and obviously for many of the members the important thing is that here in Finland is the feeling that you are making a difference here because as you probably know we have only like two grocery chains. And the prices are high. The variety in the vegetable section is not necessarily very good and the quality is not anything special. So I think a lot of people I know who are members they feel this is their way to make difference. This is how they fight those two chains that there is like you have no other options probably if you want to eat your vegetables. So I think that is important. (Interviewee F-13)

This thought was continued and expanded by another CSA member who also felt that participation in the CSA is a way to avoid the dominant grocery system in Finland. This concern was conveyed as follows:

And I am happy to pay [extra] because that is sort of feels a bit like I am a rebel. We are rebels somehow because we are not choosing the S Market or Lidl or some other big grocery store, but we are doing this ourselves. And that is value for money. (Interviewee F-1)

Similar to other interviewees, these individuals employ strong language to express their sentiment and personal conviction. Their use of bold terminology such as

“fight” and “rebel” embody strong connotations, thereby lending insight into the way some CSA members feel about their personal and political resistance to the big supermarkets.

The founder of the CSA also shared a story which I will paraphrase here due to the length of the direct quotation. The story related to his dissatisfaction with the existing system, which encouraged him to start the CSA. He told of a time when he wanted a particular brand of espresso, and he was not able to find it at his local grocery market. He spoke to several employees about getting the espresso and finally to the manager of the store. He was told that maybe it would take six months to get the type of espresso that he wanted. This experience left him feeling under-valued as a customer and drove him to look for alternatives that provided he had some influence as a customer. He did end the story by indicating that even with all the work he did, the supermarket never started to stock the espresso that he had requested.

Within the group of interviewees, there were also some who took a much more pragmatic approach to their food purchases and were not as concerned about upholding certain values with the considerations they placed on food purchasing decisions. However, even while specifically talking about food values, the below quote also hints at a dissatisfaction with the mainstream grocery establishment.

I have a food in my mind and I just buy whatever I need. It's – the selection in Finnish market isn't that great. You need potatoes you buy potatoes. There are not too many varieties available. (Interviewee F-14)

These perceptions indicate there is a certain level of powerlessness that the CSA members seem to feel in regard to the commercial grocery system which compels them to seek out an alternative. This sentiment was not just brought up by the CSA members who have already made choices to shop away from the mainstream system, but was also mentioned in other interviews about the broader food and agricultural sector in Finland. The dissatisfaction with the monopolization of the grocery system by the S and K Groups was pervasive in many discussions about Finland's agricultural geography. One key informant from the organic sector-focused interviews relayed the thought that the grocery store chains went so far as to determine the size of the farms in Finland based on their refusal to accept orders below a certain amount of produce or product.

The CSA represents an alternative for its members to make their food purchasing decisions outside of the dominant food distribution chain. The CSA allows them to express their dissatisfaction with the grocery system by not using it for a portion of their food purchases. As there are not very many options given the market dominance of the main grocers, the CSA and its opening of this option to purchase directly from the farm fields is perceived as an important benefit of the CSA to its members.

In spite of the varying levels of participation in the endeavors of the CSA, all of the member narratives shared key elements about these individual and communal benefits. These benefits included a feeling of a larger purpose being addressed through the act of participation in the CSA in addition to of the direct benefit of getting

vegetables once a week. Given the exploratory nature of the interviews, I wanted to give the interviewees a chance to add something that they either felt was important or that they wanted me to know about the CSA. This question was completely open-ended and yielded insights into the members' participation in the CSA as an act beyond simple food procurement.

I think what I find important is that it comes from the people and it is for the peoples. I mean it got started by a bunch of people who wanted to know what they are eating and have a say what is being grown and how. So it is kind of not a service that somebody provides to us, but rather a service that we made and provided for ourselves. (Interviewee F-9)

They [the farmers] are so devoted – they love the work and you can feel thing in the field and you know the atmosphere there. And year by year it is getting and better in a way. It is somehow – it is almost like a holy place and has some holy business as I don't know...But here people here are like so happy to get the food from the ground. (Interviewee F-17)

Environmental Considerations, Food Patriotism and the Benefit of Local Food

The perception that Finland is “clean” is one that was articulated in several of the interviews. One interviewee acknowledged that while she did not have specific facts or substantive data to support her claims this did not preclude her from holding the belief that “We have clean nature here. We have large areas with no factories which could poison the environment” (Interviewee F-7). Another interviewee expanded on this “ecological hunch” that food from Finland is preferable to food produced and shipped from foreign countries. This interviewee added the idea of spatial proximity, indicating that it is not simply that food from Finland is better in some way, but that one must take

into account where the food was actually produced and how much it had to travel to get to the consumer. These complicated considerations concerning the spatial proximity and production methods used were explained as follows:

I think I would go for the Swedish [carrots] because they are not that far away, but like if I should consider between conventional Finnish carrots and for example Spanish organic carrots. I think I would go for the Finnish carrots. I think it is like an ecological hunch. I don't know how much like carbon that produces to like ship those carrots from Sweden compared to like if you had to ship them from Spain, but I think like there is – of course I don't really have so much like data- but there is some kind of hunch like okay what kind of food items it is good to like ship from abroad consider growing them here. And you let go with some kind of rule of thumb of that. Like if it is outside Europe of think again. And if it is from a different side of Europe I think you should consider some effect breaks about it. But if it is from Sweden or Denmark or Germany I think it is like yeah. (Interviewee F-2)

This idea was extended but qualified in that their desire to buy Finnish was not linked to special feelings for Finland or the quality of specifically Finnish produce; rather, it was tied up with thoughts solely about the ecological footprint. While the term “foodmiles” (Coley et al., 2009) was never specifically used, the spatial component of production and the linking of ecological footprint to the transportation in production was explored by the CSA members

I try to buy organic or close produced products when possible. So as to decrease the ecological footprint. I am not, I don't buy local food in order to support Finnish. I don't have nationalistic consumer behavior, but rather just in terms of decreasing the ecological footprint. (Interviewee F-22)

An element of nationalism in food choices was expressed, with interviewees musing that organic is not even as important as the “Finnishness” of the food. The following statement does not link the desire to buy Finnish food to any reasons such as environment; it is a reflection of a nationalistic desire for Finnish food:

It doesn't have to be organic just you know I prefer Finnish. Finnish like every citizens wants to buy like the own food and I like the Finnish food.
(Interviewee F-17)

Whether the specific motivation for Finnish-produced food was nationalistic or ecological in origin, the interviewees stressed the theme that locally produced food was a key or significant benefit of being a member in the CSA.

Conclusion

This chapter of the thesis points to what could be describe as “transformative action” (Gray *et al.*, 2014). Finland stands out for its proactive nature of land use planning to maintain spaces in the urban landscape for food and agriculture interactions. This is evident from the inclusion of the allotment gardens and the cottage allotments in the city plan. While the box and sack gardens and the CSA endeavor are not included in the city plan, they do not have as large a spatial footprint as the institutionalized gardens. The city also provides guidance on which interstitial spaces would be available and appropriate as spaces for urban gardening if there are citizens who are interested in starting gardens. My field observations and interview data suggest that a local food transformation is occurring in the Helsinki region. The

Helsinki urban agricultural sector is enlarging and working to overcome economic and environmental limitations with creative utilization of new strategies and the reinvigoration of existing projects. Urban agriculture is steadily emerging as one of the agricultural activities in Finland that supports the concept of eating local, which is perceived as being integral to the Finnish food heritage and to maintaining cultural sustainability.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This thesis has sought to contribute to recent debates surrounding emergent urban foodscapes, and efforts to reconnect food, culture, and nature. Despite constraints associated with its close proximity to the Arctic Circle, Finland has a long-standing agricultural heritage and a thriving urban agricultural sector.

In conclusion, I would like to revisit my research questions. This thesis sought to address the following three research questions:

1. What is the role of grassroots food distribution networks in Finland, and are these networks meeting the objectives of creating alternative farmer-consumer linkages that support eating local?
2. How is urban agriculture structured and organized within the Finnish foodshed?
3. How do Finnish people express and reinforce their food heritage and cultural values through the act of urban agricultural practice?

Chapter Two introduced the study area and provided background information about the Finnish agricultural sector. In addition, this chapter started an examination of the relevant academic literature and its relationship with the themes extrapolated from the interviews. This chapter set the stage for the further discussion of the reoccurring themes of organic and local and how these themes are reflected through the expression of Finnish food heritage.

Chapter Three focused on the emergence of grassroots alternative food networks

and their role as a driver of the (re)localization efforts in the Finnish foodshed. Through an exploration of the REKO Circles, I examined how the objectives of creating linkages between farmers and consumers are being met and how Finnish cultural values towards food are reflected in the consumer demand for more personal relationships with producers.

Chapter Four examined the occurrence of urban agriculture in Helsinki including its structure and organization. Moreover, this chapter used the narratives of members of one prominent urban agricultural experiment to probe how Finnish food values and cultural heritage are expressed through urban agricultural practice. This CSA was chosen as the focus of this chapter as it represents not only an urban agricultural experiment but also an alternative food network. I also chose this particular CSA as the site to gather narratives of consumer perceptions of the impacts of the CSA because this CSA has served as a model for subsequent CSA project developed in other areas of Finland.

Theoretically, this thesis drew on a wide array of academic literature mostly from the discipline of geography, but also from sociology and history. The overarching theoretical framework for this research centered on the concept of foodshed (Kloppenburger et al., 1996). The conceptual approach of this research also explored the values associated with food, the values associated with Finland, and the interplay between these values and the emerging grassroots efforts involved in reshaping the

Finnish foodshed. The literature which explores the occurrence and motivations for the urban agricultural enterprises in the Global North and South was also utilized to help conceptually and empirically frame this analysis of the Finnish urban agriculture sector.

Methodologically, this thesis has several implications. It relied on qualitative methods to shed light on the perceptions the role of grassroots distribution networks and urban agriculture within the Finnish foodshed. As a result of semi-structured interviews, farm visits, participant observations, digital storytelling, industry-specific conference participation and focused conversations with agricultural sector participants, I was able to gain many insights into the Finnish agricultural and urban agricultural sectors as well as many of its socio-spatial complexities. These research experiences have given me a firm grounding to speak to aspects of both the organic agricultural sector and the urban agricultural sector, as well as more recent agricultural experiments in producing local food in Finland

Empirically, this study sheds light on the role of the grassroots food distribution networks and the urban agricultural sector in developing and shaping the Finnish foodshed. There has been little attention to these areas in the academic literature to date, but this is on the cusp of changing due to increasing attention in Europe to the issue of locality and its role in consumer food decisions. There has been extensive literature on the broader concepts explored in this thesis, but using Finland as a case study is novel.

The insights garnered in relation to consumer perceptions and Finnish food values will be useful in developing and refining Finnish food policy.

Barriers Encountered in the Research Process

There are three main barriers in this study. First, the inability to speak Finnish served as a barrier to grasping the depth of meaning many interview subjects wished to convey. As a member of the Uralic family of languages, Finnish is a complex and highly descriptive language with many words and meanings which do not translate directly into English. While my interview subjects consistently spoke very good English and a translator was not necessary for communication purposes, I do feel there were entire concepts that did not easily translate. A deeper subtlety to the interviews was not always readily accessible without sharing a common native language. Interviewees often expressed that, when speaking in English, they were not able to be as precise and accurate as they would have wanted to be in addressing the questions. Many government documents are also translated into English, but there is a significant amount of media (newspapers, radio, television, and social media) that was inaccessible to me as it was presented only in Finnish.

The second barrier was the use of the snowball method to identify interviewees. This method worked well for gathering a large number of interviewees, particularly the farmer interviews. However, as the interview process progressed past the initial phase, a certain level of control in the selection of study participants, which is suggested to be

integral to this method (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981), was lost. This limitation led to diverse farming operations being represented in the interviews, which was fruitful for making generalizations, yet never gave me a level of focus that would have potentially allowed me to draw more specific conclusions. If faced with this research task again, I would choose to focus on a particular type of farm, for example, sheep farmers or dairy farmers, to be able to draw more specific conclusions about certain agricultural sub-sectors.

Finally, when I started the initial research to lay the groundwork for this thesis project, I thought that the most compelling facet of Finnish agricultural geography would be the interplay of the EU regulatory structure and the Finnish state. I was especially interested in how this relationship influenced the growth of organic agricultural sector post-entry into the EU. Finland was approaching the 20 year anniversary of being an EU member, and the statistics about number and size of organic farms indicated substantial shifts in the agricultural sector during this time period. My initial impressions were that entry into the EU would be the most important factor shaping the policies and conversation about organic agriculture. However, my fieldwork led me in a different direction and to a story which is more complex than I could have conceived of prior to beginning the fieldwork. In fact, my interviewees indicated a lack of clarity concerning where the power in policy making was situated, and there seemed to be a great deal of uncertainty about the origins of the policy which

governs organic agriculture. The organic agriculture question was not as salient and complex as originally anticipated. However, what emerged as critical and innovative was the activity surrounding grassroots movements in food distribution and urban agriculture. These lines of inquiry were unexpected prior to beginning the fieldwork because grassroots food movements and urban agriculture have not been extensively integrated into the scholarly literature. As a result of these factors, I had to adapt my research questions to the on-ground reality.

Potential Further Research

There are numerous opportunities for continued research around the subject of the organic agricultural and the urban agricultural sectors in Finland. There is some potential for interrogation and development of the original idea of the interplay between the Finnish state and the EU. However, such a project would need to be undertaken in specific collaboration with a Finnish educational institution to allow access to native Finnish-speaking researchers. There is an interesting research story there, but it would require extensive analysis of government documents and a sophisticated understanding of the historic and current Finnish governmental power structure. There is also room for continued research into the socio-geographic arrangements of the development of the organic agricultural sector, specifically an examination of the interplay between organic farmers and conventional farmers. My research did not include interviews with conventional farmers about their perceptions

of organic methods, and this complex relationship has not been widely explored in the Finnish literature.

In assessing urban agriculture and the case of CSA development in Finland, there are ample opportunities for continued research. The CSA phenomenon is relatively new to Finland, and there are several bright and engaged academics from many disciplines who are currently developing doctoral dissertations around the subject area. While the literature is currently sparse on CSAs in the Finnish context, in just a few years several interesting projects should be forthcoming. The urban agricultural sector, particularly the relationship between Finnish summer cottage culture in the countryside and the development of the cottage allotment gardens would be very interesting to pursue. Such projects could delve into ideas of cultural sustainability and geographical imagination through the investigation of the development of these unique spaces. Another worthy line of research would be a comparison of Finnish cottage allotment history, culture, and perceptions of place with the cottage allotments found in other European countries.

In sum the research presented in this thesis provides insight into the complexity of Finnish citizens' relationships with food and agriculture. Their perception of locality is rooted in their agrarian past and the continued importance of local food reflects this cultural heritage. Trust emerges as a significant social factor that influences the dynamic ways urban food production has emerged in Helsinki. Between the growing grassroots

efforts and the established municipal support, there is a strong future for the continued (re)localization of Helsinki's foodshed.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questions: Organic Farmers, Organic Researchers, and Policy Players

Semi-structured interviews – questions varied by interview, but the following provides a guide as to the type of questions which were asked. Interviews from these groups have an “A” in front of the interview number.

Farmers

I. General

1. Please tell me a little bit about your farm – size, location, main crops.

II. Personal Experience with Organic

1. How long has your farm been organic?
2. What promoted the decision to go organic?
3. Are you a first generation farmer or has your family been previously involved in farming?
4. When did you first become aware of organic as a concept?
5. What importance does organic agricultural have to you?
6. Do you feel like you have any avenue to influence organic policy?
7. If you were at the grocery store and you had a choice between a bag of Finnish organic carrots or Swedish conventional carrots, which bag would come home with you and why?
8. What if the choice was between Finnish conventional and Italian organic carrots?

III. Perception of Organic

1. Do you think of organic policy as coming from the Finnish government or from the European Union (EU)?
2. Do you think that joining the EU had an effect on the development of the organic sector?
3. Do you think the Finnish public opinion play a role in the development of organic policy?
4. Do you think government policies make it easier or hard to be an organic farmer?
5. Do you feel like organic policy is built from the top down or the bottom up?
6. What do you think the future is for organic agriculture in Finland?
7. Is there anything you would want to me to know about the organic sector here in Finland?

Policy Players

1. When did you first become aware of organic as a concept?
2. What importance does organic agricultural have to you?
3. What role does organic agriculture play in policy decisions?

4. What role does organic agriculture play in the development of policy agendas?
5. Do you view organic agriculture as an important policy issue? Why? Why not?
6. Have you noticed any change or trend in the amount of policy relating to the organic sector? In what areas and subfields? Do you have a hypothesis on why?
7. Do you think that organic agriculture as a policy issue is more prominent on the local, state, or EU level?
8. How does public opinion play on the decisions made about organic agricultural policy? How do they communicate their needs and wants?
9. What is the role of the EU in shaping national policy? How strong an influence does it have in theory? In practice?
10. Do you think government policies make it easier or hard to be an organic farmer?
11. Do you feel like organic policy is built from the top down or the bottom up?
12. If you were at the grocery store and you had a choice between a bag of Finnish organic carrots or Swedish conventional carrots, which bag would come home with you and why?
13. What if the choice was between Finnish conventional and Italian organic carrots?
14. What do you think the future is for organic agriculture in Finland?
15. Is there anything you would want to me to know about the organic sector here in Finland?

Organic Researchers

1. Please describe the research you are currently engaged in and how it relates to organic agriculture?
2. Why did you choose to research organic farming?
3. What importance does organic farming have to you? Why? Why not?
4. Do you come from a farming background?
5. How in your opinion have government policies affected the spread of organic agricultural methods?
6. Do you think the Finnish government or the EU has a larger influence over organic agriculture? Why?
7. Do you think government policies make it easier or hard to be an organic farmer?
8. Do you feel like organic policy is built from the top down or the bottom up?
9. If you were at the grocery store and you had a choice between a bag of Finnish organic carrots or Swedish conventional carrots, which bag would come home with you and why?
10. What if the choice was between Finnish conventional and Italian organic carrots?
11. What do you think the future is for organic agriculture in Finland?
12. Is there anything you would want to me to know about the organic sector here in Finland?

Appendix B: Interview Questions: Urban Agriculture E-mail Interviews

These were semi-structured and interviews from these groups have an “E” in front of the interview number.

Community Supported Agriculture Participants

1. Please tell me how you are involved in CSA or urban agriculture and how did you come to be involved? Is there a gap being filled by your CSA?
2. How do you define community supported agriculture (CSA)?
3. What sort of CSA projects are there in Finland? Is this an established or new occurrence?
4. Are these CSAs coming from grassroots efforts or from government directive?
5. Do individual CSA schemes in Finland follow a similar structure or is there variation in how they are run?
6. Is there discussion in the Finnish media about CSAs?
7. In your experience are existing urban agricultural projects/CSA projects related to any particular type of agricultural (example: organic, conventional)?
8. How is community building demonstrated by the participants in the CSA?
9. Is there anything about urban agricultural or CSA development in Finland which is different or unique from these movements in other parts of Scandinavia or the larger Global North?
10. How do you define urban agriculture and how is it practiced in Finland?
11. Is urban agriculture or urban gardening discussed in the Finnish media?
12. In your experience are urban agriculture or gardening projects coming from grassroots efforts or from government directive?

REKO Participants

1. When and where did you first hear of the REKO Circles and why did you decide to become involved?
2. What is the difference between REKO Circles and a traditional CSA or a farmer’s market?
3. Do you see any needs or gaps in the food market which are being filled by the REKO-model?
4. To the best of your understanding, please describe how REKO Circles work? (How do farmers get involved, how do consumers get involved, how do they communicate?)
5. How have the REKO circles developed or changed since you became involved?
6. To the best of your knowledge, could you please describe the pattern of diffusion (spread) of REKO circles?

7. What factors do you think have influenced the diffusion (spread) pattern of REKO Circles?
8. Do you know of any particular individuals who have been influential in helping REKO Circles grow?
9. Are REKO Circles being discussed in the media?
10. How do you think REKO Circles are perceived by consumers?
11. How does the REKO-model tie in with traditional cultural ideas about food in Finland?
12. Is there anything that you think I should know about REKO or anything that you would like to add that I have not asked about?

Appendix C: Interview Questions: Urban Agriculture

These interviews were not recorded or transcribed and responses are paraphrased instead of quote.

Urban Garden Administrators (and Participants)

I. *General*

1. How long has the garden existed?
2. How and why was the garden founded?
3. Who is responsible for running the garden?
4. How many garden space are there? What is the average plot size?
5. Are they all full? Is there a waiting list?
6. What are the eligibility criteria or requirements for participation?
7. How long are participants able to keep their spaces?
8. Are there specific rules to follow?
9. Does the Association plan activities?
10. Is the land in an urban area?
11. Is this urban agriculture?
12. Is there anything you think I should know about the allotments?

II. *Interaction with municipality*

1. Is there support from the city?
2. Does the city enforce rules?

III. *Participants*

1. What reasons are given for why people participate with the allotment gardens?
2. Is there any evidence of community building?
3. Do participants have to adhere to specific time requirements?
4. What reactions do you get from people when you tell them about the allotment?

Appendix D: Interview Questions: Herttoniemi CSA

Semi-structured interviews with members of the Herttoniemi CSA. Interviews from this group have an “F” in front of the interview number.

I. *General*

1. How long have you been a member of the CSA?
2. How did you hear about the CSA?
3. Why did you decide to join?

II. Perceptions about food

1. When you are purchasing a food product at the grocery what consideration do you make when deciding whether or not to buy it?
2. If you were at the grocery store and you had a choice between a bag of Finnish organic carrots or Swedish conventional carrots, which bag would come home with you and why?
3. What if the choice was between Finnish conventional and Italian organic carrots?

III. *Perceptions about CSA*

1. Do you feel like you get a good value for your money with the CSA?
2. Do you consider the activities of the CSA to be urban agriculture?
3. Have you visited the fields?
4. When you tell your friends or family that you are involved with the CSA what sort of reaction do you get?
5. Is there anything you want me to know about your involvement with the CSA or your experience as a member?

Appendix E: Glossary of Foreign Terms Related to Research

Kaupunki – City.

Kaupunkiviljely – Urban farming. This term is used to describe the “newer” types of urban agriculture such as box gardens, sack gardens, and gardens interstitial spaces.

Kotimainen – Home grown, for example food which is grown, processed, and sold within Finland.

Kunta – Municipality. There are 320 municipalities in Finland.

Luomu – Organic.

Maakunta – Region, a unit of measure used in the Finnish government conception of local. Finland has 19 such regions.

Mökki – Summer cottage.

Noutopöytä – Directly translated as buffet, but used to describe the government subsidized cafeterias.

Puhdas – Clean. Connected to food and transparency in the food chain, but also used to describe the cleanliness of an item like a car or one’s mouth after they brush their teeth.

Puhtaasti – Pure, in reference to food.

Puhtaus – Cleanliness. While this word appears quite different from *puhdas* that is a result of how Finnish words are constructed and the endings that are added to create a different form of the word.

Rejäl Konsumtion – Swedish, meaning “fair consumption.”

Ruokaosuuskunta – Food cooperative is the direct translation. This is the term used for the CSA projects in Finland.

Ruokapiiri – Food circle, or a consumer driven buying circle.

Seutukunta – Sub-region. There are 70 sub regions in Finland.

Siirtolapuutarhat – Cottage allotment gardens

Uusimaa – Directly translated as “new land,” this is the *maakunta* where Helsinki and Espoo, the two largest cities in Finland, are located.

Viljelyspalstat – Allotment gardens. This describes what is considered “traditional” urban gardening.

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