SOWING SEEDS OF CIVIC AGRICULTURE: WWOOF AS AN INCUBATOR OF EMBODIED FOOD POLITICS

by

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Thesis directed by Associate Professor Jeffrey Montez de Oca.

ABSTRACT

This research examines Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF) as a scene of civic agriculture that can inspire progressive embodied food politics and counteract the dominance of the neoliberal food regime. Qualitative research – specifically autoethnography and gonzo sociology – was utilized to explore my experiences, informal recorded interviews, and conversations that occurred on three WWOOF farms in the NYC metro area in the spring of 2016. These experiences cultivated rich data showcasing experiential realities of WWOOF farm participants, including: the researcher, four WWOOF farmers, one WWOOFer, and two WWOOF farm interns. These data have been analyzed theoretically using Lyson’s (2005) civic agriculture and Carolan’s (2011) embodied food politics, and they supplement the food studies literature with rich data and analysis of WWOOF. This research has shown that WWOOF has the potential to act as a network to disseminate and receive sustainable embodied food politics in line with the principles of civic agriculture to promote social, economic, and environmental sustainability and community embeddedness. WWOOF’s experiential classrooms of civic agriculture can cultivate a food system founded in progressive embodied food politics that are in opposition to the neoliberal food regime.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In an era during which our lives and institutions are becoming increasingly penetrated by neoliberal policies and economic practices, the food we eat is similarly affected. Food has become one more market that is exploited by the corporate pursuit of profit, with little to no regard for food quality, food safety, or food culture. Food is also an indicator of social inequalities, as is evidenced by high rates of hunger and malnutrition among the global poor, in conjunction with the centralization and record profits of the corporate agrifood industry (Gimenez & Shattuck, 2011). It is evident that our patterns of consumption affect our coordinates in the food system’s matrix of privilege/oppression, where “food oppression disproportionately affects individuals whose identities comprise an intersection of traditionally subordinated groups” (Freeman, 2007, p. 2247). In addition, our coordinates are effects of our patterns of consumption. In this thesis I argue that the unsustainability and undesirability of the current corporate food systems make alternative, community based food systems necessary to overcome the current realities.

Numerous efforts have been made to disrupt the commodification of food and reconnect people with sustainably grown food. One of these efforts is Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF). It challenges the neoliberal trends of our global food systems by connecting local food communities to a global movement through “civic agriculture,” a concept that refers to agricultural practices that are economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable and embedded in a local community (Lyson, 2005, p. 92 & 94). WWOOF also creates pedagogical scenes that teach progressive
embodied food politics. In other words, by exposing people who do not normally experience food production to civic agriculture, WWOOF can provide consumers with experiential knowledge, ethics and feelings about food consumption and production so that they can transform their relationship to food and food systems (Carolan, 2011, p. 12).

WWOOF was founded in 1971 to provide Londoners access to the organic agriculture movement (“About,” n.d.). Founded upon a critique of the conventional food system, WWOOF has grown into a global network of alternative farms that provide educational experiences to volunteers who are part of a community where “practical farming skills” are exchanged for labor (“About,” n.d.). WWOOF links organic farmers with volunteers interested in learning how to farm organically. The WWOOF model reconnects people and food in a sustainable, community-centric manner. The growth of WWOOF’s global network of civic agriculture is impressive - with WWOOF farms in over 120 countries across the globe (“Frequently Asked Questions,” n.d.) and 2,139 WWOOF farms in the United States as of November 2016 (“About,” n.d.), up from fewer than 700 WWOOF farms in the US in May 2008 (Maycock, 2008, p. 284).

WWOOF’s pedagogical scene of sustainable embodied food politics represents a potentially viable path from the oppressive neoliberal food regime to a more sustainable, progressive food regime. WWOOF increases the public’s access to the lived experiences of civic agriculture. This research examines WWOOF utilizing Carolan’s (2011) understanding of embodied food politics and Lyson’s (2005) understanding of civic agriculture to scrutinize the rich data resultant from autoethnographic research that I conducted on three WWOOF farms.
**Literature Review**

There has been a great deal of multidisciplinary academic work that addresses contemporary food issues. Similarly, popular media, such as Michael Pollan’s *Omnivore’s Dilemma* (2006) and *Food, Inc.* (2009), has brought food politics closer to the social consciousness of many Americans. The literature demonstrates that understandings of the food system vary as do proposed solutions to address the current food crises. This literature review first examines the food system as a primarily corporate food regime that is inequitable and unsustainable, but can be affected by progressive action in the food system (Gimenez & Shattuck, 2011). Next, I survey Carolan (2011) that emphasizes lived experience as the cornerstone of one’s relationship to the food system. The resultant embodied food politics, which can be progressive or conventional based on the depth of one’s experiences in the food system, affect the food system accordingly. Progressive experiences in the food system can help create civic agriculture - locally embedded food communities that are socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable (Lyson, 2005). Civic agriculture is explored in the final section of this literature review.

**The Neoliberal Global Food System**

Friedmann defines the global food regime as the “rule-governed structure of production and consumption of food on a world scale” (Friedmann, 1993, p. 30-31). Gimenez and Shattuck (2011) describe the current iteration as a corporate food regime that became ascendant in the 1980s. They identify four broad trends that currently exist with varying degrees of prominence within the global food regime: neoliberal, reformist, progressive, and radical. The neoliberal and the reformist are the dominant trends and...
cooperate to foster “corporate expansion and individual ‘consumption-as-politics’” (Gimenez & Shattuck, 2011, p. 115). These dominant trends reinforce an unwavering faith in the economic structure of capitalism that ultimately causes “persistent social and environmental failures” (Gimenez & Shattuck, 2011, p. 114). The progressive trend seeks food justice by empowering the oppressed (p. 124) and the radical trend pursues food sovereignty through “radical transformation of society” (p. 128). The progressive and radical trends are heterogeneous and fragmented movements (p. 131) that stand in opposition to the dominant trends (Gimenez & Shattuck, 2011, p. 115). As we will see below, WWOOF is consistent with what Gimenez and Shattuck identify as the progressive trend.

Widespread structural changes rather than individualized lifestyle changes are necessary to transform the current food regime into a more equitable and sustainable regime. For Gimenez and Shattuck (2011) that means addressing “the immediate problems of hunger, malnutrition, food insecurity and environmental degradation, while working steadily towards the structural changes needed for sustainable, equitable and democratic food systems” (p. 132). This transition depends on the progressive trend that could potentially lead to a radical transition to a more just food regime (Gimenez & Shattuck, 2011, p. 133). Counteracting food crises and structural inequalities in the current corporate food regime will require unity between the progressive and radical trends. Gimenez and Shattuck see this as creating a sustainable, equitable, just and sovereign food regime (Gimenez & Shattuck, 2011, p. 136). WWOOF is progressive since it loosely connects sites of civic agriculture to a global and progressive food movement. This research shows that WWOOF farmers can provide experiential
classrooms of civic agriculture that cultivate WWOOFers’ (a person that volunteers on a WWOOF farm) progressive embodiments of food politics.

**WWOOF as a Global Classroom for the Pedagogy of Sustainable Embodied Food Politics**

Nestle (2007) argues that food choices are not just personal, but political in nature (p. 375). The corporate food industry is driven by the relentless pursuit of profit and so it has an economic interest in creating a public that is confused, ignorant, or apathetic. According to Nestle, the corporate food industry achieves this by:

- lobbying, lawsuits, financial contributions, public relations, advertising,
- partnerships and alliances, philanthropy, threats, and biased information to convince Congress, federal agencies, nutrition and health professionals, and the public that the science relating diet to health is so confusing that they need not worry about diets (Nestle, 2007, p. 358).

Carolan’s *Embodied Food Politics* (2011) builds upon Nestle’s understanding of food politics, by arguing that we must understand “how lived experience plays into knowledge, ethics, and feelings about food consumption and production” (p. 12). At the core of Carolan’s (2011) analysis is the idea that “our knowledge of the world…is constituted through our relationalities” (p. 4), and that disparate relationships to food create “different epistemic effects” (p. 8). Ultimately, “relationalities underlie all (food) knowledges making those connectivities inherently political” (Carolan, 2011, p. 151). A person’s embodied food politics are defined by their complex relationships to food and produced through lived experience (Carolan, 2011, p. 12). Therefore, people’s embodied food politics are affected by the global food system as well as one’s historical relations with food. Further, since embodied food politics are contextual and specific, they are also highly variable and fluid.
Carolan (2011) argues that “Global Food tunes bodies for the taste and sensations of Global Food” (p. 55), which encourages “amoral eating” (p. 58). Identifying the social nature of embodied food politics allows people to transgress and affect change within the neoliberal global food system. Carolan (2011) argues that potential transgressions of “[e]thical behavior...[come] from within lived experience” (p. 89), emphasizing the importance of participation within pedagogical scenes of alternative agriculture. Embodied food politics morph with the experiential food knowledge that is gained as one navigates different scenes within the food system. In other words, a progressive food politics counters the alienation of corporate food politics by establishing participatory relations between people and food. These growing embodied food politics can potentially inspire action – big or small. Examining participation within transgressive food spaces like WWOOF and the new relationalities to food that WWOOFing creates is essential to understanding the progressive food regime and its potential to counter the neoliberal regime. Active participation in the food system – through WWOOF in this case – creates the potential for the accumulative dissemination of progressive food politics on a macro scale through micro level changes in food relationalities.

A group of scholars collaborated to build upon Carolan’s analysis of embodied food politics and to outline new relationalities that could create meaningful change in the food systems (Goodman, M.K., Flora, C.B., Roe, E.J., Johnston, J., Le Heron, R., & Carolan, M.S., 2014, p. 272). Goodman emphasizes the “visceral” (2014, p. 272) nature of embodied relationships to the food system, which provide an important lens into our social lives, the food system, and food policy. Flora emphasizes the importance of utilizing an analysis that links production with consumption within alternative
agricultural communities (Goodman et al., 2014). Examining these alternative food communities that are committed to a “moral economy that resists Global Food” enables the academy to understand and affect the fluid social and economic relationships that link food to agriculture (Goodman et al., 2014, p. 274). Roe addresses how emphasizing relationalities with food and the corresponding opportunity to affect change could inform “an embodied food policy” that “[reaches] beyond the food consumer as the target community because it is not about more information but about different experiences with food” (Goodman et al., 2014, p. 275). Instead, Roe recommends analyzing producers in the food supply chain as well, as they have “been overlooked as passive and powerless actors in a consumer-driven food revolution” (Goodman et al., 2014, p. 275).

Johnston calls for the food studies academe to examine why food knowledge often does not translate to action (Goodman et al., 2014, p. 277). Johnston also urges a more nuanced reliance on Carolan’s embodied food politics that is informed by the sociology of culture and cognition (Goodman et al., 2014, p. 276). This merged approach, Johnston argues, will create “a better understanding of how social schemas, thought processes, and the senses interact can…[sic] [help] us understand how to more effectively challenge Global Food” (Goodman et al., 2014, p. 277). Carolan provided an engaging response to these critiques by emphasizing the shared desire to “better understand how people come to know food” (Goodman et al., 2014, p. 279). Ultimately, food “knowledge is not a noun but a verb” (Goodman et al., 2014, p. 279) that should be understood fluidly and experientially.

Carolan’s research highlights how alternative food communities strengthen the food system as incubators of transgressive “embodied knowledge that flows out of these
relationships. The former…feeding the latter, which in turn reinforces the former, and so forth” (Carolan 2011, p. 144). This literature highlights a shared optimism for “sustainable food futures” found in plans to utilize a “relational approach” to understanding the food system in future research (Carolan, 2014, p. 280). The symbiotic process of strengthening progressive embodied food politics and transgressive food spaces within the global food regime is dependent upon participation within these scenes. This research examines embodied food politics in this sample of WWOOF participants and how embodied food knowledge is cultivated within these scenes of civic agriculture.

**WWOOF Localities as Scenes of Civic Agriculture**

Issues of community are essential to transgress the neoliberal food regime and to transition to more sustainable and equitable food systems. In addressing the relationship between food and community, many theorists use the term *civic agriculture*. Lyson (2005) defines civic agriculture as “the embedding of local agricultural and food production in the community” (p. 92). In addition to its local and community-based nature, civic agriculture “embodies a commitment to developing and strengthening an economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable system of agriculture and food production” (Lyson, 2005, p. 94). This research examines WWOOF as a model of civic agriculture and considers each of the WWOOF farms in this sample with regard to their respective tactics in ensuring economically, environmentally and socially sustainable practices as well as how each of these sustainabilities are negotiated in practice.

There are several points to consider in order to better understand the concept of civic agriculture. First, civic agriculture requires that producers are embedded within a specific place. The sense of place and the social and participatory endeavors that occur in
this place are vital elements of civic agriculture (DeLind, 2002). Further, civic agriculture is dependent upon a broader network of community support (Janssen, 2010).

DeLind and Bingen (2008) suggest that the current understanding of civic agriculture is “conceptually and practically shallow” (p. 127) as the terminology “tends to direct our attention away from the culture of place and toward a functionally discrete and largely rational and market based sense of civic engagement and political activity” (p. 128). Their critique seeks to emphasize not only the grass roots “alternative strategies for rural economic development” but also the importance of and variances in place. Based on their critique, DeLind and Bingen (2008) call for grassroots action based in civic communities deeply rooted in their respective place to further connect food and community in a more cooperative and just manner. When conceptualizing civic agriculture, it is essential to consider place, process, and community with an emphasis on multi-faceted sustainability. This research examines WWOOF farms in regards to their embeddedness within their locality; their social, environmental, and economic sustainability; their reliance on the global network of WWOOF; and their localities as pedagogical scenes of experiential agricultural education to strengthen WWOOFers embodiments of food politics.

Research Goals

Examining transgressive developments within the food system is essential in the effort to better understand the food system and to successfully affect positive change in this realm. WWOOF fits the mold of a transgressive scene within our global food system that could bring positive developments in the expansion of civic agriculture via micro level shifts to a more progressive embodied food politics. The link between civic
agriculture and embodied food politics resides in the depth of human connection to the production and consumption of food. Deep experiential connections to food production can enable transgressive action leading to a more progressive food regime comprised of plentiful local civic agricultures.

To understand how WWOOF fits into the global food system, it is essential to understand who is involved within this scene, and how and why they are involved. This research examines WWOOF farm hosts and WWOOFers in terms of their motivations to be WWOOFers; how WWOOF influences their embodied food politics; and if and how knowledge of civic agriculture is successfully disseminated with these experiences. In examining the WWOOF community, we are better able to understand the experiential exchange of embodied food politics and labor within the pedagogical scene of WWOOF. This exchange transgresses the neoliberal global food regime and grows civic agriculture globally locality by locality.

In this effort, it is essential to examine if and how WWOOF hosts educate their WWOOFers. Examining embodied food politics amongst WWOOF hosts and WWOOFers allows us to analyze the viability of these micro level changes germinating into a global civic agriculture through the subsequent dissemination and accumulative growth of sustainable embodied food politics.

To understand WWOOF in terms of civic agriculture, this research will assess the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of WWOOF at the micro level. As civic agriculture is dependent on the embedding of agriculture within the local community (Lyson, 2005, p. 92), a singular understanding of WWOOF and civic agriculture globally is not possible. Instead, assessing the variability of individual
WWOOF sites is essential to understanding WWOOF’s global network. Economic sustainability, environmental sustainability, and social sustainability are examined both independently and conjunctively in this research to understand the numerous motivations and obligations that affect civic agriculture in practice. The social sustainability of WWOOF farms is dependent, to varying degrees, upon two seemingly disparate resources: the local community and the global WWOOF network. This research works to understand which relationships are most important for WWOOF hosts in their respective scenes of civic agriculture and how WWOOF’s global network impacts each WWOOF farm. Understanding this global – local connection is essential.

This research also examines the social benefits of WWOOFing (volunteering at a WWOOF farm), and whether or not these benefits are viable in sustaining WWOOFers’ desires to WWOOF. The economic sustainability of WWOOF is addressed qualitatively in terms of the financial challenges faced by WWOOF hosts. On the ground cost–benefit equations and the resulting civic agricultural product at WWOOF localities are examined to more fully understand the economic realities of WWOOF farms. Environmental sustainability is examined in terms of WWOOF host farms’ farming methods. Each of these sustainabilities is also examined in conjunction with each other as it is presumed that these sustainabilities occasionally collaborate toward a shared success while competing against one another in other instances.
CHAPTER II

METHOD

Qualitative research – specifically autoethnography and gonzo sociology – was utilized as the methodological framework for this research. This framework enabled a deep evaluation of WWOOF as an actor within the global food regime that empowers more progressive embodied relationalities to food, and thus creates a more robust and widespread network of civic agriculture. Anderson (2006) argues that autoethnography “offers distinctively grounded opportunities to pursue the connections between biography and social structure that are central to C. Wright Mills’s conception of sociological imagination” (p. 390). Autoethnographic research consists of five key features: “(1) complete member researcher (CMR) status, (2) analytic reflexivity, (3) narrative visibility of the researcher’s self, (4) dialogue with informants beyond the self, and (5) commitment to theoretical analysis” (Anderson, 2006, p. 378). Each feature is evident throughout this research. This methodological framework produced rich, authentic, and embodied data regarding WWOOF as a transgressive mechanism within the food system with the potential to empower embodied food politics and civic agriculture.

This autoethnographic research provides a deep understanding of WWOOF hosts’ and WWOOFers’ micro level relationalities to food, the dependence of these relationships upon the global WWOOF network, and how civic agriculture and embodied food politics are empowered in practice within this sample. To best increase accessibility of this research to the general public (Sefcovic, 1995), a gonzo sociological framework was used to guide a twofold research strategy: first, narrative autoethnography highlighted daily life on a WWOOF farm as well as the progression of my own
embodiments of food politics that were nourished through WWOOFing. Next, in-depth informal interviews of WWOOF farmers were utilized to explore WWOOF from a production perspective. Interviews were recorded and analyzed using an inductive, methodical and “highly interactive process between the researcher and the data” (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006, p. 195 & 196).

I used Sefcovic’s (1995) concept of gonzo ethnography that is adopted from Hunter S. Thompson’s excellent ability to let his readers know “what [he] stands for, where he’s been, and what he sees” (p. 33). To be clear, I was not an academic outsider looking down on the scenes from above. I followed the gonzo ethnographer model in this research, “accept[ing] the inevitability of involvement” (Sefcovic, 1995, p. 30), and participated in each WWOOF farm’s tasks to best understand each WWOOF locality in its most authentic form possible. My experiences working on WWOOF farms are chronicled using a narrative gonzo ethnographic style to ensure access to the general public, potentially allowing “these ideas to become diffused among the citizens who may most be transformed, democratized, empowered, by them” (Sefcovic, 1995, p. 28). In this research, I hope to reach civic agricultural farmers, the food oppressed, food justice warriors, and others interested in the food system.

In preparing for this research, I was armed with an array of questions and the foundational assumption that WWOOF is an underutilized, but effective force in reinforcing civic agriculture through the cultivation of embodied food politics. I had introductory experience with WWOOF since I had learned of it from friends and then enjoyed a two-day WWOOF excursion near Joplin, MO in 2013. With this introduction, I was left fascinated, curious, and optimistic about WWOOF. I pondered: What is
WOOF’s role in the changing food regime? Is it a viable organization, or is it just a way for twenty-somethings to travel the world on a shoestring budget? Should we invest in WWOOF as a mechanism to improve the food system? These questions could be posed through a survey or other positivist method, but the rich data from this scene that I desired would have been lost. It is important to understand WWOOF farms, farmers, and WWOOFers through the boots on the ground, “immersive, bodily experience” of gonzo ethnography (Wozniak, 2014, p. 455). This approach reveals the intricacies of the varied experiences in these scenes and how these experiences impact one’s relationalities to the food system. The data gathered from my three WWOOFing excursions are presented in chronological order to illustrate the people and places I engaged as well as my own evolving embodied food politics. Theory is placed into footnotes to avoid interrupting the narrative flow for readers less interested in sociological theory and to maintain gonzo ethnography’s sensibility as “art with a political agenda” (Sefcovic, 1995, p.25).

Later, I analyze the informal interviews that were conducted on the WWOOF farms. These interviews took place over WWOOF farm sourced and WWOOF farmer prepared meals that I enjoyed while WWOOFing. These interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded, ensuring that the experts in this subject matter - the farmers, the WWOOFers, and other farm community stakeholders - had a voice in this research.

**Participants**

The sample examined in this research was gathered by accessing the WWOOF network of farms on the WWOOF website’s WWOOFer portal. I searched on “one visitor” and “visiting for one day (local) or one week” to generate a sample of farms for my participatory research in the New York City metro area in March 2016.
Unfortunately, professional obligations prevented longer volunteer experiences at any of the farms. These search parameters yielded 19 WWOOF farms within 100 miles of my home in Brooklyn, NY. I contacted each of the 19 farms by email. 12 farms did not respond to my inquiry. Six responded by email and one responded by phone. However, one farm was not accepting WWOOFers due to the birth of a child (I was invited for an interview), one farm was not actively accepting WWOOFers until later in the spring, and I could not coordinate a visit with two of the farms.

I volunteered at three WWOOF farms for one day each over a two-week period in March 2016. Whether or not saturation was reached in this research remains a question (Morse, 1995, p. 147), but I still accomplished the research goal of generating rich and informative data on WWOOF. Not reaching saturation “simply means that the phenomenon has not yet been fully explored rather than that the findings are invalid” (O’Reilly & Parker, 2012, p.194). Despite the small sample size, the intensive mixed methodological approach that was utilized in this research yielded rich data that provides preliminary insights into an understudied but important subculture in the progressive food regime. Furthermore, the goal of this research is not generalizability. This research broadens knowledge of the food system and food politics by highlighting local experiential realities of WWOOF farm participants by “[giving] all data equal consideration in the analytic coding procedures” (Morse, 1995, p. 147).

Procedure

The following research procedures were approved by the University of Colorado Colorado Springs Institutional Review Board (see the appendix for approvals). Each research participant provided informed consent prior to participating in this research. All
research participants’ names, farm names, and farm locations have been altered to ensure anonymity. I recorded my experiences at each farm with ethnographic field notes and coded my field notes as well as the digitally recorded interviews using an inductive, data driven approach (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006, p. 195). Theory was continually developed as I reflexively scrutinized the data from the perspective of civic agriculture and embodied food politics.

The narratives focus on the mundane and prosaic to highlight the daily experiences of WWOOF farmers and WWOOF participants. When taken together, these mundane experiences create each person’s unique embodiment of food politics and their role – active or passive – within the food system. Brekhus (2000) argues that “[i]n failing to take the ordinary as seriously as the extraordinary, social science has produced a distorted picture of the social world” (p. 92). In this case, I argue that small scale alternative farming has largely been romanticized in both academia and in the public eye. This research “analytically [highlights] the mundane elements within the extraordinary and [reveals] the generic features within socially marked populations and issues” (Brekhus, 2000, p. 99) creating insight into how WWOOF farmers’ and WWOOFers’ realities are constructed into progressive embodiments of food politics through experiences on WWOOF farms.

Next, this research examines in depth informal interviews of WWOOF hosts and WWOOFers to better understand the motivations of those participating in WWOOF, as well as how embodied food politics affect one’s role within civic agriculture and vice versa. These conversations were recorded digitally, transcribed manually, and coded to optimally understand the data. Coding began during transcription when data indicative of
civic agriculture and embodied food politics were highlighted. Future rounds of coding fragmented these general concepts into more pointed theoretical insights where inter-farm commonalities as well as farm specific data was captured. Ultimately, the coding connected the intricacies of civic agriculture and embodied food politics.
CHAPTER III
RESULTS

Disclaimer - Fear and Loathing in the Food System

This research has blossomed out of my interest in the food system and entrée into social justice as an undergraduate in the mid-2000s. I cannot recall my exact entry point into the food justice movement, but I know that Michael Pollan’s *Omnivore’s Dilemma* (2006) and the documentary *Food, Inc.* (Kenner & Pearlstein, 2008) amongst other media were meaningful in shaping my food interests and practices. As a leftist with a passion for social justice, my first step in pursuit of food justice was tilling a quarter acre plot of my parent’s backyard (thanks Mom and Dad!) to experiment with growing food. This experiment blossomed into three summers of intensive gardening. And my love for producing food continued to develop as I became more involved in the food system.

With a growing set of embodied food politics, demonstrated by my newfound vegetarian diet, I began working as a farm intern at an organic farm in Colorado that further reinforced my skillset and love for farming. With this foundation of acknowledged subjectivities, I hope to clearly portray the intricacies that exist in WWOOF’s global network in the most authentic way possible in this research while sharing my experiences. My intention in this research, to be clear, is to strengthen the food system by highlighting WWOOF’s unique global subculture that has the potential to have a positive impact on the food system.

My gonzo efforts to examine WWOOF as a mechanism to breed socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable civic agriculture began in the spring of 2016. There were many similarities amongst the WWOOF farms, WWOOF hosts, and
WWOOFers in this sample, but there is no singularity that can be used when understanding WWOOF and its players. My diverse experiences are not generalizable, but instead illustrate some of the unique tactics, motivations, challenges, philosophies, personalities, conspiracy theories, and intentions seen within one small sample of the global community of WWOOF.

**25 Green Acres Farm**

My first experience with WWOOF in this research was with Max on 25 Green Acres Farm in rural New England. After a couple of introductory emails, Max called me one evening to discuss the logistics and expectations that come with a stay at 25 Green Acres Farm. Max’s passion and sense of humor were clear from the start as were his expectations for WWOOFers to participate in a *real day* of farming; not the romanticized, easy going, pie in the sky dreaming kind of farming, but the 12-hour day of hard work kind of farming.

I was welcomed with open arms by Max and his seasonal intern Susan when I arrived at 25 Green Acres farm around 8:30am. They were incredibly calm and cheery on this unseasonably warm spring morning despite the call from Max’s neighbor. Through the “giggle screams” Max heard on his end of the line, it was deciphered that a number of his herd of 16 long horned, biodynamic cattle had snuck out and wandered into his surprisingly gracious and rather unsurprised neighbor’s flower bed. We hiked to the scene of the crime to check in on the neighbor, to assess the situation, and to begin tracking and corralling these fertility machines that are essential to running a biodynamic
Max’s neighbor greeted us warmly, and let us know that the herd had continued down the road a few minutes prior. The forgiving nature of this exchange was baffling. The neighbor’s leniency indicated her relationship of trust with Max, which was evocative of the social sustainability, strong community identity, and social embeddedness found in civic agriculture.²

I am not an animal person and had no previous experience working with cattle, but I was asked to play cowboy within minutes of my arrival. Despite asking myself what the hell I was getting into, I happily complied. Max, Susan, and I spread out under Max’s guidance to locate the herd in a nearby field. Susan and I provided a perimeter for the herd’s path back to pasture while Max corralled the herd back through our human boundaries. Max also showed us how to hiss if the cattle got off track. Susan and I hissed and stood our ground as the herd retreated to their home pasture. Somehow, we survived! This intimate, hands-on civic agricultural experience provided more experiential knowledge, quicker than I had anticipated.

Susan and I spent the next couple of hours walking the perimeter of temporarily de-electrified electric fence to ensure all of the posts were secure in the ground or

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¹ Cattle are essential to fertilization on biodynamic farms opposed to the petrochemical fertilization methods commonly used in conventional farming. Both 25 Green Acres Farm and Bedrock Farm are biodynamic practitioners, passionate about their closed loop agricultural operations, which is made possible by the fertilization provided by these cattle (Diver, 1999), and representative of an environmental sustainability measure taken toward civic agriculture.

² Max’s earned leniency was created through years of practiced civic agriculture, which had strengthened his community by “nurtur[ing] local economic development, maintain[ing] diversity and quality in products, and provid[ing] forums where civic farmers and food citizens can come together to solidify bonds of community” (Lyson, 2005, p. 97).
mended as necessary. Max laid out the plan of attack that Susan and I executed under his guidance. Max’s pedagogical intentionality was on display as he explained that the recent frost and thaw caused many of the fence posts to lose their secure grasp of the land. Max took the time to discuss the why behind the situation and emphasized the ingrained awareness that one develops through the experiences of working with the land. The experience of time and space are central to Max’s relational knowledge and embodied food politics. As he had explained to Susan earlier, “you’ll get to know the angle of the sun, where it is in the sky, [and] who needs to be watered.” Intuition developed from experience ensures the dynamic to-do list of priorities is well attended to and increases a farm’s productivity.³

As we completed our task, Max reflected on the situation by digging deeper into the biodynamic herd’s excursion and their “indiscriminate pruning.” Max described the herd’s pent up desire for the green grass that was sprouting nearby as motivating their escape. After eating only dry hay over the long winter, “they could smell the green grass, they could taste it.” The cattle, Max told us, found an escape hatch through the frost damaged perimeter fence to get that taste. The cattle’s primal urge and effort was impressive, we agreed, but impeded attendance to the farm’s intensive and varied daily schedule. “They’re smart like that,” Max claimed with his snark laden sustainable foodie viewpoint on full display, “We, in all of our brilliance, can’t smell fresh french fries

³ Carolan (2011) discusses the importance of “close encounters” for those learning to farm (p. 138). Close encounters develop the “sticky knowledge” required to farm successfully (p. 140). These “understandings, knowledge, and thus behaviors are, at least in part, effects of embodied relations” (p. 144). Max’s “intuition” is a good example of “sticky knowledge” that he embodies through hands on experiences (Carolan, 2011).
halfway down the block.” Speaking of fries, I was hungry and our next agenda item was the breakfast that had been delayed by the morning’s excitement.

As we feasted on 25 Green Acres Farm grown root veggies topped with hour fresh over easy eggs and salad greens, Max’s sense of humor, political outlook, and passion for food were also featured on the menu. This was just the first of three farm fresh and definitively delicious meals that WWOOFers receive in exchange for a day’s work. Max’s and Susan’s hospitality created an inviting environment. Their valuing of and care for the food showed in the mindful, albeit rustic, food preparation and in Max’s request that we clink our forks in a cheers before the feast commenced. The conversation that ensued was fun and food focused.

We began discussing food mashups over breakfast. Susan described the Cronut to Max, who quickly deemed this Donut – Croissant mashup “bullshit.” Max argued that the changing American tastes were going down a slippery slope of over-sweetening foods. The doughnut, Max argued (in agreement with recent scholarly evidence), had been bastardized as just another vehicle for sweetness, where sweetness was all that mattered to the corporate entities selling as many units as possible to a sugar dependent populace. The texture and simplicity of a proper doughnut was a thing of perfection in Max’s eyes that is lost in its commercialized form. In these conversations, and in the enjoyment that Susan, Max, and I shared with our meal, it was clear that enjoying good food was a motivating factor in each of our decisions to actively participate in the food

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4 Moss’s *Sugar, Fat, Salt: How the Food Giants Hooked Us* (2013) discusses the intentional over-sweetening, and also the over-salting and over-fattening, of commonly consumed processed foods as a successful business strategy. Corporations increase the addictive aspects of processed foods with extra sugar, salt, and fat to increase sales.
system, albeit at varying levels of engagement. Our shared frustrations and concerns for the current state of conventional food systems were also motivators.

Susan had recently returned from the Peace Corps and was serving as Max’s Farm Intern for the spring. Prior to her stint in the Peace Corps, Susan enjoyed gardening as a hobby, but learned much more about farming through her service in Africa. Susan spoke of the experience, which primarily consisted of hands on agricultural work, as formative and the origin of her love for farming. This desire to build a career in farming was clearly being formed contemporaneously with the support of Max’s knowledge and his intentionality in disseminating the knowledge he had acquired to further the cause of civic agriculture. Some of this knowledge was philosophical, some universally practical, and some distinct to 25 Green Acres Farm’s place specific realities.

Max decided not to include me in the dishwashing process. He explained that since I did not know their system, the training would offer no reward since I was only WWOOFing for only one day instead of the typical longer stay. Max’s mindful prioritization and task distribution was on display throughout the day. He continuously analyzed the resources at his disposal alongside the fluid to-do list of priorities to

5 Max’s intentionality in disseminating knowledge to others is a good example of a civic agricultural farmer’s measures to develop more progressive embodiments of food politics within its stakeholder network. This aligns with Carolan’s (2011) contention that “sticky knowledge” is effectively disseminated by experiencing local food systems (p. 140).

6 An analysis of the mundane task of dishwashing (Brekhus, 2000), amongst other examples in this narrative, not only de-romanticizes small scale agriculture, but it also sheds light on how exactly a WWOOF farmer negotiates civic agriculture and embodies food politics in the moment as well as how these theories are connected generally.
seamlessly prescribe the most impactful application of labor.\textsuperscript{7} This was also apparent when he guided me in pruning the hydrangea tree. Max spoke about the importance of understanding that “each tree grows a certain way, and when pruning, you can’t work against it. Work with it.” He then left me to pruning while he attended to other tasks.

WWOOFers are often assigned grunt work. Not in the sense of meaningless work that is not worthy of a farmer’s time, but less skill intensive work that frees the farmer’s higher skill set for higher impact tasks. For instance, I had the task of removing a tree and its root system that was next to a garage. The tree could have caused damage that cost thousands of dollars as well as lost productivity and further logistical challenges.\textsuperscript{8} Despite being “grunt work”, Max worked alongside of me so that I could develop a more complex skill set. Max and I poked and prodded the root of the unwanted tree and he emphasized the importance of working as smartly as possible. Max instructed me on where to attack the root and which tool was best suited for the different levels of attack. I am not sure how many trees Max has extracted, but it is clear that he has deep

\textsuperscript{7} Susan had previously been trained on how he expected the dishwashing to be completed and developed experiential knowledge of the task to the local standard. This experiential embodiment of how to complete the process using Max’s system was unique to this place, and my embodiments for completing this task were not adequate to complete the task successfully. This embodiment analysis recurred throughout the day as Max assessed the experiential embodiments of food politics apparent in each of the WWOOF farm participants and prescribed action based on their embodied knowledges.

\textsuperscript{8} I saw that financial obligations regularly drive a farm’s prioritization of tasks to ensure economic success and sustainability. This extends to the community since civic agriculture is “tightly linked to a community’s social and economic development” (Lyson & Guptill, 2004, p. 371).
experiential knowledge from which he deploys skills, tactics and expertise that save time and labor,\(^9\) which are limited on WWOOF farms.

While completing these tasks, I was introduced to a few members of 25 Green Acres Farm’s community including two farm regulars who stop by every week or two to assist Max. It was clear that they enjoyed this regular activity and had a great relationship with Max. We joked a bit and laughed together as they passed by my stationary scene to attend to their task. I later learned that the younger of the two was a high school student with special needs and the elder one was his school aid. I met another farm regular who is a carpenter turned yogi and had WWOOFed elsewhere in the past. He originally met Max as a patron of 25 Green Acres Farm. Like Susan, all three farm participants enjoyed a flourishing banter with Max. Max’s welcoming nature and his more the merrier mindset created an inclusive community that was part of the farm’s DNA.\(^10\) It was impressive to see the diverse, inclusive, and flourishing community that Max had cultivated to achieve civic agriculture.

After Max, Susan, and I made a delicious lunch of savory oatmeal prepared with farm fresh greens, onions, and mushrooms, the second half of the day’s priorities were

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\(^9\) Max’s embodiments of food politics were central to the economic success of his farm. These micro level efficiencies allow Max additional time to reinvest in other civic agricultural tasks and pedagogical investments in the embodied food politics of his farm community members.

\(^10\) The community that Max created is strong and socially sustaining. Lyson argues that social sustainability like this “rests on cooperation, with an emphasis on permanence, quality, and beauty” (Lyson, 2005, p. 96), all of which were present at 25 Green Acres Farm.
upon us. Max demonstrated his interest in environmental sustainability as he trained Susan to implement a soil block making process. This process eliminates the use of disposable plastic trays often used in the seed planting process. Max had learned from studying horticulture that dirt molds also prevent young plants from becoming root bound before transplanting. This tutorial was a good example of how farming occasionally requires trial and error and readjustments based on the accumulations of experiential knowledge from prior experiences. In this case, Max was working with Susan to mix the perfect ratio of potting soil, manure from the biodynamic herd, and water. To assure optimal root growth for seedlings, the blend needs to hold its form as the mold was removed and the mixture dried. There was a written ratio on the wall, but the formula did not account for the varying levels of moisture in each of the ingredients in the mix. Getting it just right required feeling different iterations of the mixture with one’s hands and adding or draining water as necessary. This means that learning the feel of what was too thick or too thin is a long, experiential process. Susan attentively mixed and

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11 Environmental sustainability was a motivating factor for Max and his unique brand of civic agriculture as well as a response to “issues of environmental degradation and resource depletion, [and] the negative social and community consequences associated with conventional agriculture” (Lyson, 2005, p. 94).

12 More information on this process popularized by Eliot Coleman (n.d.) can be found here: [http://www.johnnyseeds.com/t-soil-block-makers-eliot-coleman.aspx#].

13 As Susan developed the feel of the proper potting mixture, we witnessed the progression of her embodied food political skills. Most importantly, the skills that Susan developed while experiencing farming first hand with Max’s support were based on how Susan’s “lived experience plays into knowledge” (Carolan, 2011, p. 12). As Susan’s embodiments progressed with increased access to the relationalities of farming practices, Green Acre Farm’s civic agriculture is strengthened as is the likelihood of her future “participat[ion] in similar food production as [a] grower” (Carolan, 2011, p. 123).
mashed, working toward the correct mix as she perfected her utilization of the metal dirt mold making mechanism.

After clearing a mushroom bed of the winter’s debris and delivering the leaves and organic matter to Max’s grateful flock of 35 laying hens, I was exhausted. Max simmered a pot of beans sourced from a farm in upstate New York with 25 Green Acres Farm onions, ham, and herbs. It was served with brown rice – “the rice, I don’t know where the hell the rice comes from,” Max laughed. As the forthcoming feast was left to care for itself, Max and I enjoyed some down time to discuss the day’s work, 25 Green Acres Farm’s history, politics, and the theoretical framework of my thesis.

As we polished off our third meal of the day, Max and I agreed that it was time to recharge for the next day of work. Max showed me the simple but comfortable accommodations available for WWOOFers. He could accommodate up to three WWOOFers at a time. For Max, he was to wash, rinse, and repeat as the next day’s sun rose whereas I would head to Swampy Meadows CSA to continue my experiential entrée into WWOOFing. I was fulfilled by the hard day’s work, the nourishing bounty of food provided by Max as well as the impressive community that he had cultivated and the new experiences I was offered. 25 Green Acres is a civic agricultural practice that is dedicated to economic, environmental, and social sustainability. Social sustainability is highlighted by Max’s continual emphasis on empowering progressive embodied food politics within the farm’s community members to strengthen the food system.14

14 Max’s emphasis on providing an experiential education allows community members to gain more progressive embodiments of food politics through the “lived experience [that] plays into knowledge, ethics, and feelings about food consumption and production” (Carolan, 2011, p. 12). Ultimately, his farm community members could later utilize these
Swampy Meadows CSA

Swampy Meadows CSA is nestled into an idyllic mountain valley of swampy land and beautiful forests. As I pulled up to a big red barn, I was welcomed by my farm host Emma, her seasonal intern Will, and a WWOOFer named Sean. They were enjoying a late start to the day with a cup of coffee as Emma laid out the tasks for the day that included: weeding vegetable beds, constructing hoop houses for a new planting of vegetables, and clearing debris that had piled up over the winter. Within the first few minutes of meeting Emma, the farm manager, I was impressed by her desire to welcome me into a comfortable environment and her intentionality in including the less experienced farm participants in the prioritization of tasks. The energy was less intense than my experience at 25 Green Acres Farm, but it was clear that this go with the flow atmosphere did not mean that we would not work hard.

Our initial task was to drape a plastic cover over a frame of bent metal fenceposts to construct a hoop house that would provide additional warmth to a 100-foot bed of vegetables that Emma had recently planted. This task had been put on hold prior to the creation of our four-person team since it was a task that required many hands to complete. We inched along the 100-foot vegetable bed with deliberation to prevent the wind from undoing all of our work; rustling each section of plastic over the semi-circle frame in a piecemeal fashion. The process consisted of one person walking the plastic cover to the pinnacle of the frame and handing off the cover to the person opposite them who unraveled the second half of the plastic from there, which completed the half circle newly gained progressive embodiments of civic agriculture to strengthen civic agriculture at his farm or elsewhere in the food system.
of encapsulation. As this handoff was made, the other two team members placed heavy rocks and logs on the plastic at the foot of each post securing the plastic to the ground. To be clear, this process was made possibly by WWOOF, which provided the extra hands necessary to complete the difficult task. Emma continually troubleshooted our work since the wind constantly undid our efforts. As we gained experience, the process ran more and more smoothly.

As we completed the project, I learned that Emma began working on the farm seven years prior as a member of a three partner team. The land is owned by a sponsor interested in providing affordable physical space to nourish a diverse community of artists and artisans that included a baker, a sculptor, and the Swampy Meadows CSA farmers. Emma is now the sole partner of Swampy Meadows CSA, but the collective structure of the farm has continued to influence her operations. Emma regularly spoke of

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15 With seven years of experience constructing hoop houses, Emma educating three novices in the construction process is a great example of the transfer of embodied food politics in practice. Emma’s dissemination of her experiential, embodied knowledge not only increased efficiency, but also provided an opportunity for two WWOOFers to grow more progressive embodiments of food politics. Carolan discussed disseminating experiential knowledge as an “opportunity to learn (and get excited) about this form of food production, which, in turn, will hopefully lead to more people doing [civic] agriculture” (Carolan, 2011, p 141).

16 This financial relationship proved to be an important measure of economic sustainability that allowed for Emma’s growth as a farmer, as well as a lower pressure environment as compared to farmers with more invested in their property.

17 This collective is a great example of how Swampy Meadows CSA was a deeply “embed[ed] [actor] of local agriculture and food production in the community” (Lyson, 2005, p. 93) further strengthening her farm’s social sustainability and economic sustainability.
the local community of supporters and CSA shareholders as integral to her operation.\textsuperscript{18}

She also spoke of WWOOF as an important resource for both her farm and her personal nourishment.

Emma’s entrée into farming came as a WWOOFer in Hawaii. That experience led her to a few years of WWOOFing internationally. WWOOF satisfied her travelling soul, cultivated her love for farming, and provided experiences that bred a strong skillset in farming.\textsuperscript{19} WWOOF empowers travel, but Emma’s current position as a WWOOF host prevents travel. However, hosting WWOOFers satisfies the same desire since the flow of WWOOFers filtering through Emma’s stationary existence provides injections of culture and diversity into her daily realities.\textsuperscript{20}

I got to know Swampy Meadows CSA’s intern Will as we weeded the farm’s raised produce beds. This was Will’s third week as an intern; Will had no farming experience previous to this position. Will who regularly mused about subjects ranging from ecological conservation, to comedians, to invasive species, was driven to farming

\textsuperscript{18} Building on the community that she is a part of and growing a community of CSA shareholders that form “the locally based organizational, associational, and institutional component of agriculture and food system [that] is at the heart of civic agriculture” (Lyson, 2005, p. 92), Emma demonstrates social sustainability.

\textsuperscript{19} WWOOF provided Emma the opportunity to cultivate progressive embodiments of food politics, which influenced her future in civic agriculture as well as “earlier experiences with local food production [are] linked to people wanting to later participate in similar food production” (Carolan, 2011, p. 123).

\textsuperscript{20} WWOOF’s broad global network may seem counterintuitive to civic agriculture since civic agriculture emphasizes local embeddedness (Lyson, 2005, p. 92), but the inflow of WWOOFers strengthens the triple bottom line of Swampy Meadows CSA’s social, environmental, and economic sustainability.
by political and social justice motivations. Our conversations revealed his idealistic motivations that correspond to my own interest in food justice. Will educated me on the different weeds that we plucked. He regularly pulled from his deepening pool of experiential knowledge, citing Emma as the source.\footnote{In this case, we see how Swampy Meadows CSA provided a classroom for Will’s growing embodiments of food politics, which he then shared with me. WWOOF provides a global network through which accumulative growth in disseminating progressive embodied food politics is possible no matter what state of highly variable embodied food politics one manifests (Carolan, 2011, p. 97).}

Sean, a fellow WWOOFer, joined us as we carved our way through the bed of weeds leaving a straight row of leafy greens behind.

Sean was a first time WWOOFer and it was his third day at Swampy Meadows CSA. This was the first leg of a multi-state WWOOFing excursion that would guide his trek back home to California after returning from travels in South America. Sean had recently graduated from college and was interested in WWOOF as a way to participate in the give and take relationship that WWOOFing provides. Sean received room and board while travelling and the opportunity to gain hands-on experience farming.\footnote{In this example, we see how WWOOF’s global structure, which is founded upon an exchange of volunteer labor at a WWOOF farm for free room and board, provides an opportunity for WWOOF farmers to disseminate progressive embodiments of food politics through hands on learning experiences that also support their civic agricultural operations, and the food system generally (Carolan, 2011, p. 124).} In return, he provided a set of helping hands that would allow for increased production at Swampy Meadows CSA. It was also clear that Sean brought a travelling spirit and social reinvigoration to the community that Emma had crafted at Swampy Meadows CSA.
Will, Sean, and I shared travel stories, idealistic musings about our respective worlds, and some laughs as we neared our lunch hour.

Will was the head chef for the day and he put together a delicious spread of brown rice and Swampy Meadows CSA sweet potatoes, greens, and cauliflower. We enjoyed a relaxing meal alongside of conversations about food politics and travelling; topics we all shared a united perspective on. Another commonality we shared was our white and middle class privileges (amongst other privileges shared by some or all at the table). We agreed that helped in leading us to the seat at the table we held that day. This wasn’t the case for everyone, Will argued, as he explained how food deserts impede poor people’s opportunities to nourish their families with fresh food due to lack of access or high cost. Emma added that poor folks also lack the opportunity to pick up their lives on a whim to travel the world like each of us had, let alone invest multiple years in acquainting themselves with the world through WWOOFing as she had. Our privilege to wander, to take a political stand through WWOOFing, or to buy organic food were possessed by all at the table even if we coveted equal access for all to these wonderful experiences. The question of how to bridge the food oppression-food privilege gap, however, was one that evaded us during our discussion of possibilities, tactics, and roadblocks. It was clear, though, that one’s privilege impacted the ability to participate in the food system with the intention of investing in experiences that empower progressive embodied food politics.

After completing the day’s final tasks, I drove past the big red barn and up the gravel road to the superhighway that would lead me back to my urbanite reality. I was taken aback by the relationships that had developed throughout our seven hours of work that were much richer than you would think our limited time would warrant. It also
struck me that the opportunity to make new friends and learn new skills while doing good to the food system was made possible by WWOOF. My experience at Swampy Meadows CSA confirmed that WWOOF could act as an important tool in ensuring civic agricultural success and providing viable opportunities for WWOOFers to experience farming and grow their embodied food politics, which was an important outcome for Emma.

**Bedrock Farm**

After another week in the concrete jungle passed, I headed upstate for the final jaunt on my WWOOFing journey. As I navigated Bedrock Farm’s winding driveway through a peaceful pine forest, I came upon a small barn. I was struck by the numerous rows of blossoming fruit trees in the foreground and the beauty of the landscape’s rolling hills. Tim and Tara greeted me to their farm quickly but warmly, and then we got straight to work. I saw a herd of long horned, biodynamic cattle similar to those at 25 Green Acres Farm. Fortunately, all were accounted for in this case. I was asked to stand back to avoid spooking the cattle as they were led to a different portion of the barn. Tim made quick work of the task as Tara and I watched from afar discussing the day’s tasks.

I quickly learned the deeply held progressive politics that motivated Tim and Tara in how they farm. They were a smart, engaging, and funny couple: Tim is a 69-year-old Australian ex-pat who has farmed for decades and Tara is a 47-year-old German ex-pat who grew up on a dairy farm in Bavaria. Tara decided to make a career of farming after interning on Tim’s farm over 20 years prior. They were married and have grown the
Bedrock Farm ever since. Their accumulated knowledge was astounding and I knew I was lucky to be their pupil for the day.23

The primary task for the day was the installation of a mesh fence. We hiked to the peak of Bedrock Farm’s pasture to begin the project. I was awestruck by the wide views of the rolling foothills. After a couple minutes chatting with Tim and Tara, Tim discussed the importance of creating an impermeable perimeter as essential to the health of the fruit orchard; Bedrock Farm’s primary enterprise. The area’s local deer population was one of the biggest predatory forces Tim and Tara defended against to ensure healthy apple, peach, pear, and plum trees. The fence would keep them away from the feast.

Tim and Tara provided me with a thorough tutorial on fastening the mesh fencing to the 8-foot-high, and 7-foot-5-inch-high wires that were already secured in place along the 100-meter-long perimeter at roughly 2 foot intervals. They taught me how to use the hog ringer. I would use the stapler like device to wrap hundreds of staples tightly around the top wires and mesh fencing, fastening the top of the perimeter fence in place.

The process consisted of me placing a stepladder securely on the sloping pine forest floor, climbing the ladder, reaching above my head with fence in one hand and the stapler in the other, taking any slack out of the fence, and, finally, fastening the top of the 8-foot-tall mesh fence to the top wire. It was a rather clumsy scene, but as I accumulated hands on knowledge my efficiency increased. Tim and Tara were attending to other

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23 Tim’s and Tara’s 60 plus years of combined farming experience provided a wealth of knowledge for me to draw from as I worked alongside them, experientially strengthening my embodiments of progressive food politics in a place of practiced civic agriculture.
items, but checked in periodically to provide encouragement and guidance with the
tedious task.

On one of the first check-ins, Tim arrived just in time to see me fumbling over
myself as I got greedy and reached out too far to my left in a rather unsteady fashion.
Tim laughed a bit, asked if I was a lefty, and complemented me on the weak handed
staple action that I was awkwardly attempting. He also discussed the imperative for care
and mindfulness in even the seemingly most insignificant of tasks. In this case, I was
handling my spare staples haphazardly. If a staple dropped to the ground a cow could
later step on it potentially causing a serious health issue, veterinary costs, extra labor, and
possibly even the loss of the cow’s life. A scenario like this could have a crippling
impact on Bedrock Farm’s bottom line, but with years of expertise, Tim and Tara shared
the embodied foresight of when not to cut corners.

The benefits of a farmer’s mindful labor may not appear for years, like in Tim’s
and Tara’s case of planting hundreds of fruit trees for a far off bounty. In the case of
building a fence, one may never receive any active gratification due to the intended
outcome of prevention. This type of work seemed foreign to me as I reflected on our fast
paced culture of instant gratification. It was inspiring to experience their intentionality
and passion in even the smallest and most tedious tasks.

As an hour of stapling turned into two, our separate works were interrupted when
Tim located a loose fence post. The resolution would require all hands on deck and the
Bedrock Farm tractor to set the new fencepost. Tim backed the tractor with the post hole
digging auger into place while Tara provided directions. After some initial success, the
auger became stuck in the nearby tree’s root system rendering it inoperable. After some
introductory poking and prodding at the root system, Tim diagnosed the problem and
developed a plan of attack. This was a bigger tree extraction project than what I had
experienced at 25 Green Acres Farm. Tim used several tools to free the auger and then
got back on the tractor to try and reverse the drill out from the ground. There was still
too much pressure on it. Tim and Tara drew on their decades of experience and decided
that it was not worth engaging the motor with too much power and risk damaging this
valuable piece of machinery. Tim provided Tara and I with pointers on where to cut,
where to prod, and which tool was best suited for each tactic. We eventually freed the
auger, which allowed us to set the post firmly in place. We admired our efforts as Tim
and Tara discussed the next priority on the list and how to best utilize Bedrock Farm’s
current iteration of resources to attend to the fluid list of priorities. A number of tasks
were rescheduled due to this interruption. One of the tasks they reserved for the next
experienced WWOOFer who volunteered at Bedrock Farm. With hog ringer in hand, I
went back to the fencing project.

After stapling my way to the end of the 100 meters of newly hung mesh fencing, I
looked back on my work with satisfaction. This tedious task was an essential one, and I
took pride in knowing that my small contribution would support Bedrock Farm’s future
successes in conjunction with the thousands of other inputs made by Tim, Tara, and
future WWOOFers. The compounding of small tedious tasks like these are what grows a
farm’s vitality. These successes are based on the strategic implementation of a farmer’s
experientially embodied skills.

After enjoying a homemade granola bar with Tara, the final task for the day was
to set the corner fence post. This project allowed for some great conversation with Tim
and Tara who shed light on their left leaning politics, local challenges to successful farming as well as their motivations and idealisms for farming. The farmers were suspicious of elites at best, conspiracy wary at worst, as was evident when discussing corporate culture’s negative impacts on our daily lives. Tim and Tara spoke about local land grabs of farmland by the Rockefellers and Buffetts. They viewed these elites with immense skepticism no matter how appealing the olive branches of agricultural education or community engagement they brought with them were. Tim and Tara found it frustrating that young farmers could often not afford land in the area to cut their teeth in farming.\textsuperscript{24} They remained incredibly idealistic about farming’s potential to cure countless social ills. They saw civic agriculture as one of the most realistic ways to improve social issues, such as poverty, unemployment, poor health, high rates of illness, and environmental degradation.\textsuperscript{25} Tim’s and Tara’s embodied food politics developed over the decades of experiencing food production first hand and motivated how they operated Bedrock Farm.

After the fencepost was placed firmly in the ground, the day was completed with a flurry of cleanup and Tim’s and Tara’s quick departure. They headed home to take care of a couple final farm house duties for the day. This included preparing a delicious lunch

\textsuperscript{24} Physical space is necessary for the development of a burgeoning farmer’s embodied food politics (Carolan, 2011, p. 130). WWOOF creates places of learning for people who do not have the economic means to purchase land but have the privilege to WWOOF. Local access creates the opportunity to engage community members that are less likely or unable to WWOOF.

\textsuperscript{25} Lyson (2005) sees the potential for civic agriculture “to transform individuals from passive consumers into active food citizens” with “a voice in how and where [their] food is produced and processed” (Lyson, 2005, p. 97).
of farm sourced butternut squash soup topped with fresh cream, fresh apple cider, homemade bread, butter, and liver pate. Meanwhile, I reflected on the day’s experiences, discussions, and lessons learned amidst a scene of idyllic rolling hills. Ultimately, it had become clear through my WWOOF experiences that each of the farmers in this sample were cultivating civic agriculture and sowing seeds of embodied food politics in their communities. Success in these initiatives was based on each farmer’s experiential knowledge earned through hands on farm work in their past.

**WWOOF Farmers Cultivating Theory:**

**Civic Agriculture and Embodied Food Politics**

In pursuit of the most robust and source-centric data possible, I discussed civic agriculture and embodied food politics with the WWOOF farmers. Understandings of these theories were often evident in the farmers’ everyday practices. Conversations with seven participants were recorded, transcribed, and coded for analysis. The following sections draw on my analysis to explore social, environmental, and economic sustainability at each farm; each farm’s classroom of experiential education; the embodiments of food politics amongst farm community members; and how the dissemination of civic agriculture and progressive embodiments of food politics are negotiated at each farm.

**Getting to Know Your Local WWOOF Farmer**

The farmers in this sample shared many similarities but were not monolithic in their demographic makeup, their motivations to farm, or their farming practices. To highlight shared realities and differences within this sample, this first section examines who these farmers are, how they came to farming, and why they utilize WWOOF at their
respective farms. These historical understandings of the farmers are essential to analyzing how each farmer developed their embodied food politics and how each farmer’s embodied food politics influence their unique civic agricultural practices.

Emma, a white woman in her mid-30s, grew up in a household where a plan had been laid out for her. “I was definitely brought up to be like a professional …. like a doctor. Yeah, I thought for a long time I would be a doctor, and then if not, like some form of doctor, like get my PhD in research science.” After graduating from college and realizing that the prescribed plan was not for her, Emma pursued her desire to travel. She saw the world as a WWOOFer and received access to diverse and immersive agricultural experiences during a time in which a food revolution was taking place.

I was a WWOOFer yeah. Hawaii, and Europe, and the west coast. Norway and Germany... My situation in Norway was really interesting. I was at a Camp Hill Community, which is a Rudolph Steiner [operation]...you know who that is? It’s the same guy who invented Waldorf education, and biodynamic farming.

So yeah, didn’t see it coming. Not even until after college did it even cross the radar. It wasn’t so popular back then. “Back then,” it’s only like 10 years ago. There’s been a whole revolution of local organic farming and stuff since then, but I felt like I was kind of early on in the wave I guess. Because…it wasn’t something I thought was possible. It never crossed my mind ever.

These experiences as a WWOOFer established a strong foundation of embodied food politics. Emma’s new WWOOF empowered relationalities to food production proved pivotal to her ultimate career choice to become a farmer no matter how disparate her new career plan was from the plan laid out for her as a child. When asked about when and how she was inspired to pursue farming as a potential career, Emma answered:

When I was travelling, when I was WWOOFing, yeah. In Hawaii, that was my first farm. I went for a whole year in Hawaii WWOOFing, and that was my first...yeah. And then I did my other travelling - Europe and out west, and spent some years going around and working at different farms.
So I definitely did my fair share of working for free. Years of it! And yeah, it’s been a gradual process of taking it seriously as my career - my livelihood. Even when I first started here, I was still in school for getting my Masters in teaching, so I have my Masters in teaching. And I was always like, I need something to fall back on, or it’s too risky. I mean there’s a million reasons not to do it. It’s crazy in a way. But yeah, every time I start thinking about something else, it’s like no, this is what I want, I want to be a farmer.

WWOOF sparked Emma’s initial interest in farming by enabling the “close encounters” in farming that are essential to the progression of one’s embodied food politics (Carolan, 2011, p. 138). Emma’s growing passion for civic agriculture coincided with her strengthened embodied food politics. This empowered a civic agricultural operation at Swampy Meadows CSA where WWOOFers could experience the same sort of experiences in farming that drew her to a career in civic agriculture.

Tara, a 47-year-old white woman, had a much earlier entrée into farming. She grew up on a dairy farm in Germany and later studied agriculture while in school. These experiences cultivated a progressive array of embodied food politics at a young age. Tara came to the U.S. for a change of scenery and to encounter new experiences in farming through a WWOOF like agreement at her now husband’s farm. She explained:

Yeah, I came to the farm, not really as a WWOOFer, but the idea of a WWOOFer, because I had gotten his address through the biodynamic research center in Germany, that he had just previously before that visited. So that’s how I ended up here. And because it was my mid-20s, and I realized if I didn’t go abroad then, and I had just finished school, a couple of different apprenticeships in a particular school, and I knew if I didn’t do it then I would be settling down in Germany.

This desire to avoid settling, like Emma’s wanderlust, led to what is now Tara’s long-term commitment to farming alongside Tim at Bedrock Farm. Both Emma and Tara provided valuable injections of sustainability into these practices of civic agriculture. Conversely, these working relationships provided basic sustenance to the burgeoning
farmers and came with first class educational experiences that are essential to developing one’s embodiments of food politics (Carolan, 2011, p. 12). Tara and Emma gained access to a wealth of experiential knowledge in farming through these experiences, developing their embodiments of food politics through the “lived experience with local food production” that enabled their future successes in civic agriculture (Carolan, 2011, p. 124).

Not all farmers sampled came to farming while in pursuit of educational or travel experiences. Farming was an outlet for Max, a middle-aged white man, to pursue a life of purpose. He left a successful horticultural and landscape business behind to begin a more purposeful existence as a producer of the organic food that he was passionate about. Max explained his transition:

I was into organic food because I had studied pesticides and their effects, and I knew how toxic they were. And I knew that I didn’t want to eat food that was grown using a lot of toxins. I was environmentally aware. I spent my childhood outdoors and in nature. So I was inclined toward organic food.

While I continued my landscaping business, I started growing things here and taking them to New York City once a week, and for eight years, I did a New York City farmers’ market. And that’s what sort of got me into farming and growing vegetables. And the more I got into it, the more I got into it. Because I’m that kind of person that goes down every rabbit hole and wants to know how everything works, and why, and how to do it better, and what would be a better system, etc. etc. etc. So, that’s how I started farming. And [I] was drawn to the significance of actually providing something of sustenance. And so I decided to stop landscaping, and stop horticultural work, and move full on into farming, [in] about 2000.

Max’s motives to become a farmer were well in line with the intentions of civic agriculture’s environmental sustainability since he transgresses conventional agriculture’s goal to “produce as much food/fiber as possible for the least cost” (Lyson, 2005, p. 93). Max was also motivated by the social component of civic agriculture that emphasizes
“social embeddedness (social relationships, the sharing of common values with consumers, and environmental preservation)…as part of the forces driving farmers’ participation in certain forms of civic agriculture” (Migliore, Caracciolo, Lombardi, Schifiani, & Cembalo, 2014, p. 114).

Tim, a 69-year-old white male Australian expat, similarly followed a desire to pursue an emotionally, spiritually, and physically empowering career in agriculture by moving to rural New England from the New York City suburbs in the early 1990s. Throughout his life, Tim has been an on-again, off-again farmer who grew up on an orchard in Australia. He left the rat race to nurture a scene of sustainable agriculture on the rolling plot of land that is now Bedrock Farm. Tim’s sustainable cultivation of the land is in line with civic agriculture. A long term lease agreement with a sustainability minded land owner provides a foundation of economic sustainability for Bedrock Farm’s operations. Upon this foundation, Tim nourishes himself and his land through socially and environmentally sustainable practices.

Despite unique entrées into farming, each farmer is committed to transgressing the corporate food system through civic agriculture. The farmers sampled started with vastly different embodied food politics as they began their careers in farming, but growing experiential embodiments of food politics provide the foundation for the operational decisions made on each farm. Economic success was not a primary motivating factor for the farmers sampled. However, they are all motivated to achieve social sustainability, environmental sustainability, and the opportunity to develop more progressive embodiments of food politics within their communities.
Scenes of Sustainability in WWOOF’s Network of Civic Agriculture

This section explores how each farmer’s unique embodiments of food politics lead to idiosyncratic deployments of environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable inputs in pursuit of pure civic agriculture. It is evident at each of the farms sampled that social, environmental, and economic sustainability measures are fluid and exist in practice on a continuum. Each measure of sustainability is founded upon the countless decisions, investments, and shortcuts as well as the dynamic set of priorities that establish a farm’s purest iteration of civic agriculture. Sometimes, however, the tactics used to achieve either economic, social, or environmental sustainability do not contribute to achieving the other two measures of sustainability.

Negotiating the triad of sustainability was continuous at each of the farms in this research. These negotiations varied with each farmer’s respective “lived experience[s]” of farming and the “knowledge, ethics, and feelings about food consumption and production” that correspond to these embodied food politics (Carolan, 2011, p. 12) as well as inevitable idiosyncrasies of the different farms. Each tactical decision was founded upon one’s level of accumulated experiences in farming and their associated embodiments of food politics. As a farmer’s experientially defined embodiments of food politics grew deeper, they managed tasks, obligations, risks, and resources more effectively in the pursuit of civic agriculture. In this analysis, we observe how farmers rely on their respective embodied food politics to negotiate the triad of sustainability, which oftentimes requires temporarily forsaking one sustainability for another.
Environmental Sustainability in Civic Agriculture

As the farmers who hosted me work outdoors nearly every day of the year, their realities are deeply affected by global climate change and the new extremes in weather that we currently see (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2014, p.7). A career in farming comes with a front row seat into the realities of climate change as Tara stated:

…With the environment, we can’t keep doing it the way we’re doing it, which is destroying everything. I mean if people still don’t believe in climate change, be a farmer for a few years and you’ll soon figure it out.

All of the farmers sampled were cognizant of and concerned by the realities of climate change and agriculture’s (often environmentally devastating) impact on the earth (Gimenez & Shattuck, 2011, p. 132). Their viewpoints, however, should not be understood as proof of global climate change. Instead, the farmers’ shared interest in reducing their farm’s negative impacts on the climate is an example of how each of the farmers’ lived experiences and intimate relationality to their farms creates a set of deeply progressive embodied food politics and an associated array of civic agricultural inputs (Carolan, 2011, p. 12). For Max, producing a positive environmental impact at 25 Green Acres Farm became a moral imperative: “I started to realize that organic farming and growing food organically had a lot more depth and implications, and responsibility, and nuance, and detail, than I could have possibly imagined. And it became an ethical question.” Max’s feeling of moral and ethical responsibility to the environment in his agricultural practices and the requisite inputs of environmental sustainability measures were common to each of the WWOOF farmers in this study. These “feelings” are examples of the moral and ethical dimensions of embodied food politics apparent in the WWOOF farmers in this research. These commitments develop experientially as Carolan
(2011) explains, “[e]thical behavior does not come from with-out – existing ‘out there’ as naturalistic moral philosophy claims – but from within lived experience” (p. 89).

All of the farmers expressed concern over the status quo of environmental degradation in agriculture (and in human life generally) and they saw it as their duty to ensure that a positive environmental contribution was delivered by their respective operation. The measures utilized to ensure environmental sustainability in their actions were multifaceted and varied. For example, Bedrock Farm has a terracing system that maximizes the use of water. Tara explained the importance of water conservation and how the system is dedicated to:

Catching water. Saving water. I mean it’s magic. [S]ince we’ve done that, it’s so much more fertile. We had late crops in there. That’s why you don’t see any cover crops in there. Now we seeded some rye and wheat, and it will hopefully germinate.

These measures of water conservation will allow for the land to be planted with fruit trees in the future.

Just as the Bedrock Farmers work with the land as it lies, Emma similarly has to accommodate Swampy Meadows CSA’s landscape. Emma explained that “the model of having permanent raised beds works [at Swampy Meadows CSA] because it’s not really fit to be like, ‘Let’s till up five acres and do conventional organic, conventional style’.” Conventional agriculture was rebuked by each of the farmers in their language as well as their actions. 25 Green Acres Farm and Bedrock Farm maintained biodynamic farming protocols, which Tim explained when speaking about not pursuing USDA Organic certification, “We don’t want some entity in our faces. People know us. And you know, if people don’t trust us, then piss off. Go somewhere else you know.” Tara agreed:
“Yeah, why would you trust a government agency, you know? … I mean we’re a biodynamic farm anyway, which is you know even more [sustainable]. Better, harder, but … a lot of people still don’t know what biodynamic means.” Tim described biodynamic farming as a “closed ecosystem” and asked me if I knew anything about it. I responded that pigs and cattle provide fertilizer. Tim corrected, “Cattle mostly.” Tara added, “It’s the farmer’s gold, it’s compost, it gives you fertility to help your food grow.” All of the farmers prize quality organic manure as fertilizer over the destructive petro-chemical fertilizer commonly utilized in conventional agriculture (Gomiero, Pimentel, & Paoletti, 2011, p. 115). This was true whether they purchased it as Emma does or have biodynamic cattle to produce it. Each measure of environmental sustainability instituted at each farm is founded upon the farmers’ deeply progressive experiential embodiments of food politics and the accompanying moral imperatives (Carolan, 2011, p. 12).

One of Max’s measures to ensure environmental sustainability at 25 Green Acres Farm was the utilization of a soil block system for sowing seeds. Instead of using plastic trays in the seed sowing process, Max uses a metal form to create soil blocks to sow seeds that grow into a plant for transplanting. Max discussed Susan’s attempt to create soil blocks:

Well the plan was…Susan was going to make those soil blocks, and then we were going to sow the seeds in them. The down side of that is Susan’s off tomorrow. So, we’ll see if I’ve got… If I go to yoga tomorrow, that’s going to shoot an hour off. And then I gotta look at getting all the chores done. Feeding the animals, making sure everybody’s got water. That kind of stuff. Then maybe I’ll get some of those seeds sown.

This shows how the multiple sustainabilities in civic agriculture is not always collaborative. In this case, economic sustainability, which encompasses labor input, does
not support environmental sustainability since the soil block system requires more time than sowing seeds in plastic flats. Max, however, prioritized environmental sustainability over both economic sustainability (labor costs) and social sustainability (going to yoga). Emma has utilized both methods for sowing seeds, but has settled on plastic flats for economic sustainability at Swampy Meadows CSA. This reduces labor costs and frees time for social sustainability. Pure sustainability is rarely possible and so priorities are negotiated as the farmer navigates their unique brand of civic agriculture by reflecting upon their respective motivations, resources, and embodiments of food politics. We examine economic sustainability in greater depth next.

Economic Sustainability in Civic Agriculture

Economic sustainability was more of an obligation than a primary motivation for the farmers in this research. Economic sustainability presents the highest stakes for each farm’s financial solvency and was also the most challenging to achieve within the practices of civic agriculture. Economic sustainability includes capital investments and also labor supply. Max discussed the challenges of economic sustainability in light of recent changes on his farm:

The scene has changed radically over the last few years. Finances are incredibly difficult. It’s really hard. When I went nonprofit, basically what I had to do was to become a fundraiser in addition to being an educator and a farmer. And that’s been phenomenally challenging. So that’s where it is at this point. Right now, I’m basically working with interns more than apprentices because of the financial situation. People like Susan, where she’s got a partner and enough support to be able to live off the farm and come here and volunteer with no money.

External, economic realities forced Max to use unpaid interns as short term labor rather than yearlong apprenticeships that he had done in the past.
The financial downturn has made things really difficult to sustain here in general. Specifically, I used to offer a full year apprenticeship that offered free room and board and a $200 per week stipend, because most of the people that come here are coming here after college… For years, I was getting 20 or 30 applications a year. As many as 40 applications a year for three spots. Three full year apprenticeships. Then I had to cut the stipend from $200 a week to $200 a month, and basically, applications dried up. Because people, in the economic climate that there is and with people having college debt, they can’t possibly afford to do something like this because of the income. So this is the first year I haven’t had at least one full year apprentice.

Max’s financial challenges are not unique to him although he may have higher stakes since he is the only land owner in the sample. It is clear, however, that external economic forces, such as skyrocketing student debt that has almost tripled over the last decade (Lucca, Nadauld, & Shen, 2016), makes economic sustainability more difficult.

Emma also finds economic sustainability the most difficult form of sustainability to achieve.

Yeah, I mean I can think of some better ways to make money, but [I] like the whole lifestyle. I’m so rich! I’m really fortunate, but it might change, because I’m trying to take it to the next level of long term investment and whatever. But as long as I’ve been here and in the fortunate position of having very little overhead responsibility, it does allow me the freedom to not [be solely driven by financial obligations], because I see people who have a lot of pressure because they could lose the farm if they don’t make a certain amount of money, and that is stressful.

For me, it’s like, I’ve been really fortunate on that front. I don’t really have much overhead right now. And in terms of… I mean when I get another piece of land, my overhead will increase dramatically, but I never want it to be insane. And the only way I can think to do that with not being wealthy is in community, like if I have a number of people sharing the overhead… And you can make decisions based on those values, instead of oh, how can we make the most money.

Although money is not an intrinsic motivator for Emma, financial pressures undoubtedly influence how she implements embodiments of food politics at Swampy Meadows CSA.
Bedrock Farm faces similar challenges in what they describe as a competitive marketplace. Tara explained that “there’s incredible competition now in our area, there are so many farms starting up every year.” The pressure to maintain financial viability is often the primary driving force when negotiating sustainability. It requires a diversification of products to protect against competition and additional emergent concerns that could inhibit economic success. Tara explained further:

And you’ve got a lot of issues out there. You could have a hail storm and hail could kill our orchard trees, knock on wood that it will never happen, but three minutes of hail, we’re cooked. 20 years of love, taking care of the trees. And that’s why we also like the vegetables. Because it’s just an extra leg to stand on, same with the meat. It’s just all these little things, I’m much more into stay small, little things that contribute, than just a big thing.

Tim interjected:

Fruit is our main enterprise… But the subsidiary enterprises are also significant. They make up, I don’t know what percentage exactly, I’d say we probably make 75% of our income from fruit, variably. This year might be less because we had a smaller crop. Last year, we had a huge crop last year, and we even cut back more on the vegetables last year.

Tara concluded:

And that’s the thing, last year, so 2015 and 2013 were huge apple years. We had a huge crop. 2014 was very little, so we ramped up the vegetable production, and we had a lot of potatoes and a lot of carrots that we could sell all winter long.

This high stakes ebb and flow and the fleeting nature of production requires extreme care. Farmers’ hands on experiences help to ensure the highest success rate possible under difficult circumstances. As a farmer’s embodiments of food politics progress, the potential for success in cultivating civic agriculture also increases.

Innovation, flexibility, and diversification are important to a farm’s agricultural practices. This also applies to the marketing, community building, and sales aspects of
effectively running an agricultural operation. The Bedrock Farmers, for example, transitioned from a traditional CSA model to a flexibility inducing CSA structure to reduce their labor expenditures while increasing flexibility for their shareholders. Tim described their varied and innovative operation:

[O]ur whole marketing system we’ve developed over the years … it’s a completely original mix, you know. But we milk the cows. We have meat down there. It’s all sub rosa. It’s all private trade. We’re not certified. You know, nothing is certified. It’s not really public. It’s not really a shop. We call it a shop between ourselves, but we don’t call it a shop publicly.

This vibrant, sanitary, yet underground meat and dairy operation is likely illegal due to a system of regulations that Tim and Tara say are easier to achieve by larger scale and conventional farmers. “It’s a pick up site,” Tara added, describing how they veered “away from the traditional vegetable CSA”:

I mean this is what we used to do…back in the days. Three hours a week, Tuesday, Friday, whenever the pickup was, usually from 4:00 to 7:00. People would have to get there, take their share, and then they went home. And the last five, six years, we changed things around, but now we like the way we set it up last year. People take ten items. And they can pick and choose… It still happens that, people then come at the beginning, and they might take a bit more lettuce than turnips. And people coming at the end, oh there might be more turnips than they wanted. So I tried to adjust that, and then they can come twice a week, they can come on Tuesdays and on Fridays, and they have to write down on their check off list Tuesday 3 items.

Tim interjected:

Then get seven the next time, but then they can’t carry it over to the following week. Each week is discreet ten items. Take it that week or you start over. And it’s worked out really well. Because we’ve always been looking for a way to build flexibility into the CSA model, which I think is way too rigid. So, we try to build flexibility into it, and as a consequence, people really buy a lot of stuff. We have completely changed the composition of our clientele. Just through that.
It is clear that this CSA system reduces a farmer’s time and labor and is also attractive to their shareholders. Tara described the appeal to their customers, “it gives them more of a sense that they’re going shopping.” Tim added:

And people like to shop. Shopping is great… People who don’t buy a share can come in after the shareholders have picked up, anybody can go in there. And you can go in there 24 hours a day, this is an honor system.

So people come for fruit, they’ll get their fruit share every week. We have a number of people that get their vegetables CSA share from us. Maybe 10 – 20 somewhere in there. But because of those people, we have a small vegetable operation still. We’ve got two to three acres of vegetables. And people who come for their fruit, will go and get meat, and milk, and yogurt, and so on and so on, and they’ll end up spending quite a bit of money. So it’s a nice thing. And it’s symbiotic.

Strategizing labor and business efficiency was an ever-present tactical discussion, but both Tim and Tara emphasized the fact that innovation is necessary to succeed economically in small scale farming. Bedrock Farm’s innovative system is based on an honor code requires a community of trust and social sustainability.

Tim and Tara as well as Max and Emma continually emphasized the importance of community to their respective successes in achieving economic sustainability. Unlike the obligatory and high stakes economic sustainability, social sustainability was intrinsically desired by each farmer and bolstered economic sustainability. Civic agriculture’s social sustainability is explored in the next section.

Social Sustainability in Civic Agriculture

Social sustainability is central to civic agriculture. Civic agriculture is founded upon “the embedding of local agricultural and food production in the community… where farmers and food citizens can come together to solidify bonds of community” (Lyson, 2005, p. 92 & 97). Like environmental sustainability, social sustainability is
inherently desirable to each farmer since they focus on growing communities around their operations for personal satisfaction and the opportunity to disseminate their embodiments of food politics.

Efforts in cultivating social sustainability were not purely altruistic since the economic wellbeing of each farm partially depends on the vitality of community support. Max emphasized just how important community is to 25 Green Acres Farm’s financial health:

One of the things that is quite poignant in my life is that lack of community, and the difference that that would make and the fact that for a farm to exist with all those criteria, [environmental, social, and economic sustainability], it has to have civic involvement. It has to have community. It has to have the support of the community or it becomes unsustainable economically.

This is the demise of most of the new farming efforts is they can’t make enough money, because they don’t have the community support, and people don’t get it. They don’t realize that when you have to chase down every sale, when you have to go out of your way to market yourself, when you have to invent new systems to attract customers - all of that takes an enormous amount of time.

While Max may be overly self-critical, economic sustainability is still strengthened by the social sustainability of a farm’s community. It is also clear that cultivating a community takes time. It is influenced by a farmer’s accumulation of progressive embodiments of food politics and their corresponding desire to strengthen the food system by providing pedagogical experiences that expand the community’s embodied food politics (Carolan, 2011, p. 144). This reinforcing relationship of social sustainability sustained by WWOOF farm community members’ embodied food politics is an important example of how WWOOF can be an effective mechanism at enabling both civic agriculture and embodied food politics.
Public ignorance of the food system is another challenge to a farm’s social sustainability. Each of the farms sampled work to counter their community’s food ignorance through varied educational offerings. Max explained his strategy for social sustainability:

… [I] ended up with all of these programs and a farm dedicated to education, so yes, there are people coming and going from here constantly. Ordinarily, I would have as many as three full year apprentices that start in the winter, stay in the rooms in the house. I have three rooms that I can offer to people year round, and then during the summer we have people that will come here and tent out and stay for the summer in tents, and work on the farm. And then there are people that come in from locally, as sort of day workers. Day interns.

Although the last few years have not been as bountiful in terms of full year apprentices, Max’s community is thriving because of his intentionality in education and community building. This is supplemented by social support and labor provided by short term unpaid interns and day volunteers.

Emma identified Swampy Meadows CSA’s Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operation as her primary source of community and as an essential resource for both her and her farm:

The CSA is unique in that it is very small, and I try to get as many people as possible to trade work for vegetables… The reason I do the CSA is for community, not for money. I do better at the farmers’ market for money.

“The community for you, or for the community?” I asked.

Both. To provide the service of offering a space to come and get your hands dirty and participate in the growing of food. Anyone, you know, all ages, and physical abilities are welcome. And it definitely serves me in that, the more people here the merrier. I get to build relationships with the people that live around here, and I have several members that live on this road.
Swampy Meadows CSA’s members are essential to the vitality of the farm by way of the social and labor supports they provide. Emma spoke of the standard working relationship she has established with her CSA members, explaining that her members work:

three hours a week usually. There’s various deals that we can make, but that’s…my general [agreement]. It’s not totally volunteer, but it’s true if you’re getting paid 15 bucks an hour somewhere else, you can just do that, and just buy your vegetables somewhere else cheaper. Especially if you’re willing to buy cheap vegetables. So, it’s not like the most economical trade [for her members]. But, it’s you know, you could argue that it’s better holistically.

Here we see that Swampy Meadows CSA’s community is not only one that supports Emma through the three hours per week of labor provided by each member, but also as a social support injecting positive social and economic inputs into the food system.

The amount of responsibility that one takes on when committing to working the land is admirable. The farmers in this sample were deeply committed to their respective farm operations and thus attached to the physical place that their farm occupies. The opportunity to connect with a community of farmers periodically was important to Max. In addition to WWOOF and his local community, the Slow Food Movement was an important social outlet for Max. Max attended Slow Food’s Terra Madre conference in Italy in 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010, and spoke of the magnitude of the events that brought the global network of Slow Food stakeholders together to:

Meet each other, network, get energized, find some solidarity and raise awareness in general. That was such a significant event for me in my life, for me to go to this conference. To meet people from China, from South Africa, from Finland, from Australia, etc. And to realize that I was part of something global, that I wasn’t just doing this ethical right thing in my own little piece here which is very isolating, but that I was part of something that was really much bigger.

It was such a significant and important event for me that I established that as one of our programs. That anyone that completed a full year apprenticeship here…I would then support them in attending Terra Madre. While I was at Terra
Madre, I met Italians that had a farm in Italy that had a lot of the same ideals that I did, and we decided to establish an exchange program. So that’s another program, an international exchange where students, after completing a year here, can go to Italy and work on that farm in Italy.

This conference provided Max with the energizing connection to a global community of farmers who aligned with his embodied food politics and similarly worked toward a moral and sustainable global food system. Max was inspired to reinvest in his local community, and to cultivate the next generation of civic agricultural farmers by providing an experiential pedagogy of progressive embodied food politics to 25 Green Acres Farm’s full year apprentices and WWOOFers.

Local communities were most important to the health of each respective farms’ social sustainability and the paralleling economic sustainability. Emma discussed her more the merrier philosophy, saying that Swampy Meadows CSA had been “blessed so far this year, [as] it’s only been less than 2 weeks, and we’ve had a lot of visitors.” She added that farms are not only recipients of social capital injections through WWOOF, but also that “social capital is...one thing that we are offering here, and food, and just like general quality of life.” This reciprocal exchange of labor and social capital between farms and WWOOFers was important to bolstering each farm’s social and economic sustainability, but was secondary to the efforts of ensuring a strong local community.

At Bedrock Farm, Tim and Tara provided insight into how they had successfully cultivated and nurtured their local community of supporters by focusing on the environmental integrity of their operations. Their decision to only use manure with purely organic grain inputs was important to their brand. This measure of environmental sustainability went above and beyond the requirements for an Organic certification.
Whereas some certified Organic farmers fertilize with manure produced with conventional inputs, they viewed that as “disgraceful” and “totally unacceptable.” Their integrity around product quality and environmental sustainability was paramount, especially when considering the higher costs of their chosen inputs. Bedrock Farm’s strict stance on the use of only organic inputs exhibits how Tara’s and Tim’s progressive embodied food politics influence the negotiation of the triad of sustainabilities. Tara explained that “organic grain is pretty expensive. We don’t give them any conventional grain, and we stand for that, you know, they get fed only organic soy free feed.” Tim boasted that “it’s of the highest integrity. Of everything we do, that is our most valuable asset in marketing, is our integrity. Everybody knows that when they come to us, there is no compromise on that stuff.” Environmental integrity proved to be the cornerstone of the Bedrock Farm’s brand and their community’s social sustainability.

Emphasizing environmental sustainability by going beyond the requirements for Organic certification maintains their environmental integrity and appeases both their community’s environmental motivations and the corresponding longer term social sustainability at Bedrock Farm. Prioritizing environmental sustainability over short term cost savings is supported by the Bedrock Farm community that Tim and Tara have cultivated. Their community of supporters is a network of people who have progressive embodiments of food politics. The community has invested in Tim and Tara as their surrogate food practitioners whom they know and trust. Their farm’s community of stakeholders, including WWOOFers and CSA shareholders, is vital to ensuring social and economic sustainability at Bedrock Farm; a pattern consistent at 25 Green Acres Farm and Swampy Meadows CSA.
A similar negotiation of social, environmental, and economic sustainabilities was evident at 25 Green Acres Farm where cultivating community member’s embodiments of food politics was also of the utmost importance. Max explained his efforts to educate the public by providing open access to 25 Green Acres Farm:

The farm is open to the public. We call [it] the open gate program because most modern farms exclude public involvement… They don’t want the public on the farm. We welcome them to see what we’re doing, and to come and look, and to visit, and to experience what we’re doing here. That takes time. Every time someone shows up, and they want to look around, it’s money out of your pocket, because you’re not producing profit.

By giving up short term economic opportunity, Max empowers a community member’s embodiments of food politics and demonstrates how civic agriculture and embodied food politics are essential to one another.

Max plays the long game socially and economically through community education. This is a long term investment that may have future benefits to him as a community member’s progressing embodiments of food politics could lead to a future volunteer or consumer of 25 Green Acres Farm’s produce. Alternatively, this investment may never directly pay off for Max, although it could inject progressive embodied food politics into the food system generally. Carolan explains that “once tuned to the food coming from these alternative foodscapes [folks] actively sought these spaces” (Carolan, 2011, p. 145). In educating his community, Max emphasizes hands on experience as key to one’s understanding of the food system. Knowledge is grown through the experiential and can not necessarily be embodied through watching a documentary or reading a book (Carolan, 2011, p. 20). Hands on investment in the experiential growth of embodied food politics within WWOOFers and farm community members was a primary goal at each
farm sampled. This does not just impact each farm’s bottom line measures of sustainability; it is also a progressive counterattack against the neoliberal global food regime.

**Embodied Food Politics**

Carolan (2011) emphasizes how lived experiences affect how we feel about food, what we know about food, and how we interact with the food system (p. 12). This section examines the lived experiences of the WWOOF farmers and farm participants sampled in this research. The act of providing hands on experiences in the food system to empower the progression of embodied food politics in others was an important aspiration of each farmer. WWOOF was one avenue, among many, for farmers to access and educate a pool of impressionable burgeoning farmers toward progressive embodiments of food politics.

Strategizing how to best empower an atmosphere through which WWOOFers and other farm community members can progress their embodied food politics was a question of great importance to each of the farmers in this research. Experiential progress in the public’s embodiments of food politics, as imbued at the farmer level can create progress within the farming industry and our culture generally. One’s decision to invest in their progression of embodied food politics grows from different motivating factors, including an interest in organic food, social justice, or environmentalism. Understanding the motivating factors that lead a person to invest in their embodied food politics is essential to a farmer’s strategy to develop people’s embodiments of food politics. It is also important to understand what inspired each farmer to invest in their own embodied food politics.
For Max, his interest in high quality, organic food was the genesis of his development as a farmer.

When it came to food, I wasn’t interested in growing something I could get really, really cheap at the supermarket. When there were things like radicchio, that was extraordinary and unknown and gorgeous and delicious and amazing. That’s what I wanted to do. Radicchio is a good example because that’s one of the first things that I gravitated towards, was trying to grow radicchio.

What is essential to the discussion of embodied food politics is that he was motivated by “trying to grow radicchio” [emphasis added]. This was an experiential initiative that he took on, and with trial and error he honed his farming skills toward a productive civic agricultural operation. With Max’s progressing embodiments of food politics, it became morally imperative for him to provide experiences where others could grow their embodied food politics. This ensures environmental sustainability in his civic agriculture and beyond.

Emma echoed Max’s emphasis on the importance of growing embodied food politics within farm community members. She considered the “service of offering a space to come and get your hands dirty and participate in the growing of food” an essential output that Swampy Meadows CSA offers the public. The experience of growing food is essential to developing progressive food citizenship (Carolan, 2011, p. 20). Tara elaborated on a recent inquiry into a proposed learning experience at Bedrock Farm:

[W]e get some girl, she’s doing [an] internship close by, and she wants to have this learning experience, and thank god you mentioned to me. It’s not, we don’t offer a learning experience, you learn by doing it. And we have a lot of conversations, we always have lunch together and also when we’re weeding or doing other particular jobs that we do together, there’s a lot of conversation happening. So that’s the experience, we don’t give you the classroom
technicalities. That’s something people have to get, you know, they can get that online.

While academic knowledge should not be discounted (Carolan, 2011, p. 140), experiential knowledge provides the opportunity to learn from others’ mistakes, to collaborate, to innovate, and to work each unique plot of earth in the most productive way possible.

For those interested in progressing their embodied food politics, the ability to make this investment is resource dependent. No matter how valuable and productive WWOOF can be in developing one’s embodied food politics, one’s relative privilege and oppression affect access to this institution. In Emma’s case, WWOOF provided the experiential education in agriculture that is essential to her success as a farmer. WWOOF provided a scene where she nurtured her embodied food politics that she has grown into a successful civic agricultural operation at Swampy Meadows CSA. At the same time, Emma recognizes the multiple privileges that enable her lifestyle:

Yeah, I mean for two or three years I would like go live at home and make money at a restaurant, save up a bunch of money and then go work for free [through WWOOF] for nine months, you know. And then go back and work at the restaurant again.

And if I didn’t have my family there to stay at their house for free, I could have in theory not have had the ability, you know… I went to a few conferences this winter and there is talk about migrant workers and farm workers and fairness and this and that, and then just like the subject of…kind of what I just said…they have like 10 people that they’re feeding at home, and they’re not able to do internships on farms. They really are oftentimes forced to do really challenging…monotonous labor for very little money.

When comparing Emma’s privileged opportunity to explore the world while growing her embodied food politics through WWOOF with the inability for the food oppressed to do so, it is clear that one’s ability to invest in embodied food politics is a deeply privileged
choice. This choice is colored by power dynamics of race, class, gender, and other social markers.

The commitment to invest in embodied food politics comes with sacrifices and is founded upon a privileged choice. The knowledge developed through experiential learning, however, is meaningful and strengthens the food system by growing the next generation of civic agricultural farmers. Max sheds light onto this potential for broader impact, when I ask him whether or not WWOOFers, interns, and apprentices of 25 Green Acres Farm have stayed involved with agriculture. He exclaimed:

Absolutely. A number of them have… Most of them are involved in farming one way or another. Some of them have their own farm, some of them are running farms, some of them are working on farms, some of them are doing associated things. Running farmers’ markets, or you know, that sort of thing.

This farmer level investment in their farm community members’ embodied food politics provides an opportunity for each farm to compound its efforts into the food system. This public pedagogy is possible as each recipient of empowered embodied food politics, through experiential classrooms of WWOOF or otherwise, could go forth and teach the next generation of aspiring embodied food politicians. Negotiating these pedagogical desires with desires of civic agriculture is a complicated task for farmers, however. There was consensus amongst each of the farmers in this research that participatory knowledge gained from hands on experience - the development of one’s embodied food politics – is essential to a farmer’s success in a competitive marketplace. Similarly, each farmer agreed that it is imperative for farmers to invest in their communities to strengthen micro level embodiments of food politics which could accumulate into the public progression of embodied food politics.
Negotiating Civic Agriculture, While Sowing Seeds of Embodied Food Politics

This section explores the fluid negotiations that take place at each farm sampled. It focuses on how WWOOF farmers balance their goals of environmental, economic, and social sustainability with their desire to invest in others’ embodied food politics. The negotiation between ensuring civic agricultural sustainability with the less existentially relevant investment of creating pedagogical experiences to develop embodied food politics within their communities is problematic. Guided by their respective embodiments of food politics, each farmer decides which investments to make and to what degree in a fluid and continuous manner.

There are countless minuscule inputs collaborated toward food production in a way often unknown to the researcher unless the task’s final purpose was made explicit by the farmer. I found myself tracking the route of a carrot, or an apple, or a slice of ham from my plate all the way back to its genesis. The farmers utilized embodiments of food politics and an aptitude for tolerating extremely delayed gratification to ensure an effective series of inputs toward each product’s success. Additionally, the foundation upon which each of these decisions a farmer makes is volatile. Emma describes the general unknowns of farming at Swampy Meadows CSA, “you never know what the weather is going to do, and it’s just like a constant hedging of bets.”

This “hedging of bets” was required of each farmer due to the numerous and varied inputs required for successful agricultural outcomes and the continually shifting landscape of contingencies. For example, when Tim’s tractor’s auger became stuck, he actively balanced the value of the auger, the time it would take to manually extract it from the root, as well as the time it would take to manage my labor in the manual
extraction. Drawing upon a well-developed progressive embodiment of food politics, Tim decided to avoid the potentially costly error of putting too much pressure on the auger and instead invested additional time and labor in manual extraction. A mistake in decision making could have ended up costing thousands of dollars in repairs and losses in productivity. Tim has become an excellent hedger of bets, a talent which is heightened as a farmer’s experiences strengthen his or her embodied food politics.

This same hedging of bets was evident in the divestment of energy when a task was deemed unnecessary. Tara explained when I asked how to perfectly staple the mesh fence to the top wire of the perimeter: “Yeah, and it’s not cherry cabinets for goodness sakes, it’s like we’re farmers… And yeah, just do the top that way it’s up, and then we can come to the next post. Because you have to staple in there.” My tendency towards perfection was moderated by Tara’s decades long development of embodied food politics and likely saved hours of labor with no detriment to the final outcome. Effective and efficient investment, or divestment, in a farm’s tasks is high stakes and is based on the accumulated embodiments of a farmer’s food politics. As embodiments of food politics progress, success in navigating civic agriculture and embodied food politics also improves. Experiential farm education opportunities like this are essential to one’s growth as a farmer or food citizen. All of the farmers emphasized the importance of sowing seeds of embodied food politics throughout the food system by providing experiential classrooms. They each occasionally invested in these outcomes while divesting in civic agricultural sustainabilities elsewhere.

Emma discussed the temporary divestment from economic sustainability to allow for the development of a community member’s embodied food politics. With a great deal
of moral intentionality, foresight, and wisdom, albeit with some restrictions, she explained:

Yeah, and it doesn’t take too long for it to pay off. For me, it’s like, I do spend a bit of energy and intention on anyone who comes here. But even if they work for like half a day or something. Unless, they’re like really, really, really slow at something. Which does happen. It’s like, what you’ve done in 3 hours I could have done in 20 minutes.

Emma explained that most often investing in the dissemination of embodied food politics, even when extravagant labor costs are involved, yields a positive outcome overall.

Max maintained a similar point of view regarding the importance of educating one’s local community of farm supporters with more progressive embodiments of food politics. In fact, he has made this a core mission of his farm by establishing numerous educational programming initiatives as part of 25 Green Acres Farm’s nonprofit structure. Max discussed how 25 Green Acres Farm’s educational orientation came to be when reflecting on how his own food politics had developed in an environment of ignorant food politics:

Well, you know I realized many years ago that as I was struggling to make a viable farm operation. That people didn’t know what that meant. And unless people began to understand their food and their environment and their community and how those things related to one another that I had no chance of surviving. And until people understood some of the things that went into what I was doing, I couldn’t possibly hope for them to be supportive, and so it became clear to me that education was essential.

And that a lot of people needed a lot of education. Customers, eaters needed education, community members needed to be educated, farmers needed to be educated if we hoped to have more local sustainable farms, local organic farms. The only way we were going to have a landscape shift to that would be if we had more knowledgeable farmers. And considering what I had learned in the first 15 years or 10 years of growing food, it became abundantly clear to me that
there were not enough people with enough knowledge to begin farming, or to make that change.

And so my dedication shifted from growing food to growing food as part of an educational process. And I realized that I needed to go with what I was strong at, which was being articulate and demonstrating these things to people and explaining these things to people from the point of view or the perspective of having lived through it...of having done it... and the things that I’d learned.

When analyzing Max’s emphasis on providing hands on farming experiences to his community members, it is clear that Max viewed experiential agricultural education as a vital investment to be made at 25 Green Acres Farm. This investment had built what I observed to be a thriving community of supporters who were positioned at various grade levels of embodiment in 25 Green Acres Farm’s experiential classroom of progressive embodied food politics.

The investment of a farmer’s time in the development of a food community’s growing embodiment of food politics does not come without costs. Max explained, “Education takes a lot of time and needs to be supported by more than just an individual, it needs to be supported by a community financially. [I had developed] 11 programs that were essentially educational and costing me time and money.” In reflecting on the financial and labor costs of education as well as the potential impact these educational investments could have on the food system, Emma pondered:

And was that really worth it? And oftentimes the answer is still yes. Like what’s more important…like this is my neighbor, and maybe she’s being more inefficient because she has two kids – two little kids who are coming over here with their babysitter needing attention. And that traps her for a little while, but then it’s like oh, bonus, two kids are here.

Similar to Max’s investment in his community education programming, Emma regularly prioritized growing her community of supporters and their embodiments of food politics
over economic sustainability. The potential for the accumulative growth of the public’s embodiments of food politics through the experiential educational she provided led to Emma’s desire to invest more energy into Swampy Meadows CSA’s experiential classroom of progressive embodied food politics:

Yeah, so, last year was my biggest year for visitors and volunteers and helpers and work traders, and stuff like that. And definitely into the future we’re thinking about ways to expand on that, and have actual more groups of college kids, or maybe offer a program of just like… I don’t know, like consistent week to week, where you come and do a chunk of work, have a tour, and some education sessions, and a meal.

Each of the farmers in this research provided a platform of experiential education to generate a pedagogy of embodied food politics. This time intensive investment in education was regularly prioritized over a farm’s short term financial expenditures or productivity when negotiating their respective iterations of civic agriculture.

The three WWOOF farms in this sample shared similar strategies for negotiating civic agricultural sustainabilities and a mission of embodied food politics curricula. Most importantly, each farm made short term economic sacrifices to develop progressive embodiments of food politics that strengthened their farm’s social sustainability and grew a network of embodied food politicians to cultivate civic agriculture elsewhere in the food system.

Discussion

This research has explored my experiences, informal recorded interviews, and conversations that occurred on three WWOOF farms in the NYC metro area in the spring of 2016. These experiences cultivated rich data showcasing experiential realities of WWOOF farm participants, including: the researcher, four WWOOF farmers, one
WWOOFer, and two WWOOF farm interns. I analyzed these data using Lyson’s (2005) civic agriculture and Carolan’s (2011) embodied food politics. The research supplements the food studies literature with rich data and analysis of WWOOF, which is a unique and relatively under-researched subset of the food system.

Each of the three farms practiced civic agriculture that is socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable and embedded in a local community (Lyson, 2005, p. 94). The achievement of these three measures of sustainability proved to be fluid in this research, and they varied based upon each farmer’s experiences and embodiments of food politics and their associated “knowledge, ethics, and feelings about food consumption and production” (Carolan, 2011, p. 12). The varied embodied food politics among the farmers in this sample yielded unique tactics intended to achieve that respective farmer’s idealized brand of civic agriculture.

Each of the farmers surveyed was intrinsically motivated to use the most environmentally and socially sustainable inputs within their respective scenes of civic agriculture. In response to “issues of environmental degradation, and resource depletion, [and] the negative social and community consequences associated with conventional agriculture” (Lyson, 2005, p. 94), each farmer implemented various tactics to ensure environmental and social sustainability. In terms of environmental sustainability, for example, cattle manure helped to avoid the use of conventional fertilizers. The farmers used raised beds to limit erosion and to maximize the use of natural resources at each farm. And occasionally they employed soil blocks to limit the use of plastics to ensure the smallest environmental footprint possible. Overall, the farmers viewed environmental
sustainability as a moral imperative and it represented an important cornerstone of each farm’s respective brand of civic agriculture.

Environmental sustainability reinforced each farm’s social and economic sustainability. Each WWOOF farm community relied on their farmer as a surrogate actor of environmentally sustainable agriculture, and that was an important motivator for many farm community members. Each farmer sampled consistently emphasized the importance of maintaining a strong farm community to ensure their social and economic sustainability. Each farm’s social sustainability was founded upon the reciprocal exchange of social capital between WWOOF farms, their WWOOFers, and other community members. This network was viewed as essential to the vitality of each farm. Efforts to cultivate community not only provided personal satisfaction and connection for WWOOF farmers, but also bolstered the corresponding bottom line of economic sustainability and provided an opportunity for each farmer to disseminate their passionate and expert embodiments of food politics throughout the food system.

The ability to provide a pedagogical scene where farm community members could experience civic agriculture and develop progressive embodied food politics was another intrinsically motivating factor for each farmer in this research. There was consensus amongst the farmers that their respective success in farming was founded upon the embodiments of food politics they had built. As “lived experience plays into knowledge” (Carolan, 2011, p. 12), the farmers found it imperative to provide constructive experiences for WWOOFers and their farm communities with the hopes of building an accumulative public progression of embodied food politics. The implementation of a pedagogical scene for the public’s progression of embodied food politics by the farmers
closely aligned with Carolan’s argument that an “opportunity to learn (and get excited) about food production…in turn, will hopefully lead to more people doing [civic] agriculture” (Carolan, 2011, p. 141). Each of the farms sampled proved to be an effective pedagogical scene of embodied food politics where WWOOF farmers regularly invested in providing meaningful experiences for WWOOFers and farm participants to experience civic agriculture first hand.

Negotiating motivations of civic agriculture and embodied food politics was continuous and high stakes on the three farms sampled. The process of negotiating the (occasionally competing) priorities of civic agricultural sustainability and growing progressive embodiments of food politics within their communities was managed based on a farmer’s unique embodiments of food politics. The corresponding variations led each farmer to prioritize tasks, manage risks, and utilize resources in a fluid fashion to best achieve their brand of civic agriculture. Ultimately, achieving pure social, environmental, and economic sustainability while also sowing the accumulative seeds of embodied food politics to community members was often impossible in practice although it was continually pursued. In examining this pursuit, it was evident that civic agriculture and embodied food politics were regularly co-reinforcing entities where increased embodied food politics enabled a more pure iteration of civic agriculture and vice-versa.

Lyson’s (2005, p.92) argument that the “locally based organizational, associational, and institutional component of the agriculture and food system is at the heart of civic agriculture,” rang true to the farmers in the sample. WWOOF farmers were ultimately reliant on their local communities of civic agriculture, however WWOOFers also provided short term injections of social and economic sustainability that strengthens
their civic agricultural practices. While I witnessed only a small group of people enjoy WWOOF’s classroom of progressive embodied food politics, it has been utilized on these farms by hundreds of WWOOFers and farm community members in the past.

WWOOF’s global network of farms for Emma was in fact the impetus that sparked her desire to build a career in farming as her embodied food politics were empowered by the “close encounters” of farming she experienced as a WWOOFer. In considering WWOOF’s potential to make deep progressive impacts in the food system, WWOOF is an underutilized tool that can effectively supplement a civic agricultural farm’s locally embedded resources. It provides a reinvigorating force of burgeoning embodied food politicians to strengthen a farm’s triple bottom line of economic, environmental and social sustainability. These positive outcomes could then accumulate into a strengthened food system generally. WWOOF, as evidenced through the analysis of 25 Green Acres Farm, Bedrock Farm, and Swampy Meadows CSA, has the potential to act as an effective progressive mechanism in counteracting the neoliberal food regime.

Each farmer sampled was intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to provide a pedagogical scene that develops their community members’ embodied food politics. However, while investing in public education is typical of WWOOF farms, it is not typical of all small alternative farms. The 2,149 WWOOF farms in the United States that are listed as of November 2016 in The WWOOF-USA® Host Farm Directory (“Our Farms,” n.d.) and the thousands of additional WWOOF farms globally (“Frequently Asked Questions,” n.d.) are likely to have a more educational framework than a farm outside the WWOOF network. Acknowledging variety in the vast network of WWOOF farms, the primary limitation of this research is the small sample size, the limited number
of visits to WWOOF farms, and the limited length of WWOOF experiences. This research, however, provides rich data into a unique subset of the food system. Whether or not saturation was reached in this research, the research goal of generating rich and informative data on WWOOF was accomplished.

This research has shown that WWOOF has the potential to act as an effective mechanism in the dissemination and reception of sustainable embodied food politics in line with the civic agricultural principles of social, economic, and environmental sustainability that are necessary to topple the neoliberal food regime. However, WWOOF is by no means the only mechanism with the ability to effectively disseminate progressive embodied food politics. Numerous initiatives present at the farms in this sample helped in these efforts, including: Community Supported Agriculture, apprenticeships, internships, and day volunteer programs. WWOOF and other pedagogical scenes of embodied food politics should be studied further to understand their impact on a widespread civic agriculture.

The WWOOF farmers and their community members examined in this research were similar in many ways, but they were not monolithic. Each of the farmers in this research shared similar left leaning politics and attitudes on environmentalism, love for farming, and the desire to build communities that support their farm’s wellbeing and improve the food system. These WWOOF farmers, however, had varied embodiments of food politics. In turn, they had different tactics in negotiating the civic agricultural triad of social sustainability, economic sustainability, and environmental sustainability. Civic agricultural negotiations should be examined in greater depth. Moreover, the three WWOOF farms examined in this research are representative of a very small subsection of
the international WWOOF network of thousands of farms. Additional research should be conducted to understand differences and similarities in civic agriculture across the diverse network of WWOOF farms; civic agricultural differences and similarities between WWOOF farms and non-WWOOF operations of civic agriculture should also be explored.

One important challenge to highlight when working toward a more progressive and sustainable food regime is the importance of extending access to the food oppressed. Providing experiential access to the food oppressed in these scenes is essential to growing a larger movement of embodied food politics. We also need to acknowledge and understand food privilege. These efforts should focus on *experiences* in civic agriculture (Carolan, 2011, p. 12). Providing the food oppressed access to these *experiences* in civic agriculture and the corresponding array of progressive embodied food politics is of the utmost importance in bridging the food oppressed–food privileged divide. Given the privileges necessary to WWOOF, as discussed in this research, it is important to develop strategies and food institutions in addition to WWOOF to effectively reach the food oppressed. That does not diminish the effectiveness of WWOOF for privileged classes to engage in transforming the current food system.

There is an ever growing food studies literature, but additional research is necessary to more thoroughly understand WWOOF (amongst others) as a mechanism of the progressive food regime. WWOOF has the potential to empower civic agriculture through the global network’s pedagogy of embodied food politics. Ultimately, WWOOF’s accumulated progressive outcomes in local civic agricultures can contribute to a more equitable and sustainable food regime for all.
REFERENCES


Janssen, B. (2010). Local food, local engagement: Community-supported agriculture in eastern Iowa. *Culture and Agriculture, 32*, 4-16.


### Principal Investigator Submission Checklist

This checklist is designed to ensure all basic requirements have been included as part of your IRB submission. Applications/Protocols without the following will be returned without review. Reminder: As studies vary greatly in topics and methodologies, the IRB reserves the right to request additional information or clarifications as required.

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<tr>
<th>Items Required for Initial Review</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>N/A</th>
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<td><strong>1. CITI Training</strong> (Social &amp; Behavioral Course)</td>
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<td><strong>2. Completed IRB Application/ Protocol</strong> (submitted via email)</td>
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<td>a. Application is detailed &amp; contains information consistent with the following application.</td>
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<td>c. Application for students includes faculty advisor information.</td>
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<td>e. Is detailed, well organized, and contains <strong>ALL</strong> information regarding the study.</td>
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<td>b. If a Waiver of Informed Consent or Verbal Consent is being requested, it has been specifically requested and detailed in the IRB Application. (Describe waiver request in Section H Question 2)</td>
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<td><strong>4. Other</strong></td>
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<td>a. All study-specific supporting documents have been successfully attached and saved with the PIs name and date. Examples may include (but are not limited to) final copies of surveys, questionnaires, interview questions, recruitment scripts, flyers, Letters of Agreement, Institutional Authorization Agreements, etc.</td>
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<td>b. Reminder: All students must route applications to their Faculty Advisors for approval and to submit.</td>
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7/4/2016

Version 08/17/12
Only submit to the IRB when you have marked/addressed all items.

IRB #: UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO COLORADO SPRINGS
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) for Human Subjects

REQUEST FOR IRB REVIEW

Review application deadlines and meeting dates, listed at the beginning of each semester on the IRB meeting page- http://www.uccs.edu/osp/research-compliance/-research-involving-human-subject-irb/irb-meeting-page.html.

PLEASE NOTE: IRB Training is required for all personnel including PIs and Co-PIs involved in human subjects research. Faculty Advisors must complete the training before submitting a protocol for review. All student requests for review must be submitted by a Faculty Advisor via email before the request will be approved. Citi training must be complete PRIOR TO IRB REVIEW. If you do not provide the Completion Report Number (located at the top of the Completion Report) and the date of your most recent training, YOUR APPLICATION WILL BE RETURNED TO YOU WITHOUT IRB REVIEW. Go to http://www.citiprogram.org and follow the instructions to complete the Social and Behavioral.

Pre-Approvals:

Will you collect or work with human blood, body fluids or tissues? Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, IBC# Date of approval: (IBC approval must be obtained before the IRB review.)

A. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

Name: Theo Holtwick

IRB Training Completion Number: 6230784 Most recent IRB Training Date: 7/10/11

Check one: ☐ UCCS Faculty/Staff ☒ UCCS Graduate Student* ☐ UCCS Undergraduate Student*

☐ Non UCCS Personnel

Department, Center, or Institute: Sociology

Mailing Address: 1504 Hwy 5 Fayette, MO 65248

Phone: 573-529-0829 UCCS email address: tholtwic@uccs.edu

B. CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: (add additional pages if needed)

Name: __________

IRB Training Completion Number: _____ Most recent IRB Training Date: _____

Check one: ☐ UCCS Faculty/Staff ☐ UCCS Graduate Student* ☐ UCCS Undergraduate Student*

7/4/2016

Version 08/17/12
C. ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL INVOLVED WITH HUMAN SUBJECTS: (Attach additional sheets if necessary) CITI training is required for all personnel having direct contact with human subjects.

Name: ____
Check one: ☐ UCCS Faculty/Staff ☐ UCCS Graduate Student* ☐ UCCS Undergraduate Student* ☐ Non UCCS Personnel

IRB Training Completion Number: ____ Most recent IRB Training Date: ____

Name: ____
Check one: ☐ UCCS Faculty/Staff ☐ UCCS Graduate Student* ☐ UCCS Undergraduate Student* ☐ Non UCCS Personnel

IRB Training Completion Number: ____ Most recent IRB Training Date: ____

D. * FACULTY ADVISOR (REQUIRED FOR ALL STUDENTS):
Name: Dr. Jeffrey Montez de Oca

IRB Training Completion Number: 4754324 Most recent IRB Training Date: 8/12/10

Department, Center, or Institute: Sociology

Phone: x4138 UCCS email address: jmontezd@uccs.edu

E. STUDY TITLE: Sowing the Seeds of a Global Food Community: Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms as an incubator of sustainable embodied food politics, linking local communities of civic agriculture globally

F. PROPOSED START DATE: 4/29/2013

G. HAVE YOU APPLIED FOR EXTERNAL FUNDING FOR THIS STUDY?
☐ Yes ☒ No If yes, answer 1 below
1. HAVE RECEIVED EXTERNAL FUNDING FOR THIS STUDY?
   □ Yes  □ No  If yes, provide the following information:
   • Speedtype _____ or OSP Proposal Number _____
   • Name of Sponsor _____ and Funded Proposal Title _____

   (For assistance, contact the Office of Sponsored Programs at X3321 or email osp@uccs.edu)

H. PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING 7 RESEARCH SUMMARY QUESTIONS BELOW (Additional information and instructions regarding the Research Summary may be found at http://www.uccs.edu/osp/research-compliance/research-involving-human-subject-irb/irb-research-summary-instructions.html)

1. **Purpose/Significance:** Briefly describe the proposed study including its purpose and the research question. Please minimize technical language not readily understood by persons outside your discipline:

   *With this research, I will examine Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms as a transgressive scene of participation within the global food system. This research will provide important insight into how the exchange of volunteer labor for an experience on an organic farm that WWOOF allows affects the global food system. Understanding the global – local food connection is all-important in growing a better food system, and this research addresses how WWOOF, as an organization offering the opportunity to volunteer, exists in practice.*

2. **Methodology:** Describe the research design and procedures to be used. Describe the population to be studied, how the population is to be approached, and what participants will experience. Append investigatory tools (surveys, questionnaires, etc.) to the application:

   *This ethnographic research will revolve around my role as a volunteer at various WWOOF farms. The farms selected for this research will be based upon the lead researcher’s access to volunteering at each farm. Each WWOOF farm host will be contacted by telephone or email with a description of this research and will complete this study’s informed consent form prior to my volunteering at each farm. As a WWOOF volunteer, I will take part in every necessary task as requested by my WWOOF hosts, including everything from the manual labor of weeding and harvesting produce, to selling this produce at local farmer’s markets. The methodology I will be using in this research project is two fold. First, I will take in-depth fieldnotes describing any and all seemingly noteworthy events, interactions, and discussions taking place while I am volunteering and conducting field research, as soon as possible. Each community member I interact with will be asked to complete this study’s inform consent form as soon as possible. Next, I will conduct and record in-depth, non-scripted interviews of certain WWOOF hosts and WWOOF volunteers whom I meet while volunteering, and any others with direct involvement in these local food communities. These interviews will be recorded on a digital recorder, and are essential in the development of a more comprehensive understanding of how each local food community exists within the global food system. This dual methodology will be used to highlight the rich detail of the interactions amongst those participating in WWOOF, and are essential to the development of a better understanding of how folks involved in WWOOF’s global network of local food communities affect the global food system.*
- Describe all risks (physical, mental, emotional, and legal) to the participants. Describe safeguards (e.g., medical consultation, counseling, etc.) that will be taken to reduce risks. If deception is to be used, describe what the deception will be and why it is necessary.

  The physical, mental, emotional, and legal risks to participants in this research are minimal. The population being studied is assumed to be a largely privileged and affluent population of adults, that has agreed to take part in this research. However, the minimal potential risks stem from the possibility that this research could spur feelings of discomfort amongst participants due to the possible personal or political content being shared. Each research subject will be informed of this possibility and will sign a release prior to any exchanges used in this research. In transcribing and deleting all audio recordings as soon as possible, anonymity and confidentiality will be better ensured. Also, the data which I will be collecting is relatively innocuous for those being recorded, as the subject matter poses minimal risk to the research subjects if revealed. In the event that a research subject does have feelings of discomfort, I will delete any distinguishing factors in my research as soon as possible. The protection of my research subjects’ anonymity will remain a priority throughout this research, and all precautions possible will be taken to maintain this anonymity, including using pseudonyms, and deleting any digital or physical documentation with a participant’s identity as soon as possible.

- Describe all benefits to the participants:

  The benefits to WWOOF’s global network, local food communities, and WWOOF participants, which is an overwhelmingly affluent population of adults comprised of food activists, and is often founded upon a desire for food sovereignty and justice, are widespread. First, the results of this research, which I will offer to share with all interviewees and WWOOF’s organizational leadership, will allow WWOOF participants to garner a better understanding of WWOOF’s role in the global food system. This knowledge will allow WWOOF host farmers to better utilize WWOOF’s resources in their local communities, and will increase the vitality of the local food community through creating a strengthened local-community-global WWOOF network relationship. Additionally, participation in this research will allow those being interviewed, most of whom are value oriented and interested in food politics, including farmers, farm volunteers, and others, to participate in the development of increased knowledge of how WWOOF’s global network and local food communities exist in practice within the global food system, which will be important to the largely activist desires of this local food community.

- Describe how the risks are reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits:

  The global food system is a greatly understudied entity of importance to the increased vitality of our society, both locally and globally. Qualitative sociological research is especially lacking in the understanding of our food system. As it is evident that the potential risks of this research are minimal, and as the importance of this research has been highlighted, this research project seems reasonable, and potentially useful to the progress of our society.

4. **Participant Recruitment:** Describe how participants will be recruited, selected, and, if part of the design, placed into groups. (Include recruitment materials with your application. If you are conducting research with another organization, include all letters of permission and any agreements with the agency.) The recruitment and selection of research subjects for this research project will be based upon WWOOF’s global network of farms, and the lead
researcher’s access to visiting each farm. First, I will contact each farm where I plan to conduct ethnographic field research by email or telephone to describe my research. I will then visit each interested WWOOF farm within a 2 hour radius of Joplin, MO and various other farms on a WWOOFing excursion through the southern United States. I will explain my research, and get consent from each farm host before my volunteering at each farm. As I document my experiences at each farm, my research subjects will consist of my farm hosts, and fellow WWOOF volunteers, and any other folks whom I end up interacting with on the farm (volunteers, other contracted labor, etc.). I will obtain informed consent from each of my research subjects. Upon looking reflexively at my own experience in relationship to the experiences of others, I hope to gain a better understanding of how WWOOF hosts and WWOOF volunteers understand their roles within the food system. I will use my own membership in WWOOF to recruit the research subjects whom I will interview. As I participate in this community, I will be developing relationships with farmers, WWOOF volunteers, and other members of each local food community. I will interview as many of these community members as possible, until data saturation has been reached.

5. **Informed Consent:** Use the consent sample located on the OSP webpage, and send your consent form as a Word document along with your IRB application to irb@uccs.edu as an attachment to your completed application.

If a waiver of consent is requested, please provide details for your request in the “Methodology” section above.

6. **Data Monitoring:** Describe how the data will be monitored to ensure the safety and privacy of the participants: As data is gathered in this research, it will be stored both electronically and in a locked file cabinet, both of which will only be accessible by the lead researcher. All audio recordings gathered in this research will be transcribed and deleted as soon as possible, and any physical documentation of my research subjects’ identities will also be deleted as soon as possible, to further ensure the safety and privacy of my research subjects. Describe how the privacy of the participants and the confidentiality of the data will be maintained. If Protected Health Information (PHI) is to be collected or transferred, Researchers must comply with the Privacy Rule associated with HIPAA. Attach HIPAA authorizations if appropriate. (http://www.uccs.edu/osp/forms.html#IRB). In this research, pseudonyms will be used in place of the names of all research subjects, and will be known only to the lead researcher. Each research participant’s name will be deleted from all digital and physical documentation as soon as possible.

7. **Protection of Vulnerable Participants:** If the research involves any participants likely to be vulnerable to coercion or undue influence, such as children, prisoners, pregnant women, mentally disabled persons, and economically or educationally disadvantaged persons, describe the additional safeguards that have been included in the study to protect the rights and welfare of these participants: The WWOOF community which will be researched is an affluent adult population. In the case that vulnerable research subjects are present in this research setting, extra efforts will be put forth in expediting the transcription process in order to delete the audio recording capturing said subject’s voice as soon as possible, to better maintain their anonymity.

**I. HAS THIS STUDY BEEN SUBMITTED TO ANY OTHER IRB?** □Yes ☒No

If YES, describe the IRB and action taken on your proposal:

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___ Attach a copy of the other IRB approval.

J. WILL YOU BE COLLECTING OR SHARING PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION (PHI)? (PHI is defined as individually identifiable if it identifies the individual or there is a reasonable basis to believe components of the information could be used to identify the individual. Information is protected whether it is in writing, in an electronic medium, or communicated verbally.) □ Yes ☒ No

COMPLETE SECTION K. IF YOU ARE REQUESTING EXEMPT REVIEW

K. THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WILL HELP YOU DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT YOUR STUDYQUALIFIES FOR EXEMPT REVIEW:

1. Will existing or archived data, documents, records, or biological specimens be used? (Existing is defined as data which has been collected for purposes other than the proposed research and is on the shelf at the time of this application)
   □ Yes (Please answer 1a. and 1b.) ☒ No (If No, proceed to #2)
   a. Is the source publicly available? □ Yes ☒ No (describe where: ___)
   b. Is the information recorded in such a manner that subjects can be identified, directly or through identifying links? □ Yes ☒ No (If YES, your research does not qualify for exemption)

2. Will surveys/interviews/tests/observations of public behavior be used? 
   ☒ Yes □ No (If No, proceed to #3)
   a. Is the information recorded in such a manner that subjects can be identified, directly or indirectly or through identifiers linked to the subject? 
      □ Yes ☒ No
   b. Would the disclosure of subjects’ responses outside the research place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects’ financial standing, employability, insurability, or reputation? □ Yes ☒ No

IF YOU ANSWER “YES” TO BOTH 2a, AND 2b, THEN YOUR STUDY DOES NOT QUALIFY FOR EXEMPTION. IF YOU ANSWERED “YES” TO ONLY ONE (OR ANSWERED BOTH AS “NO”), THEN ANSWER 2c, 2d, AND 2e.

   c. Will any of your subjects be under the age of 18? □ Yes ☒ No
   d. Is the research an observation of public behavior? 
      ☒ Yes □ No
      Describe the setting: As a WWOOF volunteer, I may be requested to take part in selling produce at local farmer's markets or taking part in other public events. Otherwise, my field research will take place at WWOOF farms.
   e. Will you participate in the activities being observed? ☒ Yes □ No
IF YOU ANSWERED “YES” TO 2c, 2d, AND 2e, THEN YOUR STUDY DOES NOT QUALIFY FOR EXEMPTION.

3. Is Protected Health Information (PHI) being collected for this project?
   ☐ Yes ☒ No If Yes, please attach a waiver of HiPAA Authorization.
   Attach HiPAA authorization if appropriate. (http://www.uccs.edu/osp/forms.html#IRB)

Definition of Protected Health Information. The Privacy Rule protects
all "individually identifiable health information" held or transmitted by a
covered entity or its business associate, in any form or media, whether
electronic, paper, or oral. The Privacy Rule calls this information "protected
health information (PHI)." "Individually identifiable health information" is information, including
demographic data, that relates to:
• the individual’s past, present or future physical or mental health or condition,
• the provision of health care to the individual, or
• the past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to the individual, and that
  identifies the individual or for which there is a reasonable basis to believe can be used to
  identify the individual. Individually identifiable health information includes many common
  identifiers (e.g., name, address, birth date, Social Security Number, identifiers assigned for
  research).

4. Select one of the following categories for exemption of this project:
   ☐ (1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal
   educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or
   (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or
   classroom management methods.
   ☒ (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement),
   survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information
   obtained is recorded in such a manner that participants can be identified, directly or through identifiers
   linked to the participants; and (ii) any disclosure of the participants’ responses outside the research
   could reasonably place the participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the
   participants’ financial standing, employability, insurability or reputation.
   ☐ (3) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement),
   survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under
   paragraph (b)(2) of this section, if: (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or

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candidates for public office; or (ii) Federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

☐ (4) Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that participants cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the participants.

☐ (5) Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of Department or Agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (i) Public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.

☐ (6) Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

L. CERTIFICATIONS/ASSURANCES:

1. TRAINING: IRB policy requires all PIs, Co-PIs and Faculty Advisors conducting research with human participants COMPLETE MANDATORY TRAINING THROUGH THE CITI PROGRAM. Training must be completed every three (3) years. Contact the Office of Sponsored Programs at X3321 if you have questions regarding training or email irb@uccs.edu. Additional personnel having direct contact with human subjects must also complete the training. CITI - https://www.citiprogram.org/default.asp

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST SHALL BE CONSIDERED TO INCLUDE:
   - Stock (holdings or options) in a sponsoring organization
   - Director, advisor, or consultant to the sponsoring organization
   - Other vested interests such as the inventor and/or patent holder of the drug, procedure, technique, device, or software being tested

Does the PI, Co-PI or Faculty Advisor have an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest as included above and/or defined in the University of Colorado Conflict of Interest Policies? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If Yes, please describe: ______

3. INVESTIGATOR’S CONTINUING RESPONSIBILITY TO IRB:
   Once the study has been approved it is the Principal Investigator’s (PI) responsibility to:
   - Ensure additional personnel take the CITI training and understand their responsibility when working with human participants. CITI - https://www.citiprogram.org/default.asp

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• Report changes in research activity related to the study. Submit a Report of Change to the IRB. (http://www.ucss.edu/osp/forms.html#IRB)
• Provide the IRB all study and consent form amendments and revisions. IRB must approve these changes prior to their implementation. All changes to advertisements recruiting study participants must also receive prior approval by the IRB.
• Promptly report any injury, adverse event, or detrimental incident experienced by a research participant that is or may be related to the research procedures.
• Renew study with the IRB prior to expiration. All studies must have a continuing review at least annually. Some studies will have the continuing review more frequently as determined in the initial review and approval. Retro-active approval for lapsed studies is not allowed. If the study approval lapses, you need to complete a new Request for Review.
• Notify the IRB (irb@uccs.edu) when the study is complete.

Failure to comply with these federally mandated responsibilities may result in suspension or termination of the study.

INVESTIGATOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT:
• I have listed all potential Conflicts of Interest
• I have read the definitions of Misconduct in Research
• I have read the Training requirements for IRB review
• I have read the Investigator’s Continuing Responsibilities to the IRB
• I understand the definitions of Scientific Misconduct and Conflicts of Interest and my continuing responsibilities to the IRB
• I understand submitting this application to the IRB does not constitute IRB approval, and that I will not proceed with my research until I receive an approval letter from the IRB.
• By submitting this Request for Review to irb@uccs.edu I attest to my agreement to conduct this research study in such a manner that acts of misconduct in research and conflicts of interest will not be committed and I will comply with the continuing responsibilities to the UCCS IRB
• I will conduct my study in compliance with the UCCS IRB Policies and Procedure manual

FACULTY ADVISOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT:
By submitting this Request for Review to irb@uccs.edu, I acknowledge that the information contained in the study is accurate to the best of my knowledge. I verify that I am the faculty advisor for the Principal Investigator for this study and that I shall be responsible for the oversight of the conduct of the research and adherence to all applicable University policies and procedures.

SUBMISSION PROCEDURES:
• Use the IRB checklist to confirm you have completed all required items.
• UCCS Graduate and Undergraduate students must have their faculty advisor submit the application via the faculty advisors email address.

By submitting this form, I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge, the information furnished above is true and complete, and that I have read and understand the Investigator Acknowledgement section. I understand that if found to be otherwise, it is sufficient cause for refusal or dismissal. I authorize
representatives of the University of Colorado Colorado Springs to make any and all appropriate inquiries regarding the information listed in this supplement. I hereby release you or others from any liability or damage that may result from furnishing the information requested.

Submit Requests for Review as a PDF to irb@uccs.edu.

IRB Contact:

Mike Sanderson, Research Compliance Coordinator
Office of Sponsored Programs
1420 Austin Bluffs Parkway
Colorado Springs, CO 80918
Phone: 719-255-3903
Fax: 719-255-3706
irb@uccs.edu
APPENDIX B

Human Research Curriculum Completion Report

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI)  
HUMAN RESEARCH CURRICULUM COMPLETION REPORT  
Printed on 05/10/2014

LEARNER: Theo Holtwick (ID: 2308507)  
PHONE: 573-529-0829  
EMAIL: tholtwic@uccs.edu  
INSTITUTION: University of Colorado at Colorado Springs  
EXPIRATION DATE: 05/09/2017

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH

COURSE/STAGE: Basic Course/1  
PASSED ON: 05/10/2014  
REFERENCE ID: 12933121

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For this Completion Report to be valid, the learner listed above must be affiliated with a CITI Program participating institution or be a paid Independent Learner. Falsified information and unauthorized use of the CITI Program course site is unethical, and may be considered research misconduct by your institution.

Paul Braunschweiger Ph.D.  
Professor, University of Miami  
Director Office of Research Education  
CITI Program Course Coordinator
APPENDIX C

IRB Exempt Approval Letter

University of Colorado
Colorado Springs

Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects

Date: 5/7/2013

IRB Review

- IRB PROTOCOL NO.: 13-204
- Protocol Title: Sowing the Seeds of a Global Food Community: Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms as an Incubator of Sustainable Embodied Food Politics, Linking Local Communities to Civic Agriculture Globally
- Principal Investigator: Theo Holtwick
- Faculty Advisor if Applicable: Dr. Montez de Oca
- Application: New Application
- Type of Review: Exempt Category 2
- Risk Level: No more than Minimal Risk
- This Protocol involves a Vulnerable Population: N/A (No Vulnerable Population)
- Expires: *
  *Note, if exempt: If there are no major changes in the research, protocol does not require review on a continuing basis by the IRB. In addition, the protocol may match more than one review category not listed.
- Externally funded: [ ] No [ ] Yes

Thank you for submitting your Request for IRB Review. The protocol identified above has been reviewed according to the policies of this institution and the provisions of applicable federal regulations. The review category is noted above, along with the expiration date, if applicable.

Once human participant research has been approved, it is the Principal Investigator’s (PI) responsibility to report any changes in research activity related to the project:

- The PI must provide the IRB with all protocol and consent form amendments and revisions.
  - The IRB must approve these changes prior to implementation.
- All advertisements recruiting study subjects must also receive prior approval by the IRB.
- The PI must promptly inform the IRB of all unanticipated serious adverse events within 24 hours. All unanticipated adverse events must be reported to the IRB within 1 week (see 45CFR46.163(b)(4)). Failure to comply with these federally mandated responsibilities may result in suspension or termination of the project.
- Renew study with the IRB prior to expiration.
- Notify the IRB when the study is complete

If you have any questions, please contact Mike Sanderson in the Office of Sponsored Programs at 719-255-3963 or irb@uccs.edu

Thank you for your concern about human subject protection issues, and good luck with your research.

Sincerely yours,

Deborah J. Kenny

UCCS IRB Co-Chair

www.uccs.edu/irb/compliance/ 1420 Austin Bluffs Parkway Colorado Springs, CO 80918 719-255-3963 phone 719-255-3766 fax

Version 2/13/13
APPENDIX D

IRB Report of Change

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO COLORADO SPRINGS
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

REPORT OF CHANGE

FOR IRB USE ONLY
IRB# Date Received Date Approved
Approved Approved w/Revision Disapproved

A. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION
Name: Theo Hollwick
Check one: ☐ Faculty/Staff ☑ Graduate Student* ☐ Undergraduate Student*
Department, Center, or Institute: Sociology
Mailing Address: 322 Bond St., Apt. 4C Brooklyn, NY 11231
Phone: 573-529-0829
Fax: ______
E-mail address: theohollwick@gmail.com
Original Investigator (if different from above): ______

B. FACULTY ADVISOR (* REQUIRED FOR STUDENTS)
Name: Jeffrey Montez de Oca
Department, Center, or Institute: Sociology
Phone: x4138
Fax: ______
E-mail address: imontezd@uccs.edu

C. ORIGINAL PROTOCOL INFORMATION
Title of Protocol: Sowing the Seeds of a Global Food Community: Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms as an Incubator of Sustainable Embodied Food Politics, Linking Local Communities of Civic Agriculture Globally
IRB #: 13-204
Approval Date: 5.10.2013
Original Investigator (if different from above): ______
Original Category of Review: ☐Expedited ☐Full ☑Exempt

D. CHANGES TO PROTOCOL
Please describe any intended changes to your project, e.g., change in principal investigator(s) or faculty sponsorship, change in procedure affecting risk/benefit ratio, significant change in study population or recruitment method, etc.:
Participant Recruitment: In addition to one farm already visited in Missouri with the prior approved participant recruitment method, I will visit WWOOF farms located within a 6 hour radius of NYC to conduct research and gather data. This participant pool differs from the original plan to conduct research at farms located within a 2.5 hour radius of Joplin, MO and on a trip through the Southern U.S. All other aspects of participant recruitment remain the same. The location is the only aspect that is changing.

E. CERTIFICATIONS/ASSURANSES:
INVESTIGATOR’S CONTINUING RESPONSIBILITY TO IRB:
Once the renewal request has been approved it is the Principal Investigator’s (PI) responsibility to:

- Ensure additional personnel take the CITI training and understand their responsibility when working with human participants. CITI - https://www.citiprogram.org/default.asp
- Report additional changes in research activity related to the study. Submit a Report of Change to the IRB. (http://www.ucss.edu/osp/forms.html#IRB)
- Provide the IRB all study and consent form amendments and revisions. The IRB must approve these changes prior to their implementation. All changes to advertisements recruiting study participants must also receive prior approval by the IRB.
- Promptly report any injury, adverse event, or detrimental incident experienced by a research participant that is or may be related to the research procedures.
- Continue to renew the study with the IRB prior to expiration. Retro-active approval for lapsed studies is not allowed. If the study approval lapses, you need to complete a new Request for Review.
- Notify the IRB (irb@uccs.edu) when the study is complete.

Failure to comply with these federally mandated responsibilities may result in suspension or termination of the study.

INVESTIGATOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

- I will conduct my study in compliance with the UCCS IRB Policies and Procedure manual
- By submitting this Request for Continuing Review, I attest to my agreement to continue to conduct this research study in such a manner that acts of misconduct in research and conflicts of interest will not be committed and I will comply with the continuing responsibilities to the UCCS IRB.

FACULTY ADVISOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

By submitting this Request for Continuing Review to the IRB, I acknowledge that the information contained in the study is accurate to the best of my knowledge. I verify that I am the faculty advisor for the Principal Investigator for this study and that I shall be responsible for the oversight of the conduct of the research and adherence to all applicable University policies and procedures.

By submitting this form, I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge, the information furnished above is true and complete, and that I have read and understand the Investigator Acknowledgement section. I understand that if found to be otherwise, it is sufficient cause for refusal or dismissal. I authorize representatives of the University of Colorado Colorado Springs to make any and all appropriate inquiries regarding the information listed in this supplement. I hereby release you or others from any liability or damage that may result from furnishing the information requested.

SUBMISSION PROCEDURES:

- Attach all consent/assent documents and a copy of the methods and human subjects sections of your grant proposal (if applicable).
• UCCS Graduate and Undergraduate students must have their faculty advisor submit the application via the faculty advisor’s email address to irb@uccs.edu.

Submit Requests for Review as a PDF to irb@uccs.edu.
Thank you for submitting your Request for IRB Report of Change to add WWOOF farms located within a 6 hour radius of NYC to the study. There is no change in risk level of the study. The protocol identified above has been reviewed according to the policies of this institution and the provisions of applicable federal regulations. The review category is noted above, along with the expiration date, if applicable.

Once human participant research has been approved, it is the Principal Investigator’s (PI) responsibility to report any changes in research activity related to the project:

- The PI must provide the IRB with all protocol and consent form amendments and revisions.
  - The IRB must approve these changes prior to implementation.
- All advertisements recruiting study subjects must also receive prior approval by the IRB.
- The PI must promptly inform the IRB of all unanticipated serious adverse (within 24 hours). All unanticipated adverse events must be reported to the IRB within 1 week (see 45CFR46.102(a)(5)). Failure to comply with these federally mandated responsibilities may result in suspension or termination of the project.
- Renew study with the IRB prior to expiration.
- Notify the IRB when the study is complete.

If you have any questions, please contact Michael Sanderson in the Office of Sponsored Programs at 719-255-3903 or irb@uccs.edu.

Thank you for your concern about human subject protection issues, and good luck with your research.

Sincerely yours,

Deborah J. Reece
UCCS IRB Chair
APPENDIX F

IRB Consent to be a Research Subject Form

Study No.: 13-204

University of Colorado
Colorado Springs (UCCS)
Consent to be a Research Subject

Title: Sowing the seeds of a global good community: Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms as an incubator of sustainable embodied food politics, linking local communities of civic agriculture globally

Principal Investigator: Theo Holtwick

Funding Source: Self-Funded

Introduction
You are being asked to be in a research study. This form is designed to tell you everything you need to think about before you decide to consent (agree) to be in the study or not to be in the study. It is entirely your choice. If you decide to take part, you can change your mind later on and withdraw from the research study. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.

Before making your decision:
☐ Please carefully read this form or have it read to you.
☐ Please ask questions about anything that is not clear.

Feel free to take your time thinking about whether you would like to participate. By signing this form you will not give up any legal rights. If you are completing this consent form online, you may want to print a copy of the consent form for your records.

Study Overview
This research will examine Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms as a transgressive scene of participation within the global food system. This research will provide important insight into how the exchange of volunteer labor for an experience on an organic farm that WWOOF allows affects the global food system. Understanding the global–local food connection is all-important in growing a better food system, and this research addresses how WWOOF, as an organization offering the opportunity to volunteer, exists in practice and affects the global food system.

Procedures
This research will take place in two phases. First, I will log in depth field notes of my experiences volunteering on WWOOF farms. This phase of the research will examine the normal day to day life of volunteering on a WWOOF farm, so will not require anything out of the ordinary from WWOOF hosts or volunteers. In the second phase of research, I will interview certain WWOOF hosts and volunteers to delve deeper into the intricacies of the organization and its members. These interviews will vary in length, and will be digitally recorded. Research subjects can opt out of these procedures at any time without consequence.

Risks and Discomforts
This research could spur feelings of discomfort amongst participants. The research will address research subjects’ histories within the organic food movement, which could become personal or political at times. If any discomfort is caused by this research, each research participant will be able to withdraw from the study, forgo a question, or ask for certain items to be withheld from the research, at any time. I will transcribe and delete all audio recordings as soon as possible to better ensure anonymity and confidentiality. The protection of my research subjects’ anonymity will remain a priority throughout this research, and all precautions possible will be taken to maintain this anonymity, including using pseudonyms, and deleting any digital or physical documentation with a participant’s identity as soon as possible.

Benefits
The benefits to WWOOF’s global network, local food communities, and WWOOF participants are widespread. First, the results of this research, which I will offer to share with all interviewees and WWOOF’s organizational leadership, will allow WWOOF participants to...
garner a better understanding of WWOOF’s role in the global food system. This knowledge will allow WWOOF host farmers to better utilize WWOOF’s resources in their local communities, and will increase the vitality of the local food community through creating a strengthened local community-global WWOOF network relationship. Additionally, participation in this research will allow those being interviewed the opportunity to participate in the development of increased knowledge of how WWOOF’s global network and local food communities exist in practice within the global food system.

**Compensation.**
No compensation will be provided for participating in this research.

**Confidentiality**

Certain offices and people other than the researchers may have access to study records. Government agencies and UCCS employees overseeing proper study conduct may look at your study records. These offices include the UCCS Institutional Review Board, and the UCCS Office of Sponsored Programs. UCCS will keep any research records confidential to the extent allowed by law. A study number rather than your name will be used on study records wherever possible.

Study records may be subject to disclosure pursuant to a court order, subpoena, law or regulation.

**Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal from the Study**

You have the right to leave a study at any time without penalty. You may refuse to do any procedures you do not feel comfortable with, or answer any questions that you do not wish to answer. If you withdraw from the study, you may request that your research information not be used by contacting the Principal Investigator listed above and below.

**Contact Information**

Contact Theo Holtwick at 573-529-0829 or via email at theoholtwick@gmail.com:
☐ if you have any questions about this study or your part in it,
☐ if you have questions, concerns or complaints about the research, or
☐ if you would like information about the survey results when they are prepared.

Contact faculty advisor Dr. Jeffrey Montez de Oca at 719-255-4132 or via email at jmontezd@uccs.edu:
☐ if you have questions, concerns or complaints about the research.

Contact the Research Compliance Coordinator at 719-255-3903 or via email at irb@uccs.edu:
☐ if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or
☐ if you have questions, concerns or complaints about the research.

**Consent**

A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

I understand the above information and voluntarily consent to participate in the research. By signing this consent, I am confirming that I am 18 years of age or older.

Signature of Participant ___________________________ Date __________