FOODLAB DETROIT: GOOD FOOD ENTERPRISE IN AN URBAN FOOD MOVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

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I define Good Food Enterprise (GFE) as a for-profit food firm that operates to some degree in solidarity with Good Food values (e.g. health, justice, accessibility, and sustainability), and that relies primarily or wholly on market-based revenue versus philanthropic or public funds for its continuation. Like other forms of alternative food initiatives (AFIs), GFE is growing in scale and sophistication across North America, yet there has been little research targeted at understanding or documenting the trend. Critics of other forms of AFIs note the limitations of entrepreneurial approaches to uphold Good Food values, showing how market-based approaches to food systems change may fail to address or even exacerbate challenges such as the exploitation of labor, structural racism, and environmental stewardship (Allen 1999; Allen et. al., 2003; Johnston 2008). Others, however, suggest that these criticisms can be reframed as an opportunity for organizers to shape entrepreneurship into a more powerful form of resistance (Donald 2008; Johnston 2008; Shattuck & Holt-Gimenez 2011; Starr 2010).

FoodLab is a non-profit network of more than 200 entrepreneurs who are "committed to making the possibility of Good Food in Detroit a sustainable reality [...] as part of a Good Food movement that is accountable to all Detroiters" (FoodLab Detroit 2016). I founded and led the organization from 2011 to 2015 out of desire to serve my community and to ask: what are the opportunities, limitations, and tensions of Good Food Enterprise as a strategy in food movements? This mixed-methods dissertation draws on a network survey, organizational records, interviews, and five years of participant observation as the basis for three journal articles, each addressing an aspect of this primary question.

The research supports three major findings: first, FoodLab GFEs espouse a broad set of food movement values, though individual entrepreneurs vary in their understanding, prioritization, and integration of these values into their

businesses, and public framing of values can differ from more internally-facing dialogue. Second, entrepreneurs are motivated by individual values and identity, but their social embeddedness affects how they prioritize, manifest, and adopt new values. Finally, limitations noted by critics, including cultural and economic elitism, lack of emphasis on collective approaches to food systems change, and an overemphasis on the local – are real tensions that GFEs and organizers grappled with, but are not necessarily inherent to the GFE form. The study also uncovered tensions around organizational scale and impact.

For all my Labbers,
HOLLA HOLLA!

And to my sweet Grandma Evie,
for the doctorate she was denied.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

AFI   Alternative Food Initiative

CSA   Community Supported Agriculture

DBCFSN   Detroit Black Community Food Security Network

DWEJ   Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice

GFE   Good Food Enterprise

Labbers   FoodLab Members

CHAPTER ONE:

Introduction and overview

Let me be clear. I am anti-capitalism. It is a system that is by nature exploitive and unsustainable. The answers to many of the social problems we face lie in capitalism giving way to a more equitable system of distributing resources that upholds the dignity of all human beings and respects nature. — Malik Yakini, 2013

Today's ideal social form is not the commune or the movement or even the individual creator as such; it's the small business. [...] When I hear from young people who want to get off the careerist treadmill and do something meaningful, they talk, most often, about opening a restaurant. [...] Our culture's hero is not the artist or reformer, not the saint or scientist, but the entrepreneur. — William Deresiewicz, 2011

For those who participate in alternative food movements, their market activity is an inchoate longing and urge to protect things that never should have been marketized in the first place— health, ecology, farms, locality, artisanship, community relations. [...] Radicals have the choice to disdain [entrepreneurial] energy, to dissipate it, or to concentrate it and guide it to become more powerful. In my view, the role of organizers is to encourage this sentiment into a more powerful form. — Amory Starr, 2010

INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the Culinary Institute of America launched a business school aimed at helping entrepreneurs "address the world's most pressing food challenges — and its greatest business opportunities" (CIA 2016). This represents just one example of a growing ecosystem of for-profit enterprises that are attempting to respond to social, environmental, and economic breakdowns in the North American food economy — e.g. exploitation of labor, systemic racism, disempowerment of communities, food insecurity, diet-related disease, antibiotic resistance, loss of food traditions, loss of farmers and farmland, loss of biodiversity, water and air pollution, and climate change — by working to provide consumers with more just, healthy, accessible, and ecologically sound food alternatives. I call these businesses Good Food Enterprises, or GFEs and categorize them among the diverse forms of agency and resistance known to food movement researchers as alternative food initiatives or AFIs.

Despite growing momentum on the ground, scholars have yet to critically examine the role of GFE in food systems change. While there is a rich body of empirical research on *non-profit* AFIs like farm-to-school programs,

farmers' markets, and food policy councils, values-based *business* tends to have a mystical quality: at times, an omnipotent force for good, or else, an insidious neoliberal force subtly reinforcing an exploitative and individualistic capitalist system. As daughter of a serial entrepreneur and an entrepreneur at heart, I have long been interested in the potential of for-profit enterprise in social change. Over the past five years, grounded in my experiences as an activist-scholar in Detroit, I've focused my attention on asking: *What is the role of Good Food Enterprise within urban food movements and what are the opportunities, limitations, and tensions in employing local food entrepreneurship as a strategy for social and environmental change?*

My dissertation research offers insight into these questions via the case of FoodLab Detroit, a network of over 200 Good Food entrepreneurs which I began convening in 2011 in response to entrepreneurial energy in my community, and as a way to explore these questions through direct action and reflection with GFEs themselves. My dissertation has four primary aims: first, to bring attention to GFE as a form of AFI and spark a more critical conversation about its role in North American food movements; second, to encourage a firm-centered perspective in food systems scholarship to complement existing approaches; third, to offer suggestions that can guide FoodLab's development into the future; and fourth, to reflect and improve on my own practice as an entrepreneur organizer and offer a framework to guide other practitioners, policy-makers, and funders working with GFEs. To meet these ends, my project intentionally blurs genres, traversing across boundaries of research paradigms, borrowing most heavily from action research, specifically developmental action inquiry, and ethnographic and auto-ethnographic traditions (Guba and Lincoln 2005).

<u>Why study Good Food Enterprise?</u>

Despite the fact that entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship are often referenced or implied in research about other forms of AFI – for example, when discussing implementation of healthy corner store programs (Short et. al. 2007) or the development of values-based supply chains (Cohen and Derryck 2011; Feenstra et. al. 2011) – systematic empirical analysis of GFEs is rare. With few exceptions, socially- and environmentally-motivated for-profit

food processing, distribution, and retail firms have received short shrift in research on alternative food initiatives (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1: Core forms of alternative food initiatives	
Author	Activities included
DeLind (1994)	CSAs, cooperatives, urban gardens, farmers' markets, community land trusts, food policy councils
Clancy (1997)	Farmers' markets, CSAs, labeling, direct marketing, community gardens, value-added marketing, cooperatives
Feenstra (1997)	Food policy councils, farmer's markets, CSAs, community and school gardens, urban farms, college-level educational farms, cooperative agricultural marketing programs
Pretty (1998)	Direct marketing, community gardens and cooperatives, alternative knowledge networks, eco-labeling
Grey (2000)	Direct marketing, community supported agriculture, food cooperatives
Lacy (2000)	Farmers' markets, farm stands, CSAs, community gardens, sustainable agriculture organizations, community food security coalitions, food policy councils, producer and consumer cooperatives
Allen et. al. (2003)	Farmers' markets, CSAs, community gardens, urban farms, educational farms, food justice organizations, community food security coalitions, sustainable agriculture organizations, labeling programs, food policy councils, cooperatives, farm-to-school programs.

Why does this matter? A large body of research has analyzed other forms of AFI including farmers' markets (Baronberg et. al. 2013; Brown and Miller 2008; Feenstra et. al. 2003; Markowitz 2010), farm-to-school programs (Allen and Guthman 2006; Bagdonis et. al. 2009; Izumi et. al. 2010; Joshi et. al. 2008), food policy councils (Schliff 2008; Wekerle 2004), labeling programs (Hinrichs and Allen 2008; Howard and Allen 2008) urban agriculture (Colasanti et. al. 2012), alternative food distribution programs (Johnston 2008; Johnston and Baker 2005), and more. Descriptive research has named, defined, and documented the rise and evolution of each of these organizational forms, including organizational structure and internal processes, prevalence, their interaction with broader social, economic, political, and environmental contexts, and their movement framing. Later research has analyzed the impacts of these initiatives on local communities and more broadly. These findings have implications for AFI organizers, policy-makers, and ultimately, communities.

For example, because of these studies, we know that the number of farmers' markets has increased more than 200% from 1994 to 2009 (Martinez et. al.); that farmers' markets can improve nutrition in some cases (McCormack

et. al. 2010; Ruelas 2011); that there are challenges to sustaining markets in low-income communities (Young et. al. 2011), and that interventions like subsidized incentives for fruit and vegetables can help address these challenges (Baronberg et. al. 2013). Similar examples can be offered for other forms of AFI. Yet we lack the same insight into the evolution and impact of GFEs in communities.

Food systems researchers do have a strong history of investigating alternative food *industries*, for example, examining trajectories in the organic (Guthman 2003; Howard 2009) and fair trade sectors (Raynolds 2000; Wilkinson 2007); however, these generally take a macro approach versus a firm-centered perspective (Donald 2008).

There *is* a broad and growing base of empirical knowledge around Good Food firms in the form of creative non-fiction and autobiographies (Hewitt 2011; Wicks 2013), case-studies (Dreir and Taheri 2008; REDF 2000a, 2000b; Sampselle 2012; Shuman 2009; Stevenson 2009a, 2009b), how-to guides (Ü 2013; Wyshak 2014), and reports promoting local food entrepreneurship as a local economic development strategy (Cantrell 2009; Colasanti et. al. 2010; Masi et. al. 2010; O'Hara 2011). However, these reports are often for the purpose of inspiration, or helping entrepreneurs to get started, or to make a case to funders or policy-makers to support GFE development. Therefore, they tend to focus primarily on the positive potential and benefits of GFE and less on limitations and potential challenges. This research project aims to encourage more critical evaluation of GFE for the purpose of strengthening its potential.

<u>Overview of the dissertation</u>

In my analysis of the FoodLab case, I draw primarily on concepts from food systems, planning and economic development, and management and organization scholarship. This manuscript is organized into three papers, each targeting one of these three audiences and each addressing a unique set of questions that drill down from the original: *What is the role of Good Food Enterprise within urban food movements and what are the opportunities, limitations, and tensions in employing local food entrepreneurship as a strategy for social and environmental*

change? As is often the case with insider action research, these questions were initially motivated by "real life puzzles and frustrations" rather than by specific gaps in scholarly literature (Herr and Anderson 2005, p.72).

In the rest of this chapter, I offer a brief history of the origins and evolution of Good Food Enterprise in North America. I then extrapolate some of the potential opportunities and limitations of GFE, based on theoretical claims and empirical investigation of other forms of AFI[i]. Next, I describe my research methods, including a brief examination of my positionality. I end the first chapter with an overview of the three manuscripts. Results and discussion are presented in chapters two, three, and four. In chapter five, I conclude with a synthesis of findings, and of implications both to research and to praxis.

ORIGINS AND RISE OF GOOD FOOD ENTERPRISE

I define Good Food Enterprise (GFE) as an off-farm firm (e.g. food processing, distribution and/or retail) that is formed and operates to some degree in opposition to the mainstream food system and in solidarity with broader food movements by integrating environmental and social values into its business structure or identity (Figure 1.1). GFE may be for-profit or non-profit or (increasingly) adopt a hybrid form, but it relies primarily or wholly on market-based revenue rather than philanthropic or public funds for its continuation. Taking a cue from social enterprise scholars, this definition leaves room for a diversity of size, structure, values and specific goals (both explicit and implicit), and strategies for integrating values and achieving these goals (Austin et. al. 2006).

Specialty Food Industry
For-profit corporations and privately-owned businesses whose products command a premium because of high grade or quality, including, but not limited to "organic," "local," "fair trade," and "artisanal."

Good Food Enterprise
For-profit, non-profit or hybrid food firm (e.g. food processing, distribution and/or retail) that relies primarily on market-based revenue for survival and is formed and operates to some degree in opposition to the mainstream food system and in solidarity with AFIs in the food movement.

Alternative Food Initiatives
Used to describe a diverse array of (often locally-focused) initiatives designed to provide an alternative and in opposition to the mainstream food system. Often organized as not-for-profit initiatives. Examples include farmers' markets, nutrition programs, mobile grocers, and food policy councils.

Figure 1.1: Defining Good Food Enterprise. Good Food Enterprise (GFE) is an understudied form of alternative food initiative (AFI). GFEs often compete within the specialty food industry, but not all specialty food businesses qualify as GFE. The line is porous and up for negotiation as entrepreneurs, activists, and every day people define what it means for a business to be in opposition to the mainstream food system and in solidarity with food movements.

As is the case with AFIs, many GFEs are small, locally owned, and embedded in local social networks, though there are some who see scaling up, and / or going public, as a strategy to further movement goals. GFEs may choose a variety of organizational forms: sole proprietorship, limited liability company, corporation, for-benefit corporation, worker-owned cooperative, non-profit, or some hybrid, so long as their existence depends on generating revenue from food product(s). This definition does not include Corporate Social Responsibility where projects happen inside an existing organization that is driven primarily by profit, nor projects that do not engage directly in the buying, selling, or brokerage of food.

I call this form Good Food Enterprise after the phrase 'Good Food,' which has been adopted in recent years by AFI organizers as a signifier of movement identity and aims. The term is used to highlight four specific criteria – health, justice, accessibility, and environmental stewardship– but it also invokes other movement values, including

local economic development, community empowerment, diversity, and aesthetics (Colasanti et. al. 2010; Flora 2009; Hnin 2012; Pirog et. al. 2014).

Table 1.2: Examples of Good Food Enterprise		
	National	FoodLab Detroit
Specialty food processing (Including organic and fair trade)	– Ben & Jerry's (founded 1976) -- http://www.benjerry.com/values – Clif Bar, Emeryville, CA (founded 1992) -- http://www.clifbar.com/hubs/impact – Farmers' Daughter, Hillsborough, NC (founded 2007) -- http://www.farmersdaughterbrand.com/about.htm – Lorenz Meats, Cannon Falls, MN (founded 1968) -- http://www.lorentzmeats.com/about/ – Shagbark Seed and Mill, Athens, OH (founded 2010) -- http://www.shagbarkmill.com/	– Locavorious (founded 2008) -- http://www.locavorious.com/ – Nikki's Ginger Tea (founded 1997) -- http://www.nikkisgingertea.com
Food aggregation and distribution (including food hubs)	– Appalachian Harvest, Abington, VA (founded 2000) -- http://asdevelop.org/appalachian-harvest/ – Cherry Capital Foods, Traverse City, MI (founded 2007) -- http://cherrycapitalfoods.com/ – Common Market, Philadelphia, PA (founded 2008) -- http://commonmarketphila.org/-- – Frontier Natural Food Products (founded 1976) -- http://www.frontiercoop.com/company/timeline.php – Red Tomato, Canton, MA (founded 1996) -- http://www.redtomato.org/about/	– Hopeful Harvest Foods (founded 2014) -- http://www.hopefulharvestfoods.com/
Food retail (including grocery stores, food co-ops, corner stores, mobile grocers, etc.)	– Village Market Place, Los Angeles, CA (founded 2012) -- http://csuinc.org/programs/village-market-place/ – Door to Door Organics, Lafayette, CO (founded 1997) -- https://colorado.doortodoororganics.com//about-door-to-door – Fresh Moves Markets, Chicago, IL (founded 2011) -- https://www.facebook.com/freshmoves/info/?tab=page_info – Mandela Foods Coop, Oakland, CA (founded 2009) -- http://www.mandelafoods.com/#!about-us/c10fk – Weaver St. Market, Research Triangle, NC (founded 1988) -- http://www.weaverstreetmarket.coop/behind-the-scenes/co-op-goals/	– The Farmers Hand (founded 2015) -- http://www.thefarmershand.com/
Restaurants and food service (including direct-to-consumer and institutional)	– Bridgeport Cafe and Community Kitchen, Cleveland, OH (founded 2012) -- http://www.bridgeportcafe.com/about-us/ – Chipotle Mexican Grill, Denver, CO (founded 1993) -- https://www.chipotle.com/food-with-integrity – DC Central Kitchen, Washington, D.C. (founded 1989) -- http://www.dccentralkitchen.org/mission/ – First Slice Cafe, Chicago, IL (founded 2001) -- http://firstslice.org/about-first-slice/ – Revolution Foods, Oakland, CA (founded 2006) -- http://revolutionfoods.com/about/	– Fresh Corner Cafe (founded 2011) -- http://freshcornercafe.com/ – Sweet Potato Sensations (founded 1987) -- http://sweetpotatosensations.com/

A current census of North American GFE – size and age of company, geography, type of business (processing, distribution, retail), legal form and ownership model (for-profit, non-profit, B-corporation[ii], hybrid), and values, and strategies for integrating values – would be a fascinating research project in itself, but is not within the scope of this project. Instead I offer a brief sketch of the field based on primary research and limited data that exists.

The history of GFE might be traced back to organic food processing companies, natural food retailers, and a new wave of food coops started in the 70s and 80s (Cox 1994). Frontier Natural Food Products (founded 1976), Ben & Jerry's (1978), Whole Foods (1980), Stonyfield Farm (1983), Nature's Path (1985), Equal Exchange (1986), Organic Valley (1988), and Annie's Homegrown (1989) are some examples. Aligning themselves with ascendant movements of that era, many of these companies focused on sustainable and organic agriculture, the protection of small scale and family farms, and building alternatives outside of mainstream culture. Equal Exchange's website tells the story of their founders who "were part of a movement to transform the relationship between the public and food producers. […and] decided to meet once a week […] to discuss how best to change the way food is grown, bought, and sold around the world" (Equal Exchange 2016). These companies wove social values directly into business structure and operations; for example, structuring themselves as worker cooperatives, improving sustainability standards internally and along the supply chain, and creating foundations to invest in projects related to their missions. In doing so, they joined a growing field of social enterprises that blurred the line between corporation and social purpose organization (Austin, Stevenson, and Skillern 2006; Dees and Anderson 2006; Mair and Marti 2006; Thekaekara and Thekaekara 2007; Weerawardena and Mort 2006).

Since then, the alternative food industry environment has changed dramatically, including the introduction of new certifications and standards, increasing consumer demand, and the introduction of new competitors including large mainstream firms drawn by this demand. For example, the specialty food industry, which includes organic, local, and fair trade food processing, distribution, and retail, has grown from $35 billion in 2005 to $109 billion in 2014; in 2012-2013 alone, there was a 22% increase in revenues, compared to a 2% increase in non-specialty

food (Purcell and Tanner 2015). Not only is the market increasing in size, but also the number and diversity of actors involved. Census data show that the number of firms in manufacturing, retail, and food service is increasing overall: the number of food firms grew 15% from 2002 to 2012 despite a 0.5% increase in all firms (United States Census 2013). "Small, new companies in rapidly growing niche markets" are primarily responsible for this increase (Martinez 2007:22). However, as of 2002, companies with fewer than 20 employees still only made up 5% of shipment value despite controlling over 20,000 (or 70%) of processing facilities (Martinez 2007).

This breakdown demonstrates that despite continued entry of new firms in manufacturing and food service, there has been an overall trend towards consolidation across the food marketing chain, most significantly in food retailing (Howard 2009; Martinez 2007; Wood 2013). More than four-fifths of specialty food is now sold through large mainstream retailers like Walmart, Safeway, and Costco (Purcell and Tanner 2015). In the organic processing industry: some companies like Nature's Path and Equal Exchange remained independent, but many like Ben & Jerry's and Stonyfield have been acquired by large conventional firms looking to enter the market (Howard 2009).

In that time, food movements expanded from its origins in sustainable agriculture – with a primary focus on producers, environmental concerns, and rural environments – to cover areas like community food security, food justice, and anti-obesity. These more recent components of food movements center more explicitly on the social, political, and economic concerns of food consumers and (to some extent) workers along the food chain. They also shift the movement's focus toward urban populations, particularly low-income people of color. Following suit, GFEs with this focus began to launch in the late 1980s and 90s, with even more activity in the 2000s; for example, D.C. Central Kitchen (founded 1989), City Fresh Foods (1994), Pie Ranch (2003), Colors Restaurant New York (2006), Revolution Foods (2006), Corbin Hill Food Project (2009), Hot Bread Kitchen (2009), and Mandela Food Coop (2009). In addition, food movements began to infiltrate academic and on-the-ground conversations about urban planning, bringing a focused wave of support for local food enterprise focused primarily on spurring economic development (Cantrell 2009; Glaeser 2010; Masi 2010; Pothukuchi and Kauffman 2009).

Over the last five years in particular, an ecosystem of support has grown up around surging interest in GFE. There were more than 135 active shared-use commercial kitchens or "kitchen incubators" in the United States as of 2013 compared to only 50 documented in 2008 (Dent 2008, Econsult Solutions 2013). They all support the development of new specialty food businesses, but vary broadly in mission and structure. For example, Chicago's "Good Food Accelerator," which launched in 2015, focuses explicitly on GFEs who have desire and capacity to scale (FamilyFarmed.org 2016); La Cocina in San Francisco, founded in 2005, aims to create an "innovative, vibrant, and inclusive economic landscape" by supporting the development of small food businesses, with a focus on low-income women of color and immigrants (La Cocina 2016). In addition to incubator and accelerator programs, a growing number of programs, organizations, have emerged to specifically support Good Food Enterprise development. A number of business development consultants focus on the niche[iii]. Local Food Lab is "a startup academy and online community for food entrepreneurs" (LFL 2016). Food+Tech Connect is an online community targeting businesses in the growing food tech and innovation sector (Gould 2016). Good Food Jobs is a job search platform for those seeking employment in GFEs (GFJ 2016). The Good Food Awards honors businesses who "push their industries towards craftsmanship and sustainability while enhancing our agricultural landscape and building strong communities" (GFMG 2016).

Federal, private, and community-based investment in food-based enterprise is also growing. Two examples of federal programs are the Healthy Urban Food Enterprise Development Center that invested $900,000 from 2009 to 2012 to support food enterprises that aim to increase access to healthy, affordable, locally sourced foods to underserved communities (USDA 2009); and the Healthy Food Financing Initiative, which is a $400 million collaborative initiative which started in 2010 that "expands access to nutritious food […] through efforts such as developing and equipping grocery stores, small retailers, corner stores and farmers markets selling healthy food" (USDHS 2015). Other programs like Community Food Projects do not specifically focus on businesses, but do prioritize projects that have an "entrepreneurial" component (USDA 2010). Social impact funds like RSF Social

Finance carry a specific food and agriculture portfolio and a number of funds have launched that focus exclusively on food businesses with social and/or environmental missions including the Good Food Fund in Michigan (target of $30 million, launched in 2015), S2G Ventures in Chicago ($125 million, launched in 2015), and FoodX Accelerator ($50 million, launched in 2015). Seemingly unlikely suspects are also starting to move their money towards food. Per estimates, private venture capitalists and angel investors invested nearly a billion dollars in food and beverage companies in 2014, compared to just $94 million in 2009 (CB Insights 2015)[iv]. According to a 2013 article in the New York Times: "since this is Silicon Valley money [...] the ultimate goal is often nothing short of grand: transforming the food industry" (Wortham and Miller 2013). At the other end of the spectrum, some practitioners are asking about alternative ways to raise capital for socially responsible food businesses (Ü 2013), including crowd-sourcing and alternative financing platforms like Credibles.co which provides food businesses with a source of capital by allowing consumers to prepay for food products.

OPPORTUNITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF GOOD FOOD ENTERPRISE

It is clear that energy around GFE is growing. What can we say about its contributions to food movement goals like local economic resilience, social justice, and sustainability? In the next sections, I briefly discuss the potential benefits of GFEs, and then draw on critical research of other forms of AFI to extrapolate potential limitations or tensions around GFE as a form of social change. I expand on each of these specific points in greater depth in subsequent chapters.

<u>Potential opportunities</u>

Local economic development and community resilience

Some posit that GFE, particularly at the local scale, has the potential to contribute to more resilient and community-based local economies. GFE has become particularly popular among economic development and planning practitioners who support policy and regulation that is friendly to start-up businesses as well as investment towards local food infrastructure. These practitioners claim that food entrepreneurship is a positive end in itself and

is also a way to improve public spaces and enhance food security while also creating new jobs, increasing the tax base, ensuring economic resilience, and providing economic opportunities for vulnerable populations (APA 2016; Cantrell 2009; Colasanti et. al. 2010; Glaeser 2010; Harworth 2009; Masi et. al. 2010; O'Hara 2011). Case studies on food business incubators build on these points, and focus specifically on best practices and impacts of entrepreneurship development entities (Blau 2007; Dent 2008; Hall 2007; Lovgren et. al. 2011). Many reports claim that local food businesses will also create ancillary benefits like increased environmental stewardship and civic engagement. This strand of thinking connects with a growing "localist" movement that champions local business ownership and the devolution of economic sovereignty from multi-national corporations and international governance bodies to locally-scaled firms and institutions (Hess 2012; Kurland et. a. 2013).

Agility and cultural relevance

Some food scholars have argued that the diversity of tactics among AFIs is an asset to food movements because it increases opportunities for individuals and organizations to specialize, innovate, and participate (Hassanein 2003; Shattuck and Holt-Gimenez 2011). At the conclusion of her analysis of the local food movement, Starr (2010) specifically points out entrepreneurs' agility, innovativeness, and willingness to experiment and their attentiveness to cultural relevance and the "sensual material embodiment" of movement values, which she suggests helps to open new and inclusive space for dialogue and exchange (p. 487).

In a notable exception to the dearth of research on GFEs, Donald and Blay-Palmer (2006) directly study small and medium-sized food businesses in Toronto to learn whether these businesses are primarily serving the interests of the urban elite or empowering socially or culturally marginalized groups. They find that the rise of small specialty food enterprises in Toronto deserves attention – not only because these businesses are economically viable, but also because they "provide opportunities for social inclusion in everyday cultural production, distribution, and consumption" (Donald and Blay-Palmer 2006:1914).

Potential limitations

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Cultural and economic elitism

While GFE has the *potential* to be inclusive, inclusivity is not a given. Food systems scholars and activists regularly criticize other forms of AFIs for being led by and largely benefiting affluent, mostly white, organizers at the expense of Black, Latino, immigrant, low-income, and other marginalized communities (Dowler & Caraher 2003; Guthman 2008; Ignaczak 2016; Sbicca 2015). These studies suggest questions like: Who is starting and running GFEs and who works in them[v]? Who do these businesses cater to and what vision of Good Food culture do they promote? To what extent does GFE and the ecosystem around it promote economic inclusion versus exacerbate existing inequity in the current food industry (Yen Liu and Apollon 2011)?

Neoliberalism and individualism

Though scholars generally do not study entrepreneurs directly, they do tend to critique the 'entrepreneurial' character of other forms of AFI (like farmers markets and community supported agriculture) for upholding neoliberal ideals: encouraging individualistic and depoliticized engagement, privileging market-based action versus democracy, and assuming an uncritical preference for grassroots solutions at the expense of demanding state responsibility through protest or political advocacy at other relevant scales (Alkon and Mares 2012; Allen 1999; Andrée et. al. 2015; Donald 2008; Johnston 2008; Konefal 2010; Shattuck and Holt-Gimenez 2011; Starr 2010). For example, Allen et. al.'s (2003) study of Alternative Food Initiatives in California found that "where in the early years AFIs combined the search for alternatives with a direct critique of existing industrial agricultural practices" this critical stance – and associated political advocacy and protest strategies – have "become subdued" in recent years, which may undermine the ability to affect systemic change around farm labor conditions or food security (Allen et. al. 2003:65).

Local traps

Finally, scholars have noted that AFIs' over-emphasis on localisation can overshadow or even compromise the pursuit of other issues like public health, social justice, sustainability, and food security for the most vulnerable

(Allen 1999; Born and Purcell 2006; DeLind 2011; Hinrichs 2000; Hinrichs and Allen 2008; Martinez et. al. 2010; Winter 2003). In one example, Hinrichs and Allen studied Buy Local Campaigns and determined that though they might be successful in developing markets for local food, they are "inadequate" as vehicles of social justice without connections to other campaigns like Domestic Fair Trade labeling (2008:345). Born and Purcell call this overemphasis on scale, "the local trap" and assert: "scales (and their interrelations) are not independent entities with inherent qualities but strategies pursued by social actors with a particular agenda. It is the content of that agenda, not the scales themselves, that produces outcomes such as sustainability or justice. […] Local-scale food systems are equally likely to be just or unjust, sustainable or unsustainable, secure or insecure" (2006:195).

APPROACHES TO INQUIRY

This dissertation comes out of my six-year research journey as a young activist and researcher investigating these opportunities and limitations alongside Good Food entrepreneurs in Detroit. My research approach blurs boundaries, but draws particularly from post-positivist traditions of action research and analytic auto/ethnography. In crafting a methodology, I wanted to integrate and honor my personal curiosity and learning, questions and needs in my community, and my desire to engage in pragmatic and action-oriented inquiry, grounded in the reality of messy, evolving lived experience.

Both action research and analytic ethnography and autoethnography value "living inquiry" or research that is "passionate, committed, involved, and personal" and integrated in the daily lives of those involved (Reason 1996:16); both acknowledge inter-subjective, contextual, and partial nature of 'truth' and therefore aim to present knowledge that is *transferable*, but not necessarily generalizable across specific contexts (Lincoln and Guba 2005; Snow et. al. 2003). Finally, neither tradition marries the researcher to a particular set of data collection or techniques of analysis, but rather encourages researchers to use the set of qualitative or quantitative tools that best fit the specific questions and circumstances (Greenwood and Levin 2006; Pace 2012). Thankfully, the Department of

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Community Sustainability at Michigan State University, and my dissertation committee in particular, encouraged and supported this type of engaged, non-traditional, interdisciplinary scholarship.

Action research and analytic auto/ethnography

I moved to Detroit in July 2010, inspired by the vibrant and growing food movement in the city and wanting to learn from and contribute my energy to it. Personal journals and communication from the two years' prior document my growing interest in food-based entrepreneurship as a means for social change. In January 2011, I convened the first meeting of twelve local food entrepreneurs that would eventually evolve into the FoodLab network. As the group grew in both size and complexity, we were guided by the principles underlying action research. As Reason and Bradbury describe,

> [Action research is not so much a methodology as an orientation to inquiry that seeks to create participative communities of inquiry in which qualities of engagement, curiosity and question posing are brought to bear on significant practical issues. [… Its] primary purpose […] is to produce practical knowledge that is useful to people in the everyday context of their lives. A wider purpose of action research is to contribute through this practical knowledge to the increased well-being – economic, political, psychological, spiritual – of human persons and communities, and to a more equitable and sustainable relationship with the wider ecology of the planet of which we are an intrinsic part. (2001:1-2)

From the beginning, I was also committed to developing my own praxis as an organizer and entrepreneur[vi]. This emphasis on personal growth and reflection leant itself to the incorporation of autoethnographic approaches. For me, autoethnography and action research were a natural pairing; in fact, Ellis and Bochner describe autoethnography as "action research for the individual" (2000:754). Reflecting on my own experiences, insights, and memories as an organizer of Good Food Enterprises added critical depth to the development of FoodLab as an organization and in turn, to the overall process of inquiry.

Per Ellis and Bochner, autoethnography is "an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural" (2000:739). My blurred approach means that my dissertation is not purely autoethnographic: while my researcher self is apparent in each paper, it does not dominate. However, the term "autoethnography" can be broken down into three parts: auto (or self, as in auto-

biography), 'ethno' (cultural or social meaning), and 'graphy' (process of research and writing) and as long as the three are present in some capacity, different traditions can give each component different weight (Chang 2008; Ellis & Bochner 2000). My research focuses on both self *and* other, and engages deeply with research participants beyond the self, hence auto/ethnography, and it adopts an analytical versus evocative approach, specifically committing to, and extrapolating theory that could apply beyond my own individual life or practice[vii].

Positionality and validity

I write from a position somewhere between insider and outsider and between scholar and activist, and my exact location along each of those spectrums changed over the six years of this project. My reflections on both the opportunities and challenges of insider action research, particularly as a fledgling researcher leading a fledgling organization, and as woman of Asian-identity from a privileged background in a primarily Black and White city, could be the subject of a separate dissertation. Here I offer some brief comments for context.

When I began convening FoodLab entrepreneurs, I had some sense that the group could provide interesting grounds for action inquiry, but I did not anticipate that the project would grow into an independent organization with over 200 dues-paying members and multiple full-time staff. From my email to the group inviting them to our first meeting:

> My particular interest is in how alternative food entrepreneurs contribute to creating more sustainable, vibrant, healthy urban food systems (in other words, I'm interested in US!) If you guys are down, I'd love to make the working group the subject of my dissertation research. This would mean that I could take responsibility for the administrative back-end: facilitating the meetings, arranging workshops, researching kitchen space, and maybe even writing a grant proposal or two if we decide to take on a project that warrants it. I'd also take notes, interview each of the working group members, and keep track of documents and materials that we create in the group.

As a graduate student, I could explore these interests through my coursework (including more than one independent study focusing on Good Food Enterprise), *and* the stipend and health insurance I received as a graduate assistant made it possible to engage in the organizing activities that led to the development of FoodLab. Beyond the basic financial support of my graduate assistant position, the relationship with the university, and particularly my advisor, Dr. Michael Hamm opened doors for funding and connections that helped FoodLab grow.

At first, especially while I was still attending classes, I was able to somewhat balance a dual role as organizer and academic. However, over time, as FoodLab grew, the demands on my mental and emotional energy and on my time increased. Eventually, in October 2013, I decided to put my doctoral program and my dissertation research formally on hold, and to focus on running FoodLab and on transitioning day-to-day leadership of organizational operations (a personal goal from early on). In an article digging in to the challenges around participation in action research, Arieli et. al. recognize that in order to ensure an honest, open, and mutually beneficial relationship with participants, action researchers should sometimes be "prepared to place action before inquiry" (2009:31). For both my personal sanity and to honor the commitments I felt I had made to my community, I decided to focus more fully on "action" within FoodLab and delay the longer cycle of reflection that my dissertation would require.

When I circled back to analysis in June 2015, I had left my role in FoodLab and moved to a new city, which allowed me to put some critical distance between myself, and the phenomenon I attempted to analyze. By this time, my priority was to complete my dissertation research in a reasonable amount of time, while addressing the four aims listed on page two of the introduction, which meant working primarily with the large set of existing organizational data. Early in the project, I had aspired to engage in co-analysis, and possibly even co-writing with FoodLab members and staff, but realized that this would require more time, energy, and personal resources than I could offer, especially remotely. Instead, I decided to conduct the analysis primarily on my own, with checks from critical friends, including FoodLab staff.

Despite the critical distance, I was still very aware of my biases, having been so intimately involved with FoodLab GFEs. In her essay "Between a Rock and a Soft Place," feminist ethnographer Patti Lather writes "if we want illuminating theory grounded in trustworthy data, we must formulate self-corrective techniques that will check the credibility of our data and minimize the distorting effect of personal bias upon the logic of evidence" (1986:65). As an insider to the phenomena I was studying, as I became enmeshed in the social and cultural patterns that I wanted to understand, I ran the risk of losing the forest for the trees. I adopted multiple strategies to increase the logic,

credibility, and usefulness of my interpretations including data triangulation (Stake 1995); ongoing dialogue with "critical friends," including other researchers who were studying FoodLab (Herr and Anderson 2005:57); and a commitment to reflexivity or regularly examining and uncovering my own biases during interpretation (Richardson 2000).

<u>Data collection</u>

In this dissertation, I draw on data collected between August 2011 and April 2016, including a social network survey and qualitative data including field notes, meeting notes and organizational records, and 17 in-depth member interviews. I received human subjects approval in August 2011 (Michigan State University Human IRB #11-729). In the tradition of insider research, inquiry was designed to integrate with, rather than add-to, day-to-day organizational activity and record keeping (Herr and Anderson 2005). It was also emergent, evolving to remain "nimble, adaptable, and exquisitely finessed to the local context of the study and the unfolding complexity of the universe" (Thorp 2006:120). Over time, my primary question, about the role of GFE within food movements, and the specific opportunities and challenges that might be associated with the form, branched off into many intersecting questions. By the end of three years, I had more questions and more data than could be analyzed or presented in a dissertation manuscript[viii]. For the purposes of this project, I focused on three questions; drawing on the data I had collected over time that would offer the most relevant insight.

FoodLab membership records were shared by FoodLab's Membership Director and included demographic and business information, as well as public-facing descriptions of each business, and a definition of what Good Food meant to them. These records allowed me to see how Labbers' understood Good Food in their own words. I kept detailed field notes from September to November 2011 in a crucial period of FoodLab's founding when an early group of entrepreneurs were negotiating FoodLab's mission, guiding principles, and criteria for membership. This period of group "storming" provided rich data on early Labbers' collective intentions, further information on their definitions of 'Good Food,' and especially rich detail on how they conceptualized the 'local.' More than 200 pages of

meeting notes were recorded by meeting participants (including, but not limited to, myself, FoodLab interns, and other FoodLab staff) from January 2011 to April 2016, including at monthly "Food for Thought" meetings, monthly Steering Committee meetings, and two Annual Membership Meetings. These serve as documentation of ongoing dialogue among FoodLab GFEs about collective topics that mattered most to them. From May 2013 to August 2014, FoodLab collaborated with a team of researchers from the University of Michigan to investigate our organization's role in Detroit's emerging food movement. The team conducted semi-structured interviews with FoodLab members to ask about their business's motivations and goals. I was included as a researcher on the University of Michigan human subjects application, helped to develop the interview protocol, and received the recordings and transcripts from the research team. These interviews provided more in-depth information about how GFEs balanced their social, environmental, and financial goals internally and how their business related to the FoodLab network and to a broader Detroit food movement. Finally, network data was collected between November 2015 and January 2016 in collaboration with the FoodLab staff. More details on design and recruitment can be found in the methods section in chapter four.

Data analysis

To begin, I used the business descriptions cited above to understand how FoodLab members describe their values publicly. Every entrepreneur who applies for FoodLab membership provides a business description and answers the question, "What does Good Food mean to your business?" Responses are posted to a public profile on the FoodLab website. Using ATLAS.ti (Version 1.0.41), I coded all 160 responses, capturing phrases having to do with values and goals, then grouped these phrases into 54 categories of claims such as "connect with local growers," "fair wages," "healthy eating and lifestyle," "humanity, heart, soul, love," and "Detroit Revitalization" (Appendix B). I then consolidated these claims into ten themes that mapped onto food movement values.

After identifying these ten themes, I analyzed the additional qualitative data listed above to further understand and add richness to what they meant to FoodLab GFEs. I again used ATLAS.ti to code material according to the

categories that emerged in step one. This yielded hundreds of pages of quotations, each representing a snapshot of Labbers' conversation on that topic over time. For each paper, I focused primarily on the most relevant category or categories of quotations. My results and conclusions come from a process of reading, re-reading, and writing[ix] about that data through the lens of the research question.

Personal memory data did not play a primary role in the dissertation, but in some cases, because I had been intimately involved in FoodLab day-to-day, the process of analysis and writing triggered personal memories beyond what was captured in meeting notes and textual data. I verified these memories against other records before including them as examples in the analysis (e.g. personal journals, email threads, business websites, photos, news articles)[x]. After connecting the data into a preliminary draft, I re-read field notes, meeting notes, and interviews, looking for examples that could contradict or add nuance.

Network data was collected in the online tool Qualtrics, then downloaded and analyzed in Excel. The primary focus was on descriptive statistics. Chapter four presents further detail on analysis of the network data and how I integrated the network data and qualitative data.

OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS

The three chapters that follow were written to stand alone and each has been submitted to a different peer-reviewed journal. As such, the papers contain some duplication, especially in the literature review and methods sections, and also have some differences in citation style.

Chapter two is titled, "The politics of pleasure: entrepreneurs negotiating Good Food and the good life." It addresses the questions, "How do Good Food Enterprises define Good Food, what is emphasized, what is ignored, and where do tensions arise? How might entrepreneurs' focus on pleasure and aesthetics support and / or undermine other Good Food priorities?" The paper offers an overview of FoodLab GFEs' framing of ten core Good Food values, focusing on how businesses integrate their emphasis on pleasure and aesthetics with values like justice and sustainability. Results show that FoodLab GFEs tend to emphasize aesthetics in their publicly facing descriptions

of what Good Food means, but that values like equity and ecology are more prevalent as topics of internal conversation. Members highlight the sensual aspects of making, eating, and sharing of food as necessary ingredients in their business, but often try to balance pleasure with other Good Food concerns. I conclude that when it comes to social, environmental, and economic transformation, one of GFE's strengths may be their ability to use pleasure as a starting point to build bridges between foodies and food activists.

Chapter three is titled "Navigating the local trap: localist entrepreneurs and environmentalism in Detroit." It addresses the question, "How do Labbers describe localisation and its benefits? What does reflexive localism look like in practice, and to what extent does it help Labbers avoid the 'local trap' particularly around environmental stewardship?" Findings suggests that a local orientation, specifically the choice to remain small, allows GFEs the flexibility to experiment with environmental practices, but also limits potential for broader impact due to lack of capital and economies of scale. Also, entrepreneurs' social embeddedness in the FoodLab network appears to encourage the development of some ecological attitudes and business practices, but is limited by FoodLab's organizational embeddedness within local networks, which generally prioritize economic revitalization and equity over ecology; as well as by its lack of connection to both local and non-local organizations with specific expertise in environmental issues and business practices, and its lack of ecological embeddedness.

Chapter four is titled "Experiments in equity: network weaving with Detroit food entrepreneurs." It addresses the questions: "To what extent does the current practice of and ecosystem around Good Food entrepreneurship reinforce unequal access to opportunity for certain groups versus promoting equity and inclusion? How can organizers weave networks to support justice in food entrepreneurship?" Findings suggest that commensurate with other studies, Black entrepreneurs in FoodLab enjoy less social capital, particularly exposure to entrepreneurial examples in their family and close circles and access to a financial safety net. Despite targeted recruiting efforts, they are also underrepresented in the network compared to Detroit's population. While the network has built some potential for collective action in the form of trusting, cross-racial ties, the extent to which this is used to promote

racial equity in local entrepreneurship is limited both by the network's culture (influenced, in part, by changing demographics), as well as formal organizational policies. The paper affirms the importance of attending to social networks when asking how to level the playing field for entrepreneurs in economically marginalized communities.

The politics of pleasure: entrepreneurs negotiating Good Food and the good life

For farmers and artisans themselves, who are often not making much money, it is the sensual material embodiment of ecology and craft that is satisfying. It is an important sign of the movement's evolving politics that this joy is inclusive and expansive, welcoming and enthused about diversity. By creating and investing with meaning social and economic space around modes of production and exchange, this movement has generated a lively space of inclusive discourse, yet with evolving normative terms. – Amory Starr, 2010

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, we have borne witness to what Wright and Middendorf call an "explosion of efforts aimed at reconfiguring our relationship to agriculture and food" (2008:2). Scholars interested in this sea change have used a social movement lens to understand the transformative potential of organizing forms known as Alternative Food Initiatives (AFIs) (Alkon and Mares 2012; Hassanein 2003; Wilkinson 2007). AFIs place themselves in opposition (some directly and some implicitly) to the mainstream food system by offering alternatives that embody values like justice, accessibility, health, and sustainability – what some organizers call 'Good Food.'

Conspicuously absent from critical inquiry on the role of AFIs in this Good Food movement are a growing number of Good Food Enterprises (GFEs) that have evolved alongside other well-studied forms. As an entrepreneur-at-heart, turned-scholar, I have long been fascinated by the role of private, primarily for-profit businesses in social change. Over the last decade, I have centered my own inquiry as an entrepreneur, organizer, and scholar around deeper understanding of the opportunities, limitations, and tensions in promoting Good Food Enterprise as a strategy to support more healthy, affordable, equitable, and environmentally sound urban food systems.

Specifically, over a five-year period from 2011 to 2016, I engaged in action research with the entrepreneurs of FoodLab, a network of small food enterprises in Detroit. I founded FoodLab in response to energy in my community, and as a way to learn about GFE alongside those engaged in the messy practice of actually starting and running businesses. While the project yielded multiple angles of inquiry, a guiding question within FoodLab was: *how do we*

define Good Food? What is emphasized, what is ignored, and where do tensions arise? This question matters because the way that GFEs define Good Food may guide how they ration limited attention and resources when integrating values into their businesses. Do GFEs attend to organic sourcing at the expense of fair treatment of labor? Do they ignore both these areas and focus purely on local economic development? In this paper, I analyze how FoodLab GFEs answer this question in order to identify strengths and blind spots in our vision for a Good Food economy in Detroit. Both the process of inquiry and the results are meant to inform GFEs and GFE organizers in other urban areas.

Of particular interest in this paper is the way FoodLab members combine aesthetics with values like justice and sustainability. In this paper, I define aesthetics as responsiveness to and appreciation of sensual pleasures, including visual beauty, taste, positive emotions, and physical sensations associated with specific actions (like cooking). Since their survival depends on attracting and retaining the interest of customers, rather than, for example, foundations or donors, it seems natural for entrepreneurs to care about making food look and taste good. This emphasis on pleasure *could* open a door for consumers to explore how movement values fit into Good Food and the good life. On the other hand, it has the potential to encourage what Johnston (2008) has called "bourgeois piggery," where food serves as a status symbol, reinforcing elites' ability to call food 'good' regardless of its public cost. Acknowledging this tension, this paper also asks, *how does GFE's focus on pleasure support and/or undermine other Good Food priorities?*

SITUATING GOOD FOOD ENTERPRISE

Framing the Good Food movement

North American food movements are broad and diverse, aptly described as an umbrella of movements that overlap to some degree, but also have unique histories and distinct, sometimes conflicting, goals. Some examples include sustainable agriculture, organic food and agriculture, food justice, fair trade, anti-GMO, slow food, community food security, food sovereignty, local food, and Good Food. Scholars coined the term Alternative Food Initiative or

AFI to describe diverse forms of agency like farmers markets, community-supported agriculture (CSA), farm-to-school programs, buy-local campaigns, urban farming, eco-labels, and food policy councils that have proliferated in recent years a part of these movements.

Besides corralling resources and recruits, AFI organizers shape food movements through collective action framing[xi]. Empirical studies show that diverse stakeholders have different ways of defining alternative food systems, and that the ways that organizers conceptualize and prioritize goals and values affects their ability to successfully initiate change. (Allen et. al. 2003; Inwood et. al. 2008; Kloppenburg et. al. 2000). For example, most North American AFIs have adopted a 'local food' frame in response to what they describe as an increasingly globalized, industrialized, and anonymous food system (Allen 1999; Starr 2010). Yet critics note that an overemphasis on the local scale can undermine movement goals like environmental sustainability, social justice, and self-reliance (Allen et. al. 2003; Bellows and Hamm 2000; Born and Purcell 2006; DeLind 2010; Martinez et. al. 2010). In response, many organizers have shifted their framing from 'local food' to 'Good Food,' which summarizes four specific qualities: "*Healthy*: Providing nourishment and enabling all people to thrive; *Green*: Produced in a manner that is environmentally sustainable; *Fair*: No one along the food chain is exploited in its creation; and *Affordable*: All people have access to it" (Flora 2009; Pirog et. al. 2014). The term was first coined by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, a major funder of non-profit food systems organizations in North America, and has since been adopted by many of their grantees (Pirog et. al. 2014). Interestingly, this frame highlights ecological and social characteristics but is silent when it comes to how food tastes. This missing piece suggests something GFEs may offer the field.

<u>Evolving values in Good Food Enterprise</u>

GFE is experiencing growth and evolution similar to other forms of AFI, especially in the last five years. Incubator and accelerator programs are becoming commonplace, boutique business consultants cater specifically to Good Food businesses, and federal and private investment is growing. The history of GFE can be traced back to organic food processing companies, natural food retailers, and a wave of food coops started in the 70s and 80s (Cox

1994). Frontier Natural Food Products (founded 1976), Ben & Jerry's (1978), Whole Foods (1980), Stonyfield Farm (1983), Nature's Path (1985), Equal Exchange (1986), Organic Valley (1988), and Annie's Homegrown (1989), are some examples. Since then, food movements have expanded from origins in sustainable agriculture to center more explicitly on food consumers, especially marginalized people of color in urban areas, and – to *some* extent – food workers (Allen et. al. 2003; Jayaraman 2016; Wekerle 2014). Following suit, GFEs with this focus began to launch in the late 1980s and 90s, with even more activity in the 2000s. Examples include D.C. Central Kitchen (founded 1989), City Fresh Foods (1994), Pie Ranch (2003), Colors Restaurant New York (2006), Revolution Foods (2006), Corbin Hill Food Project (2009), Hot Bread Kitchen (2009), and Mandela Food Coop (2009).

New GFEs enter a dramatically different field than their predecessors. The specialty food industry has grown and changed, including new certifications and standards, consolidation and increasing power of retailers, and new competitors including large mainstream firms (Chemonics International 2012; Howard 2009; Wood 2013). As more businesses enter the market claiming alternative qualities like 'organic,' 'fair trade,' 'sustainable,' etc., it has become more difficult to assess the extent to which firms are actively advancing Good Food movement agendas, benignly benefiting from consumer demand, and/or co-opting radical values for the sake of profit.

For example, Guthman (2003) demonstrates how growth in California's organic greens industry coincided with exploitation of immigrant workers and yuppie obsessions with body image. She cautions organizers to ensure that "valorized alternatives reflect alternative values" (2003:56). Howard similarly traces the erosion of the "social movement character" of the organic food industry, noting that industry tactics can present "the illusion that […] alternative options are increasing in the marketplace, even as they are narrowing with respect to many ideals" (2009:15). Others offer similar critiques of fair trade businesses, noting that whereas certification was once limited to small hold farmers, since 2012, Fair Trade USA certification allows beans from large plantations and estates; also, companies like Starbucks can now use the Fair Trade label even though (as of 2008) qualifying product only made

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up 5.1% of their total purchases (Jaffee and Howard 2010). On the other hand, Wilkinson acknowledges these challenges, but says that mainstreaming of Fair Trade should be understood as a "strategic component" rather than a "mortal threat" to the movement because it provides an access point for consumers to engage in "broader questioning of conventional trade" (2007:237). In light of these observations, there is still much to explore around what it means to be a business in solidarity with a movement, particularly as individual firms and sectors scale.

<u>Politics of pleasure</u>

In a 2011 article in Time, Walsh notes that in contrast with environmental movements, one of the strengths of food movements is that they often adopt a politics of pleasure in addition to resistance or protest. Others have made similar observations (Greenberger 2011; Johnston 2008; Kirschenmann 2006; Starr 2010). In her study of a Toronto-based AFI, Johnston documents how the project successfully promoted "post-consumer pleasures" that "provided a proactive vision of […] alternative pleasures and empowerment not based on social or ecological exploitation," though its success was partly limited by consumers' desire for choice and sensitivity to price (2008:113). As she points out, "sustained mobilization cannot be based exclusively on fear or repression but must create a foundation of shared identities and understanding of the good life" (2008:103).

At the same time, a growing foodie culture, concerned with "quality" food (e.g. organic, healthy, artisanal) has been accused of elitism, conspicuous consumption, and selfishness, what Johnston cleverly (2008) calls "bourgeois piggery." As alternative foods have gone mainstream, more firms both large and small are taking advantage of consumers' willingness to pay for pleasure and status in the form of camel milk kefir, asparagus water, and exclusive underground dining experiences[xii] without attending directly (or at least 'sufficiently,' in the eyes of critics) to the public good.

Some criticize AFIs for contributing to this 'piggery' by supporting an alternative food culture that is exclusionary or even exploitative rather than democratic and affirming of diversity. For example, Sbicca finds that "whiteness and upper-middle class biases" of California AFIs "often exclude food workers who tend to reflect different

socioeconomic groups" (2015:684). Food activist Hnin (2012) reminds us that "the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights defends the universal rights to food and to culture," and explains that trading in her Chinese and Burmese heritage for "even the most sustainably grown kale" would mean "ced[ing] these important rights." Yet she also sees opportunity for activists to negotiate a more inclusive version of Good Food that recognizes "No Justice, No Pleasure." In a society where many of us eat food produced and processed by someone else, cultural capital[xiii] is often mediated by businesses in markets (Deresiewicz 2011). GFEs have the opportunity to either promote hedonism and conspicuous consumption or help guide consumers toward new aesthetic appreciations that incorporate social and ecological values.

METHODS

This study draws on data from a 5-year research project that began at FoodLab's founding. In the tradition of insider action research, this inquiry was designed to integrate with, rather than add-to, day-to-day activity (Herr and Anderson 2005). Human subjects review approved the initial research design in August 2011 and data for this paper were collected between August 2011 and January 2016.

<u>Data collection and analysis</u>
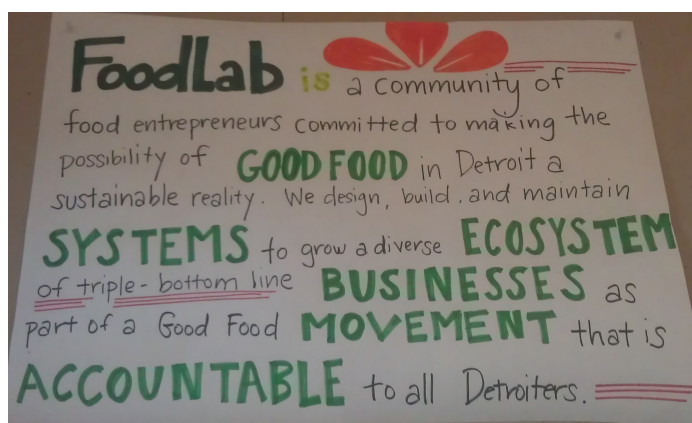
Figure 2.1: FoodLab's seed statement. FoodLab's "seed" statement or mission statement, written and adopted by the original staff and a member-led steering committee in fall of 2011.

FoodLab is a member-based network of more than 200 food entrepreneurs and start-ups in Detroit. Figure 2.1 shows the organization's mission statement. The organization grew out of a series of informal monthly gatherings that started in January 2011 around a kitchen table. As the group of entrepreneurs grew, we became increasingly organized: writing a charter,

launching programs, raising funds, securing a fiscal sponsor, hiring staff, and eventually incorporating as a non-profit organization (Appendix A).

Table 2.1: Prevalence of ten core Good Food themes in Labbers' public-facing business descriptions versus internal conversations			
	Themes:	EXTERNAL RANK (Percent of GFEs who mention topic in business description)	INTERNAL RANK (Prevalence of topic in interviews and dialogue between GFEs)
Aesthetics	Aesthetics TOTAL:	1	6
	Quality Ingredients and Process	3	8 (tie)
	Culture and Tradition	7 (tie)	8 (tie)
Populism	Populism TOTAL:	2	1
	Local Food, Economy, and Ownership	4	4
	Community / Connection	6	2 (tie)
	Uplift / Empower	9	11
	Farmers (Urban and Rural)	10	12
Healthy	Health	5	10
Green	Environment / Sustainability	7 (tie)	5
Accessible	Food Access and Food Security	11	7
Fair	Social and Economic Justice	12	2 (tie)

This paper draws on organizational records, field notes and 17 in-depth interviews with members to summarize and analyze how we discussed, negotiated, defined, and prioritized Good Food values. To begin, I analyzed the values that FoodLab members cite when describing their businesses publicly. As part of the ongoing dialogue around Good Food values and priorities that is embedded in FoodLab's organizational DNA, each entrepreneur who applies for FoodLab membership provides a business description and answers the question, "What does Good Food mean to your business?" Responses are posted to a public profile on the FoodLab website.

Using ATLAS.ti (Version 1.0.41), I coded 160 responses, capturing phrases having to do with values and goals, then grouped these phrases into 54 categories of claims such as "connect with local growers," "fair wages," "healthy eating and lifestyle," "humanity, heart, soul, love," and "Detroit Revitalization" (Appendix B). I then

Table 2.2: Qualitative data sources
FoodLab membership records. Include demographic and business information, including public-facing descriptions of what "Good Food" means to each entrepreneur.
Field notes were taken by the author from September to November 2011 during a crucial period of FoodLab's founding when an early group of entrepreneurs were negotiating FoodLab's mission, guiding principles, and criteria for membership.
Meeting notes were taken by meeting attendees, from "Food for Thought" meetings, hosted monthly since January 2011 and Annual Membership Meetings in November 2013 and November 2014. Both of these were venues where FoodLab members engaged in facilitated discussion on their role in Detroit's food movement via topics chosen by members.
Interviews. From May 2013 to August 2014, FoodLab collaborated with a team of researchers from the University of Michigan (UM) to investigate our organization's role in Detroit's emerging food movement. The team conducted semi-structured interviews with 17 FoodLab member entrepreneurs to ask about their business's motivations and goals.

consolidated these claims into ten themes that map onto Good Food movement values as defined in other literature (see Table 2.1).

After identifying these ten themes, I used the qualitative data in Table 2.2 to further understand and add richness to what they meant to FoodLab GFEs. I again used ATLAS.ti to code material according to the categories that emerged in step one. This yielded hundreds of pages of quotations. Through the process of reading, re-reading, writing, and remembering, a number of themes emerged. I chose to focus on pleasure and aesthetics because it stood out as a topic of central importance to GFEs that I had personally overlooked as a scholar and as a food activist.

For example, when I first presented my research proposal to my dissertation committee, I offered the definition of Good Food as "healthy, fair, green, and affordable." Three members of my committee nodded, but the last member, asked, half-joking, "what about delicious?" Perhaps not surprisingly, he was not a food scholar, but was head of the Management and Organization department at a well-known business school. This came up again in my role as FoodLab Director when I hired a new Co-Director who was particularly well-attuned to aesthetic aspects of Good Food. She helped implement a number of initiatives that focused specifically on food quality (including a "Check-up" program to help entrepreneurs improve their products), culture (including a focus on Black food culture), and visual beauty (including a focus on food photography via workshops and a focus on our organizational Instagram account). Instances like these encouraged me to more deeply consider GFE potential related to pleasure.

After connecting my data into a preliminary analysis, I re-read the field notes, meeting notes, and interviews, looking for examples that could contradict or add nuance. Finally, I offered a draft to critical friends, including a FoodLab staff member, and three academic colleagues, including one who had also studied FoodLab, to ask for their perspective. Though FoodLab was a participatory organization, built in collaboration with members, the research analysis and conclusions are my own.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Talk justice, sell taste

From the network's founding, FoodLab entrepreneurs discussed what Good Food meant to them (Figure 2.2). Data in externally-facing business descriptions and other qualitative data suggest FoodLab businesses' collective values correspond with food movement values. Entrepreneurs mention health, environmental concerns, food access, social justice, populist concerns, and aesthetics, including both quality and culture, as values they hope to promote via their products or business practices. Table 2.1 lists how often each theme is mentioned in public business descriptions and its relative prevalence in recorded meetings, conversations, and interviews.

In public business descriptions, aesthetics is mentioned most (81%), followed by populist concerns (74%). Just over half of businesses mention some aspect of health, 43% mention the environment. Far fewer mention class issues, including making food affordable or accessible (14%) or concerns around social

Figure 2.2: Image of notes from early FoodLab meeting. A wall of notes from a collaborative exercise at a FoodLab meeting in February 2011 during early discussions around the question, "What should our group do?" Members brainstormed ideas and then grouped them into themes. "Define '''' and Good Food Biz" was the most popular theme.

justice including fair wages (10%). Interestingly though, in meetings, conversations, and interviews, justice is the second most talked-about theme among GFEs, whereas aesthetics is fifth, coming up just behind discussions around sustainability. In fact, entrepreneurs regularly discussed issues around racial and economic justice at FoodLab gatherings, especially historical racism and current segregation in Detroit; Black entrepreneurs' lack of access to capital, media coverage, and other opportunities; and the role of small businesses in gentrification.

Comparing these findings to a study by Allen et. al. (2003) of 37 *non-profit* AFIs in California reveals interesting similarities and differences between that group and primarily *for-profit* FoodLab members. The study methods and categories are different, so direct comparison is impossible, but both groups place the heaviest emphasis on populist issues and have a similar degree of focus on sustainability (just under half of the sample in each case). California AFIs frequently discuss class (nearly half mentioned this in interviews), whereas under a quarter of GFEs mention food access or justice in external business descriptions. However, as described above, social justice was a major topic of internal conversation. The discrepancy between what GFEs choose to highlight externally and what they discuss internally may suggest that GFEs choose not to advertise their position on issues like equity if they believe it might alienate customers or investors[xiv], whereas taste, culture, and quality might be assumed to have more universal appeal. One member explains why he avoids marketing social or environmental impact to customers:

> Saying I want to affect the world and I don't even know how to have a business that's viable right now seems a little too premature [...] I am not in business to make a profit; I am in business to make people's lives better. [...] But I know there are people in my life who would think I am just an arrogant [expletive] for saying that and they are going to be really turned off.

Most notably, California AFIs *do not mention taste, quality, or culture in interviews at all*, something the authors highlight, whereas this comes up in 81% of FoodLab business descriptions and regularly in conversation[xv]. This is significant. For some FoodLab members, motivations to create high quality food are admittedly selfish, based on personal enjoyment of eating and cooking, or for the purpose of attracting and retaining customers. But for many, it is more complex. Conversations about aesthetics exemplify tensions in balancing personal and collective values with consumer desires. This may suggest a special role for GFEs in food movements, helping to create "post-consumer

pleasures," that serve as a "gateway drug to larger politicization processes [by] expanding reflexivity about the social and ecological costs of industrial food production" (Johnston 2008:105).

Selfish desires

Many FoodLab members say they started their food business, in part, based on a personal desire to access more unique, tasty, or healthful options where they live. One entrepreneur explains that his motivation to start his business and support other FoodLab start-ups is "somewhat selfish" and primarily about wanting more high quality choices in his neighborhood.

For others, making quality food – particularly artisanal products – is personal in a different way; it is about using existing skills and assets to create a livelihood that maximizes autonomy and opportunities for creativity and joy in addition to financial sustainability. One baker explains that "play[ing] with flour and butter" is what makes her a "productive and happy member of the community." Many FoodLab entrepreneurs are unemployed or underemployed prior to starting their business and see the opportunity to make and sell handmade food as a natural and enjoyable way to contribute to the household. One member offered a rotating menu of seasonal soups using local produce for direct sale to consumers and select restaurants. She started her business because she loves to cook and "had a knack" for making soups. She didn't take a part-time job or start a larger-scale catering business because she "wanted to have something that was mine, [...] knowing that I could contribute to the household," but didn't want to "burn out" making large quantities of the same kind of food.

Still others entrepreneurs see themselves as examples for others' in their family or community:

> I hope [my children] see that if you want something you can do it. [...I spent] my adulthood
> inside this automotive plant, and I would like for them not to do that. I would like for them to have
> a wingspan to be able to spread and to fly.

Small sells, sometimes?

FoodLab entrepreneurs frequently talk about the personal enjoyment of eating and cooking as a motivation for starting and maintaining their business. Since cooking is not only a hobby, but also a business, individual pleasures must be balanced with practical considerations about what will sell. How do FoodLab GFEs use aesthetics to attract

customers? 34 businesses (21%) mention the words handmade, homemade, 'from scratch,' or artisanal in their business descriptions. For many, this small-batch, craft, or artisanal aesthetic simply reflects the origins and current reality of their business[xvi]. Often, members start selling food made at home or at church to friends and family and decide to expand when they receive positive feedback. Of those who do work out of licensed kitchens, most still bake cookies, package tea, toss salads, and grill sliders themselves.

Members see a market for small-batch, specialty food. In one exchange, a White middle-class entrepreneur explains that "people don't mind paying the extra; our small, unique businesses are trending." Her Black middle-class peer responds affirmatively, "At the Rust Belt Market [in a nearby affluent, 87% White suburb, they charge], $7 for a small cake. Nobody hesitates to buy. I sold a S'more for EIGHT DOLLARS!"

Yet members are also concerned that high quality, small-batch, food has the potential to exclude many Detroiters on the basis of race and class; some cannot afford these products; some prefer the predictability of bigger brands; and others feel alienated by unfamiliar products. Entrepreneurs struggle with the tension between creating an artisanal product that will sell to foodies at a premium, and making it accessible. Some experiment with branding, education, new distribution locations, and sliding scale pricing in order to connect with more diverse customers. As we'll see in a later section, others take a different approach, choosing to create products that uplift cultural diversity, thereby challenging mainstream and elitist versions of what it means to taste, or be, 'good'.

GFEs not only question who is able and willing to pay premiums for specialty products, but also who has the social and cultural capital to connect with these customers. While some are able to capitalize on artisanality to sell $8 S'mores, others have difficulty translating food they make and serve at home into an attractive commercial product. What sells on an informal basis to family and friends does not always sell at a farmers' market or to wholesale buyers. Members who have foodie friends who regularly purchase, promote, and therefore define the market around alternative foods can more easily understand, cater to, and influence these consumers' aesthetic preferences.

To complicate matters, these preferences don't only include the intrinsic qualities of the product (taste, freshness, etc.), but also marketing and branding, which involve aesthetic aspects that have little to do with the food itself, including the logo, website, social media, market or tradeshow displays, store design, employee uniforms, appearance, and service, packaging or plating, and the founder's story. Members who understand foodie preferences and have experience in or connections to professional marketing or design have an advantage in attracting customers. Recognizing this, FoodLab members have called for more programs that help entrepreneurs not only with their product, but also with packaging, websites, market displays, and social media[xvii].

Connection and care

FoodLab GFE's attention to artisanal quality and process could be dismissed as hedonism, or a way to spin the practical reality of small scale into a selling point, in other words, profiting off "bourgeois piggery." Yet this is only part of the truth. FoodLab GFEs also note that food leads to pleasure by bringing people together both within and across communities. As Kirschenmann (2006) reminds us, "next to making love, eating is one of the most intimate things we do." Like GFEs elsewhere (Edge 2010) members recognize the power of food to "build community" and serve as "a bridge": between foodies and activists, between "old" and "new" Detroit, and across other racial and cultural divides.

GFEs describe making high quality food not only as a personal and commercial pursuit, but also an act of "caring." In business descriptions, a third of entrepreneurs mention some aspect of uplifting, bringing happiness, empowering, or raising the consciousness of customers or employees through food, and this is also a regular feature of conversation. For some, this simply means providing a joyful experience, especially in Detroit, which can be a challenging environment. "Of course, [my business is] not solving any major problems," one entrepreneur admits, "but it's a little ray of sunshine […] it's something that brings a smile to someone's face, and if I can do that *here*, then I'm very grateful" (emphasis added).

For some, the act of making and providing food is not only a caring practice, but also a sacred pursuit. In the data, four African American female entrepreneurs directly describe Good Food as a "ministry," or say their religious beliefs motivate their business practices. In my experience in FoodLab, I can think of at least three more who have spoken to be this way about their connection with food. This connects with Kloppenburg et. al.'s findings that while academics and policy-makers tend to ignore this aspect, 'ordinary competent' people see sacredness as a defining feature of sustainable food systems, where food is "a sacramental medium for honoring and nurturing the well-being of all creation" (2000:183). Many speak in more general terms about food as a means to feed the soul or spirit. At one Food for Thought meeting, entrepreneurs discussed the connection between food and love. One member described love as the "vibrational frequency that you put into your product" and integrate into daily practices in order to translate "ideals and dreams" into reality for employees and customers.

Scholars like Guthman (2008) have dismissed caring practices for turning attention away from collective action and state involvement and placing the onus for change on individuals. Yet Andrée, Ballamingie, and Sinclair-Waters argue that:

> Re-valuing caring and cooperative practices, which have been hidden and undervalued in capitalism […] is an important part of building food systems that are organised less around a contest of individual rights and more around ensuring everyone's well-being is taken into account. […] In fact, care may even be the platform from which to cultivate a radical politics of food justice that challenges neoliberalisation. (2015:1464-5)

Cultural capital

Beyond growing connections and nurturing spirit, there is recognition of sharing food as a form of cultural nourishment (Kloppenburg et. al. 2000). A few describe wanting to "elevate" Detroit's food culture, but many speak more humbly about growing and celebrating a food culture that highlights Detroit's history and diversity. This connects to Slow Food's concept of "conviviality" or the pleasure of sitting together at a table, the site where cultural capital can be negotiated (Pietrykowski 2007:314). Members hope to share their ethnic heritage through food, as well as cultural history, especially Black history. A female entrepreneur who has been in business for 28 years describes how her original concept was to continue and honor the efforts of Dr. George Washington Carver, an

African American scientist and inventor, who experimented with sweet potato recipes in order to promote the tuber as an alternative crop to cotton. A donut craftsman started his business in honor of a late relative who played a major role in Detroit's music scene. Here, a waffle entrepreneur dreams of opening a storefront one-day:

> Detroit neighborhoods used to really be known by [...] the local food establishments that were there. [...] Over by Grand Boulevard and Wolburn, we knew that by this place called Fou Fou's Corned Beef. [...] Then if you went to the east side, that was the place where you got these ribs. [...] So I wanted a place-making place like that. [...] There's nothing wrong with living [...] in the inner city, and urban environments. I loved it. And so, I wanted to kind of bring that pride back, I wanted to be an example for the youth around me, that if you really wanted to make something happen or see something different in your neighborhood, instead of waiting for somebody to come in and do it, you could stand up and do it yourself.

Embracing and lifting up tastes outside of dominant White culture can be seen as resistance to elitist and exclusive conceptions of aesthetics and a way to combat cultural displacement in Detroit (Woods 2014). In these respects, FoodLab GFEs represents a "taste community" or a "local, personalized expression of food preferences and desires that may deviate from class-based norms" in which "individual taste is socially recognized and validated through the elaboration of shared values" (Pietryowski 2007:315).

Vehicle for values

In addition to cultural *relevance*, GFEs also speak of cultivating a culture of *"attention"* to the quality of food and how food is produced:

> [We're] just a bunch of hustlers who are passionate about food, who love food and care about it from, like, where it comes from to how it's grown and the processes used to make what it makes, and wanna share that with other people, and who wanna help other people cultivate that type of atmosphere.

Members wrestle with balancing aesthetics with commitments to other values. In this, they fall somewhere in between chefs studied by Inwood et. al. (2008) who are primarily interested in local foods for intrinsic qualities like taste and freshness and *rarely* speak in ideological terms, and activists like Kirschenmann (2006) who describes the pleasure of good eating as "much more than the taste of the food," but rather "a deep appreciation for — and connection with — everything on our plates." As mentioned previously, members look for ways to make their products more accessible even if this does not maximize profit. They ask each other for advice on how to support

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local growers when produce does not meet cosmetic or taste standards. They experiment with creating healthier versions of products without compromising taste.

Even when entrepreneurs lead with an emphasis on qualities like taste, they say their goal is to offer something delicious, which is also "responsible," "mindful," and "ethical." A tea importer describes how he started out in craft brewing and distillery, but shifted to tea because "pushing alcohol, especially in Southeast Michigan, which has been devastated by drugs and alcohol" didn't fit with his ideology. Tea had the "same kind of craft" but was healthier for the community. Another producer shifted from small-batch chocolate to small-batch sweet and savory vegan snacks. A chocolate maker and founding member of FoodLab explains:

> There really isn't any very serious social or environmental aspect to what I do. Mostly I just make great quality, good quality truffles, try to make people happy and [...] provide that to the city [...]. But in everything I do I try to, you know, always take those other things into account and be a responsible business owner.

A few members come from the other end of the spectrum: rather than starting from aesthetic motivations and *then* incorporating values, they come to appreciate taste as part of a strategy to attract customers to achieve other primary goals. One entrepreneur co-founded and leads a limited profit corporation with a mission to increase access to fresh and healthy foods for all Detroit residents. He explains how quality became an important part of operations:

> It took me awhile to understand that when people go and spend their valuable dollars, especially with limited resources, they want to make sure every meal is the best possible they can have. [...] We kind of thought, the price point is the most important thing. [...] We were hitting a wall there, because we lacked quality.

And many GFEs fall somewhere in the middle, pulled from both ends. In an early meeting, one entrepreneur says she came "to have conversation about how to unite social justice and food access movement with gourmet food movements" because she felt a rift between the two camps. She urged other members to move beyond trends like "cute packaging":

> Right now the meme is that it can be good for many reasons (knew your farmer, grown by someone that's local, cute packaging) I want to see that standard raised -- when we say Good Food, it's culturally relevant, environmentally just, affordable, etc. [I...] don't want to sign on as an entrepreneur who uses the term without unpacking it.

Another member agreed[xviii] explaining that in starting her sorbet company, she had to "code-shift" between networks of social justice and foodie friends. She joined FoodLab because she wanted to "build a bridge" between the worlds:

> I think that's an interesting area of how foodies can be not just consumers, just eating… but really giving back to the community in a meaningful way. They usually are educated and have that kind of knowledge. And as they become a part of the local movement, [...] it's a gateway into all the other issues we've been talking about: workers justice issues, and wages, and all that kind of stuff. So, it's sort of a really concrete way for foodies to give back to the community that they've been eating from for a long time.

Questions of scale

Most FoodLab businesses are microenterprises: only 19% (30 of 156) have annual sales exceeding $50K. 48% are not yet breaking even or don't know if they are making a profit. Records do demonstrate a trend of growth: of members who had been part of the FoodLab community for at least a year, average sales increased from $56K to $96K between 2014 and 2015 and average number of paid employees increased from 2.8 to 3.75. Yet most members remain small. Collectively, FoodLab businesses employ 310 staff, and report $6.5 million in annual revenue. For comparison, a 2013 report estimated restaurants, grocery stores, food service, and food manufacturing, packaging and distribution companies contribute over 30,000 jobs and $3 billion in revenue to Detroit's economy (Econsult Solutions and Urbane Development 2014).

The network's economic impact is small, but it may have cultural weight beyond this footprint. FoodLab and its member businesses are regularly featured in local and national media, often as part of a narrative about the role of entrepreneurship in Detroit's revitalization. Recently, a FoodLab board member opened a cafe at the Detroit Metropolitan Airport, and another was featured on the popular TV show, "Shark Tank." Members are recognized with awards, speak on panels, and are featured on Detroit tours, sometimes with political and celebrity figures like Oprah Winfrey, former President Bill Clinton, and Michigan Senator Debbie Stabenow. Members recognize the value of their cultural capital and speak about their desire to "be the change they want to see" and use their business to

shape the preferences and behavior of their customers and the broader community, for example around healthy living, care for the environment, and attitudes toward Detroit.

As FoodLab GFEs negotiate the politics of pleasure, many are focused on the local scale. The vast majority operates and sells exclusively in the Detroit area. For some, the decision to stay small ties back to quality standards like avoiding preservatives, using fresh instead of dried herbs, or commitment to specific suppliers or processes, which make it more difficult to scale and work with corporate retailers. A few have made a conscious choice to only sell direct or through smaller retailers even though this limits growth. One organic baker had planned to sell her product at Whole Foods, but changed her mind when she realized she would have to add preservatives, which she worried might "compromise the integrity of my products or the integrity of my company." Another launched her dehydrated collard greens snack in regional Whole Foods stores, but so far has decided not to expand further to ensure continued quality (Haimerl 2016).

Some GFEs see artisanality as a way to resist corporate control, to "come together to fight the big chains." Multiple FoodLab entrepreneurs have prior experience in traditional jobs and corporate environments and describe artisanal food business as a rejection of former lifestyles and a deliberate choice to live in line with their values. Autonomy in their business connects to a broader agency to shape the world they want to live in. One member explains that business choices like remaining independent, purchasing local ingredients, and staying local to Detroit are "more than just telling stories… you're creating the world of the future with every decision you make."

Interestingly, though perhaps not surprisingly, entrepreneurs who have been in business for longer, or who are experiencing growth, more often discuss the importance of consistency versus uniqueness or artisanality as an essential component of quality. As businesses scale and struggle to attract, retain, and increase customers, move from part-time to full-time operations, and hire employees, it becomes important to create an experience that isn't only pleasurable, but also somewhat predictable. A large caterer who specializes in meals for schools works primarily with a regional distributor for sourcing. "When purchases are larger," she explains, "you need consistency

and you don't have time to spend in delighting yourself in purchasing." Another rapidly expanding charcuterie producer capped growth for a period when it became difficult to maintain high quality ingredients and production. He didn't want to "betray their base" of customers, but eventually decided "there has to be compromises when there's volume."

A few push back against the trend towards consistency, worrying that it may represent a slippery slope towards commodification. One café owner says she enjoys staying small and wants to embrace "quirkiness" and "mistakes" because those unique and personal experiences differentiate her from "big businesses." Some describe attempts to balance consistency with other values, for example, cafes that offer standard menu options alongside specials featuring local ingredients with limited or unpredictable availability. Others cite the importance of educating customers (including distributors and retailers) to be more flexible, for example, to understand when cherry jam is unavailable because of a poor growing season.

Most FoodLab members currently plan to remain independently owned, relatively small[xix], and focused on the Detroit area. Membership to FoodLab requires that businesses are locally-owned, the network is proactive in recruiting and catering to entrepreneurs with less entrepreneurial experience, fewer resources, and an interest in community, and it is seen by organizational partners, funders, and the media as a home for early-stage microenterprises, so it is not surprising that this is the trend. The data may actually underrepresent those who wish to scale nationally or internationally because FoodLab rarely targets events or topics at that group, and because entrepreneurs may be hesitant to share plans to grow if they feel pressure from peers in the network to stay local.

Still, some FoodLab businesses do have aspirations to grow their businesses and "go mainstream." For example, one business recently competed on ABC's reality television show, "Shark Tank" to ask for a $100,000 investment in exchange for a 15% share of the company (O'Connor 2015). Some have expressed interest in exporting to Canada. Others are actively looking for investors and working to grow distribution regionally or nationally. Currently all of FoodLab's 21 restaurants and cafes have only one location, but an entrepreneur working

to open a sustainable seafood restaurant sees scaling as the only way to "really be impacting the oceans and the communities that we live in." The idea of scaling in order to have a broader social or environmental impact is relatively rare among FoodLab businesses, but because most are still young, it is possible that this may change as they grow.

CONCLUSION

FoodLab GFEs are far from ascetic. Beauty, taste, sensuality, culture, conviviality, and joy are all essential ingredients in their recipes for Good Food. Yet members' focus on aesthetics is not motivated purely by economic utilitarianism (though sustaining livelihood for self and others is a strong consideration), but interwoven with Good Food values like localism, justice, care for others, environment, and health. The FoodLab case suggests that when it comes to social, environmental, and economic transformation, one of GFE's strengths may be their ability to use pleasure as a starting point to ground a more diverse and holistic vision of Good Food and build bridges between foodies and activists (Greenberger 2011). Activists ask: can we enjoy food if it's produced in a way that oppresses workers and harms the environment (Hnin 2012)? Foodies ask: can food really be 'good' if it's not delicious? This is a particularly interesting question, especially in light of the rapid growth of companies manufacturing all-inclusive liquid meal replacements like Soylent, targeted at busy Silicon Valley entrepreneurs. The beige smoothies may represent the antithesis of the Slow Food Movement: "The time wasted by eating is, in Silicon Valley parlance, a 'pain point' even for the highest echelon of techie. Elon Musk, Tesla's founder, once said, 'If there was a way that I couldn't eat so I could work more, I would not eat. I wish there was a way to get nutrients without sitting down for a meal'" (Chen 2015). GFEs can serve as intermediaries, both attending to and helping to shape eaters' preferences.

One key question is how to continue to deepen GFEs consciousness of issues and connect their efforts in with broader movement action. Another is how to encode this consciousness into business structure as businesses scale, merge, or transition ownership (Sampselle 2012). Most for-profit corporations are structured to maximize shareholder profits in the short-term, so they may be limited to integrating movement values only to the point that

they support (or at least do not jeopardize) the bottom line; on the other hand, smaller locally-controlled businesses and new business structures like for-benefit corporations are not necessarily more movement-driven, but may have more flexibility (Davis 2013).

For now, most FoodLab members still directly engage in tasting and creating foods themselves; they take personal pleasure in braising greens, rolling dough, tasting new flavors, and they want to share this pleasure with others. They experiment with ways to make and sell food in a way that is not only personally satisfying, or appealing to foodies, but also uplifting, sustainable, and culturally nourishing to a broad group of Detroiters. In other words, GFEs do not simply try to 'ride the pig' but they *do* see taste and other pleasures of the table as a necessary, baseline element of 'Good Food.'

CHAPTER THREE:

Reflexive localism in action: entrepreneurs navigating the 'local trap' in Detroit

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, North American food movements have expanded beyond rural roots to attend to what it means to live and eat sustainably in cities (Clendenning et. al. 2015; Koc et. al. 1999; Pothukuchi and Kaufman 1999). This has led to the rise of alternative food initiatives (AFIs) that attempt to provide residents with Good Food or food that is more healthy, accessible, fair, and ecological. An understudied subset of this activity is the proliferation of Good Food Enterprises (GFEs) (see Figure 3.1) that are experimenting with what Betsy Donald characterizes as a "more sustainable form of capitalism" (2008:1256). In the past five years especially, food systems organizers and scholars have joined forces with planning departments and economic development agencies to promote GFE as a strategy for more ecological and inclusive development (Cantrell 2009; Donald and Blay-Palmer 2006; Harworth 1999; Masi et. al. 2010; O'Hara 2011).

AFI organizers often promote localisation of food provisioning system[xx] as an "antidote to globalization" and its negative effects on public health, food security, labor conditions, ecology, and more (Hinrichs 2003:34). GFE is no different: local entrepreneurship — in which local refers primarily to *ownership* and *sourcing* — has become increasingly popular as one of a menu of strategies to make urban food systems healthier, more accessible to vulnerable populations, more democratic, or more environmentally sound. Yet a growing crowd of both academic and activist critics have pointed out that 'local' does not necessarily equate to better outcomes across these categories (Allen 1999; Bellows and Hamm 2000; Allen et. al. 2003; DeLind 2011). Born and Purcell (2006) call this 'the local trap' and warn planners against conflating scale with sustainability and other social benefits. Is a locally-owned café or a jam company using local fruit necessarily more environmentally friendly, producing less waste or using less energy? Who does it hire and how does it treat its workers? Are its products affordable and culturally appropriate?

Specialty Food Industry
For-profit corporations and privately-owned businesses whose products command a premium because of high grade or quality, including, but not limited to "organic," "local," "fair trade," and "artisanal."

Good Food Enterprise
For-profit, non-profit or hybrid food firm (e.g. food processing, distribution and/or retail) that relies primarily on market-based revenue for survival and is formed and operates to some degree in opposition to the mainstream food system and in solidarity with AFIs in the food movement.

Alternative Food Initiatives
Used to describe a diverse array of (often locally-focused) initiatives designed to provide an alternative and in opposition to the mainstream food system. Often organized as not-for-profit initiatives. Examples include farmers' markets, nutrition programs, mobile grocers, and food policy councils.

Figure 3.1: Defining Good Food Enterprise. Good Food Enterprise (GFE) is an understudied form of alternative food initiative (AFI). GFEs often compete within the specialty food industry, but not all specialty food businesses qualify as GFE. The line is porous and up for negotiation as entrepreneurs, activists, and every day people define what it means for a business to be in opposition to the mainstream food system and in solidarity with food movements.

As local food movements grow and mature, there have been calls for adopting new frameworks of assessing local food strategies that more directly address these types of questions. In their 2005 paper, Melanie DuPuis and David Goodman suggest that we move past a localism-as-ideal versus localism-as-trap binary toward a "reflexive localism" where:

> The emphasis is not on creating an ideal utopian "romantic" model of society and then working for society to meet that standard, but on articulating "open," continuous, "reflexive" processes which bring together a broadly representative group of people to explore and discuss ways of changing their society. (p.361)

In this paper, I offer a case study in reflexive localism based on five years of action research with FoodLab Detroit, a member-based network of more than 200 Detroit-based GFEs who call themselves "Labbers." I began to convene the group in 2011 as a response to energy in my community, and as a way to create space where

entrepreneurs might engage in messy, pragmatic, and ongoing dialogue around contributing to a healthier, just, accessible, and sustainable food system in their place. From the beginning, Labbers, staff, and allies engaged in ongoing discussion both about how to grow individual businesses and how to contribute to sustainable and just revitalization in Detroit, emphasizing local ownership and support for other local businesses as a way to "create the kind of world we want to live in" and "make Detroit a better place for our grandchildren."

This paper analyzes these efforts to-date, asking: *How do Labbers describe localisation and its benefits? What does reflexive localism look like in practice, and to what extent does it help Labbers avoid the 'local trap' particularly around environmental stewardship?* Because the work is ongoing, and the FoodLab network is still young, this analysis is meant to offer potential "trajectories and expansions" by examining Labbers' conversations and actions to date, rather than pronouncing a final verdict on their impact (Starr 2010:486).

Locavores and localists

Since the early 1990s, local food has exploded into North Americans' popular consciousness. The movement emerged in rural contexts as farmers, organizers, and scholars responded to the environmental costs of industrialized agriculture, the rapid consolidation and loss of small and medium farms in the mid 20th century, and corresponding devastation in rural communities. As farmers and their allies moved toward low-input and organic farming practices, they also began to sell directly to consumers or via shortened supply chains to retain their products' alternative identity (Feenstra et. al. 2011; Hinrichs 2000). The growth of these localized food networks went hand-in-hand with renewed consumer interest in how, and particularly *where* food is grown (Pollan 2010; Sbicca 2015). As measure of this sea change, in 2007, the Oxford English Dictionary chose "locavore" or "a person who endeavors to eat only locally produced food" as word of the year.

Proponents suggest that food system localisation can "liberate communities and foods systems from global dependence by promoting paths of local interdependence" that re-integrate the economy of food production and consumption within the context of social and environmental concerns (Wright and Middendorf 2008:5). Per this

theory, 'local' is preferable not only because of geographic proximity (e.g. food miles) or the characteristics of specific production sites (e.g. provenance), but particularly because of increased social embeddedness in localized networks:

> The local is assumed to enable relationships of aid and trust between producer and consumer, eliding the faceless intermediaries hidden within commodity chains and industrial foods. The local is also assumed to encourage both producers and consumers to internalize the externalities of conventional agriculture, paying the full costs of food production directly, rather than indirectly through displaced environmental and social harm (Allen et. al. 2003:64).

As food moved onto the urban agenda, planners and organizers inherited beliefs about the benefits of the local scale[xxi]. At the same time, a separate, but related localist movement was gaining momentum. Unlike local food, with its rural roots, localism emerged primarily in urban contexts. It aims "to re-energize the economies of local communities, especially in traditional downtown commercial districts; to retain and develop a sense of place; and to encourage the local area to reflect people's personalities rather than a cookie-cutter approach where everything looks the same" (Kurland et. al. 2013:48). Local food and localist movements share several ideological similarities, including emphasis on market embeddedness, and a populist orientation that specifically seeks to empower more citizens in local economics to devolve power from national corporations back to communities. Though both aim to affect social change by influencing markets – part of what Goodman et. al. describe as the ongoing "'economization' of the political and [...new] market-embeddedness of morality" (2012:5) – a primary difference between the movements is localism's highlighting of independent, for-profit businesses versus non-profit or public sector projects (like farm to school projects, farmers' markets, or food policy councils) as a primary locus for change.

Springing the 'local trap' with reflexivity

In her study of localisation efforts in Iowa, Hinrichs notes that 'local' is often used as a symbolic "totem" with slippery meanings; "spatial relations do not always map in consistent ways onto specific social or environmental relations" (2003:33). DeLind similarly suggests that an emphasis on the economics of localisation, including the success of market forms like GFEs, can come at the expense of direct attention to the "three E's" of ecology, ethics, and equity (2001:275). Born and Purcell (2006) have dubbed this problem "the local trap." DuPuis and Goodman

similarly caution fellow food scholars "against the reification of the local found in normative and market-oriented perspectives and their naturalization as a bulwark against anomic global capitalism" (2005:369). Instead, they suggest that we embrace a more reflexive localism that brings the politics of place to the forefront rather than occluding it behind an imagined utopian ideal:

> Bringing politics into the conversation allows us to abandon the "either-or" approach (Harvey, 2001) that has characterized local–global politics up to now. An inclusive and reflexive politics in place would understand local food systems not as local "resistance" against a global capitalist "logic" but as a mutually constitutive, imperfect, political process in which the local and the global make each other on an everyday basis. In this more "realist" open-ended story, actors are allowed to be reflexive about both their own norms and about the structural economic logics of production. (p.369)

Both practitioners and scholars engaged in local food and localist movements have proposed practical frameworks that we used within FoodLab to guide our reflexive processes.

Some AFI organizers have attempted to refocus emphasis to specific desired values by shifting movement terminology from local food to 'Good Food,' or food that is "*Healthy*: Providing nourishment and enabling all people to thrive; *Green*: Produced in a manner that is environmentally sustainable; *Fair*: No one along the food chain is exploited in its creation; and *Affordable*: All people have access to it"[xxii] (Pirog et. al. 2014). This frame has been adopted by many Detroit food initiatives, including FoodLab, to refer to the goals of their collective work: to make the "possibility of Good Food in Detroit a sustainable reality […] as part of a Good Food movement that is accountable to all Detroiters."

Figure 3.2: FoodLab's seed statement. FoodLab's "seed" statement or mission statement, written and adopted by the original staff and a member-led steering committee in fall of 2011.

Localist organizers, on the other hand, often adopt the triple bottom line framework first proposed by Elkington (1994) as a way for corporations to expand their thinking from a single bottom line of profit, to consider two other

categories of extra-economic value: "people" and "planet" (Kurland et. al. 2013; Kurland and McCaffery 2014). The triple bottom line was developed for application at the level of individual firms, though it borrows from the three-pillar conception of sustainability as applied to communities more broadly (Brundtland et. al. 1987). In addition to the framework of Good Food, FoodLab organizers (including myself) used the triple bottom line to identify and describe the process of individual firms working to balance financial, social, and environmental value within their day-to-day operations (see Figure 3.2).

Food scholars' frameworks overlap with the elements of Good Food and the triple bottom line to some degree, but tend to place more explicit focus on democracy or procedural justice – in other words, the processes that enable ongoing communal reflexivity. Among the first to recognize and write on the local trap, Bellows and Hamm (2000) suggest that instead of viewing economic localisation as an end in itself, scholars and practitioners attend to its effects directly via three indicators – environmental stewardship, equity and democracy, and fair labor trade (Table 3.1). DeLind (2011) similarly calls for food researchers to shift their attention from measuring the 'success' of new market forms in purely economic terms (e.g. shifts in food spending, number of new jobs created, number of new farmers' markets or GFEs), toward more holistic and direct treatment of the 3Es. Both highlight the importance of civic engagement, citizenship, and democratic process as grounding elements in any successful localisation project. DeLind, in particular, invites researchers to "give more of our attention to exploring the integration and reintegration of local food into place-based practice"; or, in other words, to explore at local food initiatives using approaches like ethnography that "shift[s] some of the current emphasis away from quantitative problems and instrumental solutions (i.e. our positivistic orientation) to a deeper, more holistic description of local processes, voices, and landscapes" (2011:280).

This paper responds to that call, exploring a specific case of urban entrepreneurs engaging in the political act of reflecting on and negotiating competing values as they struggle to start successful businesses and contribute to

Table 3.1: Frameworks for practicing reflexive localism with Good Food Enterprises			
Good Food	**Triple Bottom Line** (Elkington 1994)	**Localisation Impacts** (Bellows and Hamm 2000)	**Three Es** (DeLind 2010)
Green	*Planet*	*Environmental Stewardship*	*Ecology*
Accessible — Implies distributive justice, but not necessarily procedural justice.	*People*	*Equity and Democracy* — Explicitly includes both distributive justice (e.g. accessibility to resources like healthy food) and procedural justice (e.g. who has a voice in decision-making and priorities).	*Equity*
Fair — More explicitly focused on Fair Labor Trade, but could incorporate procedural justice		*Fair Labor Trade*	*Ethics*
Healthy			
	Profit		

local revitalization. In particular, I focus on the tensions and opportunities that arise as FoodLab GFEs balance a strong localist orientation with a desire to be good environmental stewards.

After reviewing dozens of studies, Martinez et. al. conclude local food "does not necessarily reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions" (2010: iv). Research shows that consumers attribute environmental qualities to local food and those who place high importance on the environment are more willing to pay price premiums for local (Martinez et. al 2010); however, it is not clear how or if those who purchase local food hold producers accountable to environmental standards. In a study of chefs and food service professionals in urban Ohio, Inwood et. al. (2008) found that the majority of chefs primarily valued local food for intrinsic qualities like taste and freshness, and rarely voiced ideological concerns about sustainability or questioned producers' practices. Bellows and Hamm hypothesize that "without conscious public framing," even grassroots localisation initiatives will not promote environmental stewardship because they tend to measure success in economic terms (e.g. revenue, spending, or jobs), while activities like managing natural resources and reducing waste often come with little-to-no financial remuneration (2000:279). Without reflexive practices and frameworks, it is easy to see how an effort promoting local entrepreneurship could fail to promote or encourage more sustainable solutions. The FoodLab project was intended

to support Good Food entrepreneurs to engage in the messy pragmatic negotiations around balancing their values (including environmental stewardship) and livelihoods within the local context of Detroit's food economy.

METHODS

This dissertation comes out of my six-year research journey as a young researcher and activist engaging in reflexive localism alongside Good Food entrepreneurs in Detroit. My research approach blurs boundaries, but draws particularly from post-positivist traditions of action research and analytic auto/ethnography. Both these traditions are particularly well suited to the questions at hand because both ethnography and action research (as opposed to positivist traditions) demand reflexivity, or the examination of political and ideological agendas at multiple levels (e.g. self, interpersonally, and for group / society) (Reason and Bradbury 2008; Richardson 2000). In addition, both action research and analytic ethnography and autoethnography value "living inquiry" or research that is "passionate, committed, involved, and personal" and integrated in the daily lives of those involved (Reason 1996:16); and both acknowledge inter-subjective, contextual, and partial nature of 'truth' and therefore aim to present knowledge that is transferable, but not necessarily generalizable across specific contexts (Lincoln and Guba 2005; Snow et. al. 2003). Along these lines, though this case focuses on food entrepreneurs in Detroit, findings within the case can be extrapolated and applied to other contexts, particularly, I would suggest, to community-based entrepreneurs in post-industrial cities worldwide.

In the tradition of action research, inquiry was designed to integrate with, rather than add-to, day-to-day organizational activity and record keeping (Herr and Anderson 2005); it was also emergent and evolved to remain "nimble, adaptable, and exquisitely finessed to the local context of the study and the unfolding complexity of the universe" (Thorp 2006:120). Human subjects research approval was received (Michigan State University Human IRB #11-729). The overall project yielded multiple angles of inquiry; this paper focuses only on one. Here, I draw on data collected between August 2011 and April 2016, including organizational records, field notes and 17 in-depth member interviews.

I began by exploring Labbers' stated goals and motivations for their business. Each entrepreneur who applies for membership offers a business description and answers the question, "What does Good Food mean to your business?" Responses are posted to a public profile on FoodLab's website (http://foodlabdetroit.com). Using ATLAS.ti (Version 1.0.41), I coded 160 profiles, grouping phrases into 54 unique categories such as "connect with local growers," "Detroit revitalization," and "waste and packaging." I then consolidated these claims into ten broad themes that map onto food movement values including "local food, economy, and ownership" and "environment / sustainability" (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Prevalence of "Local Food, Economy, and Ownership" and "Environment / Sustainability" themes in Labbers' public-facing business descriptions versus internal conversations		
Themes:	EXTERNAL RANK (Percent of GFEs who mention topic in business description)	INTERNAL RANK (Prevalence of topic in interviews and dialogue between GFEs)
Quality Ingredients and Process	1	6 (tie)
Local Food, Economy, and Ownership	2	3
Health	3	8
Community / Connection	4	1 (tie)
Environment / Sustainability	5 (tie)	4
Culture and Tradition	5 (tie)	6 (tie)
Uplift / Empower	7	9
Farmers (Urban and Rural)	8	10
Food Access and Food Security	9	5
Social and Economic Justice	10	1 (tie)

In order to get a deeper understanding of what these ten themes meant to FoodLab GFEs, I coded the field notes, meeting notes, and interviews, again using ATLAS.ti. This yielded hundreds of pages of quotations, arranged by theme, which offered a snapshot of Labbers' conversations on each theme over time. I ranked the themes based both on the proportion of Labbers who mentioned the topic in their public-facing business descriptions and separately on the prevalence of the theme in the richer qualitative data, as measured by the number of pages of

coded quotations in each category. The analysis that follows focuses on Labbers' conversations around the two themes of "local food, economy, and ownership" and "environment / sustainability."

Though FoodLab was a participatory project built in collaboration with members, the research analysis and conclusions are my own. In her essay "Between a Rock and a Soft Place," feminist ethnographer Patti Lather writes "if we want illuminating theory grounded in trustworthy data, we must formulate self-corrective techniques that will check the credibility of our data and minimize the distorting effect of personal bias upon the logic of evidence" (1986:65). As an insider to the phenomena I was studying, as I became enmeshed in the social and cultural patterns that I wanted to understand, I ran the risk of losing the forest for the trees. I adopted multiple strategies to increase the logic, credibility, and usefulness of my interpretations including data triangulation (Stake 1995) and ongoing dialogue with "critical friends," including other researchers who were studying FoodLab (Herr and Anderson 2005:57). Personal memory data did not play a primary role in my analysis, but in some cases, because I had been intimately involved in FoodLab day-to-day, the process of analysis and writing triggered personal memories beyond what was captured in meeting notes and textual data. I verified these memories against other records before including them as examples (e.g. personal journals, email threads, business websites, photos, news articles)[xxiii]. After connecting the data into a preliminary draft, I re-read field notes, meeting notes, and interviews, looking for examples that could contradict or add nuance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Labbers views on localisation

Detroit faces a number of well-documented challenges. In 2011 when FoodLab began, the unemployment rate in the city was 22.2% (USDOL 2016). By 2013, though unemployment rates had declined, nearly 40% of the population still lived below the federal poverty level. In the same year, the city declared bankruptcy – the largest municipal case in U.S. history – and was taken over by a state-appointed emergency financial manager. While noteworthy, these events were not surprising given trends starting in the 1950s: economic disinvestment, increased

crime, deteriorating infrastructure, and consistent population loss, especially among Whites and middle and upper class African Americans. In the face of these challenges, there has been growing interest and investment in economic revitalization, with a strong emphasis on local economic development, workforce development, and entrepreneurship (New Economy Initiative 2014; Solomon 2013).

Given this context, it is not surprising that the local economy is an important topic to FoodLab members. Table 3.2 gives an overview of the prevalence of core themes in FoodLab members' public-facing business descriptions versus in internal conversations, as recorded in field notes, interviews, and meeting notes. "Local food, economy, and ownership" was the second most frequently mentioned topic in business descriptions, and the third most talked-about theme after "social and economic justice" and "community / connection." "environment / sustainability" was tied for the fifth most frequently mentioned topic in business descriptions, and the fourth most talked about theme. When Labbers discuss localisation, most frequently they are motivated by a desire to support the revitalization effort. Their descriptions of localisation fall into two main categories of activity: 1) stay local to Detroit and 2) supporting and connecting with other local businesses.

Staying local, small, and loyal

When it comes to sourcing locally, Labbers tend to have flexible geographic boundaries: from Metro Detroit to Southeast Michigan, to the Upper Midwest. However, when it comes to where a business operates, Labbers often use 'local' to refer to within Detroit city limits, or even specific neighborhoods. They say they hope to contribute to the city's economy by creating jobs, adding to the tax base, and making their communities more desirable places to live, work, and start new businesses. These might be seen as by-products of entrepreneurship anywhere, but in Detroit, staying local to provide these benefits is a matter of commitment, loyalty, and pride.

Labbers say that they are motivated less by profit and more by personal values, especially a desire to contribute to their community or neighborhood. Nearly half mention some aspect of contributing to community or growing community connections in their business descriptions, tied for the second most frequent topic of

conversation. Per a recent member survey, 63% of Labbers said they were motivated to start their business because they "wanted to have a positive impact on [their] community and the environment," and 35% said they were "motivated by and/or wanted to be part of a community bigger than [themselves];" whereas only 19% said they were motivated because they "wanted their business to improve [their] financial security."

Many have personal or family history in Detroit and want to "give back" despite practical challenges and skepticism from friends, family, and potential investors[xxiv]. They joke that if they wanted to get rich (e.g. "traveling and diamonds and stuff like that") they would have chosen a different industry and a different location. A member who has been in operation for over 30 years explains it this way:

> I could've moved somewhere else. This was a boarded up building, and we chose to stay here. […] We see this as an area that's coming back. And we wanted to be part of it. […] One little boy rode his bike up here, and left his bike out there, and came inside, just like whirled around and just said, 'Wow, this is really nice, and this is in my neighborhood.' […] People [say] 'well you should have moved to Farmington or Bloomfield Hills, or somewhere else,' as if Detroit doesn't deserve to have nice places in the community, and, see, we don't think like that. […] I just believe in doing the right thing by people. And that's just more important to me than money.

Being a local business in Detroit goes hand-in-hand with broader questions around what it means to be a "true Detroiter," a question with racial undertones (Craig Fahle Show 2011; Lewis 2013). For example, within FoodLab, there is some pressure for businesses to "serve our people" (a phrase used by some Black Labbers to refer to Black residents) by locating in underserved neighborhoods and spaces, the "communities that don't get that hype." Yet demographics within FoodLab are changing, in particular there has been an increase in members from surrounding suburbs relative to members in Detroit proper (Figure 3.3). And Labbers in the suburbs are much more likely to be White (62%) than Black (17%) or another race (21%); whereas Labbers in Detroit are predominantly Black (64%) versus White (30%) or other races (6%).
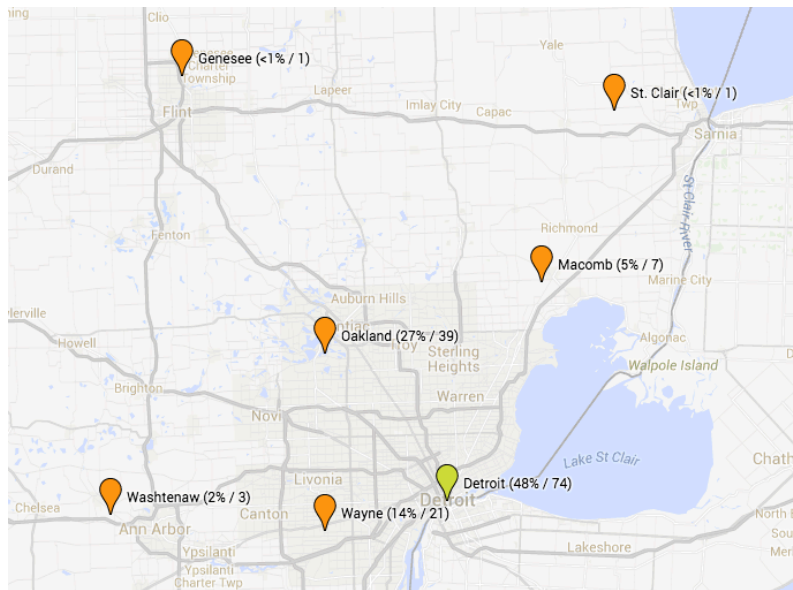
Figure 3.3: Location of FoodLab member businesses. 67% of FoodLab's 43 founding businesses were located in Detroit. As of January 2016, 48% of FoodLab members are located in the city of Detroit. The remaining 52% are located in nearby counties. A recent conversation with the membership director confirms that this trend continues.

Of those currently headquartered in the suburbs, some have loyalty to the inner city; they volunteer with or donate to community organizations; others sell at farmers markets, pop-up events, or on food trucks in Detroit; and a few hope to eventually move or expand there. Yet there are indications that those outside of the city are less embedded in the FoodLab network. According to recent membership data, suburban members know almost ten fewer fellow members than their Detroit counterparts (21.7 versus 31.2) and tend to help other members at half the rate as Detroit-based Labbers.

Supporting local businesses in service of a new economic system

Interestingly, Labbers tend to be localists rather than locavores. While some express support for Detroit or Michigan-based farms and farmers, with some exceptions, members tend to take a pragmatic versus dogmatic approach to locally grown ingredients when it is a priority at all. 27% of Labbers mention sourcing from local farms and growers in their business descriptions, but only a handful of businesses have specific purchasing goals. Discussions frequently center on the difficulty of sourcing from Detroit and Michigan-based farmers due to price, volume, consistency, and lack of availability of specialty ingredients (e.g. tropical fruits, coffee, culturally specific ingredients, and organic ingredients). In 2014, FoodLab partnered with a local growers' collaborative to launch a pilot project to facilitate the purchase and promotion of Detroit-grown produce (Figure 3.4). 14 businesses

Figure 3.4: Images from Detroit Grown and Made pilot project. Top: Entrepreneurs participate in a farm tour as part of the launch of the Detroit Grown and Made pilot program. The project was initially funded by a collaboration between grant from *Detroit's Green Economy Fund*, sponsored by U-Haul and the Conservation Fund. Bottom Left: Detroit Grown and Made logo, designed for products featuring Detroit-grown produce, made in Detroit by FoodLab members. Bottom Right: An example product, a ratatouille hand pie, made by member business, Sister Pie, on display at a local cafe.

participated and purchased $3,259 of produce over five months, but the program was pared down the next year due to lack of member support and internal resources.

Local sourcing is a frequently discussed topic, but rather than referring to *locally grown* food, Labbers more often refer to ingredients, packaging, and other inputs sold by other local businesses who may or may not manufacture these products themselves: "I can't […] get chocolate that's grown in Michigan […] but using […] local roasted coffee and […] raspberry preserves from Slow Jams […I can] cross promote with other businesses and strengthen the […] economy by supporting […] other businesses." Beyond patronage, FoodLab members support other businesses (especially fellow Labbers) by making customer referrals, partnering on events, featuring products on the menu or in a retail space, sharing advice and resources, and promoting via social media. It is common to see other members' products on display upon entering FoodLab businesses like EliTea, Detroit Vegan Soul, Good Cakes and Bakes, Always Brewing Detroit.

Labbers appear to view local cooperation and reciprocity both as beneficial to their individual bottom line, and as part of a strategy to diversify the economy and make it more resilient. As one member explained: "we know that as a city we can't rely on one industry [...] so it's everybody pulling up their bootstraps and saying [...] 'hey, let's do this thing,' and, 'how can we do it together?'" "Industry," "corporations," and "big business" are regularly described as negative influences that drain resources and undermine local self-reliance. Labbers see their own small businesses as one way to exercise agency and contribute towards a new economic system. As one spice-maker explained: "car manufacturers raped our city. You have to figure out how you can create jobs, how you can make whole people, help them to get ahead. It's not just my business, how can I make Detroit a better place for my grandchildren?"

Despite the predominant anti-corporate leaning in the network, many Labbers are pragmatic and acknowledge that since corporations and local business currently co-exist, it may be worthwhile to investigate how they can work together with them towards common goals; for example, Labbers often mention the role of Whole Foods in creating markets for their products and providing healthy food access for residents.

Labbers navigate the local trap

Much of FoodLab GFEs' enthusiasm for localisation appears to come out of their loyalty to Detroit, and their desire to contribute to its economic and social revitalization. Labbers observe that traditional economic structures (including corporations) have failed in Detroit, and see their choices to stay local and support other local businesses as a step towards a different type of system that is locally controlled, more resilient, and more generative versus exploitative.

In spite of this enthusiasm for its potential, Labbers do tend to engage in a reflexive localism, acknowledging that localisation is neither straightforward, nor a cure-all; as a group, they appear to be somewhat aware of the local trap. While many do associate 'local' with 'environmentally friendly' when describing why they care about local food, at least some know that local does not necessarily mean more ecological. In at least two Food for Thought meetings,

members discussed how corporations might have greater capacity to implement sustainability measures than small local companies because of greater resources, and debunked the myth of "food miles," noting that geographic proximity to a food source does not necessarily ensure reduced greenhouse gas emissions or energy use. In the next sections, I examine how Labbers navigate the local trap, documenting the tensions between a local orientation – specifically small scale and social embeddedness – and a desire to be more green.

Small, personal experiments

Many Labbers have a general desire to be good environmental stewards. 43% mention environmentalism or sustainability in their business descriptions. All members commit to FoodLab's guiding principles, including "Work with nature" (Figure 3.5). Many say it is important to them to "be environmentally responsible," "help the environment," or encourage others to "care about the environment" even if it is more expensive or inconvenient.

When discussing specific environmental practices, Labbers tend to draw on personal experience and household practices that are tangible and easily implemented. The two most frequently discussed are sourcing organic products and recycling, composting, and waste reduction. When explaining why organic, Labbers most often describe personal health reasons; especially concern over the health impacts of pesticides and genetically modified organisms. For example, one particularly successful bakery owner committed to using all-organic ingredients after her niece started menstruating early, a fact that she
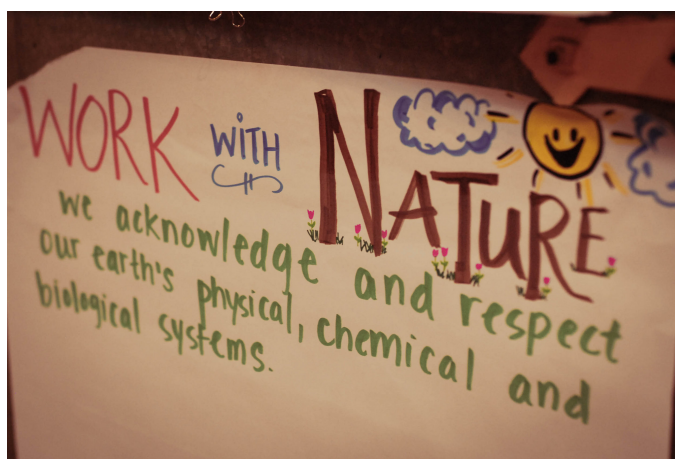
Figure 3.5: Image of poster from 2015 Annual Membership Meeting.

attributed to an excess of antibiotics and chemicals in her niece's diet. Other practices include purchasing seasonal ingredients, encouraging customers to eat less meat, and reducing energy use.

FoodLab GFEs' small size means that owners maintain control so their personal values can be manifested in business practices, and new ideas, like a recycling program or new packaging, are relatively straightforward to implement. FoodLab's culture tends to be one of experimentation and incrementalism[xxv]. As one member expressed, "just because you can't do anything, doesn't mean you can't do something."

Some believe that the extra effort for small environmental or social actions can pay off in loyalty and support from customers:

> That stuff costs a little bit more, but, well obviously paying people more, and yeah, and using local ingredients, or using recycled packaging and that kind of stuff, it costs a little bit more so I could be making slightly more money. But, I mean, honestly I think that kind of stuff also pays off because, because consumers are more aware of that kind of stuff now too.

Yet other members say that while their target customers do tend to care about 'local,' they care less, or are even turned off by a focus on healthy food or the environment. More than once, FoodLab staff and the steering committee discussed the possibility of creating "badges" or certifications for food businesses that demonstrated commitment to aspects of sustainability like working towards zero waste or reducing energy consumption. The idea never gained traction in the network. Instead of using sustainability as a marketing tool to attract customers who already share environmental attitudes, members say they hope to use their products as a tool to educate consumers about the importance of environmental issues.

Many Labbers make individual environmental efforts, driven by personal values and a spirit of experimentation; however, they also recognize that their scale can inhibit their ability to make a broad impact: "it's easier to do green if you're doing smaller, but if there are a million small people they're not necessarily a smaller footprint." For example, many members work out of shared kitchens and have limited capital, so improving building efficiency or updating equipment like old refrigerators can be difficult. Labbers are aware of these limitations, but while some have aspirations to grow their businesses and "go mainstream," many mention wanting to stay small and focused on Detroit, or at most, the Midwest. The idea of scaling in order to have a broader impact is rare among FoodLab businesses, but since most are still young, this may change over time.

For now, as in the case of their efforts to build economic alternatives, Labbers are primarily interested in increasing their impact through collective action: "What we're each doing individually is great, but if we all walk together, it'll be stronger and more effective." In response to frustration over the inability to source sugar locally, a member suggested using the network's collective power and relationships to influence the market: "If more people start to [speak up], then maybe somebody's willing to make the effort. [...]. How can we grow what's available by showing businesses that there is economic viability?" Another member regularly petitions the network to get involved in advocacy and action around federal-level organic certification standards. Yet so far, despite these small experiments and positive intention to work together, the network has failed to take collective action around environmental issues.

Some Labbers are generally friendly towards social and environmental goals, but are explicitly wary of "putting the cart before the horse." A former member who left the network in 2015 explained in an interview:

> Saying I want to affect the world and I don't even know how to have a business that's viable right now seems a little too premature. [...] I am not in business to make a profit; I am in business to make people's lives better. [...] But I know there are people in my life who would think I am just an arrogant [expletive] for saying [that I'm here to change the world].

Another Labber and steering committee member explains he prefers to experiment on a local level and "get it right" before trying to "be involved in policy stuff." However, more frequently, it appears that Labbers are interested in having a broader impact through collective action, but given scarce resources, do not prioritize environmental stewardship enough to dedicate network resources towards this.

The example of recycling, composting, and reducing waste illustrates Labbers' willingness to experiment, their desire to take collective action, and the barriers to doing so. Detroit launched citywide curbside recycling in late 2014; before then, individuals who wanted to recycle had to transport items to a facility themselves or come up with other creative solutions. There is still no city-wide composting, so businesses who want to divert food waste from the landfill compost themselves, or partner with a local farmer. Despite the inconvenience, several Labbers were

committed to recycling and composting; more than one described filling her car trunk with recyclables and food waste to drop off at multiple locations.

In the summer of 2014, the steering committee and staff decided to organize a three-meeting series about reducing waste and a "Get Wise to Waste" bus tour of the city (Figure 3.6). Prior to this, only three of 46 monthly Food for Thought meetings had focused specifically on environmental issues[xxvi]. The decision was driven by

Figure 3.6: Images of FoodLab programming related to waste management. Top left: Labbers on the bus for the Get Wise to Waste Tour. Top Right: A partner from the Green Garage leading members in a waste audit for one member business at a monthly Food for thought meeting. Bottom: Members discussing potential community action goals, including "Move Towards Zero Waste" at the 2014 Membership Meeting.

encouragement from two funders and internal reflection that despite our guiding principles, we rarely engaged in discussion on environmentalism as a group. We chose to focus on waste since many members had already adopted practices and others were interested in doing so. In these meetings, members discussed organizing a social enterprise that could offer reliable compost pick-up; others suggested pressuring local policymakers to include composting services in a Request for Proposals for Detroit's new solid waste contract. Two months after this series, the steering committee identified "Moving Toward Zero Waste" as one of five potential Community Action goals for 2016; however, when put to a full membership vote, it received the least support of all the options. Side-by-side with other potential projects like advocacy around food business licensing, helping to develop new markets and sales opportunities, and increasing local sourcing, collective action around environmental issues did not have enough support from members or from existing funders or partners for FoodLab's staff and volunteer steering committee to prioritize.

The role of local embeddedness

Unsurprisingly, Labbers' environmental attitudes and actions appear to be influenced by their social and cultural embeddedness in the FoodLab network, and the network as a whole is influenced by its embeddedness in the local Detroit context.

Some Labbers enter with connections to environmental issues and organizations; many have learned about sustainable agriculture, including soil quality and contamination, composting, and pesticides via urban gardening programs. A handful has been involved in local environmental justice campaigns around air quality and lead abatement. One Labber founded a grassroots sustainability coalition in her suburban community after being laid off. For her, starting a Good Food business was another way to channel concern about the environment into action.

Members who already hold environmental attitudes say that joining the FoodLab network is a way to connect with, be supported by, and learn from peers who want to experiment with balancing financial viability with social and environmental impact, along the triple bottom line. One member explains:

> I knew I needed a community of people that had food businesses, that had the same thoughts about food that I had, in terms of being thoughtful about how they produce their food and who they provided it to. And the [...] whole triple bottom line concept of food. And that's what FoodLab provided [...] and that's what I needed around me so that I could stay true to what I wanted from my business.

One example of this support in action is an entrepreneur who says that he always cared about the environment, but probably would not have made the leap to eco-friendlier packaging had he not been in FoodLab. FoodLab uses the triple bottom line framework in its mission statement and incorporates it throughout programming (Figure 3.7). The term gives members a way to identify themselves and connect with other like-minded entrepreneurs to get support. Most members have never heard of the triple bottom line prior to connecting with FoodLab. Only eight (5%) mention it in their business descriptions, which are written as part of a membership application before much interaction with the network. But in interviews and Food for Thought notes, at least six entrepreneurs say that the term gives them words for a way of thinking that was already natural. In response to an interview questions about how she thought about the triple bottom line, one member laughingly admitted, "you know, I was actually doing it, but I wasn't calling it that before I got into FoodLab." Another explained that in her first interactions with the network, "It was, like, all these terms that I never really heard of but things that I was talking about. So, triple bottom line, and [...] a fair living wage and eco-friendliness and ooh, worker-owned enterprise. So I was like, oh, these are the kind of people, like, they can teach me how to make my food business like this."

Figure 3.7: Image of FoodLab staff skit about the triple bottom line. A call and response exercise at the conclusion of a staff skit at FoodLab's 2014 Annual Membership meeting, wherein an entrepreneur (author, second from left) walking through the forest contemplating her business comes across the triple bottom lines of people (second from right), planet (far right), and profit (far left).

Other members start out with no interest in environmental issues and are influenced by the network. As a caterer who joined FoodLab in 2013 explains:

That [environmental] part wasn't really important to me, but then I started to hang around the people in the FoodLab and then I started to realize that it kind of does make a difference. [...] Of course you have to make money, but then what happens if all the things we do to ruin the planet ruins the fact that we can have a business, so we have to figure out how to save it. I was like "I love these people!" And they also stopped me from littering. I used to litter all the time. And I was like, "I've got to save the planet."

A conversation around organic sourcing demonstrates how entrepreneurs are influenced by peers in the network as they work to navigate between concern for the environment, a localist desire to support Michigan-based producers, and other values like fair trade labor. In a notable thread on FoodLab's online listserv, ten members discussed the social and environmental implications of organic versus non-organic sugar (Appendix C). Concerns ranged from the genetic modification of Michigan sugar beets, to the environmental impact and labor conditions within the sugar cane industry, to animal-based ingredients used in production processes, to the impact on Michigan's economy and farmers. They discussed both their personal concerns, and also questions and demands from their customers. The conversation did not end with a definitive solution, but participants agreed it had affected their thinking.

While FoodLab has been successful in nudging members towards small changes in attitudes and actions (e.g. new packaging or no more littering), and helping environmentally-minded entrepreneurs to identify, connect, and navigate values together, there are limits to the network's ability to influence entrepreneurs. Though a number of FoodLab members and staff have affiliations and/or experience participating in environmental organizations, they lack technical expertise in sustainability science, practice, and policy, especially in making this information relevant to small food businesses. As one member asked despairingly in an early meeting about how to think about energy use and greenhouse gases emissions in her business: "Are there formulas? [...] How do you make those tough decisions in the end? [We] make them on a daily basis [there's a] constantly changing methodology... [and] ever changing outcome." Members and staff also tend to have little knowledge of local or regional ecology. Other than three Food for Thought meetings where staff invited partners from environmental organizations to present, conversations about environmental issues remain broad and general. Specific local and regional issues like air pollution from the incinerator, coke piles near the Detroit river, contaminated land from Detroit's manufacturing

legacy, lead pollution in homes, groundwater contamination from livestock production, the specific effects of climate change on regional flora and fauna, Michigan's energy supply, and the Line 5 oil pipeline through the Straits of the Mackinac are never mentioned (Matheny 2015; Thomason 2013).

Figure 3.8: Word maps demonstrating the prevalence of key food systems themes in Detroit, San Francisco, and Oakland. Clockwise from top left: Detroit, San Francisco, and Oakland. Maps were produced using an online tool called Wordle based on local food policy council reports. They include the top 50 reoccurring words in each document, excluding common English terms (e.g. and, or, like).

This trend is reinforced by the way FoodLab is embedded in local networks. Though FoodLab had some connection with environmental organizations in its first few years, as it has grown the network has become more deeply enmeshed in Detroit's Good Food and economic revitalization movements, collaborating regularly with other AFIs and with business development organizations, and rarely with environmental organizations. Unlike in other cities, Detroit AFIs tend to focus on the 'healthy,' 'fair,' and 'affordable' aspects of Good Food more noticeably than the 'green.' Figure 3.1 demonstrates this emphasis. It shows a map of frequently used terms in 2010 reports by the Detroit Food Policy Council (Pothukuchi 2011), Oakland Food Policy Council (OFPC 2010), San Francisco Food Policy Council (Jones 2010). The word "sustainable" shows up frequently in Oakland and San Francisco, but not in

Detroit. "Healthy" and "Access" show up in all three cases, but Detroit is the only place where "SNAP" (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program) or "food security" is used frequently enough to appear.

FoodLab's first permanent headquarters was located at the Green Garage, a co-working community focused on organizations working on urban sustainability. Yet recently, the staff and board have been discussing a plan to move into shared-space in a more traditional business development organization. FoodLab was fiscally sponsored for its first three years by a local environmental organization, Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice (DWEJ) and its original funding came from DWEJ who was looking to explore the development of sustainable business networks in the region. But while the organizations remain on good terms, the relationship became less central after FoodLab became an independent non-profit. Furthermore, the large majority of FoodLab's funding today comes from programs that focus on food and community or economic development versus environmental issues.

Organizations, governments, and corporations across North America are developing tools and metrics to help businesses adopt more sustainable practices, but because the FoodLab network tends to focus on local knowledge, local connections, and local context, organizers have not prioritized reaching out to make new connections. As described in the example of waste management, the participatory nature of FoodLab means that Labbers have significant influence over programming and partnerships, and despite Labbers' generally positive attitude toward the environment, when forced to prioritize effort and attention in the context of limited organizational and staff resources, the immediacy of other issues tends to take precedence.

CONCLUSION

FoodLab GFEs love local. To them, localisation means moving away from a system ruled by anonymous and elite interests towards a more vibrant, inclusive, and caring economy. The call to reflexive localism asks those engaged in movements for social and environmental change to move beyond the concept of 'local' as an endpoint, towards a way of thinking that:

> Conceptualize[s] locality first and foremost as a political space, "a place for organizing," in which

"the appropriate and necessary locus of both thought and action in the foodshed may sometimes be regional, national, and even global" (1996: 34, 40). The turn to locality is motivated not by some perceived virtue inherent to a particular location but by the prospect of fostering the engagement of citizens in an active process of change in which proximity literally grounds thought and action. […] Localities are sites of contestation at which "to *begin* the *global* task to which we are called" (Kloppenburg et al.1996: 41, emphasis added). (Kloppenburg and Hassanein 2006: 18).

The FoodLab network was conceived in this spirit. Despite an enthusiasm for locally-based activity, not all Labbers plunge headlong into the local trap, assuming that more local always equates to more environmental. Many experiment directly with environmental practices like recycling and composting, changing packaging, reducing waste, purchasing organic products, and raising customer consciousness, even when these practices appear to have no immediate economic benefit.

The FoodLab case suggests that a local orientation, and specifically the choice to remain small, empowers experimentation, but also limits potential for broader impact due to lack of capital, information, and economies of scale. Similarly, an entrepreneurs' social and cultural embeddedness in a network of supportive peers appears to encourage the development of more ecological attitudes and business practices, but only to the degree that that network prioritizes and is equipped to support environmental stewardship and action. The FoodLab network itself is socially and culturally embedded in Detroit's local Good Food and business development ecosystems, which tend to focus more heavily on economic revitalization and social justice than environmental issues. The network is not ecologically embedded, or connected to natural and ecological systems and processes in the local region. Furthermore, FoodLab has not prioritized connections with regional and national environmental and environmental justice organizations with specific environmental knowledge and expertise. As it operates today, the network's embeddedness in Detroit may actually undermine its capacity to support collective efforts around environmental stewardship.

FoodLab offers a space where GFEs can continue to advance their diverse and energetic experiments in reflexive localism. As planning and food scholar, Amory Starr, points out:

> [Entrepreneurs] are creating space, enabling new experiences, innovating, and providing meaningful jobs for other people who want to work their values. Social entrepreneurship as an approach to social change is personalistic, isolated, and unaccountable, but also experimental, decentralized, agile, and multi-issue [...we as scholars] have the choice to disdain this energy, to dissipate it, or to concentrate it and guide it to become more powerful (2010:486)

So, where do we go from here? When it comes to strengthening the role of small, locally-based GFEs in promoting more sustainable forms of capitalism, one key question is how to cultivate connections to both local and non-local organizations with technical experience and expertise in environmental practices and/or advocacy, including, perhaps, to large food corporations who have the resources to develop innovations or share resources that would be particularly relevant to food businesses. Another complementary question is how to not only promote new social connections, but also ecological embeddedness, or direct relationship to ecological processes and systems (Morris and Kirwan 2011). Underlying both questions are questions about leadership: How do GFE organizers balance urgent priorities (in this case, economic revitalization and equity) with important, but less urgent long-term concerns like care for the environment? How do they allow for individual experimentation and encourage coordinated and collective action? What is organizers' responsibility to influence the local network's capacity and priorities by bridging to other networks locally and beyond?

CHAPTER FOUR:

Experiments in equity: network weaving with Detroit food entrepreneurs

> A network weaver is someone who is aware of the networks around them and explicitly works to make them healthier. They do this by helping people identify their interests and challenges, connecting people strategically where there's potential for mutual benefit, and serving as a catalyst for self-organizing groups. – June Holley, *The Network Weaver Handbook,* 2012

INTRODUCTION

Food entrepreneurship is on the rise in North America. There were more than 135 active kitchen incubators in the US as of 2013, compared to only 50 documented in 2008 (Dent 2008, Econsult Solutions 2013). The specialty food industry grew from $35 billion in 2005 to $109 billion in 2014 (Purcell and Tanner 2015). Both federal and private investment in food businesses is increasing[xxvii]; and in the past five years, a new class of consultants has emerged to support alternative food business development[xxviii]. Fueled by diverse food movements and expanding foodie culture (Starr 2010), a growing ecosystem of practitioners, planners, investors, and policy-makers is promoting small, local, organic, fair-trade, healthy, and otherwise alternative food businesses as a local economic development strategy (Cantrell 2009; Glaeser 2010; Harworth 1999, Masi et. al. 2010; O'Hara 2011).

This phenomenon has the potential to benefit communities by increasing access to healthy food and opportunities for economic self-sufficiency, ownership, and wealth generation; however both food systems scholars and activists on the ground have criticized entrepreneurial food initiatives as an elite pursuit that affords opportunity to affluent, primarily White residents, and fails to address the interests of working class people or people of color (Allen 1999; Donald and Blay-Palmer 2006; Dowler and Caraher 2003; Sbicca 2015). To what extent does the current practice of and ecosystem around food entrepreneurship reinforce unequal access to opportunity for certain groups, versus promoting equity and inclusion?

Over a five-year period from 2011 to 2016, I explored this question with the entrepreneurs of FoodLab Detroit, a member-based network of more than 200 small food enterprises (also known as Labbers) and our partners and

allies. I founded FoodLab in response to energy in my personal circles, and to learn from food entrepreneurs on the ground. As is typical in action research, questions were motivated at first by "real life puzzles and frustrations" rather than by gaps in scholarly literature (Herr and Anderson 2005:72). This paper is one in a series that documents some of these inquiries to-date.

While FoodLab offers training, access to shared use space, connections to capital, and other traditional entrepreneurial support services, its primary focus is on network weaving (Krebs and Holley 2002), or intentionally cultivating social capital both to benefit individual businesses (Me-capital**)** and the group (We-capital**)**. As the network grew and evolved in response to local needs, we became especially interested in asking, *how can we weave our network to support justice in food entrepreneurship in Detroit?* This mixed methods case study draws on multiple qualitative sources and a network survey to review FoodLab's network-weaving efforts to date and offer our experience and insight to researchers and practitioners who are interested in the intersection between entrepreneurship, equity, and local economic development.

Weaving Me- and We-capital

Social capital is a broad concept with differing definitions across multiple disciplines (Adler and Kwon 2002). I start with Baker and Faulkner's "lean" definition of social capital as the "forms and uses of networks" (2009:1532). From the beginning, Labbers thought about networks as a resource that they hoped to build for two uses: (1) to benefit their *individual* businesses and (2) to have a *collective* impact on Detroit's food economy. Notes from early meetings include phrases like: "We're not only working on our own businesses, we're also working on the network, the greater ecosystem." Labbers said they hoped both to build their personal networks to access new resources, information, and opportunities, and to create a coalition that could bridge divided groups (Black and White, inner city and suburban, foodies and food activists) and take coordinated action, from supporting other would-be entrepreneurs, to establishing social and environmental standards, to engaging in advocacy around topics of common interest like economic justice.

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These two ways of thinking about network uses correspond to two common and divergent ways that social capital is often conceptualized in the literature. As Borgatti et. al. explain:

> One usage – exemplified by Putnam (1995) – conceives of social capital as a quality of groups (usually whole societies). It is partly cultural, partly socio-structural [...]. Another usage – exemplified by Burt (1992) – conceives of social capital as the value of an individual's social relationships. [...] In a somewhat different vein, Burt (1992) suggests that certain configurations of relationships with others confer significant information and control benefits. This view is rooted in a long sociological tradition of viewing an actor's position in a social network as determinant of its opportunities and constraints (1998:1-2).

I call the latter, 'Me-capital' and the former, 'We-capital.' Me-capital appears more frequently in management and organization literature where social capital tends to be defined as an advantage accruing to an individual by virtue of her structural position in a network (Baker 2014; Burt 2001, 2004, 2010). For example, research on entrepreneurship focuses on how ties conferring emotional support, information, advice, goods and services, and/or norms or expectations affect outcomes like firm entrance, exit, and growth (Greve and Salaff 2003; Hoang and Antoncic 2003; Zimmer and Aldrich 1986).

Not only size, but also the content, quality, and structure of an entrepreneur's network, matters to his or her success. For example, Hoang and Antoncic find that trust is a "critical element of network exchange that [...] enhances the quality of the resource flows" (2003:170). Ties to entrepreneurial parents or relatives strongly correlate to higher rates of self-ownership (Fratoe 1988) as well as to small business survival, though not necessarily to financial performance (Hoang and Antoncic 2003). A denser network can allow for flow of information, resources, capital, which means that "rates of entrepreneurship should be higher in highly organized populations" like business associations (Zimmer and Aldrich 1986:17). Actors also benefit from network diversity (or heterogeneity) because this exposes them to a broader set of opportunities and ideas (Borgatti et. al. 1998).

On the other hand, We-capital appears most frequently in literature on social movements, community development, and political science, where social capital tends to be thought of as a collective good, accruing a benefit to the whole (Ansell 2003; Baker and Faulkner 2009; Carroll and Ratner 1996; Diani 2003; Putnam 1995; Rosenthal et. al. 1985). We-capital is comprised of two parts: intra-group ties and inter-group ties. A dense internal

network of mutual trust and reciprocity, also known as 'bonding' capital or 'closure' allows for direct transmission of ideas or codes; and perhaps more importantly, helps to reinforce 'good behavior' (e.g. behavior that conforms to group norms) and punish 'bad behavior,' which in turn strengthens shared norms, values, codes, and identity, and increases potential for collective action (Ostrom 2007; Rydin and Pennington 2000). On the other hand, inter-group 'bridging' or 'brokering' ties can connect otherwise fragmented clusters and reduce the distance between diverse individuals or organizations, thereby increasing a base for mobilization, decreasing the potential for marginalization and radicalization, and promoting innovation via the exchange of diverse ideas and information (Diani 1997; Granovetter 1983; Rosenthal et. al. 1985).

Following the popularization of the concept of social capital, more and more scholars and practitioners have become interested in how Me- and We- capital might be actively cultivated for the good of individuals, groups, and communities. I call this activity 'network weaving' after Krebs and Holley (2002). Network weaving by different names has become an increasingly popular concept over the past 10 years especially among those interested in organizations (Baker 2014; Cross et. al. 2001, 2004; Obstfeld 2005), community organizing and community development (Evans and Syrett 2007; Kania and Kramer 2011; Rusch 2010; Woolcock 2001), and other social change practitioners (McLeod Grant and Flower 2011; Podolny 2007). While both researchers and practitioners most often focus on the positive potential of network weaving, it is important to note that it can have negative effects. For example, when weaving We-capital, a larger or denser network may be more influential or easier to mobilize, but this begs the questions, "to what end?" and "for whose benefit?" High density or strong bonding capital in the absence of bridging capital can lead to isolation, radicalization, and xenophobia (Rusch 2009). For example, in 1940s and 1950s Detroit, organizers of White homeowner associations created dense networks that reinforced racial stereotypes against Blacks and direct resistance against mixed neighborhoods (Sugrue 1996). Within FoodLab, network weaving is *intended* to support both the success of individual entrepreneurs and a more just, diverse, and sustainable food economy.

<u>Equity in Detroit's food economy</u>

The city of Detroit faces several well-documented challenges. In 2011 when FoodLab was founded, the unemployment rate in the city was 22.2% (USDOL 2016). By 2013, though unemployment rates had declined, nearly 40% of the population still lived below the federal poverty level. In the same year, the city declared bankruptcy – the largest municipal case in U.S. history – and was taken over by a state-appointed emergency financial manager. While noteworthy, these events were not surprising given trends starting in the 1950s: economic disinvestment, increased crime, deteriorating infrastructure, and consistent population loss, especially among Whites and middle and upper class African Americans. As of 2015, the city was 83% Black, compared to less than 15% in nearby Oakland and Washtenaw Counties (USCB 2015). The city's decline has been linked to historical job discrimination, redlining, and other examples of structural racism primarily targeting African Americans (Sugrue 1996).

In the face of these challenges, there has been growing interest and investment in Detroit's revitalization, with a strong emphasis on local economic development, workforce development, and especially entrepreneurship (New Economy Initiative 2014; Solomon 2013). This energy spans industries, but food has special cache. National media regularly run articles about Detroit's renaissance, referencing its growing 'food scene' (Bruni 2015; Compton 2015; Cowley 2014; McMillan 2015). A prominent White restaurateur earned the tongue-in-cheek nickname, "BBQ Jesus," for his role in developing the Corktown neighborhood (Rupersburg 2012). In his 2012 State of the City address, former Mayor Dave Bing praised entrepreneurs for "help[ing] to establish a new Detroit;" half the businesses he named were in food (Bing 2012).

Yet the entrepreneurs and foodies fueling excitement around new locally owned restaurants, coffee shops, and specialty food companies, and turning the city into a so-called "hipsters' paradise" (Woods 2014), are often disconnected from Detroit's food movement. Local AFIs tend to focus less on for-profit entrepreneurship and more on creative initiatives around food justice, community food security, and healthy food access in response to

disproportionately high rates of poverty, joblessness, hunger, and child mortality, the prevalence of diet-related issues like heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and related low rates of fruit and vegetable consumption. Some like the Detroit Food Justice Taskforce, Detroit Black Community Food Security Network (DBCFSN) and Uprooting Racism and Planting Justice frame this work as undoing systemic racial oppression and creating more just systems through food activism. Many have been critical of the tone of development, concerned that initiatives catering to elite or creative classes benefit incoming, primarily White, 'newcomers' while ignoring, alienating, or even causing displacement of Black, 'Detroit natives' (Airey 2015; Bienkowski 2011; Ignaczak 2016; Montgomery 2015). While some Detroit food initiatives are entrepreneurial and market-based (e.g. farmers' markets, market gardens, food box distribution schemes, development of a cooperative grocery, prescriptions and subsidies for healthy food purchases) many organizers, like the well-respected Director of DBCFSN, believe that capitalism is "naturally exploitative and unsustainable" and that "the answers to many of the social problems we face lie in capitalism giving way to a more equitable system of distributing resources that upholds the dignity of all human beings and respects nature" (Yakini 2013).

From the beginning, FoodLab found itself at the intersection between this vibrant local food movement, which emphasized social justice, and racial equity ; and a popular campaign for economic revitalization, which championed entrepreneurship, but often eschewed ethical questions related to rights, democracy, and fair distribution of resources (Foley 2013). Could the two be reconciled? As one local journalist asked:

> Today, the City of Detroit is undergoing a supposed process of "emergency" macro-economic revitalization, but can it do so without addressing the historical scars of racial dispossession, and contemporary white supremacy? I'd like to argue that by failing to consider the role of race in contemporary economic development efforts, Detroit's leaders and dreamers are likely to repeat the mistakes of the past, perpetuating structural violence against impoverished people of color in Southeast Michigan. (Zagorin 2013)
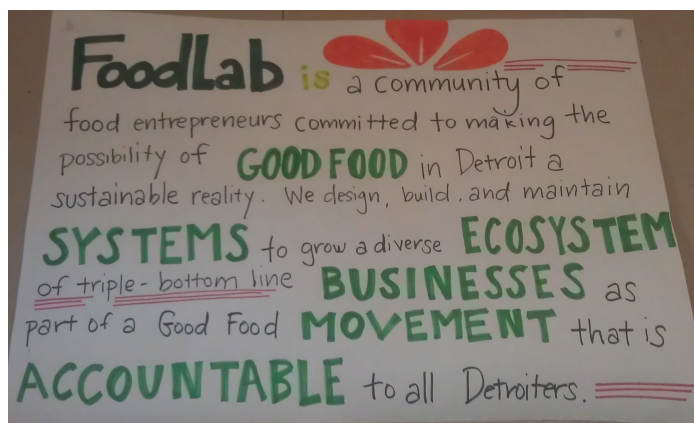
Figure 4.1: FoodLab's seed statement. FoodLab's "seed" statement or mission statement, written and adopted by the original staff and a member-led steering committee in fall of 2011.

In response, FoodLab leadership wanted to understand how could we weave networks to help "grow a diverse ecosystem of triple bottom line food businesses as part of a Good Food movement that is accountable to all Detroiters" (Figure 4.1). Could entrepreneurs contribute to a more stable *and* just food economy?

Over time, this question took many forms: How do new food businesses affect healthy food access across different populations? Do food businesses employ just labor practices? To what extent do new food businesses contribute to gentrification and displacement? In this paper, however, I focus on the process of network weaving to promote food business ownership, restating my original question in different terms: *how might entrepreneur organizers weave networks to support justice around business ownership?*

To answer, I draw on Rawls' seminal theory on "justice as fairness" (2009). Rawls argues that justice means first, equal access to basic liberties like free speech and personal property; then, equality of opportunity (e.g. entrepreneurs with equal ability and equal desire to start a business should have the same chance at success); and finally, making decisions according to the "Difference Principle," which states that inequalities (e.g. differential rates of self-ownership or entrepreneurial success or access to resources) should be arranged for the benefit of the least advantaged members of society. In the rest of the paper, I describe and analyze Me-capital and We-capital in FoodLab to-date, according to their potential to advance these criteria.

METHODS

In the tradition of insider research, inquiry was designed to integrate with, rather than add-to, day-to-day organizational activity and record keeping (Herr and Anderson 2005). It was also emergent, evolving to remain

"nimble, adaptable, and exquisitely finessed to the local context of the study and the unfolding complexity of the universe" (Thorp 2006:120). I received human subjects research approval in August 2011 (Michigan State University Human IRB #11-729). I draw on data collected between August 2011 and April 2016, focusing on a social network survey conducted from November 2015 to January 2016 and qualitative data including organizational records, field notes and 17 in-depth member interviews. The work is ongoing, and the network is still young, so analysis is meant to offer potential "trajectories and expansions" by examining conversations and activities to date, rather than pronouncing a final verdict on FoodLab's impact (Starr 2010:486).

Borrowing from other action research traditions, I judge my work first by its catalytic validity, or "the ability of research participants [including myself] to better know and transform their circumstances" (Thorp 2006:134). In her essay "Between a Rock and a Soft Place," feminist ethnographer Patti Lather writes "if we want illuminating theory grounded in trustworthy data, we must formulate self-corrective techniques that will check the credibility of our data and minimize the distorting effect of personal bias upon the logic of evidence" (1986:65). As I became enmeshed in the social and cultural patterns that I wanted to understand, I ran the risk of losing the forest for the trees. I adopted multiple strategies to increase the logic, credibility, and usefulness of my interpretations including data triangulation (Stake 1995); member checks (Lather 1986); ongoing dialogue with "critical friends," including other researchers who were studying FoodLab (Herr and Anderson 2005:57); and a commitment to reflexivity or regularly examining and uncovering my own biases in the course of interpretation (Richardson 2000). Though FoodLab as an organization was participatory, the conclusions in this paper are my own.

Network analysis

The survey asked Labbers to identify ties that were helpful to them in starting their business in the past year, including both fellow Labbers and relationships outside the FoodLab network. The survey was programmed and administered using the online tool, Qualtrics. It was designed in collaboration with FoodLab staff, especially the

Director of Membership, and was tested by three staff members, six FoodLab members, and three critical friends before launch.

The survey began with a series of questions about respondents' demographics, business information, and business attitudes, including their motivations for starting their business[xxix]. Labbers had an option to import information from existing membership records, when possible. Next, they were asked a series of questions about their helping networks. For ties within FoodLab, respondents selected from a full list of all current members and staff. For ties outside of the FoodLab network, they were asked to generate the names of up to 50 additional individuals and/or organizations. After identifying their networks, respondents were asked follow-up questions about each tie, including relative importance of the relationship; levels of trust; whether the tie primarily offered (1) friendship and emotional support and/or (2) advice, resources, and opportunities; and whether they were connected via FoodLab or by another means. At the end of the survey, Labbers were offered an option to send an automatic note of appreciation or "HOLLA-Gram" to fellow members who had helped them in some way with their business. Table 4.1 includes a list of the basic network questions, and the full survey is included in Appendix D.

Table 4.1: Basic network tie questions

1. Who have you connected with in the FoodLab network? Please check the box next to <u>everyone who you have talked to directly either in person, on the phone, or by email</u>. If the name sounds familiar, but you aren't sure if you've connected, please leave it blank.
2. Of the FoodLab members you're connected with, who has helped you to launch, run, or grow your business?
3. Who else outside of FoodLab has helped you to launch, run, or grow your business? This can include family members, friends, non-FoodLab entrepreneurs, staff or volunteers at other business support organizations, etc.

Recruitment began in November 2015, with an initial email to all current FoodLab members (N=150) explaining the purpose of the survey and presenting a link to access the survey online. From November 2015 to January 2016, the survey team followed up on this initial email with periodic electronic reminders and phone calls to those who had not yet taken the survey. The FoodLab staff also provided technical support at member events and over the phone

to support those with accessibility challenges, including limited internet access. This resulted in a 50% response rate (n=75).

Analysis consisted of exporting data to Excel, calculating descriptive statistics, and cross-tabulating statistics against demographic and business characteristics from the network survey and membership records. Where noted in the text, differences between group means and correlations were tested for statistical significance at the level α=0.05. Besides calculating tie counts and proportions, I also calculated scores for network heterogeneity across race, gender, and location to understand the degree of diversity in Labbers' networks[xxx].

Qualitative analysis

The case also draws on qualitative data to develop more clear and nuanced interpretations of the quantitative analysis and offer illustrative examples. This paper comes out of an ongoing project, and uses analysis from an earlier phase of research wherein a large qualitative data set, including FoodLab member business descriptions, field notes, meeting notes, and interviews (Table 4.2) was coded into ten major themes representing the most prevalent topics among FoodLab members and staff across a period of four years (Table 4.3). For this paper, I drew on a subset of that data: all the content from the two relevant (and coincidentally, most prevalent) codes, "Community/Connection," and "Social and Economic Justice." After completing the first stage of tabulating basic statistics from the network data, I began the process of reading, re-reading, remembering, and writing memos on my interpretation of the

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Table 4.2: Qualitative data sources

Business Descriptions are written by members when they apply for membership and are posted to their public profile on FoodLab's website (http://foodlabdetroit.com); members are asked both for a general description of their business and to answer: "What does Good Food mean to your business?"

Field notes were taken by the author from September to November 2011 during a crucial period of FoodLab's founding when an early group of entrepreneurs were negotiating FoodLab's mission, guiding principles, and criteria for membership.

Meeting notes were taken by meeting attendees, from "Food for Thought" meetings, hosted monthly since January 2011 and Annual Membership Meetings in November 2013 and November 2014. Both of these were venues where FoodLab members engaged in facilitated discussion on their role in Detroit's food movement via topics chosen by members.

Interviews. From May 2013 to August 2014, FoodLab collaborated with a team of researchers from the University of Michigan (UM) to investigate our organization's role in Detroit's emerging food movement. The team conducted semi-structured interviews with 17 FoodLab member entrepreneurs to ask about their business's motivations and goals.

survey results through the lens of the research question, supported by the qualitative data on the themes of connection and justice[xxxi]. I shared initial drafts of analysis with FoodLab's director of membership and three critical friends.

Table 4.3: Prevalence of ten core themes in FoodLab network meetings and conversations	
Themes	Prevalence of theme in conversation
Community / Connection	1 (tie)
Social and Economic Justice	1 (tie)
Local Food, Economy, and Ownership	3
Environment / Sustainability	4
Food Access and Food Security	5
Quality Ingredients and Process	6 (tie)
Culture and Tradition	6 (tie)
Health	8
Uplift / Empower	9
Farmers (Urban and Rural)	10

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Network weaving in FoodLab

FoodLab grew out of a series of informal monthly gatherings that started around my kitchen table. As the group grew, we became increasingly organized, writing a charter, designing and launching programs, securing a

Table 4.4: FoodLab timeline	
January 2011	First informal meeting; monthly meetings continue and transition into "Food for Thought" meetings.
January 2012	Host first "Building your Good Food Business Bootcamp."
April 2012	Online listserv grows to 100 participants.
October 2012	Adopt mission statement.
July 2013	With partner, Eastern Market Corporation, launch "Detroit Kitchen Connect" a network of licensed commercial kitchen spaces.
November 2013	Formalize membership and host first annual membership meeting.
October 2014	Membership reaches 100.
September 2015	Incorporate as independent 501c3 non-profit organization.

fiscal sponsor, raising funds, hiring staff, and eventually incorporating as an independent non-profit (Table 4.4). Programs were organized around "three Cs": "Cultivate," "Connect," and "Catalyze"; *cultivating* individual triple bottom line businesses[xxxii], *connecting* these businesses with one another and with resources they need along the way, and attempting to *catalyze* coordinated action within the network and in collaboration with partners.

Each of the three Cs emphasizes different varieties of what Flora and Flora (2008) call community capitals: 'Cultivate' focuses on building human and financial capital; 'Connect' focuses on social capital, and 'Catalyze' focuses on cultural and political capital. In the early stages of the network, it became apparent that our efforts to cultivate human and financial capital and catalyze cultural and political capital overlapped with other organizations in our ecosystem[xxxiii]. Yet few of these partners explicitly focused on growing social capital, the conduits by which information, ideas, opportunities, resources, and support could flow.

Network weaving became FoodLab's primary focus. It took several forms: facilitated networking at workshops and events; a moderated online listserv; direct introductions by FoodLab staff amongst Labbers and between Labbers and other resource partners; organizing and encouraging collaboration between entrepreneurs on a variety of projects; and highlighting stories about connection in internal and external communications.

Early network formation: asking who is at the table

Who was around the table at the first meeting in January 2011? Of the ten attendees, six were men and four were women; two (including myself) identified as Asian, and the rest identified as White. All lived in the city of Detroit. The question of who was and who should be at the table was a dominant theme of conversation in the first six months. A core group of early members primarily led by three White women in their mid-20s[xxxiv] stated a desire to be "intentional" about forming a group that was diverse and representative of Detroit's population and urged the group to proceed slowly:

> There's still a fact that we're not inclusive [...] and we're bulldozing ahead because we're entrepreneurs. But the city moves at a certain pace, and I want to respect that. I want to be careful of aggregating power as a group of predominantly White entrepreneurs.

Conversations about race were connected to conversations about location. The same group who was conscious and outspoken about racial dynamics was also aware of disparities in wealth, employment, city services, and more between the inner city and Detroit suburbs and of the racial dynamics behind these differences. As the Director of DBCFSN summarized in the introduction to a FoodLab meeting on "Good Food Business, Race, and Intentionality":

> We have a challenge with Detroit being one of the most impoverished cities in [the United States], which was caused by intentional disinvestment in Detroit after the tremendous White flight. White people left because of racism in the 50s and 60s, and they took their businesses with them. This was an exodus of small and big businesses. There has also been intentional investment in the ring of suburbs surrounding the city, as people spend their money out there instead of in Detroit.

As early Labbers discussed FoodLab's scope and specifically, the criteria for membership in the network, this awareness led to questioning about whether the network should allow members from Metro Detroit or only from within city limits. Some were pragmatic and said that Detroit-based businesses could only survive by seeking markets in the Metro area and beyond; some hoped the network could promote connection, understanding, and cooperation across geography and racial lines; but others were concerned that a larger scope would dilute the network's focus on economic revitalization in Detroit proper, or that the network would amass power and resources, which would be channeled out to primarily White suburbs instead of benefiting majority Black residents in Detroit. Eventually, the group agreed that the network would include members from Metro Detroit, but that programming would take place primarily in Detroit and that the network would focus on providing Detroit-specific information and resources (e.g. information about catering licenses, which varies by city).

Noticing network inequality

Over time, the FoodLab network grew and it became possible to observe differences in resources and opportunities among members. Some Labbers had lost jobs or homes to foreclosure; others were employed and owned their homes outright. Some were single parents or had dependent relatives; others had living parents who provided financial support for them and their business. Some had lived in Detroit their whole lives; others had lived elsewhere and been exposed to diverse experiences and businesses. With the emphasis on social capital and connection, it became especially clear that some Labbers were well connected and some were not. In one early

meeting, a White male entrepreneur in his mid-20s who had grown up in the Detroit suburbs, left for a job after college, and recently returned to the area, explained that Detroit was "hands-down the best place for networking between food businesses." On the other hand, a Black female entrepreneur in her 40s who had lived in Detroit her entire life said, "When you guys say this name or that name, I have no idea who you're talking about. [...] It's just me." In at least two Food for Thought meetings, members discussed racial segregation in Detroit, and the fact that the "entrepreneur scene" in particular, was White-dominated. One entrepreneur explained: "friends of color would leave events where other people were mostly White because of past experiences."

There was also a sense that the quality of networks varied by race. A business owner who had been running her establishment for more than 30 years explained that early on she encountered many people, including some who she had considered friends, who were reluctant to share information that might allow her to "get ahead." "I wanted to join FoodLab to tell everyone how much I wish it had been around when I was started," she said. "I've always shared what I know [… and] I made a promise that I would never do to others what many had done to me." Another member who later joined the FoodLab staff asked, "Why aren't Black people supporting other Black people? [We] need to do a better job. Black people don't feel validated unless a White person crowns you." A member of the steering committee explained "there's a feeling of no access, so when you get attention, you want to keep it to yourself." A number of Labbers, all Black women, said this behavior was pervasive in their networks. More than one described the phenomenon as "crabs in a barrel," in other words, a survival response to "climb over" others in response to a scarce environment.

Targeted network weaving

Given these observations about members' experiences, and given awareness of inequity more broadly, early FoodLab leadership made formal and informal attempts to target network weaving practices to support Black and low-income entrepreneurs. The intention was to help disconnected entrepreneurs become better connected and to cultivate an overall culture of cooperation, reciprocation, and trust.

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Figure 4.2: Images related to FoodLab's network weaving strategies. Clockwise from top left: (1) The "Connect" panel of a triptych highlighting the 3Cs at the Annual Membership Meeting includes a collage titled "FoodLab = Free Hugs!!" with photos of members embracing at events. (2) Members participate in a "Machine of Rhythms" activity designed to raise participants' consciousness to their role in a larger system (Boal 2002). (3) Member being honored with the annual FoodLab "Growing the Pie Award" for her efforts to provide mentorship to other Labbers. (4) Sharing food, potluck style, is central to most FoodLab events and is a primary way that members connect.

In 2013, a steering committee member and part-time staff member invented "FoodLab Mantras" which staff and members chanted at meetings and used in written communications – one of these phrases, "Grow that Pie" came out of the idea that Labbers could work together to grow a larger proverbial economic pie. Labbers used the terms "FoodLab friends" and "FoodLab family" to refer to other members to suggest mutually supportive, positive relationships. Workshops and meetings often included activities that facilitated the development of new relationships and highlighted the collective (Figure 4.2). Staff told stories of connection between members in both internal and

external communications like the "We are FoodLab" storytelling project, and attempted to model positive collaboration by regularly expressing gratitude for and highlighting members as well as organizational partners and allies in the monthly newsletter and at events.

When FoodLab adopted a set of guiding principles in August 2010, it included "Actively cultivate diversity[xxxv]." FoodLab leaders (e.g. staff, steering committee, and highly engaged members) made other efforts, including targeted recruiting and engagement via personal circle and partner organizations in order to invite more people of color and specifically Black entrepreneurs to the network. A partner organization suggested that texting or calling to invite people to meetings would be more effective than email for some populations, so this became a regular practice. An early staff person, one of the three friends who were outspoken about social justice, organized childcare at meetings to make it easier for parents to attend. Transportation was an issue for some members, so organizers decided to rotate monthly meetings to different locations around the city, both so that members could get acquainted with different neighborhoods, and to bring activities closer to where members lived. At times, we helped to arrange carpools for members without transportation.

Beyond recruiting efforts, early FoodLab leadership discussed how to ensure that not only the membership, but also the leadership team was racially diverse. We also discussed how to fairly distribute new network resources like press opportunities, business opportunities (like catering referrals), scholarships for training, and other support, particularly when these resources were finite. These discussions went beyond equality. Following Rawls' Difference Principle, staff asked whether those who appeared to be the least advantaged (in this case, had more barriers to success like direct discrimination, lack of access to capital, fewer network connections, less experience, etc.) should be offered the greater share of connections. In many conversations, "entrepreneurs of color" or "low-income entrepreneurs of color" were assumed to be the least advantaged. The group did not devise a documented or public strategy for making these decisions, but had regular internal discussions on the topic.

<u>Demographics and business characteristics in 2016</u>

Table 4.5 shows a summary of demographic and business characteristics for survey respondents and for FoodLab overall as of January 2016, six years after the first meeting. The survey sample was similar to FoodLab's overall membership in terms of demographics and business characteristics with two differences: respondents tended to have been part of the FoodLab network for a slightly longer period of time, and as a group were slightly more advanced than the average FoodLab member[xxxvi].

Table 4.5: Labber demographics and business characteristics		
DEMOGRAPHICS	**FoodLab Overall (n= 150)**	**FoodLab Network Survey (n=75)**
Gender		
Female	72%	73%
Male	28%	27%
Other / Prefer not to identify	0%	0%
Race		
Black / African American	40%	38%
Latino	3%	4%
White / Caucasian	46%	48%
Asian American	5%	5%
Other	6%	5%
Age		
Min	--	19
Max	--	72
Average	--	43
Education Level		
Less than High School Graduate	--	0%
High School Graduate (including equivalency)	--	7%
Some College or Associate's Degree	--	23%
Bachelor's Degree	--	41%
Graduate or Professional Degree	--	29%
Location		
Detroit, Downtown / Midtown	9%	9%
Detroit, Other	39%	35%
Suburbs	52%	56%
BUSINESS CHARACTERISTICS	**FoodLab Overall (n=150)**	**FoodLab Network Survey (n=75)**
Average membership duration (years)		
Average	1.65	1.88
Business Stage		
Planning / pre-launch	33%	20%
Hobby / part-time, not planning to grow	3%	5%
Hobby / part-time, plan on growing into full-time	30%	35%
Full-time / primary employment	34%	40%

Table 4.5: (cont'd)		
Number of Years in Business		
Less than a year	28%	15%
1-2 years	41%	45%
3-5 years	23%	31%
6-10 years	5%	4%
11-19 years	1%	4%
20+ years	1%	1%
Making a Profit		
Not breaking even	31%	35%
Breaking even	26%	31%
Making a profit	26%	28%
I don't know	17%	7%
Annual sales		
Min	$0	$0
Max	$500,000.00	$500,000.00
Average	$40,001.00	$56,801.00
Median	$6,000.00	$10,000.00
Number of employees		
Min	0	0
Max	14	14
Average	2.3	2.7
Median	1	1

Table 4.6: Racial demographics by geography, FoodLab and overall					
	FoodLab	FoodLab (Detroit)	Detroit	FoodLab (Suburbs)	Oakland County
Black / African American	38%	64%	83%	17%	15%
Latino	4%	0%	7%	7%	4%
White / Caucasian	48%	30%	11%	62%	77%
Asian American	5%	6%	1%	5%	7%
Other Race	5%	0%	3%	10%	2%

Table 4.7: Education levels by geography, FoodLab and overall					
	FoodLab	FoodLab (Detroit)	Detroit	FoodLab (Suburbs)	Oakland County
High School Graduate or Higher	100%	100%	78%	100%	93%
College Grad or Higher	70%	72%	13%	69%	44%

More suburban members may mean less Black representation over time

As shown in Table 4.6, racial demographics in FoodLab mirror broader demographic trends: whereas the majority of Detroit-based FoodLab members are Black (64%), the majority of suburban members are White (62%). Currently, Detroit-based members are in the slight minority (44%) compared to suburban members (located
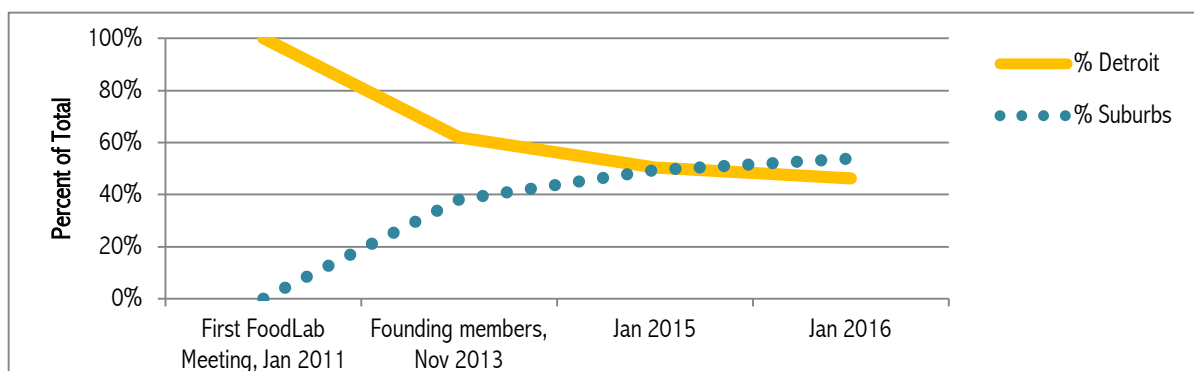
Figure 4.3: Change in FoodLab membership, by location.
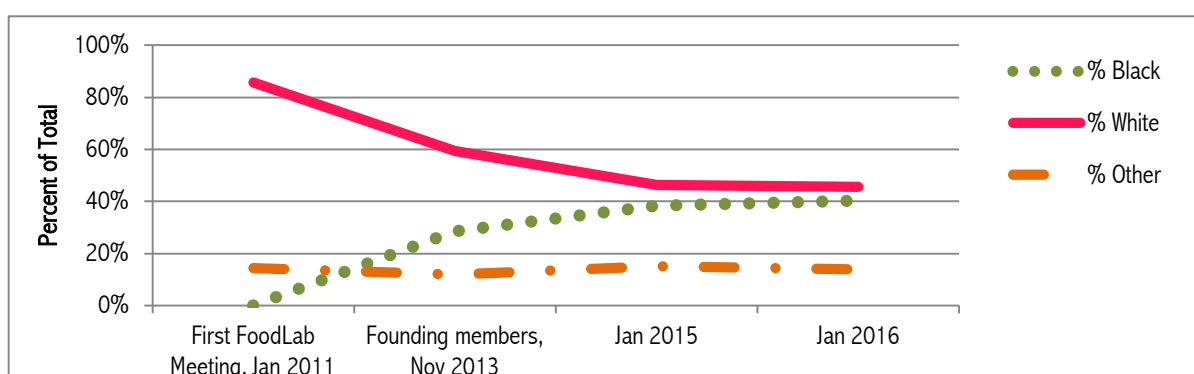
Figure 4.4: Change in FoodLab membership, by race.

primarily in neighboring Oakland County). This has been a dramatic shift since FoodLab's early years (Figure 4.3) when the majority of members were located in the city.

Nearly half of respondents identified as White; 38% identified as Black, and the remaining 14% identified as another race, including Latino, Asian, and Middle Eastern. 6% of Detroit-based members were Asian, compared to only 1% of the Detroit population, but no Detroit-based entrepreneurs who identify as Latino or of other races took the survey[xxxvii].

The percentage of Black entrepreneurs in FoodLab has been increasing since the network's inaugural meeting (Figure 4.4) but Black entrepreneurs are still under-represented among Detroit-based members (64% compared to 83% in the city overall), and the rate of increase of Black members appears to be leveling out, driven largely by the increase of members coming from majority-White suburbs.

Black entrepreneurs are starting businesses, but staying small

The data on member businesses shows differences in business characteristics per demographics. For example, more Detroit-based members are running their business full-time (60% versus only 24% of members in the suburbs), but fewer are making a profit (24% versus 31% of members in the suburbs). One potential explanation for this is that Detroit based members are more likely to run their business full-time instead of part-time because of lack of employment options. Even as it declines, the unemployment rate in Detroit continues to be approximately double that of Michigan (USDOL 2016).

Similarly, higher rates of unemployment among Blacks compared to other groups (White 2015) may also explain why half of Black business owners are running their businesses full-time, compared to only 39% of White entrepreneurs and 18% of those identifying as another race. While average annual sales are similar, median annual sales are substantially lower for Black entrepreneurs ($5K versus $15K for their White counterparts). This corresponds to broader trends; whereas the number of Black-owned business is increasing across the United States and in Detroit especially (USCB 2011), Black-owned firms tend to have few employees and low annual sales. In Detroit in 2012, 77% of businesses were Black-owned, but only 1.6% of these firms had paid employees, compared to 39% of White-owned firms. Average sales for Black-owned firms were $32,000, compared to $1.4 million for White-owned firms (USCB 2012).

Labbers tend to be college graduates

70% of survey respondents were college graduates compared with only 13% in Detroit overall and 26% in Oakland County (Table 4.7). This data is not currently collected as part of membership intake, so it was not possible to determine whether this ratio accurately describes FoodLab's total population[xxxviii]. Entrepreneurship literature often cites a link between levels of education and entrepreneurial success, and our sample bears this out. 30% of college graduates reported making a profit versus 23% of non-graduates. Average and median annual sales were

also higher (average of $60K versus $48K, median of $15K versus $8K). More graduates than non-graduates have been in business for 5 or more years (11% versus 4.6%).

Me-capital

Table 4.8 provides a high-level summary of information about Labbers' networks. Within FoodLab, respondents knew an average of 26 fellow members, or 17% of the total membership. Approximately a quarter (or six) of the individuals they knew helped them in some way in the past year to launch, run, or grow their business. FoodLab staff members were the most frequently named, accounting for 30% of helpful FoodLab ties.

Table 4.8: Summary of network survey results, total and by race				
(Average, unless otherwise stated)	Total	Black / African American	Other Race	White / Caucasian
Total FoodLab Ties	26	25.1	26.5	26.3
Total FoodLab Ties (median)	18	16.5	28	17
FoodLab Helpful Ties	6	21%	19%	25%
% FoodLab Helpful Ties of Total FoodLab Ties	23%	5.3	5.1	6.5
Other Helpful Ties	5	3.8	5.3	6.3
Total Helpful Ties	11	9.1	10.4	12.8
Total Helpful Ties, Met through FoodLab	4.3	3.8	3.3	5
% Helpful Ties, Met through FoodLab	34%	38%	31%	32%
Total Helpful Ties, Important to Essential	9	7.9	8.5	10.1
% Helpful Ties, Important to Essential	82%	86%	82%	79%
FoodLab Helpful Ties, Important to Essential	4.2	4.5	3.5	4.3
% FoodLab Helpful Ties, Important to Essential	70%	84%	68%	66%
Total Helpful Ties, Definitely or Probably Trust	9	7.8	7.5	10.3
% Helpful Ties, Definitely or Probably Trust	82%	81%	82%	82%
FoodLab Helpful Ties, Definitely or Probably Trust	4.7	4.6	4.1	4.9
% FoodLab Helpful Ties, Definitely or Probably Trust	79%	81%	84%	76%
Total Helpful Ties, Friendship or Emotional Support	7.6	6.6	6.8	8.6
% Helpful Ties, Friendship or Emotional Support	69%	67%	64%	72%
Total Helpful Ties, Advice, Resources, and Opportunities	7.5	6.6	5.7	8.6
% Helpful Ties, Advice, Resources, and Opportunities	62%	70%	53%	58%
% Other Helpful Ties, Family	21%	24%	9%	21%
% Other Helpful Ties, Friend	25%	23%	33%	22%
% Other Helpful Ties, Entrepreneur	26%	19%	14%	31%
% Other Helpful Ties, Business Support Organization	36%	38%	34%	33%

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Types of ties inside and outside of FoodLab

Besides fellow Labbers, respondents named an average of five additional individuals or organizations outside the network that helped them in the past year. Of these, 21% were family members, 25% were friends, 26% were entrepreneurs, and 36% were business support organizations or programs. Overall, members met approximately one-third of their total support network through FoodLab. In an addendum to the survey, one member suggested that even when she originally made some connections through other means, her participation in the network strengthened those ties:

> I want to add something important to my survey feedback. There are certain connections that I have made outside of FoodLab […]. Being part of [FoodLab] and attending events with people I've meet outside [of FoodLab], has been very important in strengthening those relationships.

How specifically were these relationships helpful? On average, 69% of these relationships provided friendship or emotional support and 62% provided advice, resources, or connection to opportunities. Many ties were multiplex, in other words, they provided more than one type of support. Table 4.9 gives examples in entrepreneurs' own words of the specific types of benefits that they received from fellow Labbers, including access to business inputs like

Table 4.9: Examples of tie content
Advice, Resources, and Connection to Opportunities
Access to Business Inputs (Space, Equipment, Materials, Labor)
• [He] was willing to loan me equipment that I needed at a critical time, He did not know me, he only knew that I was a member of FoodLab Detroit […].   • [He] was very kind and allow me to rent kitchen space from him in my efforts to complete the process for getting my business license in Detroit […].   • [She] helped me find a critical supplier for my business […]. Totally saved my butt!   • [She] was pivotal this year when it came to staffing for some special events […].
Access to Business Opportunities
• She offers [our] products in her cafe and always gives us great feedback along with tons of understanding as we continue to grow and improve our business. She is AWESOME.   • [She] was one of our first ever wholesale accounts, and the partnership is still going strong! We are so grateful to work with [her and her team].   • [They] gave me an opportunity to do a pop-up with them and they didn't even know much about me. But because we were both a part of FoodLab, they opened up and shared that opportunity with me.
Cross-promotion and Collaboration
• […] they cross promoted us on social media, which helped our engagement and following! Thanks guys!   • […] collaborating with her [...] was super delicious and the cross promotion helped our sales! Thanks [...]!

Table 4.9: (cont'd)

Advice and Learning Opportunities

- [She] has given me great insight as to the benefit and structure of certain bigger local food shows and events. Really helpful.
- When I was doing the buildout and licensing [she] was a great support. She took a lot of time to talk to me an answer questions, some probably stupid. I can still go to her and she will take the time to help with whatever I need. She has been the best part of my FoodLab connection.
- I offered [her] my help with processing her tomatoes, at harvest time. I wanted to get some experience working in a commercial kitchen. [...] the experience was enlightening.

Friendship and Emotional Support

- [He] is a great friend to see every week/weekend at Rustbelt Market or Eastern Market. Always so friendly and encouraging! We loved collaborating with him!
- [She] believed in me when I did not. She prophesied that my business would be bigger within a year and it, as well as I have grown tremendously. [She] supported me and gave me opportunities to get out there and shine!
- [She] is the inspirational speaker that the members need to keep them pumped up and motivated.

Multiplex

- [He] was an awesome resource for us. He always was open to me bouncing ideas off of him [...]. Also helped me navigate sourcing [...]. He also helped connect me to some local events that were very successful for us. Also [he] is a great person! Positive, energetic and just fun to be around! Go [you]!
- [She] is my [...] business mentor. She always has my back and is always there to offer advice. Though we are technically competition, it has never felt that way. I have been so lucky to have her as a friend.
- [He] is very friendly. I always get a hug with good vibes. [He] has supported me with a [contribution to my] Kiva Zip Loan.

space, equipment, materials, and labor; access to business opportunities; cross-promotion; and advice and learning opportunities.

Black Labbers have less Me-capital, especially exposure to entrepreneurial examples

How did Me-capital vary by race? Figures 4.5 and 4.6 show Labbers' average and median numbers of helpful ties overall. On average, White entrepreneurs have the largest supporting networks and Black entrepreneurs have the smallest[xxxix]. The median network size for both Black and White Labbers is even smaller, which suggests that a few members with many connections pull up the average.

It may be that because Black Labbers' tend to enjoy less me-capital overall, their connection with FoodLab is particularly important. Black entrepreneurs consider 84% of their FoodLab helping ties to be important, very important, or essential to their business' success, compared to 66% of White entrepreneurs and 68% of entrepreneurs of other races (Figure 4.7). They also named 53% of their FoodLab ties as offering friendship and emotional support compared to 49% of White entrepreneurs and only 21% of entrepreneurs of other races (Figure
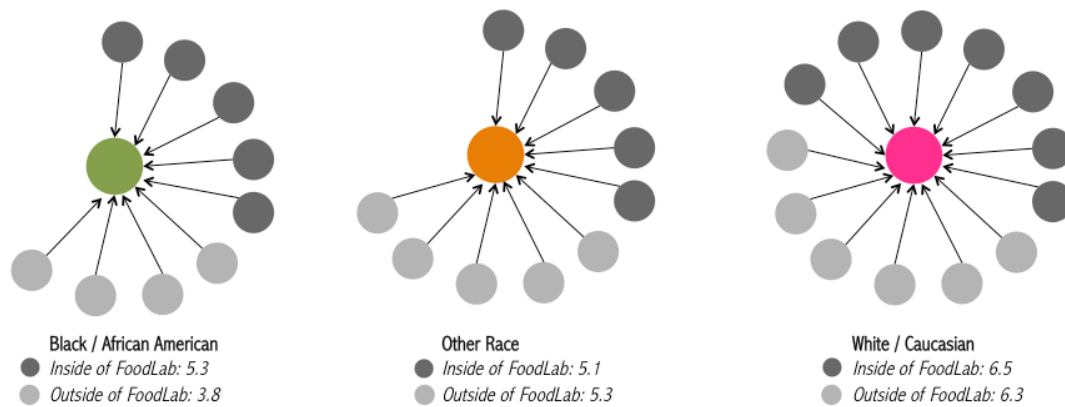
Figure 4.5: Average number of helpful ties inside and outside of FoodLab, by race.
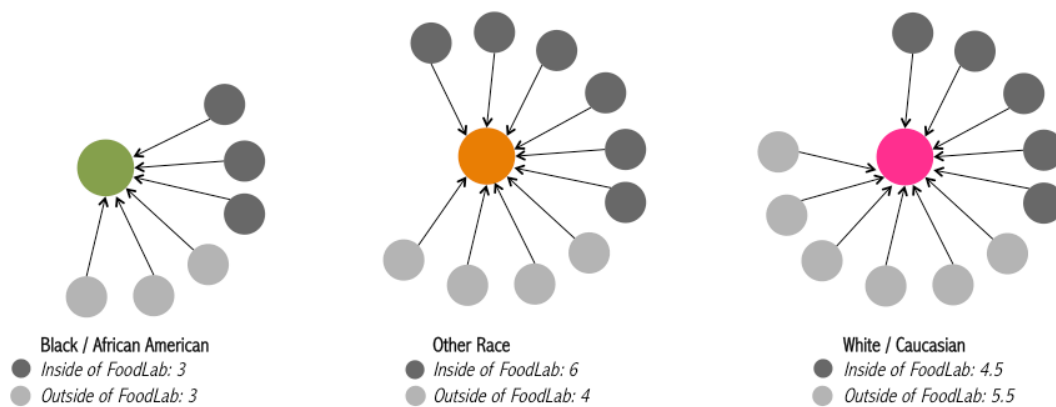
Figure 4.6: Median number of helpful ties inside and outside of FoodLab, by race.

4.8). In a counter-point to the "crabs in a barrel" scenario, 81% of Black entrepreneurs would definitely or probably trust other Labbers in their support network with sensitive business information, slightly more than White entrepreneurs (74%).

Entrepreneurs were asked whether they had a 'safety net,' should their business fail. Less than one-third of Black entrepreneurs (32%) said that they had extended friends or family that could support them in the case their business failed, a lower proportion than for other groups[xl] (Figure 4.9). Commensurate with other studies of Black business owners (Fratoe 1988), Black Labbers tend to have less exposure to entrepreneurial examples within their families and close circles than non-Black entrepreneurs [xli] (Figure 4.10). Compared to White members, Black Labbers' external networks are less likely to include entrepreneurs. Fewer have worked for a start-up or small business in the past or have someone in their family who is an entrepreneur.
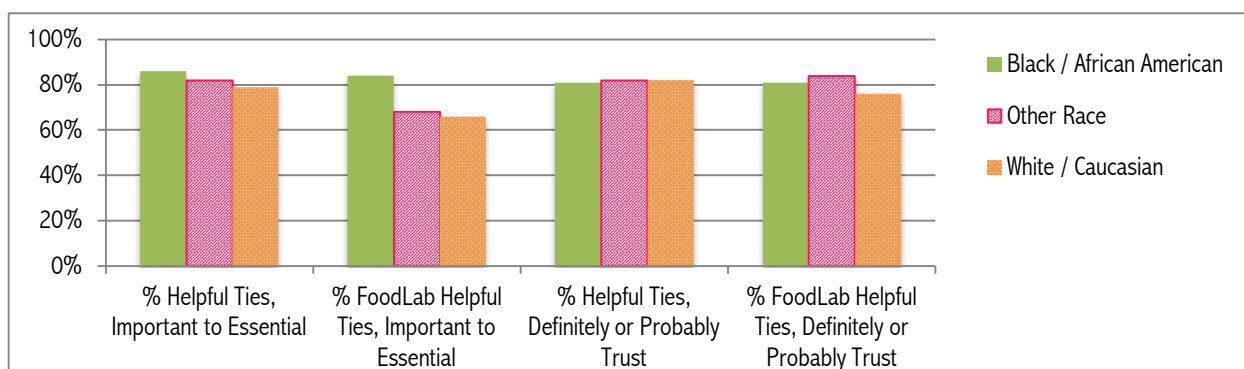
Figure 4.7: Importance and trust, by race.
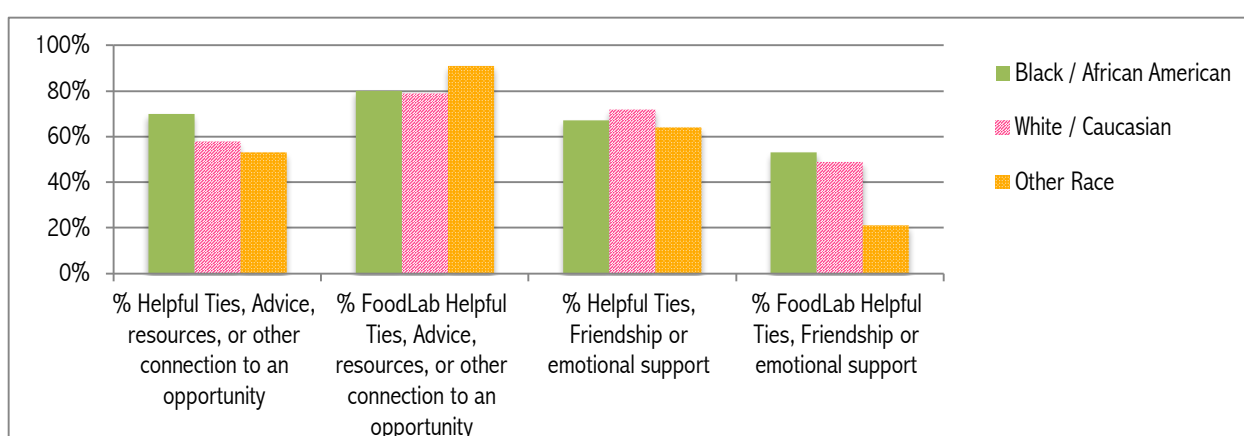
Figure 4.8: Information and opportunity v. friendship and emotional support ties, by race.

Exposure to entrepreneurial examples appears to be related to higher average and median annual sales (Figure 4.11). In addition, those who have family business connections or connections via a past start-up may enjoy a compounded advantage. Members with either an entrepreneur in the family or some experience working in a small business had two more helping ties on average (12.3 versus 10) than those who did not. This may be an example of a property of networks called the "Matthew Effect," based on the passage in the Bible: "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance" (Watts 2003). In other words, those who start off with more connections, tend to gain more connections over time.

Notably, a majority of Black members (62%) have started or run their own small business in the past, nearly twice the percent of Labbers who identify as White or Other Race (Figure 4.10). However, unlike the case with other

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Figure 4.9: Safety net, by race.

Figure 4.10: Exposure to entrepreneurship, by race.

Figure 4.11: Estimated annual sales according to exposure to entrepreneurship.
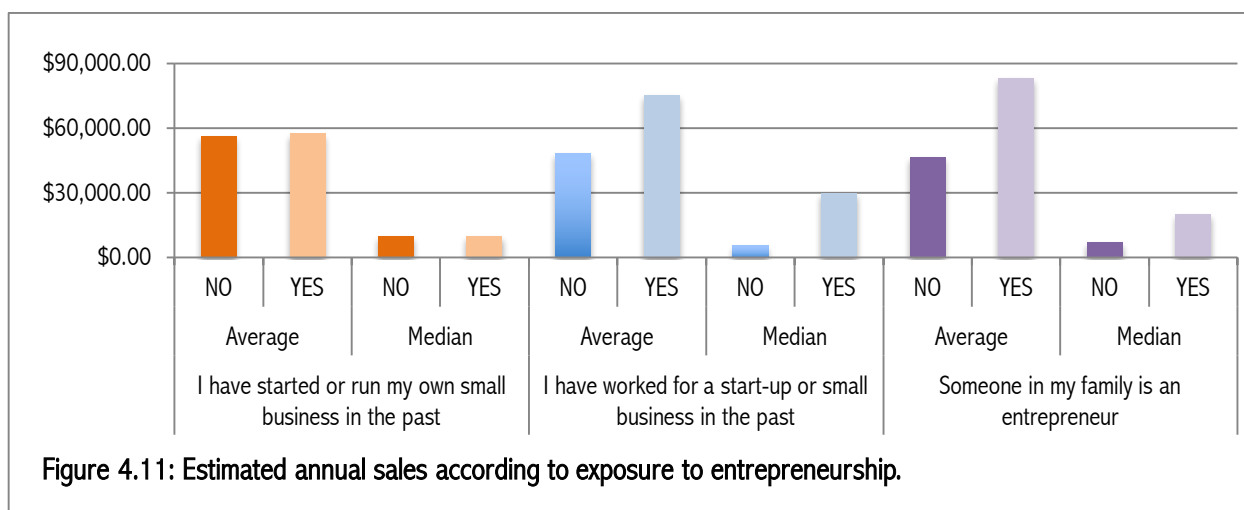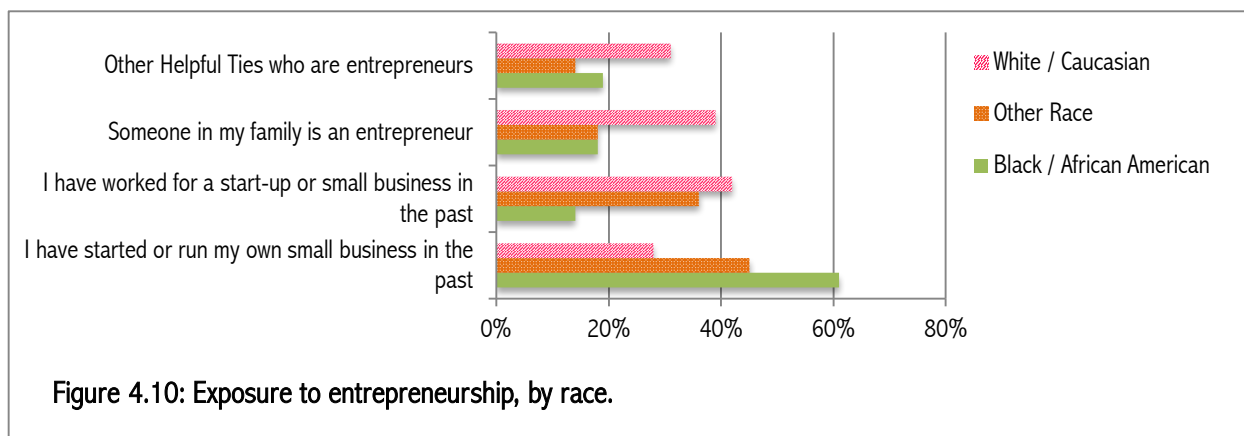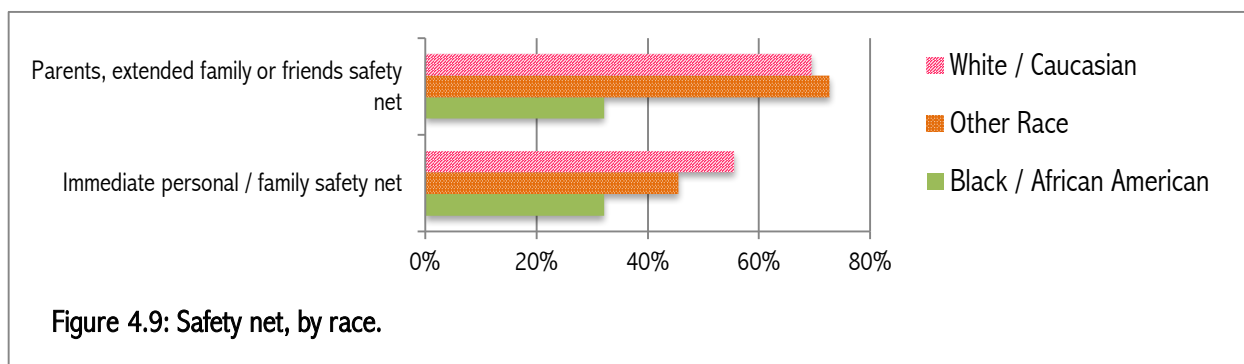
types of entrepreneurial exposure, those who have attempted to start a business in the past had the same median and average annual sales as those who have not, suggesting that this type of personal experience does not confer the same degree of advantage as exposure to entrepreneurial examples and connections (Figure 4.11).

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<u>We-capital</u>

The section above offered insight on social capital within FoodLab from the perspective of individual entrepreneurs. Me-capital appears to vary, especially by race, which suggests that there is still an opportunity for targeted weaving to ensure equal opportunity for entrepreneurs to grow successful businesses. In this section, I offer observations on We-capital, or the value of network connections from the perspective of the group.

Bridging race, seeding a culture of justice

When it comes to discussions about social and economic justice, Labbers often describe themselves as intentional bridges between groups that are divided, often based on race (Table 4.10). Recruiting was often discussed in these terms: as connecting with individual Black entrepreneurs and to other people of color who were not yet integrated into entrepreneurial ecosystems.

> How can we make these programs more accessible? It's about who you know and being a connector. As connectors, we are obligated to share and help people promote. […] Be a connector and be welcoming. […] If we are connectors then we should all invite someone who doesn't look like us to the next meeting!

Others discussed the potential of building bridges between primarily White 'foodie' groups and food justice groups. Some noticed race-based divisions within other parts of Detroit's food movement and wanted to avoid that within FoodLab:

> I'd say [our business] somewhat intentionally separated itself from the [agricultural part of the] movement. There's a lot of, like, race issues [...] I think it's unfortunate that that's been split into black and white, because I think it's much more complex than that.

These tensions mirror trends in the broader Detroit context. Per a study of a clergy-based community organizing project in Detroit, Lara Rusch found that "a history of inequality and the self-serving rhetoric of political leaders have perpetuated a climate

Table 4.10: Divisions described by Labbers		
Black		White
Food Justice		Foodies
Old Detroit	v.	New Detroit
Native Detroiters		Hipsters and young professionals
Detroit		Suburbs
The neighborhoods		Downtown and Midtown

of mistrust and encouraged a preference for race focused activism. When observing the behavior of local political elites, the development of bridging social capital in this context appears unlikely" (2010:489). Yet her study concluded that multiracial community organizing was made possible by a specific type of network weaving she calls "bridging mechanisms" or individuals who intentionally create relationships across diverse groups based on interpersonal trust, which allows "reasonable skeptics to participate without fully trusting everyone in the network" (p. 499).

The network survey data indicates that FoodLab members have also had some success in bridging across racial groups despite an environment of generalized mistrust. Labbers' networks are more diverse than the typical American. Data shows that both White and Black Labbers' networks are slightly homophilous by race, in other words members are slightly more likely to be connected to other Labbers of the same race. This fits with a broad array of network research that demonstrates racial homophily across a variety of types of relationships (McPherson et. al. 2001). Yet the degree of homophily in entrepreneurs' networks is less than might be expected, compared with Black members' experiences in other Detroit spaces (as described previously), and as compared to national baselines. A national sample found that "only 8% of adults with networks of size two or more have a person of another race with whom they 'discuss important matters'" which is only 14% of what would be expected if networks were random (McPherson et. al. 2001:420). In comparison, 38% of White Labbers' relationships were with entrepreneurs of another race, which is 70% of what could be expected if networks were random and 50% of Black entrepreneurs' networks were made up of non-Black entrepreneurs, which is 83% of what could be expected. Since network homophily can be explained as a combination of macro constraints (e.g. the effect of overall population distribution in a group) and micro level strategies (e.g. the effect of actively seeking diverse connections) (Ibarra 1995) the high degree of diversity in FoodLab members' networks might be attributed to a mix of intentional recruiting strategies that ensure diversity in the network, and behavioral norms and specific characteristics that promote connection across racial differences.

Also, contrary to research that predicts lower levels of trust in more diverse groups, and lower levels of generalized trust among African Americans (Marschall and Stolle 2004; Shoff and Yang 2012), levels of trust within the FoodLab network are relatively high: the average member would definitely or probably trust 79% of her helping network with sensitive business information, and the number is slightly higher for Black members (84%). Additionally, there is no correlation between network homogeneity and levels of trust. In fact, there is a slightly positive, but not significant relationship between diversity in entrepreneurs' networks and the proportion of trusted contacts in their networks[xlii]. This fits with findings decreases in generalized trust related to greater racial diversity can be mediated by social ties (Rusch 2010; Stolle et. al. 2008).

One benefit of these bridging ties is their potential to build shared understanding across diverse groups and a broader base for collective action and advocacy around issues related to justice. Research shows that Blacks and Whites are particularly far apart in their perceptions of racial inequity (Pew Research Center 2016). Increased connection across racial and cultural groups may not only foster Me-capital for traditionally marginalized groups, but also expose more privileged individuals to the specific stories and constraints faced by peers with different backgrounds and experiences, helping them to "see" injustices more clearly in lived examples (Dixon 2014).

It appears that some of this sharing is occurring in FoodLab, facilitated by these interpersonal relationships. As one Black member of FoodLab's steering committee explained, "I came to FoodLab so I could have these conversations [about race]. I went into businesses and didn't see anybody who looked like me. Now I've made relationships with businesses so I can bring this up with them. We need more discussion out in the open." Most entrepreneurs do not join FoodLab *in order* to have conversations about race, but a combination of positive interpersonal relationships and a culture of dialogue around racial equity has meant that there is space to engage. Some of these opportunities are formal, organized by staff, including Food for Thought meetings and specialized workshops on the topic of racial equity. Others are informal and instigated by members. For example, on one occasion, a successful White entrepreneur explained that she felt uncomfortable about the way other White business

owners in her neighborhood (non-FoodLab members) were discussing how they hoped to change their neighborhood to attract more upscale clientele. She wasn't sure how to express her feelings, so she said nothing at to her colleagues at the time, but asked to discuss this at a future FoodLab meeting so she could get suggestions on how to respond the next time. On another occasion, a Black member expressed discomfort after a FoodLab public event which showcased recent graduates of a workshop series, where she observed that White members appeared to have more polished displays and marketing materials than non-White entrepreneurs, especially Black entrepreneurs. She asked FoodLab leadership to consider how to ensure that all entrepreneurs had access to the training and resources they needed the next time.

However, the combination of We-capital and culture around equity may change. Whereas early on, a number of staff, highly involved members, and close organizational partners who were central in the network were very vocal about racial justice in FoodLab meetings, many of these key influencers have left the network. Of the three White friends who were initially the most outspoken about racial justice during the network's formation, and the steering committee member quoted above, none remain deeply involved. Whereas early on, FoodLab was fiscally sponsored by an environmental justice organization whose staff met regularly with FoodLab staff and leadership, and attended member meetings, by 2015, the network had become an independent 501c3 and no longer maintained that close tie. Similarly, whereas more than 50% of FoodLab's early funding came from a large foundation with racial equity as a central focus, later on, the network diversified its funding base to include more funding from organizations interested in economic development without any explicit equity lens. Without these key nodes in the network setting the tone of conversation, the culture of conversation and awareness around racial justice may diminish.

The double-edge of growth

Two simple indicators of We-capital are network size and density. The FoodLab network has grown more than 3 times since membership was formalized in 2013, from 42 businesses to over 200 members in April 2016. On the one hand, growth in numbers has led to an increase in public visibility and has attracted new resources to the

network overall, including new partners and funding for programming. On the other hand, though it is not possible to measure via the network survey results, it appears that as the network has grown, network density is likely decreasing.

Whereas in the beginning, the network was comprised of a tight-knit group of entrepreneurs, many of whom were friends before joining FoodLab, as the network grows, there are more members who are less connected. This is particularly true as FoodLab's public presence increases and entrepreneurs join without any prior ties. The increase in size and decrease in density has already required more leadership intervention on the part of FoodLab staff to help maintain group norms, culture, and identity. Early on, staff took for granted that members would naturally understand, resonate with, and adopt network values like a culture of engaging in conversations about justice. They assumed that members either joined because they already resonated with these ideas, or they would quickly become exposed and 'converted' as they became enmeshed in the community. Yet, unsurprisingly, staff noticed that these assumptions did not hold as the network grew. In response, they began to offer orientation workshops and other materials to introduce new members to FoodLab culture more directly. The membership director also considered intervention in the structure of the network in the form of a new requirement wherein new members would have to be referred by a current Labber, in order to ensure that new members would be at least somewhat connected into the community. She ultimately decided that this might discourage potential members who were most isolated and in need of support.

The decrease in density appears to go along with a decrease in focus on the collective versus the individual. As mentioned earlier, early Labbers tended to focus not only on individual success, but also on broader community values. Interestingly, FoodLab's membership director has noted that new members, especially in the last year, seem less motivated by FoodLab's social or environmental values and more attracted by specific individual benefits like sales opportunities and reduced entrance fees to trade shows. In addition, monthly Food for Thought meetings have

started to focus more on building skills for individual entrepreneurs rather than on collective questions around equity, ethics, or the environment[xliii].

CONCLUSION

This research asked how entrepreneur organizers might weave networks to support justice around business ownership, based on the case of a network of local food entrepreneurs in Detroit. Whereas social capital literature often focuses *either* on the benefits of social capital to the individual (Me-Capital) *or* the benefits of social capital to the collective (We-Capital) the FoodLab case affirms the value of attending to social networks from both perspectives when asking how to level the playing field for entrepreneurs in economically marginalized communities.

Prior research has shown that Black entrepreneurs do not start with equal opportunity when it comes to starting a successful business, not only because of lack of access to financial capital and human capital (often the primary focus of business support organizations[xliv]), but also because of lack of access to the social capital that is necessary to not only start, but grow a successful small business. The findings in the FoodLab case fit these broader findings: Black Labbers enjoy less Me-capital, especially exposure to entrepreneurial examples and access to a financial safety net. The FoodLab network has helped to build Me-capital for food businesses in Detroit, and this has especially benefited Black entrepreneurs, but disparities between groups remain. White entrepreneurs are still overrepresented in the network and still more connected on average.

As the network grows and attracts more resources, there is more potential to intentionally deploy We-capital to equalize opportunity and benefit the least advantaged; for example, targeting internal opportunities and referrals at members with the greatest barriers to success, engaging in cross-race dialogue to promote understanding, or engaging in collective action to dismantle barriers. Individual Labbers also have the potential to support fellow entrepreneurs who traditionally lack opportunities– passing along business or press opportunities, promoting products, providing mentorship, or making referrals. The more members in the network, the more potential there is to amplify this activity. The development of trusting relationships across racial groups may create space to allow for

conversation and collective action around racial equity; however, it is unclear whether a culture of dialogue about racial issues will remain intact given the loss of key network members who were vocal about justice and the trend towards individual over collective concerns. Furthermore, the increase in network size and decrease in density means that the effect of remaining influencers on FoodLab culture is further diluted.

While the following recommendations derive from experiences with food entrepreneurs in Detroit, they are relevant for practitioners and scholars considering how to support equity in entrepreneurship generally:

1. **Attend to both Me- and We- capital.** Our experience in FoodLab demonstrates that both entrepreneurs' individual connections to resources (Me-capital), *and* their overall pattern of connections within a network of support (We-capital) are relevant perspectives when considering how to promote equity of opportunity. Future research should also examine both the synergies and tradeoffs between focusing on Me-capital (e.g. helping to connect more disconnected entrepreneurs with the most relevant support) and focusing on We-capital (e.g. growing network size and density, and bridging between otherwise disconnected groups).

2. **Make Me-capital visible.** Before the network survey, disparities in Labbers' Me-capital resources were assumed, but largely invisible. Entrepreneur support organizations should consider integrating network surveys into their intake and evaluation processes. This could serve multiple purposes: help identify the least connected and most connected members and more effectively target interventions to promote fair distribution of resources; track trends in Me-capital in the overall network, in order to better understand, communicate about, and improve on the effects of network-weaving activity both internally and to funders (e.g. Does a new mentorship program increase Me-capital for those who participate?); and finally, help entrepreneurs to be more intentional about building social capital and encouraging reciprocation by asking them to think regularly about who has helped them. Because network survey analysis is time-consuming, complex, and unfamiliar compared to other methods of program evaluation, researchers may have a special opportunity to provide support and expertise to organizations.

3. **Operationalize social justice principles.** Early FoodLab organizers' attempts to promote Equality of Opportunity and the Difference Principle via network weaving were largely informal, including efforts to recruit in traditionally marginalized groups and attempts to allocate a greater share of resources and referrals to these groups. In order to promote racial equity in the network over time, organizers should operationalize justice principles so they are clear and transparent. For example, organizers could adopt Equality of Opportunity and the Difference Principle as filters for all decisions around growth, recruitment strategy, or criteria for allocating network opportunities, asking "Does this strategy promote equality of opportunity across racial groups? To the extent that resources are allocated unequally, does it benefit the least advantaged groups?" For example, current FoodLab recruitment strategies, which appear to be attracting a greater proportion of suburban entrepreneurs, White entrepreneurs, and more individually-minded entrepreneurs to the network, may help the network to grow, but may not pass this filter.

4. **Build bridging skills and seed a culture around justice.** Entrepreneur organizers should be intentional in building bridges between dissimilar groups and seeding a culture of attention to social justice. They can model this culture directly by acknowledging existing inequity and actively working to build bridges across race, and by publicly acknowledging and employing the principles described above when making decisions about program priorities and resource allocation. Organizers might also identify the most connected entrepreneurs in a network and offer them training and support around bridging skills and engaging in conversations about racial justice.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Conclusion and Implications

> FoodLab is a community of food entrepreneurs committed to making the possibility of Good Food in Detroit a sustainable reality. We design, build, and maintain systems to grow a diverse ecosystem of triple bottom line food businesses as part of a Good Food movement that is accountable to all Detroiters. — FoodLab Detroit, 2016

> Telling a story is like reaching into a granary full of wheat and drawing out a handful. There is always more to tell than can be told. — Wendell Berry, *Jayber Crow*

Why has so little research been done on Good Food Enterprise to date? Studies of non-profit AFIs have been critical of 'entrepreneurial' approaches, suggesting that market-based strategies, on their own encourage individualized, depoliticized behavior, direct resources away from structural or political change, and undermine democracy by moving decisions about agrifood governance out of the public realm into private markets (Allen 1999; Allen et. al. 2003; DeLind 2010; Johnston 2003; Konefal 2010). Perhaps because of this, we food scholars assume that entrepreneurs can play a neutral role, at best, in food systems change. Perhaps we are accustomed to seeing and understanding firms in the role of opposition (or at least unwelcome middle-man) rather than part of the solution since our research often focuses on shortening supply chains between producer and consumer and documenting the negative impacts of 'the food industry[xlv]' (Belasco 2007; Nestle 2013). Perhaps we simply tend to have more personal experience within non-profit and public initiatives than within businesses and those who are starting them.

Yet others — management and organization and sustainability transitions researchers, for example —have critically documented ways that for-profit and hybrid entrepreneurship has supported social and environmental movements (Davis et. al. 2008; Hinrichs 2014). It has also become clear that in order for Good Food to reach a broader audience, AFIs must scale beyond local direct marketing efforts, a challenge driving recent work on regional food distribution businesses and food hubs (Barham et. al. 2012; Diamond and Barham 2012). Energy and ecosystems around Good Food Enterprise continue to grow and as Amory Starr points out, we have an opportunity

to "disdain [it], to dissipate it, or to concentrate it and guide it to become more powerful." My aim in founding FoodLab and in writing this dissertation has been to open up a critical conversation in order that we can help "encourage this sentiment into a more powerful form" (2010: 486)

My motivating research question was purposely broad, as it was meant as a starting point for this conversation: *What are the opportunities, limitations, and tensions in employing Good Food Enterprise as a strategy within North American food movements?* This dissertation explored this via three sets of questions applied to the particular case of FoodLab GFEs in Detroit.

- How do Labbers define Good Food? What is emphasized, what is ignored, and where do tensions arise? How might entrepreneurs' focus on pleasure and aesthetics support and / or undermine other movement values?

- How do Labbers describe localisation and its benefits? What does reflexive localism look like in practice, and to what extent does it help Labbers avoid the 'local trap' particularly around environmental stewardship?

- To what extent does the current practice of and ecosystem around Good Food entrepreneurship in Detroit reinforce unequal access to opportunity for certain groups versus promoting equity and inclusion? How can organizers weave networks to support justice in food entrepreneurship?

Given the research design, there were boundaries around my answers from the outset: first, as I make clear above, I started with a goal not just to understand or document, but to support the development of GFE to play a more effective role in food systems' change, so I assume that GFEs do have *some potential role* in the movement. Second, I took a firm-based approach, which focuses on the perspectives and actions of entrepreneurs starting GFEs, and to some extent on GFE organizers (e.g. FoodLab staff and key leadership, including myself). I do not directly address the question from the perspective of other stakeholders, for example, Detroit residents and eaters,

GFE employees (though the majority of FoodLab businesses are one-woman employee-owner operations), other local AFI organizers, or local economic development professionals and policy-makers. Since FoodLab GFEs are all locally-owned, and tend to be young microenterprises, I do not address GFEs operating at different scales or later stages of development; and since I studied GFEs in the context of FoodLab, it was difficult to separate the enterprises themselves from the effect of the network and network leadership. Finally, Detroit is a unique case, especially given its economic challenges, the current energy around economic revitalization, and its thriving food movement, which begs the question whether GFE would emerge in the same form elsewhere. All of these limitations suggest areas for potential future exploration.

Acknowledging these qualifications, my analysis can be summed up in three major findings. First, as a group, FoodLab GFEs espouse a broad set of Good Food values. Individual entrepreneurs vary in their understanding, prioritization, and integration of these values into their businesses, and perhaps more interestingly, GFEs' public framing of values for the benefit of customers may differ from internally-facing dialogue and commitments. Second, entrepreneurs are motivated by individual values and identity, but embeddedness in the FoodLab network can encourage the adopting of new values (like environmentalism or equity) and prioritization of and manifestation of existing values. Finally, the limitations noted in the introduction – cultural and economic elitism, lack of emphasis on collective and democratic approaches to food systems change, and an overemphasis on locally-based organizing and action– are real tensions that GFEs and organizers grappled with, but are not necessarily inherent to the GFE form. The study also uncovered a tension that I did not note in the introduction, but that was a clear theme: the issue of organizational scale and impact. The following sections provide some additional detail on these findings, then I conclude with implications for entrepreneurs and entrepreneur organizers and for food systems researchers.

Negotiating business values and public identit(ies)

Though FoodLab GFEs' do not generally describe themselves as activists, findings in chapter two suggest that their collective values correspond with the diverse set of values attributed to North American food movements. As

demonstrated in the discussions of environmental stewardship and social justice in chapters three and four, individual businesses prioritize values differently; however, many cite one or more movement-related values as primary motivators for starting their businesses. Even when they do not describe these issues as their primary motivators or mission, they say they want to integrate values like social justice and sustainability into their business operations.

Because most FoodLab GFEs are still young it is difficult to pronounce a verdict on the extent to which firms' Good Food missions align with their business practices[xlvi], but other studies indicate that a firms' early identity does influence its practices over time. For example, Ingram and McEvily (2007:3) show that food coops' organizational identity, specifically their founding ideals and core values, "have a persistent influence on the organization [...] even as the environment around them changes." While coops were subject to pressures to conventionalize, especially through the late 1980s and 90s, their latent alternative identity reasserted itself when faced with focused pressure from Whole Foods, which manifested in a renewed effort in the 2000s to develop strong relationships with members, emphasize cooperative and participatory principles, and deepen community connections.

As I indicate in the section "implications for food systems researchers," further study on GFEs should investigate the ways that values get translated into business practice. For example, Clark and Ucak (2006) note five ways that for-profit social enterprises integrate values within their business operations: via the product or service (e.g. healthier food product), supply chain (e.g. sourcing locally grown or made products), internal operations (e.g. paying a living wage to employees), advocacy / philanthropy (e.g. involvement in campaigning for stricter organic standards), or ethics (e.g. emphasizing values like equity among employees and other key constituents). Which of these strategies are most prevalent, under what conditions, and for which Good Food goals?

Another key aspect of this finding is the difference between the values that FoodLab GFEs choose to highlight in their business descriptions and what they discuss in interviews and in dialogue with other GFEs. Externally, there is a

strong emphasis on aesthetics and on localism. However, the second most prevalent topic of internal conversation is social and economic justice, even though this is rarely mentioned in public-facing descriptions of 'Good Food.'

This lack of explicit external emphasis on certain aspects of mission seems to extend beyond the FoodLab case. For example, in a study of for-profit social enterprises, Clark and Ucak (2006) create a typology of social venture CEO types, based in part on whether or not they are explicit to customers about their social missions. When it comes to GFEs in particular, there may be a lack of marketing around social justice. For example, the Good Food Merchants Guild, established in 2012, is a group of 374 specialty food processors who differentiate themselves by claiming to "produce food with the values of taste, authenticity and responsibility in mind, using their businesses to create good Green Collar jobs, enhance rather than deplete the environment, and build a healthier community" (GFMG 2012). The Guild does not have a formal certification process, but facilitates voluntary self-enforced standards for specific food products including "Practices water recycling and other resource conservation" for beer makers, "Made with respect and fair compensation for everyone working at the ranch, in the slaughterhouse and in the kitchen" for charcuterie, "Free of high fructose corn syrup" for confections, and "Without GMOs" for pickles and preserves" (GFMG 2012). All food categories include standards related to ingredient quality, taste, and locale, but fewer include values related to labor or social justice. The Chef's Collaborative is a similar, larger network in the restaurant sector comprising more than 12,000 chefs and chef-owners "who care about sourcing, cooking, and serving better food and are doing their part to create a better food system" (Chef's Collaborative 2016). Their statement of principles focuses on sustainability, food quality, and preservation of family farms and food culture, but makes no mention of workers' rights, or issues around accessibility. There are some exceptions to this trend, including Ben & Jerry's who has been particularly outspoken recently about issues related to systemic racism[xlvii].

To what extent do these outward statements reflect internal conversations and commitments within and among the GFEs represented? What effect do these statements (with or without associated certifications) have on accountability to specific standards or practices? What are the benefits and limitations of marketing one's Good Food

values explicitly, as is suggested, for example, by those promoting domestic fair trade labeling (Hinrichs and Allen 2008; Howard and Allen 2008)? In Chapter Two, I suggest that one of GFE's strengths may be their ability to use pleasure as a starting point to open space for conversations about other Good Food values. Is it possible to market quality, but adopt just practices quietly? If so, is this selling-out, is it a smart sales tactic, or is it somewhere in between?

Network influences

The findings in chapter three suggest that the Labbers' business missions are often shaped first by personal experiences. Beyond that, embeddedness in a network of other 'like-minded' GFEs may encourage entrepreneurs to consider other Good Food issues and affect how they prioritize existing issues of interest. Interestingly, some Labbers describe their local networks outside of FoodLab as hostile (the 'crabs in a barrel' example) and others say that their local networks (including customers) can be un-concerned with or even alienated by conversations about racial justice, health, or ecology. Embeddedness in these local contexts does not necessarily encourage entrepreneurs to prioritize movement values, especially publicly, and may contribute to the explanation above for why GFEs do not promote certain values more publicly. This reinforces the caveats to the concept of embeddedness, as it is often employed by local food advocates: it seems that social and environmental responsibility may not result from *any* local connection between food producers and consumers, but rather from positive connections within a local network that sees and rewards certain values and behaviors. This nuance may be obvious, but is not always stated.

Attention to networks is important, both at the level of the individual and the organization. Just as GFEs' values are influenced by their embeddedness in their local networks, one level up, FoodLab is influenced both by its members (inside out) and by its embeddedness in the Detroit context (outside in). To some extent, the network is affected by the values, priorities, and knowledge of the organizational network it is embedded in, especially partners

and funders. Again, at this level, local embeddedness can be a liability or an asset, depending on the values, priorities, and expertise in a local organizational network.

It is well documented that Me-capital makes a difference for entrepreneurial success, and chapter four demonstrates how the FoodLab network contributes to Me-capital, particularly for Black entrepreneurs. In addition, entrepreneurs saw the well-connected network (e.g. We-capital) as a potential avenue for collective action; however, this was constrained by prioritization of resources at the network level; for example, desire for collective action around recycling and composting was never realized.

Grappling with tensions

All of the limitations mentioned in the introduction came up in analysis. However, rather than serve as a referendum on the GFE form, specific observations about these tensions are useful places from which to continue conversations and experiments.

When it came to cultural and economic elitism, chapter two showed how FoodLab members attempted to balance concerns about product quality and aesthetics with accessibility; chapter four noted the ways that network leadership were aware of and made attempts to address inequity around entrepreneurship, especially marginalization related to race. Unfortunately, despite targeted efforts, Black members are still underrepresented within FoodLab, their businesses still have lower average and median annual revenues, and they have less social capital resources both inside and outside of the network. College graduates also appear to be overrepresented in the network to Detroit's population, and they tend to have higher average and median annual revenues than non-graduates, suggesting that less educated residents do not have the same opportunities to become entrepreneurs, despite the fact that food business is often cited as having relatively low barriers to entry. Yet for now, conversations around equity continue.

Similarly, related to neoliberalism and individualism, when it came to discussing their impact, GFEs were often focused on their own individual actions and typically framed their tactics as alternative, incremental, and market-

based rather than oppositional or policy-driven. However, as described in chapters three and four, many had interest in participating in collective action and were not opposed to engaging in policy-based change. Similar to Andree et al.'s findings around 'entrepreneurial' AFI initiatives in Ontario,

> These individuals see their "local" work in a positive light – as contributing to something much bigger – starting from the bottom and working up. As one interviewee explained, more just and sustainable food systems "can be built from the grassroots up; it doesn't have to be top-down" (I4). This conception of bottom-up change does not preclude state involvement. (2015:1465)

The avenue to participating in policy is not closed; rather it may reassert the importance of attending to FoodLab's embeddedness in organizational networks. FoodLab was a small, nonprofit network with limited resources, and when prioritizing between investing in programs to support individual entrepreneurs versus collective action, the former usually took precedence. However, there may be opportunities for the network to connect with other partners who are more deeply involved in and have expertise in relevant policy-level change; some examples might include the Main Street Alliance (http://www.mainstreetalliance.org/), which organizes small business owners around progressive federal policy; the Detroit Climate Action Collaborative (http://www.detroitclimateaction.org/dcac/), which focuses on local efforts around climate change; the Restaurant Opportunity Center (http://rocunited.org/), which focuses on food service workers' rights; or other coalitions that focus on areas of primary interest for Labbers.

Finally, related to the 'local trap' GFEs did not tend to conflate local and the environment. As a group, members were enthusiastic about supporting the local economy, but understood that localism was not necessarily more environmentally friendly. Instead, they engaged in small experiments to 'green' their businesses. However, these experiments had limited impact because of their small size. On this note, a major question that arose, especially in Chapters Two and Three was about scale. The GFEs studied in Detroit are currently tiny in scale. There are a few examples of larger GFEs in North America (including some of the examples in Table 1.2), but my own experience in the field suggests that the phenomenon is mostly comprised of small firms. To what extent can these firms really offer an alternative to mainstream options? How does smaller scale either support or hinder firms' capacity to adopt environmentally and socially just practices? To what extent do values and practices shift if firms decide to grow?

What are the mechanisms and structures than can encode values as a business grows? For now, many FoodLab GFEs are struggling just to survive, let alone grow, but these are questions that we can ask in other places where GFEs are more developed, and that we hope to ask of FoodLab businesses in the future.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

The following recommendations are directed toward entrepreneurs themselves, entrepreneur organizers, and policy-maker and funders who are interested in supporting alternative food entrepreneurship.

1. **Map GFE values:** Entrepreneurs embrace a broad spectrum of values and mission related to food movements. The list of ten core Good Food values from this research offers a starting point for entrepreneurs themselves to more clearly understand and prioritize mission areas and to connect with other local and non-local GFEs and AFIs who may be doing work around the same themes. Organizers can use these categories to better target materials and programming to entrepreneurs around specific topics (for example, developing case studies, workshops, or lists of tactics related to small businesses and social justice) and more easily connect with policy-makers and funders with interest in specific issues (e.g. healthy food access or sustainability). Clarifying values and priorities (even as they change) can also help to make tradeoffs within individual enterprises and in networks of enterprises more explicit.

2. **Use pleasure as a gateway:** One of GFEs' strengths within food movements may be their emphasis on aesthetics and pleasure. GFEs and GFE organizers should consider how to intentionally employ pleasure as a gateway to examining other issues and to do so in a way that draws on, embraces, and celebrates, rich and diverse food traditions.

3. **Networks matter:** Entrepreneurship is often considered to be a solo endeavor. This research reinforces the importance of networks, especially to GFEs, both because they provide useful resources to help entrepreneurs sustain and grow their individual businesses, but also because embeddedness in networks may be key to learning about and engaging in collective action around movement values. Many local GFEs

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are already naturally embedded in local networks. GFEs and GFE organizers should develop intentional network weaving strategies that attend to both Me- and We-capital.

4. **Consider appropriate scale:** The GFEs in this project were small, but other firms have chosen to scale in order to grow their impact. Clark and Ucak surveyed the owners of 36 emerging for-profit food and agriculture social enterprises and found "only 13% of this segment thought social ventures should remain small to maintain their values and that being acquired or going public is a mistake"(2006:34) Despite criticisms of conventionalization and "selling out," firms like Ben & Jerry's and Stonyfield Farms that have entered the mainstream have maintained some commitment to other alternative or movement positions and as such, may have a strategic role to play in movements. For example, they may provide a "salient rival" against which alternative organizations can assert their values and identity more strongly (Ingram and McEvily 2007:2), they can broaden the reach and scale of movement activity (Sampselle 2012), and they can provide a more accessible entry-point for "political consumers" to become activists (Wilkinson 2007:219). GFEs and those supporting them should consider the trade-offs between different scales rather than assuming that either remaining local, or 'going mainstream' is inherently preferable.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FOOD SYSTEMS RESEARCHERS

The aim of my dissertation has been to open a conversation about Good Food entrepreneurship. The first implication of this work is that there is value in considering and studying GFE directly as another form of alternative food initiative. Just as scholars have provided critical analysis that has shaped the growth and development of forms like farmers' markets, so too do they have a role in documenting, understanding, and offering theory that can improve the effectiveness of GFE as a strategy within food movements. New forms are emerging constantly – only eight years ago, another student in my department completed her dissertation which encouraged other food scholars to attend more closely to the emergence of farm to school programs (Izumi 2008); since then, critical

attention to the form has increased and offered additional insight on both its impacts (e.g. on children's vegetable consumption) and the ways in which it is limited by state and federal policies.

One place to begin is with a census. There is precedence for collecting this type of information on other types of AFI and there are some examples of census of social enterprises across industries[xlviii] as well as recent censuses of food hubs. How many GFEs are there? What values do they espouse and/or prioritize? How are they structured? Where are they located? Who owns them? How large are they? To what extent are they connected with other food movement organizations?

Further work on GFE would benefit from drawing on theory and prior research in the Management and Organization field, particularly research and theory on social entrepreneurship. The field is still young, having

Table 5.1: Social Enterprise + Social Innovation = Social Entrepreneurship 2.0			
	Primary Goal	Themes	Examples in the Food Movement
Origins			
Social Enterprise	Operating a business venture and earning income to serve a social purpose.	Emphasizes financial sustainability and reduced donor dependence through market-based solutions; Willingness to blur sector boundaries; Bringing business skills to social sector.	Cabbages & Condoms; White Dog Café; Food from the 'Hood; Revolution Foods
Social Innovation	Establishing new and better ways of creating and sustaining social value.	Emphasizes sustainable social changes, rather than financial stability; Highlights entrepreneurial behaviors and traits, including pattern-changing innovation (creative-destruction).	Agricultural Extension Service; Food Corps; Oklahoma Food Coop; Food Policy Councils
Future			
Social Entrepreneurship 2.0	Embracing innovative ways to use business methods and markets to create lasting social value.	Not limited to a given sector and not bound by a culture of charity; Pragmatic, open to any methods or tools that get the job done, including (but not limited to) markets; Focuses on widespread and lasting social change.	COFED (Cooperative Food Empowerment Directive); DC Central Kitchen; The Intervale Center; La Cocina Kitchen Incubator; People's Grocery; Common Market; Good Natured Family Farms

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developed over the last 20 years, and is still developing consistent terms and ideology (Mair & Marti, 2006; Peredo & McLean, 2006; Short, Moss & Lumpkin, 2009); however, scholars have already developed a number of definitions and models that could be useful to study GFE. Specifically, social enterprise scholars take a firm-based approach that can complement food scholars' movement-based approaches to studying other forms of AFI.

<u>Drawing on social enterprise scholarship</u>

Dees (2008) describes the origin of social entrepreneurship stemming from two schools of practice: the "Social Enterprise School" which emphasizes financial sustainability or self-sufficiency for social service organizations and the blurring of public, private, and non-profit sectors, versus the "Social Innovation School" which focuses on broad-scale shifts to social equilibriums through game-changing ideas. In the Social Enterprise School, a non-profit might develop a product or service unrelated to its core mission in order to fund its activities (e.g. Girl Scouts selling cookies). On the other side of the spectrum, a social entrepreneur, from the perspective of the Social Innovation school, need not incorporate any sort of market-based activity, but has introduced an innovative approach to creating or delivering social value that results in broad scale change.

A convergence between the two strands of practice in the past 5 years has led to hybrid models and broader conceptual definitions of social entrepreneurship that incorporate both the Social Enterprise and Social Innovation traditions (Table 5.1). Second generation definitions of social entrepreneurship allow for a flexible definition of social value creation, which incorporates the dual goals of financial sustainability and sustained social change. These definitions highlight entrepreneurial processes such as opportunity recognition, innovation, risk-taking, and resourcefulness, and they tend to embrace a variety of organizational forms (for-profit, non-profit, public-sector, hybrids). These definitions conceptualize social entrepreneurship as an approach or process rather than an end in itself and clarify how mission is enabled and / or constrained by internal and external environments (Austin, Stevenson and Wei-Skillern 2006; Weerawardena & Mort 2006).

This unified definition could be very useful in studying the role of GFE (and possibly other AFIs) in food movements. The contemporary conceptualization of social entrepreneurship broadens the potential for entrepreneurship by positioning market-based activities as only one of a series of tactics that enterprises can employ. While the updated definition does not *guarantee* structural change, it leaves open the potential for impact in multiple categories (e.g. public health, civic engagement, environmental sustainability, cultural diversity) at a variety of scales (e.g. individual, organization, community, region, national, world). The degree to which Good Food entrepreneurship contributes to broad-scale change depends on the degree to which specific structures, process, and context (e.g. the entrepreneurs' mission, the network she's embedded in, and environmental factors) facilitates this.

NOTES

[i] Because there has been limited peer-reviewed research on GFEs, I refer at times to "grey literature" including reports, case studies, and newspaper and magazine articles, and data from primary sources like the U.S. Census Bureau Industry Statistics.

[ii] For more on B Corporations, see https://www.bcorporation.net/.

[iii] Some examples of firms include: http://www.cornerstone-ventures.com/, http://ediblesadvocatealliance.org, http://financeforfood.com/, http://www. karpresources.com, http://livecultureco.com/, http://www.newventadvisors.com; http://www.newseedadvisors.com/, http://nuttyfig.com/food-companies/, http://sustainablework.com/.

[iv] This doesn't include Corporate Venture Capital, Private Equity, or other investments like social impact funds or program related investments.

[v] For example, to what extent are GFEs more similar to Dilsa Lugo, first generation Mexican immigrant, graduate of La Cocina incubator, and owner of Los Cilantros catering company in San Francisco (La Cocina 2016), and to what extent are they more like Kimbal Musk, a White veteran of Silicon Valley, with a history of involvement in a variety of start-ups (including PayPal, Tesla Motors, and SpaceX), who is currently in negotiation for a $10 million dollar low-interest loan to expand his chain of organic restaurants (Levy 2015)?

[vi] Before starting FoodLab, I launched two smaller projects. The first was a three-day gathering inspired by the tech industry's "Startup Weekend," called "Making Good Food Work" wherein over 200 practitioners, scholars, and business people convened to help develop local and regional food distribution projects. The second was a small pop-up food stand called "Neighborhood Noodle" that I operated first out of my home, and then out of other local kitchens. Through these projects, I became to become connected to food activists, foodies, and 'like-minded' entrepreneurs who seemed interested in exploring some of the questions I had about GFEs.

[vii] Drawing in part from Snow et. al. (2003), Pace explains that analytic autoethnography is research in which "the researcher is a complete member of the social world under study; the researcher engages in analytic reflexivity, demonstrating an awareness of the reciprocal influence between themselves, their setting and their informants; the researcher's self is visible within the

narrative; the researcher engages in dialogue with informants beyond the self; and the researcher demonstrates a commitment to theoretical analysis, not just capturing what is going on in an individual life or socio-cultural environment" (2012:5-6).

[viii] Other data collected over FoodLab's history include thousands of pages of field notes from three undergraduate research interns from the University of Michigan team; hundreds of individual message threads on FoodLab's online listserv; personal journals; and interview recordings and transcripts from weekly interviews over a two-year period conducted with me, by another PhD student who was studying FoodLab.

[ix] See Richardson and Adams St. Pierre (2008) for a description of writing as a method of inquiry.

[x] See chapter five, "Collecting Personal Memory Data" in Chang (2008) for more on the role of personal memory in auto/ethnography.

[xi] For an excellent overview of collective action framing in social movements, see Benford and Snow (2000).

[xii] Actual examples. See Passy (2014), Pound (2015), and Glover (2016).

[xiii] I take my definition of cultural capital from Bourdieu's (1986) seminal essay "The Forms of Capital" to mean non-tangible, non-economic social assets (e.g. family background, education, style of dress, speech, or eating) that confer power, status, and social mobility on an individual or group.

[xiv] This corresponds with Clark and Ucak's (2006) study of for-profit social enterprises that found that companies varied in their explicitness about social and environmental missions and their use of specific labels, depending on whether they believed these labels would help their business or alienate key stakeholders.

[xv] For two other instructive examples, Kloppenburg et. al. (2000) studied how 125 "ordinary, competent people" at an annual food systems conference run by a regional non-profit envisioned a "sustainable food system." They identified 14 attributes; "culturally nourishing" was the only one of 14 that related to aesthetics. On the other hand, Inwood et. al. (2008) studied the attitudes of chefs in independent for-profit restaurants in Ohio and found a heavy focus on the intrinsic qualities of local food such as taste and freshness, and a "general absence of ideological rhetoric informed by [the] movement's attention to issues of sustainability or social justice" (p.190). For example, chefs tended to defer to the expertise of farmers and take a pragmatic stance toward their need to sometimes use synthetic chemicals and fertilizers.

xvi As noted elsewhere, most FoodLab businesses are small. 12% operate under the Michigan Cottage Food law, which allows businesses to make select products in a home kitchen without a commercial license; 35% are unlicensed or unsure about the correct licensing process.

xvii For example, FoodLab has hosted workshops on food photography and social media and offered scholarships to work with professional designers on business logos, websites, and promotional videos. After feedback from a member and food activist (herself Black) that Black businesses did not present as well as other businesses of color at a graduation showcase from the 10-week BASE program, organizers built-in more support for marketing the next year. In spring 2015, FoodLab Steering Committee members launched the "Annual FoodLab Check-Up" where 18 FoodLab members received critical feedback on their products' appearance, presentation, flavor, and texture, and packaging from a panel of friendly experts, including designers, more advanced entrepreneurs, and distributors.

xviii Both of these women later joined FoodLab as its second and third paid staff members, and brought their critical lens to much early program design.

xix Definitions of small business vary, but for the purposes of federal support and programs, the United States Small Business Administration issues a size-standards table that defines small according to industry. For some examples, a 'small' snack food manufacturer is any firm with fewer than 1250 employees; a 'small' restaurant is anything under $7.5 million in average annual receipts; and a 'small' grocery store is anything under $32.5 million.

xx Borrowing from Vergunst, I use the term local to "depict both a spatially bounded area and the network of institutions [and individuals] embedded in this area," and localisation to refer to a shift in the management of resources, provision and maintenance of services, and governance and decision-making away from larger or more distributed units (e.g. state, national, international) to a local scale (2002:150)

xxi See, for example, Koc et. al (1999) and the American Planning Association (2015).

xxii The term was first coined by the W.K.Kellogg Foundation.

xxiii See chapter five, "Collecting Personal Memory Data" in Chang (2008) for more on the role of personal memory in auto/ethnography.

xxiv Locating outside Downtown and Midtown comes with disadvantages like decreased police presence, walkability, and density, reduced access to business service organizations, and less media attention. Doing business in the nearby suburbs comes with specific benefits like a simpler and more affordable licensing process, access to well maintained, reasonably priced retail and production space, and access to a more affluent customer base.

xxv One of FoodLab's guiding principles is "Recognize we're on a path: We don't expect perfection, but are committed to being open about our goals. Not everyone will share or be able to meet all of our goals, but all are welcome to join in moving toward them."

xxvi In comparison, there were nine meetings focused specifically on topics related to community well-being, six on equity, and six specifically on local sourcing and localism.

xxvii Two specific examples of federal programs are the Healthy Urban Food Enterprise Development Center that invested $900,000 from 2009 to 2012 to support food enterprises that aim to increase access to healthy, affordable, locally sourced foods to underserved communities (USDA 2009); and the Healthy Food Financing Initiative, a $400 million collaborative initiative started in 2010 (USDHS 2015). Social impact funds like RSF Social Finance carry a specific food and agriculture portfolio, and a number of funds have launched that focus exclusively on food businesses with social and/or environmental missions including the Good Food Fund in Michigan (target of $30 million, launched in 2015), S2G Ventures in Chicago ($125 million, launched in 2015), and FoodX Accelerator ($50 million, launched in 2015).

xxviii Some examples of firms include: http://www.cornerstone-ventures.com/, http://ediblesadvocatealliance.org, http://financeforfood.com/, http://www.karpresources.com, http://livecultureco.com/, http://www.newventadvisors.com, http://www.newseedadvisors.com/, http://nuttyfig.com/food-companies/, http://sustainablework.com/.

xxix Each respondent selected up to two out of four possible motivations: two focused on the individual (financial security and autonomy) and two emphasized the collective good (positive impact on community or environment, and to be part of a something bigger).

xxx To do this, I found the raw proportion of ties who shared the characteristic in question (e.g. to calculate gender heterogeneity for a woman, I would ask, what percentage of her network is men?) and then adjusted this to account for proportions in the overall population (e.g. 28% of FoodLab members and staff are men, so I divide the raw score by 0.28).

xxxi See Richardson and Adams St. Pierre (2008) for a description of writing as a method of inquiry. Personal memory data did not play a primary role in this particular paper, but in some cases, because I was intimately involved in FoodLab day-to-day, the process of analysis and writing triggered personal memories beyond what was captured in meeting notes and textual data. I captured these memories in writing, and then verified them against other records before including them as examples in the analysis (e.g. personal journals, email threads, business websites, news articles). See Chapter Five, "Collecting Personal Memory Data" in Chang (2008) for more on the role of personal memory in ethnography and auto-ethnography.

xxxii The triple bottom line refers to the idea first presented by Elkington (1994) that instead of maximizing profits (the traditional 'bottom-line'), in the service of sustainable development, businesses should seek to balance three bottom lines, people, planet, and profit.

xxxiii See the Detroit BizGrid (http://detroitbizgrid.com/) for a full list of entrepreneurial support organizations and Econsult Solutions and Urbane Development (2014) for a recent list of food-related organizations.

xxxiv All of these women were friends with each other, and also friends of mine. Two of them later became part-time staff members.

xxxv "We work to develop a diverse FoodLab community that includes food businesses of different types and scales; as well as age, culture, and ethnicity of food business entrepreneurs. We believe diversity is an essential part of any just and resilient food system."

xxxvi For example, only 15% of survey respondents have been in business for less than a year compared to 28% of all FoodLab businesses; 40% of respondents are running their business full-time, compared to 34% in FoodLab overall; and average annual sales and number of employees were also slightly higher in the sample compared to the full population.

xxxvii This is surprising given the vibrant Latino community in Southwest Detroit, and may speak to the fact that these businesses are already part of formal and informal networks of support in their specific neighborhoods and/or to language barriers that limit bridging ties to new groups.

xxxviii These results surprised FoodLab's Director of Membership who wondered whether the sample was skewed because members with a college education were simply more likely to participate in an online survey.

xxxix The difference in average size between Black and White entrepreneurs' helping networks is statistically significant. t=2.42 > critical value=2.00 for a two-tailed distribution. I excluded entrepreneurs of other races in this calculation because there numbers were too small.

xl Statistically significant. t=3.41 > critical value=1.99 for a two-tailed distribution.

xli Statistically significant. t=2.62 > critical value=1.99 for a two-tailed distribution.

xlii r = 0.05

xliii Of the 20 meetings between 2011 and 2013, 12 were about ethics, environment or equity and eight were about individual business operations or trends or the economy; in 20 meetings from 2013 to 2015, only six meetings addressed ethics, environment, or equity, and 14 focused on individual businesses or the economy.

xliv Financial capital and human capital – e.g. training and education – also tend to receive more attention from scholars who study equity in entrepreneurship. See, for example, Fairlie's (2005) who explains that "the importance of [financial] assets has taken center stage in the literature on the determinants of self-employment." (p. 14). However, his findings show that assets and education together do not account for all the differences between different levels of self-employment by Whites versus minority groups. He points to human capital and discrimination as two additional factors that might account for these differences, but does not mention social capital except for the possible effect of intergenerational linkages between entrepreneurial parents and their children.

xlv For example, the cover of Belasco's (2007) book Appetite for Change: How the Counterculture Took on the Food Industry is a picture of mural which juxtaposes two phrases: on the top, "food for life," on the bottom "food for profit."

xlvi Although there are indications that members are taking some practical steps to integrate mission with operations (e.g. recycling programs, hiring practices, sourcing strategies, recipe changes, investigating for-benefit or cooperative business structures).

xlvii See, for example: http://www.benjerry.com/whats-new/journey-about-racial-equity and http://www.benjerry.com/whats-new/systemic-racism-is-real.

xlviii Some examples include: http://socialenterprisecensus.org/ and http://www.socialenterprisescotland.org.uk/files/1a891c7099.pdf.

APPENDICES

FoodLab history and programs

FoodLab Timeline:

January 2011	First informal meeting; monthly meetings continue and transition into "Food for Thought" meetings.
January 2012	Host first "Building your Good Food Business Bootcamp."
April 2012	Online listserv grows to 100 participants.
October 2012	Adopts mission statement.
July 2013	With partner, Eastern Market Corporation, launch "Detroit Kitchen Connect" a network of licensed commercial kitchen spaces for food entrepreneurs.
November 2013	Formalize membership and host first annual membership meeting.
October 2014	Membership reaches 100.
September 2015	Incorporate as an independent 501c3 non-profit organization.

FoodLab Programming:

Programs are organized around "three Cs": "Cultivate," "Connect," and "Catalyze"; cultivating individual triple bottom line businesses, connecting businesses with one another and with resources they need along the way, and attempting to catalyze collective action in collaboration with other Detroit-based AFIs. Some examples of programs include:

- **Membership program** where entrepreneurs pay a small annual fee in exchange for services like access to the FoodLab listserv and discounted business services and training;
- **Weekly open office hours** where FoodLab staff are available to answer questions and direct entrepreneurs and other interested parties toward resources;
- **Monthly "Food for Thought" meetings** where entrepreneurs discuss and share perspectives on their role and responsibility within broad social and environmental issues (e.g. the coexistence of small businesses with big corporations, local sourcing, and structural racism);
- **FoodLab BASE (Building a Social Enterprise),** an annual 10-week course on starting a Good Food Enterprise;
- **Detroit Kitchen Connect,** a network of low-cost licensed commercial kitchens available for rent; and
- **Community Action,** an annual process by which members craft and enact a set of collective goals and strategy to meet those goals; the first community action was called "Operation Above Ground" and consisted of working with local policy makers to make licensing for small businesses more simple and transparent.

List of detailed codes from FoodLab member business descriptions

Table B.1: List of detailed codes from FoodLab member business descriptions		
Claims:	Total no. of businesses making claim	% businesses making claim
Quality Ingredients or Process	1	1%
Quality ingredients: real, simple, whole, safe, gourmet, natural	63	39%
Flavor	36	23%
Quality process: handmade, homemade, from scratch, artisanal	34	21%
Freshness	29	18%
Authentic / traditional	24	15%
Seasonality	0	0%
Additives	10	6%
Customized	6	4%
Culture and Tradition	68	43%
Authentic or traditional	25	16%
Connection to diverse cultures through food	19	12%
Elevate local food culture	17	11%
Family recipes	9	6%
Family connections	9	6%
Detroit Revitalization	9	6%
Detroit and Michigan Roots	6	4%
Arts and music	5	3%
Local Economy	89	56%
Support and source local products and services (non-farm)	48	30%
Support and source from local farms	43	27%
Jobs and job training, general	20	13%
Elevate local food culture	17	11%
Ownership: small, independent, family	13	8%
Grow local economy / food systems	12	8%
Detroit Revitalization	9	6%
Community / Connection	78	49%
Local community building, connecting, giving back	47	29%
Connect and collaborate: other businesses	32	20%
Humanity, heart, soul, love	10	6%
Family connections	9	6%
Detroit Revitalization	9	6%

Table B.1: (cont'd)		
Connect and collaborate: farmers	5	3%
Accountability and transparency	4	3%
Global community	3	2%
Uplift / Empower	51	32%
Educate, empower, grow consciousness	28	18%
Fun, excitement, joy, celebration	13	8%
Humanity, Heart, Soul, Love	10	6%
"Nourish the body and soul"	9	6%
Comforting and welcoming	7	4%
Grow pride in place	1	1%
Farmers (Urban and Rural)	46	29%
Support and source from local farms	43	27%
Connect and collaborate: farmers	5	3%
Start a farm	4	3%
Health	87	54%
Support healthy eating or lifestyle	34	21%
Allergens and dietary restrictions (including vegetarian and vegan)	27	17%
Organic	25	16%
Other growing practices (pesticide free, beyond organic, etc.)	12	8%
Additives	10	6%
"Nourish the body and soul"	9	6%
Non-GMO	7	4%
Environment / Sustainability	68	43%
Organic	25	16%
Environment / sustainability	16	10%
Other growing practices (pesticide free, beyond organic, etc.)	12	8%
Seasonality	14	9%
Waste and packaging	10	6%
Triple bottom line	8	5%
Non-GMO	7	4%
Low carbon footprint	2	1%
Food Access and Food Security	22	14%
Affordable or Accessible	18	11%
Food Security	4	3%
Social and Economic Justice	16	10%
Justice or equity	7	4%
Jobs and training for marginalized populations	5	3%
Fair wages	4	3%
Fair trade	3	2%

Message thread from FoodLab listserv, November 2014

MESSAGE 1

To: foodlabdetroit@googlegroups.com
Subject: [FoodLab Detroit] Michigan Sugar
HI Everyone,
I may be a little late to the party and this may be old information, but for those who didn't know this, I feel like it is relevant to our food businesses.
I was considering using Michigan Pioneer Sugar and was a little reluctant because I have typically used cane sugar for my marshmallows as I prefer the results to beet sugar. In researching it, I found that 95% of sugar beets grown in the US are Monsanto's genetically modified variety.
To quote the article,
"This matters to us all because about 50 percent of white sugar sold here is made from sugar beets. In other words, unless that bag of sugar you just bought is labeled "Certified Organic" or "100 percent cane sugar," it almost certainly contains sugar made from GMO crops."
Clearly, I will not be switching over to Pioneer or Big Chief, Michigan-made or not and it is NOT because of my affinity to sugar cane, having grown up chopping it down in fields and chewing on it raw... LOL
Just thought this may be information that our "Good Food" organizations could use, if you didn't already know. If anyone knows if this information is outdated or inaccurate in any way, please feel free to let me know, but as of now, I am avoiding it.
Here is the source: http://grist.org/industrial-agriculture/feds-to-farmers-grow-gmo-beets-or-face-a-sugar-shortage/

MESSAGE 2

On Nov 6, 2014 3:36 PM wrote:
Oh, and cred goes to food lab member Meiko of Guerrilla Food for letting me know originally when I was telling her I was thinking about changing.

MESSAGE 3

On Nov 6, 2014 3:37 PM, "Green Mitten Jam" wrote:
For as much as I love sourcing Michigan, that is why I've avoided the sugar from our fair state. The sugar producers aren't even interested in trying something new! I've found Costco to be the best bet on organic sugar.
Meg

MESSAGE 4

On Thu, Nov 6, 2014 at 3:41 PM, Sofia Info wrote:
Michele,
The information is not outdated and it's probably approaching %100.
Sofia's Selection
Warren, MI

MESSAGE 5

On Thu, Nov 6, 2014 at 4:45 PM, wrote:

That's really interesting. It only applies to me indirectly (I sell coffee,) but why offer GMO sugar when I am offering non GMO beans?

Thanks!

Anamarie

MESSAGE 6

On Thu, Nov 6, 2014 at 4:55 PM, wrote:

One thing to consider... if you market to Vegans, you either must use Vegan cane sugar, or
use sugar beet. Sugar beets, although not a non-GMO food, are vegan friendly. Sugar cane is not vegan friendly, unless specifically labeled as such. I'd hazard to guess that most Vegans are also anti-gmo, but it's still good info to have.

Nedra
Sweet Mommas
www.sweetmommastreats.com

MESSAGE 7

On Thu, Nov 6, 2014 at 6:15 PM, Slow Jams wrote:

Sugar is a tough issue. In addition to the vegan problem Nedra mentioned with cane (bone char used in processing) there are long reported and systemic labor and environmental concerns both internationally and domestically in the sugar cane growing and processing industries.

Widespread child labor and forced/slave labor on top of horrendous conditions that include physical abuse have been prevalent in international sugar industry. Migrant/guest worker abuse is particularly problematic as well. Environmental concerns include destruction of rain forest internationally and everglades domestically as well as burns that produce tremendous CO_2 emissions.

One of the hardest parts to deal with is the fact that domestic cane sugar companies can use imported cane, making it very difficult to feel confident that you are not buying a product produced using forced or child labor.

Of course, on top of all of these concerns there are food miles to consider as well as the type of companies that predominate cane vs beet industry. Beet in MI is a collective with many smaller, family farms. Cane industry is very different, large corporations and plantations. While many industries were bleeding jobs in MI in 2008-2012,

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beet sugar industry gaining rapidly, putting people to work here in our state. I've had folks stop by at the market and thank us for using MI sugar because they work there.

The ideal in my mind is that the MI beet sugar industry changes course, and rejects GMO seed. To us at this point local jobs matter, a lot. Abusive labor practices matter, a lot. And unfortunately, there are many details to consider.

Shannon

MESSAGE 8

Sent: Thursday, November 06, 2014 6:46 PM
Subject: Re: [FoodLab Detroit] Re: Michigan Sugar

The education I've gotten from this single thread is just awesome. Thank you! It is incredible to see this kind of knowledge sharing and feel the sincerity and care behind all of your words.

C

MESSAGE 9

Subject: Re: [FoodLab Detroit] Re: Michigan Sugar
Sent: Thu, Nov 6, 2014 11:56:22 PM

Yes, Nedra, when I was attempting vegan marshmallows, I had to get the vegan sugar because of the bone char issue. And yes, Colin, I agree, my goodness the information is astounding, thank you Shannon. Having grown up in Hawaii, where, like I said, it was nothing to pull over to the side of the road and snag a piece of sugar cane, the labor issues and such surrounding sugar cane never even crossed my mind. It is truly good information to know and when I am finalizing this decision, I will definitely keep it in mind and research the brand/company before I choose

michele

MESSAGE 10

Sent: Thursday, November 06, 2014 7:56 PM
Subject: Re: [FoodLab Detroit] Re: Michigan Sugar

Thanks for sharing. I'm astounded. Rethinking things. Wow.
harriette

MESSAGE 11

Sent: Thursday, November 06, 2014 9:15 PM
Subject: Re: [FoodLab Detroit] Re: Michigan Sugar
Geez, to have to choose between knowing that you are using GMO's in your products and hoping that you don't get a product of child or slave labor is a sucky choice to have to make. If we are choosing to boycott cane sugar, we

are then left with the reality that we should probably boycott smartphones, balloons, louisiana strawberries, shimmery eye shadow where the mica is made in India where children as young as 6 labor for a single meal of rice, and over 130 other products made in 71 countries.

Sugar is indeed a tough issue, but it seems no tougher than most other products which we also consume here that are made overseas. That having been said, I believe that we are all making our choices in good conscience and that is really what is most important in sticking to our "Good Food" principals.

michele

MESSAGE 12

On Thu, Nov 6, 2014 at 9:41 PM, Sofia Info wrote:

I researched the sugar supply couple of weeks ago to find non GMO sugar from beets because I think it's less sweet than cane sugar but I wasn't really successful in finding a good source. I was gonna write what I found but Shannon covered the topic very well

Sofia's Selection

Warren, MI

MESSAGE 13

On Thu, Nov 6, 2014 at 11:51 PM, wrote:

Refined sugar like Pioneer sugar is pure sucrose ($C12H22O11$), it is a colorless and crystalline compound. Whither it is synthesized in a test tube or sourced from a plant, it's still has the exact same chemical formula. The fact that the source of this sugar is a GMO would be irrelevant, sucrose is sucrose.

All pure sugar compounds, like sucrose, are colorless and crystalline. However, non-refined sugars (brown sugar, honey, etc) contain additional compounds which give it color and distinct flavors. These additional compounds could also possibly contain GMO byproducts.

Personally I prefer a dark cane sugar because of it's taste but am otherwise fine with refined sugar because it is cheap. But as Shannon mentioned the food miles and social conditions behind the sugar cane industry are also important to me.

-eli

MESSAGE 14

On Fri, Nov 7, 2014 at 7:06 AM, wrote:

I bought sugar at Zerbo's Health Food Store that is Pure cane sugar. It is organic and non-GMO verified and Vegan. The company name is Woodstock 313 Iron Horse Way, Providence RI 02908. I would call the company and see if they do wholesale. I cannot speak to the labor issue.

Mary Ann

MESSAGE 15

I just read this article about GMO products including beets. It says even though the beets are GMO, the sugar that is extracted from them is not because the processing breaks down all the proteins that what makes it GMO. Read the full article to get more information. However, we should take this with a grain of salt (or sugar) because we don't know the full background of the author or the person who's being interviewed

http://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/Suppliers2/5-GMO-food-myths-dispelled

Naseer AndulNour

Sofia's Selection
Warren, MI

MESSAGE 16

FL,

This article was printed in 2009:

NON-GMO SUGAR SUPPLIERS EMERGE FROM CONTROVERSY OVER GMO BEETS
Non-GMO sugar suppliers emerge from controversy over GM beets - See more at: http://www.non-gmoreport.com/articles/feb09/non-gmo_sugar_suppliers_gm_beets.php#sthash.82NHFmP4.dpuf

http://www.non-gmoreport.com/articles/feb09/non-gmo_sugar_suppliers_gm_beets.php

forward!
devotion, prema

FoodLab network survey

Part One: About You

We would like to understand a little bit about your background, attitudes, and motivations as an entrepreneur.

1. **Please select yourself from the list**
   Select from dropdown: LIST OF ALL FOODLAB MEMBERS (including multiple individuals per business)

2. **How old are you?**

3. **What is the highest level of education you have achieved?**
   - o   Less than High School Graduate
   - o   High School Graduate (including equivalency)
   - o   Some College or Associate's Degree
   - o   Bachelor's Degree
   - o   Graduate or Professional Degree

4. **Were you exposed to entrepreneurship before starting your current business**? Please select all of the following statements that apply to you.
   - o   I have worked for a start-up or small business in the past.
   - o   I have started or run my own small business in the past.
   - o   Someone in my family is an entrepreneur.

5. **Do you feel comfortable taking significant financial risks to grow your business?**
   - o   No, I prefer to take smaller risks and go more slowly
   - o   Maybe, it depends on the situation
   - o   Yes, I feel comfortable taking risks to grow my business

6. **If you go "all out," and pursue your business 100% of the time, and your business fails, will you and your immediate family have savings or assets to fall back on?**
   YES / NO

7. **If you go "all out," and pursue your business 100% of the time, and your business fails, do you have parents, extended family or friends who would be willing and able to provide a safety net?**
   YES / NO

8. **What motivated you to start your business?**
   - ●   I wanted my business to improve my financial security

- I wanted my business to have a positive impact on my community and the environment
- I wanted to be my own boss and have freedom to make my own schedule, define my working environment, make creative decisions, etc.
- I was motivated by and/or wanted to be part of a community bigger than myself

9. **What continues to motivate you to work on your business?**
   - I want my business to continue to improve my financial security
   - I want my business to continue to have a positive impact on my community and the environment
   - I want to continue to be my own boss and my own boss and have freedom to make my own schedule, define my working environment, make creative decisions, etc.
   - I am motivated by and want to remain a part of the FoodLab community
   - I am motivated by and want to remain part of another community bigger than myself

Part Two: Your Networks

In this section, we are trying to understand more about the social networks related to your business.

10. **Who have you connected with in the FoodLab network? Please check the box next to <u>everyone who you have talked to directly either in person, on the phone, or by email.</u>** If the name sounds familiar, but you aren't sure if you've connected, please leave it blank.

    Select checkboxes: LIST OF ALL FOODLAB MEMBER BUSINESSES AND STAFF

11. **Of the FoodLab members you're connected with, who has helped you to launch, run, or grow your business?**

    Select checkboxes: LIST OF MEMBERS AND STAFF CONNECTIONS FROM SELECTIONS ABOVE

12. **Who else outside of FoodLab has helped you to launch, run, or grow your business? This can include family members, friends, non-FoodLab entrepreneurs, staff or volunteers at other business support organizations, etc.**

    Enter text: FIRST AND LAST NAME: _____
    Select checkboxes: Who is this person? Please check all that apply: Family / Friend / Entrepreneur / Business Organization / Other

Part Three: Your Networks, Part Two

In the next few pages, you'll see a list of the entire community who has helped you to launch, run, or grow your business. That's pretty impressive! Now that we have a better understanding of <u>who</u> helped you with your business, we'd like to know more about <u>how</u> they helped you.

<< For following questions, respondents answer for each of the names they selected or listed in questions #11 and #12 >>

13. **How important is / was this person to your business' success?**
    o   Not important
    o   Slightly important
    o   Important
    o   Very important
    o   Essential (my business wouldn't exist without them)

14. **Would you trust this person with sensitive personal or financial information?**
    o   Definitely
    o   Probably, but it depends
    o   Probably not, but it depends
    o   No

15. **Did you connect with this person through FoodLab? This may include connecting at an event, via the listserve, or through another FoodLab member.**
    o   Yes, I connected through FoodLab
    o   No, we connected some other way
    o   I'm not sure

16. **How did this person help you? You may choose as many as apply.** If the categories don't seem like they fit perfectly, don't worry, you will have an opportunity to describe the relationship further in the next question.
    o   Offered friendship or emotional support
    o   Offered advice, resources, or other connection to an opportunity

17. **Please add anything else you'd like us to know about how each of these relationships affected you and your business. Feel free to share as much or as little as you'd like. Stories or details you share will help us gain a richer understanding of how your network supports you as an entrepreneur. This information can remain private with the research team or if you'd like, we can send a "FOODLAB HOLLA-GRAM" to the person to thank them for supporting you.**

    o   What else would you like to share?
    o   Send a HOLLA-GRAM? YES / NO
    o   Include what you shared in the HOLLA-GRAM? YES / NO, please send a generic thank you.

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