

**A thesis submitted to the Department of Environmental Sciences and Policy of
Central European University in part fulfilment of the
Degree of Master of Science**

***Local Food Systems in Budapest: Citizen Driven Conscious Food Consumption Initiatives
to and their Ability to Shape New Food Paradigms in Hungary.***



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May, 2012

Budapest

Erasmus Mundus Masters Course in
Environmental Sciences, Policy and
Management

MESPOM



This thesis is submitted in fulfillment of the Master of Science degree awarded as a result of successful completion of the Erasmus Mundus Masters course in Environmental Sciences, Policy and Management (MESPOM) jointly operated by the University of the Aegean (Greece), Central European University (Hungary), Lund University (Sweden) and the University of Manchester (United Kingdom).

Supported by the European Commission's Erasmus Mundus Programme



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ABSTRACT OF THESIS submitted by:

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Month and Year of submission: May, 2012.

Throughout Hungary a diverse and resilient group of individuals has been working hard to develop equitable and environmentally conscious food production and distribution systems. Such networks seek to offer high quality food products to consumers without being reliant on environmental exploitation or social and economic injustice that exists inherently within industrialized production systems. Organic growers and small scale producers face an uphill battle in simultaneously managing production responsibilities with retail demands; all within an incredibly competitive, consolidated, globalized food market. Growers and producers are expected to fulfill multiple roles while trying to remain financially stable in the crisis ridden Hungarian agricultural sector, taking on the duties of land and animal managers, marketers, distributors, processors, transporters, and employers. With these challenges in mind, it is not an overstatement to say that the local food networks that exist in Budapest are a testament to the creativity and ingenuity of producers, and those working to support their cause in the city, and in Hungary. What is observed from trends in local food system development in Budapest will have great resonance in greater Hungary as citizens look for guidance on how to shape local food movements in their community. In a time of crisis within the agricultural sector in Hungary, it becomes more important than ever to develop factors for success which can aid in the development and result in the continuity of local food initiatives across the country. This study will attempt that task with hopes that the roots to solutions to the greater problems in the Hungarian agricultural sector will be planted at the local level.

Keywords: <local food systems, citizen conscious consumption initiatives, food citizenship, sustainable agriculture, Hungary>

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to all of the wonderful people who I've met while trying to learn as much as I can about sustainable agriculture and local food network development in Hungary. I thank all of the great people who have welcomed me with open hearts and minds while offering so much knowledge and insight.

I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Guntra Aistara, for all of the continuous support, motivation, and guidance that she's offered during this thesis period.

I would like to thank my MESPOM classmates, for making these past two years two of the best of my life.

I would like to thank all of my heroes for painting colors on the world.

And finally, I would like to thank my family, for everything.

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Preface

The way now that things are working in this world is that people are trying to do things separately, not all holistically. We talk about globalization, but we should talk in a different way, so that it is global in a sense that we only have one globe. We must know this in every moment that everything is connected. Whenever you want to do anything you must keep this in mind all the time, that problems are complex.

-Ildiko Harmathy, Hungarian Local Food Activist, Market organizer

Each food choice that we make not only has a significant effect on our own personal health, but also the health of our community and local environment. This fact has been overlooked in recent years, as the demands of modern living and the convenience offered by industrial production and distribution networks have encouraged a disconnection with the origins of food, and the individuals responsible for its production. This has not always been the case; as recently as only 50 years ago most of what families were eating would have been produced in close proximity to their residence. In the last few decades, its not only been our purchasing patterns that have been completely altered, but also our willingness to produce food products within our own household, whether it be growing fruits, vegetables, and herbs in backyard gardens or processing foods at home to create traditional jams, spreads, and other hand-crafted specialties.

One may argue that time and resource constraints on the matriarchs and patriarchs of modern families prohibit such activities and extra care, but diminishing time for backyard gardening and meal preparation should not justify widespread societal disconnect with natural foods, how food is actually produced, and the social and environmental consequences of our food choices. The consequences of the complete system upheaval have not only been from a social and environmental standpoint; cultural traditions linked to food and growing forged over hundreds of years have been rapidly eroded away, or co-opted and resold in a lower quality format. It is also of note to mention how industrialized food production has escalated the disparity in resource consumption footprints between developed and developing nations, as the typical diets of citizens in developed nations require substantially more resources (petroleum, water, raw food ingredients, land, etc.) to be produced than diets in less developed nations.

It's a gets a bit complicated to trace the void that has developed between citizens and food, and piecing together the history involves a structured study of sociology, economics, globalization, corporate law, government support policy for agriculture, along with many other factors. In spite of this, it's not difficult to come to the conclusion that the level of societal knowledge related to food production is much lower than healthy, and that the common citizen has little power to decide or influence how food their food is produced. We've allowed a food production system to develop in front of our eyes that exploits growers and those involved in the food production industry, exploits land by encouraging nutrient and soil destroying crop rotations, exploits water resources with overuse and chemical runoff, exploits bodies with low nutrient, and low nutrition (but high profit) food being the cheapest and most readily available, and so on, and so on.

Local food networks, while not the singular cure to solving the world food crisis, or righting all the wrongs inherent within global food systems, offer a glimmer of hope for those looking to gain more knowledge about the foods they consumer, and regain more control over how their food is produced, and who reaps the benefits in food production

chains. Local food networks can be classified with varying definitions; most generally by production chains that fall within an arbitrary radius from a specified central point, or by state, country, or other political boundaries, by geographical “foodshed” limits which chronicle natural resource flows through a region, and a number of other traditional delineations. While these more formal, boundary derived definitions provide a general context of one of the goals of local food networks (granting access to food products produced near a consumers residence, thus shortening distance between production and consumption) but by limiting the scope of such networks to distance alone is overlooking the additional significant themes personified within local food systems.

Instead of thinking of local food networks as “proximity based production networks,” it is more accurate and encompassing to think of them as a combination of information transparency facilitators, traditional knowledge and culture preservers and transmitters, community developers, local economy builders, environmental protectors, and self sufficiency enablers. Functioning local food networks, should seek to empower consumers so that they are not relegated to solely “voting with purchase dollars” but actually permitting citizen participation and input within the decision making process that goes into food production and distribution. This notion is often summarized as a pursuit of “food sovereignty,” but this term can also be boiled down to a quest to deliver knowledge and grant participation rights to citizens within food production processes.

Why Budapest?

I’ve chosen Budapest and Hungary as a focus location (and country) for my thesis study not only because of an overall fascination with its culture, history, and development, but also because of the potential that lies within the sustainable agriculture and food production sector here. I think that functioning local food networks have the potential to revitalize the vulnerable agricultural sector in Hungary, while empowering at-risk communities in the rural countryside and the small scale growers living there. I’ve decided to embark on a quest to understand and quantify local food networks in Budapest, assuming that if functioning sustainable production and distribution systems are to be established in Hungary, the examples set and lessons learned in Budapest will have great impact nationally.

Research Aim

The overall aim of this study is:

To determine success factors for current and future citizen driven conscious food consumption initiatives in Budapest based on an overview of a range of existing initiatives and a detailed case study of the Szatyor group, and to highlight the role such groups have in creating effective and culturally appropriate short food supply chains in Hungary.

Research Objectives

In light of this aim my research objectives are to:

- To clearly define what is driving changes in food systems globally, and what role local food systems are playing in delivering positive social, environmental and economic change in food systems.
- To assess the methods that have been used to shape local food systems globally, while also characterizing their successes, failures, credits and criticisms
- To explain how the major changes in the past two decades of agriculture in Hungary have increased the need for culturally appropriate localized food systems
- To introduce the actors working to create pathways for sustainable, local food systems in Budapest and Hungary
- To introduce the Szatyor group, and show what potential citizen driven conscious food consumption initiatives can learn from Szatyor's model when striving to bringing positive change to the agricultural sector in Hungary

Methodology:

My project will attempt to describe the actors and processes which comprise the newest incarnations of short food supply chains in Budapest, describing how such campaigns have developed. I will first provide a historical perspective of the transitional changes in agriculture in Hungary since the Socialist Regime change, and trace how the sectoral changes have made local food movements more important than ever in Hungary. I will then trace the development of local food movements globally, and then in Budapest, before moving on to a closer analysis of a citizen based local food advocacy group, Szatyor. I will designate Szatyor as an initiative which has goals to develop a conscious food buying community in Budapest. I will discuss just what this quest means within the Hungarian context, and the role these innovative partnerships play in bringing stability to local food systems, while keeping in

mind the impacts such networks have within the greater Hungarian agriculture sector (especially regarding organics and sustainable consumption). I will attempt to perform a focused case study on the Szatyor association, and explain why their development path has placed them in a position to succeed where other initiatives have failed in Hungary.

A portion of my case study will be in assisting Szatyor in gaining detailed information about the motivations and satisfaction levels of their participant base, with hopes that “success factors” and actions that can refine and bring greater efficiency to their current structure can be uncovered. This participant survey, and subsequent observation of the logistical and organizations processes of Szatyor will occur as the association attempts to transform itself by moving to its own independent location, and expanding the services it offers to participants. Refinements during this period, and a constant observance of participants needs will be necessary to avoid shocks of change that may disrupt previous patterns of success. Detailed feedback from participants will allow Szatyor to refine its system to make sure it operates as efficiently as possible, and in a manner that secures sustained participation. If the Szatyor model is to be eventually replicated, success factors for organization, human and financial resource management, programming initiatives, and services offered must be developed, so that similar initiatives avoid mistakes observed mistakes that have halted such initiatives in their early before they had the chance to reach full maturity.

Research Design and Data Collection

My research has been comprised of an extensive literature review regarding the structural changes that have lead to a sustained, 20 year period of crisis within the Hungarian agricultural sector, the development of local food initiatives globally, and academic critiques of local food networks. In addition to this formal literature review my research will consist of a series of interview with relevant actors within the Hungarian local food movement including producers, advocates, and scholars.

I will chose to observe the Szatyor Association by becoming a member of the organization and volunteering with with the group from February until May of 2012. This experience has been integral to my research, and provided me with an insider’s perspective in the working mechanisms of the Association.

Background

Drivers for change in food production systems: setting the stage for the global vs. local distinction

Calls for change within global food production networks have been heard since the dawn of the Environmental Movement which appeared in the 1970s in the United States (Sheriff 2009, Hassenien 2003). As sustainability materialized as a dominant discourse within the movement later in the 1980s, the wide scale social, economic, and environmental repercussions of industrial agricultural systems were targeted as key areas of interest by environmental advocacy groups, researchers, farmers, consumer groups and other citizen initiatives (Hassenien 2003, Dupuis 2005, Kremer and DeLiberty 2011). The narratives that have emerged in years following have been premised on implicating increasing instance of environmental destruction, social injustice, animal abuse, biodiversity loss, food scares and cases of ill health, marginalization of small scale producers, loss of culture and tradition, and the concurrent degradation of rural communities as resultants of lengthened global food chains (Hassenien 2003, Kremer and DeLiberty 2011, Hendrickson and Heffernan 2002, Feagan 2007). Feagan (2007) has outlined how “distance” and “length” used when describing conventional food chains is best interpreted in a physical, social, and metaphorical sense. As a response to growing hegemony within the globalized, elongated, and corporatized food production spectrum, oppositional movements have fought to establish new means of producing and distributing food using methods that inherently promote the values of proximity, equity, information transparency, and social and environmental consciousness. These budding networks have been classified as “alternative agro-food networks,” “civic and democratic agriculture,” “quality turn in agriculture,” “short food supply chains,” “local food systems,” and other similar terms. Within this document the latter term will be utilized to describe such systems, while further exploring the significance of the different connotations and representations of the “local” in food systems.

Localism has been pitted as the adversary to the globalist, capitalist food system, and has been accepted as means of promoting environmental sustainability and social justice (Connelly et al. 2011, Allen 2010, Jarosz 2008, Dupuis and Goodman 2005). The “local” has been characterized as a “quality turn” in food procurement which enables ethics of care, understanding, concern and socio-cultural awareness to be expressed in food choices and production (DuPuis and Goodman 2005, Born and Purcell 2006, Higgins et al. 2008). Dupuis and Goodman (2005) have identified the local as representing a counteractive response to the dominance of global food networks, and as a means to re-instill trust in food systems. As localist movements have developed around the globe they have taken various shapes and forms while reflecting the most pressing issues, governing styles, and social movement and advocacy practices in respective locations.

Academic literature has cast the local movement in the United States as being consumer and activist driven, while being rich with idealist rhetoric that strives for a transformation of food systems while re-embedding ethics of care in citizens (DuPuis and Goodman 2005, Feagan 2007, Ibery et al. 2005). The United States movement has been described as an action initiator that encourages the development of differentiated, progressive social norms and restructured food chains with the capacity to pacify growing demands of conscious consumers’ notions of health, ecology, animal welfare, and social justice (DuPuis and Goodman 2005, Higgins et al. 2008, Sheriff 2009). Alternatively, DuPuis and Goodman 2005 have plotted the trajectory of European local food movements as products of a different history of class, race, and gender relations, which have generated a lobby for greater interest

in protecting the European countryside from the consequences of the liberated international trade market, while also creating governance that encourages sustainable rural development and preservation of European heritage. European localist ideals embrace a distinct view of national traditions expressed in a imagery of family farms, local direct markets, unique rural communities and ecologically diverse rural landscapes (Ibery et al. 2005, DuPuis and Goodman 2005, Feagan 2007)

Table 1: Global and Local Food System Theory: Major Distinctions	
Global	Local
Concentrated capital, financial capital	Distributed capital, social capital
Corporate dependence	Self reliance, local community dependence
Mass production for mass consumption	Diversified production, localized consumption
Spatial and temporal independence	Proximity based, seasonal
Reliance on mechanical, standardized systems	Traditional, local knowledge and practices
Dependence on symbols, human anonymity	Direct contact, social proximity

Table 1: Synopsis generated after consulting (Feagan 2008, Feagan and Henderson 2009)

Localist movements, regardless of geographic position and history, have shared the core notion of delivering more information to citizens regarding the reality of the meaning of their food choices, along with the need to comprehend the complete social, environmental and economic costs of food (Connelly et al. 2011). This task most often has begun with designing processes that bring producers and consumers closer together, or formulating means for “short circuiting” industrial systems while striving for transparency and “re-embedding” place based information into procurement processes (Feagan and Henderson 2009, DuPuis and Goodman 2005). Local movements have been characterized as steps away from productivist, mechanized, and standardized systems of food production that encourage the commoditization of food within the free market (Born and Purcell 2006, Higgins et al. 2008). Such processes have used label identifications to differentiate food in traditional retail outlets, and orchestrated direct sales marketing and other novel partnerships between growers, consumers, and communities to lessen the “theoretical, physical, and social” space between food production and procurement (Feagan 2007) As local endeavors have developed across the globe it has become clear that each regionalized “local” movement has evolved at a unique pace, while facing distinct logistical, financial, socio-cultural and resource capacity challenges.

The push for short food supply chains: A closer look at the social, economic, and environmental criticisms of globalized food networks

The criticisms against globalized food systems can be distilled and placed into at least one of three topical categories: ecological sustainability; social/economic justice and equity; and food quality and health. Issues can cross over and have relevance under more than one of each of the blanket headings, but the general condemnations put forth by environmentalists, social justice advocates, growers, scholars and those others influenced by localist rhetoric can be separated into these broader categories. The governing issues of conflict are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Conflict within globalized food production systems: 3 major categories		
Ecological Sustainability	Social/Economic Justice and Equity	Food Quality and Health
Reduced biodiversity	Erosion of food culture/tradition	Food scares, disease outbreaks
Chemical reliance	Human and animal abuse	Disparity in access to healthy food
Intensive land management	Concentration of power	Diminishing food quality
Petroleum reliance: production, processing, and distribution	Degradation of agrarian communities, rural society, local economies	Diseases of affluence
Carbon emissions from intensive land/livestock management	Societal disconnect between food and its origins	Poor nutritional knowledge
Natural resource abuse	Economic disparity	

Table 2: Synopsis generated after consulting (Born 2006, Kremer and DeLiberty 2011, Allen 2010, Feagan 2007, Hendrickson and Heffernan 2002, Jarosz 2008)

Ecological Sustainability

The most widespread claim against conventional food supply chains has been from an aspect of environmental sustainability (Born and Purcell 2006). The rapid changes in global agricultural systems perceived within the last 60 years have been attributed to policy initiatives and business strategies which encouraged the extension of supply chains as a means to gain economies of scale and profit maximization within production and distribution processes (Kremer and DeLiberty 2011, Born and Purcell 2006, Feagan and Henderson 2009). Such transition, and a concurrent shift in farm level production techniques, were facilitated by an abundant supply of cheap fuel sources, which resulted in the extensive adoption of agricultural management techniques inextricably linked to petroleum, chemical inputs and mechanized labor (Feagan 2007, Kremer and DeLiberty 2011, Hendrickson and Heffernan 2008). The increased reliance on fossil fuels has not only been identified from a production standpoint, but at all levels of distribution: transport, storage, and retail.

The commodification of food for a global market has encouraged an intensification of agricultural and livestock production, consolidation of farmlands, and a reduction of biodiversity in growing operations (Allen 2010, Born and Purcell 2006). The evolution has increased demand for natural capital such as land, water, feed and fertile soil while also amplifying the synthetic chemical load entering ecosystems. Farmer have been pressured by the necessity to produce higher and higher yields on increasingly consolidated large farming operations to secure incomes that maintain a livelihood in a commodity market that drives down raw output prices. Such pressures have made the proposed promises of controversial genetically modified organisms (GMOs) as input materials more lucrative to growers, and aided their proliferation in locations that permit their usage. While the usage of genetically modified input materials remains controversial, the trend of constant pressures on growers to produce more and more, while earning less and less per unit of output will continue to push open the door for the entry of more GMOs. The localist movement portrays this pressure and risk filled portrait as an end product of a capitalist, agribusiness controlled, corporate hijacked sector, which has externalized the true environmental costs of production (Jarosz 2008).

The pursuit of sustainable agriculture primarily involves technological innovation and the dispersion of more environmentally conscious production practices. Growers which conform with the governing characteristics of sustainable agriculture are expected to engage in ecologically sensitive, low intensity agricultural practices. Such behaviour can be certified by official inspection bodies, or implied by growers and accepted within local systems relying on the integrity of personal communication that such networks facilitate. Local networks also are expected to

reduce the amount of fossil fuel demands in transport, storage and vending of food products. For such growing and distribution operations to be economically sensible new market arrangements which showcase the differentiated output in an accessible and convenient manner must be established, and this is where all incarnations of local food networks play an integral role.

Social/Economic Justice and Equity:

Another category which has been highlighted within localist discourse is the inherent social and economic justice and equity issues within globalized food systems. Hendrickson (22) characterizes the modern food landscape as controlled by “food chain clusters,” where few decision makers manage vast amounts of resources and space. While product and brand choices may have increased exponentially during this time, the number of benefactors from each food purchase dramatically decreased, and such consolidation of power and wealth has been described as eroding the horizons of public food decision making (Hendrickson and Heffernan 2002). The theoretical and physical space encouraged by this system has been said to create a disconnect between the general public, those responsible for producing food, and the processes they use, creating opportunities for human and animal abuse within all levels of the system (Feagan 2007). The strict production expectations put more pressure (physical, mental) on the humans involved in handling, processing and distributing products at a time when they also experience low pay wages for labor within a system that prides itself on high yield and low cost.

The unequal power relations and distribution of resources has increased pressures on growers and lead to the loss of rural livelihoods, the degradation of agrarian communities, and increases in economic disparity (Allen 2010). Feagan (2007) has described the globalization of food production as a “thinning” process which has erased social and cultural traditions, broken community relations, and degraded local economies. The general standpoint of the local movement is that the corporate food production structure has encouraged an atmosphere of ignorance and separation from the social and economic consequences of food production (Dupuis and Goodman 2005, Feagan 2007).

Food Quality and Health:

Although industrial agricultural systems have increased the abundance of food products that customers are exposed to, it is suggested that the high standardization and productivist outlook has decreased overall food quality and nutritional value (Born and Purcell 2006). While consumer choice remains higher than ever, it is generally accepted that the sea change in dietary patterns and food procurement traditions has led to the degradation of societal health in developed countries, where increased instance of dietary related, “diseases of affluence” have been recorded (Born and Purcell 2006). Food scares, and disease outbreaks have also been connected with the extension of production and distribution chains along bringing attention to lack of trust regarding the likelihood of establishing safeguards for such highly complex and widely spaced operations (Higgins et al. 2008). The localist outlook echoes the premise that the industrialized food system has delivered us to a point where lower quality food options more readily available to consumers, and where the integrity and safety within food systems once instilled by proximity and personal relationship has been destroyed (Born and Purcell 2006, Higgins et al. 2008, Feagan 2007, Brougherea et al. 2009).

Theoretical Framework

Local network theory: why it is necessary to trace and reflect

The assumption that local food networks inherently contain the instant solutions to delivering results that empower consumers and producers in communities engaged in food localization activities is a dangerous estimation. In a blatant and straightforward critique of the embellishment of the local, the local is described as being void of inherent qualities, and recast solely as an effective strategy for advancing particular food agendas (Connelly et al 2011). Persistent blind faith in the merits of the local has shifted food based social movements' concerns away from more deep rooted issues such as equity, community building and citizenship (DeLind 2011). Many questions must be asked while developing the "local" on a location by location basis to ensure that the correct regionally and culturally specific systems are set in place to fulfill unique expectations in different communities. It is also imperative to note that the impact of local food initiatives will be inextricably linked to the agro-politics of regions, the geographical and climactic limitations, and the dominant market trends within each location's agricultural sector.

To best understand how "local" can and has been defined, who has defined it, and how after building on these definitions advocates have successfully gone about establishing structures to create participatory localized food systems, it is useful to reflect upon a few governing theoretical concepts which have arisen in local food literature. It becomes important to introduce concepts which have been used to describe the most deeply rooted and functional aspects of local food networks, along with the additional critiques that have challenged local initiatives to reexamine their fruits of their efforts.

By identifying potential pitfalls as described within critical local network theory, it can become possible to produce a clearer definition of ambiguous concepts within local principles, and to accurately identify the problems that are plaguing specific local initiatives and keeping them from reaching their full potential. Through the process of observing what factors have detracted from effectiveness of past local initiatives, relevant success factors for future endeavors can be formulated. Within this work, the ability to analyze the existing local food initiatives in Budapest with a clear, honest, and objective viewpoint is essential for identifying where progress can be made in expanding the effects of the budding networks in the rest of Hungary. This task will comprise a major portion of this work, where I will utilize a few predominant theories from local food literature to critique the elements that have comprised local food movements when examined from a global perspective, while also focusing in on one Budapest's contemporary local food networks. I will highlight the development path that one specific actor, the Szatyor Association, has taken in securing its place as a functional actor within the maturing food movement in Hungary.

Theoretical Critiques of Local Network Theory

Deciphering the reality of the Local: What's promised and what's delivered?

Much has written about local food systems, what has driven the motivations for their development, and the results they are expected to deliver at the ground level. These notions have been distilled into theoretical concepts by academics who have spent time chronicling the development of networks as both participants and observers. Academic literature that has portrayed the reality of movements has uncovered that there has been an overwhelming

tendency to fall under the spell of an inherent “local superiority complex” when both examining and participating in social movements connected to food. Critiques go on in length to describe the progress that must be made for local food initiatives to truly develop into the fully inclusive, functional adversaries of the dominant food systems they are pitted against. Born and Purcell (2006), Feagan (2007, 2008), DeLind (2011), Allen (2010), Hassenien (2003), DuPuis and Goodman (2005), Jarosz (2008) and Treagar (2011) have all performed comprehensive critiques of varying aspects of local food movements. Their research has uncovered a tendency for romanticized ideals to appear within local initiatives, weakening their ability to be effective instigators of change. Scholarly critiques have sought to classify the strengths and weaknesses of distinct local movements across the globe with general concepts that make it easier to understand the complex socio-cultural concepts within local food networks.

To create a distinct vision of their consolidated notions, I will combine the points most relevant to this study exposed in their literature and frame them generally utilizing Born and Purcell’s (2006) characterization of “The Local Trap,” which has been coined to describe the weaknesses inherent within common local network approaches. I will use the “Local Trap” to summarize the most pressing and broad concerns which have developed within local networks, and then outline the more specific issues relating to popular structures and mechanisms within local food systems in Chapter 2. I will also utilize the concepts of “food citizenship,” and the imagined food community to identify strong, rooted elements within local food network development. In the case of local food network development in Hungary, I will go on to show how both the positive and negative points uncovered in local food literature have been exemplified in Hungary’s local initiatives, and use the most pertinent concepts to examine the Szatyor Association’s growth and maturation as a social movement in Budapest.

Unabashed romanticism and falling into the “Local Trap”

A major concern expressed in academic literature is the question of whether local movements deliver on all or any of the promises represented within their ideals. The local has been framed in an overwhelmingly tough position as an oppositional force that is expected to contribute to restructuring industrial food networks, which exist with an overwhelming corporate resource and financial advantage over short food supply chain initiatives. When framed as the singular means for inciting the transformative societal change that would be required to create complete change in global food networks, the challenge of the “local” seems futile (Hassenein 2003). Such overwhelming expectations, and the local’s placement as a distinct, independent, and incongruent adversary to capitalist agricultural networks has been cited as a primary weakness in local theories (Born and Purcell 2006, Treagar 2011, DuPuis and Goodman 2005). Additionally, the assumption that on a stand alone level the local is implicitly oppositional to global, is open to debate (DuPuis and Goodman 2005, Allen 2010, Treagar 2011). Born and Purcell (2006) characterize baseless assumptions of this nature as a product of the “local trap.” In outlining the misconceptions that come with making large investments in local presumptions, he states:

The local trap refers to the tendency of food activists and researchers to assume something inherent about the local scale. The local is assumed to be desirable; it is preferred a priori to larger scales. What is desired varies and can include ecological sustainability, social justice, democracy, better nutrition, and food security, freshness, and quality. For example, the local trap assumes that a local-scale food system will be inherently more socially just than a national-scale or global-scale food system... Local-scale food systems are equally likely to be just or unjust, sustainable or unsustainable, secure or insecure...The outcomes produced by a food system are contextual: they depend on the actors and agendas that are empowered by the particular social relations in a given food system (Born and Purcell 2006)

This argument is not made with intent to undermine the ambitious efforts of those involved in local food movements, but to highlight the dangers of assumptions. It is expected that a greater awareness of such false pretenses can help ground localist stakeholders with hopes that a repetitive, continuous introspective search within each movement will take place to observe the actions and interactions of all systems participants, and to outline just what exactly each unique system is and is not delivering. It is Born and Purcell's inclination that an unabashedly romantic view, an exclusionary view, or a lack of introspective observance of a local system will lead to a misunderstanding of key issues, an aggravation of the most pressing problems, and an ignorance of more effective actions. This critique should not be looked upon as a futile chastising of the progress that has been made in the local food movement in recent years, but rather a stark call to constantly enhance the system through routine monitoring of standards and practices within culturally, socially and geographically distinct areas.

The Local Trap: Assumptions, Romanticizing Proximity, and Participant Isolation

The danger of assumptions when determining the relative value, capacity, and functionality of local systems has been highlighted as something major to consider when attempting to avoid falling victim to the "local trap" when observing food based social movements (Born and Purcell 2006, Delind 2007). The assumption that greater proximity both spatially and socially during food transactions results in more ecologically sustainable food distribution network and the development of trust, camaraderie and mutual understanding between growers and consumers has been contested. Born and Purcell (2006) discredit the notion that there is anything inherently more sustainable within weakly defined local food systems, especially those premised solely on proximity of interactions, and that the automatic equation of ecological consciousness and socio-cultural consideration creates a wide margin of error within any local movement. The reoccurring inability of local food movements to have an ameliorating effect on the social justice conflicts within conventional food networks can often be traced back to an unclear definition of goals at the beginning of each initiative, and a inability to reflect upon system realities to determine whether systems are moving closer to, or further away from social justice (Allen 2010).

DeLind (2002) discredits assuming the inherent value of enterprises that remain reliant on traditional market relations and private enterprise. She makes the ambitious declaration that participation in agricultural enterprises that remain predicated on private ownership and accumulation reduce one's ability to truly break out of the designated "producer" and "consumer" classifications that the traditional market encourages, reducing the likelihood for true mutual understanding between parties cooperating in local initiatives (DeLind 2002). It is also suggested that this distinct classification tendency within local food initiatives results in a segregation of participants that discourages an introspective analysis of the role each stakeholder; grower, consumer or other, can play in contributing to creating food system alternatives.

Local movements must be aware that ideals aside, most efforts end up being directed towards creating alternative economic arrangements in food distribution systems, as opposed to more holistic alternative structures (Delind 2002). Statements of this nature are made to directly challenge individual placation through conscious purchasing, reminding that the act of conscious consumption alone is still performed within the comfortable confines of the traditional marketplace, and does not represent a substantial commitment to creating meaningful alternatives to conventional food chains. DeLind (2011) goes as far as stating that an individualizing of food issues (and the means for resolving them) through the vein of consumption disconnects people from their additional roles as residents,

neighbors, and citizens, effectively preventing the acceptance of group responsibility for challenging inequity within existing structures.

The Local Trap: Defensive Localism and Exclusion

In Dupuis and Goodman's (2005) summary of the politics of localism, she describes the striking point that the local concept inherently includes and excludes "particular people, places and ways of life" when defining what is local, quality, trusted, and good for society. Recalling the question of who is included and excluded from local movements, and the assumption that the expressed benefits of the local will reach all members within a community is an additional aspect which can result in falling victim to the "local trap." Spatially based justifications for local alone provide no inherent pledges of equity, social justice, or inclusion (Feagan 2007, Born and Purcell 2006). DuPuis and Goodman (2005) warns against relying on proximity based local food agendas that make broad postulations in forming set norms and standards of practice, for fears that such a predetermined orientation will make it more difficult to uncover the social justice ramifications of each movement while making them more vulnerable to corporate co-opting. It is also suggested that the inward looking nature of local movements can resemble protectionist stances that, while aiming to empower specific individuals marginalized within food systems, actually isolate those most disadvantaged on the periphery of movements (Treager 2011).

As momentum for local movements has gathered, scholars have been calling for a more realistic observation of the repercussions of primitively decisive, "defensively local" determinations done with acknowledged or unacknowledged personal agendas in mind (Allen 2010, Alkon 2008, Feagan 2007, Connelly et al. 2011). This theoretic bursting of the idealistic "local bubble" has been done in the name of bringing greater awareness to the multiple meanings of the concept that persist. Hinrichs (2000) describes the local as being comprised of complex "cultural, social, and environmental content" that must not be stifled by hasty, inelastic, and exclusionary determinations. Such defensive determinations in local movements have been quantified as protectionist and exclusionary stances that impede openness and innovation that could create fully functional alternatives to conventional food systems (Treager 2011).

The potential danger is that localism can incite competition between territories if messages become construed as place vs. place protection measures, a battle which has been described as a self-inflicted quarantine which, as a result protects no one (DuPuis and Goodman 2005, Allen 2010). Such elitist "privileging" of the local puts food based social movements in jeopardy of epitomizing the protectionist, conservative agendas which grassroots movements of this nature would expectedly pit themselves against (Feagan 2007, Treager 2011, DuPuis and Goodman 2005). The possibility of excluding the needs and concerns of all members within a community has been highlighted as a common trend of such presumptuous, defensive localism (Treager 2011, DuPuis and Goodman 2005, Allen 2010).

Table 3: Framing the Local Trap: Governing Concepts	
Theoretical Ailments	Major Symptoms
Dangerous Assumptions	Framing the local as the mirror adversary to the global; major assumptions regarding inherent social and ecological benefits of proximity
Weak Structural Elements	Lack of ability to measure progress, success, and failure; weak outline of goals and concepts within developing local initiatives, lack of mechanism for self inspection; retaining strict producer/consumer definitions; remaining reliance on commodity related interactions, conscious consumption as sole driver for change
Defensive Localism	Short-sightedness, introverted classification of local; isolation and protectionism; territorial competition, exclusion and continued marginalization of the disadvantaged

Table 3: Synopsis generated after consulting (Treager 2011, Delind 2007, 2008, Dupuis and Goodman 2005, Allen 2010, Hinrichs 2000, Feagan 2007, Treager 2011, Hassanein 2003)

Avoiding the Local trap: Food Citizenship and Imagined Food Communities

Having framed the “local trap” as a mechanism for describing elements of weakness within the inherent local food network philosophies, it also becomes a useful point of reference to utilize additional theoretical concepts which can help identify strengths within various local food network structures. Academic literature has framed theories which can be used to help uncover signs of deeply rooted and functional relationships in local systems, highlighting them as premonitions for sustained systems. Within this work, I will utilize the concepts of Food Citizenship and Imagined Food Communities to provide a means for identifying and describing the actions, relationships, collaborations, structures and orientations within local networks as the most deeply rooted and effective means for creating culturally appropriate, location optimized conscious food procurement networks.

Food Citizenship

While the Local Trap theory is used to summarize the debilitating tendency of local food tenets to prioritize geographic closeness and proximity as the primary building blocks in restructuring food systems, the concept of “food citizenship” has emerged to endorse the importance of active, participatory and purposeful social cohesion in empowering local food advocates to induce change. The terms civic and democratic agriculture, food democracy, and reflexive localism have been used (Lockie 2009, DuPuis and Goodman 2005, DeLind 2011, Hassenien 2003) to describe similar processes and structures, but the general notions of each concept will be combined, falling under the term food citizenship within this document. Food citizenship has been used to summarize the unique, ground-level activities that individuals, households, and communities within a region engage in to democratically express their ideals for shaping new food paradigms (Hassenein 2003). Food citizenship is expressed by the actions, institutions, and participatory processes that secure citizens the opportunity to deliberate upon, and shape solutions to the food issues faced within their locale (DuPuis and Goodman 2005, Hassenien 2003, Treager 2011).

Tregear observes that food citizenship is expressed when constructing and utilizing the processes of political decision-making that maximize opportunities for open exchange between all food stakeholders. Such processes intertwined with local food politics are expected to result in “re-engagement with people through relations of regard, with local place and environments, and with knowledge of place-histories and cultural customs.” (Feagan 2007, 37).

Hassenien (2003, 79) notes that food citizenship is about “citizens having the power to determine agro-food policies and practices locally, regionally, and globally.” DeLind (2002, 217) adds that the term food citizenship should frame socially conscious activism and environmentalism within rural and urban settings “not only through market based models of economic behavior, but through common ties to place and physical engagement with that place.”

Although the notion of food citizenship itself can be critiqued for being porous and idealistic, it’s a concept that is used to encourage the development of outlets for political and physical participation in the construction of local food networks. Allen (2010, 302) adds that participatory democracy is a necessity in developing social equity within food networks, which can be expected to be accompanied with a sense of belonging. Acknowledging that conflict will be inevitable during this process, he states that the best pathway for finding working solutions to such conflicts is by means of “the active participation of the citizenry and political engagement to work out differences.” Hassanein (2003, 79) echoes these sentiments when stating that when contemplating sustainability, choices are made that affect everyone, inciting conflict, and that “politics is the arena in which we deal with disagreements of values,” as fair and equitable means of finding solutions to disagreements. Allen (2010, 300) has questioned the functionality of the theme of food citizenship, and has suggested that such participatory control over food systems can only be accomplished at the “extra-local” level, citing an ability to witness the tangible effects and benefits resulting from participation as a major factor in empowering citizens and giving them the necessary motivation to forge on with local food efforts. The description of this limitation will prove useful when attempting to explain how aspects of successful local food initiatives must be scaled up to induce wider change on the food systems within their region and beyond.

Food citizenship is predicated on the belief that each individual has something to offer when constructing the solutions to the common problems of society (Hassenien 2003). Local movements which accommodate expressions of food citizenship foster opportunities for citizen participation, inclusion, and ingenuity, and their outcomes are a product of stakeholders’ unique interactions and collective goals and strategies (Allen 2010, Hassenein 2003). The mechanisms for executing such opportunities consist of a combination of functional decision-making processes, and the theoretical and physical infrastructures for collecting and carrying out citizen contributions regarding the design and operation of local food networks; essentially the capacity to install and manage a “local” system as designed by those who comprise the citizenry within a region. The tools within such arrangements include meetings and meeting spaces; partnership decisions between food producers and consumers; procurement and distribution infrastructures for products; communication infrastructures between system participants; processes for voting, making suggestions, and future decision-making; feedback loops; time management, resource management, and people management decisions; a management structure and more. A system’s capacity to accommodate food citizenship can be measured by its ability to operate as an inclusive and transparent system of food procurement and distribution, while remaining in a malleable state that protects stakeholder ability to shape its future methods and processes.

A major part of citizenship, in addition to volunteering, voting, and participatory decision making is the resultant sense of belonging that carries on long after deliberation sessions, or days of work. Through participation and engagement with others one makes a firm rejection of the culture of individualism and separation which has become a convenient option in modern life (DeLind 2002). Expressions of concern, by persons within a location in honor of other persons, working together in honor of the same cause, forge bonds of solidarity and conviviality that tie people to each other, and to places (DeLind 2002). Social cohesion forged through shared human endeavors enhance

one's sense of attachment to a location, and general sense of belonging within a place of residence, sentiments going far beyond the satisfaction that comes with having equal say in a decision making process (Feagan 2007).

Imagined Food Communities

While food citizenship as a concept is used to describe the initiation of processes that make participation and reciprocal exchange within a local food network possible, the term does not fully capture what is created out of such ritualistic sharing and compromise within the context of a location's well-calculated local food endeavor. By creating opportunities to engage in food citizenship within an area, local food initiatives have been touted for their ability to reinstall a public culture of participatory democracy while empowering citizens (DeLind 2011). The close interactions during deliberation, interaction, volunteering, collaborative work and exchange between local food stakeholders have been highlighted to do more than signify equity within a system, but rather "engage in the continual creation, negotiation, and re-creation of identity, memory and meaning" of the place in which the local initiative is being constructed DeLind (2011, 279). This unique outcome of local food efforts has been touted as the recreation of community, and installation of "we-ness" through group transformation of food systems, and acknowledging that this birthing of a new place of social "inhabitation" for citizens comes without strict political or geographic boundaries, or even without physical place of habitation. What crystallizes as a result has been deemed the "imagined food community" (Feagan (2007, 27) DeLind (2011, 279) DeLind 2002).

Benedict Anderson (1983) first coined the term "imagined community," when using it to describe nations as constructs of the ritualistic processes shared by citizens. He described the imagined community as being comprised of "ideas and practices distilled into symbols, slogans, and ritual," while emphasizing that community does not require spatial definitions to exist, but rather shared processes, beliefs, and attitudes which bond citizens (Wolford 2003, 501). The term community in this definition does not have to be thought of as an actual place of residence, but the actual space for social interaction encouraged by the food system, the "imagined community" established during the preparation, implementation, and reformation of the new food procurement and distribution network. Hendrickson and Heffernan (2002, 362) go into detail in describing the embedding qualities that local food initiatives have in a location, (in this case describing food circles in North America) in a manner that outlines the reciprocally supportive relationship between a community and a regenerative food system:

The Food Circle's perceived role is to connect all actors in the food system in a sensible and sustainable way that sustains the community, is healthy for both the people and the environment, and returns control of the food system to the local communities. The embeddness notions of responsibility, trust, and relations of regard are central to the food circle process of constructing relationships more consciously integrated between the local community and its food system.

While Hendrickson and Heffernan are describing food circles in this definition, their sentiments are relevant in describing the role of any regenerative food system initiative, especially those in which food citizenship is encouraged. Feagan (2007, 29) outlines that "community and its members coalesce around reconstructing food systems so as to re-embed them in place oriented socioeconomic and ecological relations," outlining that the community which is formed is liberated from connotations of geographic space, and actually defined by the people, actions, interactions, and results of a system, rather than its tangible footprint. DeLind (2002, 221) holds that the imagined community does not develop without dedication as it is "a function of necessity, not of choice, and civic engagement is a matter of personal sacrifice, or relinquishing self interest to a group or common good."

The imagined food community is to be thought of as the social space around a food system which triggers a “re-engagement with people through relations of regard, with local places and environments, and with knowledge of place-histories and cultural customs,” acknowledging that such forums of interaction and exchange, both social and financial, whether tangible or invented, “commit ourselves economically and politically to those places” (Feagan 2007, 37). Hinrichs notes that one should not shy away from highlighting the importance of an economic connection to a space, or classify this bond as a less wholesome bond than social capital and trust, stating that the “level of social embeddedness of economic activity has always been substantial” (Hinrichs 2000, 296). Allen (2010, 301) reinforces that orientation of communities goes far beyond geographic designations and physical spaces stating they are: “socially constructed circuits of geographically bounded social relationships that have been shaped and are being shaped.” The imagined food community concept highlights the liberation of community from geographical space, encouraging that the social aspects fostered by a community are as important as the space it occupies. The imagined food community that is formed around a local food initiative is the element that essentially secures credibility and sustenance for its local definition, emplacing the local by providing a frame of reference that is comprised of people, interactions, exchanges, decisions, and results, as opposed to indistinct definitions, geographical designations, labels or other weaker local food system elements. Although the imagined community can utilize a central space as a meeting or deliberation point, it is not the space that is essential in securing the desired outcomes of the local initiative, but rather the people, interactions, and relationships fostered inside and outside of the space.

An imagined food community can take shape around various incarnations of food-based social movements, and the diversity of approaches that can foster this unique forum of social exchange has been touted as major positive in academic literature. It has been acknowledge that places and communities, and the identities that develop within those who inhabit them are in “constant relationship, movement, and interaction” (Feagan 2007, 35). The vibrancy that is encouraged within imagined food communities, by means of a continuous reinvention, and self-determined definition of the social spheres is identified as a core strength which consistently gives “new members an opportunity to participate in different ways” (Hasseneien 2003, 81). Such vitality has been pointed out as a means of stimulating novel insights and approaches, which aid in effectively mobilizing people to remove themselves from traditional routines while engaging in social movement activities (Hasseneien 2003). Essentially, it is the responsibility of actors within imagined food communities to epitomize ideals that challenge established food paradigms, while challenging the ideas of other engaged in the same community, inciting an on-going metamorphosis of goals, beliefs, and strategies in a process that secures interest in members and provides vigor to movements (Feagan 2007, Hassenien 2003, Hinrichs 2000).

Using the Local Trap, Food Citizenship, and Imagined Food Community to Analyze Local Food Movements

Within the context of this work I will use the local trap, food citizenship, and the imagined food community to classify points of strength and weakness within the local food movements which have been observed globally, and described in detail in Chapter 2. I will also complete an in-depth analysis of the Szatyor Association, and outline how the concepts of food citizenship and the imagined food community relate to the association’s maturation as a unique and novel local food movement in Budapest. The local trap will also be referred to when developing success factors for the Szatyor Association, and while elaborating what relevant information can be extracted from the Szatyor Association that can have positive implications for future advancements of local food movements in Hungary.

Utilizing this theoretical framework will permit me the capacity to overcome urges to deem preliminary signs of local food network development in Budapest as complete success stories before applying the set of warnings outlined within the “local trap” concept. It will also be possible to determine whether the Szatyor association has oriented itself in the proper position to skillfully harness the citizen interest which it has garnered in its short lifetime.

Table 4: Summary: Food Citizenship and Imagined Food Communities	
Definition	
Food Citizenship	Both the infrastructure (which makes possible) and the actions and process that grant individuals the opportunity to deliberate upon and shape solutions to food issues within their locale. Also, the conscious dedication of time, effort, input and self devoted in honor of expressing one’s right and interest in shaping their locale.
Imagined Food Community	The continual creation, negotiation, and recreation of places of social inhabitation that accommodate and draw together stakeholders within a local food movement. Stakeholders may be previous acquaintances but it is expected that the imagined community would serve as a forum of unification which would encourage new interactions and the forging of relationships between those who come to define it.
Shared Elements	Exchange, communication, inclusion, regard, action, individuality
Shared Processes	Volunteering, voting, managing, decision making, working, sacrifice, feedback loops

Table 4: Synopsis generated after consulting (Hinrichs 2000, DeLind 2002, Hassanein 2003, Feagan 2007, Allen 2010, DeLind 2011, DuPuis and Goodman 2005, Born 2010, and Treager 2011)

Table 5: Strategic Analysis: Food Citizenship and Imagined Food Communities	
Pertinent Questions	<p>How has the local been defined in each situation, who is defining it?</p> <p>What is changed by the system?</p> <p>Who is empowered by the process?</p> <p>What is the effect on the locale?</p> <p>How do the stakeholders relate, communicate, and interact with each other?</p> <p>What is the decision making process?</p> <p>Who and what is excluded from the process?</p> <p>How can the system develop and transform?</p>

Table 3: Synopsis generated after consulting (Hinrichs 2000, DeLind 2002, Hassanein 2003, Feagan 2007, Allen 2010, DeLind 2011, DuPuis and Goodman 2005, Born 2010, and Treager 2011)

Chapter 1

Research Question 1. *How has the organization and trajectory of the agricultural sector in Hungary since the end of the Socialist period influenced the development and potential for short food supply networks in Budapest?*

The purpose of this section will be to explain how Hungary's agricultural sector has transitioned into the extremely vulnerable state that it exists in today. I will outline why the transitions within the sector since the Socialist period have increased rural disparity and exodus, created a declining value in farm production and agricultural sector value, while also putting Hungary in a poor position to address agri-environmental issues from a top down standpoint. I will explain why citizens and growers have felt compelled to take action themselves and attempt to rebuild the local distribution systems. I will attempt to position Hungary as a country which can benefit extremely from the stabilizing results provided by local food networks.

Post Socialist Transition and the Increasing Importance of Local Food Initiatives in Hungary's Agricultural Sector

Introduction

The last 20 years of transition have left Hungary's agricultural sector in a precarious situation. Hungary exists as a country struggling to maintain its agricultural heritage while dealing with the sector's diminishing importance in contributing to GDP and employment since the end of the Socialist Era (Popp and Udovecz 2007). The effects of European Union accession still resonate in Hungary, and both the positive and negative consequences have been exemplified within the agricultural sector. While EU accession has brought increased environmental and rural development expectations, (and support programs to encourage them) the plight of Hungary's development strategies has proven how difficult it is to effectively reform deeply rooted agricultural systems in the name of improved environmental performance and rural development, especially while operating within the pressurized context of the global food market (Nemes 2010, Bennett 2001, Popp and Udovecz 2007, Gatzweiler and Hagedorn 2003, Hanisch and Lachewski 2002).

There is much at stake within the agricultural sector in Hungary. The country has been a historic net exporter of agricultural products thanks to its favourable geography and climate, along with fertile soil (Podruzsik 2003). Its cultural identity for the past two centuries has been shaped by the robust commitment to agriculture held by its rural class. The last two decades were plagued with despondency, crisis, income and land disparity, and property disputes, all of which have taken their toll on Hungary's countryside resulting in population exodus, decreasing rural livelihood, a decrease in farming output, and farming operations (Konig 2007, Bennett 2001, Szabo 2007). EU accession spurred initial hopes for regeneration within agricultural stakeholders, but time has proven that the rapid changes within the liberalised market combined with insufficient institutional support have left Hungarian producers at a disadvantage within the European Union. The result is a situation where the potential value of many Hungarian products goes unrecognized domestically and gets marginalized within the greater food commodity market (Halmai and Vasary 2007).

While it is difficult to place the blame for this decline on a single policy initiative, political regime, or European Union level determination, the challenges Hungary has faced leading up to and after its accession in the EU paint a useful picture of the trajectory of the sector, and provide a means for outlining what assisted in causing the agricultural sector to atrophy into the vulnerable state it exists in today. In the midst of such challenges, local level solutions to agricultural issues have been developing with little outside support, and have served as a beacon of light in an otherwise bleak sector. Hungary's local food initiatives have shown incremental progress in rewarding ecologically and socially conscious growers for the differentiated model of production they carry out with support, while also helping rally attention for a vulnerable rural society which for so long has served as the torch holders of cultural traditions that have defined the Hungarian condition. The role of bottom-up, citizen-driven social initiatives has become as important as ever in representing the plight of environmentally conscious and small-scale Hungarian growers across the countryside, while also voicing the concerns of a conscious citizen base who expect more out of their local and regional food systems, and more from their government in providing functional support to the farmers with whom identify.

The Historical Perspective: Agricultural Transition in Central and Eastern Europe

Background: Regime change in Central and Eastern Europe

Agricultural transition in Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) and former Socialist and Soviet Union States established itself as a polarising subject immediately following the fall of the USSR and dismantling of its governance structures. The regime change and concurrent state sovereignty instigated a rapid restructuring of national economies (Halmai and Vasary 2007). Some of the largest shockwaves were felt in the agricultural sector, while attempting to convert centrally planned production systems into operations driven by free-market economics. Under socialist governance, agricultural production was not dictated by competition, but after regime turnover, nations quickly exposed producers and products to a competitive European market (Fejos 2006). Such drastic changes had a tumultuous effect on rural populations who were forced to attempt to cling for life to the tattered remnants of a discarded system or find their place within a vastly different free market based system.

In early transition years, shared issues plagued CEECs with the most common observed deficiencies being: insufficient financial capital, inadequate technical and knowledge-based capacity, and the absence of competent institutions to functionally manage adjustments within the hurried timeframe (Gatzweiler and Hagedorn 2003). CEECs struggled with market liberalisation and the reinstatement of private property rights (Burger 2006, Hanisch and Lachewski 2002). In the first decade after transition most CEECs faced agricultural production declines which were attributed to: reduced market value of products, import competition, population migrations, land ownership disputes and cases of land abandonment. Such conditions caused a general decline in the standard of living and per capita income in rural areas (Banse et. al 1999, Ferto 2001, Brown and Schaft 2002, Sumelis et al. 2003).

As chaos dissipated, CEECs sought long-term stability within the agricultural sector by taking steps to conform with European Union guidelines that were expected to improve social and economic conditions, and reverse some of the shocks of transition (Bennett 2001). Actions were taken with EU membership in mind, and CEEC strategies became driven by accession qualifications and support plans (Popp and Udovecz 2007). Preparation for accession

also came with the additional expectations of adopting agricultural practices that maintained acceptable environmental conditions while providing support in the marginalized rural peripheries of countries. (Gatzweiler and Hagedorn 2003, Bennett 2001). It was during this period that CEECs began to institute some of the earliest agri-environmental principles and rural development strategies in policy objectives, in most cases following this with the formation of new management ministries (Popp and Udovecz 2007)

In 2003, after closely observing more than a decade of transition in Post-Soviet and Post-Socialist countries, the Central and Eastern European Sustainable Agriculture Project (CEESA) (funded EU 5th Framework Programme) was able to identify recurring setbacks within the process of building institutions for sustainable resource management in agriculture. They were quick to observe that many countries experienced setbacks when attempting to rapidly install copies of Western governance models to replace former systems. The diversity of each nation's plight was bonded by general instances of: resource conflicts at local levels, a lengthy amount of time required to establish governance to promote sustainability, and a tendency to place more gravity on ineffective attempts at fixing large, complicated issues while on a hurried path to EU accession (Gatzweiler and Hagedorn 2003). The problems shared by CEECs when attempting to organise institutions of sustainability are highlighted in more detail in Table 1.

Table 6: Common barriers to creating sustainable institutions within CEEC agriculture	
Issue	Barriers
Institutional Integration	Agencies at different levels disagree on roles and operational strategies within integrated systems; result in poor coordination efforts
Institutional Void	Lacking advisory services, producer organizations, NGOs, and local level trust and cooperation; government detachment from local problems
Agri-Environmental Governance	Absence of a decentralised resource distribution system; lack of governance that fails to unite stakeholders in seeking a common goal
Capacity Building, Partnerships, and Mutual Learning	Failure to cooperate and foster shared responsibility, strengthening the role of civil society in solving environmental issues

Table 6: Synopsis generated after consulting (Gatzweiler and Hagedorn 2003)

A Closer Look: Over 20 Years of Transition in Hungary's Agricultural Sector

Ferto held that the agricultural landscape in Hungary within the first decade-and-a-half after transition could be broken down into major periods: Post-Socialist Transformation (1990-1993), Consolidation and Recovery (1994-99), and EU Accession Preparation (2000-2004), with the period following up to the present coming to be known as the Accession, Adjustment, and Contemporary Refinement period (2004-present) (Ferto 2001). Each period brought with it different priorities, resource allocation schemes and responsible government institutions. Tracking the structural, economic, political and institutional changes during these distinct periods, and analyzing the larger implications within the agricultural sector help identify the important role that local food initiatives can serve in “filling in the cracks” within a crumbling agricultural system.

Post Socialist Transformation (1990-1993)

A tumultuous shift in power occurred as the Soviet Union disintegrated, leaving the new Hungarian government with the responsibility of managing the crisis of turnover, while trying to completely restructure economies and social systems. Within the agricultural sector began a systematic disassembling of the centrally planned Socialist structure to prepare the nation for an open market (Ferto 2001). The predominant aims of new production schemes were to: secure a stable domestic food supply, increase quality and efficiency within production chains to prepare for export markets, and to institute new farm ownership structure based on private ownership (Ferto 2001).

A starting point for free market conversion was land privatisation, by means of restitution of rights to former holders, and ensuing land auctions based on historic ownership documentation (Magda 2007). Scholars debate how focused this redistribution process was on restitution to original owners, and much literature has been dedicated to chronicling the complicated, confusing, and sometimes questionable procedures that were used to return land to Hungarian citizens (Magda 2007, Monasterolo 2007). What is not debated is the fact that this complicated procedure fragmented land ownership. Compensation laws established in 1991 affected nearly 50% of the nation's land cover and helped create millions of independent titles, many of which would later be characterised as small, misshaped, plots with little independent commercial value (Magda 2007).

This chaotic reapportionment of land rights contributed to the overall state of economic depression, as less land was used for production. Additionally, the manufacturing industry was crippled, and between 1989 and 1993 industrial output decreased by 1/3, adding to a large class of unemployed (Brown and Schaft 2002). Unemployment created an urban exodus of sorts, as newly jobless urban and peri-urban dwellers took to the countryside in search of cheaper living, and as resettlement occurred, subsistence farming became common. Economies in rural areas became less diversified and more dependent on agriculture at time when its value was at its lowest, which began the gradual decrease in rural living standards, and increase in rural/urban disparity (Brown and Schaft 2002).

Along with industrial decline, steep drops in overall agricultural production would plague this period, marking the beginning of a downturn in utilised agricultural area, and agriculture's contribution to GDP which would persist until the present (Halmai and Vasary 2007). (Table 7) Land fragmentation, ownership disputes and subsequent abandonment, reduced production efficiency and quality, and a lack of new investment capital eroded the value of farming (Magda 2007, Monasterolo 2007). Crop production would not reach the 1990 output level until the mid 2000s, and never reach the 1990-level again for animal husbandry (Szabo 2007). Areas that were formerly the most reliant on agriculture felt the brunt of this decline, serving as the basis for regional income disparity (Ferto 2001). GDP would not reach the 1989-level again until the year 2000 (Halmai and Vasary 2007). Decreasing income, increasing unemployment, and reduced domestic consumption furthered the gap between Eastern European nations and their Western counterparts in the early 1990s, and Hungary exemplified this pattern (Halmai and Vasary 2007).

Table 7: Share of Agriculture (%) in National Statistics					
	GDP	Consumption	Export	Investment	Employment
1990	12.5	37	24	8.7	17
1993	5.8	28.7	22	3.1	9.3
1996	5.8	27.3	21	3.4	8.3
1997	5.2	26.9	15	3.6	7.9
1998	4.9	26.5	12	3.6	7.5
1999	4.2	26.2	9	3.3	7.1
2000	3.7	29.2	8	2.7	6.9
2001	3.8	29.6	7.5	3	6.2
2002	3.5	29.9	7.8	3.9	6.2
2003	4		7.5	3.9	5.5
2004	4.1		6.9	3.9	5.3

Table 7: Decreasing Value of Agricultural Sector in Hungary (Halmai and Vasary 2007)

Table 8: Agricultural Gross Product (Index Period 1986-1990=100)			
Period	Agricultural Production	Crop Production	Animal Husbandry
1986-1990	100	100	100
1991-1995	73	75	70
1996-2000	71	76	65
2001-2005	78	91	62

Table 8: Gross Production Comparisons (Szabo 2007)

This crisis period was not without its positives. With the agricultural sector in turmoil, government officials began the process of crafting new food-safety and quality-control legislation that was in compliance with EU requirements (Fejos 2006). Although “rural development” and its associated support strategies would not surface within national policy until years later, the decline in living standards forced the Hungarian government to reconsider the organization of its national support structures. In 1990, a Ministry of Environment and Regional Planning was established, giving localized development strategies a differentiated institutional system. Along with this came the creation of the Regional Development Fund (Ferto 2001). Although agri-environmental measures and rural development initiatives would not be promoted for a few years, the creation of a separate institution for rural development measures was observed as an important step the maturation of Hungary’s agricultural sector.

Table 9: Period Summary: Post Socialist Transformation (1990-1994)	
Setbacks	Problematic land redistribution process, fragmented agricultural landscape, increasing dependence on agriculture as livelihood while value of agricultural production decreased, land abandonment, decrease in utilized agricultural area, rising unemployment, increased in regional disparity
Progress	Improved food and safety requirements, quality control, infancy of rural development strategies
Influence on Local Food Initiatives	Agricultural sector turmoil sets the stage for the increasing need for both top down, and bottom up restructuring of agricultural activity

Table 9: Synopsis generated after consulting (Ferto 2001, Fejos 2006, Szabo 2007, Montasterolo 2007, Magda 2007)

Consolidation and Recovery (1994-1999)

By the mid-1990s most sectors in Hungary had overcome the worst economic shocks of regime change, but agriculture was still in decline. Agricultural policy during this period focused on ameliorating the misjudgements made in the beginning of the decade. Goals included completing the land reform process begun earlier in the decade while seeking to avoid fragmentation through consolidation of land ownership, stabilizing the domestic agricultural market by creating an office in charge of market regulation, and continuing to reform agricultural law to conform with EU legislation (Ferto 2001). Although economic growth and new employment opportunity was apparent within aggregated national statistics, progress was regionally-based, and income and standard of living disparity continued to widen across Hungary. It is estimated that nearly half of all foreign direct investment went directly to Budapest, with a majority of the remaining funding being directed to urban centres near the Austrian border, Sopron and Győr (Monasterolo 2007). Rural areas began to be observed as chronic poverty pockets, as unemployed, and financially unstable migrants resettled in these villages (Brown and Schaft 2002).

Identification of this isolation led to a greater acceptance of rural development strategies, and their interlinking with a stable agricultural sector. Once again, Hungary looked to the EU for inspiration in creating the institutional structures to encourage rural development, and in 1996 a new “Law on Regional Development and Physical Planning” was incorporated. The law was predicated on core EU principles (partnership, decentralization, subsidiarity), with the central objectives to: create conditions for self-sufficient development, improve economic conditions and quality of life within all regions, reduce gaps between capitals and other areas, and support regional and community based initiatives (Ferto 2001). While the law was predicated on these principles of development and support equity, the functional implementation of the core aims has proven to be problematic to this day. In 1998, in another important step signifying the improved governance capacity of the country, Hungary officially established 7 distinct (NUTS II) sub-regional classifications along with the support of European Union funding (Ferto 2001).

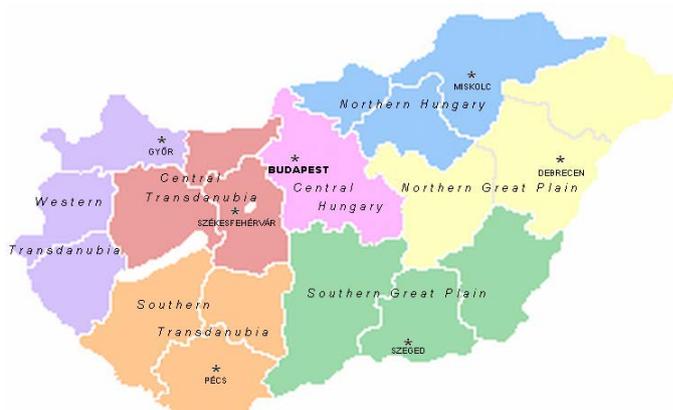


Figure 1: Developing Regional Governance Capacity: NUTS II Subregional Classifications (Kovacs 2011)

Establishing functional regional governance and preliminary environmental regulations for agriculture were done EU with accession in mind (Monasterolo 2007). During the late 1990s Hungary began to position itself as a nation with EU member state qualifications. In 1998, concurrently with the election of a new political regime, the Ministry of Agriculture was given more responsibilities, and renamed the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) (Monasterolo 2007). MARD, in combination with research institutes, NGOs, and relevant experts also

began to prepare for the adoption of EU agri-environmental policies. The result of these efforts was the National Agri-Environmental Protection Programme (NAPP) which was finished by 1999, but not fully launched as a support program until 2002 (Nemes 2010). The main objective of NAPP was to prepare farmers to qualify for EU subsidies, and Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) funds.

Although institutional progress was made, agricultural production continued to be weakened by outdated farming technology, a lack of access to capital, and insufficient storage and transport infrastructure for goods (Hanisch and Lachewski 2002). Land holding disparity widened, as farms began to fall into the category of either large or small, with mid-size holdings disappearing (Podruzsik 2003). Large farms were accepted to have cultivated over 50% of utilized land within the country, and their influence within the structuring of national policy would continue to grow (Podruzsik 2003). This trend has since repeated itself, with the general expectation that top-down policy support for agriculture is likely to favor larger farming operations, than the small operations scattered throughout Hungary's countryside. While disparity in farm holding size increased, overall utilized agricultural area declined.

Table 10: Period Summary: Consolidation and Recovery (1994-1999)	
Setbacks	Direct foreign investment concentrated in urban centers, increased standard of living disparity in Hungary's regions, consolidation of farm lands, increased big farm lobby in national policy formation and corresponding favouritism within national agricultural support policy
Progress	Land ownership reform process completed, Preliminary regional governance established, Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development, Early Agri-Environmental Schemes, Emergence of Organic sector in Hungary
Influence on Local Food Initiatives	Disparity, persistent degradation in rural livelihood, representation of small scale growers, and continued marginalization of small scale growers creates need for alternative food distribution networks

Table 10: Synopsis generated after consulting (Podruzsik 2003, Hanisch and Lachewski 2002, Ferto 2001, Nemes 2012, Montaserelo 2007)

EU Accession Preparation (2000-2004)

At the dawn of the new millennium, the Hungarian economy stabilized, and like most in CEECs during the period, grew at a rate even higher than European Union countries (Halmai and Vasary 2007). Although progress was made outside of the agricultural sector, Hungary enacted further agricultural reforms with EU accession in mind. Beginning in the year 2000, nearly all goods leaving Hungary, and those coming into the country from the EU became tax-free, and by 2002, 97% of Hungarian exports left the country untaxed, to prepare for entry into EU's free internal market (Konig 2007). In the year 2000, there were about 255,000 persons estimated to be working in the agricultural field, and in each of the subsequent years agricultural employment would show a declining trend, along with the amount of utilized agricultural area (Ferto 2001, KSH 2012). (Table 11) Keeping in mind the deleterious trends within the agricultural sector in the ten years since transition, a protectionist stance was taken when entering into pre-accession negotiations, which led to contention between agricultural stakeholders (Burger 2006). In spite of this, the most influential agricultural stakeholders and lobbyists supported Hungary's bid to join the EU, looking forward the potential benefits of a fully liberalised trade market, along with the agricultural support measures and Common Agricultural Policy payments that were entitled to Union Members (Popp and Udovecz 2007).

Table 11: Decline of the Agricultural Sector in Hungary (2001-2008)

Year	Number Employed	Used Agricultural Area (thousand hectares)	Share of Agricultural in National Employment (%)	Share of Agriculture in GDP (%)
2000	255,500	5 853.9	6.63	5.90
2001	243,400	5 865.4	6.29	5.70
2002	240,900	5 867.3	6.22	5.00
2003	215,200	5 864.7	5.49	4.60
2004	204,900	5 863.8	5.25	5.10
2005	194,000	5 854.8	4.97	4.40
2006	190,800	5 808.9	4.85	4.20
2007	182,900	5 807.1	4.66	4.20
2008	174,100	5 789.7	4.49	4.00

Table 11: Data retrieved from the Hungarian Statistical Office (KSH 2012)

The other significant developments during the pre-accession period pertained to the maturation of Hungary's institutional capacity to manage rural development, along with a growing concern to integrate agri-environmental strategies within national agricultural policy. Agri-environmental payments are reimbursements for the incurred costs of improving environmental performance (Bonnieux et al. 2005). EU Agri-environmental schemes were to be multifaceted, with primary goals to raise environmental standards in agriculture while conserving natural resources and creating opportunities for economic development in rural areas. Before this period in the 1990s, basic agri-environmental policy initiatives in Hungarian policy included per hectare subsidies to deter soil erosion, and compensation programs for organic farming conversions while the most common policy instruments to support rural development included input subsidies, area payments, export subsidies, and fixed pricing (Popp and Udovecz 2007). The European Union encouraged the Hungarian government develop the institutional capacity to manage support measures that Hungary would eventually qualify for through the Common Agricultural Policy.

Understanding that Hungary would need help in generating the financial capacity to support such programs, allocate funds, and measure progress, the EU financed several intervention programs aimed at bringing candidate countries up to speed in agri-environmental pursuits (Monasterolo 2007). The EU Special Accession Program for Agriculture and Rural Development (SAPARD) was designed as a funding and educational mechanism aimed at helping countries initiate and test agricultural support processes, preparing them for future compliance with CAP (Bennett 2001). Agri-environmental support programming would become mandatory under the Rural Development Regulations (RDR) (also know as the Second Pillar) within the CAP, and it was determined that resources would be utilized more efficiently with functional distribution capacity.

In the years before accession, attempts were made to establish the institutional capacity to both manage EU funding allocations, and serve as the communication links between rural growers and urban policy makers in Budapest. Due to lack of experience, this process unfolded in a haphazard and rushed manner, resulting in an insufficient ability to process funding applications and distribute funds for environmental performance, and a fluid stream of rural-urban communication never materialized (Nemes 2010). Heading into EU accession, the largest and most powerful agricultural lobbying group in Hungary, which acted on behalf of the large scale, industrial farmers who held more than half of all cultivated landholdings in Hungary poised itself to influence policy and funding allocations in favour of large-scale agriculture (Nemes 2010). In the battle to influence EU and Hungarian policy initiatives, and their

corresponding support programs, industrial agriculturalists have remained the most powerful actors in Hungary (Nemes 2010).

Table 12: Period Summary: EU Accession Preparation (2000-2004)	
Setbacks	Continual decline in farm employment, agricultural contribution to GDP, and utilized agricultural area; increasing influence of large agricultural lobby, liberalization of trade laws, insufficient capacity to develop functional communication networks between producers and policy makers
Progress	Slight progress in ability to incentivize environmental performance in agriculture, continued progress in developing rural development governance, most successful growth period of organic agriculture
Influence on Local Food Initiatives	Trade liberalization begins increase in imported food in retail outlets, growing influence of big agriculture continues marginalization of small holders, conscious citizens begin to observe major changes in food procurement and their impacts

Table 12: Synopsis generated after consulting (Nemes 2010, Popp and Udovecz 2007, Halmai and Vasary 2007)

Accession, Adjustment, and Contemporary Issues (2004-present)

Hungary officially became a member of the European Union on May 1st, 2004. Entrance was supported by a majority of agricultural stakeholders, and although expectations were high for improvements in the sector, the backlash of the expanded market would be felt shortly after gaining EU membership (Popp and Udovecz 2007, Halmai and Vasary 2007). While pre-accession adjustment programs were expected to prepare Hungary's agricultural sector for the changes it would be endure within the free market, producers and actors within the food industry were not ready for the heightened import and pricing competition, along with the rapid changes in domestic consumption patters spurred on by the enlarged market (Popp and Udovecz 2007).

It is also of note that at the time of accession, while the liberalized market went into full effect, the recently admitted nations were placed into a transitional funding program that served to progressively introduce CAP direct payments to new member states. Starting in 2004, new member states were only eligible to receive 25% of the amount of direct payments for agricultural activity compared to what EU-15 could receive, with the total available payment amount increased each year following (Popp and Udovecz 2007). During this introductory period, new member states were suggested to “supplement” the stipulated CAP direct payments with national contributions, with supplements capped at 30% of total eligible direct payment amounts (Popp and Udovecz 2007). Even with such national “top up” criteria in place, Hungary, in the same pattern as most new member states, found difficulty in coming up with the national funds to provide additional direct support to producers, leaving them at a competitive, structural and financial disadvantage. The disproportionate funding between new and old states in the immediate period after accession is recalled as a start instance of the manipulation of new member states by old members states within the agricultural sector, in a overtone that subsists. It will not be until 2013, that new member states will be eligible to receive 100% of CAP direct payment for agriculture (Popp and Udovecz 2007).

From an expanded trade market perspective, the direct payment restrictions put producers in new member states at a disadvantage when compared with growers in old member states. Internally within Hungary, the payment allotment subsidies as stipulated by the EU were higher than the pre-EU support payments being issued by the national government, and because of this overall farm incomes were measured to increase at a national aggregate

level during this period (Popp and Udovecz 2007). Unfortunately for smaller growers, the subsidy support and corresponding income stabilization was proven to be unevenly distributed between large and small farming operations, with bigger producers receiving a majority of these payments, furthering the gap between big and small agriculture in Hungary (Popp and Udovecz 2007).

Table 13: Progressive scheduling for direct agricultural payments in EU new member states (2004-2013); values equal % of full EU-15 direct payment rate										
Payment Breakdown	Year									
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
EU Payment	25	30	35	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
National Supplement	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	20	10	0
Maximum Payment	55	60	65	70	80	90	100	100	100	100

Table 13: Synopsis generated after consulting (Popp and Udovecz 2007)

The changes in consumer behaviour during this period can be thought of as an era of rapid “de-localization” of food procurement in Hungary. Accession triggered an influx of cheaper, lower quality, foreign alternatives to domestic products, eroding consumption of Hungarian goods (Szabo 2007). (Figure 2) Concentrated on the potential benefits of the expanded market, government authorities overlooked the effect the varying levels purchasing power and consumption patterns of consumers in other member states, and the impacts this would have on the price that Hungarian farmers received for products (Popp and Udovecz 2007). The declining value of Hungarian goods was exacerbated by the logistical deficiencies and marketing shortcomings that were less apparent before accession.

Hungary was susceptible to an influx of hyper and supermarkets, which quickly became the dominant retail outlets for food procurement (Csaki and Jambor 2009). The expansion of large-scale retail outlets brought new expectations for producers to comply with product based value chains, as opposed to markets driven by raw commodities (Csaki and Jambor 2009). Hungary’s degraded food processing industry also created a situation in which growers were forced into export agreements which retained little of the eventual face market value of processed food products domestically. The processing units that remained within the country’s borders were quickly turned over to a level of 75% foreign ownership just five years after accession, further reducing Hungary’s ability to reap the benefits of its own agricultural output (Csaki and Jambor 2009, Fejos 2006). Foreign ownership of the most influential distribution outlets for food manipulated both Hungarian producers and consumers to a large extent (Csaki and Jambor 2009). Pricing competition impacted consumer decisions by introducing an influx of low-cost, low quality products on store shelves, and resulted in extra pressures on producers by a reduction of choice in business partners along with a decrease in farm level payments received for raw commodities (Csaki and Jambor 2009).

The first hypermarket in Hungary opened in 1995 in Gyor, and since then the numbers have increased exponentially; with Interspar, Tesco, Auchan, and Cora being the largest operators in Hungary (Gulyas 2011). Retail trade since accession has become more concentrated, and although the number of total food retail units decreased by 1.3 percent from 2002-2007, the number of locations operating as hypermarkets increased by over 60 percent (Gulyas 2011). (Figure 3) Increasing retail concentration and the proliferation of large shopping outlets completely changed food procurement patterns in Hungary, as citizens quickly acknowledge the added convenience of one stop shopping, along with the lower prices made possible by supermarket economies of scale. Since this time the share of

domestically produced products in Hungarian retail has consistently dropped (Csaki and Jambor 2009) (Figure 2). More shopping than ever is being done at supermarkets, and expectedly, the amount spent per shopping trip at a hypermarket is four times higher than expenditures per trip at small, independently owned shops (Gulyas 2011). By 2009 the top 10 food retail chains were estimated to control 88 percent of the food retail market in Hungary (Gulyas 2011, Csaki and Jambor 2009). The emergence of supermarkets decreased the level of domestic consumption of Hungarian products by offering cheaper imports on store shelves while subsequently bankrupting smaller retail stores which formerly sourced traditional Hungarian products (Gulyas 2011).

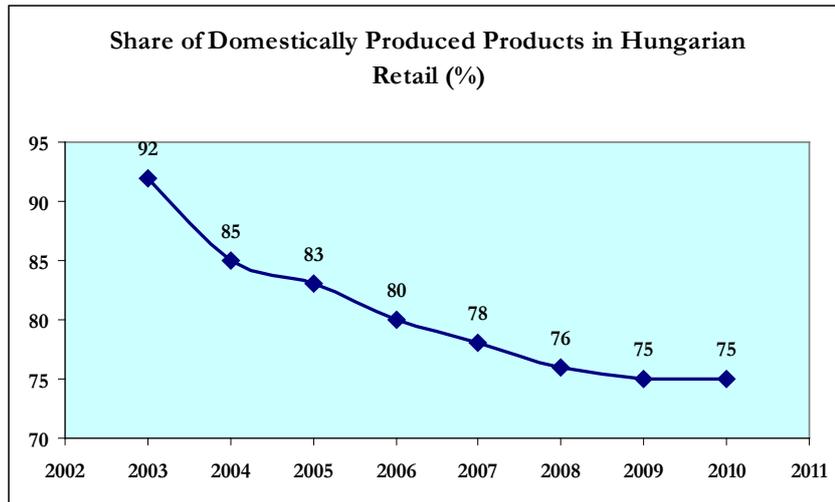


Figure 2: Decline in domestic consumption of Hungarian goods (Csaki and Jambor 2009)

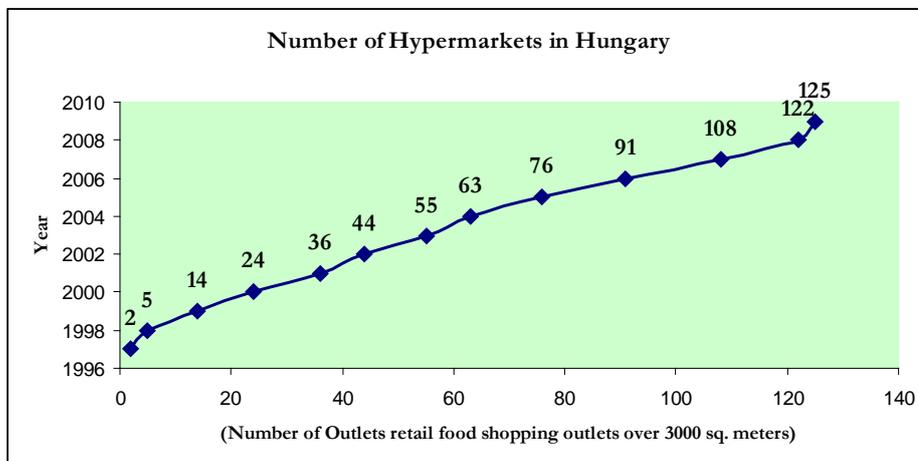


Figure 3: Graph generated after consulting (Gulyas 2011)

The true consequences of the liberalized market would be felt at the individual producer level, and declines in prices received for raw products would be masked by aggregated national economic growth statistics (Szabo 2007). From 2004-2006 farm production was boosted by some of the best growing conditions in decades, and record harvests were recorded (Szabo 2007). Production increases helped temporarily delay the reality of the new market, and the pressures it would place on producers, especially those holding the declining number of small and medium sized plots in Hungary. The changes in consumption patterns that occurred during this period, and the corresponding

transformation in Hungary’s food retail landscape, were alterations that had a deep effect, in giving corporate food retailers a never before seen foothold within the Hungarian market.

Table 14: Period Summary: Accession and Adjustment (2004-present)	
Setbacks	Market-based consequences of EU accession: decline in domestic consumption of Hungarian products, ownership turnover in food retail and processing, declining value of Hungarian exports; continued favoritism of larger farming operations in policy initiatives and subsidy distribution, complete change in consumer purchasing patterns
Progress	Continual development of National Rural Development Strategy, Increased aggregate level farm income
Influence on Local Food Initiatives	The influx of hypermarkets encourages some of the greatest resistance against the industrialized food system, local food initiatives gain an "opponent" in the rise of they hypermarket culture in Hungary

Table 14: Synopsis generated after consulting (Szabo 2007, Csaki and Jambor 2009, Guylas 2011, Popp and Udovecz 2007)

A Brief History: The Organic Sector in Hungary

The history of the organic farming sector in Hungary is one of ingenuity, resiliency and perseverance. The foundations were laid during some of the most structurally traumatic times within the greater agricultural sector in Hungary, and its existence today is a testament to the commitment of the handful of growers who remained true to the ideals of ecologically conscious farming. While the contemporary situation in Hungary presents us with a distinction between “institutionalized” organic producers and the “informal” ecologically conscious producers, portions of both groups, with a greater influence on smaller scale producers, serve an integral role in the development of sustainable local food networks. Organic and ecologically conscious growers serve as the backbones of local food initiatives, often playing multifaceted role as provider, advocate, manager, and communication facilitator. With a brief reflection on the history of the organics sector in Hungary, one can identify similar parallels (extreme pressures, market challenges, and exclusions) exemplified within the conventional agricultural sector throughout the transition period. An observation of this path can result in a better understanding of the trajectory of the greater organics sector in Hungary, why organic growers are marginalized within Hungary’s contemporary agricultural sector, and the importance of local food systems in helping spread organic agriculture in Hungary. I have chosen to outline a history of the organic movement first, so that a firm base of understanding regarding organics in Hungary is reached before and explaining and critiquing further the role of organic direct markets in Budapest’s local food network in Chapter 2.

The Birth of Organics in Hungary

The roots of the organic agricultural sector in Hungary sprouted in the early 1980s (Torjussen et al. 2004). The organic movement began with a club of ecologically conscious, small scale gardeners, environmentalists, and natural medicine advocates who shared a common concern about chemical free agriculture and individual and family health issues. In 1983, although the number of organic growers remained relatively small, the Biokultura-Klub, was established as the first official organic agriculture organization in Central and Eastern Europe (Torjussen et al. 2004). In 1987 the Biokultura Club, became the Biokultura National Association and gained greater credibility and

structure after becoming the first International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM) sanctioned member in central and Eastern Europe (Torjussen et al. 2004). The organization's main focus was to portray organic agriculture as an alternative to conventional production, maintaining a subtle outlet for protest against the agricultural infrastructure encouraged by the Socialist Regime (Torjussen et al. 2004). In subsequent years, the Biokultura National Association updated its legislative definition by evolving into the Biokultura Alliance. The association in its current form is comprised of regional branches distributed throughout Hungary, and works to collaborate with other organic producer associations, gardeners, and activists in attempting to facilitate political recognition for the merits of organic agriculture. It is expected to serve as the main advocacy organization for organic agriculture in Hungary. The Alliance outlines in its mission statement its role as a catalyst for the spread of ecological production in Hungary, and a link between farmers practicing ecological production (Torjussen et al. 2004).

Infancy, Growth, Crisis, and Decline

The organics sector in Hungary started out as a hobbyist movement, grew rapidly in the decade between 1995 and 2005, and then reached a period of stagnation which persists today (Solti 2012). Many of the same challenges faced within the conventional agricultural sector are as equally apparent in the organics sector in Hungary. When conversing directly with organic growers and agricultural scholars in Hungary, the most pressing issues within the sector that were mentioned included: marginalization of Hungarian organics within the European Union's liberal market; a raw-commodity export-oriented tendency; traditional retail market saturation with foreign imports; a low recognition of Hungarian products within the domestic market; difficulty in acquiring retail space in conventional shopping outlets; weak representation within the political sphere on behalf of organic growers; insufficient communication between growers, organic advocates, support organizations, and research institutes; weak policy initiatives and structural support systems for organic growing, and a disproportionate reliance on demand in urban locations to drive direct sales opportunities (OMKI 2012, personal contacts).

The beginnings of the organic movement in Hungary as recanted by growers familiar with the period is a story of hobbyist growers producing at backyard, or subsistence level, producing for personal consumption or being completely reliant on direct sales within their immediate vicinity at small scales. The earliest production scale organic operations became reliant on Dutch traders to sell their products throughout the rest of Europe (Torjussen et al. 2004). For the first decade-and-a-half of organic production in Hungary, a few countries emerged as the most important exporting outlets for Hungarian organic goods in Europe, with Germany (40%), Austria (25%), Switzerland (20%), and Holland (10%) being the end receivers of nearly all of the organic goods produced in Hungary (Torjussen et al. 2004). This country-by-country breakdown for demand of organic products maintains a similar form to this day. The Hungarian organic sector's reliance on exports has continued to be a problematic issue. While foreign demand for raw organic commodities initially sparked the spread of organic production, a corresponding increase in domestic demand for organic has never accompanied this trend, consequentially handcuffing Hungarian organic producers to export agreements which increase pressures and lower farm level profits for production. The amount of organic farms, and organically farmed land in Hungary grew consistently from the late 1980s until the mid 2000s, when a crisis period sent the organic sector into a period of decline, before reaching the stagnant period of subsistence that it remains in today (Solti 2012)(Table 15). In a five year data comparison of countries within the Carpathain Basin, Hungary's share of organically farmed land has increased the least in comparison to the other seven countries within the region (Table 16).

Table 15: Organic Production Profile of Hungary: 1998-2010					
Year	Number of Farms	% inc. from previous year	Organically farmed hectares	% inc. from previous year	% total HU agricultural land
1998	401	249	22501	17	0.363
1999	475	18	35979	60	0.581
2000	762	60	53649	49	0.916
2001	1119	47	79178	48	1.35
2002	1517	36	103700	31	1.76
2003	1775	17	116535	12	1.98
2004	1842	4	133009	14	2.27
2005	1935	5	128576	-3	2.19
2006	1974	2	122766	-5	2.09
2007	2024	3	122270	0	2.09
2008	2066	2	122817	0	2.09
2009	2292	11	145942	19	2.3
2010	2062	-10	130717	-10	2.1

Table 15: Data source (Solti 2012)

Table 16: Organically farmed land in Carpathian Basin Countries: 2004-2009								
Country	Year and organically farmed hectares						Changes 2004-2009	
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	hectares gained	% gain
Serbia	542	n/a	740	830	4494	8661	8119	1498.0
Croatia	2853	3124	6145	7561	10010	14194	11341	397.5
Slovakia	53801	90296	120417	117906	140755	145490	91689	170.4
Romania	73800	92770	107578	131401	140132	168288	94488	128.0
Austria	344916	479216	477472	481636	491825	518757	173841	50.4
Slovenia	23032	23499	26831	29322	29838	29388	6356	27.6
Ukraine	240000	241980	242034	249872	269984	270193	30193	12.6
Hungary	133009	128576	122766	122270	122817	145942	12933	9.7

Table 16: Data Source (Solti 2012)

EU Accession and the Hungarian Organic Sector

The organic movement has always been important in framing an image for agriculture in Hungary, with the nation's favourable geographical and climatic conditions for organic production encouraging this creed. While such ideologies exist within the minds of citizens, a corresponding acknowledgement and demand for officially certified organic products has been meager within the country, a problem that is escalated by a lack of easy access to fresh organic products in traditional retail settings (OMKI 2012). It has been estimated that less than one percent of total average Hungarian household expenditures on food are used to procure organic products, and that Hungarian consumers have high food price sensitivity, a commonly shared feature of Central and European Countries (Lehota 2012). The main obstacles for growth in domestic consumption of organics in Hungary have been cited as: low consumer demand; a limited capacity and willingness to pay price premiums for organics; the limited availability of organic products; and a lack of consumer confidence in organic certification (OMKI 2012).

The increasing impact of large corporate retail chains in the Hungarian food market has had major repercussions on the patterns of consumers, as well as the distribution stream of Hungarian grown products. As previously outlined,

at the beginning of the new millennium and at an increasing rate after accession, power and influence within the Hungarian food retail market was captured by large corporate retail chains, supermarkets, hypermarkets and global food traders. In a short period of time not only was the landscape of the food retail scene completely changed, but also the consumption patterns of Hungarian citizens. This usurping of control of the food market in Hungary, and its corresponding influence on consumer shopping patterns had repercussions on both the conventional and organic production sectors in Hungary, forcing producers to become more focused on maintaining a livelihood within the foreign export market.

A startling outcome of this is portrayed in the comparison between the percentage of exported Hungarian production, and the percentage of foreign imported purchased organics in Hungary. In Hungary, about 85% of organic production is exported, leaving the country as raw materials or low “added value” bulk commodities (OMKI 2012). About 90% of organic food consumption in Hungary is comprised of processed imported products, a statistic that serves as both a reflection of the low recognition countrywide for fresh domestically produced products, and a portrayal of where most organic purchasing takes place (OMKI 2012). While Hungary has taken pride in its historic image as a net food exporter to the rest of Europe, this disparity in reliance on exports in a food retail atmosphere flooded with foreign imports has never been so stark. In the case of organic products, the domestic demand conundrum creates a “chicken-or-egg” type scenario regarding attempts to increase consumption of Hungarian grown organics; low demand decreases the likelihood of traditional retail outlets seeking fresh Hungarian organics, and low availability within the most popular shopping outlets decreases the likelihood of increased consumption of the organic products.

A majority of the organic products carried in traditional supermarket chains are processed, preserved, and non perishable items marketed as health foods. Hungarian consumers prime motivation for consuming organic products is the added health benefits that are associated with them (OMKI 2012, Hayes and Vadovics 2008). Since supermarkets have been identified as the dominant retail sales location for organics in Hungary, it is understandable why the percent of consumed organics that are imported is estimated at 90%; essentially because the imported products are they most readily available, or the only organics available in the most popular shopping outlets (See Table 17). The origins of these processed products are often in Western European countries with fully mature processing and distribution capabilities. The lack of processing capacity for both conventional and organic products in Hungary has been highlighted as a major deficiency with the larger agricultural sector (OMKI 2012). The inclusion of processed organics from countries with established and specialized organic processing infrastructure makes it more difficult for Hungarian products to compete, factoring in the economies of scale found within foreign production arrangements. In an alarming trend, Hungarian producers have become trapped within an international trade cycle that sends high quality, fresh organic products out of the country as low “return-value” exports, before shipping them back into the country to be sold as higher “added value” imports. This process essentially transfers most of the end retail value of product out of Hungary, and into the hands of foreign owned organizations.

Table 17: Share of organic sales in Hungary based on location	
Location of Sale	Share of Sales
Large Retail Stores and Supermarkets	60%
Specialized Stores	20%
On-line purchasing	6-7%
On-farm sales	2-3%

Organic markets and fairs	10%
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Table 17: Source Data (Fruhwald 2012)

Overcoming Challenges: Future Strategies for the Hungarian Organics Sector

In spite of the harsh realities of the food market in Europe, growers in Hungary are still finding their way navigating the difficult path to a stable livelihood as an organic producer. Some growers, typically of larger scale have reaped the benefits of the premium prices awarded for raw organic materials, but they have secured this level of income with sufficient scales of production to make export capacity possible. Organic producers can be loosely classified based on their production scales, and in a very general way, separated by growers who can produce at export capacity, and those who can not produce at export capacity. The patterns of operation and decision making process for each of the groups are very different. As expected, the producers trying to make a non export living are reliant on the underwhelming domestic market, and land payment subsidies to earn a living wage. Noting that to gain access to processing capacity smaller producers need to pay to utilize facilities that turn raw produce into added value products, the resilience of Hungarian organic producers is proven by each vender at each direct market who offers a varied mix of fresh produce, jams, sauces, and other specialty products, while placing great reliance on the direct sales atmosphere to earn a living.

Although European Union accession has done much to open the door for an influx of foreign imports which help make an increase in consumption of domestic goods more difficult, the support payments offered under the EU's Common Agricultural Policy have done much to stabilize incomes for growers by means of direct payments for organic production. It is of note that once again, the biggest growers are the winners in this game, as payment levels are determined on a by hectare basis, once again stacking the odds in favour of larger producers. In considering the needs all of scales of organic growers, a few main points have risen to the top of the discussion of what could be done to provide beneficial structural support to organic growers and the groups working on their behalf in Hungary.

Outlining Progress in the Organic Sector

Keeping the underwhelming level of domestic demand and recognition for organic products in mind, the need for aggressive marketing support for Hungarian products becomes clear. These notions have been echoed by both growers, academics, and organic food advocates when questions about Biokultura's activities. Biokultura's tendency to spend time and resources arranging once and done, single location events, as opposed to smaller, more wide ranging and sustained campaigns has been highlighted as a weakness in discussions with organic stakeholders. The ability of the Biokultura Alliance's efforts to increase recognition of the value and benefits associated with organic produce in Hungary has been targeted as an area where progress must be made, as well as the organizations ability to lobby for the interests of Hungarian growers within Hungarian political circles, and their willingness to work to create necessary fluid streams of communication between organic growers, advocates, NGOs and various support groups which focus on food issues. Although many organic stakeholders were willing to implicate an inefficient use of resources on the behalf of the Biokultura Alliance, actors that were interviewed also expressed a sense of responsibility that the role of improving the visibility and acknowledgement of organic in Hungary does not lie in the hands of Biokultura alone, but all industry stakeholders. Poor communication and a tendency for individual

growers to maintain isolationist stances, and an overall unwillingness to collaborate in cooperative marketing campaigns have also been cited as problematic issues that need resolving within the organics sector in Hungary.

An additional pressing issue has been the monopolistic tendencies of the chief organic inspection body in Hungary. Biokontroll Hungaria Kft, Hungary's first officially sanctioned organic inspection agency, has been accused of prioritizing its own personal interests in maintaining complete control over the inspection operations in Hungary, effectively reducing cooperation and stalling progress within the sector (Kovacs 2012). Biokontroll faced little competition in the organic inspection sector in Hungary for nearly a decade until Hungaria OkoGarancia Kft was founded as an additional inspection body in a group partnership between leading inspection agencies in Austria and Germany (Hungaria Okogarancia Kft. 2012). One of the biggest criticisms against the Biokontroll organization has been their strict regimentation of certified organic direct markets scattered throughout Hungary, with special regard to the most popular markets in Budapest, along with restricted permission to be featured in organic events unless certified by Biokontroll (Kovacs 2012). Biokontroll's demands that a grower be certified through their own organization to gain access to retail space within one of their markets, and the other associated processes with gaining access to specific organic markets, have been criticized as exclusionary practices that do little to forward the best interests of the organic sector in Hungary (Kovacs 2012).

Other controversial issues include insufficient support programs at the national level, and a general belief that Hungary's recent update of its National Rural Development Strategy will result in little functional ground level support for organic growers, and small scale growers in Hungary's peripheral areas. Upon completion in 2010, the strategy was touted as one of the most ambitious plans ever crafted in Europe, but the unstable political environment in Hungary that has persisted since its creation has created the general consensus that the strategy will remain a well intentioned document that will result in little-to-no ground level implementation, or new novel support programs for organic and small scale growers in Hungary. This viewpoint was expressed by growers, academic scholars, and stakeholders in a similar fashion. Such pessimism has been escalated due to the fact that the Secretary of State in charge of drafting the new strategy was forced into resignation shortly after the documents completion, in a move that viewed as a sign of solidarity between the current Hungarian political regime and the most dominant players within Hungary's agricultural sector, and business as usual politics.

In spite of the persistent pessimism within the organic agriculture sector, promising gatherings of industry stakeholders and the birth of a new academic research institution have been sources of hope in an otherwise bleak sector. Ökológiai Mezőgazdasági Kutatóintézet (OMKi), (Research Institute of Organic Agriculture in Hungary) a branch of the Research Institute for Organic Agriculture in Europe (FiBL) has emerged as a promising organization which has succeeded in organizing open forums for communication between growers and other industry stakeholders, engaging in field level research projects which serve the needs of organic farmers in Hungary, and supporting academic research which specifically focuses on the technical and scientific aspects of organic farming (FiBL 2011). The OMKi institute has goals of fostering partnerships between top research institutes, professional organizations, and innovative enterprises in Hungary with hopes encouraging greater cooperation between organic agriculture stakeholders, actors within the food industry, and the research and development sector (FiBL 2011). Having been established in 2011, in about a year of existence the institute has already showed much promise in linking actors within the organic sector (as personified by its February 2012 conference, "The Domestic Situation of Organic Farming-Trends and Breaking Points," attended by over 400 organic sector stakeholders) and fostering unique farm level research projects (the testing of new rare organic potato species at production levels in various

locations in Hungary, spring 2012) which have both opened streams of communication within the sector and advanced technical knowledge and skill development at the ground level.

Table 18: Organic Sector Summary: Challenges and Opportunities	
Challenges	Marginalization of Hungarian organics within greater EU market, low domestic demand and recognition of HU organics, competitive retail environment, poor communication between stakeholders, weak structural support at the national level, immature processing industry for organics, lack of cohesion between organic stakeholders
Opportunities	Favorable geography, climate, and seasonal growing potential, slow but increasing recognition for the benefits of organics, innovative partnerships fostered by new research institutions
Role of Local Food Initiatives	Create and maintain infrastructure for procuring organic products; Forming relationships with, and providing support to growers who have limited access to tradition retail outlets; advocacy on behalf of organic growers; increasing demand for Hungarian organics

Table 4: Synopsis generate after consulting (Lehota 2012, Fruhwald 2012, OMKi 2012, FiBL 2011, Solti 2012, Kovacs 2012 Torjussen et al. 2004, Hayes and Vadovics 2008)

Summary: Lingering Issues in the Conventional and Organic Agriculture Sectors and the importance of localized food systems in Hungary

It can be observed after tracing the trajectory of the Hungarian agricultural sector since Socialist regime change that disparity and inequality remain common themes. Although population shifts have become less drastic, the gaps in living standards within urban centers and rural peripheries have widened (Csaki and Jambor 2009). Hungarian per capita income levels have crept closer to EU averages, but statistical progress hides the isolated realities of the marginalized (Nemes 2010). EU accession and new regionally based governance structures have proven to be inefficient at reversing trends of internal divergence, and communication breakdowns within Hungary (Monasterolo 2007). Living conditions vary drastically across Hungary’s 19 counties and its central Budapest capital region. (Table 19) The last two decades of agricultural transition have both contributed to this predicament and personified the complications of reversing such trends; as the country struggles to maintain its agrarian roots, while coming to a realization of the decreasing overall, and ever-concentrating value within the sector. The promises of European Union accession have since given way to the realities of the globalized, corporate-controlled food market.

Table 19: Hungarian Regional GDP as % of EU Average (2007-2009)			
Region	Year		
	2007	2008	2009
Hungarian Average	39.6	42.0	38.7
Central Hungary	65.2	69.2	65.1
Central Transdanubia	36.8	38.0	32.3
Western Transdanubia	38.8	40.8	36.2
South Transdanubia	26.8	28.8	26.8
Northern Hungary	25.2	26.4	23.8
Northern Great Plains	24.8	26.4	25.1
Southern Great Plains	26.0	28.4	25.5

Table 19: Data gathered using EUROSTAT Database (EC 2012)

Table 20:Regional Gross Domestic Product in Hungary (million EUR) by NUTS 2 Region			
EU NUTS 2 Region	Year		
	2007	2008	2009
Central Hungary	47115	50408	44978
Central Transdanubia	10124	10537	8349
Western Transdanubia	9653	10220	8480
South Transdanubia	6485	6896	5975
Northern Hungary	7857	8077	6778
Northern Great Plains	9449	9981	8862
Southern Great Plains	8748	9426	7981

Table 20: Data gathered using EUROSTAT Database (EC 2012)

As the level of competition within the agricultural sector in Europe remains extremely high, designing national policy that brings stability to domestic markets, while being suitable for all scales of agricultural operations remains a daunting task. The attempt to sustain agricultural operations from the industrial to the subsistence level, while encouraging a transition to environmentally responsible production measures is a quest that the nation will continue struggle with. Hungarian landholdings have evolved in a bipolar fashion, with large-farm ownership increased to control nearly 65-70% of the utilized agricultural area (as of 2007, and growing), whereas small plots under one hectare still account for about 17% of cultivated area (Nemes 2010). Farm size disparity has increased to the point that large companies and co-operatives manage plots over 100 times the size of private individual farms (374 vs. 3 hectares) (Szabo 2007). Although gross farm income has increased per hectare, gains have mostly been concentrated and feasible due to national support structures which favour large farming operations (Monasterolo 2007). Rural marginalization has been reflected in statistics that have recorded declining birth rates, along with an increasing percentage of those over the age 65 in rural locations (Csaki and Jambor 2009).

The agricultural sector will continue to be polarized, as the split in the spectrum between large farm operators and the approximately one million small plot owners who average less than one hectare each for mostly subsistence level farming (Nemes 2010). The percentage of total farmed land within Hungary has dropped since the end of the Socialist period, (while crop production has stabilized, animal husbandry has declined and never recovered) and little has been done to encourage expansion of agricultural operations, or encourage young people to take up farming, especially considering the relatively weak market outlook of the sector (Burger 2006). Most purchased food is procured in large supermarkets with foreign ownership, and even the domestic processing industry that exists is largely foreign owned (Fejos 2006). Adding to the center-periphery dichotomy, most processing operations are situated near the Budapest capital region, or in the urban regions near the Austrian border (Ferto 2001). Hungarian policy has not accomplished much in the way of securing a higher percentage of the end-value of products for Hungarian producers, nor established a structured program for increasing acknowledgement, and accessibility of domestically produced food items.

It becomes apparent when following the transition of agri-environmental policy in Hungary that the systematic instances of institutional deficiency, inefficient resource allocation, weak communication and feedback networks, and the unwillingness to implement policy which addresses the most pressing issues of marginalized producers continue to plague efforts even after twenty years of attempted reformation (Nemes 2010, Szabo 2007, Gatzweiler and Hagedorn 2003, Monasterolo 2007, Popp and Udovecz 2007, Burger 2006) Hungary has continued to struggle with developing the regional governance capacity to react to bottom up concerns (Nemes 2010). What has become blatantly apparent is the ability of both the farmers working to make a livelihood from farming, and the citizens looking to procure quality food items within their means have very little influence or ability to affect the food systems that surround them. Both groups have become isolated and turned into mere pawns within a system that goes far beyond their respective national borders. Bringing to mind the nullification of the strategy presented within Hungary's updated National Rural Development Plan before it even had a chance to be initiated, it is possible to observe why the solutions to Hungary's agricultural issues will need to be fostered at the ground and soil level, by citizens, producers and other vested stakeholders who would like to reverse these disparaging trends.

Table 21: Drivers for Change: The Development of Local Food Systems in Hungary	
Agricultural Sector Deficiencies	Dominance of big agriculture in dictating policy in Hungary, immature processing infrastructure and corresponding lost income on value-added products, decline in utilized land for agriculture, increasing age and disparity in rural areas, little incentive to become a farmer
Structural Deficiencies	Food retail outlets dominated by foreign ownership, hypermarkets, low differentiation for domestically produced products, no distribution infrastructure for domestic products or domestic organics
Citizen Reaction	Growing awareness of challenges faced by smaller growers, growing interest in ecologically conscious production, organics and locally produced products, cooperation in developing alternative procurement networks and providing support for marginalized growers

Table 21: Synopsis generated after consulting (Nemes 2010, Szabo 2007, Gatzweiler and Hagedorn 2003, Monasterolo 2007, Popp and Udovecz 2007, Burger 2006, Csaki and Jambor 2009, EC 2012)

Creating Space for Local Food Movements

It is during this time of crisis that the development of regenerative food systems, birthed at the ground level, become more important than ever. In the face of increasing hypermarket dependence, a growing number of citizens have mobilized to express their desires to create new systems of food distribution which help reverse the damaging trends experienced after Socialist regime change, and entrance to the European Union. Displeasure has been expressed regarding the low quality of products available within traditional retail chains along with a growing awareness of the damaging effects of the industrial agricultural system on Hungary's most vulnerable growers. A developing environmentally and socially conscious consumer class, in unison with NGOs, environmental organizations, farmer support groups, regional governments, and research institutions have been working to develop alternatives to the conventional food system. These initiatives have been personified in direct grower's markets, community supported agricultural initiatives, along with various activities organized in the name of bringing attention to Hungary's agricultural crisis.

Citizen-driven conscious consumption initiatives often have their roots in urban centers, and this too is the case in Hungary. Budapest, and other large urban centers in Hungary exist as some of the most lucrative areas with respect

to demand for locally grown products, and willingness to coordinate to construct alternatives to industrial food structures. Up to this point in time, little top-down structural support has been granted to local food initiatives which have been attempting to serve as the link between marginalized growers in the rural periphery, and the concentrated wealth and interest in differentiated products in cities and urban centers. Where national policy has failed in increasing retail opportunities for Hungarian producers, especially those producing at a small scale, citizen-driven initiatives are stepping in to create outlets that can both improve farmer livelihood, and reunite citizens with the origins of their food, empowering the partners on both sides of the relationship.

The Hungarian local food movement is still in its infancy stages, but the fate of many growers in the countryside, and nearly all of Hungary's organic producers rests on the budding social movements' ability to create economic opportunities for growers who can not fit into industrial food models. In order to properly assess the Hungarian local movement's progress, and future ability to inflict functional change within the food and agriculture sector in Hungary, it is useful to track the development of local food initiatives that have developed globally for the past 30 years, in order to compare the successes and failure, strengths and weaknesses, and praises and criticisms with what is taking shape currently in Hungary

Chapter 2

Research Question 2: How has the development and transition of local food initiatives in Budapest compared with global trends, and what factors (globally and at the Budapest level) have influenced such initiatives' ability to institute systematic change in food systems?

In this chapter I will outline how local food initiatives have taken form globally, going into detail to describe the theoretical concepts held within each approach. I will also attempt to outline the strong and weak points within each local food approach, and also the criticisms which have developed regarding each system's ability to inflict change on global agricultural systems. In the end of the chapter I will define the current state of local food networks in Budapest, by introducing the individuals behind the city's newest conscious food consumption initiatives, and use the developed theoretical framework to judge the systems' ability to encourage positive change within the greater food procurement networks in Budapest.

Global Perspectives at the Local Level: Comparing Budapest's Local Food Initiatives with Global Trends

Who's designing new local food solutions? Citizen participation and movements at the ground level

While the roots of local and sustainable food initiatives are traced to the Environmental Movement in the United States in the 1970s, since then the ensuing political and social movements that have incorporated a wider spectrum of ideals which have attracted support from a citizen base with an evolving set of ethical considerations and moral ideals (Alkon 2008, Sheriff 2009, Agyeman 2004) Localist movements have used multiple rationales to call attention to the "citizen consumer's" right to influence his/her food paradigm with activism, advocacy, and conscious purchasing. Alkon (2008) has chronicled this bonding of sustainability minded issues with social justice goals as the natural emergence of a "Just Sustainability Paradigm" within food systems. In recalling Agyeman's (2004) description of just sustainability, she outlined it as an advancing desire in society to create "liveable, sustainable communities for all people," along with instilling a regard for the ecological health of the planet (Alkon 2008, Agyeman 2004).

Connelly et al. (2011) have also utilized Just Sustainability to characterize the integration of Sustainable Community Development (SCD) theories with principles of the social economy. Separately, SCD has been pointed out to be the quest to implement sustainable environmental and economic models at the local level, while the social economy theory has been used to describe processes for providing direct occupational and educational assistance to marginalized people in underprivileged places (Connelly et. al 2011). Within this context, local initiatives can be thought of as striving for Just Sustainability within the food sector; serving as catalysts that integrate SCD and the social economy; creating communities that are both more socially just and environmentally friendly while attracting participation by citizens motivated by a number of rationales (Connelly et al. 2011, Alkon 2008, Agyeman 2004).

Motivation for participation within local food systems

Local food systems have been portrayed as rebellious forces working to encourage a value-based transformation of global food systems, taking multiple shapes and forms across the globe according to ground level conditions

(Feagan 2007). As described by Allen 2010, values, changes in beliefs and attitudes are the main factors that contribute to willingness to participate in groups working for social change. Placing this in the context of the “empowerment theory,” she goes on to credit the development of a sense of critical consciousness in inspiring work and action for a larger “collective good.” It is expected that this “critical consciousness” in individual citizens would be spurred on by varying location based factors, and be representative of the unique socio-cultural and economic profiles of the individuals and communities, along with the historical significance of food traditions and agrarian activity. In his summary of local food system options, Follett 2009 summarizes the governing rationales that trigger support and participation within local food movements, based on a level of interest in the focus areas that act as the dividing points within the local and global food system discussion (See Table 3). In Follet’s (2009) estimation, the local network becomes the means in which one personifies values as “work” that provides resistance to the prevailing capitalist food structure.

Table 22: Motivating factors for supporting local food networks	
Area of Concern	Reasoning for supporting local food systems
Rural Community Development	Fair farm wage, increasing rural occupations, retaining funds in communities
Environment	Sustainable/organic agriculture, biodiversity, conservation, less chemical usage, non-GMO seeds, less resource intensive, reduced petroleum reliance
Food Safety	Proximity to production, accountability, information transparency
Food Security	De-centralized, localized production, local decision making
Health and Nutrition	Less chemical/fertilizer usage, processing, more seasonal/natural food
Pro Democracy	Participation options, choice, right to express and vote
Worker's Rights	Distributed capital and profit, equity, local job creation
Small Holder Farming	Provides stable livelihood for family farmers, empower smallholders
Animal Rights	Ethical treatment of animals, natural feeding, extended space for grazing
Anti Capitalist/Corporate	Counteracts corporate agriculture dominance, provides alternative
Religious Beliefs	Community relationships, accountability, concern for others

Table 22: Synopsis generated after consulting (Follett 2009)

General Local Network Theory

A hallmark of local food systems has been the attempt to develop marketing and retail initiatives which shorten the spaces involved in food transactions, while providing more knowledge regarding the production of each product (Ibery et al. 2005). Locality comes with connotations of decreased space between production and consumption and increased information, and transparency of all processes from “farm to fork.” Locality as outlined by this theory is protected by the various producer-consumer product chains which bring the two groups “physically, socially, and metaphorically,” closer together (Feagan 2008). The closeness is expected to root transactions in a particular locale, allowing products to personify the natural and cultural features of a specific area (Treagaer 2011). Local food rhetoric also claims that such arrangements produce transactions that are more economically viable for both the producers and consumers involved, as the proximity eliminates the need for middlemen or distribution infrastructure which reduces farm level profits and places additional quantity, uniformity, and production management demands on growers (Qazi and Selfa 2005).

Higgins et al (2008) have described three levels of local food network arrangements and their associated governance: the face to face network, the proximate network, and the extended network. In his classification, local food initiatives can be separated into networks which directly introduce producers to consumers in a retail setting, those which facilitate direct purchasing from producers, and those which naturally embed more information in products found in traditional retail settings. A summary of this distinction is portrayed in Table 23 below.

Table 23: Three categories of local food network arrangements		
Face to Face Networks	Proximate Networks	Extended Networks
Consumers purchase direct from growers at markets, on the farm, at roadside stalls, or other neutral spaces. Authenticity and trust are preserved through personal interaction.	Extended beyond face to face interaction with producer; products are sold in proximate region of production through intermediate sources which assure authenticity. Trust is largely based on regionally specific, personal knowledge.	Utilize symbols, labels, and institutionalized mechanisms in conventional retail format to connect consumers with a place outside of their locale; integrity of the people and place, and the values of production are protected with the symbolic labelling.
Examples:	Examples:	Examples:
Direct sales markets, farm shops, roadside farm stands	Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), food box schemes, local retailers, citizen and public conscious procurement	Organic labels, PDO/PGI origin labels, terroir, slow food labeling

Table 23: Synopsis generated after consulting (Higgins et al 2008, Feagan 2008, Qazi and Selfa 2005)

While going into less detail about specific purchasing arrangements, Venn et al. (2006) contributes that local food initiatives can be quantified as efforts to deliver one or more of the following outcomes:

- Linking producers and consumers in an alternative market orientation which reinforces place based knowledge of food production and consumption
- Promoting quality production and products while preserving specific traditions, heritage, and cultural customs related to food
- Establishing non traditional production and distribution chains which exist outside of conventional industrial production networks and corporate supply chains
- Personifying principles of place-based embeddedness capitalizing on trust and community generated by interactions within a specific geographical region

Placing local in context: the varying definitions of “local” and what local is comprised of

Local food movements have been simplistically, but incompletely characterized as the adversaries of industrialized, globalized food networks, and the term remains as a loose classification for a large number of oppositional food system models with similar ideals (Feagan 2007). A common means of defining local is by prescribing geographic classification to determine what is and is not local in food production and procurement (Kremer and DeLiberty 2011). Along with distinct 50 or 100 or other mile/kilometer radius based definitions, other state or regional political boundary definitions can be used to define the “local.” Biological concepts such as watersheds and regional ecosystem properties have been used to outline “foodsheds” which can be introduced as a means of “grounding oneself in the biological and social realities” of living and eating within a space (Kremer and DeLiberty 2007, Allen 2010). The foodshed premise is accepted to rebuild geographically based food systems by persuading socio-political decisions regarding food to be made with a specifically outlined space in mind (Feagan 2007). While geographic and political definitions appear to be a natural means for prescribing locality, when taking into account the complete ambitions of local networks, geographic distinction alone does little to incorporate many crucial aspects of what

local food movements attempt to represent and personify, beyond guarantees of proximity. Local determinations of this nature serve to reinforce proximity as a core principal in local food systems, rather than outline the most encompassing means for definition.

Local has also been come to symbolically represent systems that encourage differentiated interactions between producers and consumers, and the assumed end results that such interactions encourage. The University of California’s Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program describes local food systems as “collaborative efforts to build more locally based, self reliant food economies, in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution, and consumption is integrated to enhance the economic, environmental and social health of a place” (Kremer and DeLiberty 2011). Feenstra (1997, 28) expands upon this definition to explain that systems are not solely meant to be examined as a flow of consumer goods from points of production to consumption, but rather as a means of establishing systems that “are rooted in particular places, aim to be economically viable for farmers and consumers, use ecologically sound production and distribution practices, and enhance social equity and democracy for all members of the community.” Morgan et al (2006) completes the explanation by explaining that local movements share three traits: 1) redistributing value through food networks in the opposite direction of bulk commodity systems; 2) re-instilling trust between producers and consumers; 3) expressing new means of political association and market governance in food systems (Follett 2009).

Table 24: Defining the "local": Assumed Themes and Expected Results		
Geographical themes	Interaction themes	Expected Results
proximity	community, neighbourhood	equity
local radius	trust, understanding	fairness
political boundary	common knowledge	democracy
regional biology	exchange, collaboration	political association
foodshed	decision making	market control
watershed	ritual	choice

Table 24: Synopsis generated after consulting (Kremer and DeLiberty 2007, Follett 2009, Feenstra 1997, Jarosz 2008)

Local food movements have shown to be dynamic and multifaceted, involving diverse groups of core members or volunteers who utilize unique strategies within their own location (Hassenien 2003). They are social movements which are expected to encourage changes in civil society by influencing values, lifestyles, and purchasing patterns within individual citizens (Ibery et al. 2005). This transformation is expected to create new social identities which will incite engagement within civil society, through conscious participation in a differentiated food procurement network (Hassenien 2003). Most local food initiatives could be categorized generally under at least one or more of Higgin’s three distinctions which outline the level of interaction between producers and consumers in each situation. These distinctions, however, do little to explain the ground level processes that are occurring, and make assumptions about the end results about what will be deliver by each process. Before being able to accurately judge the success at which each local initiative personifies its principles and satisfies its goals, it is necessary to examine closely the actions, actors, and processes which comprise each unique local food mechanism.

Direct Sales Markets

Direct sales markets are retail transaction settings in which food producers offer products to consumers that they are directly responsible for producing or procuring. Direct sales markets have roots as a traditional means of food

procurement across the globe, but recently a resurgence in interest in locally and organically certified markets has risen as a result of growing dissatisfaction with the quality of products in traditional retail outlets, along with the co-opting of many former market spaces by traders and wholesalers. Their main role in the establishment of local food networks comes in providing retail space for growers outside of the competitive networks of traditional retail systems (i.e. supermarkets, hypermarkets, grocery stores).

Food procurement in a traditional direct market setting is expected to encourage ritualistic exchanges between food producers and consumers that result in stronger social bonds, familiarity and ties to place (Hinrichs 2000). Direct markets foster human interaction in space destined to allow the spheres of food production and consumption to converge, an outcome otherwise unavailable in a traditional hypermarkets and shopping centers where one party remains abstracted from the other (Hinrichs 2000). It is expected that in a direct market setting growers have the opportunity to both publicize products and advise potential customers, while also receiving useful and fulfilling feedback from a loyal customer base. This open flow of communication can appease public restlessness regarding the social, ecological, and safety attributes of food (Hinrichs 2000). Direct markets, while remaining firmly rooted in commodity relations, are justified for their emphasis on community relations and the distinctive qualities of sharing, care, and sense of trust that they instill (Lockie 2009).

Direct sales markets serve as the lone outlets for smaller scale growers to gain access to a customer base and retail space in many regions. Within the conventional food sphere, smaller scale growers, both organic and conventional, are marginalized as a result of the price, uniformity, appearance, and quantity demands within the inventory procurement schemes of traditional retail outlets (i.e. supermarket, hypermarket). In regions that lack an alternative distribution infrastructure, smaller growers are typically forced to sell products on their own; direct from farm, roadside stands, or other small units, or forced to do business with traders and wholesalers who distribute products on behalf of the growers. When entering into agreements with traders and wholesalers, producers lose the ability to provide a face and name to their own products, while also being held at the mercy of the expectedly lower prices received for farm outputs. With ecological sustainability in mind, growers who have the option of selling in direct markets are more likely to be able to design more diverse crop rotations based on what is best for their land, as opposed to having these decisions made for them based on what is worth the most in the trading and wholesale market. Such realities help identify direct markets as foundational aspects of sustainable local food networks, while also foreshadowing the pressures on growers that come when being completely reliant on market settings for income.

Direct markets remain extremely important for growers not only as a means to receive premium prices for products, but as a forum for forging bonds with a dedicated consumer base, while also providing a human face to purchased products. The role of vendor and the opportunities for interaction that such a position grants for growers are often cited as one of the most fruitful parts of farm labor, and within a direct market setting, producers not only get the opportunity to engage in friendly banter with customers, but develop relationships that go beyond the break the “producer/consumer” void, if the proper intimate setting is encouraged by each market arrangement. The opportunity to receive feedback and recognition from a satisfied consumer base who expresses satisfaction through continued patronizing of vendors has been cited as one of the most fulfilling portions of maintaining a farm enterprise.

When examining the realities of a direct market, it is possible to observe that the opportunities for extra fulfillment garnered within a direct market setting do not come at no cost to growers. Direct markets, while inducing emotions of kinship and camaraderie between vendors and patrons, are also highly competitive retail institutions in their own right. Growers which spend a major part of their week managing on farm operations often have to engage in one of their longest “on the clock” days at the market. Preparation for once a week, or bi-weekly markets, preparing products for transport and display at markets, selling products during market hours, repacking and transporting inventory back to farms requires an intense time commitment by growers and farm employees. Market days often begin in the wee hours of the previous morning, and do not end until the late afternoon, or early evening of the subsequent day. When factoring in fees for market space, and the intense competition from both a pricing and consumer preference perspective at markets with multiple vendors, the romanticized “pleasures” of life as a direct market vendor can be observed in a more realistic perspective.

Direct Markets: Symptoms of the Local Trap

While direct sales markets have been credited for creating an opportunity to forge closer social ties between producers and consumers, they have been criticized for remaining essentially reliant on a similar commodity exchange format as conventional systems, where a distinct producer/consumer relationship is maintained (Lockie 2009). Additionally, since purchasing is still dictated by consumer decisions, there is no inherent shared risk in agricultural production, or other premeditated agreements that lessen financial pressures on growers (Lockie 2009). This condition has been outlined as a weakness in the format which reduces a direct market’s ability to present itself as a complete “alternative” to the conventional food system. In an additional observance, Hinrichs 2000 has highlighted that growers are as likely to participate in direct markets because of the premium price received for products in such settings, as for the fulfilling social experience of selling at the market. This should not come off directly as a critical decision on behalf of the grower, but rather be used to highlight the immense importance of direct sales markets to many small scale growers.

It has also been noted that one’s ability to purchase locally grown, ecologically sensitive, seasonal products does not guarantee his or her interest or willingness to work to incite change in larger agricultural systems, but rather the mere interest and privilege of having the capacity to purchase market offerings. In urban settings, direct sales markets have a tendency to become exclusionary and elitist due to the premium prices that wealthier classes are willing to pay for fresh products, excluding many from having the capacity to participate within the system. Consumer participation within the market, in a major sense, is predicated on their capacity to purchase within the market setting. While presenting a worthy opportunity for conscious purchasing, direct markets fall short in guaranteeing the decommodification of food. Observances of this nature are not meant to discredit the value of the social ties, familiarity, and trust that direct markets generate, but rather point to the reality that economic interests are not displaced within a direct market setting (Hinrichs 2000), and that a healthy network of direct sales opportunities within a location is one contributing factor towards building functional local food networks.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Projects: a step closer to the decommodification of food?

Community supported agriculture (CSA) is a direct marketing format in which ecologically conscious growers and citizens form direct partnerships in managing the costs, risks, distribution infrastructure and resulting products of a

farming operation (Hinrichs 2000). CSAs garner similar implications as those of direct markets regarding the social, environmental and economic benefits they could provide to a region. The CSA movement began in Japan in the 1970s, before spreading to Western Europe and the United States in the mid 1980s (Feagan and Henderson 2009). CSA initiatives can take varying forms, and CSA should be thought of as a general approach rather than a distinct method. Hayes and Vadovics 2008 describe three general CSA schemes which can be adapted to the context and circumstances within a particular setting.

- **Share farms:** an arrangement where consumers purchase “shares” which guarantee a selected portion of the farms output throughout a growing season. Shares represent partial ownership in the farm for the duration of the membership period. Share dues can be paid either at the beginning of a growing season, or sporadically throughout a year, depending on the financial arrangements within the agreement.
- **Box schemes:** an arrangement in which a single farmer, or multiple farmers in collaboration produce a diverse box of seasonal produce to be distributed to the investing members, who pay up front or make periodic association payments
- **Delivery schemes/ ordering schemes:** arrangements which exist as more flexible personifications of the two previous arrangements, where consumers have farm products, either in pre determined boxes or those selected by order, delivered directly to home or another selected pick up location.

CSA share schemes receive praise in academic literature for their unique economic arrangement in which members invest in an environmentally sensitive farming operation before knowing what exactly will be received in return. In this orientation, a bonded social community is forged, one which personifies the care and confidence expressed on the behalf of the farm investor, where both the risks and rewards of sustainable agriculture are shared (Feagan 2009). This relationship is described as the desired “decoupling” or “decommodifying” of food from prescribed monetary value and the enforced expectations of the global market, in a manner that re-entrenches food in a social, environmental and cultural sense (Feagan 2009, Allen 2010, Hinrichs 2000). Additional benefits of such CSA arrangements are the educational benefits that “shareholders” or members are expected to receive by being a part of the agreement. In the share farm arrangement, and to a lesser extent in box schemes, members are expected to learn more about the realities and challenges associated with the agricultural practices of an ecologically sensitive, presumably moderately sized farm (Feagan 2009). It is also assumed that learning should be facilitated in ways being more cognizant due to shared financial risk, but rather through farm visits and active participation in handling systematic distribution logistics, along with on-farm management and labor in “open” work days (Boughera et al 2009).

CSA: Symptoms of the Local Trap

While CSA projects receive much credit for being distinct in their ability to decommodify food through shared, stabilized investment in individual farming enterprises, their long term success and viability from the perspective of producers is not something that comes with ease. CSAs are still completely dependent upon “fair” pricing which encourages member participation. Fairness in this estimation is often a basis comparison between prices paid at traditional outlets, or those at local farmer’s markets. Even though farm investments are guaranteed once an agreement is made between producer and “shareholder,” it is still a producer’s responsibility to generate satisfactory output which garners continual participation within the scheme. Factoring in consumer expectations influenced by traditional retail outlets, there exists a wide definition for “satisfactory output” which would result in extended

participation in the CSA agreement. Participation levels in CSAs are also difficult to manage, as a decline in participation can make CSAs financially unfavorable for growers, and an increase in participation may cause a corresponding increase in required labor and time by the farmer that does not guarantee increased profit (Jarosz 2008). Community building ideals aside, at the end of each growing season, the income from CSA systems must meet or exceed production costs endured by farmers, and reaching this medium has proven to be a challenging task (Hayes and Vadovics 2009, Feagan 2009).

In all three levels of CSA arrangement outlined by Hayes and Vadovics 2009 (Share farms, box schemes and delivery/order schemes) the level of grower and member collaboration is a key measuring stick in deciding if the CSA truly delivers the “re-embedding” qualities that are expected to be delivered in a food production model premised on sharing and exchanging. Building a participatory organization where most of the benefits are not directly financial has been cited as one of the most difficult, but potentially productive challenges facing CSA initiators (Feagan 2009). It is often the case that the most inflexible of CSA arrangements which do the most to subvert the conventional food procurement system require the greatest patience and level of commitment from the member base, a reality which can only be fulfilled by member bases with superior levels of commitment (Feagan 2009, Hayes and Vadovics 2008, Hinrichs 2000). Collaborative CSAs can encourage members to do more than just visit farms, but rather volunteer, provide labor, or help initiate the preparation and delivery of farm produce throughout the growing season. Once again, the burden to establish such a relationship of mutual exchange often falls on already stressed growers (Jarosz 3). Feagan 9 has outlined three CSA model descriptions in a framework which describes the relationship, level of collaboration, and its eventual effect on the conventional food system. A summary of this outline is featured in Table 25.

Table 25: Feagan and Henderson's CSA Model Distinctions		
Model	Producer/Shareholder relationship	Effect on conventional food system
Instrumental	Business agreement, farmer provides food to an interested community	Slight modification, replication of retail model with increased knowledge and proximity to origin
Functional	Camaraderie between parties, collaboration, face to face interaction, and increased transparency	Alters procurement practices, time and effort as well as currency exchanged for goods
Collaborative	Food production is a partnership, responsibility is shared, members play active role in the success of farming operations	Food system is transformed, food procurement becomes a mutual exchange of time, labor, and effort in the name of sustaining the organization

Table 55: Synopsis generated after consulting (Feagan 2009, Hayes and Vadovics 2008)

Labels and Terroir: Embedding more information in traditional retail purchases

Certification schemes have been developed to formally differentiate products based on quality, region of origin, and the presence of environmentally conscious production practices during their creation (Higgins et al. 2008). Labels are used to differentiate products from their existing “conventional” counterparts as a means for encouraging more informed food purchases and enhancing attractiveness to conscious consumers, whether motivated by ecology or quality. The two major means of differentiating food products by labelling are terroir designation and organic certification.

Terroir designation is a nuanced label of origin scheme which attempts to link foods with places to capitalize on the perceived quality of a location's products and production practices (Feagan 2007). Terroir is defined as the specific characteristics that the geography, climate, and geology of a place grant to food products produced there (Feagan 2007). This "cultural branding" of food by adding a label linked with a known place, is done formally with protected geographical indications (PGIs) and protected designations of origin (PDOs). Terroir labels mesh with local food notions to "re-spatialize" food, or publicize the importance of acknowledging the value of localized foods, and the specific production processes used to create them. PDO and PGI labels are extended means of linking consumers to the places and people responsible for creating food products. It is through this process that the ability to add additional value to products which resulted from traditional practices and possess distinct ecological characteristics that are valued within a tangible place (DuPuis and Goodman 2005). Feagan (2007) describes terroir placed as an opponent of the globalized food system's "frictionless and placeless tendencies" which prohibit producers from being held accountable for products their products.

Organic certification is a product of the social movements in Western Europe and the United States in the 1980s which reacted against diminishing product quality, and lack of trust in food production processes and food origins (IFOAM 2009). It was during this period that consumers called for a labelling mechanism that signified quality, ecological sensitive production, social justice and safety within food production and distribution systems (Lockie 2009). In the early 1990s in North American and Europe separate national legal definitions for organic farming methods were adopted, paving the way for organic certification labels for food products (IFOAM 2009). Organic labelling is utilized to differentiate products which have been produced using methods that comply with a set of standards that seek to create a precedent for minimizing environmental impacts which conventional farming practices induce, while guaranteeing more just social conditions during production (Michelsen 2009). While less tied directly to place than terroir labels, organic labels serve to embed information about the externalities of the full life cycle of a food product, and give credibility to distinguished choices that were made during the cultivation, processing and distribution of each marked product.

The role of labelling and certification within local food systems is complex. Labels do not exist independently of local purchasing initiatives, as certification stands as an important factor in bringing integrity to direct farmer's markets and providing structure to community supported agriculture programs. CSA cooperatives are typically formed in conjunction with certified organic farmers, and in direct market settings, producers have the opportunity to use official certification to their advantage to receive premium prices in return (Feagan 2007). While the purchasing of organic or terroir labelled products in traditional retail outlets does not necessarily shorten the space between production and consumption, nor transmit any direct personal information regarding the producer of each product to the consumer, they do serve to contribute knowledge which can satisfy consumer urge to make conscious food choices. From an overall perspective within larger agricultural sectors, organic distinction, and increased awareness of the external benefits and significance of purchasing organics is a desired outcome.

Labeling and Terroir: Symptoms of the Local Trap

The paradox of labels and the certification process is often a dilemma of inclusion and exclusion, compounded by the complex outcomes of differentiation within the food market. Organic farming has been accepted to be the most formally regulated and trusted means of alternative agricultural production, but this distinction also comes with the classification of being the most regimented and controlled form of production (Qazi and Selfa 2005). Such

institutionalization has been credited with excluding small farmers from certification and its connected benefits due to the higher costs for inspection, while also putting organic agriculture in a vulnerable position to be readily co-opted within the conventional agri-business sphere (Qazi and Selfa 2005, Higgins et al. 2008). Major concern has been expressed that the tightly regimented standards for organic production could discourage innovation by causing producers to focus more intently on the bare standards for compliance, rather than pursuing more novel approaches to sustainable agroecosystem management (Lockie 2009). For terroir labels, their ability to empower marginalized rural areas which are not able to cultivate “specialty” foodstuffs has been questioned (Watts 21). PDO and PGI protective declarations have been designed to showcase products of celebrated uniqueness rather than in a flexible manner that can accompany location specific production specialization (Ibery et al. 2005). It is of note that not all places are fit for an establish culture of “terroir” and many place are unlikely to qualify for, let alone benefit from such a designation (Feagan 2007).

It has been emphasized that both organic and terroir labeled products, when purchased in a traditional retail setting, do little to encourage larger questions about the nature of conventional food systems because they bring greater attention to specific foods rather than the supply chains that they pass through, a notion that stands as a primary goal within local food initiatives (Ibery et al. 2005, DeLind 2011). The extending length of organic supply chains has been described as replicated many qualities of conventional networks. Follet 2009 p.39 has outlined this focus on quality by way of label as a distraction from being concerned with greater food networks as a whole, and reducing the likelihood of creating social and political change in food systems because both producers and consumers of labeled organic can become fulfilled with their label sanctioned role within food chains. Lockie (2009) even goes as far to summarize that mainstream retailers take advantage of labeled products to capitalize on the greater connotations of quality that they receive from customers. In his estimation this is a calculated act that complies with the expectations of consumers for which price, convenience and an expected shopping experience is paramount, rather than ambitions to seek more environmentally conscious, ethical products (Lockie 2009)

The Local Trap Personified: Complex realities of Direct Markets, CSA’s and Labeling Initiatives

A tangible example of the inherent romanticism of local food initiatives can be identified when conducting a closer observation of the traditional civic agricultural models that have been mentioned previously. Within the positive hue of direct markets, community supported agricultural projects, and labeling schemes, exist great possibility for applying extra pressures to the same producers which the systems are established to support, and creating exclusionary conditions which make participation for many certain citizens improbable based on income level and residence location.

Exclusion

Within local food circles, questions have been raised about the exclusionary outcomes of the official certification processes, and direct markets comprised of solely certified growers. While differentiation within a market setting has been touted as a necessary step in embedding more information for consumers to observe, critics have pointed out that the costs associated with standards and the certification regimes required to organize organic markets have an exclusionary effect on both producers and consumers (Lockie 2009). A paradox within direct marketing has developed around giving rightful regard to producers who have taken the necessary steps to gain official organic certification by isolating organic products and producers from non organic products and producers in separate

direct markets. This step has seemed like logical means to protect organic growers from being undercut by the cheaper prices made available through uncertified or conventional production, but tension has developed between the “institutionalized organic” scene and the non certified, but ecologically conscious local scene in many regions. The costs associated with certification may leave some growers “priced out” of the organic market, and associated certified organic direct markets, even if their production practices go above and beyond set standards. Beyond costs, the procedural measures associated with certification may be unfavorable for growers who do not have the capacity to handle the necessary amount of formal paperwork to gain certification. Finding a balance in which all ecologically sensitive growers have access to retail space continues to be a challenge of local food network advocates.

Urban elitism

A growing body of literature has been dedicated to uncovering the significant role urban areas playing in developing local food systems (Jarosz 2008, Born and Purcell 2006, Boughera et al. 2009, Alkon 2008, Qazi and Selfa 2005). Research has proven that the demand for fresh, locally and organically grown produce is highest in urban areas, and that a gain in urban professionals within a region fuels demand for such differentiated products (Jarosz 2008). Urban centers are likely to contain the highest number of traditional retail outlets containing organic products, and direct markets, while often being the focused end of chain delivery point of more complex community supported agricultural initiatives. This has led to a discrepancy in which rural areas become responsible for creating output that is intended to satisfy a consumer population in urban center that while perhaps proximate in distance, is far extended from the realities of the respective rural regions where the food has originated. Much difficulty has been met in creative local food distribution networks that are stabilized by constant urban demand, while also being able to provide locally grown, organic, and high quality produce to rural regions concurrently. This dominant reliance on the demand fostered within cities has been both a form of a blessing and curse to local food initiatives. The uneasy relationship that has developed, as the rural livelihoods become completely reliant on the political and economic decisions of urban centers, is not a new occurrence but most certainly one that deserves future observation to maintain system equity.

Price and Consumer Access Exclusion

From the consumer side of the spectrum, the price premium that acts is a bonus for organic producers also can exclude a large percentage of a potential purchasing audience. As previously mentioned, urban centers serve host to a majority of direct and officially certified organic/local markets due to the economies of scale and potential lucrative market associated with a concentrated customer base. In many cases, certified organic markets have been transformed into elitist shopping outlets which offer select foodstuffs to those with the purchasing power or willingness to pay extra to afford such prestigious items. Local and organic products become concentrated in select city center outlets, excluding certain groups based on proximity (i.e. those in rural areas, or in parts of the city without access to markets). Price exclusion can occur when a higher premium price for goods can develop in areas of concentrated wealth, which cities serve as. This should not be attributed alone to the greediness of growers, or market organizers, but rather the fact that such “direct market price inflation” has appeared as a natural outcome of placing organizing direct markets in their most potentially financially lucrative locations, where pressured growers have a one day reliance on conscious shoppers who develop a designated “market day” shopping ritual. Such outcomes echo the notions that direct markets remain inefficient in producing the “decommodifying” of food results desired within the principles of local food advocacy rhetoric.

Procedural Deficiencies of Labeling

Another common notion is that organic certification standards and the “procedural checklist” inspection process awards value to farm attributes which are easy to quantify; ignoring the benefits of more holistic approaches to farm management which may be more ecologically sensitive, while at the same time discouraging innovative new farming methods which may not satisfy established organic compliance standards (Jarosz 2008, Lockie 2009). It has also been pointed out that labels and certifications, with all of their differentiating abilities, still fall short of advocating for the internalization of the full social and environmental costs of production. The increasing appearance of certified foods in conventional market setting has also brought attention to the power of corporate actors to dictate the ideals of what labels truly represent. Corporate involvement in the sale of certified products may increase the availability of organics, but undermine the integrity of what the label represents, by increasing pressures on growers and lengthening and intensifying organic supply chains as part of conventional business models, in a form of “corporate co-opting.” (Higgins 2008). Trends of this nature would lead to the gradual industrialization of organics, the lengthening of supply chains, pricing out smaller farmers, and increasing the likelihood of organic farms to eventually resemble conventional operations (Feagan 2007). DeLind (2011) hints that there is little to suggest that the relationship between conventional retail outlets and small scale organic growers would lead to anything but an exploitative, classic economic arrangement where price, uniformity, varieties and quantities would be determined by corporations.

Searching for Patterns: the Local Scene in Budapest

Options for local food consumption in Budapest are limited. Before supermarkets and traditional retail chains gained a major hold on the food retail market, Hungarians held direct procurement in high regard when making food choices. The favorable climate and long growing season provided Hungarian citizens with a plethora of food choices throughout the year. As reflected globally, once introduced to the supermarket model, Hungarian consumers rapidly settled for the price and convenience offered by one stop shopping outlets. The disappearance of a once robust culture of purchasing through direct markets, and the overwhelming influence of supermarkets and hypermarkets has made it more difficult than ever for local producers to get their products to the lucrative Budapest market.

What remains after nearly two decades of the conventional food system influence on the food retail spectrum within the city, is a scattered number of certified and non certified direct markets, a limited number of locally-minded or environmentally conscious small grocers and health stores who actively source locally grown organics, and the minimal locally produced offerings which have taken the difficult path to entering traditional supermarket sourcing streams. The present state of Budapest’s local food infrastructure is reflected in the historical decline of its direct market culture, and the modern day challenges faced by organic and small scale growers attempting to penetrate traditional food retail outlets, which have come to be the dominant source of food procurement for Hungarian citizens. The Budapest local food scene that remains exists in a highly pressurized state which encourages exclusivity, marginalization and other tell tale symptoms of the local trap.

The Decline of Direct Purchasing Culture in Hungary

They are not markets, they are food shops. I don't think they can be taken back. I think we should start from the beginning, new markets in every district, build up from the beginning. We should not let in these bigger distributors, the traders, just small growers.

-Ildiko Harmathy, Hungarian local food activist

In Hungary, a rich tradition of buying directly from producers existed until the mid 1990s, when an influx of convenience shopping stores completely altered consumption patterns of residents. Competition from cheaper prices in supermarkets and hypermarkets also changed the face of existing direct markets in Budapest. Budapest's market halls, which formerly featured products of Hungarian growers now serve as trading posts for foreign goods, with a mix of conventionally produced Hungarian products are sourced when prices are cheaper or comparable with foreign imports. Budapest's five Historic "Millennium Market Halls" (Five traditional style market halls all constructed during a period of wealth in the city in the late 1800s) have become popular tourist attractions, but do little to showcase authentically produced Hungarian foods, or serve as a retail opportunity to smaller scale Hungarian growers. Most small producers in Hungary have given up on attempting selling goods in such market halls, and those who still make attempts are typically marginalized to spaces outside of the market buildings, or lost within the sea of cheap, out of season imports.

A minimal number of hybrid market spaces, which feature a mix of foreign traders and Hungarian growers are scattered throughout the city's districts, where subsistence level growers from the periphery of the city offer seasonal goods, but the marginalization of markets of this nature, and pricing competition with traders has made such markets an unattractive option for most small scale producers in Hungary. Hunyadi Ter in Budapest's VIth district is a fitting example of where direct markets have transitioned to in the city. In this location, on the outside of one of Budapest's former Millennium Market Halls rest a public park with vendors tables lining its outer footpaths. On each weekday at this location, outside of the market which now houses only conventionally produced Hungarian products and wholesale items, a handful of subsistence level growers make attempts to sell their goods at stalls next to traders offering a wide assortment of imported fruits and vegetables, in an expectedly competitive fashion. Markets of this nature hold a place in the heart of city residents, but are certainly few in numbers, and not a viable option for most Hungarian producers or citizens.

Hungarian Products in Retail Stores: Local Meets the Conventional

Hungarian organic and locally produced products are marginalized within the most popular retail outlets in the country, and concurrently the Budapest market is no exception. Within supermarkets if fresh produce is of Hungarian origin it is labeled as so, but it is nearly impossible to find out much more about the product beyond its country of origin, with little or no information regarding the production practices that were used to create it, unless it is an officially certified organic product. Organic and small scale local producers face great difficulty in creating business relationship with supermarkets and grocers, and if working contracts are established they are often in favour of the retail outlet which has the ability to apply price, quality, quantity, and production specifications on growers. A Hungarian grower commenting on past attempts to try to supply a larger health food store with fresh products reflected:

We put a lot of effort into supply those stores for years, and we've seen no growth, if anything we've seen contraction over the last 5 years compared to what we had 10 years ago. They just don't seem to be the outlet for produce. And they are quite demanding, they would like to have the best looking, quality produce, delivered two times per week, and the volumes are not something that make supplying those worth it. The quality demands, cosmetically are the problem, and they like uniformity, they do not like different sizes, they do not know how to price them. They also follow their competition in a process. That does not serve us so well.

-Hungarian Organic Producer

Large retailers are unlikely to form business relationships with smaller producers, and they remain resistant to offering a high quantity of fresh organic products that can not be acquired within their traditional procurement structures. This places the responsibility of finding retail opportunities for products on growers who already face the pressures of managing farm operations, and creating successful harvests using ecological farming methods.

Increasing Pressures and Outcomes on Direct Sales Markets in Budapest

Well there is the obvious danger that all your eggs are in one basket. If something starts jeopardizing that, you don't have many other alternatives. The competition at the market over a number of years has gotten stronger and stronger. The increased number of growers means that some just get a small cut of what's going on there.

-Hungarian organic farmer commenting on the Budapest organic market

Most organic and small scale growers and the corresponding consumers searching for their products have been forced to become disproportionately reliant on once a week or period direct sales markets in Budapest. The officially certified organic markets held on Saturday's in Budapest exist as the most dominant outlet for the direct sales of organic products in Hungary, with most growers attributing a majority portion of their total sales in these weekly market. This has increased pressures on growers vying for sales and equal market representation each Saturday. Growers who do not produce at a scale for exporting are the most reliant on direct sales in certified markets. This heavy dependence on a once per week markets in Hungary's capital is both a sign of the pressures placed on growers to attain a fair amount of sales in limited locations, and the reliance on urban demand to drive the consumption of organics and locally produced food in Hungary. Such imbalances are representative of the instability of the sector overall, and the lack of access to organics and locally produced food for a vast swath of the Hungarian population. Although many producers earn a stable livelihood from sales at the certified markets, overall domestic sales of organics in Hungary have become stagnant, reflecting the need for additional approaches to getting products to consumers.

The institutionalization of Budapest's Organic Markets

It partly reflects what is going on. It reflects what's going on with this formal commercial organic thing. Its looking more and more like "brand organic." It probably wont change so much now because its fixed place, but if you traced the last 5 markets its gotten more and more institutionalized. I don't dislike the market because its fantastic that it exists, but it can become a bit elitist in that way.

-Hungarian organic farmer commenting on the Budapest organic market

Everyone knows its more expensive. There is a certain brand of consumers who can expect to be able to afford the products.

-Anonymous patron of the Budapest organic market

Three officially certified, organic-only direct sales markets exist and are administered by Biokontroll. While much time and resources have gone into establishing these markets which although popular, have come to be acquainted with connotations of exclusivity, both to growers and patrons. Questions regarding the amount of financial resources that went into the establishment of the largest organic market in Budapest persist, although its favorable

aesthetics and placement next to a city park have been at the same time praised. Premium pricing within the urban market setting has been cited as an excluding factor to citizens, and the competitive nature of the market along with certification requirements, and the payments required to attain retail space at the market even after certification has prohibited the markets from being an option for many growers. Many citizens who have an interest in purchasing locally grown products are turned off by the elitist image personified by the certified direct markets, an outcome that has been encouraged by both the development decisions made in establishing the markets, and sustained by the limited supply chains that can deliver products to consumers in Hungary.

Applying the framework of the Local trap to Budapest’s Local Food Options

Table 26: Signs of the Local Trap in Budapest	
Theoretical Ailments	Major Symptoms
Dangerous Assumptions	Overwhelming reliance on a limited number of direct sales outlets; and the inclusion of local/organics in traditional retail outlets to drive consumption
Weak Structural Elements	Little advocacy for local/organics; absence of market/campaigning for conscious food consumption; persistent producer/consumer distinction; outlets encourage traditional market interactions
Defensive Localism	Protectionist stance of certified organic markets, exclusion of a large class of city residents based on pricing encouraged by minimal outlets for sales; low number of markets excludes growers and potential consumers
Producer Consequences	Persistent reliance on highly competitive direct markets, low growth prospects for business, handcuffing to market cycle
Citizen Consequences	Lack of access to products, isolation, high costs, inconvenience

Table 26: Synopsis Generated after consulting: (Treager 2011, Delind 2007, 2008, Dupuis and Goodman 2005, Allen 2010, Hinrichs 2000, Feagan 2007, Treager 2011, Hassanein 2003)

The limited number of local food options in Budapest is the first and most prevalent issue within Budapest’s local food scene. The local trap framework encourages a criticism of local food initiatives which do little to break down producer/consumer distinctions in food procurement. A distinct reliance on direct sales markets as the only option for conscious consumption within the city, while largely a product of the relatively limited development in advocacy for such options in Hungary, a face that should be identified as a weakness which reduces the likelihood of influencing the greater structural changes in the agricultural sector in Hungary. Although direct sales markets receive much credit for bringing producers and consumers closer together, the pressurized orientation and limited outlets exemplified in Budapest both locks producers into an absolute reliance on the minimal number of direct sales to earn a livelihood, and excludes a vast swath of potential patrons based on pricing and location.

An observation of the local food scene in Budapest exposes the simple fact that a majority of city residents can neither afford to purchase locally produced items in certified organics markets nor access products conveniently even if they had the financial capacity to procure the products at organic market prices. Such a critical analysis should not be seen as ignorant chastising of the resources and efforts that have been put into established Budapest’s direct organic markets, but rather call to mind the notion that the city is in dire need of varying approaches that attempt to increase accessibility to locally produced products. This reality has not gone ignored within the Hungarian population, and citizens who have become discouraged with the food options featured in supermarkets,

or those offered within the context of the institutionalized organic sector have started to design innovative initiatives which may hold some of the greatest potential in creating food procurement systems which truly acknowledge the needs of producers and citizens.

The Emergence of Conscious Food Communities in Budapest

Although not reflected by the low rate of consumption of certified organic products exemplified in Hungary, there exists a growing class of conscious food consumers who are working to establish new mechanisms for procuring products directly from producers. Reacting to the lack of available fresh local products, and the exclusivity of established direct markets, citizens are banding together to create their own unique procurement relationships with producers they have become acquainted with. While relatively marginal within the complete population today, general acknowledgment for conscious food consumption has been rising within the past 10 years. The patterns that have been emerging typically involve groups of friends and families in a location banded together by a common interest in making ecologically and socially conscious food choices working in unison to create their own arrangements with producers, in order to secure a fair and equitable means for procuring differentiated food products. These citizen driven initiatives are working to establish working relationships with producers which take into account the limitations of traditional retail supply chains, along with the pressures associated with official organic certification, and participation in certified organic markets.

In personal dialogue with Hungarian organic growers, food advocates, agricultural scholars, a general summary of the profiles of Hungarian conscious food consumers working to design new food procurement schemes could be established:

- **The Health Conscious:** Consumers who identify with the health benefits associated with products that have been produced without harmful pesticides and chemicals, those who are conscious eaters because of ill health or disease, and those who prioritize fresh and minimally processed products, along with supplements and vitamin rich foods
- **Motivated by Trust:** Consumers who are pacified with the health and safety, and environmental concerns associated with foods once they can acknowledge who has produced food items and where they have originated, consumers who may also be motivated by knowing and supporting the individual who has produced their food as opposed to supporting a faceless corporation or distant producer
- **Young Families:** Consumers who have recently had children and have become more health conscious as a result of this. Young mothers have been cited as one of the largest groups of organic and locally produced food consumers in Hungary
- **The Environmentally Conscious:** Consumers who are motivated by the positive environmental and sustainability attributes of locally or organically produced food. A relatively small, but growing section of the Hungarian population, currently defined as mostly urban dwellers with a higher level of education than average

Conscious Consumption Advocacy in Budapest

Multiple advocacy and non profit groups in Hungary have recently focused their efforts on building conscious consumption initiatives in Budapest. Five of the most important actors working to expand conscious food consumption options in Budapest include **Tudatos Vásárlók Egyesülete** (TVE), The Association of Conscious

Consumers in Hungary, **Védegylet** “Protect the Future” environmental NGO, **Humusz Szovetseg**, an environmental non profit group and the **Messzelátó Association**, an additional environmental non profit organization, and **Slow Food Budapest**, a group of Hungarian Gastronomy advocates who also promote localized food procurement. A summary of their actions and activities related to food is listed below.

Table 27: Budapest Based Conscious Consumption Initiatives	
Group	Outreach and Areas of Focus
TVE Assoc. of Conscious Consumers	Maintains a website with a multitude of green procurement suggestions for residents, conducts audits of large retail shopping outlets for sustainability and social justice issues, assists with the creation of community supported agricultural initiatives in Hungary
Védegylet: Protect our Future	Facilitate workshops, events, and education sessions which seek to spread the message of sustainability, and concern for future generations in Hungary. Periodically organize events focusing on the consumption of local and organic foods.
Humusz Szovetseg	An environmental non profit which focuses on waste issues; works with schools and businesses in reducing and managing waste sustainably and reducing waste. Advocates for a localized, waste and “food miles” reducing system of food production and distribution
Messzelátó Association	Pioneers of the 50 km diet campaign in Budapest, facilitators of environmental education activities and make-and-take participatory demonstrations. Volunteers within the Szatyor Association
Slow Food Budapest	A non profit culinary and Hungarian gastronomy organization which promotes the consumption of "good, healthy, local, and fair food" through food tasting and cooking events in Budapest

Table 6: Summary of Hungarian Conscious Consumption Advocates (Synopsis generated after personal consultation with Budapest local food advocates)

The work of these advocacy organizations has not gone unnoticed in Budapest, and a growing culture of conscious consumption is arising within the city. While these organizations have played a pivotal role in expanding awareness for the social and environmental repercussions of food purchasing, the backbone of innovative food procurement initiatives has been concerned citizens. Chapter 3 of this work will be devoted to exploring the path of development that the Szatyor Association has undertaken on its way to becoming one of the most promising and effective local food initiatives in Hungary.

Chapter 3

Research Question 3: How has Szatyor developed a localized and culturally specific conscious food community in Budapest and how do its members perceive its success and future potential?

In this chapter I will introduce the Szatyor group, an important actor within Budapest's local food movement whose successes have gained much attention throughout Hungary. The Szatyor Association model has had influence in encouraging the development of conscious food consumption initiatives both in Budapest and throughout Hungary. I will chronicle the history, maturation, and transition of the Szatyor Association, its stated goals, the Szatyor structure, and the group's future plans. I will tie in the theoretical frameworks presented in the opening section to explain how the Szatyor group is epitomizing the themes mentioned within their organization, and therefore placing themselves in a position to sustain and succeed in Budapest

Citizen Driven Conscious Consumption Initiatives in Budapest Introducing the Szatyor Association

Preface

I was fortunate enough to be able to acquire information for this section by observing the Szatyor Association at an extremely important time in its development as an important actor within the Budapest local food scene. From February until May of 2012, I was able to interact and converse with Szatyor members while attending events, volunteering on pick up days and construction work days, and in informal gatherings which usually took place after work or pick up days. I am extremely thankful for this experience, the time I've been able to spend with Szatyor members, and the extremely gracious reception that I've received while interacting with the members of this community. Throughout this experience I have been fortunate enough to not only gain a better estimation of why the Szatyor group has persevered in the face of many challenges, but also clearer understanding of the greater role that the organization plays in the lives of its members.

Szatyor Egyesület (The Szatyor Association)

What does Szatyor represent to you?

- *The small growers. We need to help them and support them with every means.*
- *A way of sustainable development. Connecting producers and buyers by eliminating the unnecessary institution of the trader. A community where like-minded people do something for the nature, for each other and certainly for themselves.*
- *For me Szatyor represents a gleam of hope that we can live well – not only in a context of luxury. I don't know where it will develop but I would be the happiest if this would remain an underground organisation around the world and would take over capitalism, which would be needed the most right now.*
- *It's alternative, underground and illegal, and cool!*

(Responses from Szatyor members)

A Brief History

Szatyor Egyesület, (Szatyor Association, meaning “food bag” in Hungarian) was spawned in 2007 by a group of Budapest based citizens who were linked by a shared dissatisfaction with the quality of produce available in the city’s conventional retail outlets and markets. Reflecting back to the saturation of super and hypermarkets that occurred in Hungary in the late 1990s, as production chains were completely altered and smaller grocer shops were either forced out of business or into procurement agreements with international traders, the quality of produce available in retail locations declined, and the ability to find fresh, locally grown products became more difficult. It was also during this time that the ability to acquire information of the direct origins of products became more difficult. As a reaction to this, a group of friends began using their personal connection with one certified organic producer from the Budapest periphery, and the power of combined group purchasing to establish a rudimentary system of buying directly from producers, instead of settling for products delivered in retail chain format by buyers, international distributors. In this format, an organic vegetable producer was willing to deliver a special order of produce which was placed by phone by one of the group members. The initial delivery points included private spaces which had the capacity to store the produce in boxes. The initial circle of friends kept up this activity for about a year before a majority of them moved away from Budapest, putting the group ordering on hiatus.

The founder of the Szatyor Association, Erika Karman remained interested in the process and continued efforts to set up a direct procurement link that could be utilized within her circle of friends. The second incarnation of the group ordering model was described as having a specifically “underground” feel to it, as patrons expressed pride in procuring food outside of traditional networks. Integrity within their system was solidified through personal connections; as they only created business relationships with producers were acquainted with, and with farming operations that they visited first hand. This reliance on proximity and personal connection for producer contacts remains within the structure of their system today. Starting off only serving a handful of friends, the model grew to serve over 10 participants who actively sought locally produced food products, and the greater information transparency delivered within the direct buying supply chain. This incarnation of the ordering group rapidly grew to comprise about 20 dedicated customers, and it was at this point when Erika and the other group members began to look to the future towards the extra steps that would need to be taken to maintain stability and the capacity to handle the higher number of orders and delivered goods.

In the five years since it originated as a handful of friends getting a produce box delivered to a garage, parking lot, or other relatively empty space, the Szatyor group has grown to accommodate about 60 stable members, and offers a willing consumer base for dozens of small scale and organic Hungarian producers. Szatyor, as it exists today, serves citizens of Budapest ordering food products from growers that have been selected to comply with “Szatyor Certification” standards, who mostly operate within a 50 km radius of Budapest. While originally only offering fresh vegetables during the main growing season in Hungary, Szatyor has expanding its selection to feature a multitude of locally produced fresh produce, preserves, dairy products, breads, wines, sauces, spices and much more.

The continuity and stability that the organization has maintained has not come without the determination and dedication of a core group of volunteers, who have donated countless hours while helping shape the organization into what it has become today. The “Szatyor” model has become a popular phrase mentioned by local growers, food advocates and activists, and currently, similar citizen driven groups are blossoming in Budapest, and across Hungary attempting to parallel the Szatyor model. It is at this point that it becomes as important as ever to trace the path of

the Szatyor group, chronicle the important steps that have taken in legalizing their model and taking steps to stabilize their operations, to ensure that the organization is living up to the ideals it was predicated upon. Szatyor's youth has limited its capacity to have a larger effect on the complete food procurement system in Budapest, but much can be gleaned from the steadfast path that the group has carried on during its short five year existence.

The Szatyor Mission

This represents a sustainable way for me, which I have been searching for and this is how I wish to live my life in the future. From one hand it does matter what we eat, on the other hand it does matter how we get these things and what this means for the environment. Moreover, I also would like to support those people, farmers, who are dealing with this and give me this valuable opportunity that I can live healthier and more sustainably.

-Szatyor Member

Szatyor's mission is to establish a functional group buying mechanism that beyond serving as a means for procuring and distributing goods, works to create a strong, active, and interactive community of participants who are linked with the common interest in sustainable food choices. Specifically stated goals include:

- Acting as a medium for promoting and supporting **conscious consumption** within the Budapest community, with special regard given to food procurement. To **bring together patrons** with the same or similar ideals who may otherwise shop independently, and unite them to form a greater conscious food buying communities.
- To promote the ideals of **food sovereignty**, its acknowledgement in Hungary, and encourage a **greater concern** with citizen's ability to participate within food production and distribution systems
- To facilitate a **closer connection** between food producers and consumers; to attach names and faces to food products, to give farmers the opportunity to introduce themselves to consumer populations and to receive feedback after their products have been consumed
- To establish a market place for sustainable consumption that offers **similar or superior convenience** to other retail outlets for food products, while providing the additional benefits associated with participation within a **conscious food community**
- To carry out **educational, awareness raising, knowledge and skill transferring** events which promote sustainable and conscious food consumption, and greater knowledge transparency within food systems.

What is Szatyor?

Szatyor in its most basic terms is a system of direct food procurement by which Association members can place orders for locally and organically grown products from an inventory list managed and maintained by a core group of volunteers. Szatyor can be thought of as an "assisted direct marketing" organization; effectively making locally and organically grown fresh and processed products, mostly produced at small scale, available directly to consumers without the added pricing, uniformity, and aesthetic pressures that are associated with sourcing within traditional retail supply chains. The Szatyor group makes it a priority to identify and work with producers who otherwise not have access to retail space and an associated consumer base, such as those who produce at scales too small be featured in stores, or even direct markets. Szatyor also offers a means for uncertified, but ecologically conscious growers to get recognition for their production practices and quality products without requiring the official organic certification process. Szatyor does offer many organically certified products, but they prioritize personal knowledge of a producer's operating practices over certification by an outside organization. It is a main priority of the

Association to offer more information about products to community members, to attach a face to a product and perhaps even an opportunity to visit the place of origin of offered products.

Outside of the food procurement and distribution functions of the group, Szatyor's maintains an important role as a social forum within the Budapest community, where citizens, growers and volunteers can meet and exchange ideas, stories, recipes. Such interactions are facilitated by the basic food procurement system, but maintained by the uniquely social atmosphere in which is encouraged by the group and the spaces they occupy. Szatyor actions and activities are housed within two spaces in central Budapest during pick up days, but their communal gatherings have often lead them to various farms and production sites, as on site trips that link producers and Association members are held as some of the most important events that the group can facilitate.

Who is Szatyor?

The Szatyor Association is comprised of citizen-members who inhabit center city Budapest. Within the Association there is a core section of the most active volunteers who fit into one of Szatyor's essential working groups who are the most responsible for maintaining system infrastructure, along with members who from time to time donate their efforts when necessary, and additionally a few members who utilize the food procurement services offered by the organization only. To gain the capacity to order through the system, one must simply submit an online registration form and be approved by the Szatyor administration. More often than not membership is spread by word of mouth, and potential members make a visit on a pick up day to introduce themselves to other longer term Szatyor members. Members also have the option of paying an annual membership fee, which warrants them a 10% discount on weekly purchase, while knowing their investment has been utilized to support the overall system. There are about 200 members with online ordering capacity, and each week about 50 orders are placed on behalf of individuals and families, with ordering fluctuating between about 20 orders in a slow week, and more than 60 in a peak ordering week.

The group is also comprised of the producers who supply the food products. This diverse group contains vegetable producers, dairy farmers, beekeepers, harvesters, foragers, and household producers, and it is common that producers become visible members of the Association, especially during featured event days which encourage face to face interaction between members and producers. Some Szatyor members hold producer-member-volunteer classification; playing multiple roles of consumer, pick up day volunteer, and product vendor all in one.

The Szatyor Model of Procurement and Distribution

The original Szatyor model was reliant on word of mouth and phone conversations to manage ordering, collection and distribution of products. As the amount of participants and interest in the organization and what it represented grew, so did the amount of human capacity required to manage orders, deliveries and pick up days. Szatyor has been able to manage this increased work load through the continual dedication of core volunteers, and by working in close cooperation with Hungarian non-profit Messzelátó Egyesület (Messzelátó Association). The Messzelátó Association is an organization which aims to encourage young people to recognize the value of their natural and built environment, and they accomplish this through active workshops, educational sessions, and volunteer activities. Messzelátó was the originator of a 50km diet campaign in Budapest, and their local eating initiatives encouraged a working relationship with the Szatyor Association. Messzelátó employees comprise some of the most

dedicated members of Szatyor, and the Association is also able to offer the services of two European Volunteer Service volunteers, as part of the EU funded *Youth in Action Program*, to assist with the logistics of handling deliveries and arranging orders (Messzelátó Egyesület 2012).

In spite of this enthusiasm and dedication from volunteers, Szatyor’s growth has been a complicated process to handle throughout the group’s maturation. The amount of time necessary to manage the Szatyor operations has been a challenge, and it was expressed that a period of “burnout” was experienced in the autumn of 2011. The momentum gained while participation numbers increased also increased the required human capacity to manage orders, deliveries, and distribution. The group was able to manage this crisis period by putting a temporary cap on the number of new members who could order through the system.

With a refinement of volunteer duties, the association was able to handle this period of high pressure, and has since found a balance in dividing up task so that no volunteers were required to commit overwhelmingly to participation. Currently no volunteers are compensated financially for their services, but this possibility is something that will be explored in the future, and the possibility to earn “Szatyor credit” which could be used to purchase products within the system has been explored. Szatyor working processes are divided amongst volunteers, and specific groupings within this arrangement are listed below (Table 28)

Table 28: Szatyor Working Groups Summary	
Working Group	Responsibilities
Communications	In charge of public relations and communication with members through newsletters, online communication, also in charge of documenting Szatyor events in photos
Web-Design	In charge of designing the Szatyor website, updating product inventory, and adding additional web based features
Event Organizers	Coordinate Szatyor community outreach days, farm visits, demonstration workshops, and information sessions
Administration/ Logistics Group	Handles all feedback submissions, and questions from members. Facilitates and manages relationships with producers and takes care of ordering responsibilities, shipment tasks, and logistics during the week
Pick up day volunteers	Collect deliveries on Thursdays, separate and create individual shopping bags that are ready for member pick up, in charge of managing the Szatyor Bolt during opening hours during the week.

Table 28: Breakdown of Szatyor working groups and responsibilities (Personal Consultation with Erika Karman)

Today Szatyor operates utilizing an online ordering system, where members place orders online Thursday through Monday, before picking up orders at one of two specific locations in Budapest from 4pm-8pm on Thursdays. Members can also choose to have food orders delivered by bicycle if they pay an extra fee for delivery. By accessing Szatyor’s website (which was a recent, member created addition to the Association model in 2011) members can view a list of the featured products for the week, and select exactly the items which they choose to order for the week, along with the corresponding place of pickup or the delivery option. Before this web ordering process was instituted, the organization utilized an open “google document” which could be accessed by all users, but the inclusion of the online ordering form proved to be more efficient in accurately collecting and managing orders.

On pick up days members travel to their desired pick up location where a prepared bag with the items containing the items they’ve ordered will be waiting for them with their name and amount owed listed on it. At each of the

Associations two pick up location there are usually 3-4 Szatyor volunteers who turn deliveries into the separated orders, arrange the space for pick up, and managed transactions during the pick up period. Szatyor members have access to food products which are featured at prices that are both priced at a level that is both attractive to members, and equitable for producers, and members shop with the additional notion that as much of the proceeds as feasible are returned directly to the producer, as opposed to an intermediary as in traditional retail arrangements.



Image1: Szatyor Bags prepared for a “pick up” day (Source: Personal Collection)

Szatyor’s Inventory: What can be procured?

Szatyor currently features seasonal produce, milk, cheese, cream spreads, numerous preserved fruits spreads, jams and sauces, pickled vegetables, spices, seasonal foraged products, honey, flour, wine, fruit juice, breads, and a constantly shifting inventory of additional Hungarian specialty products produced by artisanal producers and members alike.



Image 2: Szatyor Permanent Inventory Sample (Source: Personal Collection)

Communication within Szatyor

I think its forming and reforming the norm the way we communicate with customers. Every week we send a letter saying what is news, and this is also keeping this personal connection. For example: yes last week something went wrong, or maybe something went really good or we found a new producers, its so that they know what is going on, its not just that they come by and that's it. We try to communicate in a friendly way, and we don't want to change that.

-Erika Karman, Szatyor Founder

I think the information is enough and I know if I would like to know more about them I always have the opportunity to ask

-Szatyor Member

Transparent communication is a key element within Szatyor's model. Having been built from the ground up by its core members, the Szatyor group has maintained aims to be open to any and all suggestions regarding organization, logistics, featured products, and future events and workshops. Feedback from members is encouraged by means of the Szatyor website, which is also used as an online forum to provide product updates, news publications, and to display information regarding each producer and the origins of featured products. Szatyor management prides itself on accepting member feedback to continuously refine the Association model. Additionally, Szatyor remains open to any producer or product suggestions made by members, and in a progressive search to create the most satisfying product inventory.

A monthly newsletter is published and sent to each member via email, and an additional weekly email is sent to provide members with up to date inventory information, as well as informing members if there are any unexpected changes in pick up day logistics. The monthly newsletter is used to keep members updated on news, upcoming events, new products and producers, while also displaying member submitted recipes, stories, and anecdotes related to food and life in Budapest. Fluid communication of this nature is very important to both engage members and keep them informed of the often occurring changes in inventory availability. The fragile nature of the ordering process can sometimes lead to weeks where not all of the items featured in the beginning of the week online inventory list appear in customer bags on pick-up Thursdays, and members of the causes of such issues via email in days preceding or quickly after such occurrences.

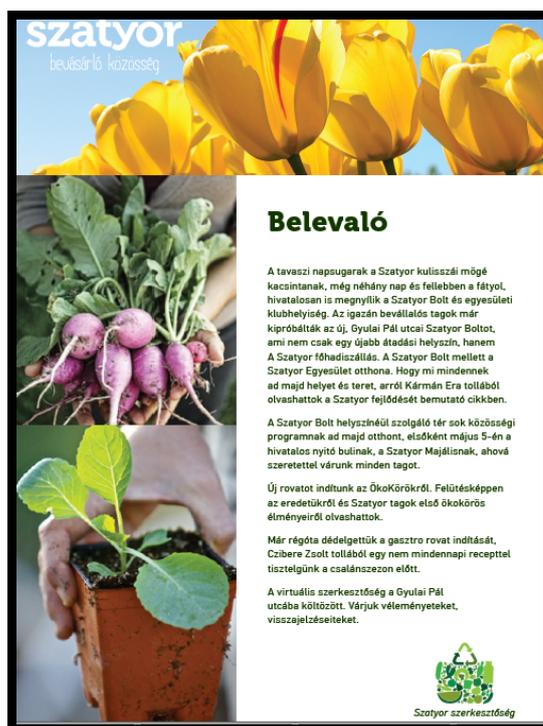


Image 3: Szatyor May 2012 Newsletter Cover (Source: Personal Collection)

Defining local from within: Szatyor Certification

But the main point is how they produce, that is what the most important for us, to see how they produce and in what way. And again, we are not controllers or professionals, but the personal connection gives a good sense if someone takes production seriously, and what kind of outlook they have, something beyond typical certification. We build more on the impressions, and we can see this when we visit, and so far it has worked.

-Erika Karman, Szatyor Founder

Szatyor is a community place- therefore is different- it's more, it's better- it's built on trust- personal relationships are behind the transactions. I know who are the growers, where are they coming from, and where the food originates from. I absolutely trust that the growers and producers of Szatyor don't use chemicals, pesticides, they produce organically, I don't have to read labels to know what I'm buying.

-Szatyor Member

The Szatyor certification method is predicated on personal relationship, and face to face interaction. Understanding the challenges faced by small scale producers in Hungary, the Szatyor group has chosen to develop a personal certification method which encompasses the needs of both certified and uncertified growers. They have developed their own group certification system which is used to determine what producers they would like to engage in working relationships with. Integrity within the system is maintained by the mutual trust between Association members, core administrative members who interact with producers and confirm expected production practices, and the producers themselves who remain open for inspection. Pricing, proximity, and ecological sensitivity and chemical usage are prioritized subjects within their method of personal certification. Producers are expected to comply with the pricing expectations set within the Szatyor group, which are not strict demands but general estimations of prices that are both fair for producer and consumer alike. The association does not set pricing demands on growers, but rather engages in an open dialogue expressing the expectations for prices on behalf of association members, while taking into the considerations of the producer.

There are different ways how producers become regularly featured on our list. We are open for recommendations. If someone as a buyer tells us that they've met a producer who has great products, and this person is recommending this farmer, we go and try to see if we can form a point of cooperation. Sometimes it does work and sometimes it doesn't. The other things is that there is a list of organic producers and we try to get to know them and meet them, and see if they are into this, its important that we meet and talk with them. Not everyone understands the concept. There are many people who are seeking us now that we are becoming more popular, but sometimes they are too far away, or sometimes they have high quality products but the prices is too high.

-Erika Karman, Szatyor Founder

The Association will not feature products from a producer until a core member of the organization visits the production location and witnesses first hand the types growing and processing practices utilized by each producer. While no Szatyor member is certified as a legal agricultural inspection agent, general notions of ecological sensitivity, and social consciousness in production are confirmed by an initial on-site inspection, and close contact is maintained with each producer throughout the duration of time supplying the Association.

Officially certified organic products are prioritized, but a core goal of the Association is to feature products from growers who have the greatest difficulty in gaining retail access (mostly growers producing at subsistence, or home production levels) and in this case the integrity of the Szatyor on-site inspection is relied on to ensure desired production standards. Individual members are strongly encouraged to suggest new suppliers, expanding both the total producer network and diversity of products featured.

Most often producer-Association working relationships are forged within the group, as a member suggests a local producer and their respective products to be featured. More often than not producers end up becoming members on their own part, and visible faces during schedule pick up and special event days. Szatyor participants also have free access to submit any of their home produced items to be featured in the “in-house” inventory of products, or if producing at high enough capacity, can be featured on the weekly menu of featured products on the on-line ordering list. The Association has been able to maintain a wide array of products while making sure that there is not an overload of the same item featured by means of creating selective relationships with growers who produce different items.

Why this Model?

Even if we go to the market and we do know the producers, we don't know the other customers. Maybe you will ask “Why do I need to know?”, which is a valid question, but here it is a community thing. We try to promote people getting more in touch with each other, and there are many additional values regarding how people can come together, and do many other things together.

-Erika Karman, Szatyor Founder

With the purchase of quality products it's important to know that the money goes directly to the growers. We can minimize the burden on the environment with this reasonable distribution method.

-Szatyor Member

The Szatyor model has developed in this form through the decision making process of the founding members, and also to accompany the needs of members and growers alike. The model never rests in a static position, and can always be changed and altered to meet both producer and member needs. The feedback loops for member concerns are personified through web communication, and the ability to interact with core members on pickup days. The association has made the conscious decision that a differentiated means for procuring fresh, healthy and high quality

domestically produced foods was lacking in the city, and that the existing outlets for these products in the city did not do much to accommodate the smallest scale producers, nor do much to bring together the consumers who are making differentiated food choices. The Szatyor model was predicated on creating an equitable, efficient and convenient means for procuring locally sourced food products, with the added opportunity to engage with both others interested in the process, and the suppliers who provided the presented goods. The model was shaped around the core principles and aims the group developed at the beginning of this initiative, and since then, with each period of growth, have adapted accordingly to retain the integrity of its original mission while expanding its capacity to accommodate more members and producers.

Pressures to professionalize, and growth of the system

As the Szatyor Association progressed in both membership and working relationships with producers, the founding members and the core volunteers faced pressures to both legalize and formalize the operations of the organization. This calculated maneuver was done with both the long term security of the Association in mind (mostly regarding the possibility of legal and tax pressures from the Hungarian government) and the best interests of participants within the system, to ensure efficiency, and maintain high standards of professionalism. In the infancy stage of the organization, it served as an informal, neutral exchange place for products, serving only as the mediator between producers and member-consumers. Understanding the potential implications of such informal transaction methods, Szatyor management took the necessary steps to gain full certification as “Szatyor-Bolt,” or an official registered business, while maintaining its Association certification.

Szatyor now exists with dual statuses, one as an “Egyesület” (association in Hungarian official distinction) which allows it to have registered members, and the authority to hosts events, workshops, and educational activities within its space. An additional registry as a “Bolt,” or retail store was pursued and acquired in the Spring of 2012. Acquiring Bolt status legalizes all of the exchange activities done within the group’s spaces, but comes with the added requirements of the technical capacity in managing operations, taking into account the formal registration, paperwork, receipt handling, tax submission, and health and safety standards that are required within Hungarian retail laws. These steps were taken with the long term future of the organization, its members, and the producers who are reliant on it in mind, and additionally to set a standard for future citizen driven conscious consumption initiatives which may attempt to model themselves after Szatyor.

The legalization of Szatyor was done to protect the time and resource investments of the past that have helped mold the organization into its present form, but also with the future in mind. In the Fall of 2011 new interest in Szatyor tested the capacity of both volunteers, and the spaces they resided in. Up until that point Szatyor pick up days were taking place in NOHA art studio, a multifunctional communal space within Budapest’s 13th district that served as an art and pottery studio, children’s exercise center, along with various other activities. Storage capacity was limited in this space, and there was no possibility to store perishable goods that required refrigeration. High traffic from both members and other utilizing the studio on pick up days added to the complexity of managing the ordering and distribution process. The lack of a personal space to carry out educational events, workshops, and information sessions also limited Szatyor’s capacity to fulfill a major goal set within its core principles. Essentially for Szatyor to exist as a conscious food community, it needed to produce its own communal space, and in the Spring of 2012 steps were taken in this direction in a process that has lead to the creation of the new Szatyor Association and Store on Gyulai Pal street in Budapest’s VIII District.

Building a New Space for Szatyor from the Ground Up

We would like to give the floor and space for those really small producers who can not be involved in the shopping system; the association can give them the opportunity within an organized mini market. We would like to promote this. We hope for this. We have to be ready.

-Erika Karman, Szatyor Founder

Szatyor was able to acquire a vacant space that formerly served as a photo development studio in the Spring of 2012 with the financial backing of a private donor who is extremely supportive of what the initiative represents within Budapest and Hungary. The possibility to create a space arranged with the full envisioned functions of the Szatyor group in mind was something that the founding members had been discussing throughout Szatyor's maturation as an Association. A personal space would allow the organization to accommodate more growers and their products, which would result in extra benefits for members due to the added diversity of featured products. Plans for the new space also included full kitchen facilities that would permit cooking demonstrations, expanded storage capability (both dry and cold storage), and also an additional multi-purpose group space that could be converted into a movie viewing room, meeting space, lecture hall, with the capability to house workshops as well. A multi purpose space of this nature was an essential requirement for Szatyor to organize the type of outreach events it desired to reach its full potential as much more than just a means for procuring locally produced food items.

In expected Szatyor fashion the conversion of the space from a decrepit photo studio, into a functional store/community space/kitchen involved many hours of volunteer time, and a few timely donations of various furniture items that were acquired through connections with the Szatyor network. Nearly all of the non technical labor that was necessary to completely remove the former photo shop interior, and all of the debris that was left by the former company was completed by Szatyor members. Beyond this much of the rebuilding, and refinishing of walls, floors, and carpets was completed by members or friends of members with construction skills. Only the most technical of jobs were outsourced to professional electricians or contractors.



Image 4: Szatyor's Communal Space: March 2012 (Source: Personal Collection)



Image 5: Szatyor’s Communal Space, Gyulai Pal Street Budapest: May 2012 (Source: Personal Collection)

Throughout this process great ingenuity was shown in the group’s ability to make the most out of the resources that were available to them. Wood and tiles were saved and reused in to complete some of the aesthetic elements of the new space, furniture and display cases were donated from a Budapest based store who was updating its own in store display, and other creative elements to fill out the aesthetics of the new space were either hand crafted, or donated by members. The new Szatyor space is comprised of a storage and display “store” room which serves as the room for offering the products in the group’s permanent inventory, along with handling the once a week pick ups. The Szatyor Bolt is new open four days a week, offering products non perishable products from the permanent inventory four days a week. An additional room is for group gatherings lies adjacent to the store, and has ample space for large gatherings, and is connected to a fully functional kitchen which makes cooking demonstrations and food preparations for events possible.

The new Szatyor space is the personification of the work and effort of those most committed to the organization, in honor of all of the members, producers, and volunteers who comprise the group. It is truly a communal space made possible through the dedication of those within the community, and now exists, with open doors to all others who would like to join.

Szatyor outreach and events

Some programs that are the most exciting are farmer visits, but we would also like to do a free, open university, that consists of organized lectures and round table discussions where we invite producers and experts who can teach and tell us more about food connected things, like answering health questions.

-Erika Karman, Szatyor Founder

Szatyor members have been engaging in on farm visits, workshops, and discussion sessions long before the Association acquired its new space in the Spring of 2012. Such gatherings outside of the scheduled food bag pick up days have been encouraged as much as possible when time and resources for such excursions were available. In distributed questionnaires and discussions during pick up days, many Szatyor members were vocal in expressing their enjoyment of the on farm visits, and informal gatherings between members. The establishment of the new communal Szatyor space has expanded the Association’s ability to invite producers directly into their space on pick

up days, and on special event days. Keeping in mind Szatyor’s goals to provide retail space to growers who normally have trouble finding access, and the additional interest in encouraging face to face interaction between members and producers, this stands as an integral advancement.



Image 6: Szatyor opening festival May 2012: Producers and members interact (Source: Personal Collection)



Image 7: Szatyor members during an on site visit to a goat cheese production facility (Source: Personal Collection)

Establishing a Conscious Food community: Reflections from a Szatyor Pickup Day

The most important is the fact that the Szatyor is not only a marketplace where exchanges of goods and money happens but the point is the community, a bit of talk, the friendly attitude to each other, the trust, the win-win situation. This is a community where every party trust in each other. Here there is no indifference or apathy, and no profit maximalisation. This is what guarantees the quality.

-Szatyor Member

I spend several hours when I take the goods, and I can talk with the producers and organisers too.

-Szatyor Member

Having had the chance to spend an extensive amount of time engaging with Szatyor members, on volunteer days, pick up days, and in informal event settings, the intangible human connections that provide stability to the group while engaging in such an ambitious and unique quest rise to the surface. The Szatyor community, while serving a community of about 200 total part time members, and a core group of about 40-60, at heart is a close knit family whose bonds have been forged through collective cooperation, dedication and sacrifice in honor of the system which their efforts have forged.

A Szatyor pick up day creates a unique social environment with encourages members to linger, relax, engage in conversations regarding new products and producers, and also any pertinent informal topics which may be in the current news. Both spaces that Szatyor utilizes for its activities, its personal Guylai Pal street location, along with the NOHA art studio space are uniquely inviting, with plenty of room to sit, chat, and let kids roam free to explore. It is not often that a member spends less than 15-20 minutes within the Szatyor space on a pick up day, as the inviting atmosphere encourages one to spend time, interact, and make themselves at home. Children and young families are a constant occurrence on pick up days, and parents can often be seen entering with a child on each arm, or strapped to their back, and leaving in the same manner except with a bag full of groceries in tow. It's also common to see a local producer stop by to inquire about the possibility of featuring their products within the weekly inventory.

Observing the full cycle of a pick up day, from delivery, to baggage preparation, through distribution and final pack up, is an ebb and flow of activity and interaction. The produce delivery and bag packing process is often a hectic, but well orchestrated system, with the well seasoned volunteers perfecting the process to prepare orders to exact specification even when pressed for time, which is often the case taking into account the varying products that need to be delivered from various producers, or picked up by separate volunteers. Subtle breakdowns in the system do occur, such as shortages in produce or eggs from week to week, but these mishaps happen infrequently and members are knowledgeable regarding what to expect and not expect within the system.

The new Szatyor space with its bright colors, ample space, recycled display shelves, functional kitchen, and full activity space bears a resemblance to a home, more than a store, and its expected that this effect was intentional. The Szatyor group has only had full capability to use its new space for a little over a month, but already the space has hosted an opening day fair which was attended by over 100 members and a handful of producers; an organizational forum held between various citizen driven conscious consumption initiatives from Budapest and its periphery, and multiple pick up days which featured new "in-house" products created by Szatyor members, and additional producers and products who were never previously featured.



Image 8: Scene from a Szatyor “Pick up” Thursday (Source: Personal Collection)

The Szatyor Member Perspective

I have been able to gain a better understanding of the meaning and importance of the Szatyor organization within the eyes of its member base by interacting with many of the members for a three month period in the Spring of 2012, and also by circulating a questionnaire in which general queries regarding motivations for participation, level of satisfaction with the mechanics of association, expectations for the future and other relevant questions were posted. Summarizing the most important information extracted from the surveys paints a good picture of satisfaction of the Szatyor member base.

- Most Szatyor members were motivated to join the organization because of their interests in supporting local growers, acquiring locally produced ecologically conscious food at a fair price, and for the opportunity to get to know other members by being part of a an active community
- Most members were never part of such an initiative before joining Szatyor
- Members estimate that they Szatyor sourced food comprised between 30-50% of the total amount of food that either they, or their family consume within a one week period
- Nearly all Szatyor members are satisfied with the selection and price of products offered by the organization, and the most popular requests were for more fresh fruits and vegetables
- Most members expressed that they received a satisfactory amount of information regarding the origins of each product, and that if they are not satisfied with the amount of information they have, they do not mind asking questions to find out more
- Nearly all members would not pay more to have items delivered to their homes, citing an enjoyment of the pick up days as a main reason
- Most members expressed an interest in volunteering, and helping out with pick up days
- Nearly all members expressed an interest in participating in more workshops, educational activities, and cooking events

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Applying Theoretical Framework to the Szatyor Model: Success Factors and their Relevance in Hungary

Document Overview

Chapter 1 of this work was used to present a picture of the current state of the agricultural sector in Hungary, and present an argument for why the development of local food initiatives is as important now as it ever was in Hungary. Tracking the changes within the last 20 years in the agricultural sector in Hungary have painted a bleak picture of disparity, inequality, and financial loss. The agricultural sector is more polarizing than ever in Hungary, as the nation attempts to retain some semblance of its once great agricultural heritage, while remaining relevant in the highly competitive European trade market. It will soon be a decade since Hungary has joined the European Union, and within its agricultural sector, a game of “catch up” is still being played in comparison with other Western European nations, and most other new members countries that joined the EU at the same time as Hungary. The inability to draft function rural development policy that serves the needs of all sizes of production operations will continue to increase disparity within the agricultural sector, effectively marginalizing some of the most vulnerable citizens in the country. Hungary must do more to ensure that that value of domestically products agricultural products does not escape due to a lack of processing capacity, or an underdeveloped distribution infrastructure in Hungary. It is also the task of policy creators to acknowledge the damaging effects that the invasion of foreign owned supermarkets has had on both the consumption patterns in the country, and the corresponding loss of food heritage that such consumption patterns trigger.

Chapter 2 of this work was used to outline the development patterns of local food initiatives across the globe. Whether through direct markets, community supported agriculture initiatives, or labeling schemes and origin designations many incarnations of local food initiatives have been tested. It is during this current time that enough time has passed to look back in constructive reflection about where local food movements have brought us, and if indeed, they’ve delivered on any of the promises within the ideals they represent. Academic literature has helped highlight the danger of assumptions which lead to romanticized ideals about the local, and makes it clear that the local can quickly be manipulated to resemble the exact globalized food production systems that they are supposed to serve as alternatives too. Through the context of the local trap, it becomes easier to decipher what is strong and weak about various local food initiatives, setting up a useful rubric for judging initiatives and their capability to induce functional change within the food systems in a locale. The concepts of food citizenship and the imagined food community have also been highlighted to serve as tools for identifying the properties within local initiatives which signify deeply rooted ritualistic behaviors which go far beyond the simple mechanics of food production and distribution, and do much to foster the creation of conscious communities which remain embedded in place, reaching out far beyond a singular role as conscious food system facilitator. Within this chapter Budapest’s local food scene was also introduced, outlining similar patterns of exclusivity, pressure, and access that can be observed in the greater agricultural sector in Hungary.

Chapter 3 of this work was used to introduce the Szatyor association and their innovative approach to developing a functional and locally appropriate model of food consumption in Budapest. The history of the development of the

organization, and its metamorphosis into a successful model of a citizen driven local food initiative have been outlined. Insight into how Szatyor was able to define from within a system of food procurement and distribution that has grown to serve nearly 200 people within the Budapest community, and dozens of growers from the Budapest periphery was elaborated upon. The opinion of members was reflected in quotations that were gathered by means of a member survey conducted in the Spring of 2012.

Strategic Analysis of the Szatyor Model

The aim of this project was to develop success factors based on the Szatyor model that could be applied in future local food initiatives in Budapest and within the rest of Hungary. It was my aim to observe the Szatyor group from the inside out, and spend enough time with the group to see past the novelty of their local food experiment, and observe the deeper rooted bonds that kept the group moving forward where other local food movements have run out of steam. Listed below are success factors which have risen after attempting to distil the principles exemplified by Szatyor into a few basic foundational aspects of any local food initiative. I was able to identify these concepts after observing the different steps the Szatyor organization has taken to avoid falling victim to the “local trap,” to open the door for its members to engage in food citizenship, and to exemplify a vibrant imagined food community linked by more than common space and proximity.

Table 28: Summary: Szatyor Success Factors
Local has been defined from within the group, by the group members
Change is measureable based on a set of established goals
The organization is predicated on addressing the needs of all stakeholders equally
The system is self sustaining and has benefits within its community without being heavily reliant on outside support
Transparent communication is prioritized
Democracy drives changes within the system
Exclusion is minimized within the system
Growth is managed sensibly to protect integrity

Table 28: Synopsis Generated through Szatyor Case Study and Observation

Question 1: How has the local been defined in each situation, who is defining it?

Within the context of Szatyor’s model the local has been defined from within. Starting with the principles outlined by core group members, the Szatyor Association was able to define and redefine the local based on its original ambitions for accommodating the needs of food producers for which they were most concerned, and not using predefined assumptions that were not their own. As the group transitioned and attracted more attention from both members and producers, they’ve worked hard to maintain the integrity of their original model, while remaining open to the interjections of all new members. Szatyor has developed a self defined certification system which has allowed

them to satisfy their ambitions to certify ecologically and socially conscious production within being reliant on official certification bodies for approval.

Success Factor: Local has been defined from within, and appropriated based on the socio-cultural context, and the ambitions of the members who comprise the group. The definition of local in this case is flexible, but functional in guaranteeing the desired outcomes of ecologically and socially conscious procurement of food.

Question 2: What is changed by the system?

The Szatyor system creates a new means of linking marginalized producers and conscious consumers in Budapest. Producers now have access to retail opportunities without the pressures associated with traditional retail supply chains, or direct sales markets. Szatyor acts in a manner as close as possible to a neutral medium for exchange, securing fair prices for growers and members alike. Members have become less reliant on retail stores and certified direct sales markets because of the Szatyor model. Within the context of the Szatyor model, members have also been granted the opportunity to meet and engage with other conscious food consumers, as well as the persons responsible for producing the food they eat. All members have gained the opportunity for social engagement through food procurement. Citizens gain a renewed sense of belonging within their community, and the social bonds they create with other members and producers they come into contact with.

Success Factor: Change is measurable and embodied by each new member, and each additional producer who benefits from the system, and each product ordered through the system. The system is functional in creating change by providing a fair retail environment for producers, and an efficient and affordable means of means of procuring local food for members.

Question 3: Who is empowered by the process?

It is the option of producers to engage in working relationships with the Szatyor association, and it is expected that their continual partnerships has empowering effects on each producer, especially regarding access to a predominately neutral space of retail transaction. Producers get to showcase products in a space in which they will not be marginalized or manipulated. Szatyor members are empowered through the added social benefits that come with procurement, as well as the by participating in education and outreach events organized by the association. The Association is equally empowering to both members and food suppliers, and this balance is an integral part of the success of the organization.

Success Factor: The entire organization of the Szatyor system is based on the mutual needs and desires of members and producers, i.e. those who shape the food community. Within this agreement, the needs of specific individuals are not prioritized, and a holistic approach to the concerns of producers and consumer's alike are taken into account.

Question 4: What is the effect on the locale?

The effect of Szatyor on the Budapest community is multifaceted. Beyond the system of local food distribution facilitated by the system created by Szatyor, the work of the group to solve problems that have relevance within the larger agricultural sector in Hungary should come with great acknowledgement. The Szatyor group has created a local level solution that is beneficial to both citizens and food producers within this locale, without the need of substantial policy adjustment, political will, or financial backing. The locale is enhanced socially by the conscious food community and the knowledge regarding food systems that is spread both inside and outside their community.

Success Factor: The Szatyor Association has created a self sustaining and efficient system of conscious food procurement and knowledge transfer without relying on a large sum of outside financial resources, extensive political support, or a large technical infrastructure. The system does not only accomplish its primary task of creating an alternative system of food procurement, but also secondary tasks of spreading knowledge, raising awareness and transferring skills.

Question 5: How do the stakeholders relate, communicate, and interact with each other?

Communication is multifaceted within the organization. Members have the opportunity to interact face to face at least once a week, or through periodic electronic communication. The organization works to send out weekly email messages and monthly newsletters to keep members informed about any updates in service, new producer relationship, or any other changes within the Association. Members are encouraged to express feedback either in person, or through electronic communication, and feedback is expected to be addressed in a timely manner. The management team maintains a close connection with the producer base to ensure that orders are placed accurately and that transactions are completed successfully a majority of the time.

Success Factor: The Association maintains a transparent communication network that includes both face to face, and electronic communication options. Communication is timely, but not overbearing, and varying communication opportunities exist. The natural orientation of the organization encourages interaction between members.

Question 6: What is the decision making process?

Major Szatyor decisions are made democratically with the input of each of the core members of the group. All Szatyor members have a say in determining what producers and products are featured within the model, and have the right to make any suggestions in which they feel would improve the overall efficiency of the organization.

Success Factor: Democratic processes are utilized to alter the mechanics of the system. All members have an equal say in the proceedings.

Question 7: Who and what can be excluded from the process?

The Szatyor model attempts to be as inclusive as possible while having the capacity to manage system growth. Producers that can not comply with Szatyor certification expectations are excluded, and there are no strict demands set on members which would encourage exclusion. Some citizens who can not afford to pay for products as priced within the system may be excluded, but this factor has been taken into account and plans to address this issue in the future are being developed.

Success Factor: There is minimal chance for exclusion within the system, unless one is unaware of Szatyor's existence, or living outside of a sensible proximity to make pick up feasible.

Question 8: How can the system develop and transform?

The system has been designed to be flexible, and developed with stabile, sustained growth in mind. Szatyor has not grown beyond its means, or in a way that would jeopardize their being able to maintain the integrity of their core principles. The growth process has been well calculated, and a multifaceted analysis of each step in their advancement has been undertaken before conducting any major changes. Szatyor's ability to manage the addition of new members was done with its human capacity to manage more orders in mind. Growth was not immediately

touted as the best option for the group, and slow, but sustained growth was determined to be the best option for the long term success of the group. Growth and additional features will remain possible in the future, but will not happen until the human capacity to manage growth is ensured.

Success Factor: Szatyor has managed growth sensibly, and with long term sustainability in mind. The Association has avoided opportunities to grown beyond its means, and other risks which would jeopardize the system.

Szatyor and Avoiding the Local Trap

A major criticism levied using the framework of the local trap is that romanticism blinds local food movements from their inability to deliver the desired outcomes in which they expect after making assumptions about the inherent values within proximity based systems. In the beginning of Chapter 3, Szatyor’s mission was outlined. The local trap framework encourages a deeply introspective look at the expectations and deliverables of local food approaches. Reflecting back to Szatyor’s key objectives, its possible to confirm Szatyor’s ability to serve the purpose it has aimed for within the Budapest community.

Szatyor Goal	Indication of Accomplishment
Conscious Consumption	A system of procuring local food is utilized by on average about 40-60 members per week.
Bring members closer together	Pick up days have turned into lively social outings which promote solidarity, the first two community events within Szatyor's new public space were well attended
Encourage greater concern with citizen ability to effect food systems	Enthusiasm within the Szatyor group has encouraged a culture of volunteering in honor of the group initiative
Closer connection to producers	Members have met producers in person during event days, and farm/production site visits have been described as some of the favorite activities of members
Convenience	Members have expressed a general satisfaction with Szatyor processes, and many the enhanced experience when compared with traditional shopping
Form a conscious food community	Szatyor members have worked together to create a new space which will expand their ability to foster future group interaction
Education, awareness, knowledge transfer	Szatyor's communal space will expand the group's capacity to host events, workshops, and educational activities

Table 29: Szatyor Goals and Proof of Accomplishment (Synopsis generated through case study analysis)

A major argument inherent within the concept of the local trap is the tendency of local food movements to be exclusive. The Szatyor Association has designed itself to be accommodating to producers who are the most marginalized within traditional retail chains, and direct marketing activities. Szatyor neural retail space places little to no pressure on small scale producers to feature products, and is predicated upon returning as much of the sale value of products to the producer as possible. This flexible relationship contains risk that is managed by the Association, as it is enduring a slight cost (both financial and time-based) in honor of giving a producer the opportunity to earn a stable income. Such generosity has become common practice within the group, and exclusion issues can only be raised with regard to members of the Budapest community who can not afford to pay for products that are featured within the Szatyor system. This problem has been identified, and plans to address this in the future as volunteer and work for system credit programs are being considered.

Beyond exclusion, the local trap concept warns that the local is comprised of complex social, cultural and environmental content. Szatyor's openness and transparency allow it avoid socio-cultural conflicts within the group, and in relations with producers, and the high level of face to face interaction between members encourages exchanges which foster feelings of camaraderie, solidarity, and mutual knowing; further decreasing the likelihood of divergence within the group. The local within the organization is a product of the group; local was defined by the members themselves, and not guaranteed or certified by an outside organization. Members know that they have the ability to help influence the definition of Szatyor local if they choose, further lowering the probability of an inappropriate, or incompatible governing definition of what type of food procurement system the organization is aiming to represent.

Szatyor and Food Citizenship

The Szatyor that exists to day was literally and figuratively built from the ground up by its current member base. The inspiration for the group, the design and development of its mechanisms, and the physical space in which it currently inhabits are all products of the efforts of individuals who are visible and active to this day. The Szatyor Association shows fundamental signs of creating opportunities to express food citizenship for its members. Citizenship is fostered by the ability to acquaint oneself with their surroundings, both the people in their vicinity and the complex processes regarding agricultural practices in their location, effectively bringing people within a location closer together and bonding them with the lands in which they inhabit. The ritualistic behavior and interactions that are encouraged within the Szatyor context, the volunteering, the community outreach events, the social exchanges, facilitate bonds that link people to people in groups, and concurrently bind these groups to place. The effects resonate at the "extra-local" level as members of this local food community have the opportunity to view first hand the fruits of their labor, whether it be in a cooked meal within the new pick up local, or in the satisfaction of seeing products one suggested to be featured stocked in permanent inventory. No one Szatyor member is more important than the next, and the say of all members is respected equally in discussions. While Szatyor members live scattered throughout Budapest, on "Szatyor" days they find a common home in the pick-up spaces, sharing anecdotes, exchanging stories, and while all basking in the communal space that belongs to them.

Szatyor: The Imagined Food Community Personified

The Szatyor Association has created an Imagined Community centered on the ideals of conscious food consumption which is personified in both the relationships that are fostered by the orientation of the group, and the habitation of the spaces they occupy during pick-up days and events. Although Szatyor's own space has only been a part of the initiative for a short time, all of the spaces they have been occupying up to this, whether it be empty garage, warehouse, artist studio or anywhere in between, housed the individuals that needed no tangible space to signify that a community was present. The foundation for the imagined community of Szatyor was laid by its core members, who persevered during difficult times to keep the original motives for starting the organization going, no matter how time or resource constrained the organize had become. What their efforts have morphed into a space to be inhabited, both in the literal and imagined sense that can be patronized by all Association members within the Budapest community; essentially, an imagined community with an open door that needs no key for entry, only time and forged relationships. Time is essential to gain entry to the imagined food community fostered by Szatyor. Time is required to get to know the other Szatyor members, to have a chance to learn about the unique products that have been mainstays within the inventory for years, and to remain caught up on new products which cycle through. Time

is required to attend a farm visit, or workshop, or member event, and to foster the relationships that really condone a sense of belonging in any member.

The procedural aspects associated with being a Szatyor member may do much to establish a comfortable ritual of ordering, traveling to the pick up space, collecting goods, and heading home, but the community notions are fostered by the individuals present at each step during this process both behind the scenes and in real life on collection days. The community that results, a community within the larger Budapest community, links person to person regardless of actual residence address. The community that has developed around the Szatyor group, the collective interest in the long-term stability of the organization, the collective interest in sustaining the group *for the group*, members and producers alike, is what gives Szatyor so much promise while attempting to be a small beacon of light in an agricultural sector otherwise cloaked in darkness.

Szatyor's Impact in Budapest, and Resonance in Hungary

This alternative shopping experience is the forerunner of future shopping methods and the only viable way of the sustainability. The direct shopping opportunity from the growers is good for all stakeholders. It's practical, with no unnecessary transportation and storage issues, the products are fresh and the food is healthy. Szatyor is exemplary that is already has lots of followers throughout the country. Szatyor is very innovative and ready for change. We have to prepare for a big interest for this kind of shopping experience.

-Szatyor Member

I'd much rather see people turning to self organized groups, like consumer groups, I think raising awareness about that, by definition it's a non commercial approach because its sort of, taking over the logistical work of supermarket chains and organizing it for yourself. But, to me there is so many benefits in that approach, either a fresh market where people go week by week, but even more these consumer groups. If the purpose of producing organic food and marketing it is to raise awareness about environmental issues, which quite frankly a lot of this is the point, the mission of organic farmers, is to get more and more to be conscious consumers, then those forums are some of the most dynamic in being able to get people to think about actively participating in something that is not so simple or routine. Something that they have to make a conscious choice to go out of their routine, to a fixed point, to a fixed place, out of routine, not on their normal shopping run. That act in itself is a positive action, the positive action is what makes groups think about what they are doing.

-Hungarian Organic Farmer

Szatyor has organized a system of conscious food consumption that is able to handle about 60 orders per week. From the full scale perspective within the great Hungarian agricultural sector, 60 food bags per week will not end disparity, poverty or kick start an agricultural revolution. What is important to extract from the Szatyor model is that citizens in Hungary are responsive to ecologically and socially just food procurements systems, that while perhaps not offering the same low prices and one stop shopping convenience of supermarkets, offer a differentiated procurement experienced that is enriched with social cohesions, camaraderie and solidarity. Szatyor's successes have gained acknowledgement far outside the city limits of Budapest. Similar initiatives are sprouting up within Budapest's districts and in communities throughout the country. Szatyor's model is being recreated and localized throughout Hungary. The Szatyor Association has taken an active role in providing information and guidance to other groups who have reached out for their assistance.

The cure for Hungary's agricultural sector will not come with the calculated recreation of Szatyor's in each city or town, but through the creation of location specific food procurements models that pay close attention to the unique choices that Szatyor has made during its development. The success factors exemplified by Szatyor can be utilized as useful guidelines for future local food initiatives in Hungary. Defining an "extra-local" version of the local that satisfies a group's ideals for what they desire out of a food procurement system is a firm basis for starting any future

local food initiatives. Being self-reliant without requiring complex technical support or a large financial investment is also a key step within the process. Finding an orientation that creates a space for everyone, taking into account the needs of many while giving full representation to the long term needs of all individuals involved within a system will guarantee sustained participation.

Local food initiatives should be acknowledged within the greater policy spectrum in Hungary, and lauded for doing the hard work that neither CAP subsidies nor National Rural Development Strategies can accomplish; truly encouraging citizens to bond together to solve issues within their own locale. What local food initiatives need most is minimal support during their most formative years. Szatyor has been able to forge through periods of crisis through the strength and resilience of core members whose bonds went beyond a common interest in food. It's not expected that food initiatives in all locations will be held together by such a strong core group, and this is where it is necessary of outside help to assist in filling the gaps when systems begin to crumble. Local food initiatives are poised to gain steam in Hungary. If they have the space to develop on their own organically in different locations, while being assisted in minimal ways with permits to use space, assistance with human labor capacity, and perhaps the creation of a new tax definition which makes neutral retail transactions actually feasible, the deterioration of the agricultural sector can be reversed, community by community, grower by grower, citizen by citizen.

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Appendix 1

Szatyor Questionnaire

Név

Foglalkozás:

Lakhely(kerület/cím)

Családi állapot: Házast/egyedülálló/élvált

Vásárlási státusz: Saját fogyasztásra vagy barátok/család részére vásárolsz?

- 1) When did you become a member of the Szatyor Association, and how did you first find out about the group?

Mikor lettél tagja a Szatyor Egyesületnek és hogyan talákoztál először a csoporttal?

- 2) Have you ever participated in a group food purchasing initiative before Szatyor?

A Szatyor Egyesület előtt talákoztál / részt vettél- e valaha hasonló „közösségi” vásárlásban?

- 3) What were your main motivations for joining Szatyor?

Mi volt a legfőbb motivációd arra, hogy csatlakozz a Szatyorhoz?

- 3) How does being a Szatyor member compare with buying food from other outlets? (Supermarket, ABC Shop, Farmers' Market, Organic Market?)

Mi a különbség a Szatyorbolt és más élelmiszer vásárlási lehetőségek között? (Pl. Szupermarket, ABC boltok, Farmers' piac, BioPiacok?)

- 4) How much of the food that you purchase per week comes (%) from the Szatyor group?

Általában hány százalékát teszik ki az összes heti élelmiszer vásárlásaidnak a Szatyorbolt által beszerzett élelmiszerek ?

- 5) Are you pleased with the selection of products and produce offered? What are your favorite products, and what else would you like to see featured?

Elégedett vagy azokkal a termékekkel/élelmiszerekkel amelyek a Szatyorbolt által beszerezhetőek? Melyek a kedvenc termékeid és mi az amit szívesen látnál a választék között a jövőben?

- 6) Do you feel like you have enough information about where the food products in Szatyor originate, along with the growers and producers who provide products? What is the best way to give this information to you?

Elég információd van arról, hogy a kínált élelmiszerek és termékek honnan származnak/hol termelik őket? Mi a leghasznosabb információforrás számodra?

- 7) How do you decide what items you order from Szatyor as opposed to what you buy from other outlets?

Hogyan döntöd el, hogy mely termékeket veszed meg a Szatyorbolton keresztül és melyeket más boltokban?

- 9) In what other locations are you making food purchases?

Milyen más helyszíneken és boltokban veszel még élelmiszereket?

- 8) Are you pleased with the prices of products in Szatyor? What products do you question the price of? Do you compare Szatyor prices with those in supermarkets?

Elégedett vagy Szatyorbolton keresztül elérhető árakkal? Mely termékeknek az árait kérdőjelezted meg? Összehasonlítod-e a Szatyorbolt árakat más boltok áraival?

- 9) Would you pay a bit more to have products delivered to your residence?

Fizetnél azért többet, ha ezeket a termékeket házhoz szállítanák?

- 10) Are you pleased with the current setup of the Szatyor website, along with how ordering and pick-up days are organized? What do you think could make this process better?

Elégedett vagy a Szatyorboltjelenlegi weboldalával, a megrendelés módjával és a „pick – up” napok időpontjaival? Mit gondolsz, mivel lehetne ezeken javítani?

- 11) Is there anything else that you think could be done to improve Szatyor and make the association more convenient and member-friendly?

Van bármely más, amiről úgy gondolsz hogy javítani lehetne a Szatyor közösségen és ezt a társulást még kényelmesebbé és tag „baráttá” tenni?

- 12) Have you ever attended a Szatyor event (farm visit, discussion night, educational event?) If so, please describe. What other types of events would you be interested in?
Elmentél valaha bármely Szatyor Egyesület által szervezett rendezvényre (farm látogatásra, megbeszélésre, vagy oktatási célú rendezvényre)? Milyen más jellegű rendezvények érdekelnének?
- 13) Have you ever volunteered with Szatyor? Would you be interested in volunteering more in the future?
Önkénteskedtél – e valaha a Szatyor Egyesületnél? Önkénteskednél – e bármikor a jövőben?
- 14) How well do you know other Szatyor members? Would you like to get to know more of the participants?
Mennyire jól ismered a Szatyor Egyesület tagjait? Szeretnél megismerni más tagokat is?
- 15) What does Szatyor represent to you currently? What are your thoughts on Szatyor’s development, and changes that may occur in the future?
Mit reprezentál Szatyor bevásárló közösség jelenleg neked? Mit gondolsz a Szatyorfejlődéséről és a jövőbeli szükséges változásokról?
- 16) Are you aware of the steps Szatyor has taken to improve the professionalism of its operations? If so, could you explain.
Tudsz-e azokról a lépésekről, amelyeket a Szatyor Egyesület annak érdekében tett, hogy működése még professzionálisabb legyen? Ha igen, kérlek részletezd alább.