

**FINDING COMMON GROUND:  
THE FAIR TRADE AND LOCAL FOOD MOVEMENTS IN CANADA**

by

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A Thesis presented to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

of the University of Manitoba

Department of Canadian Studies/ Études canadiennes

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

**MASTER OF ARTS**

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## **Abstract**

A report on social consequences of neoliberal trade policies and the commodification of food, and the international efforts of small farmers to counteract the worst of these consequences.

Social justice movements like fair trade and local food have emerged with the aim to expose the direct impacts on food producers. These movements co-exist while achieving their respective and mutual goals.

Themes explored are: the fight against neoliberal globalization and mainstream trade, labour practices (workers' rights, fair wages, safe work environments,) sustainability (environmental practices, food security,) community and economic development and consumer awareness of aforementioned issues. Although these are global issues, close attention is paid to recent mobilization efforts in Canada and Manitoba among small food producers, farmers' unions and related non-government organizations.

## **Acknowledgments**

Firstly, thank you to my advisor, Dr. Priscilla Walton.

To my committee members, Dr. Michael Dorland and Dr. Dana Medoro- thank you for your thorough questions and supportive feedback. I look forward to our continuing discussions.

Thank you to the director of the Maîtrise en Études canadiennes program at Saint-Boniface University, Lise Gaboury-Diallo.

Thank you Mom, Dad and my husband, Dave.

Alice Felawka, Niki Ashton, Emma Peacocke, Tanya Van Strien and Rhonda Hinther- thank you for all your support.

## **Dedication**

To my grandmother, Alice Felawka, who was denied education because of her gender.

To those whose work and suffering is hidden – may we shine the light on injustice and put people before profits.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Abstract.....</b>	i
<b>Acknowledgments.....</b>	ii
<b>Dedication.....</b>	iii
<b>Table of Contents.....</b>	iv
<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	1
<b>2. Origins and Principles of the Fair Trade and Local Food Movements.....</b>	3
2.1. Historical context of the fair trade movement in general and in Canada.....	3
2.2. Historical context of the local food movement in general and in Canada.....	10
<b>3. Literature Review.....</b>	14
3.1. Fair Trade.....	15
3.2. Local Food.....	24
3.3. Social Movements.....	31
<b>4. Comparison Section: Common Goals of the Fair Trade and Local Food Movements.....</b>	37
4.1. Criticisms of the movements working together.....	38
4.2. Theories in common and ways the movements can be studied.....	41
4.3. The fight against neoliberal globalization and mainstream trade.....	43
4.4. Labour practices (workers' rights, fair wages, safe work environments).....	49
4.5. Sustainability (environmental practices, food security).....	57
4.6. Community and economic development.....	61
<b>5. Consumer Awareness and Public Involvement, Organizations and Events.....</b>	63
5.1. Consumer involvement.....	63
5.2. Labelling initiatives.....	67
5.3. Fair trade and local food organizations, outreach and events in Canada and Manitoba.....	68
<b>6. Conclusion: Lessons Learned and Future Work .....</b>	76
<b>Works Cited.....</b>	80



## **1. Introduction**

With campaigns such as Make Poverty History, awareness is growing of the injustices that take place in international trade practices. Average citizens recognize the counter-productiveness of international aid from the so-called first world if, as in some cases, trade tariffs imposed on developing countries cancel out this aid. This, and the desire to see producers receive fair wages, became the engine behind the fair trade movement. In the era of globalization and lightning-speed communication it is becoming impossible to ignore one's global neighbours.

While thinking globally has become a popular refrain, thinking locally has become a priority for many. With buzzwords like "Go Green," there is a desire to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to combat climate change. One way of reducing emissions is through changes to transportation habits, so relying on local food and products to reduce food miles is an important way of achieving this. Also, maintaining food security through a stable food supply is easier if a population is self-sustaining and reliant on food that is produced in the community. With these goals in mind, there have been various efforts to encourage more local trade.

Focusing my attention on the realities in Canada, my research will investigate the fair trade and local food movements. There is a misconception that the two movements have conflicting goals or even hinder each others' success. I will show how two social movements can co-exist while achieving their respective and mutual goals in the arena of trade justice. Common focuses include environmental practices (sustainability), labour practices (workers' rights, fair wages, safe work environments) and economic impacts (growing the local economy and benefiting citizens of the region, at home or abroad.) The term 'domestic fair trade' is used when the traditional principles of international fair trade are applied to local production of commodities. My research will look at ways that fair trade

regulations are being encouraged in long-distance trade as well as in local trade. I will examine how governments, local organizations, producers and businesses, individuals, and consumers are all involved. I will look at ways to further raise awareness about and to encourage changes to the global food system through both fair and local trade in Canada.

The research methodology will include document and data analysis for preliminary research to achieve a base knowledge of the issues. I will include publications from international organizations such as Oxfam and Fairtrade and articles from academic journals. I will explore commodity fetishism, comparative advantage, neoliberalism and ways of studying social movements. I will also include information from Manitoba organizations such as Fair Trade Manitoba, 100 Mile Manitoba and the Harvest Moon Society.

My first section will begin with background information and definitions, which will be the historical context of the fair trade movement in general and in Canada, followed by a historical outline of the local food movement in general and in Canada.

The next section, the literature review, will be thematically organized: first, the fair trade movement, second, the local food movement and finally, social movements in general. I will examine various authors' works to introduce my topic. I will analyze the literature and research question. I will discuss trends and developments identify conflicts and incompatibilities. In doing this, I will attempt to highlight the gap in knowledge which my research aims to fill and find new ways of looking at the topic.

Next, the comparison section will identify commonalities in practices and in goals between the fair trade and local food movements. How can the two social movements co-exist while achieving their respective and mutual goals? Several arenas will be discussed to find such commonalities, such as labour practices, environmental and food supply sustainability, community and economic development

and consumer awareness of aforementioned issues. What theories apply to both movements? I will look at international and Canadian organizations, organized events, and challenges that promote public involvement in these social movements.

To conclude, I will explore what lessons have been learned, what future project possibilities might look like, and how to create stronger alliances within the ethical consumption movements in Canada. What more can we do as Canadians for our local and international neighbours?

## **2. Origins and Principles of the Fair Trade and Local Food Movements**

### **2.1 Historical context of the fair trade movement in general and in Canada**

Industrial capitalism in the 19th century started to spread through European empires to other parts of the world. Trading with rival empires was prohibited and much of this trade was founded and maintained by military force. The goal of this foreign trade was to enrich the colonial home countries, like Britain, Spain, Portugal, France and Holland (Ransom 9.)

The theory of comparative advantage emerged, explaining that every region of the world has an economic advantage. A 19th century example is the United States growing cotton, selling it to Britain and buying it back as cloth. It was a logical arrangement because America had the land and climate for growing cotton but not many urban labourers. Meanwhile, Britain had the coal, the steam engines and the industrial city workers. But comparatively, the advantage was not equal. The value-added product brings more profit than the raw material; relative to the cotton cloth, the raw cotton (picked by slave labour) sold for little (Ransom 12).

After the First World War, there was a decline in price for raw materials (copper, cotton, tin, rubber, wheat) compared to manufactured goods. This was because of the global recession, the Great Depression which lowered the demand for goods in the Northern hemisphere. In the Southern

hemisphere, production capacity was growing but the markets were already saturated. To counteract this, there were attempts to control international markets in various ways. Limiting production and stockpiling primary goods were tactics used to raise prices. The result was the opposite of what was desired; higher prices meant that alternative and cheaper operations were sought out, so production kept going up and the market got more competitive (Fridell 25).

The Great Depression of the 1930s came about in a time when governments were generally hands-off with internal national economies. The 1940s recovery was aided by government spending and more spending, on World War II and employment programs (Ransom 13). The second World War reduced commodity production and so prices went up. After the war, states got involved in rebuilding capitalist pursuits to ensure stability in the world trading system through restrictive economic practices. Through the negotiated Bretton Woods system, the Allied powers “sought to create a new international order premised on the objective of establishing a regulated international monetary system to provide a stable basis for a liberal international trading system” (Fridell 27). The United Nations created a study group on trade, and the Havana Charter put in place interventionary “buffer stocks” instead of restriction of production like in earlier strategies. The goal was to study commodities and to develop control schemes that met several goals at once: create reasonable prices, make sure global demand was met and make sure that the most efficient producers would be allowed to increase their production (Fridell 27).

When prices dropped again in the 1950s, new study groups had to be formed and old ones reactivated to deal with the decline. The agreements were not generally advantageous to Southern producers. Dumping practices and protectionist policies of Europe and North America prevented higher prices and opportunities in the South. Most Southern countries followed Northern models of organizing (Fridell 28). Exponents of dependency theory and world systems theory argue that unfair trade is “due

largely to unequal exchange relations stemming from the legacy of colonization, which had compelled Third World nations to develop in a manner dependent on the export of a few primary commodities to markets in the North. As a result, Third World nations were reduced to a state of dependence on First World countries for technology, capital, and markets, which restricted and distorted their national development" (Fridell 32).

Working within the United Nations conference in 1964, Southern producers continued to attempt to pressure people in the North to reconfigure the economic situation through more compensation, aid and fairer trade. Northern tariff rates on processed and unprocessed goods were rising and being applied in an unequal manner. They also wished to see direct subsidies given to producers instead of financial aid from the International Monetary Fund, to ensure fair prices for raw materials. A slogan that is still used today – "Trade Not Aid" - was born in these demands. The resolutions were voted down at the UN Conference and the only action that came of it was further study of the problem of unequal exchange (Fridell 30).

During the 1950s and 1960s, industrializing newly-independent European colonies became a priority in order to speed up the expansion of international markets, for the supposed benefit of all. 'Infant industries' in the South were set up with the support of government import substitution programs, which encouraged local production for local consumption rather than focusing on exports. These industries were protected against foreign competition by tariffs (Ransom 13). For some countries, it worked fairly well, and places like Japan, Hong Kong and South Korea produced for world markets and became export-oriented. For other countries in Africa and Latin America, it did not work very well. Trying to supply local markets, weak and insufficient industries were created that consumed large subsidies, until the subsidies expired (Ransom 14). The global economy continued to grow while countries in the global South remained dependent on raw commodities produced for world markets,

like cotton. Relying on international commodity markets proved disastrous for these countries.

As Ransom explains,

A frost kills the coffee harvest in Brazil; a war disrupts copper supplies from Zambia; a speculator attempts to 'corner' the silver market: all such events cause sharp fluctuations in prices and unequalled opportunities for profit – or loss. The effect is compounded by vast amounts of money switching in and out of commodity markets in London, New York or Chicago. Even larger sums of speculative money swirl around the currencies in which world trade is transacted. So the soundest financial advice is always to avoid commodity markets like the plague – unless you can afford to lose your money. Today, the poorest countries least able to afford it are the most heavily reliant on world commodity markets for their very survival (16).

This contributes to many of these countries going into debt and being forced to participate in poverty alleviation programs, a sort of bankruptcy administration. In order to pay back debts to creditors, part of the process requires the export of available commodities to earn foreign currency to help their debt load. When several debtors must do this at the same time, the market is flooded with commodities and prices drop. The producers of raw materials receive even less profit for their exports (Ransom 16). The entities that benefit from and advocate for this 'free' market system are transnational corporations and banks. Ironically, these corporations receive a lot of government assistance, such as tax breaks, subsidies and bailouts.

In this capitalist system, negotiation between producers and consumers occurs through the market, and not by direct contact. For consumers, purchasing goods is quite often an abstract exercise, without any connection to the human beings who produce the goods. This fetishism of commodities, as outlined by Karl Marx in the nineteenth century, hides the inequalities between low-income workers in the South who produce the goods and the capitalist Northerners who consume these goods. The inequalities are very clear: The high income countries in the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) have a life expectancy of 78 years and have an average Gross Domestic

Product per capita of \$29,000. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the lowest-income countries have a life expectancy of 64 years with an average GDP per capita of \$4,054. In sub-Saharan Africa, the poorest region in the world, life expectancy is 46 years and the average GDP per capita is \$1,790 (Fridell 5). Even richer Southern nations, such as Brazil and Mexico, that are relatively better off still have inequalities within their populations.

## The Case of Coffee

Coffee is the champion of the fair trade movement. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was a global coffee crisis. This crisis caused coffee-producing countries to suffer economically and there are after-effects that persist today. Countries in Africa, Asia and Central and South America dependent on exports had to cut spending and citizens suffered the consequences in the areas of health, education and general well-being (Fair Trade Manitoba 2:1). There are 27 countries\* that produce Fair Trade Certified Coffee and 231 producer organizations.

A small number of multinational corporations rule the coffee marketplace, even though small family farms grow more than 50% of coffee. Many of these small producers live in poverty while the companies continue to make huge profits. In some cases, the gross domestic product of coffee-export dependent countries is less than the yearly sales of the corporations (Fair Trade Manitoba 2:1). This is a clear indication of unfair trade.

Large companies dominate the coffee roasting business and control the way business is done. The four biggest companies, Kraft, Procter & Gamble, Nestle and Sara Lee, along with Tchibo, a German company, combined, buy nearly half of the world's coffee beans (Fair Trade Manitoba 2:2). In

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\*Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroon, Columbia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, East Timor, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Laos PDR, Mexico, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Rwanda, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, Venezuela, Zambia.

this system, according to fair trade advocates, the producer receives little of the final price while the corporations make huge profits. Fair Trade labelled coffee aims to be an alternative to the mainstream market.

### **The beginning of the 20th century so-called fair trade movement**

Because of the unequal conditions outlined in OECD reports, people started wondering if trade could benefit the global South instead of working against it while promoting human rights, environmental sustainability, minimum price guarantees and other principles of fair trade.

The basic principles of fair trade are to create long-term and stable relationships between growers and roasters, to guarantee fair wages for workers, ensure that farmers are guaranteed a fair price for beans, secure some advance payment before harvest, and finally fair trade includes a commitment for ecological sustainable development (Simpson and Rapone 2).

According to Gavin Fridell, author of “Fair Trade Coffee,”

Broadly speaking, the groups involved in this movement have shared two central objections. First, to pressure Northern countries to eliminate what has been perceived as 'unfair' protectionist regulations in the North. Second, to demand the creation of international cooperative mechanisms to regulate the world market and ensure 'fair' prices and labour conditions for commodity producers and workers in the South (23).

There was an initial wave of the fair trade movement that occurred in the 1940s until the 1980s that emphasized fairer trading instead of giving aid monies. The focus was on creating an alternative world trading system (Fridell 23). In the second phase, a more market-friendly approach was taken and the focus was on working within conventional markets and having direct dealings with multinational corporations (Fridell 24).

Since the 1970s, aid agencies and partners have found ways to connect with Southern

craftspeople and bring their wares to the North. There have also been independence movements, like in Nicaragua, that worked to bring awareness regarding trade inequities and to raise funds through coffee sales (Ransom 22).

In North America, fair trade started with the trading of handicrafts between religious groups and Southern producers. In the 1940s, the American branch of the Mennonite Central Committee started trading with producers in the South. Also, Self-Help Crafts (now Ten Thousand Villages) and SERV International bought handicrafts from European World War II survivors. Those organizations eventually began focusing on economic empowerment of developing countries (Fair Trade Manitoba 1:1).

In Europe, fair trade was beginning to gain ground in the 1960s with Dutch OXFAM shops selling goods from cooperatives in developing countries. To raise funds and awareness, solidarity movements were created with countries like Nicaragua starting in the 1970s (Ransom 22). The 1980s saw “World Shops” opening in the United Kingdom and Switzerland and by the middle of the decade, there were around one thousand of these shops in operation (Fair Trade Manitoba 1:1).

Fair trade certification and labelling came into existence on an international level starting in Holland under Max Havelaar in the 1980s. This new system brought some of the niche products that were previously only sold in specialty shops into more mainstream stores (Fair Trade Manitoba 1:1).

### **The fair trade movement comes to North America, Canada**

The organization Equal Exchange brought fair the trade market to the United States and used the Dutch model, Max Havelaar. They used standards and development analysis from the Dutch model: worker ownership and control. With the creation of Equal Exchange by social justice activists, marketing and support for fair trade goods came from Lutheran and Catholic churches and clubs (Simpson and Rapone 3).

In the United States in the 1990s, fair trade selling started off with products that were sold

through community-based co-op stores. Then, people could buy products directly from Latin American sellers through catalogs like "Pueblo to People." There also began wholesale buying clubs in churches, campuses, then on to coffee shops and small grocery stores (Simpson and Rapone 2). Now you can find fair trade coffee at mainstream coffee shops and supermarkets, yet it remains a niche product.

Fair trade products in Canada are still a small portion of overall trade, and even coffee, the biggest fair trade commodity, was only 1% of the overall coffee market in 2008. However, fair trade sales in Canada might be growing as rapidly as by 50% per year (Fair Trade Manitoba 1:1).

## **2.2. Historical context of the local food movement in general and in Canada**

Modern agriculture as it is today has been evolving since European colonization. As conquering and colonizing occurred in Africa, Asia and the Americas, all types of cultural indigenous systems were destroyed. This included local means of producing food, which were replaced by crops desired by the colonizers. Plantations also replaced local crops, so the food or fibre could be shipped back to Europe (Norberg-Hodge et al. 5). The best land was used for the colonizers' purposes, while food production for local consumption was moved to poorer quality land. It was not just colonized countries that were feeling the effects of such agricultural "progress," but the global North as well. The enclosure movement in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England and Wales privatized land that was once common. Traditionally, people had been able to farm and hunt on this public land, but this was no longer the case once landowners took over public land for their own benefit (Norberg-Hodge et al. 5).

This agricultural progress continued with the Industrial Revolution, where people were drawn into urban centres and farther from food sources. The economic viability of rural areas was greatly diminished. With the development of more farm equipment and machines, fewer workers were required

while farms kept getting bigger and more heavily-subsidized by governments, a process that continues today (Norberg-Hodge et al. 8). A lot of agribusinesses are vertically-integrated, meaning the same company can be processor, distributor, retailer (buying, selling, packaging the food), and they can be involved in every aspect of growing, etc. (Norberg-Hodge et al. 9). Farmers get little profit, while the marketers, brokers, and other middle-men get the most.

Now, fewer and fewer people farm than ever before. In eighteenth-century England, about 40 percent of the population was engaged in agriculture, by 1900 it was 8 percent, and one hundred years later, it is 2.5 percent (Norberg-Hodge et al. 6). For the six founding countries of the European Common Agricultural Policy, there are about 7 million farmers today, compared to 22 million in 1957 (Norberg-Hodge et al. 6). In the United States, there were 6.8 million working farms in 1935 and only half as many by 1964. Between 1964 and 1997 in the United States, there had been a loss of over one million farms (Norberg-Hodge et al. 7).

For a country that is extremely productive agriculturally, Canada does not have a large number of farms and farm numbers continue to decline. There are fewer and fewer farms but they get bigger and bigger. In Canada, by 1996 there were only one quarter of the farms than there were during the Second World War (Weiss 1). That means three quarters of the Canadian farming population have been lost.

In the global market, food is reduced to a commodity. Small family-owned farms in the North are going under while farmers in the South increasingly become landless by removal. The food supply is controlled by corporations and government policies demand higher exports, lower trade barriers, more pesticides and more Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) (Norberg-Hodge et al. 1).

Agricultural transnational corporations have control over the global food economy and that makes it difficult to survive as a small-scale farmer. So, on a large scale, Canada exports the food items

that are produced on a large scale (grain and pork, for example) and imports other food that is produced on a large scale elsewhere (various kinds of produce, orange juice, etc.) Even if Canada has the climate to grow the food it is importing, it is cheaper to bring it in.

The fact that food has been reduced to just another commodity has people worried about the sustainability of such a system. A locally-based food system would seem like a better way to assure food security and sovereignty.

### **Comparing Global to Local**

The global food system is vast, relies increasingly on monoculture practices, employs more and more chemicals, and its production is targeted at and for global markets. It is capital- and energy-intensive, with big machinery and long-distance transport necessary to meet the goal of efficiency: the most production for the least amount of labour (Norberg-Hodge et al. 3). Technologies are often applied even if they don't match the ecological and social landscape of the region (Norberg-Hodge et al. 4). In short, technology and market forces are what mostly drive the global food system.

In local food systems, instead of following the singular global model, there are locally-adapted food systems. Local food initiatives are popping up around the world, growing out of traditional cultures. The South still contains thousands of indigenous systems (Norberg-Hodge et al. 4).

### **Food miles and GHGs**

Another of the main factors that led to the creation of the local food movement was the discovery of the enormous amount of transportation that takes place to sustain average eating habits. Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are emitted during transport by the burning of the fossil fuels used by the transport vehicles. These gases have a negative impact on air quality and climate change, and ultimately human health (Xuereb 4). The term “food miles” is used to describe the distance that food is shipped

from its origin to its final destination. The term was first used in a report by Sustain UK, a British non-profit organization (Xuereb 4).

The Leopold Centre for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University came out with the distances that typical food items travel, anywhere from 1500 to 3000 miles<sup>1</sup> (Smith and MacKinnon 3). Between 1980 and 2001, when the Leopold Centre study was published, there had been an increase of 25% in the distance that food traveled from its origin to the homes of consumers, and this distance is increasing (Smith and MacKinnon 3). These distances were only calculated for whole foods that travel within North America; the study does not account for pre-packaged foods nor foodstuffs that come from overseas. In Waterloo, Ontario, the public health department conducted a similar (but more limited) study that showed many popular foods travel even further to get to the kitchen table – an average of 4,497 kilometres. (Xuereb 12). “Imports of the 58 studied food items into Waterloo Region generate 51,709 tonnes of GHG [green house gases] emissions annually, which is equivalent to the emissions produced by 16,918 cars being driven for one year” (Xuereb 12).

Broader Canadian food miles studies have been unable to replicate the Leopold Center’s methodology due to an absence of comprehensive food terminal arrivals data. A study by Toronto non-profit organization Foodshare took the straightforward approach of purchasing the same dinner ingredients at a grocery store and a farmers’ market, reading product labels to identify source locations, and contacting producers to identify the mode of transport (Bentley, 2005). The study found that the local food items traveled an average of 101km, versus 5,364km for the imported items. The imported food items created 100 times more greenhouse gas emissions than the local ones” (Xuereb 5).

Food systems program leader at Iowa State University, Dr. Rich Pirog, explains that we are able to ship food such long distances because transportation costs don’t play as much a factor as one might

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<sup>1</sup> 2414 to 4828 km

think. In the price of a shipped item, only 6.3% of the total retail value reflects the cost of transportation (Smith and MacKinnon 30).

The “ecological footprint” test was invented to measure individuals' impacts on the earth and to illustrate over-consumption of natural resources. From the University of British Columbia, Dr. William Rees invented a test that asked basic questions about what kind and size of housing the test subject lived in, what type of transportation was used, typical energy consumption, etc. (Smith and MacKinnon 7). The answers to the questions would indicate how much land it would take to accommodate all of the test subject's consumption habits. To further illustrate the point, the amount of acres are transformed into earth-sized planets. A typical North American typically ends up needing nine planets to sustain them (Smith and MacKinnon 8).

With these types of studies being released, consumers have been becoming increasingly aware that most of the food they were eating was being shipped thousands of kilometers. It is this realization that has gotten people thinking about reducing the amount of food miles they eat and the local food movement seed has been planted.

### **3. Literature Review**

In this literature review, the research will be set in the wider academic context. Previous related work and its conclusions will be summarized and evaluated. Trends and developments will be discussed, the gaps in knowledge highlighted which the research aims to fill, new ways of looking at the topic will be found. How is this work similar or different from these studies? How do they relate to this work? What methodologies and theories have been used?

The literature review will be organized in three parts by theme: the fair trade movement, the local food movement and social movements in general.

### **3.1. FAIR TRADE**

In “Community Development From the Ground Up: Social Justice Coffee,” Anita Rapone and Charles Simpson argue that the fair-trade cooperatives operation that they study in Mexico can be explained as a grassroots social movement; the article focuses primarily on the co-op model in coffee production. Simpson and Rapone use the term: 'moral economy,' where “roasters are both material beneficiaries and conscience constituents, linked to producers and consumers in a moral economy which promotes social solidarity and enhances the social capital of each sector in the movement. (Rapone and Simpson 46).”

They argue many advantages to the co-operative model, including cost-saving measures by purchasing trucks, equipment, and warehouses. Capital is then reinvested into the community for projects and development.

The article lays out the basic principles of fair trade: 1- it creates long-term and stable relationships between growers and roasters 2- it guarantees fair wages for workers and farmers are guaranteed a fair price for beans 3- farmers receive some advance payment before harvest 4- there is a commitment to ecologically sustainable development (Rapone and Simpson 47).

Rapone and Simpson advocate for an “ethically-centered corporate culture” that contrasts with “price based models of consumerism (47).” The fair trade movement includes fair trade labelling and promotion. “Ultimately, the fair trade system depends on the mobilization of key actors in the North into a movement seeking the sustainability of indigenous and peasant communities in coffee-producing regions as a matter of social justice and human rights. The movement supports cooperative

agriculturally-based communities as a valued component of cultural diversity (47)."

The Dutch faith-based organization Max Havelaar started a fair trade label and certification system in the late 1980s. Since the operation was so focused on the ethical angle of the product, the quality of the product was not competitive with gourmet brands. The image of fair trade coffee had to be changed, from low-quality to high-quality.

Analysis of progressive social movements in Latin America has shown that change happens when linking material beneficiaries of that change in the South – such as peasants and the landless – with social justice and environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the North. Change happens when old social movements and new social movements meet, and when North and South meet (48). Cooperative set-ups empower members with skills and the collective profits are used to support community initiatives in health, education and transportation. Fair trade roaster employees are both "conscience constituents" and beneficiaries.

According to Rapone and Simpson, "Each side, then, commits itself to support a system of coffee production that is organizationally democratic, ecologically sustainable, and sufficiently profitable to enable small farmers to remain on the land with the hope that they can improve their lives. The fair trade paradigm offers coffee producers in the South and distributors in the North the satisfactions that come from linking their efforts in a struggle to improve conditions for small farmers generally and to add a moral dimension to the act of coffee consumption. The alternative trade system is most usefully understood as a social movement that seeks to challenge global commodity markets and alter the motivational assumptions built into the culture of capitalism (48)."

The article describes a farmer co-op in Oaxaca, Mexico, the Unión de Comunidades Indígenas de la Región del Istmo (UCIRI), and its business relationship with the American fair trade roaster Equal Exchange (48).

The article explains the history of the UCIRI collective in Mexico: The farmers began their struggle in poverty, they contacted a collective, then organized their *own* collective, eliminating coffee brokers and contacting processors and distributors directly, while tapping into the appeal of their already organic product.

Equal Exchange participated in the International meeting that created the IFTA (International Federation of Alternative Trade) dedicated to “cooperate with poor and oppressed people in the Third World countries to improve living conditions by directly importing their products” and “to educate consumers about the unfairness of conventional trade (Rapone and Simpson 52).”

The authors point out that Equal Exchange has said it wants to guarantee a living wage to workers, but mostly focuses on a fair price for the coffee beans.

“The second linchpin concept in Equal Exchange’s mission is support for sustainable farming practices. This includes promoting organic agriculture to maintain the soils in coffee regions. Third party organic certifiers such as Naturland of Germany are hired by producers to confirm the validity of the organic claim. Beyond this, however, Equal Exchange defines sustainability as a production system in which peasants and small-scale growers work their own land and market through cooperatives which pursue comprehensive community development plans. Sustainability must be social and economic, as well as biological (Rapone and Simpson 53).”

It is Equal Exchange that informed North America about the human rights situation in Chiapas. In the Fall of 1998, Transfair certification was introduced in the United States and the authors of the article say that third party certification strengthens the claims that fair trade make.

Retail outlets are provided with literature to educate consumers. Say Rapone and Simpson, “The goal of this program is to alter the awareness of consumers, teaching them to connect coffee as a commodity with the social context of its production and trade (55).” Acting in solidarity with peasant producers and “taking the form of a social movement, these market development campaigns carry the

message that consumers have real power in the marketplace to improve the condition of small coffee growers (55)."

Rapone and Simpson mention another ideological focus of the fair trade movement : the preservation of the environment, in the form of shade-grown, organic coffee beans.

Author of "Consuming Global Justice: Protest and Globalization" Josee Johnston disagrees with Rapone and Simpson that consumption can improve living conditions of coffee growers. She writes that fair trade products are "marketed to placate the conscience of the uncomfortable consumer (38)." Johnston discusses hegemonic neoliberal globalization, where free markets reign and oppose state intervention. Responding to the consumerism and over-consumption in North America, she notes there is resistance to this ideology, for example "culture jammers" who organize events such as Buy Nothing Day.

Johnston explores the concept of consumer sovereignty: individual choice versus collective action to solve social problems. In the case of buying fair trade goods, political action equals either doing nothing or buying a product. The choice does not include not purchasing anything or doing something else. Johnston uses Ten Thousand Villages as an example, where helping means either prayer or purchase.

According to Johnston's opinion on the fair trade movement, global inequality is de-politicized within the fair trade movement because it does not include lobbying the government to reduce Third World debt or to reduce corporate rights.

The author quotes Bob Thompson when he states that "Fair Trade is only one part of the solution (47)." Johnston compares the fair trade movement to "green consumerism" and the 10 Days for Global Justice Campaign. She concludes that fair trade is realistic but not very radical.

According to the authors of "A Case Study of Coffee Production in Chiapas", Mark Hudson and Ian Hudson, fair trade addresses relations of exchange: relations of production, relationships between Southern producers and Northern consumers. It also gives autonomy to producers. The most likely consumer of fair trade products is an affluent, urban female aged 26-45. There are lengthy criteria for Fair Trade Labeling Organizations (FLO) : the focus must be on family-run operations, diversification and environmental practices, such as shade-systems used in small-scale productions that are better for environmental practices.

Coffee is the flagship product for the fair trade movement in Latin America , Africa and Asia. From 1999 to 2000, there was an increase of 50% in sales of fair trade products in the United States and Canada. The authors conduct a case study of a poor state in Mexico where collective land was purchased by large farmers and foreign investors in 1992.

The authors find that there are negative socio-economic impacts caused by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA.) For example, the corn and beans consumed in Mexico are cheaper to produce in the United States than in Mexico: "The fall of trade barriers following the enforcement of NAFTA has resulted in a flood of very cheap basic grains from the United States, where mechanized and chemical-intensive farming results in a bountiful production of seven tons of corn per hectare. One hectare in Mexico produces on average only 1.7 tons. Adding to the disadvantage, one ton of U.S. corn embodies only 1.2 hours of labor (excluding the labor embodied in the production of tractors and pesticides, of course), whereas one ton of Mexican corn embodies almost 18 days of labor .The numbers for beans are similarly skewed (133)."

Coffee bean growers earn little of the retail price; importers, roasters and retailers are getting the profits. There are inequalities between profit levels and the wages that are paid. They describe this kind

of consumption as "see no evil, hear no evil" consumption.

In the article "Oxfam Takes on Coffee Kings," Neena Dhaun writes that in September 2002, British Oxfam asked big coffee corporations to pay more of a percentage of their profits to coffee bean farmers. After the fall of coffee prices, 25 million farmers around the world faced financial ruin. While targeting the big companies, Oxfam also criticized the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, for ignoring the impact on the poor while encouraging export-led growth in commodity countries.

According to Oxfam, 1% of coffee shop prices reach the farmer. The majority of profits go to Nestle, Kraft, Procter and Gamble, Sara Lee, who buy almost half of coffee beans in the world.

Oxfam proposed the destruction of five million coffee bags as a solution to increase price and demand for coffee beans. There were low coffee prices and the supply exceeded demand. Large coffee roasting companies did not agree with Oxfam's point of view. Joost Den Haan, spokesman for Sara Lee, said in response: "We do not support any form of price guarantee or subsidy to coffee farmers. This is a very short-sighted solution which is no more than an incentive to over produce."

Author of *Fair Trade Coffee* Gavin Fridell gives very detailed explanations of liberalism, neoliberalism, theoretical foundations of the fair trade network and gives a historical critical analysis.

Fridell discusses the fair trade network, which is made up of formal organizations whose efforts are intertwined. He distinguishes the network from the movement, which is not formalized but describes various initiatives by actors in governments, NGOs and international organizations (23). Fridell explains how the network has been crippled since 2000 when Southern goods had unprecedeted low prices. He also states that supermarket price wars contributed to a global coffee

crisis. The price for specialty coffee dropped from about a dollar to about 41 cents a pound, which was the last record low, in 1882. Fridell states that the fair trade minimum per pound remained \$1.26 and saved fair trade coffee bean growers from bankruptcy (71).

Fridell argues that the way the actual networks function is drifting from the social movement ideals. He states that the certification system is working within the current system rather than creating a truly alternative system. He does not think it reflects the original alternative trade model that was a part of the fair trade movement in the beginning. The author suggests the International Coffee Agreement, which aims to strengthen the coffee sector by promoting its expansion in a market-based environment and purposes to retain more coffee profit in the global South and to improve the situation of all participants (139).

A criticism Fridell has of the FLO certification system is that sellers in the North don't have to follow the same requirements as the producers in the South. This is an excellent point to make, one that this paper will explore more in the Comparison Section.

Fridell talks about viewing the movement from different perspectives: one is the "shaped advantage perspective", which is looking at how disadvantaged farmers can have better access to the markets through fair trade efforts and fight against globalization (85). The next is "alternative globalization" where small operations are incorporated into the existing market by being put on an even playing field with bigger producers. He talks about fair trade being an alternative to neoliberal policies but not to the general capitalist system (90). Next is "decommodification" in which the focus is on raising awareness of the moral impacts, because the conventional market lacks transparency. For Fridell, decommodification is the ultimate goal of fair traders (85).

Fridell discusses how some corporations use the idea of fair trade to boost public perception and profits (251). Starbucks is an example of a corporation that participates in the corporate social

responsibility movement.

In *The No-Nonsense Guide to Fair Trade*, David Ransom describes various fair trade markets, such as bananas, blue jeans and cacao and looks at how international trade is affecting countries like Mexico, Peru and Ghana.

Ransom is critical of the World Trade Organization (WTO), formed in 1995, which was formerly the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) . The WTO, like its former incarnation, was put in place to resolve trade disputes, but in its newer form, trade negotiations would only be about money. Issues affecting human rights or the environment are not included (Ransom 15). While most countries belong to the WTO, decisions are regularly made by only the most powerful countries in what is known as the 'Green Room.' A group of developing countries formed to present ideas at the 2003 WTO Ministerial Meeting, to discuss government procurement, public services and investment. Even though the 'Group of 20' contains large countries such as India and Brazil, there has been no forward motion on these discussions. Ransom claims that the European Union and the United States have "focused on direct 'bilateral' trade agreements with Southern governments in an attempt to nullify and concerted effort by the Group of 20 and others at the WTO. A stalemate has been reached, allowing the inequities and hypocrisies of the current system to continue more or less unchecked (15)." Like Hudson and Hudson, Ransom is also very critical of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the effect it has had on Mexico (34).

As other authors, such as Rapone and Simpson, have explored the faith-based origins of the fair trade movement, Daniel Jaffee also touches on the secular origins in *Brewing Justice*. In the 1970s, British Twin Trading made connections with socialist countries where access had been blocked and

created markets for their goods (12). When the American government put an embargo on Nicaraguan goods in the 1980s, some U.S. groups sold Nicaraguan coffee in spite of the rules in place. Jaffee explores the slogan "Trade Not Aid" used by these American groups who were in disagreement with the treatment of Central America by their own government. Jaffee describes the slogan as "as attempt to differentiate its philosophy of local development and empowerment through trade from the paternalism of charity and the inefficiency and corruption of foreign aid by (and to) governments. These solidarity groups viewed the creation of alternative trade networks as part of a much larger critique of capitalism and the global economic system (13)."

Jaffee endeavors to answer the question of whether fair trade certification really improves the lives of those individual farmers it is trying to help. He calls fair trade a hybrid : "simultaneously a social movement and an alternative trade structure (1)."

Jaffee performed a case study in Oaxaca, Mexico. He examined how the communities were dealing with the historically low prices for coffee beans. In the towns he studied, Yagavila and Teotlasco, families had to react by buying less food or other goods, emigrating out of the country into the United States, agricultural diversification (returning to traditional crops and ways of growing them) or deciding to join a coffee-producer organization (73).

His two-year study included a survey of fifty one coffee farming families, where half were selling in a conventional market with coffee coyotes (the middlemen) during a historical coffee-price crisis. The other half benefited from fair trade and received advance credit and extra income. He found that when comparing farmers who sell to conventional markets to farmers in a co-op who sell in fair trade organic markets, the fair trade farmers did make more profits. But, they also had higher costs in order to work within the fair trade standards. They pay higher labour costs and also must pay for organic certification. Jaffee concluded that the fair-trade families were generally better off than their

conventional counterparts: their children had more education, they have more comforts at home and they have less debt (131). The coffee profits are definitely higher, but the budgetary bottom line may be only slightly better. Much of the extra profit goes towards hired labour from the community and does not stay in the family. Although the ripple effects in the larger community are beneficial, Jaffee writes that the effects of fair trade are more complex and less dramatic than we might hope for (132).

Jaffee takes a look at how fair trade has gone mainstream and large corporations are getting on board. The rules put in place by fair trade certifier Transfair are bent for companies like Starbucks- they aren't required to adhere to the 5% fair trade minimum volume commitment at first, as long as there is a commitment to growth (204). Some fear that core principles are being sacrificed so companies can get a public-relations boost. This type of scenario has put a wedge between movement-oriented and profit-driven fair traders. Some small roasters have even stepped away from the Transfair label while still purchasing fair trade beans (207).

Jaffee has recommendations for improving fair trade, such as raising the base-price for beans, revisiting the allocation of benefits, reducing entry barriers to fair trade and addressing demands of organic certification.

### **3.2. LOCAL FOOD**

Brian Halweil states that eating locally rather than eating the products of international agribusiness is the way to be healthier and to better support farmers and the earth. In *Eat Here: Reclaiming Homegrown Pleasures in a Global Supermarket*, he does case studies of various regions around the world and how there is a reclamation of local farming and buying. He spoke with farmers, activists, entrepreneurs, chefs and politicians. Halweil explores rural regeneration, which can include strengthening ties within communities, higher farm incomes and good land use.

A study done in Minnesota showed that farmers who grew corn and soybeans were going bankrupt, while the raw commodities they sold out of state were making more profits when transformed into value-added products. The out-of-state food companies were making their profits from the corn turned to syrup and the soybeans used as filler in burger patties (Halweil 3).

As pointed out about Starbucks in Daniel Jaffee's in *Brewing Justice*, when large corporations participate in a food movement, it goes through a transformation. Halweil uses Whole Foods Markets as an example of a supermarket chain that started out using a local food distribution network but after the company grew to 156 locations in the US and UK, it changed to the conventional model of national distribution. They still support local producers, especially when local produce is in season. But a Whole Foods marketing director has said that "this is a commodity market and sometimes you run into problems of consistently and reliability at the local level (125)." Paul Hawken, a critic of this attitude and of the shift in doing business says that this state of affairs is far removed from what the original organic food movement aimed to achieve in the 1960s. The aim was to create 'regional food webs' where there was a network of people and farmers wanting to source their food as nearby as possible (127). What Whole Foods gets right is their detailed labelling system that goes further than required labelling laws. They label where everything comes from stating the state or country of origin and whether it's organic or hormone-free.

Halweil admits that with the conventional food system in place "the cards are stacked against local food (134)." With food systems being so consolidated, and with so much support for long-distance food, the seeds of change can only grow when governments aid local food efforts. Halweil advocates for local procurement laws and tax breaks to local farmers and food businesses because they will benefit the overall population (134). A local farm might stop urban or suburban sprawl by its proximity to city limits, a town might want to fight obesity by promoting fresh produce at farmers

markets. An institution that can assist governments in this task is a local food policy council. There are more than a dozen of these in North America and Halweil states that there are more in the planning stages. These councils are made up of individuals from diverse backgrounds: they may be environmentalists, sustainable agriculture activists, community development activists, politicians, hunger or poverty activists, social justice and faith groups, cooperatives and unions. They can advise a city or a state about ways to improve production of and access to local foods. The food policy council in Hartford, Connecticut was created by a non-profit group that helped start farmers markets in the area, distributed coupons to low-income people for use at the farmers markets and improved public transportation to food outlets (135). In Vancouver, British Columbia, the non-profit organization Farm Folk/City Folk (FFCF) has a project called Linking Land and Future Farmers, which people who would like to farm but cannot afford to with those who own land but no longer use it for farming. This often links retired farmers with no kin to take over the family farm with recent immigrants. They have also converted former city parks that were intended for commercial development into functioning farms (136). The Toronto Food Policy Council lobbies politicians and educates the public on food waste recovery, farmland preservation and GMOs. They broker deals between local farmers, hospitals, schools and co-ops. As in Hartford, they link low-income Torontonians with local farmers through a program called “Field to Table” that promotes fresh local produce in the inner city (136.).

Halweil writes that these state/provincial and city councils are effective, but some of the greatest threats to local food systems are national and international and therefore work must be done on that level. Halweil proposes some points that should be touched on when lobbying governments. He states that antitrust legislation must be enforced and monopolies must be broken down, and in the face of corporate consolidation, collective bargaining must be allowed. Halweil advocates for the elimination of commodity payments since most of the payments are linked to corn, soybeans and wheat and

discourages diversification. Ministries of Agriculture and universities should focus research on a holistic view of the farm business and not just on production. He would like fossil fuels to be taxed instead of subsidized (140). He wants to eliminate food dumping and give countries the power to block imports of a particular foods during their local harvest time. He wants world trade rules to be reformed in order to ensure food sovereignty.

In *The Global Food Economy: The battle for the future of farming* , Tony Weis aims to "invigorate alternative imaginations and strategic action" against the supposed inevitability of the commodification of food production (8).He sets out the basic dimensions of future agriculture worth fighting for, centered on efficiency, which actually points to labour-intensive small farms, not industrial agriculture. He makes a case for small farming that hinges on the idea of dignified work and develops "an optimistic understanding of how the battle for the future of farming could lead towards more ecologically rational and socially just systems of food production (163).

When it comes to energy and environmental considerations in agriculture, Weis says that it's misleading to equate crop yield with overall productive efficiency and that there should be a shift from specific crop yields to net output per unit area, so the process is not just measured at its end-point. Small farms are typically much better at retaining and recycling organic materials (composting), and at drawing on local renewable resources. Reducing toxicity and carbon emissions and reducing volume of land needed for food production should be understood as intertwined rather than diverging priorities.

Weis links environmental reasons for eating locally with the fight against large corporations and the need to ensure farmers getting paid fairly: "While the calculation of food miles can be very complex, especially if it takes inputs into account as it ideally would, systematically reducing the distance that food travels from farm to plate is a basic objective for building more ecologically rational

food economies. In a general sense, this is mutually supportive of the goals of working towards more equitable and diverse farm landscapes, unsettling the dominant place of corporations as intermediaries between producers and consumers and securing for farmers a greater share of the wealth derived from agriculture (166.)”

With a growing youthful world population set against concentrations of capital, hyper-productivity, it equals dislocated small farmers facing grim employment prospects. Weis states that jobless de-peasantization together with commodification of everything means that "the challenge of meeting basic needs through the market with insecure and meager incomes is likely to define the livelihood struggles in explosively growing urban and peri-urban areas of the developing world (173)." Some see small farming as a definitive social breakwater against "expenditure of human forces governed by a logic that bears no relation to the objective of generating fulfilling, creative, socially meaningful and ecologically rational work (174)." Weis argues that progressive conceptions of small farming can't stop here and that we need radical changes.

Weis fears that populist calls for land reform can lead to a slippery slope of land accumulation by wealthier small farmers, which is an important caution. Weis prefers historically and culturally contingent forms of community or state-held property with secure, renewable leases for farmers (183). But however land reforms are planned, the push to make them a reality will depend on the local social movements that are made up of the landless, small farmers, and indigenous groups across Latin America (183).

For Weis, the fight against GMOs was a key activation of widespread popular support for local farming practices against industrialized practices. In Europe, there was the struggle for mandatory food labelling. Weis believes that education and direct action such as burning GMO crops go hand in hand (186).

On the effects of transnational corporations on people's connection with food, Weis said, "From seasonal cultivation routines to harvest to preparation to mealtime, food has long been a central part of cultural identities, and a major aspect of the escalating power of agro-TNCs lies in their extraordinary ability to sever both the material and conceptual links between farmers and consumers and replace these with opaque webs of sourcing, processing, distributing, retailing and branding....(186)" while naturalizing this process. There is a need to re-insert food into people's everyday thoughts, as food has the unique power to help people see that there are serious contradictions in the current system. Weis says the case where this is especially true is the massive scale of farm animal production the way global diets have been 'meatified (186).'

The book *Locavore* by Sarah Elton states the term 'locavore' was first used in San Francisco in 2005 to describe a person who consumes food grown and produced nearby. It was the word of year in 2007, according to the Oxford American Dictionary (15).

Elton does not believe that eating local food means following the 100-mile diet. In fact, she writes that food miles are not the best way to measure sustainability and that it often takes less kilocalories to grow food and ship it long distances than it does for a local farmer to take his or her food to a local market (14). In order to support a new food system, author Sarah Elton writes that we do not have to give up chocolate, coffee and spices. Eating healthy food with the least possible environmental impact is usually based on local foods but also includes imported goods that are produced and transported sustainably (15). Elton's book is divided into two parts, the first is on the farm and the second is in the cities to explore both sides of the food equation in Canada.

Elton discusses the dwindling numbers of family farms in Canada and the reasons for the decline. In 1951, there were 600,000 and in 2010, only 230,000 (26). In the 1950s, there were programs

put in place by the Canadian government to encourage growth in terms of land and production, and growth was aided by the tractor. Elton describes a shift in attitudes regarding the family farm, where it was seen as antiquated and inefficient. The federal government passed the 1962 Agriculture and Rural Development Act to make bigger and more productive farms, and those that stayed on the land were encouraged to specialize in something like hog farming. In the 1970s farms continued to expand and took out loans from government and banks because of low interest rates and high inflation. But many of those loans were not paid back – the production of food in North America was higher than the rest of the world could buy, interest rates rose and oil was more expensive. Elton describes The Farm Crisis which began in the early 1980s when Canadian farmers hit a rough patch. In Ontario, 488 farmers went bankrupt in 1983 and there were 551 more the next year (27). According to Elton, what the bankruptcy numbers don't show are the bank-foreclosed farms and the families who quit the business before everything was lost (28).

A group of Ontario farmers took action in the spring of 1982, forming Farm Gate Defense in order to stop banks from taking over their neighbours' farms. The Ontario Food Terminal was blocked by 150 farmers who were attempting to cut off the city's food supply (28). The crisis and the public actions taken to bring attention to the crisis made the national news, but the media attention didn't effect change. According to the National Farmers Union, even though interest from the general public has dwindled, Canada is still in a farm crisis. The NFU states that farmers in Canada earn less today than they did during the Great Depression. Because of this, they predict there will be half of the farmers in 2025 that there are now (28)

Elton does a case study of a co-op in New Brunswick, the Really Local Harvest Co-op, also called La Récolte Chez-Nous. In the 1950s, farms in the Acadieville area started growing Brussels sprouts and selling them to McCain. It went this way for three decades, with Brussels sprouts being a

mainstay of the local economy. Then in the early 1980s, McCain started to buy their Brussels sprouts elsewhere at a lower price (30). Some farmers tried to sell to grocery stores which came with new costs such as delivery and a registration fee. Other farmers went into business with large companies and signed contracts to grow a certain number of acres of a particular crop. When it came time for harvest, sometime the company would back out of the contract (31). During Elton's interviews with farmers across Canada, there were many stories of contracts being broken in this manner by large corporations (227). In 1997, a group of six farmers decided the only way to survive was to sell directly to the public. They became a 30 member co-op in 2000 with a mandate to assist members in increasing their profits while farming in an ecologically sustainable way. They created their own brand called Eco-Logik, which means that whatever is branded must follow provincial and federal agricultural regulations, test irrigation water for E. Coli and other pathogens and keep excellent financial records (33).

### **3.3. SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

The authors of *Prophecy and Protest: Social Movements in Twentieth Century Canada* begin by defining a social movement, which they describe as “form of behaviour in which a large number of people try to bring about or resist social change (1). It is often categorized under the heading of collective behaviour by social scientists. The authors, Samuel Clark, J. Paul Grayson and Linda Grayson, argue that collective behaviour is a response to the fact that the people involved do not believe that satisfactory institutional guides exist. Segmentation and fragmentation in society contributes to higher levels of discontent. It could be a reaction to rules in place that limit behaviour, or a reaction to behaviour that stems from rules that aren't clear or strict enough.

So, for a social movement to exist, there has to be a) a perceived institutional deficiency and b)

the conditions for mobilization (3). The elements necessary for the mobilization of a social movement are: an ideology that unites its members, a willing and able leadership and communication and a network of co-operative relationships. There is a perceived deficiency, it is defined and then there is an attempt to remedy the less than desirable situation. It does not matter if the common perceived deficiency is fact or not, it only matters if people believe it to be true (3). The participants in a movement attempt to create new institutional guides or modify existing ones to fit the modern day. They have made progress towards a goal but have not attained it.

Compared to other types of collective behaviour (crazes, fads, crowds, panics), social movements are the most institutionalized. Their institutional structures include common values, norms and leaders and usually include associations to which members belong. The formal structure may include rules and a division of labour (6). Clark, Grayson and Grayson write that “the emergence and maintenance of institutional guides are the most problematic aspect of a social movement (7).”

Even though it will steer towards a more uniform state, in the beginning, the norms and values of a social movement are ill-defined and there is rarely a decision made that is near unanimous. If a social movement becomes routine behaviour, then it ceases to a social movement. The authors give examples of 20th century social movements that took place in Canada such as the women's movement, the labour union movement and the social credit movement.

In *Organizing Dissent: Contemporary Social movements in theory and practice*, William K. Carroll states that “In the study of Canadian social movements...the result has been a literature on movements that is organized less around theoretical issues – of movement mobilization, of the formation of collective identities, of strategic interaction among movements, and the like – then around substantive topic areas that include regional protest, labour struggles, and feminism (2).”

Sociology as an organized discipline in Canada came about in the late 1960s and early 1970s, which coincided with a time when social movement activism was at its pinnacle. In the United States at the time, sociological study was stunted because of a longer academic history and leftover McCarthyism causing institutional and ideological inertia. Meanwhile, the ideas raised by the movements of the day were incorporated into Canadian sociology (2).

*La Via Campesina* by Annette Aurélie Desmarais explores the social and political significance of the Via Campesina, which is an important modern rural social movement. Desmarais explores the main issues, strategies, and collective actions of this peasant movement and highlights its contributions to building alternatives to the powerful forces of neo-liberal economic globalization (9). The experiences of the participants themselves are privileged in order to write an insider's account while examining local, national and international connections with the goal of understanding the dynamics of organizing in the countryside (20).

In Chapter One, Desmarais writes that, formed in May 1993, the Via Campesina is perhaps the most significant and largest peasant and farm movement in recent times and its global level of activity has been surprising for many observers. The common concerns of farmers in the global south and the global north are flying in the face of the commonly held belief that rural peoples in the North and South could not possibly have much in common (7).

Writes Desmarais, "Clearly, La Via Campesina is filling an important void. Its very existence is evidence of new structures of collective action in the countryside; its strategies defy traditional patterns of organizing in the rural sector; and the sheer magnitude of its international presence - its dynamic nature, cultural diversity, and wide geographical distribution - speaks to its transformatory potential (9)."

Desmarais writes that simply focusing on a social movement can be a deeply political act, especially peasant movements, whose participants, some suggest, no longer exist (19).

Like Weis, Desmarais argues that national categories important to understand treaties, etc. but that an increasingly international understanding of agriculture, including exploring agrarian activism across borders, is essential (20).

La Via Campesina movement's collective identity and strategies were originally defined through opposition to WTO and emerged in explicit rejection of neo-liberal agricultural policies (77).

Desmarais distinguishes between 'inside' and 'outside' movements with regard to globalization. Social change either accommodates or radically re-imagines existing realities. Desmarais argues that in certain situations, no good can come from negotiating with powerful interests. The Via Campesina has demonstrated the importance of delegitimization and disengagement, with the WTO especially.

The author distinguishes between NGOs and peasant organizations as insiders and outsiders.

Non-Governmental Organizations:

- Have different aims, purposes, interests
- Are staffed generally by well-educated, middle-class professionals
- Gather significant resources for research
- Are project-driven
- Give a voice to the voiceless

In contrast, peasant organizations:

- Are popular/mass-oriented
- Are community or sector-based
- Embrace diversity in their membership
- Are democratically elected leaderships
- Are more directly/immediately accountable to membership
- Provide an alternative to the exclusionary nature of neoliberalism

Desmarais argues that NGOs' approach can significantly limit imagined alternatives (23). NGOs have not been comfortable with what the "formerly voiceless" have to say, and might not know when to keep quiet when appropriate and let the peasants speak. The conformist and reformist views of those

involved in NGOs are more likely to be accepted and they are therefore able to maintain relationships with the WTO. Grassroots movements with more critical views get less access (25).

Desmarais discusses the structure of a social movement. She argues that one main strength of the Via Campesina is how it weaves together organizations embedded in their own particular political, economic, social, and cultural contexts, but still manages to establish unity (28). It has a horizontal structure, which includes millions of farm families, therefore the decision-making is extended and time-consuming. Consultation and accountability are key with the regions being the key points of intersection.

Food sovereignty at the heart of an alternative model of agriculture. The Via Campesina distinguishes food sovereignty from food security, which is that a sufficient amount of food is produced nationally and that everyone has access to it. Food sovereignty means those important points, plus *what* food is produced, that it is culturally appropriate, and that it respects biodiversity and production capacity of the land. It means providing suitable wages for farmers, regulating production to avoid surpluses, using a family-farm-based sustainable practice without industrialized production methods and also abolishing direct and indirect export aid (34). Desmarais argues that the Food Sovereignty concept directly delegitimizes the WTO (131).

Globalization takes diverse forms and depends on a specific context. (135) Desmarais writes that global aspects of social movements cannot be studied in isolation from the local and there must be a dialectical relationship between local, regional, national, global. In order for effective international work, the movement must be grounded in local realities (139).

The National Farmers Union (NFU) has two prongs: international solidarity work, and bringing international work home through education (140). Says Desmarais, “Historically, peasant and farm organizations have been most successful in bringing about change when they have made community-

oriented issues a national concern. Perhaps the most important of these issues has been agrarian reform (153)."

The International day of Peasant Struggle is April 17th. It grew from individual organizations' local concerns, until transnational focus was achieved in 2001. Food sovereignty was a key issue , with a campaign against dumping food imports and introduction/imposition of genetically modified or transgenic seeds (155).

There have been challenges to the movement as it has grown, because of its desire to be everywhere: "While strengthening its work at the international level the Via Campesina may have sacrificed much-needed spaces for internal debate and organizational strengthening (158)." There have been challenges to be representative of women and challenges of regionality, leading the author to wonder whether regional articulations are the movement's strongest or weakest links. The entry process for new organizations requires support from other organizations at the regional and national levels and this reduces the ability of organizations to enter whose interests might be to divert, subvert, or undermine Via Campesina. However, this can also serve to restrict organizations whose participation could form a significant contribution. Differences in regions leads to the over-stressing of Latin American organizations needs over other regions.

"The cultural politics of social movements are complex. Building an understanding of them begins with paying close attention to the everyday (190)." Resistance encompasses a wide range of practices: constructing collective identities, defining a collective will, developing a collective voice, and carving out social and political space. The transformatory potential of movements is greatly influenced both by power relations within movements themselves and by the power dynamics in the social and political context in which the movements function (191).

In the Foreword of *La Via Campesina*, Walden Bello states that the two dominant modernist ideologies

do not support peasants: socialism sees peasants as relics of feudal production and with capitalism, efficiency reduces the numbers of peasants, replacing them with technology. To Bello, this is tragedy masquerading as progress.

In the face of poverty and marginalization, economic liberalization and globalization, peasant leaders mobilized beyond their own borders. Said Pedro Stedile of Brazil's Landless Workers Movement,

"It is very striking that it is only now that farmers are starting to achieve a degree of worldwide coordination, after five hundred years of capitalist development. Workers have had an international day for over a century, and women for not much less, but farmers have only just agreed to mark one – 17 April, a source of pride to us: a tribute to Carajas. As long as capitalism meant only industrialization, those who worked on the land limited their struggle to the local level. But as the realities of neoliberal internationalization have been imposed on us, we've begun to hear stories from farmers in the, Philippines, Malaysia, South Africa, Mexico, France, all facing the same problems – and the same exploiters. The Indians are up against Monsanto, just as we are in Brazil, and Mexico, and France. It's the same handful of companies – seven groups, in total, worldwide- that monopolize agricultural trade, and control research and biotechnology, and are tightening their ownership of the planet's seeds. The new phase of capitalism has itself created the conditions for farmers to unite against the neoliberal model (74)."

#### **4. Comparison Section: Common Goals of the Fair Trade and Local Food Movements**

In this section, the fair trade and local food movements will be shown to have many elements in common that make it possible for proponents of each one to work together on common goals. For example, they can be studied in the same way, and have many goals in common, such as labour practices, sustainability, community and economic development and consumer awareness. They also face similar challenges. First and foremost, what they have in common is the desire to be mindful about

consumption and the desire to be connected with the world and other people. This paper will disprove that you must be either pro-fair (long-distance) trade or pro-local food. Although local and food groups and fair traders disagree on certain points, which will be explored in this section, if each group could see the benefits of the other, a sustainable and formal relationship between the two could be struck. They have far more in common than not.

There has been much written on the fair trade and local food movements separately, and even works claiming that they are incompatible, that we must chose one or the other, with feet firmly in one camp. This is not so. The two movements have so much in common that it is possible to support both while believing in the principles of each. Many of the authors discussed in the previous section hinted at or outright agreed with this idea.

#### **4.1. Criticisms of the movements working together**

There are some arguments against the fair trade and local food movements working together, and many criticize the movements themselves. There are different levels of arguments: one, that any move toward alternative agriculture or trade reform is negative and that promoting local food, fair trade, organics, etc. is naive and pointless. Two, that one can acknowledge that there is a problem with business as usual and that we should attempt to modify behaviour, but that we should choose either local or long distance fair trade. The first argument will be paid a small amount of attention, but the focus in this section will be on the second set of arguments, because those individuals are already thinking “outside the box” and willing to consider alternatives.

Firstly, the obvious must be acknowledged: the local food movement advocates for short-distance consumption and the fair trade movement is a discussion surrounding long-distance trade. This is why at first glance fair trade and local food are at odds. But neither must be seen as exclusive streams

of thought that exclude the other. Few proponents of either movement argue that one must either trade long or short distance. Rather, it is about the global picture of trade and how neoliberal policies affect food and the people who produce it.

Some believe that it is foolish to even criticize the current system of global trade. They say that it is in place for a reason and is working well, for economic reasons, like the theory of comparative advantage. As explained in the first section of this paper, comparative advantage appears logical because each region produces what is suitable to the climate and soil and trades for what is not appropriate to grow in the region. In 'The Locavore's Dilemma: Why Pineapples Shouldn't Be Grown in North Dakota" authors Jayson Lusk and F. Bailey Norwood criticize the local food movement by using the theory of comparative advantage. As counteracted in the historical section of this paper by authors Rapone and Simpson, it is rarely an equal exchange and not, as Lysk and Norwood say, a principle that makes almost everyone wealthier.

What these economists also do not take into account are the repercussions on the people who work within the system. Just because a system works well on paper or in dollar amounts, does not mean that it is right. Ignoring human suffering is completely unethical. If the priorities are profits and not people and the environment, there can be no constructive discussion.

Regarding concerns by those who are supportive of the spirit of the movements but who express concerns with specifics, one argument is that farmers in developing countries will be hurt by the push to 'eat local' such as in the article "Developing farmers hurt by eat local philosophy in U.S." by William Moseley. This is a valid concern and one that should be discussed. Local food activists in Europe are hoping that African farmers will concentrate on organic growing for local consumption. But, this is already being done; it is just not officially labelled. Food for local consumption is often pesticide free and chemicals are used only for exports like coffee and cotton (Moseley). African farmers who *have*

entered organic and fair trade export markets may be punished when Europe and North America turn away from their products and wish to focus on their own local production and consumption. A reduction in demand for long-distance fair trade and organic products may have as a consequence that those who have entered into the fair trade and organic market return to conventional pesticide use at smaller profits. This may be a side-effect of the local food movement, but the ultimate solution is to advocate for real changes to global trade, which will be explored later in this section.

As mentioned by author Sarah Elton, food miles may not be the best way to measure the environmental impact of a food and some say that locally-produced food can use even more energy than long-distance food. This may be because of less energy-efficient methods being used at the local level. In a UK study, it was shown that tomatoes imported from Spain used less energy than tomatoes grown in England, because of the use of energy-intensive greenhouses (DEFRA 3). Another example of a study done to demonstrate this affect was about raising and exporting lamb from New Zealand to the UK. The Lincoln University study found that the carbon dioxide emissions were much lower for New Zealand lamb shipped to the UK than British lamb consumed within the UK because NZ farmers use less energy-intensive fertilizers and the animals graze year-round. (NZ study 93). But, the study was criticized for the authors' connection to agribusiness, the numbers were disputed, it did not include in its calculations transport *within* NZ and the UK and did not compare with a UK farm that is agriculturally sustainable that sells locally (Elton 73). All this to say that the energy used in production must be taken into account when deciding what is more ecological.

When it comes to differences in the movements themselves, fair trade is mostly a Southern problem, whereas industrial farming can affect the North and South.

A very important discussion involves the question: when does encouraging local food become protectionism? A conflict is that the local food movement might err on the side of protectionism, which

fair trade proponents advocate against. In its origins pure free trade meant just that – trade free of government interventions. Modern global free trade contains many interventions by governments and organizations such as the WTO and trade agreements like NAFTA. But the current rules benefit the global North and countries that are already wealthier. Authors like Brian Halweil criticize “current international trade agreements that restrict the ability of nations to protect and build domestic farm economies by forbidding domestic price supports, tariffs on imported goods, and preference for products based on place of origin (138).” This is an example of a local food advocate who wishes for local governments to have the power to put in place protectionist type safeguards such as tariffs and price supports. This would not be conducive to fair trade with less wealthy Southern producers if these policies are only used in wealthier countries, giving them the advantage. Countries that cannot afford to subsidize their farm will continue to go into debt and it is already difficult for many Southern producers to make living wages (Fridell 49). For the fair trade and local movements to work together, price supports have to be universal or there can not be any at all.

#### **4.2. Theories in common and ways both movements can be studied**

As discussed above, both the fair trade and local food movements have problems with the theory of comparative advantage. In theory, it does seem to make sense that countries produce what is best for their climate and population, export that and import what is not sensible for them to produce themselves, since it is difficult for one country to be completely self-sufficient and produce everything it consumes. In practice, the advantage is not equal because all exports do not bring the same profits on the global market. A country might have to export many times more of what they bring in to feed themselves and avoid loss. It also encourages intensive agricultural operations to produce the biggest yield possible, while often neglecting environmental practices, workers' wages and animal welfare.

Neglect of working and environmental conditions ties into Marx's idea of commodity fetishism, which is another problem for local food and fair trade. Commodity fetishism is when people are only able to see products and not the work that was put into making them and see relationships between things and not people (Hudson and Hudson, *Removing the Veil* 1). The local food and fair trade movements seek to remove the layer of mystery between people and the things they consume so everyone can see poor working conditions, the plight of farmers and environmental degradation. Both movements find it disturbing that something essential to human survival, food, has become a simple commodity on the world market. Further explanation of commodity fetishism and the attempts to raise awareness of these issues will be further explored in the next section.

Both the fair trade and local food movements can be studied as social movements. The shared perceived institutional deficiencies in both movements are clear: conventional trade is problematic on several levels and the biggest issues arising from this, such as farmer poverty, are the conditions for mobilization. The fair trade movement is more institutionalized than the local food movement, perhaps because it has been a formal movement for longer. Its organizations will also be explored in the following section.

The fair trade and local food movements fight against neoliberal economic policies. In *The Wealth of Nations*, economist Adam Smith advocated for a liberal market, without barriers or tariffs, and no government intervention when it came to economics. He and others believed it was the best way for a country to develop, but in fact it was the best way for those making capital to make more. When the Great Depression hit, another stream of thought, lead by economist John Maynard Keynes, came into popular consciousness, which was that perhaps government should have a hand in the common good and increasing employment. Keynesian economics was the theory behind growth post-war in the Northern hemisphere, which included countries spending on public services, infrastructure

and investment at levels never seen before (Fridell 26). But liberalism was renewed when private forces began to have more power than big government in the 1960s and 1970s. Neoliberalism started to take hold and once again, the interests of corporations and a 'free market' were advanced. There is a strong ideology that a free market will self regulate, grow the economy and be beneficial to all. But neoliberalism has brought with it many negatives for workers and farmers. Government's role has been reduced in some ways and augmented in others. Under this ideology, public spending is cut for services such as health care and education, regulations that get in the way of profits are reduced, state-owned enterprises are privatized. There is a libertarian point of view wrapped up in neoliberalism, where citizens are responsible for their own well-being, such as with healthcare, with no help from government. Meanwhile, government subsidies and tax benefits for business are welcome (Fridell 34)

Neoliberalism is maintained by institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and agreements such as NAFTA. In Mexico, it is clear that these policies are detrimental. In 1994 when NAFTA was first implemented, the cost of living in Mexico rose by 80% while wages went down 40-50%. Since then, "over 20,000 small and medium businesses have failed and more than 1,000 state-owned enterprises have been privatized in Mexico (Martinez and Garcia 1)."

#### **4.3. The fight against neoliberal globalization and mainstream trade**

The reasons behind the need for the existence of these movements are rooted, firstly, by the legacy of agricultural colonialism. Coffee is an example of a colonial commodity, where the colonizing countries appropriated an indigenous crop to benefit themselves. In the 17th century, the Dutch smuggled coffee seeds out of present-day Yemen and plant them in their colony in Java. French colonists brought coffee to Martinique and Haiti, where slaves harvested the crop, while Portuguese colonists planted in Brazil. The Spanish brought coffee plants from Cuba and the Dominican Republic

to Mexico in the late 18th century. The labour of indigenous people and peasants was used on lands that were previously theirs, expropriated by wealthier landowners (Jaffee 39). The local food movement also sees colonialism as a negative influence on the way agriculture exists today. As discussed in *Bringing the Food Economy Home*, the colonization of Africa, Asia and the Americas replaced food systems native to the regions with what the new inhabitants wanted to grow. The food for local consumption was grown on lesser-quality lands. This happened in a major way in the global South but also in the global North, such as when great swaths of land were privatized in 17th and 18th century England (Norberg-Hodge et al 5).

The Industrial Revolution is another contributing factor to these movements, where people were drawn away from rural areas into urban spaces, further away from food sources and needing to import from the rural areas and then from abroad. New technologies reduced the number of jobs in the agricultural sector and farmers spent more on equipment and less on labour. With rising equipment costs, production needed to be higher in order to keep up financially. Farmers had to take out loans to keep up with the technological upgrades, buy more land and seek newer and farther-flung markets in order to pay back loans (Norberg-Hodge et al 7). An economic system emerged where markets were king; they controlled, regulated and directed the system. The price of things was central, not the interaction between human beings, not culture, not the environment (Jaffee 18).

The movements face the same problems with raw commodities being cheap while the transformed product is more expensive. Farmers in the Northern and Southern hemisphere who grow and export raw materials suffer when there is a decline in prices for these raw materials. Also, the fair trade and local food movements both challenge corporate-led globalization, as larger companies have created problems for local and fair trade. To look further into these challenges, the global coffee crisis and the global farm crisis can be examined. The initial Canadian farm crisis in the early 1980s was

caused by rapid farm growth fueled by large loans and over-production. When interest rates and the price of oil went up, the farmers were unable to pay back the loans and there was mass bankruptcy. There still exists a farm income crisis in Canada, where family farm incomes have been lower than they were during the Great Depression of the 1930s. According to a report by the National Farmers Union, “In 2005, average realized net farm income from the markets (not counting government payments) was approximately *negative* \$12,000 per farm. In 2004, it was negative \$10,000 per farm, and in 2003, it was *negative* \$16,000 per farm. These figures – after inflation is taken into account - are well below those experienced by farmers in the 1930s. During the worst years of the Great Depression, the average Canadian farm averaged \$3,897 per farm from the markets (after accounting for inflation). In contrast, over the past ten years – from 1995 to 2005 – the average farm earned *negative* \$323 per farm (National Farmer's Union, *Federal Election 1*).” Not only are Canadian family farms not making decent incomes, they are in large amounts of debt and in need of government assistance and off-farm income. Meanwhile, a small number of large companies are dominating the marketplace and doing very well. Farms are only one component of the agri-food system that begins with oil and ends at the retailer or restaurant. There are companies at every step of the process, for fertilizer, seeds, processing, packing. These companies have been making better profits while family farms have been floundering. In 2004, when net farm income was negative \$10,000 per farm, the corporations that dominate Canadian agribusiness had record profits. The National Farmers Union profiled 75 companies that year, and 41 of those had record profits and 16 more had near-record profits or a second or third best year ever. None had record or near-record losses (National Farmer's Union, *Corporate Profits 2*).

The coffee crisis in 1989-1994 was a price drop caused by the collapse of quota system put in place by the International Coffee Organization (ICO) under United Nations International Coffee Agreements. These successful agreements controlled coffee supplies from the 1960s to 1989, stabilized

the market, kept prices from declining and a quota system limited excess supplies. When the United States withdrew from the agreement in 1989, the quota system was suspended while negotiations were taking place and coffee prices fell to half of what they previously were. The coffee crisis in 2001, like the farm crisis, was caused by an over-supply of product that crept up during the 90s where demand for coffee increased by 1 percent yearly but the supply grew by 3 percent (Jaffee 44). In 2002, there was a ten million hundred-pound bag difference in what was being grown and what was being consumed (Jaffee 44). Many countries, such as Brazil, Indonesia and especially Vietnam, were encouraged to increase their coffee production by institutions such as the World Bank with the idea that export-led development is the way to reduce poverty. The increase in production caused a price drop in an already-saturated market and farmers received less profit. In 1989, the average world price paid to farmers per pound of bean was \$1.29, in 1999 it was \$1.20, in 2002 it dropped to \$0.47 and was creeping back up to \$0.95 in 2005. Individual coffee farm families now earn less than 100 years ago when taking into account inflation (Jaffee 46). The countries of these coffee-producing farmers are earning less as well; when global coffee sales totaled \$30 billion in 1989, coffee-producing countries earned \$10 billion of that. Global sales were almost \$80 billion in 2001, but producer-countries only received \$6 billion (Jaffee 45). The coffee grower is in the middle of the production chain, which includes exporters, importers, distributors, retail stores, cafés. These actors are all attempting to gain more profits with lower costs.

The coffee crisis has had many negative repercussions, affecting 125 million people around the world, from Africa to Central America. Many farmers have had to sell cattle or other assets, cut down on essential services, remove their children from school or even reduce their food consumption. Some give up or lose their farms, moving out of the area into cities (Jaffee 46). Because of the impoverishment and starvation that lower coffee prices have caused, many farmers who stayed on their

land changed their crop to something more profitable, like cattle or drugs. In Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia, coca leaves and opium poppies were planted and elsewhere, such as in Mexico, marijuana replaced coffee. In Ethiopia, many of the 700,000 farmers who worked in coffee started planting an addictive stimulant called khat, which causes a feeling of euphoria. It may surpass coffee as Ethiopia's top export commodity (Jaffee 47). Coffee is just one example of a primary commodity that has fallen in price over the last hundred years. In fact, with the exception of petroleum, the price for all raw commodities has gone down: sugar, cocoa, rubber, cotton, soybeans, peanuts, rice. Where grower families lose in the scenario, big companies gain from the lower prices paid for the raw materials that they purchase for transformation.

With coffee, the companies that gain the most are the five biggest multinational roasters. In 2001, while coffee beans were at their lowest, Starbucks had a 41 percent hike in their first-quarter profits, Nestlé's profits increased by 20 percent in that same quarter and rose by 13 percent more in 2003 (Jaffee 49). Not even consumers have seen any of the savings from lower coffee bean prices, as seen between 1975 and 1993, where wholesale coffee prices dropped 18 percent but the retail price of coffee rose 240 percent (Jaffee 50).

There is the worry that large corporations will co-opt the fair trade and local food movements and their principles, claiming corporate social responsibility. There are arguments about whether large companies participating in even a fraction of the movements is beneficial. There is the example of Starbucks, which started offering fair trade coffee in Canada in 2002. For-trade coffee had been offered for purchase in bags only at select locations and was not being brewed and served in cafés unless customers asked directly. Starbucks is, however, 100% fair trade in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Is Starbucks participating just enough in the fair trade movement in order to gain good press while still mostly taking advantage of low coffee bean prices to make more profit? Whole Foods started out

supporting local farmers exclusively, but as the company expanded, began relying on larger food networks in order to stock bigger and more numerous stores. Is the Whole Foods company still an ally to the local food movement because it still deals with local producers or is it tokenism? Can Walmart, the world's biggest retailer and second-largest food retailer, ever be considered an ally if it commits to offering organics and locally grown food (Halweil 46)?

Both movements have criticisms of the World Trade Organization. The WTO's 1995 Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) had the objective of establishing "a fair and market-oriented agricultural trading system" with a tag line of 'Fairer markets for farmers (Weis 128).' Local food advocates and fair traders argue that the use of 'fair' in this context is misleading. With problems such as "distortions caused by rich-country surpluses and subsidies, the declining earnings of farmers within commodity chains, the instabilities associated with rising import dependencies, the tropical commodities disaster, it would be beneficial to inject some fairness into the equation for small producers. That is not what the Agreement on Agriculture set out to do. The AoA has three pillars, which are market access, export competition and domestic support. All three categories have percentages set out for developed countries and different levels for developing countries. This uneven set of rules are beneficial to agro-transnational corporations that have been able to influence governments, especially the United States. For small farmers in developing countries, this agreement is detrimental because it limits their countries' ability to protect its source of income in the form of tariffs. The richer countries can continue to pay their own farmers large subsidies that developing countries cannot afford to do (Weis 129 and Oxfam 1).

Regarding some of the details discussed during 2005 AoA negotiations, the organization Oxfam pointed out that some of the concessions made by developed countries should have already been in place: "On cotton, the US is offering to eliminate all forms of export subsidies, which is welcome, but this is already required by a WTO ruling and these payments only represent 10% of overall spending. The

proposal does not address the core issue of domestic payments that have been proven to distort trade and facilitate dumping (Oxfam 1)."

#### **4.4. Labour practices (workers' rights, fair wages, safe work environments)**

Both the fair trade and local food movements strive to improve the lives of farmers and farm workers, whether it be advocating for worker's rights, fair wages or safe work environments. There is a global epidemic of farmers going into debt, going bankrupt, being forced out of farming, being forced off the land and being driven to despair. The tragedy of farmer suicides happens in North America, in Europe and in developing countries.

Since the 1990s, India's livestock production has been growing rapidly. India is the global leader in aggregate dairy production and is fifth in the world for broiler chickens and eggs, partly because of the recent rise of factory farming of chicken (Weis 109). There remains extensive and persistent hunger in India, and more demand for grains to feed the factory farms. These factors have lead the Indian government to allow genetically modified crops. There has been resistance to GMOs in India, but the government has faced pressure to liberalize trade when meeting with other nations. Meanwhile, Indian farmers are in distress and in debt. The Minister of agriculture admitted to parliament in 2006 that between 1993 and 2003, over 100,000 farmers committed suicide. The most important factor identified in this rash of suicides was debt (Weis 110). In a 2006 policy document, the Indian Ministry of agriculture discussed the crisis by writing that "...agriculture has become a relatively unrewarding profession due to a generally unfavourable price regime and low value-addition, causing abandoning of farming and increasing migration from rural areas. The situation is likely to be exacerbated further in the wake of integration of agricultural trade in the global system, unless immediate corrective measures are taken (Weis 110)." The Ministry's comments could apply to any commodity farm, anywhere in the

world. In the global North, farmers are blamed for their farm failure because they lacked efficiency. There is a sense of shame that comes with losing land that may have been in the family for generations. In the United States, farmers commit suicide at three times the rate of the general population and it is now the leading cause of death of American farmers. In the United Kingdom, there is a farmer suicide every week (Norberg-Hodge et al 84). To add to the examples given with India, the United Kingdom and the United States, higher rates of suicide within farming communities have also been found in Australia and Japan (Sturgeon and Morissette 192).

Compared to urban centres, rates of suicide are often higher in rural areas. Farming is an industry where there is one of the highest rates of suicide, and there appears to be evidence that there is a higher risk of developing a mental illness within farming compared to other industries (Sturgeon and Morissette 192). It is becoming a universal phenomenon and farmer suicide must be examined through a global lens.

A study was done in 2010 that researched Manitoba farmers who seek counselling through a rural crisis telephone service and who have had suicidal thoughts. There are several factors that may be related to farm suicide in Canada, which include falling farm revenues, lack of respect for farm work, the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) scare and reluctance to seek mental health services (Sturgeon and Morissette 194). Stress is a factor, which could be caused by unstable economic conditions and work overload, which is typical when farmers must seek off-farm work to supplement their income, such as long-distance trucking. The World Health Organization isolated several risk factors for suicide among farmers, for instance, higher rates of depression, hazardous work environments, easy access to pesticides, reduced access to emergency services, high job stress, and social isolation. There is also the issue of mental illness stigma and barriers to treatment related to living in a rural and more isolated area. Highlighting the factors of stress caused by dwindling farm revenues and the exhaustion

of off-farm supplementary employment, Canadian and Manitoba farmers face similar struggles to their global counterparts.

The despair that farmers are facing globally is a large part of why the fair trade and local food movements exist. They are attempting to maintain a sense of dignity in farming that the global food machine is oppressing. People desire meaningful work and do not want to be simple cogs in a machine. “Recognizing this, the challenge to the corporate control of agriculture gains strength not only in appeals that recognize that small farms have been a historic bedrock of cultures but in understanding how - in an age marked by ecological degradation, hyper-productivity and alienating work - they can be a crucial part of more efficient, ecologically rational agricultural systems that sustain dignified livelihoods into the future (Weis 9).

Both fair trade and local food fall under the umbrella of the food sovereignty movement, a term used by the Via Campesina. They share the goals of food sovereignty, such as providing suitable wages for farmers and using family farm-based sustainable practices. The Via Campesina has a member organization in Canada, the National Farmers Union, many in Latin America and in Africa. It is a movement that represents and speaks for those who are working the land, in the global North and the global South and stands for farmer and peasant solidarity.

Co-operatives play a part in the local food and fair trade movements and play a role in reforming the global food system. There is a general desire to cut out the middlemen in the chain of food and profit and see more profits in the hands of producers. With a co-op, there is more control over livelihoods, instead of being at the mercy of the global markets. Co-ops can skip the many steps and costs in between growing and consumption. The benefits and profits are shared within the group, rather than ending up with a CEO who is disconnected from the work being done.

In Oaxaca, Mexico, producers participate in fair trade by forming a co-operative coffee-producer

organization called Michiza. There are requirements for joining, which include composting, building terraces, pruning the coffee plants. There are over 1,000 member families and almost all of them have organic certification. The Michiza co-op has eight people on its directive council who are elected by their peers for three-year terms. Each community then elects a representative to send to decision-making meetings. There are only 3 non-members working for the group and the goal is to work independently, without advisors. Like many coffee producer groups in Mexico, Michiza was founded with the help of a local Catholic priest (Jaffee 86). The co-op has had struggles, especially when elected representatives in the mid-90s were not competent enough to handle new members, loan repayment and organic certification. Some computer files were lost and several hundred members lost their organic certification. They had to begin the 3-year transition process all over again (Jaffee 90). When coffee was high on the conventional market, many growers wanted to go back to selling to the coyote, who is the middleman exporter, because he put no conditions on the production or the quality of the coffee. But in 2001, the co-op had a period of renewal and became more controlled fiscally.

An example of a co-op in the local food movement is the Really Local Harvest Co-op/La Récolte Chez-Nous in New Brunswick. It started when the main buyer for local farmers' produce stopped buying from them and then the grocery warehouses shut down. A group of farmers decided to cut out the middlemen and sell to consumers by forming a sustainable farming co-operative. The membership elects a board of directors, who meet at least quarterly to discuss day-to-day issues and marketing. Members must sign a contract stating that they will not sell at a loss, which was hard for some community members to understand because that would mean doubling the price of their produce in order to make a profit. Since its inception in 2000 and a period of adjustment, the co-op has been continuously profitable (Elton 33).

Union representation is vital for worker solidarity in the fight against a global food system that

hurts its poorest participants. Unions give strength and support to farmers who are geographically separated from each other and larger centres. Unions are useful for lobbying for change that is desired by individuals who have more a voice when they are joined together.

In Canada, the National Farmers Union is a voluntary, direct-membership national farm organization and was incorporated in an Act of Parliament in 1970. It was the result of a merger of Saskatchewan Farmers Union, the Ontario Farmers Union, the Farmers Union of B.C. and the Manitoba Farmers Union. When the provincial units were working individually, it was challenging to work with the federal government, when all decisions regarding agriculture were centralized in Ottawa. The founding meeting took place in Winnipeg in 1969 and a federal charter and constitution were developed. Its members strive to develop economic and social policies to “maintain the family farm as the primary food-producing unit in Canada (NFU website).” Using the family farm as their cornerstone, they recognize that working together is the only way to survive in an industry dominated by powerful multinational corporations. Some of the goals of the NFU are to develop markets, ensure fair food prices for farmers and consumers, conduct research, promote legislation and ensure an adequate supply of safe, nutritious food for Canadians. They promote fair trade and taxation policies that benefit farmers and consumers and not multinational agribusiness. The NFU is divided into eight regions across Canada and all members of the farm family are full voting members of the Union- including the farmer and their spouse and children, ages 14 to 21. This acknowledges that all family members contribute to the farm directly or indirectly, such as through off-farm employment. The NFU allows non-farmer Associate Members, who want a voice in Canada's food system, because it is everyone's concern. Associate members can participate in NFU activities, but they cannot act as voting delegates or be elected officials.

A main principle of fair trade is to uphold co-operative or democratic organizations, so that

producers can own the land they work on and be in control of their livelihoods. When it is not possible to own the land and it is controlled by others, the workers who produce for fair trade must be able to organize and negotiate through trade unions (Ransom 25). Fair traders advocate for collective rights such as a living wage, by assuring a price that covers the cost of production, which usually means guaranteed minimum prices for coffee beans, regardless of what the world price is. They also want to assure decent working conditions and that there be no child labour involved.

Some have criticized the Fair Trade Labelling Organizations certification system because sellers in the North don't have to fulfill the same obligations as the producers in the South. The principles of fair trade and workers rights should apply "at home" as well. Overall, richer Northern nations have a higher standard of living than poorer Southern nations, labour rights, Social welfare, life expectancy, literacy rates and income per capita. But, these more wealthy nations still face inequality, poverty, alienation and social conflict (Fridell 226).

"Economist Amartya Sen has criticized the view, held by many in development circles, of 'development' as the process of combating poverty, deprivation, and injustice in the South alone. Instead, he argues for the need to approach development as a process required for all nations, rich or poor, because 'richer countries too often have deeply disadvantaged people, who lack basic opportunities of health care , or functional education, or gainful employment, or economic and social security. Even within very rich countries, sometimes the longevity of substantial groups is no higher than that in much poorer economies of the so-called third world' (Sen 1999: 15, 13-34)(Fridell 226)."

This is becoming more of an issue in Northern countries because of neoliberal spending cutbacks on health care, education and social welfare. Corporate taxes are down, along with working-class wages and rates of unionization. In Canada, the gap between the rich and the poor has been widening since 1989, when the Free Trade Agreement was signed with the United States. The polarization is apparent when looking at inflation-adjusted incomes from the period of 1989 to 2001.

The wealthiest 20 percent of Canadians' incomes rose by 16 percent and the poorest 20 percent lost 7 percent of their incomes (Fridell 227). This reflects on the trend of polarization between jobs that are stable, high-paying with opportunities for advancement and jobs that are low-paying and precarious with no upward mobility and no opportunity for training. The lower-paid employment generally goes to youth and members of Canadian society who are marginalized, such as single mothers, recent immigrants, Aboriginal people, people with disabilities and people with less education. When workers are in 'dead-end' jobs and aren't able to gain any skills development, it impedes social inclusion. Unions and non-governmental organizations in Canada have become concerned with these trends and are attempting to counteract them with assistance to these workers through community economic development initiatives.

The service sector in Canada follows the trend of precarious employment, and this includes the coffee industry. These service sector jobs are generally low-paying, not secure and not unionized. Coffee shop workers in Canada have a very different reality than rural coffee workers and farmers in Africa or South America, but they can still find solidarity with each other. Low-wage earners working in the coffee industry in the North have been affected by neoliberal trade policies and are affected by the exploitative practices of large multinational coffee corporations. Aligning themselves with the principles of fair trade, these workers have mobilized for fairer wages and improved working conditions.

The term 'domestic fair trade' is used when the traditional principles of international fair trade are applied to local production of commodities. This is an ideal tie-in between the fair trade and local food movements as their principles come together. Farmers in developed countries have challenges that are similar to farmers in developing countries. They must work within a global food system that does not value individual farmers, but rather high-yield, intensive factory farms owned by large transnational

companies. They face crippling debt, they are dwindling in numbers and there is an epidemic of depression and suicide. Over 50% of the profits of global food retailing are reaped by just ten companies (Crowell and Sligh 1).

In 2005, a group was formed to discuss the converging interests of family farmers, farm workers, organic advocates and Fair Trade Organizations in local agriculture. The group included representatives from Farmer Direct Co-operative from Saskatchewan, the Wisconsin farmer CROPP co-op and Equal Exchange, a worker co-operative and fair trade organization. There was also a group developing standards for farm workers and standards for fair trade between small-scale farmers and purchasers. A call was put out to all parties interested in launching a movement for 'Domestic Fair Trade' which would follow the principles of international fair trade, but it would be adapted for local production. An initial meeting was held in the summer in 2005 in Wisconsin and it brought together Fair Trade Organizations, farmers, farmer co-ops, worker co-ops, traders and marketers, organic and local agriculture activists, social justice and workers rights activists. A goal of this organization is to safeguard the principles and ideals of the movement from being co-opted for corporate interests. Stakeholders come together to create a domestic fair trade movement towards economic alternatives that are more democratic, socially just and sustainable, that exist in local and global communities. It reviews progress of participants' Fair Trade projects and the development of systems for standards and monitoring. If there were to be a labelling system put in place, the organization would ensure the integrity of any certification label. There are several key principles in the Domestic Fair Trade Working Group, as laid out in *Social Policy Magazine*. Domestic Fair Trade reinforces marginalized family-scale farming to preserve the culture of rural communities and farming, and to create long-term relationships with farmers. Domestic Fair Trade favours co-operative organization to empower producers and workers and to ensure their democratic participation and the equitable distribution of profits with a

living wages. There must be a safe and healthy working environment that aligns with International Labour Organization conventions and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. There is an emphasis on the empowerment of women, minorities, indigenous peoples and other marginalized members of society. Fair trade attempts to reduce the go-betweens between the producer and the consumer and conduct direct trade. Pricing must cover the cost of production and be socially just. It provides fair pay to the producers, fair wages to labourers, and takes into account the principle of equal pay for equal work by women and men. Domestic fair traders work to share the risks of an unstable marketplace among producers, processors, marketers and consumers through more equitable trade partnerships, fair and prompt payment, transparent costs and affordable credit. It supports farm diversification and small-scale farming, emphasizing biodiversity and the use of traditional technologies, available in the public domain, and excludes GMOs. They support indigenous peoples' rights to land and to seed exchange. Educate consumers about the unequal trading system and the need for alternatives and sharing information about the marketplace with producers. To train the next generation of farmers, artisans and workers, apprenticeships are promoted (Crowell and Sligh).

#### **4.5. Sustainability: Environmental practices and food security**

As the global agro-food system has grown, environmental concerns have arisen. With industrialization and capitalism, there has been a trend towards simplification in agriculture. There has been an increase in the use of synthetic fertilizers, farm machinery, animal antibiotics and hormones and enhanced seeds. A dependence on fossil fuels is a part of this system, because of long-distance transport, or 'food miles' and combustion machinery used in place of animal traction. To enhance productivity, certain organisms have been chosen over others with to bigger yields and greater heartiness, creating less diversity of plants and animals. Conventional industrial farming creates chronic

toxicity, including high levels of phosphorus in water and vulnerability to pests. It also poses risks to human populations with virulent strains of disease, like Bovine Spongeform Encephalopathy (BSE) (Weis 29). The use of farm chemicals is also a concern for the health and safety of people working on farms, which ties into environmental concerns, demonstrating that human health cannot be separated from the health of the soil, water and air. The toxicity of farmland does not occur in a vacuum. Studies done by the United Nations have found that up to 40,000 global farm workers die every year from pesticide exposure and 300,000 farm workers in the United States suffer from pesticide-related illnesses (Norberg-Hodge et al 55).

Arguments have been made for the necessity to expand industrial agriculture because of the world's growing population and the need to produce more in order to feed all people and combat world hunger. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, enough food is already produced to feed the world's population, one and half times over (Weis 165). This 'efficient' system is not efficient at evenly distributing food. Because of the control that agricultural trans-national corporations have on the food supply, global consumption is so homogenized, but is so imbalanced at the same time. The global trend of convergence of diets means that diets are becoming more similar worldwide, relying on staple grains like wheat and rice and more animal products, specifically meat and dairy. But this type of diet is spread unevenly and is insecure; there are poles of obesity and hunger.

Large intensive farming operations are not the only way to produce food and, in fact, there are better ways. The National Farmers Union promotes environmentally-safe farming practices by regaining control of food production by farmers, farm families, local communities and regions. Proponents of the fair trade and local food movements are very concerned with environmentally sustainable food production and with building a system that does not create excess in one part of the world while another part goes hungry. Both movements advocate for smaller farms, which are typically

better than larger farms at retaining and recycling organic materials. Small farms can make more intensive use of space by cropping patterns that incorporate complimentary plant species and small livestock and draft animals. Toxicity and carbon emissions reduction and volume of land needed for food production reduction can be intertwined rather than seen as diverging priorities While industrialized farming is advertised as being a good option because it uses less land, it has actually exacerbated inequalities in land distribution (Weis 167.) It is important not to hold up an ideal of the family farm of the past that is unrealistic; it is important to use the model of a smaller farm but apply energy-efficient technologies, whether they be modern or traditional. As Weis writes, "It is important to emphasize that the aim of progressively moving agricultural systems off the chemical and fossil energy treadmill and towards lower-input, labour-entered intensification and more bio diverse agriculture is not about going backwards to more 'primitive' approaches and rejecting modern science (170)." Creating sustainable agriculture is a process of learning, not a rigid model that is imposed.

Fair trade includes environmental sustainability as one of its principles and can help counter the process of environmental degradation. Conventionally, coffee is grown in the full sun after forests have been clear cut to accommodate more crops. High-yield bean varieties are chosen that are planted densely. There are higher yields for a short time, but then the plantations become more prone to water and soil runoff which effects the long-term sustainability of the operation (Jaffee 137). In fair trade practice, shade-grown coffee leaves more forest intact and birds and other animals are able to maintain their natural habitat. Shade-grown coffee has been found to be extremely bio diverse, often containing the same diversity as the original forest, with a variety of plants, insects and soil organisms. When a sample of shade-grown coffee plots was studied in Oaxaca, Mexico by local biologists, they identified sixty kinds of plants along with thirty non-identifiable ones, eighteen kinds of mammals, several reptile species and over one hundred bird species ( Jaffee 135). The protection of bird habitat is particularly

important to note. Since the widespread growing of 'sun' coffee, populations of migrating birds have declined in consequence of rainforest destruction for more coffee plantations. Because shade-grown coffee is planted among existing trees, carbon dioxide is filtered and erosion is minimized by the moisture retention in the soil. When small producers receive the higher fair-trade price, they are incentivized to continue the practices associated with organic shade-grown coffee, investing in systems that control erosion, conserve soil fertility and increase water filtration (Jaffee 163).

The **organic farming** movement and the fight against GMOs has cross-over between the fair trade and local food movements. The organic coffee strategy pre-dates fair trade – it was started in the early 1980s as a way for producers to add more value to their coffee and make a higher profit. Mexico is the World's largest producer of organic coffee (Jaffee 91) The organic movement started in Mexico in the 1980s and has spread. Consumer demand for organic coffee exploded in the 1990s, especially in the United States. Fair trade producers who converted to organic a long time ago find themselves more stable than those who only recently sought certification. Organic certification is strongly encouraged in fair trade and for many the two go hand-in hand. When coffee is shade grown, it requires little or no chemical fertilizers, pesticides or herbicides to begin with.

A major ecological reason put forward to produce and eat local food is to reduce the amount of food miles that are used to transport food from 'farm to plate.' The burning of fossil fuels for long-distance food transportation is a contributing factor to climate change. The calculation of food miles has been discussed as inexact, but it's important to keep focus on the overall idea of short-distance food consumption that may be examined on a case-by-case basis. Other options should be explored, for example, shipping by train is more fuel-efficient than trucks and should be utilized more (NFU website). The local food movement also encourages biodiversity, diversification of crops and general practices of sustainable farming. In Canada, intensive agriculture used to produce high quantities of

grain crops has been detrimental to the environment, with problems such as soil erosion, fertilizer and pesticide contamination of soil and water, and reduced biodiversity. There is so much water and energy that goes into intensive agriculture and we are getting less out of it than we are putting in: "In North America, it takes approximately two units of fossil fuels to harvest one unit of energy captured from the sun by the plant (Elton 76)." The International Institute for Sustainable Development has suggested that perhaps the world would be better off with local food systems (Elton 77).

The lack of biodiversity in conventional agriculture is an important conversation that takes place in the local food movement. With limited varieties of crops being planted, food security could be compromised. If a typical crop is attacked by disease or by a predator, the world supply of said crop could be wiped out. Planting a variety of species aids in the recovery of the crop. Seed saving, which of course is nothing new, is rising in popularity. In Canada, the federal government performs this task, with vaults of seeds preserved across the country. Individuals and groups are saving their seeds as well, no longer able to find their preferred varieties sold by seed companies. Farmers are facing new technology in the form of 'terminator seeds,' seeds that are genetically modified and are unable to germinate a second time. Therefore, farmers must buy seeds every year without being able to collect seeds to re-plant. The main organization in the Canadian seed-saving movement is called the Seeds of Diversity. This group has the goal of preserving the biodiversity of Canada's food supply by keeping a seed library, coordinating seed-exchanges and encouraging the cultivation of heritage seed varieties (Elton 88).

#### **4.6. Community and Economic Development (economic impacts; growing the local economy and benefiting citizens of the region, at home or abroad)**

After assuring that producers make a living wage, are not under crushing debt and can feed

themselves and their families, the next step is growing communities in ways that are not possible when poverty is widespread and persistent. With more and more Canadian farmers leaving the business, it is not only farms that are negatively effected by the exodus. Rural communities suffer when farmers suffer. After populating and developing Canada for over a century, now rural schools and stores are being closed down and train tracks ripped up, creating ghost towns (NFU Farm Crisis 2). Both the fair trade and local food movements address the issues of rural regeneration and community development. To fix rural communities, they focus on small family farms and less on big business. Education is at the center of rural regeneration: training and opportunity for improvement for producers, education for their children and mentorships for the next generation of farmers. The ripple effects can be seen throughout the community when farmers and their families are educated and empowered. They are then able to employ and empower others in their community. The National Farmers Union has the goal of “involving, educating and empowering rural youth for a better future; building healthy, vibrant rural communities;” and aim to “promote a higher standard of community in agriculture (NFU Farm Crisis 3).”

In fair trade, social premiums are provided for community development, on top of the fair trade price, that doesn't go to individual producers, but rather to their organizations or communities for collective projects. This money goes into a communal fund for workers and farmers to use to improve their social, economic and environmental conditions and to generally improve quality of life. “The use of this additional income is decided upon democratically by producers within the farmers' organization, or by workers on a plantation. The Premium is invested in education and healthcare, farm improvements to increase yield and quality, or processing facilities to increase income. As many projects funded by the Premium are communal, the broader community, outside the producer organization, often benefits from Fairtrade (FLO website).” Also, if producers ask for it, fair trade

standards require buyers to give a financial advance on contracts, which is called pre-financing. This is to help producers access capital and to overcome what can be one of the biggest obstacles to their development. “This promotes entrepreneurship and can assist the economic development of entire rural communities (FLO site).”

## **5. Consumer Awareness and Public Involvement, Organizations and Events**

### **5.1. Consumer Involvement**

An important part of the work of the fair trade and local food movements is bringing awareness to social and economic problems that farmers and workers face, on a local and global level. Dedicated activists toiling away in the dark will only help up to a certain point. Eventually, the general population has to be on board. The problem begins with a population that is more and more urbanized and disconnected with rural life. People residing in urban centres may have never even visited a farm or understand what modern farming looks like. Being unaware and disconnected from the food supply creates a situation where environmental and human rights abuses can occur without consumers knowing what they are buying was unethically produced. The conventional global food system also creates expectations for the availability of items. People in Northern countries are used to having constant access to bananas, coffee, chocolate and other food items that cannot grow in the climate in which they live. Consumers are used to getting everything at all times of the year and are not in tune with growing cycles. Winter 2011 saw a hard freeze in areas that grow high concentrations of fruits and vegetables, like Mexico, and areas of the United States like California, Florida and Arizona which affected the availability of produce during the winter throughout the US and Canada. When incidents like this occur, consumers get a glimmer of the global system and where their food comes from. No

matter how agriculture becomes mechanized, it can still be devastated by bad weather.

The global food system also masks the real costs of the food we eat, like carbon emissions and poverty conditions. This can be explained by the concept of 'commodity fetishism,' which is when people come to understand social relations as a the interaction between things and not the interactions between people. Only the final product of labour is seen, and not the work that was put into it. Philosopher and economist Karl Marx described capital as almost having a life of its own, having power over workers and making financial returns (Hudson and Hudson "Removing the Veil": 415). Objects become what holds value and not the labour that created it. While the market is a product of social interactions between human beings, commodity fetishism makes it seem like the market is the all-powerful and invisible thing that controls people and capital. Labour is regulated through the exchange of commodities in a capitalist system. This way of thinking affects not only consumers but producers as well. A person's work is zapped of creativity and reward when the fruits of their labour go directly to the capitalist, their boss or the CEO of the company. Work becomes a means to an end and is not rewarding in itself. The reward becomes consumption in a capitalist society that promotes narcissism by alienating workers from each other. Consumption is presented as a cure to this alienation, anxiety and loneliness. For wealthy consumers, they are "convinced that they are too powerless to affect life in a meaningful way [and] people turn towards self-improvement and building a superficial identity based on material furnished by advertising and mass culture.. (Fridell 268)." The producer has no contact with the consumer and therefore gets no satisfaction from seeing something they made put to good use. The lack of contact also negatively affects how the consumer sees the producer: they don't see them.

In this global food system, only the final product is seen, not the way it was made. As an example that is useful in understanding the Canadian prairies context, "Grain grown by a small farmer

using few chemical inputs and working his or her own land is put into the same market as grain grown by an agro-industrial operation using wage labor and massive quantities of chemicals. In the process of exchange, the grain, produced through very different processes, will be evaluated only on the basis of its characteristics as a final product (Hudson and Hudson "Removing the Veil": 417)." Marketing has made hiding a product's true nature even easier, with packaging, commercials and the price tag. Long-distance trade has also helped to blur the historical, social and environmental origins of commodities.

The alternative-trade movement attempts to counteract this ignorance by making visible hidden work and costs. Fair traders and local food activists seek the ethical sourcing of goods by creating ethical trade models. The market lacks transparency and reduces food to a commodity and therefore decommmodification is the ultimate goal of fair traders. Northern partners in fair trade programs depend on 'ethical consumers' to purchase their products. Without these consumers, the system does not work. Marketing research conducted in Europe has shown that an important proportion of consumers are willing to make buying decisions based on ethical considerations. The majority of these ethical consumers are middle-aged women who are middle-to-upper class with post-secondary education and managerial or administrative types of employment (Fridell 263). This may be because of the social construction of femininity that women are cooperative, social and community-oriented. It may also be because of women being relegated to the private sphere away from traditional politics, and being more amenable to volunteer community work rather than overt political action. Perhaps being more comfortable with 'political consumerism,' women may be more likely to participate in boycotts and labelling initiatives (Fridell 264). Those who are on the upper rungs of the socio-economic ladder are able to pay more for specialty food items, such as fair trade coffee and locally-made artisan bread. In Canada, the households with the top 16 percent income spend 56 percent more on coffee per person and shopped at specialty food stores 46 percent more of the time than the lowest-income 43 percent of

households (Fridell 264). Higher-income individuals can evidently afford ethical products that are priced higher than their conventionally-produced counterparts and may want to display their wealth by purchasing specialty products. But there is more to it, because in this case people are choosing to purchase ethically-produced products and not just luxury items. Some people might purchase fair trade goods to appease guilt that comes with living a comfortable life. Some may want to improve the lives of others. Some may be participants in other social movements and see fair trade as another part of the bigger picture of social and political activism. When people are aware of the problems that the conventional trade system causes, they can then begin to make choices as consumers, knowing what they know about how and where food is produced. Some people and companies come up with a hierarchy of priorities when it comes to the food they consume. Meaning, a person looking to buy fruit would decide what was most important to them about their food in general, decide what was second most important and so on. If the first priority is not possible, then they would choose next on the list. If local food and fair trade are important to the individual, the list might look something like this:

- 1.Local, starting with 100 mile/km radius, then from within the province, then within the country
- 2.Family farmed
- 3.Fairly traded
- 4.Made by union labour
- 5.Organic and/or hormone free
- 6.Produced using sustainable farming practices

Corporate Social Responsibility programs have been growing in recent years and so there is reason to believe that there is still room to grow in ethical markets. Consumer awareness campaigns, labelling initiatives and challenges are all efforts to “remove the veil” from what we consume.

## **5.2. Labelling Initiatives**

Labelling systems can be an effective tool to signal to the consumer that something is special about the product. It is especially effective when the logo is recognizable and is known to be trusted. FairTrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO) was created in Germany in 1997 and united and harmonized other labels, Max Havelaar and Transfair, under worldwide standards and certification. In 2002, the FLO Board of Directors started to include producers and now producers are full members and co-owners of FLO. The Fairtrade Certification Mark was launched by Fairtrade International, whose goals were to enhance the visibility of the mark when placed among other options at the supermarket, to facilitate cross border trade and simplify export procedures for both producers and exporters. Fairtrade International is now divided in two independent organizations, one that sets policy and the other that carries forward the set standards: FLO sets Fairtrade standards and supports producers by strengthening their capabilities and supporting worker organizations. FLO-CERT is the arm that inspects, certifies and audits traders. The ISEAL Alliance, which is the global organization for social and environmental standards, recognizes Fairtrade International as having the highest standards in ethical trade (FLO site). The Fairtrade Certification Mark is used on products that follow the fair trade standards set out by FLO, which fall into two categories. The standards that apply to farmers in co-operatives or working in a democratic structure are that all members share in decision-making processes and the group must be transparent and non-discriminatory. Producers must be paid the Fairtrade Minimum Price and/or the Fairtrade Premium. The standards that apply to hired workers include decent wages, the right to join unions, upholding up health and safety standards and adequate housing when applicable (FLO site).

The Rainforest Alliance approaches biodiversity conservation and the sustainability of agricultural livelihoods by changing land-use and business practices and modifying consumer

behaviour. Their aim is to protect ecosystems and workers. The Alliance deploys the labels ECO-OK and “Better Banana” labels on bananas to signify that where they grow and are harvested, rainforests are protected. The requirements for the Rainforest banana labels are different and less ambitious in the area of farmer supports than fair trade banana labels, with more emphasis on the environmental side and less on the social spectrum. The less ambitious labelling project has overtaken the ethical banana market in Denmark and fair trade banana sales dropped, because the country's largest retailer could get the other labelled produce for a better price (Hudson and Hudson “Removing the Veil” 425). This is the challenge of having several labelling systems, with those that are less aspirational than others luring retailers with a lower price. Retailers can then tap into the ethical marketplace, but always keep their profits at top of mind.

There are labelling initiatives to indicate local food as well. The Eco-Logik brand in New Brunswick is a Canadian example of this type labelling. The farmer co-operative Really Local Harvest wanted to communicate to customers that their produce was locally grown in an environmentally sustainable way. Most of the farms in the co-op are not organic, but they adhere to standards of weed and pest control that reduce chemicals used. The standards are beneficial to the farmers because they buy little to no chemicals, thus reducing their costs and improving profits. The label is beneficial to their customers because they can be assured that the produce falls under the New Brunswick and federal governments' regulations and the water had been tested for pathogens (Elton 33).

### **5.3. Fair Trade and Local Food Organizations, Outreach and Events in Canada**

There are many non-governmental organizations working to bring awareness to food issues. They do outreach, plan campaigns, develop policy and lobby governments. They are an important component in promoting and linking the fair trade and local food movements.

**FairTrade Canada** was formerly Transfair Canada; the change to its name was made in 2011.

Along with the new name, the organization adopted the label of Fairtrade International. As a member of Fairtrade International, it holds the same core values as its parent. Fairtrade Canada licenses and audits companies in Canada that sell Fair Trade Certified products. For Canadian licensed companies using the label, there are several requirements that must be followed. They must “report transactions with traders/producer organizations on a quarterly basis, submit to an audit of records, use the Fair Trade Certified Mark according to norms designed to provide consumers with the guarantee the product is Fair Trade Certified. If they sell conventional products in addition to Fair Trade Certified products, maintain business systems that distinguish between the two (Transfair Canada handout).” There are now hundreds of these certified products that are available in Canada that originate from over 1.4 million farmers in 59 countries around the world, represented by 632 certified producer organizations (Transfair info slip). Fairtrade Canada works with Canadian companies to ensure that the mark keeps its integrity and is employed properly so as not to mislead the public. Promotion is an integral part of the work that is done as they work together with community groups, companies, and individual citizens to promote Fair Trade and its certified products. To further develop the public’s understanding of fair trade, they build partnerships, launch campaigns, create promotional materials, plan events and engage the media. They want to build momentum so that producers can sell more of their products on fair terms. Fairtrade Canada is operated by the fees that companies pay in order to sell items with the certification mark (Fairtrade Canada website).

The seeds were planted to establish **Équiterre** at the 1992 Earth Summit in Brazil. Some of the Canadian participants were inspired by the Summit discussions and decided to form a group to find solutions to environmental problems, large scale industrialization and the exploitation of workers in the South. Action for Solidarity, Equity, Environment and Development (ASEED) was formed in 1993 and

got non-profit status and a name change a few years later. Équiterre is based in Quebec City and Montreal and is founded on the idea that everyday choices made by individuals can make a big impact towards changing in the world. They examine food, transportation, housing, gardening and shopping. Along with governments, citizens and organizations, it develops projects in agriculture, transportation, fair trade, energy, responsible consumption and climate change.

“Équiterre helps build a social movement by encouraging individuals, organizations and governments to make ecological and equitable choices, in a spirit of solidarity. Our consulting, awareness-raising and research projects offer concrete solutions to promote human and environmental health, social justice and community development at home and abroad. We also advocate publicly on environmental and social issues, encouraging decision makers to adopt laws and practices that will contribute to a society that is sustainable and fair (Équiterre website).”

It is an organization that looks at issues in a global sense, taking into account local issues as well as issues abroad.

The **Food Sovereignty Coalition/Coalition pour la souveraineté alimentaire** is another Quebec-based organization that participates in the local food and fair trade movements. The Coalition is concerned about world hunger and the growing percentage of Canadians who rely on food aid, which was 11.9% in 2002 and in 2008 it was up to 14.5%. Meanwhile, large companies are controlling the food supply, with five companies earning 52% of Canadian retail food sales and in the province of Quebec, three companies earn 82% of the sales (Food Sovereignty brochure 3). They are concerned by the long distances food travels on average to get from farm to plate, the fact that 75% of the world's species have disappeared over the past century to make way for more productive plants and that Canada loses 67 farms a week (Food Sovereignty Coalition 4).

The Coalition works to “uphold peoples’ right to define their own food and agriculture policy, in keeping with basic human rights, and with the right of nations to develop national food-security

programs based on their own territory and resources” through the promotion of international accords and national measures (Food Sovereignty Coalition 5). The Coalition calls for federal and provincial rules about food sovereignty, such as compulsory country-of-origin labelling for food sold in Canada, the protection and promotion of supply management and the protection of agricultural land in Canada.

There are some interesting fair trade and local food organizations, projects and events happening in Manitoba. Many of the organizations look at the issues holistically and how their values can apply locally and globally.

**Fair Trade Manitoba** is a project of the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation, which is a coalition committed to development that protects the environment, global cooperation and social justice and self-determination for all people. Fair Trade Manitoba aims to spread the word about fair trade and growth the availability of fair trade products in the province. They liaise with vendors and consumers to provide infrastructure in order to increase fair trade sales. They produce a fair trade online shopping guide that is always updated with the latest stores and restaurants that carry the products, along with organizing shopping events to link merchants and consumers. Fair Trade Manitoba also works with other institutions and all levels of government to push for adoption of fair purchasing policies. Speaker's series are arranged, and visits to clubs, schools, churches, workplaces and union locals are organized (Fair Trade Manitoba pamphlet 4). An example of an event is a “Fair Trade Coffee Break” with a guest speaker at the downtown library with free chocolate and coffee, encouraging people to bring their own mug.

The Fair Trade One-Month Challenge is a yearly challenge organized by Fair Trade Manitoba. It starts on Valentine’s Day, to acknowledge the mass quantities of chocolate produced under unfair conditions that is consumed on that day. Participants pledge to drink fair trade coffee and tea and eat fair trade chocolate for 30 days. People are encouraged to participate to join the increasing number of

Manitobans supporting fair trade, to support fair wages and working conditions, promote sustainable incomes and to foster global justice. Participants sign a pledge form, receive updates and progress reports and are sent information about fair trade initiatives. The tag line for this challenge is “30 Days, 3 Simple Luxuries, 1 Better World (Fair Trade Challenge Poster).”

**100 Mile Manitoba** is a group of Manitobans who care about the distance that food travels, the energy used in growing and processing food and the working conditions for the people who produced it. The group is troubled by the difficulty in finding details about the food we consume, whether it is where it came from, what the labour practices look like and who is making the profits. They aim to promote and enjoy the diversity of locally-grown food and raise awareness of food justice issues in the province and globally. They are seeking a way to eat that is more socially just and ecological while building collective action around food justice

They also want to increase direct relationships between consumers and Manitoba food producers and look for new opportunities for Manitoba growers. 100 Mile Manitoba maintains a map of community-supported agriculture, local farms, farmers’ markets and stores that carry local food items (100MileManitoba.org). They list Fair Trade Manitoba as one of their friends, a nod to local food advocates and fair traders working together in solidarity.

This organization encourages the 100-Mile Diet, which is a diet of eating only what is produced within a one hundred mile radius from where one lives. In 2007, a 100-Mile Challenge took place in Manitoba where participants committed to eating locally for 100 days, starting in September. There were canning and cold storage workshops, a wine tasting of locally-made wines and a wrap-up potluck at the end of the challenge in December. The CBC documented a town that participated in the 100-Mile Diet in Mission, B.C., which aired in the spring of 2009. The Canadian authors of *The 100-Mile Diet*, who ate locally for a year, were on site to give advice and coach the participants.

**Food Matters Manitoba** is a registered charity with a goal to have healthy, sustainable and fair food for all and a just and sustainable food system in the province of Manitoba.

Its vision is expressed in the Manitoba Food Charter. In the Charter, the challenges that Canada and Manitoba face are expressed, such as an urbanized and global economy that can hinder the development of agricultural communities. Certain demographics are negatively affected by the current food system and cannot always access high quality food, such as people living in the North, in the inner-cities, and people who are low-income. People from rural, urban and northern communities are disconnected. According to the **Manitoba Food Charter**, a just and sustainable food system in Manitoba means that:

“Farmers, fishers, harvesters, processors and distributors can generate adequate incomes and use ecologically sustainable practices; respect for the traditional hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, and conservation practices of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples within sustainable limits; a sustainable balance between fair international agricultural trade and diverse vibrant production for the local market; healthy relationships between producers and consumers in urban, rural and northern Manitoba communities; province-wide availability of a variety of nutritious and affordable food through accessible retail outlets and food service operations and the economic means to obtain sufficient daily food for health and dignity; well grounded confidence in the quality and safety of our food; and easy access to understandable accurate information about nutrition, food composition, the ways food is grown, preserved, processed, purchased, and cooked, and how to minimize waste (Food Charter 1).”

Drafted through public consultations, the Food Charter balances the needs of producers, First Nations, the environment, and of international and local trade.

For five years, Food Matters Manitoba has organized the Growing Local Conference, which connects growers, traditional harvesters and consumers to share and learn about food security issues. Attendees discuss the social justice movement, North-South connections, youth and First Nations

issues, biodiversity and more. Another popular event put in by Food Matters Manitoba is the Localvore Iron Chef Cook-Off, which pits high school students against each other in a competition to cook a dish made of local ingredients found in Manitoba all year-round, since the event is held in the middle of winter. Participants must form teams of four, connect with Manitoba farmers and create an original recipe using three local ingredients and receive extra points if the ingredients are sustainable grown and harvested (Cook-Off poster).

The **Marquis Project** is based in Brandon, Manitoba and is a non-profit organization that endeavors to strengthen international development. It was started in 1979 as a small resource centre for world issues and is now recognized nationally. Its goal is to bring forward economic, political and social issues on local and global levels and educate Manitobans about these issues. The Project is an active participant in partnerships and projects that improve the quality of life in small rural communities in developing countries (Marquis Project 4). The Marquis Project runs a worldly good shop, a radio show, a debater lunch series. The statement of debate during the 2011 Development Week was “It is impossible to feed the world’s people using organically produced food.” Later in the week, there was a panel discussion about “the importance of sustainability in our local communities while we pursue broader development goals globally”, where the mayor of Brandon was a panelist (Marquis 2011 newsletter 3). Youth education is a big part of their outreach and they use games for this purpose. The Fair Game/Équimonde is designed for use in grades 10-12, in Geography and World Issues classes. The game explores costs and benefits of world trading systems and presents a model of major forces driving globalization in a world that is divided by population, resources and wealth. “Players trade in a global market, trying to prosper in the face of fluctuating markets and conflicts between governments and corporations... (Fair Game brochure 1).” The Global Trader is a game aimed at young people in the middle years in which they learn competition and cooperation by buying and selling resources. The

students learn about inequalities in the world and why some nations are more successful than others.

The game creates a sense of understanding for the students regarding people living in countries that are disadvantaged. “Students quickly learn that all regions do not enter a trading relationship with equal resources. This experience of inequality provides the classroom teacher with the opportunity to discuss the economic and social impact of resource inequalities (Global trader pamphlet 3).”

The motto of the **Harvest Moon Society** is “Healthy Land, Healthy Communities.” Its goal is long-term economic and environmental rural sustainability. The HMS lives in Clearwater, Manitoba at the Harvest Moon Learning Centre, formerly the local elementary school, a facility that provides eco-agricultural training. It houses workshops and events, making a bridge between local area farmers and urban consumers, with the goal of increasing food security and income for participating farmers. The Harvest Moon Local Food Initiative has the goal of creating a more local, fair and sustainable food system in Manitoba. The message is that people are disconnected from the people who produce the food they eat. The Who’s Your Farmer initiative encourages connections in the community and greater awareness of food issues. They demonstrate that food affects everyone and not just farmers. It is also a way to grow more respect for the farming profession: “You may have an accountant, a doctor, or even a lawyer, but do you have a farmer - someone you can identify as providing you or your family with local, safe, healthy and nutritious food? Our network of Food Buying Clubs or local food communities offers a unique alternative to the mainstream food system. Eaters are given access to high quality, healthy, fair local foods directly from their own farmer. Meanwhile, farmers are empowered to protect the environment, ethically care for animals and sustain livelihoods. Become a part of this grass roots initiative to reinvent a more sustainable food system (Harvest Moon Initiative).”

The Harvest Moon Festival is an annual event held in Clearwater with a fair trade fair, a farmer’s market, musical performances and workshops.

Beyond non-profit organizations, charities and community groups, there are also some companies and co-ops that are truly dedicated to the vision of an alternative global food system, such as Planet Bean Coffee in Guelph, Ontario. It is a company that is driven by fair trade principles applied to their supply of coffee that comes from overseas and applied to their workers at home. The principals of fair trade apply to their producers, their workers, the shareholders and their customers. “We are respectful of the many hands that touch our coffee - from the farmers who grow and harvest it, to the roasters who roast it, the baristas who brew it and to those who drink it (Planet Bean website).” Planet Bean strives to be ecologically sustainable: They believe that a successful business is measured by more than profits but also by a small ecological footprint by using organic production. Believing the economy should be people-centric, they are a co-op with a democratic workplace. Planet Bean is 100% fair trade: it roasts beans, serves coffee at two locations and also sells wholesale beans. It advertises that it has an innovative, fair and sustainable business model.

## **Conclusion: Lessons Learned and Future Work**

How can the fair trade and local food movements co-exist while achieving their respective and mutual goals? By continuing to work together on commonalities, such as criticisms of the conventional global food system, the emphasis on workers' rights, environmental concerns and the loss of vibrant rural communities and culture.

Some valid criticisms were presented and discussed. Criticisms of local food include inexact calculations of greenhouse gas emissions, the effect of local consumption on Southern farmers, possible lack of efficiency, and critics wondering if a focus on local production is a valid pursuit at all. While most critics still acknowledge the validity of the fair trade movement, criticisms of fair trade include questions about actual results and whether it is gimmicky, whether it is realistic and if it goes far

enough. While maybe not altogether resolved, the aim has been to continue a dialogue about current conditions in global trade and efforts to amend certain negative conditions. The goal was to demonstrate that like-minded philosophies, whether local or fair trade, can work together on issues that effect farmers and workers everywhere, such as the coffee bean crisis and the ongoing farm crisis. Proponents of both movements have made negative remarks when it comes to the World Trade Organization, specifically the Agreement on Agriculture. There were also joint criticisms regarding the North American Free Trade Agreement and how it has negatively affected Mexico and Canada. In both movements, cutting out middleman is important in creating direct links between producers and consumers. In the Mexican coffee business, the middlemen, 'coyotes,' often pay too little for beans and in countries like Canada, the middlemen are so numerous; marketers, distributors, retailers. This is why co-operatives are popular in fair trade and in local food advocacy. With the support of a co-op, farmers and workers can do more together than they could individually, sharing the risks and the profits.

The darkest corners of the global food economy were explored: farmers have been driven off the land in the North and South, there is extreme farm debt, growing drug crops and farmer suicide.

Ideas that not been explored in this paper or have just been briefly touched upon would be worthwhile to expand upon in a future research project: Exploring the phenomenon of migrant workers and how they are shaping modern agriculture, with an example being workers from Mexico who have been driven to the United States in search of jobs and a better quality of life. Migrant labour has been affected by immigration law in the United States and has caused crops to rot in the fields, because there is no one to harvest them. Studying migrant labour within intensive livestock operations would be interesting, such as the Maple Leaf processing plant in Brandon, Manitoba and how it has affected the larger community. The commodification of food was discussed at length, but it would be important to continue the discussion of the commodification of bottled water, especially in the Canadian context.

The case of the dismantling Canadian Wheat Board is worth studying, as it ties into the ideology of “market freedom.” Further expanding on the idea that rural communities are distressed by the current global food system, it would be interesting to look at food insecurity in First Nations communities and other Northern or isolated parts of Canada and discussing the Nutrition North program. This paper mainly focused on food and coffee and did not address sweatshops in the textile and other industries. Loss of local production extends to other markets as well. For example, there used to be large garment industry in Winnipeg, Manitoba, but now it is very small, with the garment work being done overseas to cut costs. Inner-city food deserts would be interesting to further research, with the food justice movement taking on inner-city healthy food. When there are no supermarkets in the area, sometimes large transnational corporations like Walmart are the only places to buy food. Walmart has even begun to carry local and organic produce and it would be interesting to discuss the merits of that, whether it is simply corporate 'greenwashing' or if it is truly beneficial to the community. The grey areas of child labour were not explored in this paper. Some local food literature talks about contribution of farm families' children, but fair trade principles do not condone child labour. It would be worthwhile to explore at what age is appropriate to assist with farm work and also what type of farm work is appropriate for young people.

Gender was touched on briefly when discussing ethical consumption, but this paper did not delve into gender politics within the movements. The National Farmers Union strives to give farm women an equal voice in shaping farm policy and it would be an interesting piece of research to discuss women in farming and women migrant workers. A study on seed vaults around the world would be fascinating; in Canada, in Sweden, in Australia and to follow up on some seed research that was destroyed during Egyptian political unrest in January 2011. Another future project would be going further than fair trade and discussing a democratically planned economy.

An important question to continue asking ourselves is what can we do as Canadians to improve the way food is produced and distributed? We can produce and eat less ruminant animals and the products that come from them, such as lamb, cow and dairy products. It takes less water and energy to produce vegetables and grains, and therefore greater rates of vegetarianism should be considered. We should learn more about what to consume that comes from Canada and what procure from afar, while always assuring that superior working conditions and better environmental practices are upheld. How can we eat locally and trade fairly? As discussed earlier, we can create a hierarchy of choices in our food decisions. For example, if local is not available, then choose a family farm. If a family farm is not available, then choose fair trade, etc. Fair traders and local food activists must look at the bigger picture to determine what the ultimate goal is of reforming the current global food system? Is it environmental protection, the protection of workers, fair wages or creating stable local economies? If it's the case that they are all priorities, we can support both. We can buy locally the produce that grows in Canada, such as potatoes and wheat, and assure that local farmers live and work in good conditions. For luxury items, like coffee, tea and bananas, Canadian consumers can look into where they come from and assure that the conditions are humane.

“As globalization expands, it is becoming clearer that many of the challenges faced by small producers and workers in marginalized regions of the world are similar to those encountered by rural communities in industrialized countries (Crowell and Sligh 1).” Farmers, along with members of rural and urban communities, have a stake in how the global food system is run because it affects us all.

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