

ABSTRACT

Salad is good, and French fries are bad. People who eat salad are healthy, and those who eat French fries are not. These are some of the assumptions and dichotomies produced by dominant discourses around food and health in America. One of the main discourses is that individuals have complete responsibility for, and control over, their own health. This, by extension, often leads to the assumption that unhealthy people (or those whose bodies society deems “unhealthy”) are ignorant or disinterested in their own well-being.

Although there is some acknowledgement of the role that systemic socio-economic factors can play in health, this often leads to the designation of certain areas as in need of interventions; programs that seek to improve such a community’s health generally focus on trying to change individual consumption habits. These programs are often run by outsiders and assume a lack of knowledge or access to fresh produce, something that is debated by academic literature. Additionally, many of these programs enter communities with preconceived ideas of what “healthy” is, which may not align with the eating traditions of individual households or the community as a whole.¹

The Food Project is a Boston area non-profit seeking to improve food access and food equity, and ultimately to reform the food system through youth education and empowerment. To this end, the organization hires diverse crews of high-school age youth for summers of farming and participating in social justice workshops. I conducted a case study of the Lynn, MA branch, trying to answer the question: In what ways does The Food Project try to challenge the existing food system and its supporting discourses, and how are its efforts and affects on youth shaped by dominant discourses about health and healthy eating? For this case study, I conducted partially structured interviews with most of the youth in Root Crew (older youth with multiple summers of participation), and six months later, with three staff members who worked directly with the Root Crew.

I examine the staff and youth experiences in the context of the dominant discourses about health and food. By comparing the staffs’ views and intentions in their work with the youths’ perceptions of what they are learning, I am able to reflect on the results of The Food Project’s program, both intentional and unintentional, and thus on its effectiveness. Ultimately I argue that because The Food Project exists within a society molded by the systems it is trying to question, both its impact and the organization itself are products and critiques of them.

¹ Julie Guthman, *Weighing In: Obesity, Food Justice, and the Limits of Capitalism*, California Studies in Food and Culture: 32 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

FOR THE LOVE OF CARROTS AND COMMUNITY

EXAMINING *THE FOOD PROJECT'S* YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN THE
CONTEXT OF DOMINANT DISCOURSES ABOUT FOOD AND HEALTH

ROSALIND IRENE WALTZ-PETERS
MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT

THESIS ADVISOR:
PROFESSOR CATHERINE CORSON

COMMITTEE:
PROFESSOR TIMOTHY FARNHAM
PROFESSOR DOUGLAS AMY

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I. INTRODUCTION

Everyone seems to have an opinion about what belongs on your dinner plate and how it got there. A great many people seem to agree that the way Americans eat at present needs to be changed, but their reasoning behind these beliefs and proposed alternatives are numerous and conflicting. What is the right way to eat? *Is there a right way to eat?* Much of the current discourse about eating in America is interwoven with discourses about health and weight, and discourses about nature, the environment, and human separation from it.

A wide array of studies, articles, and recommendations reference the “obesity epidemic” in America.² Although many contest the terminology describing the collective weight gain of the American population in recent decades,³ and some question whether the measurements used to

² Charlotte Biltekoff, *Eating Right in America : The Cultural Politics of Food & Health* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013); Jeanne Firth, “Healthy Choices and Heavy Burdens: Race, Citizenship and Gender in the ‘Obesity Epidemic,’” *Journal of International Women’s Studies* 13, no. 2 (January 3, 2013): 33–50; Yuki Kato and Laura McKinney, “Bringing Food Desert Residents to an Alternative Food Market: A Semi-Experimental Study of Impediments to Food Access,” *Agriculture and Human Values* 32, no. 2 (August 26, 2014): 215–27, doi:10.1007/s10460-014-9541-3; Bonnie Ghosh-Dastidar et al., “Distance to Store, Food Prices, and Obesity in Urban Food Deserts,” *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 47, no. 5 (November 2014): 587–95, doi:10.1016/j.amepre.2014.07.005; White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity, “Solving the Problem of Childhood Obesity Within a Generation: White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity Report to the President,” 2010, http://www.letsmove.gov/sites/letsmove.gov/files/TaskForce_on_Childhood_Obesity_May2010_FullReport.pdf; Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma : A Natural History of Four Meals* (New York : Penguin Press, 2006., 2006); Jane E. Brody, “Attacking the Obesity Epidemic by First Figuring Out Its Cause,” *The New York Times*, September 12, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/13/health/13brody.html>; Susan Greenhalgh, “Weighty Subjects: The Biopolitics of the U.S. War on Fat,” *American Ethnologist* 39, no. 3 (August 1, 2012): 471–87, doi:10.1111/j.1548-1425.2012.01375.x.

³ Firth, “Healthy Choices and Heavy Burdens”; Julie Guthman, “Doing Justice to Bodies? Reflections on Food Justice, Race, and Biology,” *Antipode*, no. 5 (2014): 1153, doi:10.1111/anti.1017/abstract; Greenhalgh, “Weighty Subjects.”

describe this trend are reasonable and relevant,⁴ the general consensus does seem to acknowledge some change in the average American's physique over the last several decades.⁵ Whether or not having excess fat tissue on one's body actually has deleterious health effects is a matter of academic debate, but mainstream discourse blames extra weight for leading to many other health issues, from diabetes to heart attacks.⁶

The dominant discourse on obesity also portrays it as a result of personal behavioral failures, and thus its solution as individuals' responsibilities.⁷ As discussed later in this paper, some literature connects this focus on the individual to the predominance of neoliberal ideology and discourse in American culture today.⁸ Under neoliberal thought, system-based changes focus on altering the scope or reach of the system so that they can change purchasing and consumption patterns, but do not alter the underlying concept that the free market can most justly and efficiently serve society.⁹

Many such programs focus on improving so-called "food deserts," or low-income areas with little geographic access to grocery stores selling "healthy food," usually determined based on the presence of fresh produce.¹⁰ Some academic studies indicate that there are correlations between areas classified as food deserts and neighborhoods predominantly populated by racial

⁴ Guthman, *Weighing In*; Greenhalgh, "Weighty Subjects"; Jerry Shannon, "Food Deserts: Governing Obesity in the Neoliberal City," *Progress in Human Geography* 38, no. 2 (April 2014): 248–66, doi:10.1177/0309132513484378.

⁵ Biltekoff, *Eating Right in America*; Greenhalgh, "Weighty Subjects"; Guthman, *Weighing In*; Brody, "Attacking the Obesity Epidemic by First Figuring Out Its Cause"; Shannon, "Food Deserts."

⁶ Nikolas C. Heynen, Maria Kaika, and E. Swyngedouw, *In the Nature of Cities : Urban Political Ecology and the Politics of Urban Metabolism*, Questioning Cities Series (London: Routledge, 2006); Guthman, *Weighing In*.

⁷ Biltekoff, *Eating Right in America*.

⁸ Alison Hope Alkon and Teresa Marie Mares, "Food Sovereignty in U.S. Food Movements: Radical Visions and Neoliberal Constraints," *Agriculture and Human Values* 29, no. 3 (September 2012): 347–59, doi:10.1007/s10460-012-9356-z; Biltekoff, *Eating Right in America*.

⁹ Julian Agyeman and Jesse McEntee, "Moving the Field of Food Justice Forward Through the Lens of Urban Political Ecology," *Geography Compass* 8, no. 3 (2014): 211–20, doi:10.1111/gec3.12122.

¹⁰ Pedro A. Alviola IV et al., "Determinants of Food Deserts," *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 95, no. 5 (October 2013): 1259–65, doi:10.1093/ajae/aat029.

minorities,¹¹ although academic literature is not in agreement on this.¹² However, programs that simply focus on creating more avenues for the sale of fresh fruits and vegetables do not address the underlying social and economic issues that caused food deserts.¹³ Additionally, they often make assumptions, sometimes tied to the discourse about obesity and poor personal decision-making, that a community is eating “incorrectly” due to a lack of access to fresh produce or a lack of knowledge about its availability or culinary usages.¹⁴

These assumptions ignore cultural or community food preferences and buy into the idea that there is a “good” or “right” way to eat. By extension, this casts other ways of eating as “bad” or “wrong.” Today’s dominant discourse conflates the idea of “good” eating with the idea of “natural” and “nature,” reinforcing the idea that some people are wrong in how they take care of their bodies and that they must be aided in understanding and changing this.¹⁵

In this case study, I explore how one organization, The Food Project (TFP), goes about trying to improve access to fresh food, change eating habits, and empower youth through education about social justice. In particular, I look at how TFP rhetoric and education questions the systems and social structures that uphold the current food system, teaching youth to think outside and beyond them, while at the same time is a product of, and constrained by, the underlying discourses. I argue that TFP presents its youth with accessible information about the food they eat and the broader food system involved in its production, and empowers them to make changes to their personal interactions with the food system. However, its focus on individual experience and action limits the youths’ abilities to critique the food systems in their

¹¹ Ibid.; William K. Bellinger and Jue Wang, “Poverty, Place or Race: Causes of the Retail Gap in Smaller U.S. Cities,” *The Review of Black Political Economy* 38, no. 3 (2011): 253–70, doi:10.1007/s12114-011-9103-5.

¹² Bellinger and Wang, “Poverty, Place or Race.”

¹³ Agyeman and McEntee, “Moving the Field of Food Justice Forward Through the Lens of Urban Political Ecology.”

¹⁴ Biltekoff, *Eating Right in America*.

¹⁵ Guthman, *Weighing In*.

communities outside of their own experiences, and to think about possibilities for collective action or systemic change.

I begin by discussing current literature on food deserts, health, and environmental and food education initiatives, particularly those focused on youth. To help ground this case study, I also give a brief background of The Food Project, and of Lynn, MA, the location of the TFP branch where I conducted this case study. Next, I discuss the methods I used to conduct this study. Then, based on the semi-structured interviews done with youth and staff at TFP, I examine what kinds of information is taught at TFP and the angles from which it is presented. I compare and contrast the ways in which TFP staff and youth discuss the food system and their personal beliefs related to it, as well as how the youth connect their TFP experiences and their personal lives. At the same time, I look at the ways in which these experiences and perceptions relate to the broader discourses of health, food, and nature in society. I conclude by summarizing the way The Food Project's work draws upon these discourses, both intentionally and inadvertently, and by reflecting on its implications specifically for TFP's workshops and discussions, as well as more generally for programs seeking to reform the food system.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Food Deserts

2.1: A Brief History and Definition of Food Deserts

Over the past several decades in the United States there has been a growing trend of residential segregation based along race and class lines.¹⁶ Although some of this began through *de jure* (existing in law) segregation during the construction of cities, it was exacerbated by the 1980's "white flight" to the suburbs.¹⁷ The *de facto* (existing in practice but not law) segregation now in place concentrates lower income minority populations within the inner city, while wealthier, whiter populations live on the outskirts of the city or in the surrounding suburbs.¹⁸

In more recent decades, there has been increasing attention drawn to another issue of geographic division within communities: that of food deserts.¹⁹ Food deserts are areas in which residents do not have access to healthy food, and are indicative of uneven distributions of grocery stores within communities.²⁰ The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) broadly defines food deserts as "urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to

¹⁶ Nadra Hashim, "Reversing Food Desertification: Examining Urban Farming in Louisville, Chicago and Detroit," *Local Environment* 20, no. 6 (June 3, 2015): 611–36, doi:10.1080/13549839.2014.931364.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

fresh, healthy, and affordable food.”²¹ More specifically, the USDA identifies food deserts using census tract data; for an area to fall under federal “food desert” designation, its population must be both low-income and low-access. Low-income populations are those in which at least 20% of residents fall below the federal poverty line, or those for which the median family income is 80% or less of the median family income of the surrounding area.²² Low-access populations are ones in which 500 people and/or 33% of the population live a mile or more from a grocery store selling healthy food, in urban areas, or 10 or more miles from a grocery store in “non-metropolitan census tracts.”²³ On its website, the USDA does not specify the criteria it uses to determine when a store is selling “healthy food,” although it does say that its program to identify and food deserts “seeks to increase access to whole foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fat free or low-fat dairy, and lean meats that are perishable (fresh, refrigerated, or frozen) or canned as well as nutrient-dense foods and beverages encouraged by the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA).”²⁴ Academic studies examining food deserts and associated social characteristics often determine whether or not to call something a grocery store based on the availability and variety of fresh produce.²⁵

²¹ “Food Deserts” (USDA Agriculture Marketing Service), accessed December 14, 2015, <https://apps.ams.usda.gov/fooddeserts/fooddeserts.aspx>.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ “Food Desert FAQs” (USDA Agriculture Marketing Service), accessed December 14, 2015, <https://apps.ams.usda.gov/fooddeserts/FAQ.aspx>.

²⁵ Ghosh-Dastidar et al., “Distance to Store, Food Prices, and Obesity in Urban Food Deserts”; Tamara Dubowitz et al., “Healthy Food Access for Urban Food Desert Residents: Examination of the Food Environment, Food Purchasing Practices, Diet and BMI,” *Public Health Nutrition* 18, no. 12 (August 2015): 2220–30, doi:10.1017/S1368980014002742; Alviola IV et al., “Determinants of Food Deserts.”

2.2: Socioeconomic Correlations with Food Deserts

Studies vary in their findings linking food access (or lack there-of) to race and economic status. A 1997 study of Chicago found that poor areas had fewer grocery stores than non-poor areas, and that a much greater proportion of stores in poor areas were small.²⁶ Looking at St. Paul and Minneapolis, Chung and Myers similarly found that only 22% of chain stores were located in the inner city, and that 89% of chain stores were located in areas where the poverty rate was below 10%.²⁷ Since chain stores generally have cheaper prices, especially for dry goods, this tendency creates physical and financial barriers for low-income, inner-city shoppers.²⁸ While another study contradicted this income/food price correlation, finding overall food prices to be generally lower in low-income neighborhoods, the researchers also noted that overall food quality was significantly lower in these neighborhoods.²⁹ Similarly, in a survey of three low-income neighborhoods in Santa Barbara, Carney et al. found that convenience played a key role in many residents' meal decisions; people favored pre-prepared meals or ate out at whatever was closest to them, which was generally a fast food chain or local pizza or taco shop.³⁰ Carney et al. also found that residents who were unemployed or employed only part time altered their purchasing habits to try to reduce costs.³¹

²⁶ Linda F. Alwitt and Thomas D. Donley, "Retail Stores in Poor Urban Neighborhoods," *Journal of Consumer Affairs* 31, no. 1 (1997): 139–64.

²⁷ Chanjin Chung and Jr. Myers Samuel L., "Do the Poor Pay More for Food? An Analysis of Grocery Store Availability and Food Price Disparities," *Journal of Consumer Affairs* 33, no. 2 (Winter 1999): 276–96.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Karen Glanz et al., "Nutrition Environment Measures Survey in Stores (NEMS-S): Development and Evaluation," *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 32, no. 4 (April 2007): 282–89, doi:10.1016/j.amepre.2006.12.019.

³⁰ Megan Carney, "Compounding Crises of Economic Recession and Food Insecurity: A Comparative Study of Three Low-Income Communities in Santa Barbara County," *Agriculture and Human Values* 29, no. 2 (June 2012): 185–201, doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10460-011-9333-y.

³¹ *Ibid.*

Other academic work examines food deserts areas in relation to the distribution of different races and ethnicities. Several studies have found that predominantly African-American communities or neighborhoods tend to be less thoroughly served by grocery stores.³² Bellinger and Wang found that there was overall lower “retail density” in African-American neighborhoods, with a greater number of grocery stores that were generally much smaller and probably had less food variety than in other areas, but that this correlation did not extend to neighborhoods of other ethnicities.³³ Another study found that in Detroit, the poorest African-American neighborhoods were an average of 1.1 miles further away from the closest grocery store than the poorest white neighborhoods.³⁴ The authors also noted that of the neighborhoods with a high proportion of African-Americans (60% of the population or more), 76% fell into the high poverty category, defined as 17.23% to 81.96% of the population falling below the federal poverty line.³⁵ In a study of hundreds of census tracts in three states Moore and Diez-Roux also concluded that there were more supermarkets in wealthier, whiter neighborhoods, than in poorer ones populated by racial minorities.³⁶ They too found that in predominantly black neighborhoods there were fewer fresh produce markets, but noted as an interesting counterpoint to this that there were actually more meat and fish markets in the minority-dominated neighborhoods of their study.³⁷

³² Bellinger and Wang, “Poverty, Place or Race”; S. N. Zenk et al., “Neighborhood Racial Composition, Neighborhood Poverty, and the Spatial Accessibility of Supermarkets in Metropolitan Detroit,” *American Journal Of Public Health* 95, no. 4 (April 2005): 660–67, doi:10.2105/AJPH.2004.042150; Latetia V. Moore and Ana V. Diez Roux, “Associations of Neighborhood Characteristics With the Location and Type of Food Stores,” *American Journal of Public Health* 96, no. 2 (February 2006): 325–31, doi:10.2105/AJPH.2004.058040.

³³ Bellinger and Wang, “Poverty, Place or Race.”

³⁴ Zenk et al., “Neighborhood Racial Composition, Neighborhood Poverty, and the Spatial Accessibility of Supermarkets in Metropolitan Detroit.”

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Moore and Diez Roux, “Associations of Neighborhood Characteristics With the Location and Type of Food Stores.”

³⁷ Ibid.

2.3: Food Deserts and Obesity

The 2010 White House Task Force on Child Obesity focused on increasing physical access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food by promoting projects that bring or create new retailers of healthy food to food deserts.³⁸ This is a response to some studies that suggest that obesity is linked to a lack of ready access to healthy food, particularly fresh fruits and vegetables.³⁹ Analysis of data collected from about 7,700 youth participants in the National Youth Health and Nutrition Examination Survey found an inverse correlation between socioeconomic status and obesity.⁴⁰ However, it should be noted that although the study was described as a “cross-sectional, stratified, multi-stage probability sample,” 71% of its participants were categorized as “non-Hispanic white.”⁴¹ Another study found that adolescents’ Body Mass Indexes (BMIs) were lower in areas with higher densities of chain supermarkets, and higher in areas with higher densities of convenience stores;⁴² other researchers have found that fast food outlets and convenience stores exist in greater densities in food deserts.⁴³ The association between BMI and the prevalence of chain grocery stores was three times higher for African-American youth than their white and Latino counterparts.⁴⁴

Other recent studies, however, question whether or not physical proximity to stores selling healthy foods is the most important factor in the relation between food deserts and

³⁸ “Food Desert FAQs”; White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity, “Solving the Problem of Childhood Obesity Within a Generation: White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity Report to the President.”

³⁹ “Food Desert FAQs.”

⁴⁰ Giuseppina Imperatore et al., “Socio-Economic Status and Type 2 Diabetes Risk Factors Among US Children and Young Adults,” *Diabetes* 56, no. Supp 1 (June 2007): A488–89.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Lisa M. Powell et al., “Associations Between Access to Food Stores and Adolescent Body Mass Index,” *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, Bridging the Gap: Research Informing Practice and Policy for Healthy Youth Behavior, 33, no. 4, Supplement (October 2007): S301–7, doi:10.1016/j.amepre.2007.07.007.

⁴³ Alviola IV et al., “Determinants of Food Deserts.”

⁴⁴ Powell et al., “Associations Between Access to Food Stores and Adolescent Body Mass Index.”

obesity.⁴⁵ A growing body of literature suggests that the relationship is a much more complex one, involving racial, economic, and cultural factors, as well as food industry marketing tactics.⁴⁶ For example, Alviola et al. found that in Arkansas, low-income urban areas were statistically more likely to have minority populations than surrounding areas, fitting in to the standard food desert discourse, but that they had a *lower* average distance to the nearest grocery store.⁴⁷

Other studies also contradict the idea that low-income residents' eating habits are determined by limited geographic access to grocery stores. Dubowitz et al. found that in the two low-income (and predominantly African-American) neighborhoods the Pittsburgh Hill/Homewood Research on Eating, Shopping and Health (PHRESH) study looked at in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, almost all participants were already shopping at places where healthy foods were available, even though only two neighborhood groceries sold fresh produce and the nearest full-service grocery stores were 2-6 km from participants' homes.⁴⁸ They also found that about 50% percent of participants did not shop at the grocery stores that were closest to them, and that traveling further to shop seemed to correspond to spending less on food and having a higher BMI.⁴⁹ Similarly, in a study done in New Orleans, researchers found that cost was the most important factor in determining how neighborhood residents obtained food; many traveled to stores such as Walmart for cheaper prices, passing by multiple groceries stores nearer their homes.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Dubowitz et al., "Healthy Food Access for Urban Food Desert Residents"; Ghosh-Dastidar et al., "Distance to Store, Food Prices, and Obesity in Urban Food Deserts."

⁴⁶ A. Hu et al., "Community Perspectives on Barriers and Strategies for Promoting Locally Grown Produce From an Urban Agriculture Farm," *Health Promotion Practice* 14, no. 1 (January 1, 2013): 69–74, doi:10.1177/1524839911405849; Ghosh-Dastidar et al., "Distance to Store, Food Prices, and Obesity in Urban Food Deserts"; Dubowitz et al., "Healthy Food Access for Urban Food Desert Residents"; Alviola IV et al., "Determinants of Food Deserts."

⁴⁷ Alviola IV et al., "Determinants of Food Deserts."

⁴⁸ Dubowitz et al., "Healthy Food Access for Urban Food Desert Residents."

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Kato and McKinney, "Bringing Food Desert Residents to an Alternative Food Market."

Other researchers examining data from the aforementioned PHRESH study expanded on this with their observations that the prices of grocery stores in the area were more predictive of how their food was marketed than of their offerings of healthy food.⁵¹ In the studied areas, high-price stores were more likely to have healthy food visible from the main entrance (as opposed to foods like chips, candy, and soda, which were more often visible from the main entrance of lower-price stores.)⁵² Higher-price stores also had about twice as many displays promoting healthy foods as lower-price stores had, despite similar actual availability of healthy foods within the stores.⁵³ Nonetheless, they found that shoppers at lower price stores had higher rates of obesity; additionally, they, like Dubowitz et al., suggested that shoppers that traveled further were more likely to be obese.⁵⁴ From this, Ghosh-Dastidar et al. concluded that food is marketed to low-income communities in a way that encourages the purchase of high-calorie, nutrient-poor food, and that this may influence community health trends more than the location of stores.⁵⁵

2.4: Culture Blindness in Food Desert and Obesity Discourses

The prevalence of minority populations in food deserts also means that there are a wide variety of cultural views and norms regarding food that influence how communities eat and how receptive they are to changes. Hu et al. did a study in an unnamed mid-Atlantic city in which their mostly African-American participants expressed some cultural resistance to mainstream ideas about healthy eating.⁵⁶ The participants idealized the “old way” (Southern way) of cooking

⁵¹ Ghosh-Dastidar et al., “Distance to Store, Food Prices, and Obesity in Urban Food Deserts.”

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

and eating as better and healthier than modern eating, and dismissed things such as salad, carrots, and certain food preparation methods as the “white” way of doing things.⁵⁷

In a general critique of the urban farming movement as a method of remedying unequal food access, Hoover argues that urban farming is a young, middle-class, white movement that lacks the cultural breadth to adequately include the very communities it is trying to help.⁵⁸ Some communities (particularly ones with many immigrants) have extensive backgrounds relating to farming and agriculture, and the white-dominated urban agriculture movement does not give this knowledge a role in its vision for fixing food deserts.⁵⁹ Additionally, Hoover cites Alkon and McCullen (2010) as finding that farmers’ market patrons tend to be mostly white and to have romanticized views of agriculture and farmers, suggesting a clear clash of views with the culture and experiences of many food desert dwellers; Hu et al. reference Guthman’s assertion that phrases such as asking people to “get their hands dirty” have connotations relating to slave labor for African-Americans.⁶⁰ Through an examination of customer behavior at a city convenience store, one researcher concluded that although there was very little fresh produce available at the store, there was also no demand for it among the store’s customers (contrary to what the dominant food desert discourse predicts).⁶¹ The researcher believes this to be a result of cultural food

⁵⁶ Hu et al., “Community Perspectives on Barriers and Strategies for Promoting Locally Grown Produce From an Urban Agriculture Farm.”

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Brandon M. Hoover, “White Spaces in Black and Latino Places: Urban Agriculture and Food Sovereignty,” *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development* 3, no. 4 (2013): 109–15.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid; Hu et al., “Community Perspectives on Barriers and Strategies for Promoting Locally Grown Produce From an Urban Agriculture Farm.”

⁶¹ Nicolas Larchet, “Learning from the Corner Store: Food Reformers and the Black Urban Poor in a Southern US City,” *Food, Culture and Society: An International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 17, no. 3 (September 1, 2014): 395–416, doi:10.2752/175174414X13948130848386.

preferences and of the way customers used food and food purchasing as a way to indicate status in a community.⁶²

On the other hand, Kato and McKinney contradict this notion in their study, noting that the participants (almost entirely African-American) they recruited for participation in a local, white-dominated alternative food network had positive experiences in their engagement with it and were enthusiastic in trying new produce from a farmers' market.⁶³ They do however acknowledge the potential for a self-selection bias, since participants were all volunteers.⁶⁴

Paralleling this, many academics also critique the framing of the obesity problem in America and the discourse around solutions to it.⁶⁵ One of the main issues, O'Flynn writes, is that the mainstream discourse involves the "body as a machine" model, to borrow a phrase from Gard and Wright (2005).⁶⁶ This model ignores all cultural, geographic, and physiological differences to assume that all bodies will respond alike to the same things, and that controlling weight is as simple as not allowing "inputs" to exceed "outputs" by controlling diet and exercise.⁶⁷ As such, the idea of being thin and fit becomes conflated with the virtue of self-control and morality and, conversely, obesity becomes linked to ideas of gluttony and immorality.⁶⁸ This both minimizes issues of weight by portraying them as individual failings and disproportionately frowns on certain groups.⁶⁹ The single most obese population in the U.S. is African-American women, who historically have been considered "deviant," allowing the dominant narrative around obesity to portray them as in need of "moral policing," as Firth puts

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Kato and McKinney, "Bringing Food Desert Residents to an Alternative Food Market."

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Gabrielle O'Flynn et al., "Food, Obesity Discourses and the Subjugation of Environmental Knowledge," *Australian Journal of Environmental Education* 31, no. 1 (July 2015): 99–109, doi:10.1017/aee.2015.13; Firth, "Healthy Choices and Heavy Burdens."

⁶⁶ O'Flynn et al., "Food, Obesity Discourses and the Subjugation of Environmental Knowledge."

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid; Firth, "Healthy Choices and Heavy Burdens."

⁶⁹ Firth, "Healthy Choices and Heavy Burdens."

it.⁷⁰ Additionally, since obtaining and preparing food is still generally seen as a mother's job in a family, overweight children are seen as indications of women's immorality in caring for her children.⁷¹ This narrative and its assumptions are seen in even some of the best-intentioned programs; papers by both Somerville et al. and Gatto et al. reference their programs for youth as "interventions," implying a need for outside knowledge and help.⁷² As a counter to this "master narrative," it is crucial to create a space for individual and place-specific stories about food and food consumption, and to allow counter narratives to tailor aid and revitalization programs to the needs of individual communities.⁷³

Garden Education

2.5: Environmental Education and Knowledge

The term "environmental education" came out of the 1960s, but Crosley argues that the ideas it was based in began in the 1800s, as part of the Nature Study movement, which romanticized the outdoors and brought into the idea of nature as "pristine."⁷⁴ She feels that many of these values persist today in environmental education and serve to make the environment seem as something "other" to populations that increasingly live in urban environments.⁷⁵ Like the authors that critique urban agriculture as an appropriate way to address food deserts, Crosley

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Megan Somerville et al., "The Effect of a Garden-Based Nutrition Education Program on the Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables by Hispanic Children," *Californian Journal of Health Promotion* 10, no. S1 (March 2, 2012): 20–25; Nicole M. Gatto et al., "LA Sprouts: A Garden-Based Nutrition Intervention Pilot Program Influences Motivation and Preferences for Fruits and Vegetables in Latino Youth," *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* 112, no. 6 (June 2012): 913–20, doi:10.1016/j.jand.2012.01.014.

⁷³ Beth A. Dixon, "Learning to See Food Justice," *Agriculture and Human Values* 31, no. 2 (June 2014): 175–84, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10460-013-9465-3>.

⁷⁴ Katie Lynn Crosley, "Advancing the Boundaries of Urban Environmental Education through the Food Justice Movement," *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education* 18 (January 2013): 47–58.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

questions whether urban agriculture's parent movement, food justice, is framing issues in the most productive way possible; she feels that presenting food access simply as an issue of rights can ignore structural issues in society that have caused food access issues and discrepancies.⁷⁶

A unique study done by Hess and Trexler examined the agricultural literacy of ten and eleven year old students from an urban area of southern California.⁷⁷ None had any experience raising plants or animals, and what little experience some had with the agricultural system-- from visits to farms or relatives' gardens-- did not affect their abilities to discuss the agri-food system.⁷⁸ Using a cheeseburger, all students were able to identify what general food category at least some of its components fell under, and where that food product came from (but with some serious misconceptions such as thinking the bun came from an animal).⁷⁹ However, they struggled to describe the system that produced their food, and seemed particularly unaware of the role of food processors, manufacturers, and marketers- key players in the agri-food system.⁸⁰

2.6: Teaching to Youth about Food

Different groups and organization have taken a variety of different approaches to utilizing gardens as an educational tool to address gaps in nutritional and environmental knowledge. Some have very specifically targeted curriculums, such as the study and pilot program run by Somerville et al. in Pomona, California with 6-12 year olds involved in a local gardening

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Alexander J. Hess and Cary J. Trexler, "A Qualitative Study of Agricultural Literacy in Urban Youth: What Do Elementary Students Understand about the Agri-Food System?," *Journal of Agricultural Education* 52, no. 4 (January 1, 2011): 1–12, doi:10.5032/jae.2011.04001.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

program.⁸¹ They conducted thirteen one-hour sessions with their participants, in which they focused primarily on turning fresh produce into healthy snacks, but also played games that increased general familiarity with fruits and vegetables.⁸² Over the thirteen weeks the researchers found that when given the options of fruits and veggies or chips as a snack, the children increasingly chose and consumed the produce over the chips.⁸³ A very similar study conducted on the LA Sprouts program concurred with these findings. Their twelve-week program featured ninety-minute classes each week on cooking with fresh produce and working in a garden; it increased preference for vegetables among (primarily Hispanic) elementary-schoolers, when compared to a control population of their peers.⁸⁴ Additionally, program participation correlated with increased vegetable and fiber consumption and decreased rate of weight gain, particularly among the overweight and obese children that made up more than half the study population.⁸⁵

A primary school program in the United Kingdom involving seventy-five schools engaged children in farm and garden related activities, and then utilized produce from this facet of the program to learn about cooking and healthy eating.⁸⁶ Teachers who participated in implementing the program reported increased family engagement with the school and with activities practiced as part of the program; parents came to activities within the school more, and many reported starting gardens (and even getting chickens) at home, as well as remaking at home meals made at school to allow their children to show off their new knowledge and practice new

⁸¹ Somerville et al., “The Effect of a Garden-Based Nutrition Education Program on the Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables by Hispanic Children.”

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Gatto et al., “LA Sprouts.”

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Emma Weitkamp et al., “Creating a Learning Environment to Promote Food Sustainability Issues in Primary Schools? Staff Perceptions of Implementing the Food for Life Partnership Programme,” *Sustainability* 5, no. 3 (March 8, 2013): 1128–40, doi:10.3390/su5031128.

skills.⁸⁷ Healthy Gardens, Healthy Youth was a project that ran from 2011 to 2013 and used a \$1 million grant from the USDA to fund the creation of gardens at low-income schools in New York, Arkansas, Iowa, and Washington.⁸⁸ Program designers hoped to teach youth about food and healthy eating, as well as use the gardens as outdoor classroom space in which interactive lessons in subjects such as math and science could be taught.⁸⁹

2.7: Youth as Both Environmental Students and Teachers

While some educational programs involving gardens focus simply on teaching *to* youth, others try to engage youth in creating or deciding parts of larger community programs as a way to empower them and help them take ownership of their knowledge.⁹⁰ For example, the Garden Mosaics program run through Cornell University tried to engage youth in researching and documenting the gardening practices of minority urban community gardeners and developing a community action plan to help share and build on this knowledge.⁹¹ Although the youth did not document their research in the way the Cornell designers had hoped, educators implementing the projects reported youths taking initiative in engaging and interviewing community members and an increase in youth knowledge about soil and garden plants.⁹² A program in Arizona engaged high school dropouts from the Yaqui tribe to research, design, and run a traditional garden to

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Dani Corona, "Using Gardens to Plant the Seeds of Good Health, Education," *Human Ecology* 40, no. 2 (2012): 19.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Rebekah Doyle and Marianne Krasny, "Participatory Rural Appraisal as an Approach to Environmental Education in Urban Community Gardens," *Environmental Education Research* 9, no. 1 (February 2003): 91–115, doi:10.1080/1350462032000034386.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

help address community issues the youth identified, such as lack cultural connectedness.⁹³ In addition to the horticultural and cultural knowledge they gained, youth gained an increased sense of community responsibility, as indicated by pre and post program surveys, and many received their General Education Development degrees (GEDs) or diplomas after participation.⁹⁴

A different study found that when youth worked in urban gardens as part of a “City Farmers” program they took more initiative in their own education.⁹⁵ The garden program gave youth positive experiences learning about science and taking on responsibility in growing and marketing produce and planning events.⁹⁶ The author’s observations suggested that youth were much better able to engage with science in this applied form than in the classroom, since their learning incorporated their own observations and queries of head gardeners.⁹⁷

These studies only report the effects of garden education programs as they exist at a given point in the lives of the participants. Longer, broader program lend themselves to studies looking to examined the effects of garden education over time on different age groups. One such program is Project Green Reach, run through the Brooklyn Botanical Garden.⁹⁸ This program involves underprivileged elementary school children, as well as a summer program for older youth, that involves the children in garden activities.⁹⁹ Morgan et al. found that despite aiding in growing some food, summer program alumni mostly emphasized the role of the program in developing their skills (in areas like speaking or science), increasing their sense of personal

⁹³ L Sandler, Ja Vandegrift, and C Verbrugghen, “From Desert to Garden - Reconnecting Disconnected Youth,” *Educational Leadership* 52, no. 8 (May 1995): 14–16.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Jrene Rahm, “Emergent Learning Opportunities in an Inner-City Youth Gardening Program,” *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* 39, no. 2 (February 1, 2002): 164–84, doi:10.1002/tea.10015.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Susan Conlon Morgan et al., “Environmental Education in Botanic Gardens: Exploring Brooklyn Botanic Garden’s Project Green Reach,” *Journal of Environmental Education* 40, no. 4 (July 2009): 35–52.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

responsibility, and making them more appreciative of the outdoors in general.¹⁰⁰ Morgan et al.'s study is unusual in its focus on the longer-term intangible effects of garden education. While there are many other garden initiatives, such as those run through 4-H programs, engaging students in community environmental projects, there is little analysis of personal, intangible effects on participants.¹⁰¹

Examining Dominant Discourses

2.8: Neoliberalism, Health, and Hunger

As discussed previously, there is serious scholarly debate about the discourse of health in the United States and whether it is damaging, both generally and to specific groups in particular. Many scholars connect some of the moralistic strains in the discussion about “good” health to the focus on individual responsibility for health that is a byproduct of the neoliberal discourse and policies that have become dominant since the 1970s.¹⁰² Neoliberal economic theory is wedded to the concept of individual liberty being a person’s right to make decisions unfettered by any external constraints.¹⁰³ Accordingly, it presents free markets as the most just kind, and one of the best ways to uphold individual freedom.¹⁰⁴ Neoliberalism also believes that systems can reach

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Melissa Cater, Janet Fox, and Bobby Fletcher Jr, “Louisiana 4-H Seeds of Service School Gardens: A Descriptive View,” *Journal of Extension* 50, no. 4 (2012), <http://www.joe.org/joe/2012august/iw5.php>; Sharon B. Kinsey and Michael W. Haberland, “Using Rain Gardens to Promote Service Learning and Climate Science Education with Urban Youth,” *Journal of Extension* 50, no. 4 (2012), <http://www.joe.org/joe/2012august/iw4.php>.

¹⁰² Alison Alkon, “Paradise or Pavement: The Social Constructions of the Environment in Two Urban Farmers’ Markets and Their Implications for Environmental Justice and Sustainability,” *Local Environment* 13, no. 3 (April 15, 2008): 271–89, doi:10.1080/13549830701669039; Agyeman and McEntee, “Moving the Field of Food Justice Forward Through the Lens of Urban Political Ecology”; Alkon and Mares, “Food Sovereignty in U.S. Food Movements”; Guthman, *Weighing In*.

¹⁰³ David Harvey, “Freedom’s Just Another Word...,” in *Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford, GBR: Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

maximum efficiency when run under the influence of unregulated market forces and interactions.¹⁰⁵ Thus, in neoliberal theory, government involvement is generally seen as something undesirable, both in directly regulating markets or in providing services for the public that could be provided by a privatized system.¹⁰⁶ However, a privatized system functioning under neoliberal theory interprets everything as a commodity, to be bought and sold; anything that can be bought and sold, acquired or lost, cannot, by definition, be a right and thus becomes something that people are individually responsible for obtaining.¹⁰⁷ The idea of this individual responsibility is reinforced by the underlying concept of individual freedom, for if it is considered a person's right to make all of the choices relating to their lives, it is an easy transition to seeing it as a duty to take individual action in all areas of their lives.

In the United States, where much of healthcare is privatized, this widespread acceptance of neoliberalism and its attendant emphasis on personal freedom has made health one such individualized issue. Every person is seen as responsible for keeping themselves healthy, and for making themselves better if sick.¹⁰⁸ In cases of so-called "lifestyle diseases," this assignment of responsibility is exaggerated, as the diseases are often interpreted as the result of habitual past "bad" decisions about health and personal failures to change themselves by making "healthier" decisions, such as buying "better" food.¹⁰⁹ The term "lifestyle diseases" itself even suggests blame, as "lifestyle" connotes a manner of living that a person has chosen. It is easy to see how, once health is made an individual responsibility and poor health can be seen as a result of bad consumption choices, health can become part of a discourse about morals, as discussed earlier.

¹⁰⁵ Alkon and Mares, "Food Sovereignty in U.S. Food Movements."

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Biltekoff, *Eating Right in America*.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.; Guthman, *Weighing In*.

¹⁰⁹ Guthman, *Weighing In*.

Since neoliberalism has become subtly intrinsic in the predominant discourse around health, it is also embedded in many of the most popular proposed solutions; the “lifestyle diseases” such as obesity that result from “bad” consumption habits are portrayed as being fixable through consumption changes.¹¹⁰ According to this logic, simply eating “better” food such as fresh fruits and vegetables in place of “junk food” such as soda and chips is the solution.¹¹¹ Many projects within food deserts and low-income communities that seek to “improve” them (or recommendations for such projects), such as discounted farmers’ markets, additions of fresh produce to the food pantry offerings, school garden and nutrition programs, and even community gardens, operate on this principle.¹¹² All emphasize changing the consumption behaviors of individuals, and many try to change their purchasing habits; as pieces in a neoliberal system, men and women are expected to buy their way to good health.¹¹³ This is seen even more pronouncedly in the manner in which the government seeks to address hunger and obesity. As already discussed, areas are designated food deserts based on precise numerical criteria relating to income levels of the population and the absence of a large supermarket within a certain distance.¹¹⁴ Thus, the simple added presence of a supermarket within that area, which might expand the food purchasing options of nearby residents, automatically declassifies it as a food desert.¹¹⁵ This does not, however, address any of the underlying issues that may have

¹¹⁰ Biltekoff, *Eating Right in America*.

¹¹¹ Agyeman and McEntee, “Moving the Field of Food Justice Forward Through the Lens of Urban Political Ecology.”

¹¹² Lena Hatchett et al., “‘Something Good Can Grow Here’: Chicago Urban Agriculture Food Projects,” *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community* 43, no. 2 (April 3, 2015): 135–47, doi:10.1080/10852352.2014.973253; Alwitt and Donley, “Retail Stores in Poor Urban Neighborhoods.”

¹¹³ Hatchett et al., “‘Something Good Can Grow Here’”; “Food Desert FAQs.”

¹¹⁴ Agyeman and McEntee, “Moving the Field of Food Justice Forward Through the Lens of Urban Political Ecology.”

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

shaped the community's location, layout, public services, and retail options in such a way that the area became a food desert initially, such as poverty and institutionalized racism.¹¹⁶

2.9: *The Right Taste*

As organizations and projects work to remedy issues of obesity and food deserts by increasing the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables, they are operating under the assumption that produce is something desired by their target populations but inaccessible to them.¹¹⁷ Other organizations seek instead to provide the commodity of knowledge about food, rather than food itself; these operate under the assumption that their participants don't eat a "healthy" diet because of their lack of knowledge about health and food preparation, or their lack of exposure to fruits and vegetables.¹¹⁸ Both types of programs view their recipients as in some way "lacking" or "ignorant" and are somewhat paternalistic or "missionary" in nature, as they try to encourage the "right" kind of consumption and eating behaviors.¹¹⁹ As discussed above, the food desert areas that these programs are often targeted at are disproportionately populated by ethnic minorities, and the programs themselves tend to be run by outside organizations. However noble the intentions of such programs, this suggests that the dominant discourse about healthy eating is seen as superior to individual and community experiences and traditions, and may conflict with cultural and community consumption habits of lower-income and non-white neighborhoods.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Guthman, *Weighing In*.

¹¹⁸ Jessica Hayes-Conroy and Allison Hayes-Conroy, "Veggies and Visceralities: A Political Ecology of Food and Feeling," *Emotion, Space and Society*, Emotion and Ecology, 6 (February 2013): 81–90, doi:10.1016/j.emospa.2011.11.003.

¹¹⁹ Guthman, *Weighing In*.

In some ways, the ideas lack of access to versus lack of appreciation for fresh produce are contradictory. Programs that try to increase the availability of produce assume that there is a desire for it among populations without it. Among these programs, eating “better” means eating fresh fruits and vegetables and there is little consideration of the fact that among some, that may not be seen as the ultimate way to “eat better.”¹²⁰ Programs that try to create a taste for vegetables do take this into account, but are usually trying to “educate” taste. While they assume the opposite of access-focused programs, that taste and preference are formed rather than inherent, they still assume an inferiority or naivety among their participants. Their focus on trying and learning to enjoy fruits and vegetables suggests that that is the “correct” way to eat, again buying into the dominant and Caucasian-shaped construction of health eating. These programs also assume that everyone experiences food the same way, and that food preferences and interactions with food exist separately from individuals’ cultural backgrounds and past personal experiences.¹²¹ Arguably, this belief in the completely equalizing nature of educating taste through first-hand experiences with food is a reflection of the “body as a machine” and neoliberal discourses discussed already; all assume that their subjects- be it markets, bodies, or individuals- respond predictably and in a model-able manner to certain stimuli or inputs and do not factor in biological or experiential variations in human physiology, understandings, and responses.

¹²⁰ Larchet, “Learning from the Corner Store.”

¹²¹ Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, “Veggies and Visceralities.”

2.10: “Natural” as the Perfect Solution

The focus on eating more fresh produce in general, and especially the alternative food movement’s focus on eating organically and locally grown produce, is in part justified through a discourse about living “naturally.” In American social understanding of nature, it is often portrayed as something perfectly in balance, that when undisturbed maintains itself in a fairly static state and appearance.¹²² In this construction of nature, it is pristine and untouched by human influence.¹²³ Consequently, the idea of “nature” is one that is romanticized, and becomes, for some, emblematic of what human civilization lacks and what has caused many humans to lose their “natural” healthiness. Of course, “pure” nature cannot so easily be separated from humans and human influence. In most parts of the world there have been humans for thousands of years who have lived and fed off of the land; in many cases, this has involved activities such as harvesting building materials, clearing or otherwise preparing land for agriculture, and damming and reshaping bodies of water.

Nonetheless, “natural” is used to market all sorts of food products, and proponents of alternative food networks promote farmers’ markets and CSAs as superior alternatives to supermarkets.¹²⁴ Their logic is that small-scale, local, and environmentally friendly agriculture is more “natural” than anything more directly a product of food science.¹²⁵ Living and buying “naturally” is supposed to make a consumer closer to “nature” and all of the idealized balance and health it represents.¹²⁶ Despite the fact that almost all things consumed as food today are

¹²² Anne Portman, “Mother Nature Has It Right: Local Food Advocacy and the Appeal to the ‘Natural,’” *Ethics & the Environment* 19, no. 1 (2014): 1–30.

¹²³ Ibid.- pg 10; Alkon, “Paradise or Pavement.”

¹²⁴ Alkon, “Paradise or Pavement.”

¹²⁵ Portman, “Mother Nature Has It Right”; Alkon, “Paradise or Pavement.”

¹²⁶ Alkon, “Paradise or Pavement.”

cultivated by humans and thus cannot fully fit the constructed idea of pristine nature, by labeling some foods and practices as “natural” or “pure” and thus “good,” food activists are implicitly labeling others as “unnatural” or “impure” and “bad.”¹²⁷ By extension, this suggests people who consume these products are consuming “bad” things and not caring for themselves appropriately, connecting the discourse of “nature” and “natural” also to the moralistic framing of obesity and healthy eating.

¹²⁷ Guthman, *Weighing In*; Portman, “Mother Nature Has It Right.”

III. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON *THE FOOD PROJECT*

One organization creating a (semi)alternative food network to try to address community food access issues and create change in the food system is The Food Project, a Boston, Massachusetts area non-profit. The Food Project was the brainchild of Ward Cheney and Allen and Jeanette Callahan, who first conceived the idea for it in 1991 and launched the organization in its initial form in 1992.¹²⁸ Mr. Cheney was a white farmer from Lincoln, Massachusetts, while Mr. Callahan was an African American minister from Boston and Mrs. Callahan was “an African American youth worker and community organizer.”¹²⁹ They wanted to create a program that would help youth engage with the natural world around them in a meaningful way and also “facilitate growing and distributing food in the City of Boston.”¹³⁰ The program was also meant “to bridge race and class and to provide meaningful work for young people.”¹³¹

With the aid of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, Mr. Cheney and Mr. Callahan established the Summer Youth Program (SYP) as a pilot project on Drumlin Farm in Lincoln with two acres of land and twenty youth from the greater Boston area.¹³² SYP hired an employee from the organization Teen Empowerment and someone from Harvard School of Education to work on youth development and construct a “farm education curriculum,” respectively.¹³³

¹²⁸ “The Food Project- A Brief Timeline” (The Food Project, June 3, 2015).

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ “History” (The Food Project), accessed January 19, 2016, <http://thefoodproject.org/history>; “Diversity” (The Food Project), accessed January 19, 2016, <http://thefoodproject.org/diversity>.

¹³¹ “Diversity.”

¹³² “The Food Project- A Brief Timeline.”

¹³³ Ibid.

In 1995, The Food Project (TFP) officially came into being under that name when it was registered as a 501(c)3 (tax-exempt non-profit organization), with two former interns as directors.¹³⁴ In Lincoln, TFP began working on conservation land instead of at Drumlin Farm, while in Roxbury, a neighborhood of Boston, the organization began its first truly urban agricultural project by clearing an abandoned lot in preparation for farming in the spring.¹³⁵

The youth program began evolving into today's structure in 1996, when the Academic Year Program, now known as DIRT (Dynamic, Intelligent, Responsible Teenagers) Crew, was established because youth were asking for ways to be involved beyond the summer.¹³⁶ In the early 2000s, TFP added additional youth programs that involved internships specializing in farming, development, and diversity education, and by 2003 the summer program involved 60 youth.¹³⁷ As TFP continued to expand its farming operations, it also increased the number of youth involved over the summer to 90, which has been the number involved for the past several years (with a brief decrease in 2013-2014 due funding shortages).¹³⁸

Today the youth are organized into three main programs or "crews." Seed Crew (the former summer youth program) takes youth aged 14-17 who do not need to have any prior experience with farming or plants.¹³⁹ Many youth return to Seed Crew for consecutive summers. All of the Seed Crew youth are paid \$200 per week, and work five days a week for a total of thirty-five hours.¹⁴⁰ They are held to strict standards of personal conduct and work ethic through a weekly evaluation system; every Wednesday they each have one-on-one "straight talk" meetings with their group leader, who tell them if their behaviors have earned them any

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.; "A Word About Names and Naming" (The Food Project, June 3, 2015).

¹³⁷ "The Food Project- A Brief Timeline."

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ "A Word About Names and Naming"; "Frequently Asked Questions: Seed Crew" (The Food Project), accessed January 19, 2016, <http://thefoodproject.org/seed-crew-faq>.

¹⁴⁰ "Frequently Asked Questions: Seed Crew."

“violations” that week, based on a chart detailing expectations in ten different categories.¹⁴¹ A given number of violations in any one category results in the youth being fired.¹⁴² However, youths are given a chance to “earn back” (or have removed from their record) violations by going a week without having any violations in the category of concern; for each category, one violation-free week “earns back” one violation.¹⁴³ Should they get a number of violations in any one category, TFP has a system intended to create peer and group support for the youth through meetings talking about the problem and potential solutions with both the group leader and other youths of the offender’s choice. It is uncommon for youth to be fired.¹⁴⁴

After completing a season with Seed Crew, many youth progress on to Dirt Crew, the academic year program and some become part of Root Crew, formerly the intern program.¹⁴⁵ Root Crew members take more leadership in the program, sometimes leading workshops or dialogues, or teaching members of Seed Crew about things like the farmers’ markets or Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs.¹⁴⁶ Some also return as the youth leaders who head the nine groups of ten Seed Crew members, or as assistant leaders.

The youth summer programs have two broad components: productive work in TFP gardens, and education about how The Food Project and their produce relate to broader food systems. For the Seed Crew, these components are fairly clearly defined. There are set work blocks, generally in the mornings, with afternoon workshops led by crew leaders and other TFP staff members.¹⁴⁷ Workshop topics range from identifying edible weeds to understanding

¹⁴¹ “Seed Crew Standards Chart” (The Food Project, June 3, 2015); “The Food Project Seed Crew 2015 Standards Agreement” (The Food Project, June 3, 2015).

¹⁴² “Seed Crew Standards Chart.”

¹⁴³ “The Food Project Seed Crew 2015 Standards Agreement.”

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ “A Word About Names and Naming.”

¹⁴⁶ “Root Crew” (The Food Project), accessed January 19, 2016, <http://thefoodproject.org/root-crew>.

¹⁴⁷ “Seed Crew 2015 Summer Calendar” (The Food Project, n.d.).

privilege and institutional discrimination.¹⁴⁸ Seed Crew are encouraged to try vegetables through a “vegetable of the week” activity. Each week every Seed Crew member is given some of that week’s vegetable, and each Seed Crew group can earn points in a summer-long competition by bringing in dishes containing that veggie, for themselves or for the group to share. Seed Crew also spends a small amount of time at the farmers’ market, learning about the general way in which it is run.

It is Root Crew that truly interacts with the farmers’ market, with several members working the entirety of it each week, including set-up and aiding customers. Although they do not handle the actual transactions, Root Crew members do learn how the various forms of local and federal food aid function so that they can calculate purchase costs for customers. Root Crew also helps out at the Mobile Market (a quasi farmers’ market that travels to different housing projects) and with the Community Supported Agriculture program, giving them a feel for the different facets of organization-community interaction.

Today, The Food Project farms on approximately seventy acres of land spread across these three areas. In Lincoln, TFP actively cultivates twenty-seven of its thirty-one acres of town conservation land. In Beverley (on the North Shore), it farms on two acres of historic conservation land at Long Hill Farm. Recently, it also acquired permission to farm on thirty-four acres in Wenham (also on the North Shore) and has recently begun work there. Due to their locations, TFP’s urban farms are all much smaller than these urban farms. It has two plots of land a few blocks apart in the Dudley neighborhood of Boston that total two acres, as well as 10,000 square foot greenhouse in Roxbury. In Lynn (on the North Shore), TFP also rents two plots of land, that total one and half to two acres.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ “Our Farms” (The Food Project), accessed January 20, 2016, <http://thefoodproject.org/our-farms>.

In Lynn, where I worked, one of the plots of land, a little over an acre, is located behind Ingalls Elementary School and was once an abandoned lot. The second plot of land is much smaller, about half an acre, but well-situated for publicity. It is in downtown Lynn on Munroe Street, located between a Mexican restaurant known for its karaoke and a travel agency, and directly across the street from one of the entrances to the Lynn Commuter Rail Station. There are a number of stores, cafes, banks, and small businesses on the surrounding blocks, as well as the Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) Program offices, churches, and a couple food pantries and soup kitchens. The center third of this plot of land is given over to small, boxed garden plots that are rented by community members for thirty dollars on a yearly basis. Passersby often paused to gaze at this garden and ask the nearest TFP staff member questions about it, often leading to conversation.

Lynn was once an industrial city that was the “ladies’ shoe center of the world” and home to the Thomson-Houston Electric Company (one of the two companies that merged to form General Electric). It is now a city of about 92,000 people and is plagued with poverty.¹⁵⁰ According to 2010-2014 Census data, 20.9% of Lynn’s population falls below the federal poverty line.¹⁵¹ For comparison, in Massachusetts as a whole only 11.6% of the population is below the poverty line (geographic comparison issue warning on data).¹⁵² Only 19.3% of Lynn residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, in comparison to 40.0% of Massachusetts residents.¹⁵³ Much of Lynn’s population is also made up of historically underserved communities, with 12.8% of the population identifying as black or African-American, 32.1% as

¹⁵⁰ Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, “A Brief History of Lynn” (The City of Lynn), accessed January 20, 2016, http://www.cityoflynn.net/aboutlynn_history.shtml; “QuickFacts United States” (United States Census Bureau, 2015), <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/00,25,2537490>.

¹⁵¹ “QuickFacts United States.”

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

Hispanic or Latino, and 32.0% as foreign-born.¹⁵⁴ For context, those statistics are 6.6%, 9.6%, and 15.3% for the state as a whole.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

IV. METHODS

After many alterations and abridgements, my project became a tightly focused case study of the North Shore Root Crew, a group of high school aged youth who had all worked at The Food Project for at least one previous summer. Originally, I had wanted to examine how youths' understandings of health and healthy eating changed because of participation in a program that educated the about food and farming. To this end, I had hoped to survey the Seed Crew, the youth group that included some teenagers without any prior experiences at TFP, three times over their summer program: at the beginning, middle, and end. Unfortunately, I struggled to get all of the forms and permissions I needed in time to do such a longitudinal study, and had to revise my plan to be a descriptive case study that drew its data from Seed Crew's reflections on their summer and learning. My study underwent an even more major change when, even after I had cleared my study with everyone on the North Shore, the staff member at the official headquarters in Greater Boston who needed to give final approval would not. She did not want me surveying Seed Crew since the organization might lose touch with the members at the end of the summer. She offered the older youth, Root Crew, as an alternative. Since they seemed to be my only option, I rewrote my survey and interview questions and worked with them, even though their several years of TFP involvement would make it harder for them to reflect on changes created by starting work at TFP.

I began by distributing parental consent forms along with a letter explaining my project, in English and Spanish, the two languages spoken by Root Crew families. A friend of mine who

is Costa Rican and a native Spanish speaker translated the Spanish consent forms. I allowed Root Crew members who were over eighteen to sign their own forms, but gave them a letter to take home to their parents as well. I asked youth who were minors to sign informed assent forms before they took surveys or were interviewed. There were thirteen Root Crew members, nine of whom I was able to interview and survey. The other members were all willing, but unfortunately had to be excluded because they could not provide parental consent.

I gave each member of Root Crew a survey and interviewed him or her on the same day, although the order of the two parts was not consistent. I recorded the interviews and transcribed them later. I gave a sheet containing my personal contact information to each participant, telling them to get in touch if they had any questions, wished to remove themselves from the study, or wanted a copy of the completed study.

For the Root Crew, I created a survey that was fairly evenly split between open and closed ended questions. I tried to approach the concepts of health and healthy eating with questions that were as least abstract as possible, but found it difficult. For the most part, I asked youth to discuss their daily personal habits, opinions, and decisions-making processes. The questions were very food focused, asking, for example, about the factors regarding their decision about what to bring for lunch, if they could describe a healthy meal they might make, and how likely they would be to eat certain vegetables. In retrospect, I'm not entirely sure how helpful the surveys were. Although I did gain some quantitative data, the very small sample size makes it difficult to draw any significant conclusions from it. The open-ended questions proved, for the most part, even less useful, as the teenagers taking the surveys mostly seemed disinclined to write more than a sentence or two, even when discussing their opinions, which prevented me from gaining much insight into those opinions. As well, the surveys' close focus on personal

food choices made much of the information irrelevant as my research question evolved in response to the data I collected through interviews.

The interviews were semi-structured, with a few broad, open-ended questions that I made sure to ask. I tried to make the interviews as much a conversation as possible, asking follow-up questions to many of the youths' initial answers, pursuing topics that they mentioned but hadn't elaborated on. Interviews varied in length from about five to twenty minutes, with most around ten or twelve minutes. I recorded the interviews, and afterwards transcribed them.

To begin analysis of the interviews, I read through the interview transcripts and outlined a basic open coding system as I went. I then read through again to do the actual coding, modifying and expanding the system during the process. After that, I did another pass of coding, using the final coding system I had created to update my coding on the transcripts, in a sort of modified focus-coding process. My final coding system focused on the different types of social justice issues mentioned by the youth, the array of personal actions and choices influenced by the youths' TFP participation, and the ways in which youth discussed information. Given the small number, I did not use my coding to calculate any quantitative information from my data. Instead, I looked at how different themes I had coded for overlapped, and grouped them under larger categories (sometimes including one theme in more than one category) that seemed to tie them together as they had appeared grouped in the responses, or contrasted related themes. Some categories mirrored the group headings of my initial coding scheme, and some did not. Based on these results, which focused on what the youths felt they had learned very generally about food and how they thought about this information in relation to their own lives, I created a new research question I felt I could answer with the results I had, at least in part. My project became a

descriptive case study examining how TFP uses food as a lens to teach about larger social justice issues.

To add depth to this study I decided that I would like to interview some of the North Shore staff members at TFP who worked with the youth, especially the Root Crew, about what topics they tried to focus on in their discussions with youth, and how they tried to convey information about them. I conducted semi-structured interviews with the Summer Site Supervisor and two Growers, of about half an hour in length. I conducted one of the Grower interviews via Skype rather than in person, due to confusion about meeting locations. I coded staff interviews using the same method I used to code youth interviews. In comparing the focuses and views of staff and youth, and noting the ways in which they did and did not reflect dominant discourses, I arrived at my final research question: In what ways does TFP try to challenge the existing food system and its supporting discourses, and how are its efforts and affects on youth shaped by the dominant discourses about health and healthy eating?

V. RESULTS

Youth Interviews

In general, the respondents to the interviews demonstrated a strong understanding of issues surrounding food production and access. The youth seemed to think much more about the “how” of their food, as opposed to the “what.” Most referred to a set of workshop run by The Food Project known collectively as the Food for Thought workshops, or FFT, and were able to discuss different aspects of the food production system and industry through specific examples used in that workshop.¹⁵⁶ The youth also candidly discussed their families’ relationships with food, and reflected on how TFP had changed their thinking about food. Most discussed issues of food access within their own lives, but seemed to have difficulty thinking about access within their own communities as varying. The youth also expressed clear beliefs about “good” and “bad” ways to eat; some of their assertions were clearly connected to material presented in workshops but others were unsupported, further suggesting that the youth sometimes struggle to engage critically with information outside of the context in which it was presented.

¹⁵⁶ 13596, Interview #13596, interview by Rosalind Waltz-Peters, August 25, 2015; 21689, Interview #21689, interview by Rosalind Waltz-Peters, August 25, 2015; 35649, Interview #35649, interview by Rosalind Waltz-Peters, August 25, 2015.

5.1: *Food for Thought Workshops*

FFT consists of three workshops, which most youth touched on and some described quite comprehensively. My summary of the workshops is almost entirely built from the youths' descriptions of them. The first workshop, titled "Seed to Fork," begins by asking participants to envision their favorite meal, and then asking them where they think the parts of the meal come from.¹⁵⁷ This leads to a discussion contrasting a local, sustainable food system, and a global industrial food system.¹⁵⁸ These seem to be presented as two completely separate concepts, although arguably there are plenty of ways in which they can overlap; in particular something being grown locally does not necessarily mean it's being grown sustainably.

The second workshop focuses on workers rights.¹⁵⁹ The Immokalee workers, tomato pickers in Florida, are used as an example.¹⁶⁰ This seemed to be particularly memorable workshop, as several students went into great detail about it.¹⁶¹ They described the working conditions of the laborers, from long days spent filling tomato buckets to the brim, to workers not being able to wash their hands of pesticides at lunch time.¹⁶² They also addressed the issue of the workers being very badly paid.¹⁶³ While several mentioned that the Immokalee workers couldn't do much about their conditions, only one linked it to the fact that many are undocumented immigrants and might be punished by a report to the government and deportation if they made any trouble. Another student mentioned that the workers had formed a coalition that

¹⁵⁷ 13596, Interview #13596; 38372, Interview #38372, interview by Rosalind Waltz-Peters, August 25, 2015.

¹⁵⁸ 13596, Interview #13596; 35649, Interview #35649; 38372, Interview #38372; 75618, Interview #75618, interview by Rosalind Waltz-Peters, August 25, 2015.

¹⁵⁹ 21689, Interview #21689; 35649, Interview #35649; 38372, Interview #38372.

¹⁶⁰ 21689, Interview #21689; 13596, Interview #13596; 38372, Interview #38372.

¹⁶¹ 13596, Interview #13596; 21689, Interview #21689; 35649, Interview #35649.

¹⁶² 35649, Interview #35649.

¹⁶³ 13596, Interview #13596; 21689, Interview #21689; 35649, Interview #35649; 38372, Interview #38372.

was having some success in improving conditions, but this more positive note was clearly not the memorable part of the workshop as no one else mentioned it.

The third workshop combined a focus on the nutritional value of food with a discussion about marketing tactics. The Food Project uses as an example a strawberry milkshake from McDonalds, which is about twelve years old.¹⁶⁴ Although dried out (and the plate having disintegrated from around it), the milkshake still smells of strawberries although it never contained strawberries, something that most of the youth marveled at, in a somewhat appalled manner.¹⁶⁵ The introduction of the milkshake is followed by an exercise in which the workshop participants are asked to order several common beverages in order of the amount of sugar contained.¹⁶⁶ These beverages included Arizona Iced Tea, Sobi Water, some kind of energy drink, and apple juice.¹⁶⁷ Perhaps because they were the beverages the youth drank most often, several specifically mentioned surprise at how much sugar the Arizona Iced Tea and apple juice had, and one or two students even quoted figures for how many grams of sugar were in them.¹⁶⁸

5.2: Environmental Issues

For a program with a topic as literally grounded in the environment as food, The Food Project seems to put minimal emphasis on environmental issues. They do discuss that commercially grown food often has a lot of pesticides on it and sometimes involves GMOs, but it is unclear from the passing mentions the youth give these factors if they in any way understand the associated environmental ramifications. The environmental discussions mentioned by youth

¹⁶⁴ 13596, Interview #13596; 35649, Interview #35649; 38372, Interview #38372.

¹⁶⁵ 13596, Interview #13596; 35649, Interview #35649; 38372, Interview #38372.

¹⁶⁶ 13596, Interview #13596; 35649, Interview #35649.

¹⁶⁷ 13596, Interview #13596; 21689, Interview #21689.

¹⁶⁸ 13596, Interview #13596; 35649, Interview #35649.

mainly focused on energy consumption. The first, apparently part of the “Seed to Fork” workshop and referenced by two youth, discussed how the global industrial food system is not fuel efficient; one youth asserted that in terms of caloric energy consumption “it’s more efficient to drink like gas from a pump than to like eat food because... we put too much energy into making the food.”¹⁶⁹ The second was a section of a workshop in which participants were asked to guess how many gallons of gasoline it took to supply a family with groceries for the week.¹⁷⁰ The number, eighteen gallons as the youth recalled, was much higher than participants predicted.¹⁷¹ However, from the youth’s explanation it was unclear what was included in this number: production, transport, the production of associated products like pesticides, what number of people constituted a “family,” how that “family” ate, where that family lived, etc., rendering that number somewhat meaningless given the lack of context. For the most part, issues such as pesticides and GMOs seemed to be framed more in the context of how they affect personal health (and in the case of pesticides and the Immokalee workers, how they affected the health of the tomato pickers).

5.3: *The Food Project as a Way to Learn about Others*

Most of the youth discussed learning about, and from, others in some capacity through their times at The Food Project. For some, this was focused on diet; they met people who were vegetarian, vegan, or even gluten-free.¹⁷² One youth felt convinced after these interactions that

¹⁶⁹ 13596, Interview #13596; 35649, Interview #35649.

¹⁷⁰ 21689, Interview #21689.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² 13596, Interview #13596; 67725, Interview #67725, interview by Rosalind Waltz-Peters, August 25, 2015.

being gluten-free made one decidedly “peppier.”¹⁷³ Others talked about learning of new ways in which to prepare and eat vegetables from the lunches of their peers.¹⁷⁴ Similarly, the eye-opening quality of dishes at TFP potlucks was mentioned.¹⁷⁵ One youth remarked in amazement that almost all of them were vegetable based dishes, with just a few centered around meat.¹⁷⁶

Other youth felt that their learning had come more from their experiences working at farmers’ markets and Mobile Markets.¹⁷⁷ These made them part of interactions with sections of the community outside their sphere of everyday experiences.¹⁷⁸ One talked about learning about how federal food aid benefits had the potential to be utilized for farmers’ market purchases, while another talked about how simply holding and seeing EBT cards and WIC coupons was an entirely new experience for him/her.¹⁷⁹

5.4: Ideas about Access

Students were quite articulate in their discussions of general concepts of food access and of their own food access, but seemed less able to look at their own communities with these concepts. Several talked about how some people thought that eating healthfully was simply a choice, but in reality there were often many societal obstacles to eating healthfully.¹⁸⁰ Quite a few talked about how expensive it could be to eat healthfully, and Whole Foods was brought up

¹⁷³ 67725, Interview #67725.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ 25586, Interview #25586, interview by Rosalind Waltz-Peters, August 25, 2015.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ 13596, Interview #13596; 21689, Interview #21689; 25586, Interview #25586.

in relation to this several times.¹⁸¹ One or two also mentioned that some people had trouble physically accessing places with healthy food.¹⁸²

A couple discussed financial barriers to accessing healthy food in their own lives as they talked about how their parents chose to shop.¹⁸³ Several said that their parents would buy whatever they could get the most of per dollar, since they were shopping to “spend [their] money in a way [that they could] become full.”¹⁸⁴ Interestingly, however, when asked about their own communities and access, several made assertions that there were not problems of access within their own communities.¹⁸⁵ In some cases the reasoning behind this was that their communities had lots of farms.¹⁸⁶

One student who equated his/her proximity to farms as access to fresh food did note that Beverley (a more rural area where another TFP site is) did not have farmers’ market that could process EBT benefits and that this limited others’ access to fresh food, but most simply saw the presence of farms as guaranteeing food access.¹⁸⁷ Given that not all farms produce food sold locally, and that lack of access to transportation can be a de facto barrier to access to food in rural areas, these struck me as both odd statements, and ones given with a great deal of conviction. None of the students who were sure that there were no access issues within their own communities were ones who talked about budgeting and monetary concerns in relation to how their families shopped. It makes me wonder if despite their ability to see and understand these issues in Lynn, the site at which I worked, their privileged economic statuses within their own communities prevented them from seeing similar issues at home.

¹⁸¹ 21689, Interview #21689; 75618, Interview #75618.

¹⁸² 13596, Interview #13596.

¹⁸³ Ibid.; 21689, Interview #21689.

¹⁸⁴ 21689, Interview #21689.

¹⁸⁵ 35649, Interview #35649; 44651, Interview #44651, interview by Rosalind Waltz-Peters, August 25, 2015.

¹⁸⁶ 14688, Interview #14688, interview by Rosalind Waltz-Peters, August 25, 2015; 25586, Interview #25586; 38372, Interview #38372; 44651, Interview #44651.

¹⁸⁷ 38372, Interview #38372.

An additional note, several youth indirectly discussed knowledge as a barrier to access as well. Many said that they hadn't known about farmers' markets as a concept or in their communities until they began working with TFP.¹⁸⁸ One youth seemed to have already known about the farmers' market, but was sure s/he would never have visited it before experiencing it as part of TFP.¹⁸⁹ Some talked about telling their parents about farmers' markets as a way to alter how their families ate, or at least make their parents aware of other options.¹⁹⁰ As well, several talked about education of community members, both about how they ate and the option of farmers' markets, as the way that they felt that they personally were best equipped to help improve others access to healthy food.¹⁹¹

5.5: Self-Empowerment vs. Influence on Others

One thing that most of the youth interviewed noted, and appreciated, was the way in which The Food Project teachings were for the most part non-directional.¹⁹² The workshops would give information about what was in food, or how the production of that food affected others, but would not explicitly state that the participants should change their habits.¹⁹³ One youth even compared the TFP instructional model to the kind of information given out by doctors, saying that doctors just tell him/her to eat healthfully and s/he brushes their suggestions off, but The Food Project gives you information and shows you a way to eat without ever explicitly asking you to follow their directions.¹⁹⁴ This seems to allow the youth to take

¹⁸⁸ 21689, Interview #21689; 25586, Interview #25586.

¹⁸⁹ 75618, Interview #75618.

¹⁹⁰ 21689, Interview #21689.

¹⁹¹ 14688, Interview #14688; 21689, Interview #21689.

¹⁹² 14688, Interview #14688.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ 21689, Interview #21689.

ownership of any choices or changes they do make and give them the self-certainty to bring those choices with them outside of a TFP environment.¹⁹⁵ As one youth said, “I shouldn’t stop because I left being around [the TFP] environment.”¹⁹⁶ While they all express a certain confidence in their decisions, it seems very self-focused, perhaps as a result of this instructional model.

Most discussed talking about food choices with others in their daily lives, but many described resistance from friends, family, and peers.¹⁹⁷ Some described telling their friends that whatever they were snacking on was bad for them, and being told in response that they did not know what they were talking about.¹⁹⁸ Others describe talking with their parents about food purchasing decisions, one youth even using “deep” and “passionate” to describe his/her conversation with his/her mother.¹⁹⁹ Although a few felt that this had encouraged their parents to go the farmers’ market more, others felt that their discussions had little real effect on their parents’ habits.²⁰⁰ As one youth put it, “It’s hard to just kind of like quit your habits.”²⁰¹ Another youth had not even talked with his/her family about their eating habits, feeling that it was so unlikely to sway them as to be pointless.²⁰² S/he felt that without the experiences given by a program such as The Food Project, his/her words alone would have no effect.²⁰³ A different youth described his/her family making jokes about his/her role at The Food Project based in negative views of the profession of farming (perhaps culturally so).²⁰⁴ They said things like

¹⁹⁵ 75618, Interview #75618.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ 38372, Interview #38372.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ 21689, Interview #21689; 35649, Interview #35649.

²⁰⁰ 21689, Interview #21689; 35649, Interview #35649; 38372, Interview #38372; 67725, Interview #67725.

²⁰¹ 21689, Interview #21689.

²⁰² 75618, Interview #75618.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ 21689, Interview #21689.

“you’re... doing slave work.”²⁰⁵ Interestingly most youth, including those who felt that they couldn’t influence those around them, felt that their personal decisions about how they ate were worthwhile, and that as long as they knew what they wanted and lived by those standards, that was enough. In the words of one youth: “If they choose to listen, then ok. But if they don’t choose to, then ok. But I for me personally, I know what I’m doing and that’s all that matters.”²⁰⁶

5.6: Parents as Food Participants and Facilitators

Most interviewees reference his or her parents as playing a key role in how they eat. In all of these cases the mother is referenced, as well as the father in one case.²⁰⁷ Several discuss their mothers (and the one father) doing the grocery shopping for the family, generally with some kind of system or mentality that has become habit.²⁰⁸ One or two said that their parents were already very health conscious prior to the interviewee’s participation with The Food Project and indicated that they had taken their parent’s strategies to heart.²⁰⁹ In particular, one youth discussed in detail how his/her mother shopped only in a circle around the perimeter of grocery stores, because that was where all of the crucial food groups were located; junk foods were located in central aisles.²¹⁰

Although not always open to changing their own purchasing habits, parents played roles in many anecdotes told by the youth about bringing vegetables home.²¹¹ Several said that their parents always asked them to bring vegetables home from work at The Food Project, even

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ 75618, Interview #75618.

²⁰⁷ 13596, Interview #13596; 21689, Interview #21689; 35649, Interview #35649; 44651, Interview #44651; 67725, Interview #67725.

²⁰⁸ 13596, Interview #13596; 21689, Interview #21689; 35649, Interview #35649.

²⁰⁹ 25586, Interview #25586; 35649, Interview #35649; 44651, Interview #44651; 67725, Interview #67725.

²¹⁰ 35649, Interview #35649.

²¹¹ 21689, Interview #21689; 44651, Interview #44651; 67725, Interview #67725.

though they did not always oblige.²¹² One interviewee described his/her mother's particular delight when s/he was hired that they would be able to bring garlic home regularly, while another said his/her mother cried the first time s/he brought home strawberries.²¹³ Others mentioned amazing dishes that their mothers had made out of vegetables brought home, including, in one case, an overwhelmingly large five pound zucchini.²¹⁴

5.7: Changes in Food-Related Habits

Most youth felt that they had changed how they ate in some way as a result at The Food project.²¹⁵ Most of the changes were general, including changes in the amounts of certain types of foods the youth ate and newly developed tastes for some vegetables, often never tried before.²¹⁶ There were a few specific changes, most of which directly involved specific products discussed in the Food For Thought workshops.

Several youth said that they no longer ate fast food (McDonalds was mentioned by name by several), or ate it only as a meal of last resort when there wasn't anything else available to them.²¹⁷ One had consciously reduced his/her consumption of meat.²¹⁸ Others said that they tried to eat less junk food and that the idea of moderation in what they ate was one of their main take-aways.²¹⁹ As one youth said "I think that's what I learned here. Like not to take away everything.

²¹² 13596, Interview #13596.

²¹³ Ibid.; 44651, Interview #44651.

²¹⁴ 13596, Interview #13596; 38372, Interview #38372; 44651, Interview #44651; 67725, Interview #67725.

²¹⁵ 13596, Interview #13596; 35649, Interview #35649; 38372, Interview #38372; 67725, Interview #67725; 75618, Interview #75618.

²¹⁶ 13596, Interview #13596; 25586, Interview #25586; 38372, Interview #38372; 67725, Interview #67725.

²¹⁷ 38372, Interview #38372; 67725, Interview #67725; 75618, Interview #75618.

²¹⁸ 67725, Interview #67725.

²¹⁹ 38372, Interview #38372; 75618, Interview #75618.

But just to like cut back because there's so many chemicals. It's disgusting."²²⁰ In a similar vein, another youth talked about how, prior to his/her Food Project involvement, s/he had gone to the convenience store for daily after-school snacks.²²¹ After beginning work with TFP s/he had stopped doing this.²²² Another discussed choosing to no longer eat school lunches because s/he felt they were unhealthy, even though this often meant s/he had no lunch at all.²²³

Several others talked about cutting the consumption of certain beverages out of their diets after the third part of the FFT workshops.²²⁴ In particular, several youth mentioned not drinking Arizona Iced Tea anymore.²²⁵ Two others specifically mentioned cutting down on how much juice they drank after learning how much sugar was in apple juice.²²⁶ One talked about how Juicy Juice was served several times a day at his/her school and after the FFT workshop s/he read the juice label and began to think about how much sugar s/he was drinking, and so s/he started drinking less Juicy Juice.²²⁷ The other still drinks apple juice but generally waters it down about 50/50, and says s/he likes it the same.²²⁸ The same youth also said that s/he made a point of not drinking soda, with the exception of Izzes (sparkling, fruit-juice based drinks) which s/he had done some research on and felt were sufficiently healthy and free of chemicals to be drinkable.²²⁹

²²⁰ 38372, Interview #38372.

²²¹ 44651, Interview #44651.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ 13596, Interview #13596.

²²⁴ 35649, Interview #35649; 38372, Interview #38372.

²²⁵ 35649, Interview #35649; 44651, Interview #44651.

²²⁶ 13596, Interview #13596; 35649, Interview #35649.

²²⁷ 13596, Interview #13596.

²²⁸ 35649, Interview #35649.

²²⁹ Ibid.

5.8: Development of Personal Belief Systems

Many youth have incorporated their experiences at TFP, or some of what they've learned, into beliefs about how to live their own lives, improve their communities and, in some cases, improve the world as a whole. Several talked about their philosophies regarding healthy eating. As mentioned above, the idea of moderation and cutting back on but not entirely eliminating “unhealthy” foods had become an important belief in daily food choices for a number of the youth.²³⁰ They regarded it as something important, but not something that needs to be unpleasant or difficult.²³¹ One youth said “if I don't like it I'm not going to force myself to eat it just to be healthy. I'm obviously gonna eat something that's gonna make me full and happy.”²³² Another succinctly phrased his/her beliefs regarding eating as “I believe in prevention” and went on to elaborate about eating well and “[taking] care of your body before you have to take medication.”²³³

The idea that education and information is key to creating positive change was expressed by several.²³⁴ Some talked about educating others with the information included in FFT workshops (some of the youth helped run the workshops and so had gotten to see other's reactions firsthand) while others talked about needing to spread the word about where and when farmers' markets were located.²³⁵ One youth talked about how s/he really believed that school lunches across the United States needed to be made healthier.²³⁶ Another also focused on a need for changes at school, but said that s/he thought that educating children about fruits and

²³⁰ 38372, Interview #38372.

²³¹ 75618, Interview #75618.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ 35649, Interview #35649.

²³⁴ 13596, Interview #13596; 14688, Interview #14688; 21689, Interview #21689; 25586, Interview #25586; 38372, Interview #38372.

²³⁵ 21689, Interview #21689; 35649, Interview #35649; 38372, Interview #38372; 75618, Interview #75618.

²³⁶ 35649, Interview #35649.

vegetables and exposing them to gardening was key: “society tells you... ‘Oh kids hate vegetables.’ When it’s really like, like when you teach kids, like how it’s grown and they see like their product being formed it’s like really surprising to see how excited they get.”²³⁷

While not quite a personal belief, several youth also mentioned that they intended to live in places where they would have access to farmers’ markets or other local food vendors.²³⁸ Two even discussed the possibilities for including local food in their lives based on the locations of their future colleges.²³⁹

5.9: Projects Outside of *The Food Project*

About half of the youth talked about projects they were doing, or had at least attempted, inspired by their work at TFP but outside their duties there. Most of the projects revolved around gardens. Two youth talked about creating personal gardens (raised beds) at their homes.²⁴⁰ One was on his/her second year of gardening and successfully growing vegetables and flowers, although admitted s/he hadn’t been weeding as thoroughly and consistently as s/he should have.²⁴¹ The other said that things had not grown well in his/her garden, and attributed it to poor soil quality in the yard behind his/her apartment building.²⁴²

One talked about starting gardens at their schools, while a third was working on getting a garden project started at Girls Inc., where s/he worked.²⁴³ The school garden projects had both had the backing and aid of teachers, and at least one had also received help from The Food

²³⁷ 25586, Interview #25586.

²³⁸ 14688, Interview #14688.

²³⁹ 25586, Interview #25586; 44651, Interview #44651.

²⁴⁰ 25586, Interview #25586; 67725, Interview #67725.

²⁴¹ 25586, Interview #25586.

²⁴² 67725, Interview #67725.

²⁴³ 13596, Interview #13596; 67725, Interview #67725.

Project on initial construction of the raised beds, but the youth were active participants and catalysts in getting the gardens built.²⁴⁴ The Girls Inc. project did not actually have any gardens but the youth who worked there said that s/he was discussing it with people in charge there, but that there were still some concerns over how work would be reliably split up among the three major groups of girls the organization had (elementary, middle, and high school age).²⁴⁵

5.10: Knowledge: Facts, Assertions, and Context

Without exception, the youth each made some blanket statements about health and agriculture, and what was good or bad. While many of these they supported with discussions of various aspects of the food system, some were given without much justification. Only one youth thought to question some of the statistics (the ones used in an ice-breaking game), pointing out that s/he did not know what sources they were from or if they were still up to date.²⁴⁶ As well, almost without exception, the youth quoted very specific statistics and figures, mostly from the three FFT workshops, although a couple relating to the properties of cucumbers were mentioned by two separate youth.²⁴⁷ Interestingly, most of the statistics were given without full context. While to some extent this may have been a result of the youth's familiarity with the workshops the statistics came from and forgetting that I was not familiar with the workshop, some of it also may have been a lack of understanding. For example, several quoted figures for the amount of sugar in juice, an Arizona Iced Tea, or a McDonalds milkshake, but did not make clear whether

²⁴⁴ 67725, Interview #67725.

²⁴⁵ 13596, Interview #13596.

²⁴⁶ 14688, Interview #14688.

²⁴⁷ 21689, Interview #21689; 35649, Interview #35649; 44651, Interview #44651; 67725, Interview #67725.

the figures were for identical volumes of these beverages, or standard container sizes.²⁴⁸ Since the workshop with the beverages was usually done with physical bottles, I assume that they're quoting the amounts of sugar for each of those bottles, but I do not know for sure, nor do I know if those bottles were the same size. An even more striking example of this was the figure that "it takes eighteen gallons of gasoline to buy groceries for a family for a week." How big is the family? Where are they living? How do they eat? And what is taken into account in that statistic anyway? The youth discussing this did not mention any related environmental contexts and although it may have been implied this was a reason for local food production, that was not said either.

Similarly, there were several general statements implying that organics were good and pesticides and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) were bad, and in one or two cases, that food from grocery stores was unhealthy.²⁴⁹ Not a single youth discussed in any detail the first three presumptions at all. They may have seen the mention of pesticides as self-evident, although I still found it interesting that there was no discussion of *how* pesticides would affect humans, since they are designed to poison insects and our government says the amount left on produce at supermarkets won't hurt humans. In their world, pesticides, in any form, were evil. I was even more puzzled by the blanket discrimination against GMOs. In retrospect, I wish I'd asked those who mentioned them more about GMOs, because their statements didn't even tell me enough for me to know whether or not they understand what a GMO is, or what the acronym stands for. The implications of their statements were that GMOs were bad for their personal health, which was striking. There seems to be little scientific consensus on how GMOs affect those who eat them,

²⁴⁸ 13596, Interview #13596; 35649, Interview #35649.

²⁴⁹ 21689, Interview #21689; 25586, Interview #25586; 35649, Interview #35649; 44651, Interview #44651; 67725, Interview #67725.

with much opposition to them focusing on their impacts on biodiversity and the environment, which certainly were not things the youth discussed.

This way of presenting information unquestioningly but without clear context ties back into the statements made by a couple youth asserting that there were no food access issues within their communities. In those cases, too, they seemed unable to approach the information they had been given critically, and overlay it with the world around them. On the other hand, in their examinations of the health of drinks not discussed in an FFT workshop, two of the youth demonstrated the ability to apply their less theoretical knowledge of sugar content.²⁵⁰ Perhaps this suggests that while they are able to apply straightforward, “hard” knowledge to their lives, they struggle significantly more with more theoretical knowledge.

Staff Interviews

Although all three staff members I interviewed worked directly with the Root Crew youth, their responsibilities and personal focuses in engaging the youth varied. Two of the staff managed and farmed different North Shore agricultural sites: the Lynn Grower at the Lynn, MA urban agriculture sites, and the North Shore Rural Grower at the more rural Beverly and Wenham sites. The third staff member, the Summer Site Supervisor, helped organize the Root Crew’s activities and sometimes ran workshops for them. All staff members wanted to empower the youth and felt that to this end, the youth needed to see results from their work and actions over the span of the summer. The staff each had strong personal beliefs about eating and the food system but made it clear that they tried to impartially present information to the youth, although

²⁵⁰ 13596, Interview #13596.

their views clearly sometimes flavored their “neutral” stances and directed casual conversations with youth.

5.11: Individual Action for Empowerment and Change

Individual action was mentioned by all three interviewed staff members, although they placed different levels of emphasis on it.²⁵¹ The Summer Site Coordinator placed the most emphasis on preparing youth to take individual actions; although the growers both felt it a useful and beneficial thing, they both emphasized that their primary responsibilities were managing farms and discussing the farm work that needed to be done.²⁵²

None framed individual action as a responsibility; rather it was presented more as a personal choice and a method of empowerment.²⁵³ For example, one of the growers talked about running a workshop on soil- what it was made of and how it was created- and using it as an “invitation” for the youth to think about how they interacted with soil and to decide whether to be “soil builder[s]” or soil “degrader[s].”²⁵⁴ In this case at least, this method of presentation seems to have appealed to the youth, because the other grower, who runs land in a different

²⁵¹ Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower, interview by Rosalind Waltz-Peters, February 3, 2016; North Shore Rural Grower, Interview with North Shore Rural Grower, interview by Rosalind Waltz-Peters, February 3, 2016; North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, interview by Rosalind Waltz-Peters, February 3, 2016.

²⁵² North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator; Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower; North Shore Rural Grower, Interview with North Shore Rural Grower.

²⁵³ North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator; Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower; North Shore Rural Grower, Interview with North Shore Rural Grower.

²⁵⁴ North Shore Rural Grower, Interview with North Shore Rural Grower.

town, mentioned youth dubbing themselves “soil builders” as they performed tasks with her such as turning compost.²⁵⁵

The actions of growing food and eating it, possibly with family, were framed by two staff members as an initial type of individual action, facilitated by youths’ employment at The Food project.²⁵⁶ As the Summer Site Coordinator put it, paraphrasing the reactions she sees in youth: “I worked really hard to this, and grow all this food, and I’m going to give it my loved ones.”²⁵⁷ She termed this opportunity for youth to bring home the literal fruits of their labors as “gratification of completion of their work” and said that she felt that being able to see some level of impact within the same summer that they worked was key to helping the youth feel motivated and proud of their work.²⁵⁸ The importance of seeing some level of immediate impact in keeping youth motivated was also her justification for the greater focus on individual actions than on community or systemic actions.²⁵⁹ “It’s harder for youth to [make systemic changes] because they don’t have the resources or the time... So we focus on meeting the individual. And like what you can do, right now, as of right now... to make a change.”²⁶⁰

Nonetheless, all three staff members made the case for individual change in the context of benefitting not just oneself, but the community and society.²⁶¹ The Summer Site Supervisor said that she talked with youth about using their economic power (created in part by their paid

²⁵⁵ Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.; North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator.

²⁵⁷ North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.; Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower; North Shore Rural Grower, Interview with North Shore Rural Grower.

jobs at TFP) to support local farms and businesses and “[enhance their] community’s value.”²⁶² Both she and the Lynn Grower discussed how the youth brought the food they grew to their families, and the Lynn Grower discussed how the food also made its way into the community through the farmers’ market while other TFP youth projects included building raised garden beds and running workshops for community members.²⁶³ They expanded on these more immediate community impacts by talking about how learning about the food system and farming was also the first step towards being empowered to make much broader change.²⁶⁴ The Site Supervisor discussed encouraging youth to think about how they could extend any actions or changes they were making currently into the future, and expand upon them as they got older and had more opportunities and means to do so.²⁶⁵ The Lynn Grower said that she preferred to talk about food issues on a systemic level, mostly drawing attention to how they manifested themselves in the work she and the youth do and in their daily experiences.²⁶⁶ She hoped that the knowledge and confidence the youth gained as part of TFP would inspire them to be “the people who lead... a new reality around food and distributions, and growing and consuming food.”²⁶⁷ In an unexpectedly philosophical turn, the North Shore Rural Grower said that he believed that teaching people how to farm allowed them to “challenge corporate rulership” and attack social issues “more powerfully and confidently, and... courageously” because it allowed them freedom from dependence on a corporate web for food.²⁶⁸

²⁶² North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator.

²⁶³ Ibid.; Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower.

²⁶⁴ North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator; Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower; North Shore Rural Grower, Interview with North Shore Rural Grower.

²⁶⁵ North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator.

²⁶⁶ Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ North Shore Rural Grower, Interview with North Shore Rural Grower.

5.12: Unbiased Engagement vs. Personal Philosophy

While all of the staff members clearly had strong personal philosophies about eating and participating in the food system, they tried to be neutral in their presentations of information to the youth. Both the Site Supervisor and the Lynn Grower were explicit about the care they took to avoid criticizing others' choices about eating and living, while the North Shore Rural Grower simply made no mention of his opinion of others' choices.²⁶⁹ The Site Supervisor emphasized that she tried not to make eating locally versus eating from a grocery store tied into the globalized system seem mutually exclusive, and that "it's important not to say [the commercial food system] is bad, and [to recognize] what are the benefits of one versus what the benefits of the other" (sic).²⁷⁰ In this vein, she noted that "having food coming from long distances definitely helps us in terms of cultural diversity."²⁷¹ Similarly, the Lynn Grower felt it was important not to blame or shame someone for eating fast food, especially since it was inexpensive and convenient.²⁷² She also pithily described her personal philosophy around discussing eating habits as "don't yuck my yum."²⁷³

Both growers, however, had strong personal opinions regarding the systems structuring our society whose strength was clearly evident despite being presented in a conversational, opinion-sharing manner rather than a pedantic one.²⁷⁴ The Lynn Grower termed McDonald's

²⁶⁹ North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator; Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower; North Shore Rural Grower, Interview with North Shore Rural Grower.

²⁷⁰ North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.; North Shore Rural Grower, Interview with North Shore Rural Grower.

food and the like “crap,” although also said that she didn’t think “that we should blame each other for the choices that we make in an unjust system.”²⁷⁵ When discussing her overall goals as part of TFP, she focused on wanting to connect people to “natural processes” and things like soil and bugs.²⁷⁶ The other grower shared a similar philosophy about connecting people to soil, although his had more religious undertones; he talked a lot about energy streams and how they were present in varying ways in all life and the world around them.²⁷⁷ He also discussed corporate control of the food system briefly, as well as his belief that the international banking and loan system was responsible for environmental degradation, as it creates debt that people pay off by exploiting the value of natural resources.²⁷⁸ This grower made clear, however, that these beliefs and “musings” were only ones he shared casually with youth who expressed an interest, and were never part of farm workshop material.²⁷⁹

5.13: See the System to Change the System

Although the staff discuss minimal emphasis on *how* the youth could change the system, all three talked about discussing aspects of the dominant socio-economic system.²⁸⁰ In particular, there was a focus on terminology and naming, and a connection between that and empowerment.²⁸¹ As the Lynn Grower said: “the youth get so much... out of learning to name

²⁷⁵ Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ North Shore Rural Grower, Interview with North Shore Rural Grower.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator; Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower; North Shore Rural Grower, Interview with North Shore Rural Grower.

²⁸¹ North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator; Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower.

these systems, that are such forces in their lives.”²⁸² The Site Supervisor, who is more directly responsible for discussing terminologies and their meanings talked about helping youth understand these more abstract concepts by trying to contextualize them within the youths’ daily experiences.²⁸³ She also discussed how conversations about “social inhibitors” often touched on obstacles that youth were presently facing and allowed them to understand that others had similar experiences and connect.²⁸⁴ As mentioned previously, the North Shore Rural Grower also like to discuss systemic things with the youth, particularly the international banking system.²⁸⁵ All three presented their conversations primarily as ways of getting youth thinking about and questioning the systems that shaped their lives, with the indication that they believed this was the first step towards being able to engage with and potentially change these systems.²⁸⁶

²⁸² Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower.

²⁸³ North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ North Shore Rural Grower, Interview with North Shore Rural Grower.

²⁸⁶ North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator; Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower; North Shore Rural Grower, Interview with North Shore Rural Grower.

VI. DISCUSSION

6.1: Individualism as a Path to Empowerment

The Food Project youth display a clear sense of agency in making changes related to food in their own lives, which is a reflection of the emphasis that the staff put on individual action. As one staff member said when explaining how and why The Food Project worked, “It’s not that they don’t care, it’s just that they’re not given the opportunity *to* care.”²⁸⁷ This quote is representative both of the ways in which The Food Project shares a mindset with many other social justice organizations and the ways in which it is unique. Unlike programs framed as “interventions” in how youths or a community eats, The Food Project does not assume that youth are disinterested participants in their own well-beings and that of their community; it does not assume that youth need to be taught to care.²⁸⁸ However, like other programs and studies that aim to educate about nutrition or familiarize youth with new and different foods, The Food Project operates under the assumption that food, eating, and the food system are things that youth and communities *should* care about and take a vested interest in.

Stemming from the idea that youth *do* care and just need some help acting on that feeling, TFP focuses on empowering and energizing youth. Primarily, the staff hope to achieve this by

²⁸⁷ North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator.

²⁸⁸ Somerville et al., “The Effect of a Garden-Based Nutrition Education Program on the Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables by Hispanic Children”; Gatto et al., “LA Sprouts”; Sandler, Vandegrift, and Verbrugghen, “From Desert to Garden - Reconnecting Disconnected Youth.”

having the youth harvest, consume, and share produce from their farming labors, so that they see and experience tangible results as they do the work.²⁸⁹ Although TFP staff do address systemic issues, they express concern that focusing solely on trying to create change or impact in these broader, more theoretical realms is slow and would be disheartening to youth as it is highly unlikely they would see any immediate results to their actions.²⁹⁰

Although TFP promotes individual action hoping to empower youth, rather than seeing it as their responsibility, the focus on individual action nonetheless buys into the individualism promoted by neoliberalism. By assuming that each youth has the power and liberty to create meaningful food-related change in their lives within the existing system, The Food Project inadvertently affirms that this economic system allows the greatest opportunities for individual liberty. It also plays into the neoliberal focus on individual action and consumption. Staff discuss how TFP gives youth a chance to experience and appreciate fresh food, and bring that appreciation to their families.²⁹¹ While many of these experiences are attached to produce given out to the youth (as opposed to sold to them) by The Food Project, the overarching idea is that these experiences will change youths' consumption habits. Two of the staff talk directly about encouraging youth to buy locally when they can, in part to support local communities.²⁹² One particularly emphasized this dynamic, pointing out that by paying youth TFP enables them to make decisions with a small amount of their own financial power.²⁹³ The same staff members also employs some of the rhetoric of the narrative promoting individual responsibility for health,

²⁸⁹ North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator; Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower.

²⁹⁰ Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower; North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator.

²⁹¹ Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower; North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator.

²⁹² Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower; North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator.

²⁹³ North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator.

asking “How can [you] use [your] money... to have a better life expectancy.”²⁹⁴ This emphasis on changing consumption, for both personal and community gains, is one presented in neoliberal discourse as a solution: participants in a system can fix problems simply by altering consumption and essentially buying their ways to something better.

This emphasis on individual action is very evident in youth responses, and dominates their thoughts on creating change. Although several youth talked about educating others about farmers’ markets, and maybe gardening as adults, only one who mentioned trying to create systemic change in the future in any capacity; s/he said that s/he wanted to change school lunches.²⁹⁵ The lack of youth discussion about trying to reshape the food system as a whole was notable, especially when contrasted with the ways in which the staff discussed the system. It seems that in focusing on individual level changes, TFP has perhaps drawn attention away from the role that youth could play in reforming the systems on a broader scale. Of course, it’s possible that to some extent this is due to the fact that experiencing tangible results makes individual actions much more memorable and appealing to youth. Several youth mentioned how much they appreciated that TFP presented information to them, but did not preach certain “correct” decisions.²⁹⁶ Any alterations to their eating habits that youth had made they had independently chosen, and as such they seemed confident of and committed to them.

This TFP strategy stands in contrast to the methodology of many other youth and food focused programs. There seem to be few studies of initiatives aimed at teenagers; most studies focus on programs with elementary school-aged children, which often are trying to change their behavior in a more specific way, such as getting them to choose fruits and vegetables as

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ 21689, Interview #21689; 35649, Interview #35649; 38372, Interview #38372; 75618, Interview #75618.

²⁹⁶ 14688, Interview #14688; 21689, Interview #21689.

snacks.²⁹⁷ In most of these cases, there is an emphasis on exposure to and sampling of novel produce and changing the children's actions by altering habits, rather than altering how they think about food and the system that produces it.²⁹⁸ In the short term, The Food Project has similar goals to many of these programs: having youth become more familiar with, and open to trying, fruits and vegetables so that they will change their individual consumption patterns within the existing system. However, maintaining these changes, especially for children, is very much dependent on parents and other factors that determine access. In light of this, The Food Project's work to create short-term change within the neoliberal system, while also teaching youth to name facets of the system and consider the ways in which they are unjust, seems like a stronger recipe for far-reaching change. As is evident in the youth interviews, the youth feel a sense of purpose in their individual changes, and being able to name and describe the systems around them is a first step towards being able to change them.

6.2: In Defining, Dividing: Food System Knowledge Applied to Real Life

Without a doubt, The Food Project has succeeded in helping youth to learn common terminology about food systems and issues. They easily discuss the "global industrial" food system as well as the "local sustainable" one.²⁹⁹ What is less clear is if the youth have been able to engage critically with these terms and ideas. The site supervisor said that she tried to be clear that purchasing within the global industrial food system and the local sustainable one were not

²⁹⁷ Somerville et al., "The Effect of a Garden-Based Nutrition Education Program on the Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables by Hispanic Children"; Gatto et al., "LA Sprouts"; Corona, "Using Gardens to Plant the Seeds of Good Health, Education."

²⁹⁸ Somerville et al., "The Effect of a Garden-Based Nutrition Education Program on the Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables by Hispanic Children"; Gatto et al., "LA Sprouts"; Corona, "Using Gardens to Plant the Seeds of Good Health, Education."

²⁹⁹ 13596, Interview #13596; 35649, Interview #35649; 38372, Interview #38372; 75618, Interview #75618.

mutually exclusive, but it seems as if the youth understand the systems themselves as existing as a dichotomy.³⁰⁰ There is a pervasive perception among the youth that if something is bought in a standard grocery store, it is inherently less healthy than something purchased at a farmers' market. Accordingly, anything grown locally must be more healthy. None pause to reflect on the fact that all farms, including the ones supplying supermarkets, are local to some population, and that a farm's proximity to them is utterly unrelated to the growing techniques it employs.

It is also notable that although the youth can discuss many of the possible access barriers to fresh healthy food and can in many cases discuss how the barriers might affect their own lives, they seem to have difficulty projecting this same understanding onto their own communities. Several youth discussed how their parents shopped with cost efficiency in mind, implicitly commenting on how financial limitations factor into their own eating experiences.³⁰¹ However, when discussing the possibility of access issues within their own communities, several simply stated that there weren't issues, equating the presence of farms within their communities to widespread access to food.³⁰² This demonstrated an inability to see or make connections beyond their own experiences of their communities, and acknowledge that others might not have the same transportation and financial advantages that gave their own households ready access to food. Since most of the youth could reflect on such access barriers through their TFP experiences, such as working at mobile markets (which visit state housing projects) and at the farmers' market, for some youth it seems that TFP may inadvertently be creating a little bit of the missionary mindset that often attends nutrition or food programs and which the TFP staff seem to take pains to minimize; the youth are able to understand and empathize with issues in

³⁰⁰ North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator.

³⁰¹ 13596, Interview #13596; 21689, Interview #21689.

³⁰² 14688, Interview #14688; 25586, Interview #25586; 38372, Interview #38372; 44651, Interview #44651.

communities that are “othered” from them- and wish to help- but blind to work they could be doing closer to home.

Youths’ views on food access are also an interesting parallel to the existing literature on food deserts. Several studies have found that price is one of the biggest determinants of where families (at least low-income ones) buy food, sometimes even more so than proximity; TFP youth discuss price more than any other factor as an influence on how their families, and by extension they, eat.³⁰³ In geographically delineating food deserts and then attempting to “fix” them, there is the assumption that given the presence of fresh produce, consumers in these areas will buy and consume it. To a large extent the youth seem to buy into this belief, evidenced in their focus on spreading knowledge about when and where farmers’ markets are and several youths’ equations of the presence of farms to access to fresh food.

Yet, contradictorily, many are examples of ways in which this cannot be true. A couple youth mentioned opting **not** to bring fresh produce home from work at TFP, despite it being free and their parents’ pleas.³⁰⁴ Others mentioned specific vegetables that they had helped grow, harvest, and sell, but had never tried despite years of work at TFP.³⁰⁵ Although the youth did not generally give specific reasons for not taking or trying produce, their responses align with the results of studies that show that in some neighborhoods and communities there is a general resistance to trying novel produce, and that introducing produce is meeting a non-existent demand.

³⁰³ Carney, “Compounding Crises of Economic Recession and Food Insecurity”; Kato and McKinney, “Bringing Food Desert Residents to an Alternative Food Market”; Ghosh-Dastidar et al., “Distance to Store, Food Prices, and Obesity in Urban Food Deserts.”

³⁰⁴ 13596, Interview #13596; 67725, Interview #67725.

³⁰⁵ 75618, Interview #75618.

6.3: Teaching vs. Sharing: The Balance Between Preaching Beliefs and Aiding Self-Discovery

Many of the actions youth discuss taking to aid other communities center around spreading knowledge and experience with fresh, local food. Although most of their hypothetical actions are things such as making people aware of the locations of farmers' markets, many also discussed "education" of others. This idea of needing to teach about healthy eating was even more evident in their accounts of interactions with friends and family, in which several said things along the lines of "you shouldn't eat that" or "it's bad for you," and one youth talked about keeping her family members' eating "on track."³⁰⁶ These comments, and the language that youth use to discuss personal eating changes, demonstrate that in their minds, there often is a clear right and wrong to eating, and that they feel that at least some of these designations are objective, rather than subjective. I find this a striking and startling contrast to comments made by some of the same youth about how much they valued not being instructed on what to eat by TFP staff.

This is also in stark contrast to the clear efforts of the staff not to label any behavior or eating pattern as bad or good. Both the Site Supervisor and the Lynn Grower made clear that they understood that, either by necessity or preference, fast food was something many people, including the youth, consumed on a regular basis.³⁰⁷ As such, they tried very hard not to critique those who ate it.³⁰⁸ However, despite their careful constructions of uncritical workshops and dialogues with youth, it was also clear that all of the staff members had very strong personal

³⁰⁶ 38372, Interview #38372; 25586, Interview #25586.

³⁰⁷ Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower; North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator.

³⁰⁸ Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower; North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator.

opinions about food and food systems. As the growers both pointed out, most of their interactions with youth are outside the parameters of scheduled workshops and instead are either about farm work or take place in the context of performing farm labor.³⁰⁹ This gives them a fair amount of opportunity to talk about these topics on a more personal level, and with more focus on issues that are of particular significance to them. These conversations, at least as indicated by their interviews, tend to be focused more on broader systemic changes, and less neutral in tone.³¹⁰

The staff tend to use vocabulary such as “sharing” to describe their interactions with the youth.³¹¹ Interestingly, despite their rather dichotomized views about eating expressed in descriptions of interactions with family and friends, this framing is one the youth seem to have adopted as part of their “professional” personas at TFP. The academic year Dirt Crew, many members of which were part of the Root Crew I interviewed, is responsible for leading a variety of community workshops. In discussing this experience many youth talk about presenting information and being amazed at how people react; while sometimes they discuss “teaching” those they give workshops to, for the most part they seem to see their TFP roles as being conveyors of information to be used at the discretion of those they talk with.

³⁰⁹ Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower; North Shore Rural Grower, Interview with North Shore Rural Grower.

³¹⁰ North Shore Rural Grower, Interview with North Shore Rural Grower; Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower.

³¹¹ Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower; North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator, Interview with North Shore Summer Site Supervisor and Academic Year Program Coordinator; North Shore Rural Grower, Interview with North Shore Rural Grower.

6.4: The Natural and the Right

As could be expected given the dominant discourse about “nature” and the superiority of “natural” things underlying many alternative food movements, both staff and youth discuss “nature” and “naturalness” and use it as either explicit or implied justification for their choices and opinions. Unsurprisingly, both of the Growers had strong feelings about nature, with both saying that trying to connect the people to the soil was one of their main goals.³¹² One also added that she felt that, particularly in urban environments, many natural processes were hidden and that it was important to help people see and become comfortable with the mechanisms of them, such as bees and bugs.³¹³ This grower also emphasized how much better quality local produce (such as she grew at TFP) was than what could be purchased at the supermarket; while she compared the physical appearances of two bunches of cilantro to illustrate this, for the most part she drew this conclusion from the comparative simplicity of growing locally, elaborating on how many chemicals and how much transport was involved in getting produce to conventional supermarkets.³¹⁴ The other Grower echoed this sentiment; when pressed on what he meant by natural, he said that it was detaching yourself from a system with middlemen mediating your interaction with food, and instead being more involved and aware of the energy and process that went into growing it.³¹⁵ Despite the similar sentiment, his logic was different, and he seemed less inclined to hold “natural” as self-evidently superior. He emphasized that nature was not something that existed separate from or outside of humans, and suggested that people should eat more “naturally” (and outside of the system) because it made them more autonomous and better

³¹² Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower; North Shore Rural Grower, Interview with North Shore Rural Grower.

³¹³ Lynn Grower, Interview with Lynn Grower.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ North Shore Rural Grower, Interview with North Shore Rural Grower.

able to question and challenge all the systems that governed their lives and world.³¹⁶ To him, growing food is a way of engaging with the forces of the world, and connects to his beliefs about energy, mindedness, and existence.³¹⁷

As with opinions about healthy eating, these views of the superiority of “natural” things are echoed by the youth in a less nuanced and more black and white fashion. Although many youth discuss their families shopping at supermarkets, they seem to feel the need to justify this (many reference the cheaper prices of supermarkets), sometimes with an almost apologetic tone; there seems to be an underlying belief that it would be better for their families to shop exclusively at farmers’ markets if that were feasible, and that supermarket food is innately inferior to farmers’ market produce. Many also reference Whole Foods as a preferable alternative to “regular” supermarkets. In both cases, the youth offer little discussion of these assumptions, although a few reference pesticide usage. The references to Whole Foods are particularly interesting, since the chain shares with standard grocery stores characteristics that the youth critique; there are many internationally sourced products, and while there is a wide selection of sustainable and ethically produced foods (labeled as such) there are many others that are not, but almost all the youth view the chain as “better,” albeit more expensive.³¹⁸ Conversely, the youth broadly reference the presence of pesticides and GMOs- unnatural things- in supermarket food as a reason to avoid it, and “chemicals” as a reason to avoid the notorious McDonald’s milkshake and other beverages covered in the workshop discussing their ingredients and sugar contents.

Interestingly, several youth pointed out what they considered to be false or misleading marketing around the Arizona Iced Tea, branded as “natural” but containing many unnatural

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Josée Johnston, “The Citizen-Consumer Hybrid: Ideological Tensions and the Case of Whole Foods Market,” *Theory and Society* 37, no. 3 (2008): 229–70, doi:10.1007/s11186-007-9058-5.

sounding ingredients, but none ever really discussed what “natural” *was*. Ultimately, this is hardly surprising; as discussed earlier the idea of “pure nature” is one that exists more in the human imagination than reality, and so it is perhaps easier to say certain things are “unnatural” and assume those outside that category to be “natural” than vice versa.

The commonality between all of these views on nature is a rejection of food system inputs that cannot be seen or easily understood on an individual consumer basis. By comparing “global industrial” food systems with “local sustainable” ones in their teachings of terminology and practice, The Food Project (probably) unintentionally delineates between the two. Through discussions of commercially produced products full of perplexing ingredients and comparisons of the aesthetics of supermarket and TFP garden produce, a connection is drawn between supermarkets and the complexities of the global food system, and ideas of deceit and “unnaturalness.” Thus as the other half of the dichotomy, the “local sustainable” system becomes by default the understandable, simple, and “natural” one. The youths’ own experiences working in the gardens and cooking with what they grow reinforce the understanding that “natural” food is food produced through easily understandable processes and inputs. Without ever directly addressing or defining the ideas of “nature” and “natural,” The Food Project gains righteousness from the existing discourse about nature.

The connection between nature and rightness, and that which can be individually experienced and understood, makes complexity seem unnatural. This essentially limits “natural” things to those which are produced and consumed on a community level. By extension, this reinforces The Food Project’s neoliberal emphasis on using individual consumption and actions to support and strengthen the community. Ideas about healthy eating are complexly bound to discourses about neoliberalism, individual responsibility, and nature and so without questioning

all of these discourses, it is impossible for beliefs about changing eating and the food system to be truly separate from any of them.

VII. CONCLUSION

The Food Project seeks to change the food system within the United States by making today's youth the change-makers of the future. It helps them explore and name the issues and challenges in the modern food system, and empowers them by presenting information and allowing them to build their own narratives. However, since The Food Project exists within a society molded by the systems it is trying to question, both its impact and the organization itself are products and critiques of them.

For the sake of empowering and energizing youth, TFP puts a great deal of emphasis on individual action and consumption, the standard solutions of a neoliberal system, since these are the kinds of actions that have visible impacts over the course of a summer. As well, although the staff strive to present information about the current food system in a manner free of "good" and "bad" labels, existing discourses about there being right and wrong ways to eat, and that equate constructed ideas of "natural" to "right," mean that the youth ultimately frame ideas about food and eating within their own narratives in these dichotomized terms.

Perhaps as a result of this, most youth do have staunch beliefs about food that they try share and spread to those who are close to them. While for most this takes the form of trying to shape other individuals' actions, for some this manifests itself as community projects. In the short term, The Food Project is really only able to create small-scale change within the existing system. Yet, in doing this, it instills a belief in the need for some kind of change and a sense of

agency in the youth that might someday make them the leaders of the systemic change TFP hopes to see, and at the very least makes youth change-makers in their own lives.

Helping form individuals who are active participants in their own change, rather than pawns in someone else's, seems like it might be one of the keys to creating lasting and spreading change. It also makes individuals who are truly part of the alternative food movement, whose experiences can broaden and deepen the movements' understanding of what health and healthy eating means to different people and in different communities.

To further develop these skills in youth so that they are even better prepared to help make changes that are not just personal, but are community-based or broader, there are areas in which The Food Project could expand or supplement its existing work. Since, despite the staff's efforts to be non-biased in their discussions of the food system, youth tend to internalize their understanding of it in dichotomized terms, it would be beneficial to discuss some of the discourses and assumptions underlying the youths' categorizations of ideas. In particular, exploring ideas such as "health" and "nature" could help youth question their own assumptions and engage more critically with information, although admittedly that might not be in The Food Project's own best interest as an organization with a food-based mission. Additionally, both the youth and their communities would gain from the youth learning to think about their communities' food access, consumption patterns, and well being beyond the limitations and possible privileges of personal experience. One way to approach this could be helping youth meet members of their home communities outside of their normal social spheres, and then holding peer discussions about individual communities' food systems; this would allow youth to gain multiple less-biased outside perspectives that might help them see patterns and issues they struggled to perceive from within the community. Finally, greater exposure to collective action

movements aiming for systemic changes might help the youth better understand the possibility and potential of using their own empowerment and capacity to create change as part of something larger. Of course The Food Project itself is, in some ways, a form of collective action against the food system, but this did not generally seem to be one of youths' main takeaways. Discussions of other specific movements to alter the food system, or the related socioeconomic systems could serve as an intro to providing youth opportunities to witness and participate in collective efforts for systemic change in the area. The Food Project already gives its youth passion and conviction in their beliefs, and these steps could help youth be questioning of the aspects of their own beliefs that help perpetuate an unjust food system, and instill in them a belief in their own power to change more than simply just themselves.

APPENDICES

Appendix I:

Questions for Partially Structured Youth Interviews

1. What have you learned about healthy food and healthy eating at TFP?
 - a. What new information stood out to you the most?
2. Do you think you will change your eating habits have changed because of TFP? Why or why not?
 - a. Do you think they will change, or stay changed, in the future?
3. Do you feel you have access to fresh, healthy food? Why or why not?
 - a. If not, do you think there is anything that *you* can do to change that for yourself/your family/your community?

Appendix II:

Questions for Partially Structured Staff Interviews

1. What are your goals as part of this program? Does this differ for youth specifically?
2. How do you go about trying to achieve them?
 - a. What topics do you cover?
 - b. How do you present information and ideas?
3. What kind of impact do you think The Food Project has?
4. Are there changes that you think could or should be made to make TFP more effective?

7. Describe a healthy dinner. It does not have to be something you know how to cook or have the ingredients for.
8. Describe a healthy dinner that you think you could make, based on your cooking skill and the ingredients you usually have available to you. If it is the same as the dinner you described in question 6, write "same."
9. How much do you enjoy eating each of the following fruits and vegetables? Please rate each option on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being "don't like at all" and 5 being "like very much."
- a. Zucchini
don't like at all 1 2 3 4 5 *like very much*
- b. Peaches
don't like at all 1 2 3 4 5 *like very much*
- c. Spinach
don't like at all 1 2 3 4 5 *like very much*
- d. Carrots
don't like at all 1 2 3 4 5 *like very much*
- e. Apples
don't like at all 1 2 3 4 5 *like very much*

- f. Peas
don't like at all 1 2 3 4 5 *like very much*
- g. Strawberries
don't like at all 1 2 3 4 5 *like very much*
- h. Tomatoes
don't like at all 1 2 3 4 5 *like very much*
- i. Pears
don't like at all 1 2 3 4 5 *like very much*

10. Below are descriptions of five meals. Please rate how healthy they are as **complete, balanced** meals on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being “very **unhealthy**” and 5 being “very healthy.”

- a. Peas, mashed potatoes, and steak.

1 2 3 4 5

very unhealthy very healthy

- b. Hamburger (including bun, burger, slice of tomato, lettuce, and onion) and french-fries and ketchup.

1 2 3 4 5

very unhealthy very healthy

- c. Chicken tacos (tortillas, chicken, lettuce, tomato, onions, and salsa) with rice and beans on the side.

1 2 3 4 5

very unhealthy very healthy

- d. Salad with lettuce, tomatoes, carrots, and cucumbers.

1 2 3 4 5

very unhealthy very healthy

- e. Cheese pizza and pasta salad (pasta, corn, peas, onions, mayonnaise).

1 2 3 4 5

very unhealthy very healthy

Appendix IV:

IRB Letter of Approval

Mount Holyoke IRB

Approval Notification

To: Rosalind Waltz-Peters
From: Amber Douglas, IRB Chair
Subject: Proposal #219
Date: 07/02/2015

The proposal **#219, The Effect of Agriculture Education on Teenagers' Eating Habits and Perceptions of Health** has been approved by the Institutional Review Board Chair on **07/02/2015**.

The approval of your study is valid through 07/01/2016, by which time you must submit an annual report either closing the proposal or requesting permission to continue the proposal for another year. Please submit your report by **06/17/2016** so that the IRB has time to review and approve your report if you wish to continue it for another year.

Before you begin work, you must reply to this email and affirm that you have read and understood the terms of this approval and that you agree to abide by those terms. Please reply with the words "I agree" to serve as your electronic signature to be kept on file with this proposal.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Amber Douglas,
IRB Chair
adouglas@mtholyoke.edu

Appendix V:

IRB Approval for Amendments to Project Proposal

4/7/2016

Mount Holyoke College Mail - Amendment Approved - IRB ID: 219



Rosalind Waltz-Peters <waltz22r@mtholyoke.edu>

Amendment Approved - IRB ID: 219

Amber Douglas <noreply@axiommentor.com>
Reply-To: Amber Douglas <adouglas@mtholyoke.edu>
To: waltz22r@mtholyoke.edu

Thu, Jan 7, 2016 at 4:21 PM

Dear Rosalind,

Your amendment has been approved by the IRB. Good luck with this part of your research.

Best,

Amber Douglas

Chair, IRB

Appendix VI:

Project Proposal for IRB Review (Including Amendments)

Please note that amendments are highlighted in yellow to distinguish them from the original proposal.

MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR THE OVERSIGHT OF RESEARCH INVOLVING
HUMAN SUBJECTS
PROPOSAL FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Instructions: Please complete this form on your computer, save it with a new file name, and upload it in the Mentor IRB system at

<https://www.axiommentor.com/login/axlogin.cfm?i=mtholyoke>

The first time you use Mentor IRB, you will need to activate your account by following the instructions on the first screen of the Mentor IRB website and entering your MHC account username and MHC e-mail address. If you do not have a MHC faculty or student account, send e-mail to institutional-review-board@mtholyoke.edu requesting a Mentor IRB account. You will receive an e-mail message from the IRB administrator with your username.

Title of Proposed Research Project: The Effect of Agriculture Education on Teenagers' Eating Habits and Perceptions of Health

Student or Principal Investigator name(s): Rosalind Waltz-Peters

Department: Environmental Studies

E-mail: waltz22r@mtholyoke.edu

Phone: 774-641-7097 (after May 16th)

Has this proposal been subject to departmental review or review by another IRB?

Yes No

If "Yes" please upload to the Mentor IRB system copies of all documentation submitted for that review, along with the written response (approval, approval with modification, disapproval) from the department or other IRB.

Note: Students and visiting PIs should indicate the name of their project advisor or MHC

liaison in the Mentor IRB online system. Your advisor/liaison will be notified that your proposal has been submitted and instructed how to review it online and indicate their approval for the project. The IRB will not review a student proposal or a visiting PI proposal until advisor/liaison approval is received.

1. Briefly describe the purpose of this study:

The purpose of this project is to study how hands-on education about food and farming may affect what high school students eat, and why they choose to eat it. The design of modern cities and suburbs in the United States has distanced their occupants, both physically and mentally, from fresh food. One effort to combat this has come in the form of urban agriculture initiatives, including programs that involve students in gardening work. For many, this can teach them many new things about their food and the environment it comes from, as well as open their eyes to new food possibilities. While this education may change how students think about food, I would like to examine whether changed views can translate to real changes in eating habits in daily life, and if changes in eating habits are more likely to occur with longer participation in a garden program. There is particularly little research on garden-based education in which the subjects are teenagers, yet they often have more independence in their meal choices than the elementary and middle schoolers generally studied.

2. Participants: Describe the number and type of participants, the source from which they will be recruited, the method of recruitment.

Participants will all be high school students on the youth crew of The Food Project in Boston, MA; the youth crew works in The Food Project's gardens. I hope to administer questionnaires to all members of the youth crew. First-time youth crew participants will be given three similar questionnaires about health and food over the course of the summer. Returning youth crew members will only be given a single questionnaire, which will ask more retrospective questions than the questionnaires given to the first-time youth crew members.

From both groups of students, a few individuals will be randomly chosen for partially structured interviews to supplement the data gathered with questionnaires.

To supplement the interviews with youth, I will conduct partially structured interviews with some staff members of The Food Project.

3. Describe the research procedures to be used (what participants will be asked to do, or what treatments will be applied to each subject) in detail.

Each student will be asked to complete a questionnaire about eating habits and perceptions of health. The questionnaire will contain a combination of closed and open-ended questions. New student participants will be asked to complete one questionnaire before, or at the very beginning of, their jobs on the youth crew. They will then be given two more questionnaires over the course of the summer with very similar questions. Students with a previous year or years of experience will be asked to complete a single questionnaire (with closed and open ended questions) about how their participation in youth crew up to the present may have affected their understanding of health and their behavior in relation to food.

Some students from each group will be chosen at random for partially-structured interviews as well, to help obtain a more detailed understanding of eating habits and attitudes about health. These interviews will be recorded using a tape recorder. Once consent is given, students will be asked questions such as whether or not they perceive certain foods to be healthy, how they choose what to eat for breakfast, and what they might eat if they were choosing the components of a healthy meal.

The partially structured interviews with staff members will discuss the experiences the staff have had working with youth and the community, as well as their perspectives on The Food Project's educational model. They will be asked questions such as what they focus on when running workshops for the youth, and how they choose to discuss issues, from genetically modified organisms to poverty. Staff interviews will be recorded.

4. Risk to participants: Given the fact that, in any study, it is possible for participants to experience some degree of discomfort, anxiety, concern about failure, etc., what will you do to minimize the possibility that this will occur, and how will you address or reduce it if it does occur?

In this study, there is little risk to participants. However, some may feel uncomfortable talking about their eating habits and perceptions of health because related topics such as body image and household income may be considered very private. I think it is also possible that the idea of "being studied" could make some portion of the population I am working with uncomfortable. To try to minimize this, I will be careful to assure them that all of their responses are anonymous, and that no one, including anyone at The Food Project will ever know what a particular person said. I will also try to emphasize that their responses may be able to help The Food Project extend their youth crew garden program to more people and improve it for current and future participants.

Given the close personal connections between The Food Project staff, it would be difficult to include in a report any quotes, and possibly even opinions, that could truly be anonymous if another staff members read the report. Thus, staff interviews will not be anonymous although the interview data will be kept confidential. I will make sure that staff

members know this and know that the organization has requested a copy of the finished report so that they can use their own discretion as they answer questions.

5. How will you obtain informed consent? Describe the procedures.

I will obtain informed consent by explaining, verbally or in writing, who I am and what my project is, and how the participant fits into my study. I will be sure to explain that participation is completely optional, and that even once they agree to participate they can change their mind without any consequences and their answers will be removed from the study. I will also make sure that they know they have the option of skipping any question they are uncomfortable with, without their choices in any way affecting how they are treated. Then, I will ask if they have any questions and answer them openly and honestly.

I will do these things with both the parents/guardians of the students and then with the students themselves. The parents/guardians will receive a written letter explaining the study and the ways in which their children may be involved, and will then be asked to sign the informed consent forms. Once parental consent forms are signed, I will have informed assent forms for the students to sign as well, to help ensure that both they and I know that their participation is their choice. I will give the parents/guardians separate informed consent forms for interviews. With students asked to do interviews, I will review the study and their rights, and ask for their verbal assent, recorded on a tape recorder.

Given that The Food Project tries to hire a very diverse group of students, it is possible that some may have parents/guardians who do not speak English or are illiterate in English. In cases where the parent/guardian does not read English, I will, if the student and their family are open to it, meet the parent in person to explain the project, read the consent form, and get oral consent, recorded on a tape recorder. In cases where the parent/guardian does not speak English, I will get the organization's help to translate the letter and consent form into their native language (if they read) or to find a translator who can translate my verbal explanation (if they do not read). Should I be unable to find an adequate method of translation and explanation, the student will not be allowed to participate in the study.

All of The Food Project staff are over eighteen years old, and so can give informed consent for themselves. I will discuss my project and staff members' roles in it in the same manner I discussed it with youth, as described in the first paragraph of my answer to this question. The written consent form staff members will be asked to sign will contain a line specifying that the interviews will not be anonymous. As on the interview consent forms for the youth, there will be a separate section on it where each staff member will be asked to specifically consent to his/her interview being recorded.

6. If necessary, how will you debrief participants? Describe procedures that will be used.

All participants, and their parents/guardians, will be given the option of receiving a debriefing letter summarizing what I found in my conclusions. When getting written and oral consent and assent, I will leave both participants and parents/guardians my contact information, and tell them to contact me with a mailing address if they wish to receive a copy of the debriefing letter.

7. Participants' rights:

A. How will confidentiality or anonymity (whichever is appropriate) be guaranteed? (Include a description of how data will be handled to insure confidentiality or anonymity)

Youth Participants' names will not be recorded with their answers. Instead, they will be assigned a numerical code, recorded and stored separately from the data. All answers and data will be marked solely with their numerical code. No data with any identifying descriptions of **youth** participants will be released.

Each staff member will also be randomly assigned a numerical code that will be used to identify the raw data from their interviews. However, in the final report discussions of the data may reference particular staff members by their positions; their names will never be used, as a measure of privacy.

All data will be stored on paper or a thumb drive in a locked drawer. The chart containing interviewee names and their numerical codes will be stored separately (either in another locked drawer or on a second password-protected flash drive) from research data.

In the long term, the data will be destroyed after the project is completed by the destruction of the papers and thumb drives containing this data and the numerical codes.

B. How will participants' right to terminate or refuse participation be guaranteed?

Participants and their parents/guardians will be asked if they are willing to participate/have their child participate and if they decline, the conversation is over. It will be made very clear to all students that their answer will not in any way affect how **I or** The Food Project will treat or support students. Participants and their parents/guardians will be given contact information for me should they decide to terminate their participation after beginning the study. They may choose to terminate at any time, which will be made clear to them. Should they choose to do so, their answers will be removed from consideration and analysis and they will not be contacted further. Participants may choose to skip any questions on questionnaires or in interviews.

8. Background/Training in the ethical conduct of research involving human subjects

I have taken Research, Ethics, and Policy (Research Methods) with Catherine Corson, and the online human subject research training offered by Mount Holyoke through CITI.

9. For Principal Investigators (faculty and students) whose research is supported by Federal grants:

1. Upload a copy of the funded grant proposal in the Mentor IRB system.
2. Upload documentation that you have completed a training program in the ethical conduct of research as required by Federal Law. Please refer to the options posted on the IRB website. Alternative documentation may be accepted. Please consult with the Chair of the Institutional Review Board: (institutional-review-board@mtholyoke.edu).

Appendix VII:

Letter to Participant Parents

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Rosalind Waltz-Peters, and I am interning with The Food Project this summer. I am interested in how learning about food and farming affects adolescents' understanding of food, their eating habits and decisions, and their interpretation of the idea of "health." To this end, I would like to give members of The Food Project's youth crew surveys about their eating habits and thoughts about health. I am asking all members of the youth crew to complete these surveys.

I would like to ask for your permission for your child's participation in this study. Participation is completely optional, and will in no way affect your child's experience as a member of the youth crew. If you choose to allow your child to participate, they will be given three surveys over the course of the summer if they are new members of the youth crew, or one survey if they are returning members. Some students may also be randomly chosen for short interviews so that we can discuss eating habits and ideas about health in greater detail.

If at any time during the summer you decide you do not want your child to participate, or your child decides they do not want participate, they may withdraw from the study and any answers they have given will be removed. They will be free to skip any questions on the surveys or in interviews that they do not wish to answer. All survey and interview answers will be anonymous; your child's answers will never be used to identify them in any information released that discusses what I have learned from talking to students who are part of the youth crew. The information I gather will be used as part of a written report, which may be published. But again, your child will never, in any way, be identified in this report.

Attached to this letter is a consent form for your child's participation. If you are willing to allow your child to participate, please read and sign this form and return it with your student to youth crew. Please note that should information I am required to report to authorities come to light during this study, I will do so after informing you and your child that I am reporting it. I do not foresee this being an issue, but you should understand this so you can consent to your child's participation in a truly informed manner. If you have any questions, please contact me at waltz22r@mtholyoke.edu or 774-641-7097.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Rosalind Waltz-Peters

Appendix VIII:

Guardian Informed Consent Form

MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of Study: The Effect of Agriculture Education on Teenagers' Eating Habits and Perceptions of Health

Investigator: Rosalind Waltz-Peters

Brief description of project and procedures:

The purpose of this project is to study how student participation in a program that involves hands-on education about food and farming may affect what teenagers eat, why they choose to eat it, and what they understand "healthy" to mean. I will survey members of The Food Project's youth crews about their eating habits and decisions. Students who are working with The Food Project for the first time this summer will be asked to complete three short surveys over the course of the summer, while those that are returning members of youth crews will be asked to complete only one. Some students may be asked to participate in short interviews about their eating habits; interviews will be recorded using a tape recorder. Information gathered from this study will be written up in a final research report, but questionnaire or interview responses will not be used to identify individual students in any way.

This project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of Mount Holyoke College. The following informed consent is required by Mount Holyoke College for all participants in human subjects research:

- A. Your child's participation is voluntary.
- B. Your child may withdraw his/her participation at any time with no repercussions. Should he/she choose to withdraw, his/her answers will be removed from consideration and analysis.
- C. The aims of the project and the procedures used in conducting it will be explained to you and your child. Any questions either of you have about either the aims or procedures will be answered openly and honestly.
- D. All of the data and information collected during this study will be treated as strictly anonymous. Your child's name will not be associated with the data in any way. No characteristics that might identify him/her will be used either. The data will be kept on paper or a password-protected thumb-drive in a locked drawer at The Food Project headquarters.
 - a. Please note that should you or your child tell me something that I am required, by law, to report to authorities, I will inform you/your child that I am reporting it to the organization and relevant authorities, and then report it accordingly.
- E. The results of this study will be made part of a final research report that may be published. The report will be available to members of The Food Project and the Mount Holyoke Community and will be stored in the Mount Holyoke Archives. No names of participants will be used in this report.

If you understand the above, and consent to participate in the project, please sign here:

_____ (Print participant name here)

_____ (Parent/guardian sign here)

_____ (Parent/guardian print name here)

(Date)

If you have any questions about this research, please contact:

Rosalind Waltz-Peters at waltz22r@mtholyoke.edu ; or

Catherine Corson (student advisor) at ccorson@mtholyoke.edu ; or

MHC's Institutional Review Board at institutional-review-board@mtholyoke.edu.

Appendix IX:

Guardian Oral Informed Consent Form

MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE ORAL INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of Study: The Effect of Agriculture Education on Teenagers' Eating Habits and Perceptions of Health

Investigator: Rosalind Waltz-Peters

Brief description of project and procedures:

The purpose of this project is to study how student participation in a program that involves hands-on education about food and farming may affect what teenagers eat, why they choose to eat it, and what they understand "healthy" to mean. I will survey members of The Food Project's youth crews about their eating habits and decisions. Students who are working with The Food Project for the first time this summer will be asked to complete three short surveys over the course of the summer, while those that are returning members of youth crews will be asked to complete only one. Some students may be asked to participate in short interviews about their eating habits; interviews will be recorded using a tape recorder. Information gathered from this study will be written up in a final research report, but questionnaire or interview responses will not be used to identify individual students in any way.

This project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of Mount Holyoke College. The following informed consent is required by Mount Holyoke College for all participants in human subjects research:

- A. Your child's participation is voluntary.
- B. Your child may withdraw his/her participation at any time with no repercussions. Should he/she choose to withdraw, his/her answers will be removed from consideration and analysis.
- C. The aims of the project and the procedures used in conducting it will be explained to you and your child. Any questions either of you have about either the aims or procedures will be answered openly and honestly.
- D. All of the data and information collected during this study will be treated as strictly anonymous. Your child's name will not be associated with the data in any way. No characteristics that might identify him/her will be used either. The data will be kept on paper or a password-protected thumb-drive in a locked drawer at The Food Project headquarters.
 - a. Please note that should you or your child tell me something that I am required, by law, to report to authorities, I will inform you/your child that I am reporting it to the organization and relevant authorities, and then report it accordingly.
- E. The results of this study will be made part of a final research report that may be published. The report will be available to members of The Food Project and the Mount Holyoke Community and will be stored in the Mount Holyoke Archives. No names of participants will be used in this report.

If you understand the above, and consent to participate in the project, please state your understanding of the project and agree to participation.

If you have any questions about this research, please contact:

Rosalind Waltz-Peters at waltz22r@mtholyoke.edu ; or

Catherine Corson (student advisor) at ccorson@mholyoke.edu ; or

MHC's Institutional Review Board at institutional-review-board@mholyoke.edu.

Appendix X:

Guardian Interview Informed Consent Form

MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW

Title of Study: The Effect of Agriculture Education on Teenagers' Eating Habits and Perceptions of Health

Investigator: Rosalind Waltz-Peters

Brief description of project and procedures:

The purpose of this project is to study how student participation in a program that involves hands-on education about food and farming may affect what teenagers eat, why they choose to eat it, and what they understand "healthy" to mean. I will survey members of The Food Project's youth crews about their eating habits and decisions. Your child has also been randomly chosen for a short interview. Interviews will include questions about your child's eating habits and how their participation in The Food Project's youth crew may have changed how he/she thinks about health and food. Interviews will be recorded using a tape recorder to ensure the most accurate understanding of answers. Information gathered from this study will be written up in a final research report, but questionnaire or interview responses will not be used to identify individual students in any way.

This project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of Mount Holyoke College. The following informed consent is required by Mount Holyoke College for all participants in human subjects research:

- A. Your child's participation is voluntary.
- B. Your child may withdraw his/her participation at any time with no repercussions. Should he/she choose to withdraw, his/her answers will be removed from consideration and analysis.
- C. The aims of the project and the procedures used in conducting it will be explained to you and your child. Any questions either of you have about either the aims or procedures will be answered openly and honestly.
- D. All of the data and information collected during this study will be treated as strictly anonymous. Your child's name will not be associated with the data in any way. No characteristics that might identify him/her will be used either. The data will be kept on paper or a password-protected thumb-drive in a locked drawer at The Food Project headquarters.
 - a. Please note that should you or your child tell me something that I am required, by law, to report to authorities, I will inform you/your child that I am reporting it to the organization and relevant authorities, and then report it accordingly.
- E. The results of this study will be made part of a final research report that may be published. The report will be available to members of The Food Project and the Mount Holyoke Community and will be stored in the Mount Holyoke Archives. No names of participants will be used in this report.

If you understand the above, and consent to have your child participate in an interview, please sign here:

I agree I do not agree to have my child's interview recorded on
audiotape.

_____ (Print participant name here)

_____ (Parent/guardian sign here)

_____ (Parent/guardian print name here)

_____ (Date)

If you have any questions about this research, please contact:

Rosalind Waltz-Peters at waltz22r@mtholyoke.edu ; or

Catherine Corson (student advisor) at ccorson@mtholyoke.edu ; or

MHC's Institutional Review Board at institutional-review-board@mtholyoke.edu.

Appendix XI:

Informed Assent Form for Minors

MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE INFORMED ASSENT FORM

Title of Study: The Effect of Agriculture Education on Teenagers' Eating Habits and Perceptions of Health

Investigator: Rosalind Waltz-Peters

Brief description of project and procedures:

The purpose of this project is to study how student participation in a program that involves hands-on education about food and farming may affect what teenagers eat, why they choose to eat it, and what they understand "healthy" to mean. I will survey members of The Food Project's youth crews about their eating habits and decisions. Students who are working with The Food Project for the first time this summer will be asked to complete three short surveys over the course of the summer, while those that are returning members of youth crews will be asked to complete only one. Some students may be asked to participate in short interviews about their eating habits; interviews will be recorded using a tape recorder. Information gathered from this study will be written up in a final research report but questionnaire or interview responses will not be used to identify individual students in any way.

This project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of Mount Holyoke College. The following informed assent is required by Mount Holyoke College for all participants in human subjects research:

- A. Your participation is voluntary.
- B. You may withdraw your participation at any time with no repercussions. Should you choose to withdraw, your answers will be removed from consideration and analysis.
- C. The aims of the project and the procedures used in conducting it will be explained to you. Any questions you have about either the aims or procedures will be answered openly and honestly.
- D. All of the data and information collected during this study will be treated as strictly anonymous. Your name will not be associated with the data in any way. No characteristics that might identify you will be used either. The data will be kept on paper or a password-protected thumb-drive in a locked drawer at The Food Project headquarters.
 - a. Please note that should you tell me something that I am required, by law, to report to authorities, I will inform you that I am reporting it to the organization and relevant authorities, and then report it accordingly.
- E. The results of this study will be made part of a final research report that may be published. The report will be available to members of The Food Project and the Mount Holyoke Community and will be stored in the Mount Holyoke Archives. No names of participants will be used in this report.

If you understand the above, and assent to participate in the project, please sign here:

_____ (Print participant name here)

_____ (Participant sign here)

_____ (Date)

If you have any questions about this research, please contact:

Rosalind Waltz-Peters at waltz22r@mholyoke.edu ; or

Catherine Corson (student advisor) at ccorson@mholyoke.edu ; or

MHC's Institutional Review Board at institutional-review-board@mholyoke.edu.

Appendix XII:

Letter to Participant Parents and Guardian Informed Consent Forms (Spanish Translations)

Querido padre/guardián,

Me llamo Rosalalind Waltz-Peters y soy una interna de “The Food Project” durante este verano. Estoy interesada en estudiar como el aprendizaje sobre agricultura (¿) y comida influye los hábitos alimenticios y el concepto de la salud que tienen los adolescentes (I translated, roughly, youth crew to “adolescent memebers” of the Project, is that accurate?) . Para profundizar este estudio me gustaría darle a todos los miembros adolescentes (again) del “Food Project” una encuesta sobre sus hábitos alimenticios e ideas sobre la salud.

Me gustaría pedir su permiso para que su hijo/a participe en esta encuesta. La participación es completamente voluntaria y de ninguna manera afectará la participación de su hijo/a en el “Food Project”. Si usted y su hijo/a deciden participar en estas encuestas a su hijo/a se le darán tres encuestas a lo largo del verano en el caso de que sean miembros nuevos y una sola encuesta en el caso de que haya sido parte en años pasados del “youth crew” del “Food Project”. Algunos estudiantes también serán elegidos aleatoriamente y serán entrevistados brevemente sobre sus hábitos alimenticios más detalladamente.

Si en cualquier momento usted o su hijo/a decide que no desea continuar participando con estas encuestas puede retirarse del estudio. En este caso cualquier información que su hijo/a haya ya aportado será eliminada y no será considerada en los resultados finales del estudio. Durante el estudio su hijo/a también puede decidir no responder cualquier pregunta, durante encuestas o entrevistas, que no quiera responder. Todas las respuestas serán anónimas y las respuestas de su hijo/a nunca serán utilizadas para identificarle en ninguna manera, incluyendo información concluyente sobre los resultados de este estudio. La información obtenida será publicada pero la identidad de su hijo/a va a ser completamente anónima.

Le adjunto un formulario que autoriza la participación de su hijo/a. Si está dispuesto a autorizar la participación de su hijo/a por favor lea, complete y mande devuelta al “youth crew” el documento adjunto. Si durante el transcurso de este estudio su hijo/a revela información que debe ser reportada a las autoridades tengo una obligación a hacerlo. La información será reportada después de haberlo contactado a usted y a su hijo/a para informarlos de la situación. No creo que esto llegue a pasar, pero de esta manera usted estará autorizando la participación e su hijo/a de una manera informada. En caso de que tenga alguna pregunta por favor no dude en contactarme a waltz22r@mtholyoke.edu o al 774-641-7097.

Muchas gracias por su consideración.

Atentamente,

Rosalind Waltz-Peters

MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE
FORMULARIO DE AUTORIZACIÓN INFORMADA

Título del estudio: El efecto de la educación agrícola en los hábitos alimenticios adolescentes y en la percepción que tienen los adolescentes de la salud

Investigadora: Rosalind Waltz-Peters

Descripción breve del proyecto y su procedimiento:

El propósito de este proyecto es estudiar como la participación involucrada de estudiantes en proyectos educativos que tratan temas agrícolas y de comida afecta lo que estos estudiantes adolescentes comen, el proceso de escogencia de su comida, y cualquier idea que estos estudiantes puedan tener sobre el concepto de salud y de ser saludable. Miembros adolescentes de “The Food Project” serán entrevistados para obtener información sobre sus hábitos y decisiones alimenticias. A los estudiantes que estén trabajando por primera vez con el “Food Project” se les entrevistará tres veces, a los estudiantes que ya han sido miembros previamente de la organización se les entrevistará solamente una vez. Algunos estudiantes serán elegidos aleatoriamente para ser entrevistados sobre sus hábitos alimenticios y el audio de estas entrevistas será grabado. LA información aportada por estos estudiantes será usada para escribir un reporte final, pero esta información nunca será utilizada para identificar a los estudiantes.

Este proyecto ha sido aprobado por el “Institutional Review Board “ de Mount Holyoke College. Las siguientes son categorías requeridas por Mount Holyoke College para la aprobación de proyectos de investigación que involucren sujetos humanos.

- A. La participación de su hijo/a es voluntaria.
- B. Su hijo/a se puede retirar del proyecto en cualquier momento o sin ninguna repercusión negativa. Si su hijo/a decide retirarse sus respuestas no serán utilizadas en el reporte final.
- C. El propósito y el procedimiento de este estudio será explicado a usted y a su hijo/a. Cualquier pregunta que usted o su hijo/a tenga serán respondidas honesta y abiertamente.
- D. Toda información aportada durante esta investigación por su hijo/a será completamente anónima. El nombre de su hijo/a no será asociado con la información que haya aportado. No se mencionará ninguna otra característica que pueda ser usada para identificar a su hijo/a. La información estará guardada en un dispositivo con contraseña en una gaveta bajo llave en el edificio de “The Food Project”.
 - a. Si usted o su hijo/a en algún momento revelan información que tenga que reportar a las autoridades lo haré después de haberle informado a usted y a su hijo/a que debo hacerlo.
- E. Los resultados de este estudio serán parte de un proyecto final que puede llegar a ser publicado. En caso de que se publique el reporte podrá ser accesado por miembros de “The Food Project” y de “Mount Holyoke College”. La publicación permanecería en los archivos de Mount Holyoke College. La publicación no va a utilizar el nombre de los estudiantes que participaron en estas encuestas.

Si entiende este documento y autoriza la participación de su hijo/a por favor llene la información a continuación:

_____ (Nombre del estudiante participante)

_____ (Firma del padre/madre o guardián)

_____ (Nombre del padre/madre o guardián)

_____ (Fecha)

En caso de que tenga alguna pregunta no dude en contactarnos:

Rosalind Waltz-Peters: waltz22@mtholyoke.edu

Catherine Corson, asesora de estudiantes: ccorson@mtholyoke.edu

Junta de revisión de Mount Holyoke College: institutional-review-board@mtholyoke.edu

MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE
FORMULARIO DE AUTORIZACION INFORMADA- ENTREVISTA

Título del estudio: El efecto de la educación agrícola en los hábitos alimenticios adolescentes y en la percepción que tienen los adolescentes de la salud

Investigadora: Rosalind Waltz-Peters

Descripción breve del proyecto y su procedimiento:

El propósito de este proyecto es estudiar como la participación involucrada de estudiantes en proyectos educativos que tratan temas agrícolas y de comida afecta lo que estos estudiantes adolescentes comen, el proceso de escogencia de su comida, y cualquier idea que estos estudiantes puedan tener sobre el concepto de salud y de ser saludable. Miembros adolescentes de “The Food Project” serán entrevistados para obtener información sobre sus hábitos y decisiones alimenticias. Su hijo/a ya ha participado en las encuestas y ahora me gustaría que participara en una breve entrevista. La entrevista incluye preguntas sobre los hábitos alimenticios de su hijo/a y sobre el efecto que ha tenido la participación de su hijo/a en el “Food Project” en sus hábitos alimenticios y en sus conceptos de salud. El audio de las entrevistas será grabado para así entender con exactitud las respuestas de su hijo/a. Esta información será parte de un reporte final, pero las repuestas aportadas por su hijo/a no se usarán para identificarlo/a de ninguna manera.

Este proyecto ha sido aprobado por el “Institutional Review Board “ de Mount Holyoke College. Las siguientes son categorías requeridas por Mount Holyoke College para la aprobación de proyectos de investigación que involucren sujetos humanos.

- A. La participación de su hijo/a es voluntaria.
- B. Su hijo/a se puede retirar del proyecto en cualquier momento o sin ninguna repercusión negativa. Si su hijo/a decide retirarse sus respuestas no serán utilizadas en el reporte final.
- C. El propósito y el procedimiento de este estudio será explicado a usted y a su hijo/a. Cualquier pregunta que usted o su hijo/a tenga serán respondidas honesta y abiertamente.
- D. Toda información aportada durante esta investigación por su hijo/a será completamente anónima. El nombre de su hijo/a no será asociado con la información que haya aportado. No se mencionará ninguna otra característica que pueda ser usada para identificar a su hijo/a. La información estará guardada en un dispositivo con contraseña en una gaveta bajo llave en el edificio de “The Food Project”.
 - a. Si usted o su hijo/a en algún momento revelan información que tenga que reporta a las autoridades lo haré después de haberle informado a usted y a su hijo/a que debo hacerlo.
- E. Los resultados de este estudio serán parte de un proyecto final que puede llegar a ser publicado. En caso de que se publique el reporte podrá ser accesado por miembros de “The Food Proejct” y de “Mount Holyoke College”. La publicación permanecería en los archivos de Mount Holyoke College. La publicación no va a utilizar el nombre de los estudiantes que participaron en estas encuestas.

Si entiende este documento y autoriza la participación de su hijo/a en una breve entrevista, por favor llene la información a continuación:

Autorizo No autorizo a la grabación de la entrevista de mi hijo/a

_____ (Nombre del estudiante participante)

_____ (Firma del padre/madre o
guardián)

_____ (Nombre del padre/madre o
guardián)

_____ (Fecha)

En caso de que tenga alguna pregunta no dude en contactarnos:

Rosalind Waltz-Peters: waltz22@mtholyoke.edu

Catherine Corson, asesora de estudiantes: ccorson@mtholyoke.edu

Junta de revisión de Mount Holyoke College: institutional-review-board@mtholyoke.edu

Appendix XIII:

Staff Interview Participant Informed Consent Form

MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW

Title of Study: The Effect of Agriculture Education on Teenagers' Eating Habits and Perceptions of Health

Investigator: Rosalind Waltz-Peters

Brief description of project and procedures:

The purpose of this project is to study how student participation in a program that involves hands-on education about food and farming may affect what teenagers eat, why they choose to eat it, and what they understand "healthy" to mean. I will survey and interview members of The Food Project's youth crews about their eating habits and decisions, as well as Food Project staff members about their experiences as educators. Interviews will include questions about what topics you focus on in your interaction with youth, and how you present material. Interviews will be digitally recorded to ensure the most accurate understanding of answers. Information gathered from this study will be written up in a final research report, and your position title may be used as an identifier with your response.

This project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of Mount Holyoke College. The following informed consent is required by Mount Holyoke College for all participants in human subjects research:

- A. Your participation is voluntary.
- B. You may withdraw your participation at any time with no repercussions. Should you choose to withdraw, your answers will be removed from consideration and analysis.
- C. The aims of the project and the procedures used in conducting it will be explained to you. Any questions you have about either the aims or procedures will be answered openly and honestly.
- D. All of the data and information collected during this study will be treated as strictly confidential. Your name will not be associated with the data, but your position will be. Due to this, your anonymity cannot be guaranteed, so please keep this in mind as you answer questions. The data from this project will be kept on paper or a password-protected thumb-drive in a locked drawer at Mount Holyoke College.
- E. I would like to record the interview so as to ensure accuracy of information. You have the option to decline, however, in which case, I would like to take notes on your responses. Again, you also have the option to request that I do not take notes.
- F. The results of this study will be made part of a final research report that may be published. The report will be available to members of The Food Project and the Mount Holyoke Community and will be stored in the Mount Holyoke Archives. Your name will not be used in this report, although your position title may be.

If you understand the above, and consent to participate in an interview, please sign here:

I agree I do not agree to have my interview digitally recorded.

_____ (Print participant name here)

_____ (Participant sign here)

(Date)

If you have any questions about this research, please contact:

Rosalind Waltz-Peters at waltz22r@mtholyoke.edu ; or

Catherine Corson (student advisor) at ccorson@mtholyoke.edu ; or

MHC's Institutional Review Board at institutional-review-board@mtholyoke.edu.

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