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Alternative food networks and value creation: The case of farmers markets in New Zealand

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Alternative food networks and value creation: The case of farmers markets in New Zealand

Abstract

As the global population transitions into a high-energy consumption lifestyle, natural resources are diminishing and pressures on food production systems are intensifying. A growing population and changes in consumption behaviour have seen the emergence of a food economy characterised by large-scale industrial production systems often considered to be environmentally unsustainable, socially unjust, and even exploitative. In addition, these conventional food systems are largely dependent on access to cheap and abundant sources of energy. However, it has become widely accepted that such sources of energy cannot be guaranteed long-term. Therefore, it has been of particular interest among scholars and wider society to explore alternative systems of food provisioning.

As part of an *alternative food network*, farmers markets have been characterised as an outlet for small-scale food producers to re-capture some of the value that is often lost through conventional food systems. Their growing popularity on a global scale shows that significant value opportunities exist as a result of participation. However, while there has been some research on farmers markets within New Zealand, very little has considered value processes within the social phenomena. Described as a shift towards sustainable development, farmers markets provide a useful site for research into understanding sustainable food system opportunities. This research explores an agricultural sector for which little research exists in New Zealand by seeking to investigate value creation within a sample of farmers markets.

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher utilised a qualitative research approach whereby a combination of semi-structured interviews and ethnography was employed. Data was analysed under a social constructivist lens and the findings of the research are presented in narrative form in order to communicate the true perspectives and opinions of those being studied. The research revealed various forms of value evident within farmers market settings in New Zealand and various factors present in its creation. This thesis presents the research and its findings, aiming to further conceptualise farmers markets within New Zealand. In doing so, the research offers small-scale food producers/entrepreneurs and the academic community insight into value processes within farmers markets and thus their true efficacy and merit as part of an alternative food network. The findings of this research can help us to further understand the role alternative food networks play in the food and agricultural sectors and thus help to define more sustainable food system opportunities within New Zealand.

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This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher and supervisors named above were responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Problem Field

“If you eat, you’re involved in agriculture.”

Wendyll Berry, American farmer and philosopher.

A growing proportion of the global population is entering the middle class and therefore transitioning into a high-energy consumption lifestyle. Consequently, natural resources are diminishing and pressures on food production systems and the environment are intensifying (Pullman & Wu, 2012). Coupled with the need to feed a growing population, technological advances and value-added processing and distribution have resulted in the social distance between sites of food production and its final consumption increase significantly (Arce & Marsden, 1993). As the world population changes, so to does the way we conduct business. As a result, our definition of *value* and the ways to deliver it are shifting (Fischer, as cited in Emerson & Rowarth, 2009, p. 100). Society has seen the emergence of a new food economy characterised by large-scale industrial production and distribution systems that are largely dependent on access to cheap and abundant sources of energy (i.e. fossil fuels). However, it has become widely acknowledged that such sources of energy cannot be guaranteed long-term. Therefore, it has been of particular interest among scholars and among wider society to explore alternative systems of food provisioning.

Characterised by its holistic nature, this new food economy is the centre of growing global concerns (Bunte & Dagevos, 2009). Anxieties about food production systems and the associated turbulent politics have become too prominent to ignore (Goodman, 2002). Subsequently, failures of industrialised and globalised food provisioning systems have been the topic of much recent work, particularly among agro-food scholars (Guthman, 2002). The rise in industrial agriculture and conventional food production systems has seen an increase in food production across the world. As food supplies become abundant on a global scale, traditional supply routes are diminishing (Thomas, n.d.), small-scale farmers and producers are losing their livelihoods, the social aspects traditionally associated with food consumption are being lost, and many would argue that we are seeing an increase in associated health risks such as diabetes, obesity, and cancer related diseases as a result of industrial agriculture.

Growing concerns over the importance of diet and health, combined with general concerns about the environment have led to questions regarding the true efficacy and merit of conventional food systems (Follett, 2009). Authors such as Arce and Marsden (1993) suggest we are seeing significant interest in the

social need to consume *green* commodities, particularly in developed countries. The authors also suggest that concerns in industrialised countries about the relationships between agricultural chemicals, conservation, food, and health problems came about as early as the 1960's. Yet, it has only been in the last decade that we have seen the notions of *sustainable development*¹ and *sustainable agriculture*² become widely recognised.

In today's society, more and more frequently organisations are finding themselves responding to rapidly changing consumer demands in order to remain competitive. "Consumers are becoming more capable, more knowledgeable, and more demanding" (Wikström, 1996, p. 372) and as a result we are seeing an increase in demand for values-based products (Pullman & Wu, 2012). Within the contemporary environment, a social dimension to business is increasingly being acknowledged (Downing, 2005) and controlling a business from a financial perspective alone can be counter-productive (Edvardsson, Enquist, & Hay, 2006). Businesses are increasingly looking for ways to add value to their products that extend beyond pure functional value, or 'value for money'. By this nature, we are seeing commodities from apples to electronics increasingly being attributed with various symbolic meanings where they are associated with concepts such as 'sustainable', 'environmental', 'eco-friendly', and 'local'. "Consumers are growing more aware and interested in the companies they are buying food from, and state that they prefer to purchase from companies that support social, community, and environmental interests" (Molyneaux, as cited in Baldwin, 2009, p. 159). Similarly, in their 2013 study, Auckland-based company Horizon Research concluded New Zealand is seeing an emergence of consumer support for organisations that display sustainable behaviour, suggesting that significant opportunities exist for organisations that compete on environmental and social factors, in addition to price.

The rise in what have been termed *alternative food networks* is one response to a shift in consumer demand. Operating arguably more sustainably than conventional food systems, such networks encompass smaller-scale food producers, organic farmers, community supported agricultural schemes (Farnsworth, Thompson, Drury, & Warner, 1996), hired gardens (Naylor, 2012), and farmers³ markets. The increasing popularity of alternative food networks can be attributed to various factors including recurrent food scares such as the mad cow disease in Western Europe (Goodman, 2002), desires to go back to traditional, artisanal style food production and consumption, dramatic increases in oil prices resulting in the topic of 'food miles' becoming high on political, economic, and social agendas, and simple rejection of environmentally

¹ Sustainable development is defined according to the Brundtland Commission (1987) as, "development, which meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

² For the purposes of this research, *sustainable agriculture* is attributed a widely cited definition suggested by Allen, Van Dusen, Lundy, and Gliessman (1991, p. 34). It is considered to be both an industrial and social movement that "equitably balances concerns of environmental soundness, economic viability, and social justice".

³ Following the logic of Alkon (2008), the researcher has chosen not to use the apostrophe in order to denote that farmers markets belong to all participants, rather than to just the farmers.

degrading conventional food systems (DuPuis & Goodman, 2005). Whatever motivations lie behind their development, alternative food networks are gaining popularity on a global scale and have been the topic of a significant body of recent literature as researchers search for ways to analyse and categorise the new food networks. As Tregear (2011) suggests, there is still much to learn about this social phenomenon.

With a large proportion of New Zealand farmers exporting, farming in New Zealand is the primary income generator for the nation (Emerson & Rowarth, 2009). However, with increased global competition in food production and retailing, many New Zealand farmers and food producers (particularly small-scale farmers/producers) are excluded from conventional retailing outlets on a national level. As New Zealand supermarkets gain food-retailing dominance, value in the form of returns to New Zealand farmers is diminishing (Christian, as cited in Guthrie, J., Guthrie, A., Lawson, & Cameron, 2006). As a result, small-scale farmers and producers have to find alternative ways of getting their products to consumers (Thomas, n.d.) and new ways of creating value that differ to that provided by the conventional food system. Described as new institutions within the food system (Joseph, Chalmers, & Smithers, 2013), farmers markets (see Appendix One for an illustration of a typical farmers market) offer producers a way to recapture some of the value often lost through the conventional food system. While their benefits are often debated, scholars within the alternative food network field agree that farmers markets constitute part of an alternative system of food provisioning. Offering an alternative site of exchange and reconnecting producers and consumers, farmers markets have enjoyed growing popularity on both a global and local scale. The current body of literature on farmers markets has primarily been concerned with conceptualising the phenomenon from a social perspective and discussing its merits. However, similar to research on alternative food networks, many scholars who have written about farmers markets contest their efficacy. Being a relatively new and contested field of research, farmers markets serve as an interesting site for further research to be conducted.

As Arce and Marsden (1993, p. 293) state, “food production rarely stops at the farm or field gate” and land-based production represents only a small part of the total value of a product in economic terms. Through the conventional food system, food products are reconstituted through various value-adding processes that are not limited to the production stage. Rather, Arce and Marsden suggest that value processes, particularly symbolic, extend to all stages in a product’s lifecycle (i.e. distribution and retailing). While conventional food systems have the ability to create a significant amount of value (i.e. ‘value-for-money’ for consumers, employment opportunities through supermarkets), a substantial amount of value is also lost, particularly for producers. As producers and consumers congregate at farmers markets, many opportunities are presented that allow such lost value to be recaptured. For example, producers are able to realise higher economic profits as a result of direct sales to customers and customers are able to engage with producers and learn about the food they are purchasing. With changing consumer demands, processes of value creation have become more interactive (Ramírez, 1999) and farmers markets clearly display a significant level of social

interaction among all participants. Yet, value creation within farmers markets in New Zealand is a largely unexplored topic. This research attempts to advance the understanding of alternative food networks in relation to the issues associated with conventional food systems, albeit in a limited way.

1.2 The Research

As Guthrie et al. (2006, p. 560) state, “food is essential to life”. Consequently, the means by which food is produced, distributed, and consumed are important areas of research interest. Therefore, this research aims to contribute to the limited state of extant literature on value creation within farmers markets on a local scale by further conceptualising farmers markets vis à vis local food systems in New Zealand. In doing so, the research aims to help small-scale food producers/entrepreneurs and the academic community further understand the role of alternative food networks and thus help to define more sustainable food system opportunities in New Zealand. In undertaking this task, the following research questions were formulated; “What types of value are created when small-scale food producers participate in farmers markets?” “How are such different types of value created, both at the producer-level and at the wider market-level?” and, “How can a more comprehensive understanding of farmers markets help to define more sustainable food system opportunities in New Zealand?” Accordingly, the research aimed to meet the following objectives; provide a detailed description of what types of value are created when small-scale food producers participate in farmers markets; provide detailed description of how different types of value are created, both at the producer-level and at the wider market-level; and, understand how value creation within farmers markets can help to define more sustainable food system opportunities in New Zealand.

Given the exploratory nature of the research objectives and the complexity of the interactions that occur at farmers markets, a qualitative research strategy was utilised in order to answer the above research questions and thus meet the research objectives. The primary source of data for this project came from semi-structured interviews with one farmers market manager and five small-scale producers who participate at farmers markets as vendors on a weekly basis. Participants were recruited using convenience and snowball sampling methods. Before conducting interviews, a preliminary study was conducted whereby the researcher attended the Farmers Markets New Zealand (FMNZ) annual forum in Lyttelton. This allowed the researcher to gain comprehensive background knowledge about the operation of farmers markets in New Zealand and provided a testing ground for interview questions to be asked in situations that were slightly more informal than the interviews that followed. In order to supplement interview data and gain a comprehensive and reliable picture of the social phenomenon in question, the researcher also engaged in ethnographic data collection whereby a volunteer role was assumed at one farmers market. This allowed the researcher to become immersed in the social setting and to interact with a range of farmers market participants. The researcher’s personal experiences are reflected in the findings of the study. In addition,

the researcher assumed the role of regular customer at a wide range of farmers markets in New Zealand, thus providing further supplementary ethnographic data.

Data were gathered and analysed under a social constructivist lens using aspects of a grounded theory approach. A social constructivist perspective was adopted following the logic of Berger and Luckmann (1967) who argue that reality reflects processes of social interaction. Subscribing to an anti-positivist tradition, it was assumed the social world is “a subjectively meaningful reality that is in a constant state of revision” (Bryman, 1998, p. 139) and therefore that the social world is socially constructed. Arce and Marsden (1993) suggest that social actors are the drivers behind the pace and direction of the constantly changing social and environmental/rural context. Therefore, emphasis was placed “on taking the perspective of those being studied, on detailed description of social settings, on understanding in context, on a processual view of social life, on flexible research approaches, and on a preference for theory and concepts to emerge out of data” (Bryman, 1998, p. 139). This approach was considered appropriate given the complexity of social interactions occurring at farmers markets and the socially constructed nature of the concept of value. A grounded theory approach was applied whereby theme identification analysis was conducted as and when data were collected. This method of data analysis proved useful for analysing the large amounts of textual data, allowing for significant themes to become apparent through the course of the research. In order to effectively communicate key themes and ensure the integrity of the data, results of the study are presented in narrative form.

1.3 The Thesis

Following this introduction, chapter two reviews a range of local and international literature published on alternative food networks, farmers markets, and on the topic of value. The literature review begins by reviewing some of the critical dimensions in the study of alternative food networks in order to provide a broad, conceptual overview of the field. A wide range of literature on farmers markets and value is then reviewed in an attempt to provide a well-rounded perspective on value creation within farmers markets. It was considered important that a variety of literature was presented given that farmers markets are a relatively new phenomenon in New Zealand compared to other countries and given the concept of value creation within farmers markets has been largely unexplored. Chapter three outlines the study design and methodological framework adopted for this research by explaining how data was collected, analysed, and interpreted. This chapter identifies participants and the logic behind their recruitment and discusses the ethical considerations taken into account throughout the project. The fourth chapter presents the research findings in narrative form where series of short ‘snapshots’ are provided. Each ‘snapshot’ represents an exemplary event or focal element at the farmers market in order to clearly articulate value creation within a single moment in time. Each event or moment in time presented has been carefully selected and constructed by the researcher in order to provide detailed description of the social settings and to

effectively represent the perspectives of those who were studied. It is worth noting here that throughout the thesis, the terms 'exemplary events', 'examples', and 'narratives' are used interchangeably. Following each series of narratives, discussion is presented where the events are analysed in detail. Chapter five concludes the thesis, reviewing the key findings and drawing conclusions from the study in relation to the research questions and study objectives. In addition, the final chapter discusses limitations to the research and recommends opportunities for further studies to be conducted. The researcher's personal reflections on the project are also presented in the final chapter.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Identified in the preceding chapter, various factors are contributing to the dynamic nature of our food provisioning systems. Regardless of the motivational forces behind its development, with significant changes in production and consumption behaviour, we are seeing the emergence of an alternative food economy. Considering the ways in which value is created at farmers markets is one way to help further conceptualise alternative food provisioning systems and to help define sustainable food system opportunities. Literature on food systems and sustainability is largely multi-disciplinary. It covers disciplines ranging from marketing, management, and entrepreneurship, to sociology and rural and agricultural science. In contrast, literature concerned with the notion of value creation comes predominantly from a marketing perspective, which as this literature review will highlight, can be closely aligned with work on food systems, in particular, farmers markets. The following sections in this chapter therefore review a range of literature in an attempt to build a complete picture of value creation through farmers markets internationally and locally.

For the purposes of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the topics central to this research, searches were conducted using various online databases covering primarily management and agricultural disciplines. This chapter continues by reviewing the literature concerned with the emergence and development of alternative food networks on a global scale. Manifesting in a diverse range of forms around the world, alternative food networks are seen to be positioning themselves in opposition to the global, industrialised food system. While they are predominantly seen to be offering a more sustainable alternative, there are some theoretical debates around defining what it means to be *alternative*, the motivations behind their development, and how sustainable they really are. Each of which will be reviewed in detail below.

In the second section, the alternative food network field is refined down to a specific focus on farmers markets on a global and subsequently, on a local scale. Much like that of alternative food networks, literature on farmers markets primarily comes from North American and European perspectives. Being a relatively new phenomenon in New Zealand, there is limited work published from a local perspective. However, various works by Cameron (2006a; 2006b; 2007), Chalmers, Joseph, and Smithers (2009), Guthrie et al. (2006), Lawson, Guthrie, Cameron, and Fischer (2008), and Murphy (2011) provide a useful base by which farmers markets in New Zealand can be examined.

Various literatures on the notion of value are then reviewed. There is an overwhelmingly extensive amount of literature on the topics *value*, *value creation*, and *value capture*. To critically review all the various perspectives would be beyond the scope of this paper. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to review work on 'value' by some of the most prominent authors in the field while also extending the scope to include authors who have written on the topic of value from an agricultural perspective. While its creation and capture may be perceived as crucial for, or even definitive of business, the notion of value appears to lack definitive meaning (Willmott, 2012). This section therefore begins by covering literatures concerned with defining value, and then considers the various ways in which it is created, distributed, and realised or uplifted. Following this, three significant forms of value are distinguished and reviewed in detail, *economic*, *relational*, and *symbolic*. A review of the limited amount of literature focused on how the concept of value is applied within farmers markets is then presented, thus highlighting the significant opportunity for further research to be conducted in the area. Finally, the literature review will conclude that together, each of the elements reviewed provide a framework by which to examine value creation through farmers markets and thus help to define more sustainable food system opportunities.

2.2 Alternative Food Networks

2.2.1 Defining Alternative Food Networks

Contemporary literatures on food system planning, production, and consumption frequently recognise the growing popularity and increasing importance of what have been termed by academics and wider society as 'alternative food networks'. Clearly defining what constitutes *alternative* and how such networks should be conceptualised has been the topic of much research in rural studies (Coombes & Campbell, 1998; DuPuis & Goodman, 2005; Jarosz, 2008; Tregear, 2011), sociology (Goodman, 2002; Lockie & Kitto, 2000; Roep & Wiskerke, 2012), geography (Sonnino & Marsden, 2006; Venn et al., 2006), and environmental planning (Renting, Marsden, & Banks, 2003). Built on unconventional social norms, alternative food networks encompass producers, wholesalers, retailers, and consumers engaging in more traditional, artisanal practices, different to that of conventional, industrialised, global food systems (Kloppenburg et al., 2000; Lezberg, De Master, Stevenson, & Hendrickson; Roep & Wiskerke, 2012). A review by Venn et al. (2006) concludes that alternative food networks consist of schemes such as community gardens, community supported agriculture, farmers markets, and farm gate sales, among others (see Appendix Two for further detail). While the complexity of alternative food networks makes it difficult to generalise about their characteristics (Follett, 2009), Morgan, Marsden, and Murdoch (2006) explain that such networks all share three common traits: (1) they redistribute value through the network in the opposite direction of the conventional food system; (2) they re-build trust between producers and consumers; and (3) they develop new forms of political association and market governance. The three characteristics do

however lack sufficient detail to explain the complexity of alternative food networks (Follett, 2009) and as Tregear (2011) suggests, there is still much to learn about this field.

While characteristics of alternative food networks are generally consistent throughout the literature, there are debates around some key terms. Tregear's (2011) research proposes that within the alternative food network field, there tends to be an over-reliance on what Markusen (as cited in Tregear, 2011) calls 'fuzzy concepts' resulting in a lack of clarity among the literature. Previous work has loosely defined alternative food networks in terms of *quality*, *transparency*, and *locality*, signalling a shift away from the conventional food sector towards a re-localised food and farming regime (Sonnino & Marsden 2006). Winter (2003) suggests 'quality' is the defining characteristic of the alternative food economy. Yet, as Ilbery and Kneafsey (2000) suggest, the term is one that is contested, constructed, and represented differently by different actors. By a similar nature, Sonnino and Marsden (2006) suggest the focus on the term 'quality' within the literature is partly responsible for blurring the boundaries between conventional and alternative systems due to the term being highly contested and open for interpretation and appropriation. The authors describe 'quality' as a constructed and negotiated term. Much like the term 'value'. To illustrate another 'fuzzy concept' work by Ricketts Hein, Ilbery, and Kneafsey (2006) uses the terms 'local' and 'alternative' interchangeably suggesting that alternative food provisioning encompasses local production and local consumption. Yet, defining exactly what is considered to be 'local' can often be difficult (Edwards-Jones, 2010). Often holding multi-faceted and sometimes contradictory meanings, the rarely transparent terms, 'localisation' and 'local food' (Hinrichs, 2003) are widely contested in literature on food systems. Work by Hinrichs (2003) offers some insight here by examining the social construction of the 'local' concept in terms of food system localisation.

2.2.2 Theoretical Perspectives

Various theoretical and conceptual perspectives underpin extant studies within alternative food network research. Tregear (2011) identifies *political economy* as a key perspective identified in alternative food network research. Inspired by a Marxian approach, authors such as Goodman (2004) and Allen, FitzSimmons, Goodman, and Warner, (2003) consider alternative food networks as "movements in constant struggle against threatening forces of global capitalism" (Tregear, 2011, p. 420). A second strand of alternative food network research, Tregear suggests is from a rural sociology or development perspective. Under this body of literature, alternative food networks are seen to be social constructions of their members, as expressions of values and motivations of those members as they engage in behaviour with the goal of socio-economic benefit. Work here typically utilises the notion of *embeddedness*. The core idea here being that social relations are a necessity of all economic transactions (Winter, 2003). Work by Sonnino and Marsden (2006) considers the concept of 'embeddedness' to be one of the main traits that distinguish alternative food networks from the conventional food system. Governance and network theory

perspectives make up the final body of literature identified as significant by Tregear. Here, alternative food networks are viewed as “networks or clusters of actors” (Tregear, 2011, p. 421) to which social relations are attributed. Under network theories comes actor-network theory, which appears to be a dominant fundamental theory, methodologically inspiring research within the alternative food network field (see Lockie & Kitto, 2000; Roep & Wiskerke, 2012). This largely anti-essentialist movement assumes that social phenomena are effects of collective activity (Crawford, 2004), that they are accomplished by social actors and their interaction, which are continually changing (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

2.2.3 Geographical Perspectives

Interestingly, two different geographical regions largely separate the extant literature concerning alternative food networks and very little research has been conducted that examines both together. Although, it is worth noting that research by Vecchio (2011) provides useful insight in his comparison of farmers markets as part of an alternative food network in Italy to those in the United States. Research from a North American perspective commonly attributes the rise in alternative systems of food provisioning to growing concerns about the safety and nutrition of food produced by the conventional food system and its true efficacy and merit (Follett, 2009). Literature from this perspective, based on a philosophy that is in opposition to perhaps neoliberal ideologies, frequently positions alternative food networks as operating in direct opposition to large food manufacturers and retailers (Allen et al., 2003) and describes them as representing a radical political agenda (Cox et al., 2008). Such a profound perspective is illustrated by Grey (2000, p. 147) who suggests that, “industrial food producers are destroying family farms and separating food producers from consumers”. Work from this perspective tends to emphasise nutrition, organic farming, sustainability (Feenstra, 1997), and power imbalances. In comparison, literature from a European perspective often considers alternative food networks as systems working alongside the conventional system to meet demands not met by the industrial sector. This work tends to focus on a return to traditional, artisanal food production and consumption practices, localism, embeddedness (Roep & Wiskerke, 2012), and social relations (Jarosz, 2000).

As Edwards-Jones (2010, p. 589) states, “the concept of local food has gained traction in the media, engaged consumers and offered farmers a new marketing tool” and as Cameron (2007) suggests, New Zealanders are also expressing concerns over the way their food is produced and marketed. Yet, given New Zealand’s economic reliance on its agricultural sector and the prominence of research on sustainable development within the fields of agriculture (Aerni, 2009; Bruges & Smith, 2008; Campbell, Rosin, Hunt, & Fairweather, 2012) and business and management (Battisti, Deakins, & Perry, 2013; Battisti & Perry, 2011; Milne, 2004), it is surprising that little attention has been given to alternative food networks in a local context. It is currently unknown if and how, small-scale food producers in New Zealand fit into an alternative food network framework and what implications this could have for sustainable business

development within the agricultural sector. Coombes and Campbell (1998) provide insight into organic farming in New Zealand as an alternative agricultural movement, yet make no reference to alternative food networks. Even literature from an Australian perspective is limited. From a sociological perspective, Lockie and Kitto (2000) discuss production-consumption networks in agri-food research within Australia but again, do not specifically focus on alternative food networks. Therefore, aspects of both North American and European literature are useful to draw upon when attempting to understand such socially constructed alternative food networks on a local scale.

Regardless of geographical location, while there are some debates around key definitive terms, seminal authors tend to agree on what constitutes as 'alternative' and what food systems make up alternative networks (i.e. community supported agriculture schemes, farmers markets etc.). However, there are significant debates throughout extant literature concerning the benefits of alternative food networks on local and global scales, the topic of the following section.

2.2.4 Uncertainties and Tensions

Of significant prominence throughout extant literature is the debate on whether or not alternative food networks are considered to contribute to sustainable development. Renting, Marsden, and Banks (2003) describe the emerging phenomenon as a key dimension of new rural development. Similarly, others such as Feenstra (1997) and Roep and Wiskerke (2012) describe alternative food networks as a move toward sustainable development. Authors such as Kloppenburg et al. (2000) use the terms 'alternative' and *sustainable* interchangeably and Grey (2000) calls for a precise definition of 'sustainability' to give meaning to the idea of alternative food systems suggesting the term 'alternative' can be closely aligned with the notion of 'sustainability'. As DuPuis and Goodman (2005) suggest, there appears to be a strong connection throughout the literature between alternative food systems and the promotion of environmental sustainability and social justice. However, others such as Marsden (2004) believe it is too early to judge whether alternative food networks actually deliver goals of sustainability and rural development. Some authors argue that alternative food networks are predominantly catering to the 'discerning' and 'affluent' (Goodman, 2004) or 'elite' members of society and are excluding consumers from a lower socio-economic level. Goodman (2004, p. 13) describes 'inequalities of access' and suggests these new food networks "represent socially exclusive niches rather than the future of European food". Accordingly, Goodman calls for more realistic research into the territorial value-added model to understand whether alternative food networks actually help to mitigate rural problems of poverty, inequality, and social exclusion. In addition, recent work has begun to question the positive environmental effects of alternative food networks (for example, see Edwards-Jones et al., 2008). Directly related to the long-term viability of alternative food networks, these issues raise questions about the social and environmental justice associated with the

networks. However, it is beyond the scope of this research to examine in detail the credibility of the positive environmental claims associated with alternative food networks.

The development of alternative food networks has been met with formidable force from the current industrial food production system (Pullman & Wu, 2012) causing significant tension between the two sectors. Sonnino and Marsden (2006) argue for a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between conventional and alternative food chains. Rather than seeing conventional and alternative food networks as separate spheres, Sonnino and Marsden view them as highly competitive and as relational to one another, where extreme power imbalances are likely to be present. Whilst a review of the extant literature on alternative food networks reveals a significant body of knowledge and varying perspectives, there remain important questions concerning how local food systems can function most effectively (Smithers, Lamarche, & Joseph, 2008), particularly within a New Zealand context. How alternative systems of food production and consumption operate within an environment where two significant players dominate conventional retailing (such as the case in New Zealand) is a topic that is yet to be explored. It is here that we can draw on perspectives such as social constructionism borrowed from the field of sociology to provide some insight.

2.3 Farmers Markets

2.3.1 The Global Phenomenon

“In the Market is life, vitality, health, abundance, grit, prime produce, colour. In Markets lie the thick of things, sociability, the throb of human community. They provide links with the past and all indications suggest that Farmers Market networks will create far-reaching and revolutionary changes in the ways we shop and eat – alterations that will affect agriculture’s future”
(Chorney, as cited in Feagan & Morris, 2009, p. 235).

As part of an alternative food network, farmers markets are described as one response to the unsustainability of conventional, industrial food production systems (Feagan & Morris, 2009). They have been described throughout the extant literature as a *resurging* (Smithers & Joseph, 2009) phenomenon occurring around the world, emerging as a highly successful form of food distribution for small-scale producers (Carey, Bell, Duff, Sheridan, & Shields, 2011; Fischer, 2004). Their growing popularity can be attributed to a variety of environmental, social, and economic factors (Smithers & Joseph, 2009). Carey et al. (2011) directly attribute the growth of farmers markets in the United Kingdom to the increase in consumer demand for fresh food of a high quality, direct from the source and suggest they are one response to the increasing trend towards conscious rather than conspicuous consumption. In the United States, Brown (2002, p. 167) attributes the growth of farmers markets to “changing consumer interest and the

changing economics of agriculture". Similarly, Vecchio (2013) suggests environmental issues in the United States and food scares in Europe have caused such a shift in consumer demand, driving the popularity of farmers markets globally.

While literature on farmers markets is limited (Carey et al., 2011), just about every book and journal article associated with alternative food networks used for the purposes of this literature review has made at least one reference to the significance and merit of farmers markets on a global scale. The increase in the literature on the topic alone indicates a shift in consumption behaviour and perhaps a trend towards conscious consumption (Carey et al., 2011). Much like that of alternative food networks, extant literature concerning farmers markets has mainly come from North American (Alkon, 2008; Beckie, Kennedy, & Wittman, 2012; Feagan & Morris, 2009; Jarosz, 2008) and European (Carey et al., 2011; Kirwan, 2004; La Trobe, 2001; Vecchio, 2011) perspectives. More recently, literature has been published on the farmers market phenomenon in Australia (Andrée, Dibden, Higgins, & Cocklin, 2010) and New Zealand (Cameron, 2007; Guthrie et al. 2006; Joseph et al., 2013; Lawson et al. 2008; Murphy, 2011). A majority of which has been concerned with their development (Guthrie, et al., 2006), defining what makes an authentic farmers market (Smithers & Joseph, 2009; Joseph et al., 2013), identifying their alterity (Kirwan, 2004), the uncertainty surrounding the phenomenon (Smithers et al., 2008) and motivations behind producer (Cameron, 2007) and consumer (La Trobe, 2001; Murphy 2011) participation.

It seems recent literature has moved away from discussion on the pure *alterity* of farmers markets, toward actually defining their core attributes (Davies, 2012 as cited in Joseph et al., 2013). Much like the case of defining alternative food networks, defining what actually constitutes a 'real', or 'authentic' farmers market appears to be an issue of contestation throughout the extant literature. Farmers markets have been closely associated with terms such as 'local', 'regional', 'sustainable', 'ethical', and 'traditional' (Guthrie et al., 2006) and described as vital components to local food systems, fostering sustainable development at the community level (Farmer, Chancellor, Gooding, Shubowitz, & Bryant, 2011). In seeking a widely recognised definition of farmers markets, FMNZ (2007-2013) provides a definition that appears consistent with much of the literature. They define a true farmers market as a market selling food produced in a local area, where the vendors are directly involved in the growing or production process. Not all farmers markets in New Zealand are registered members of FMNZ, yet market managers frequently employ the term 'farmers market' in order to associate their markets with concepts such as 'local', 'regional', and 'traditional'. Registered or non-registered, farmers markets in New Zealand typically exhibit a combination of food produced within the local area in which they are operating and food that has come from outside the area. Similarly, vendors are often people who are directly involved in the production process or who are family members of those producers. However, this is not always the case.

While defining what farmers markets actually are and determining their alterity are widely contested issues in farmers market literature, academics and the popular media appear to agree on the benefits farmers markets can provide. It is well known that a significant gap has grown between food production and consumption. Bridging that gap and rebuilding connections between producers and consumers (Bunte & Dagevos, 2009; Goodman, D., DuPuis, & Goodman, M. K., 2012) seems to be the most commonly cited benefit of farmers markets. From a consumer perspective, sustainable consumption (Alkon, 2008), the availability of organic and locally grown fresh food (Guthrie et al., 2006; La Trobe, 2001), and a more enjoyable shopping experience (Guthrie et al., 2006) are all benefits believed to be gained from participation at an alternative retail outlet such as a farmers market (Carey et al., 2011). Work from a local perspective by Murphy (2011) compares the difference in consumer perceptions between farmers markets and conventional supermarkets concluding that product quality is the key motivator for consumer participation in farmers markets. This is similar to work by Smithers et al. (2008) who found that the determination that products at the farmers market are superior to similar products available elsewhere is a key driver in consumer participation. Interestingly, Murphy finds that the 'retail environment' does not have a significant influence on consumer participation, concluding that consumers do not place high value on interaction with producers. Yet, a study of a North American farmers market conducted by Vecchio (2011) found that direct interaction with producers was one of the main components of the market. Here, we can see how research findings can differ depending on the geographical location of the study. From a producer perspective, interactions with consumers are one of the most commonly cited benefits with Guthrie et al. (2006, p. 568) finding that many stallholders "appreciate the chance to test new products in the local market and the ability to gauge reaction instantly". Similarly, better financial outcomes (Andrée et al., 2010), more efficient supply chain innovations through cooperative behaviour (Pullman & Wu, 2012), cooperation with other producers through collective action (Lawson et al., 2008; Alkon, 2008), and the ability to test new products in new markets (Cameron, 2007) are all considered as common sources of value for producers.

While farmers markets have been described as a positive response to some of the problems associated with large-scale, conventional food systems (Kirwan, 2004), they have also been widely contested throughout extant literature. The markets have been described as sites of contestation and complexity (Smithers & Joseph, 2009) and *uncertain* sites of engagement serving as spaces for alterity, opposition, class fragmentation, and even exclusion (Smithers et al., 2008). Pullman and Wu (2012) describe farmers markets as an example of a new supply chain model promoting healthy food systems and supporting rural economies. Yet, at the same time, the authors categorise farmers markets as a non-traditional food retailing option much like drug stores, convenience stores, and supercentres such as Costco and Wal-Mart in the United States (p. 207). Such perspectives reflect a significant uncertainty around the phenomenon suggesting there are many opportunities for further research to be conducted in the field.

2.3.2 Farmers Markets in the New Zealand Context

“(The) growing popularity of Farmers Markets is something being seen worldwide and for a host of reasons. The awareness of what’s in our food and growing demand for regional, unadulterated produce, climate concerns, and the investment into local communities and resources, sustainable agriculture and community hubs are just a few of the influences causing Farmers Markets to flourish in New Zealand.”

(C. Fortune, personal communication, July 29, 2013).

Similar to Australia, North America, and Europe, New Zealand has seen a significant increase in the development of farmers markets in the last decade, with Murphy (2011) reporting of their growing significant influence in the retail scene. The phenomenon emerged in New Zealand in 1998 (Chalmers et al., 2009) with Guthrie et al. (2006) reporting of 16 farmers markets in operation by 2006. The importance of the phenomenon in New Zealand was highlighted with the establishment of a New Zealand Farmers Market Association in 2005 (Guthrie et al., 2006), which now reports having more than 35 registered farmers markets spread throughout the country (FMNZ, 2007-2013) from Kerikeri to Invercargill. The markets have been described as “prominent players in emerging alternative food networks” in New Zealand (Beckie et al., 2012, p. 334). However, the rise in the popularity and development of farmers markets has not enjoyed the same growth in local literature, which is surprising given New Zealand’s significant economic reliance on its’ agricultural sector. Recent searches utilising various academic databases produced very little literature on the topic from a New Zealand perspective. Thus suggesting knowledge of the farmers market phenomenon in New Zealand is limited (Guthrie et al., 2006; Lawson et al., 2008; Chalmers et al., 2009). Studies that have been conducted from a New Zealand perspective have primarily been of an exploratory nature, concerned with describing, explaining, and understanding the farmers market phenomenon and have largely come from marketing (Murphy, 2011), social science (Guthrie et al., 2006; Joseph et al., 2013; Lawson et al., 2008), and management/entrepreneurial (Cameron, 2007; Guthrie et al., 2006) disciplines.

What we do know from the limited amount of local literature is that unlike in Europe and North America, farmers markets in New Zealand are not a re-kindling phenomenon (Thomas, n.d.) and the increase in popularity they are enjoying can be attributed to factors different to those driving their growth overseas. Where markets in Europe and North America are commonly driven by history, Thomas suggests farmers markets in New Zealand are driven by differing local circumstances and requirements. Preserving growers’ and farmers’ livelihoods drives many New Zealand farmers markets, while others have a stronger focus on the social aspect and the provision of specialty foods. Thomas’s views are consistent with research conducted by Guthrie et al. (2006), which concluded that the growth in New Zealand farmers markets is primarily driven by a multiplicity of (mainly supply-side) factors that are not related to environmental or

food safety concerns. The authors found that New Zealand consumers simply enjoyed better quality food and a more enjoyable shopping experience and were less concerned with environmental issues or food scares. The difference in motivational forces behind the growth of farmers markets in New Zealand compared to other geographic regions makes the local context a unique setting for further research.

The benefits farmers markets provide to producers and consumers are widely cited, although extant literatures commonly focus on either party alone. Few studies have considered how multiple stakeholders interact and realise the benefits that a farmers market can provide. Perhaps one of the most useful local studies was that conducted by Guthrie et al. (2006), which considered how farmers markets benefit not only consumers and entrepreneurial small-scale producers but also what opportunities they provide for the communities in which they operate. It is commonly cited throughout extant literature that farmers markets provide small-scale food producers with an outlet that is alternative and/or additional to conventional supermarket chains (Guthrie et al., 2006). Similarly, work by Cameron (2007) found that the markets play a significant role as small-business incubators and safety nets, therefore increasing the chances of survival for small rural businesses. While the benefits that extend to the wider communities in which farmers markets operate have been identified in previous research (Guthrie et al., 2006), discussion appears to be limited to the economic benefits that are realised through financial value and rarely extends to potential social benefits. While benefits and thus sources of value may have been a focus of farmers market research, extant literature does reflect many uncertainties around the processes and activities that actually occur in order for such value to be created and later realised, particularly within the New Zealand context.

A significant uncertainty around farmers markets is the issue of authenticity. While North American and European literature largely discusses alterity, the issue of authenticity appears to be the most prominent among the difficulties associated with defining farmers markets in New Zealand (Joseph et al., 2013; Smithers & Joseph, 2010). This issue has been widely contested by authors such as Smithers and Joseph (2010) who argue that while authenticity is central to the identity of the farmers market, its meaning varies between market producers and governing bodies such as FMNZ. In a more recent study, Joseph et al. (2013) use the Marlborough farmers market in New Zealand as a case study to discuss issues of authenticity at the producer-level through formal certification, concluding that the differing perspectives on the issue are fracturing the relationships between competing parties within New Zealand farmers markets. Smithers and Joseph conducted a similar study within the Canadian context. However, interestingly little other attention has been given to authenticity within farmers markets on an international scale.

2.4 Value – A Contested Domain

2.4.1 Defining Value

A review of the literature concerned with the notion of *value* reveals various perspectives on what in fact ‘value’ is and shows that its meaning lacks precision within the field of business and management (Willmott, 2012). The extensive amount of literature on the topic is evidence of the theoretical complexities associated with the concept. As highlighted in work by Graeber (as cited in Willmott, 2012), perhaps due to its ambiguous nature, a ‘theory of value’ can be difficult to find. Even literatures concerned with theorising value (Makadok & Coff, 2002) often fail to explicate the term. The term’s subjective nature can be attributed to it inherently being a dynamic concept that evolves over time (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). Throughout academic literature, value is discussed largely in relation to pricing, consumer behaviour, and strategy (de Chernatony, Harris, & Dall’Olmo Riley, 2000). However, a consensus on what the term actually means is lacking and its meaning can often be taken for granted, particularly when paired with for example, ‘creation’, ‘capture’, ‘chain’, ‘proposition’, or ‘shareholder’. Its very ambiguity is what allows the term to accommodate so many associations (Willmott, 2012).

Perhaps the most simplistic, yet narrow perspective is that of Porter’s (1985) who defines value as “what buyers are willing to pay”, suggesting that the value of a product is equal to only the monetary amount assigned to it. Not too dissimilar to Marshall’s 18th century theory of value suggesting the value of a product is equal to the expenses incurred in its production (Laughlin, 1887, p. 228). Similarly, literatures on value from a resource-based theory perspective (Bowman & Ambrosini, 2000; Blyer & Coff, 2003) primarily focus on economic profits or rents as the value captured. Bowman and Ambrosini (2000) distinguish between ‘use value’, and ‘exchange value’. ‘Use value’ being the consumer’s perceptions of the usefulness of the product for sale, and ‘exchange value’ being the amount the buyer pays to the seller for the use value. The authors go further by explaining how use value extends beyond the consumer, to the firm when they engage in procurement. From this perspective, the firm operates as both a supplier involved in optimising the capture of exchange value and as a customer aiming to optimise the capture of use value from suppliers (Bowman & Ambrosini, 2003). It is worth noting here that use value is commonly considered from a Marxian perspective, as the physical usefulness of the commodity itself and does not extend to its symbolic aspects. While economic foundations are important in understanding value (Harrison & Wicks, 2013), the concept has been described as qualitative as well as quantitative, material as well as symbolic, and individual as well as collective (Eiss & Pedersen, 2002) and is seen to exhibit social benefit as well as material and economic gain (Willmott, 2012).

Before critically reviewing the topic beyond a purely economic perspective, it is useful to clearly distinguish the difference between *value* and *values*. When discussing consumer value, Holbrook (1999)

refers to 'value' as a preferential judgement, which is framed by the set of 'values' held by the consumer. 'Values' are therefore used as criteria by which judgements of 'value' are then made. From Holbrook's simplistic, yet useful distinction between the two concepts, we can assume that value is likely to be a widely contested domain, its meaning largely subjective and entirely dependent on the nature of subjective experience (Perry, as cited in Holbrook, 1999). Similarly, Arvidsson (2009, p.16) defines value as a 'socially recognised importance' that he suggests varies from one social formation to another.

While material production largely follows monetary logic, immaterial or social production (of for example, knowledge and social wealth) follows a different logic often driven by non-monetary incentives (Arvidsson, 2009). Work by Harrison and Wicks (2013) is driven by the idea that individual differences are fundamental in defining value and Hilton, Hughes, and Chalcraft (2012, p. 1508) describe value as a personal evaluative judgment made by each actor, suggesting that "value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary". Similarly, analysis on value conducted by Kraaijenbrink and Spender (2011) concludes that people perceive value differently. Therefore, products and services will offer different forms of value to different people. In the same light, Willmott (2012) suggests that whatever is deemed valuable is governed by a self-referential value-orientation, these perspectives being dramatically different from that of Marshall's. Simply put, value means different things to different stakeholders (Bowman & Ambrosini, 2003) and can extend beyond pure monetary connotations. Holbrook (1999, p. 8) loosely defines value as the 'outcome of an evaluative judgement'. By a similar nature, Willmott (2012, p. 11) relates the concept to 'what is desired' or 'what is asserted to be desired'. It is clear from the existing literature that due to personal values and unmet needs and desires, people perceive the idea of value in different ways. Therefore, we cannot consider value without considering for whom and by whom it is created (Kraaijenbrink & Spender, 2011) and how it is created, the topic of the following section.

2.4.2 Value Creation and Realisation

Similar to defining the concept of value, determining the processes by which it is created and later realised, captured, or uplifted is a contested field of study among scholars. Questions regarding what is considered valuable, who values what, and where value resides all contribute to the complexity of understanding the process of value creation (Lepak, Smith, & Taylor, 2007). It is widely agreed throughout the academic literature that creation and capture of value is a necessity in order for organisations to sustain and be successful (Kraaijenbrink & Spender, 2011; Willmott, 2012) and that the process of value creation is increasingly seen as the next source of competitive advantage (Woodruff, 1997). A robust definition of value creation is therefore instrumental in this regard. Foster (2006, p. 286) refers to the process of value creation as "the practical specification of significance, that is, to actions that define and make visible relations between persons and things". Such a definition encompasses preoccupations with activities that

produce quantitative value and those which create qualitative value. Many authors refer to value creation and realisation as a dynamic process. This is particularly evident within the field of anthropology in research on commodity chains (Foster, 2006) where products are tracked through their entire lifecycle, from manufacture, to consumption, to recycle, and all stages in between. Such commodity chain analysis explicates how the processes through which value is created and by which meaning is attributed to an artefact change at each phase of its lifecycle. Studies of this nature will often demonstrate a network of various perspectives and show how these can often be conflicting. For example, work by Ferry (2005) demonstrates how the value of mineral specimens is transformed over time, often as a result of power relations between Mexico and the United States. Similarly, work by Cook (2004) follows the life of papayas from their harvesting in Jamaica and Brazil right through to consumption in places like the United Kingdom and highlights how value is created, distributed, and uplifted at each stage.

A neoclassical standpoint assumes that creating increasing value for customers will result in greater value and thus competitive advantage for the firm. This perspective holds strong theoretical support, particularly among literature from a marketing perspective. However, such literatures that place consumer benefit at the forefront of analysis (Holbrook, 2009; Payne & Holt, 2001; Priem, 2007) often lack clarification of the actual inputs into the value creation process and instead focus on value in the form of benefits that specifically pertain to the consumer. Yet, as Foster (2006, p. 289) describes, “consumption... is itself a source and site of value creation”.

Understanding the ways in which firms create value through various value-generating processes has witnessed growing interest in the management field (Ravasi & Rindova, 2004) and various perspectives enjoy strong theoretical support. Kraaijenbrink and Spender (2011) consider how value can be created for the firm by analysing various ‘theories of the firm’ such as resource-based views, entrepreneurial-based views, Weber’s bureaucratic theory, and Alchian and Demsetz’s team production approach. Similarly, previous work has focused on how value can be created for business owners (Sirmon, Hitt, & Ireland, 2007), while other work focuses on how it can be created for customers (Priem, 2007). While each perspective holds different assumptions as to how value is created, from which sources it is derived, and who captures it, the underlying theme throughout extant literature assumes that value creation requires some form of input from the creator (firm) and/or the beneficiary (customer). As will be discussed below, value extends beyond that created purely by the firm for the customer, to that created in various forms by multiple actors, distributed beyond just the customer to individual employees (Lepak et al., 2007), shareholders and business owners (Bughin & Copeland, 1997; Day & Fahey, 1990), and society (Lepak et al., 2007; Porter & Kramer, 2011).

A Marxian perspective shows the potential to offer some insight here. Marx (as cited in Willmott, 2012), from a capitalist work organisation perspective, considers labour as ‘the value-forming substance’ where

resources and labour are used directly to create rent. Similarly, authors such as Bowman and Ambrosini (2000) describe labour as the direct source of value. Such a perspective, highlighted in analysis by Willmott (2012, p. 16) holds that as a result of labour inputs, values are created for which a demand exists or can be generated. From which, surplus value can be extracted, acting as the driving motivator behind the submission of labour. While attention to human inputs is limited in Bowman and Ambrosini's (2003) review of value, the authors do recognise that human inputs are present in the form of performed services or activities when creating value. It is therefore of significant interest when looking at different types of value, to consider who in fact is submitting their work or labour in the creation process and what value is realised or captured as a result.

The following sections review literature on value in three separate (although often related) forms, economic, relational, and symbolic. While there are many forms of value discussed throughout extant literature, they all commonly fall under one of these three categories. In a study of the values-based service brand IKEA, the authors distinguish four significant types of value - economic, social, communication-based, and environmental (Edvardsson et al., 2006). In this case, social and communication-based values can be classified as relational, and environmental value can, in many forms be considered symbolic.

2.4.3 Economic Value

Work on economic value largely comes from the strategic management field and from a resource-based view (Bowman & Ambrosini, 2000; 2003; Amit & Schoemaker, 1993; Madhok & Tallman, 1998), which aims to explain firm profitability. Profitability is ultimately determined by the value captured by the firm (Makadok & Coff, 2002) and usually expressed in terms of economic utility (Edvardsson et al., 2006). Authors such as Bowman and Ambrosini (2000) have written a significant amount of literature from this perspective where they discuss how the creation of use value leads to the creation of exchange value where value can be captured or appropriated by the firm in the form of profits or rent. Profit can loosely be defined as "some sort of reward for something that is done for the good of economic society" (Bowman & Ambrosini, 2000, p. 11). It is worth noting that throughout much of the literature on value from a resource-based theory perspective, the term *profit* is commonly replaced by *rent* (Rumelt, 1987; Bowman & Ambrosini, 2000).

The resource-based perspective holds that "the source of value and hence profits (as the proportion of value captured by the firm) is the combination and deployment of labour with other resources" (Bowman & Ambrosini, 2000, p. 1). Similarly, Amit and Schoemaker (1993) suggest, the nature of a firm's resources and capabilities are a crucial determinant of its profitability. The authors distinguish between resources as being "stocks of available factors that are owned or controlled by the firm" and capabilities as "a firm's capacity to deploy resources...to reflect a desired end" (p. 35). Willmott (2012) considers labour processes

(as capabilities) to be what makes creation of goods or services possible. Literature from this perspective commonly assumes that inanimate resources (tangible or intangible) are incapable of creating value; instead, they need to be activated or worked on before they are able to produce use value (Bowman & Ambrosini, 2000). Therefore, use values are considered to be derivative of the actions, or labour of people. In their analysis of value creation, Lepak et al. (2007) describe three different sources of value creation, the individual, the organisation, and society, all of which require human input to perform appropriate tasks and activities. In their analysis of labour, Bowman and Ambrosini (2000) distinguish between the generic, differential, and unproductive types that can occur in the process of value creation and explain that the source of labour can extend beyond that of the individual worker, to that of a collective group of individuals working together as a team. The team approach accounts for those individuals whom, on their own may not create use value but as a part of a team may play a crucial part in the value creation process.

Because of newly created use value, potential value pertaining to the firm must be captured or realised. Bowman and Ambrosini (2000) argue that use value does not automatically translate into exchange value and thus rent appropriation. The authors suggest that the added exchange value can only be determined when the use value is actually sold (2000; 2003). Thus, exchange value arrives in the form of what buyers are willing to pay. It is worth noting here that when considering what buyers are willing to pay, authors on value from the resource-based view (Bowman & Ambrosini, 2000; 2003) refer only to monetary payment. They fail to consider that "...things-of-values need not be limited to goods, services, and money; they include other resources such as time, energy, and feelings" (Kotler, 1972, p. 48). Lepak et al. (2007, p. 182) state, "value realisation must at least translate into the user's willingness to exchange a monetary amount for the value received". Bowman and Ambrosini (2000; 2003) argue that the exchange of payment for use value is what allows value to be captured by the firm through the appropriation of economic profits, i.e. the exchange value retained within the firm. In order for a firm to maximise exchange value and thus their value capture potential, they must deliver more consumer surplus than their competitors. Two strategic options provide opportunity to increase consumer surplus. A firm can lower their prices while offering equivalent perceived use value, or offer superior use value but at the same price as its competitors, or offer a combination of the two (Bowman & Ambrosini, 2003).

Bowman and Ambrosini (2000) assert that while organisational members are responsible for creating value, value capture is determined by perceived power relationships among various economic actors, i.e. the bargaining power a firm has with its' customers and suppliers, including their suppliers of labour. The authors' prevailing perspective here is that, "labour performed by organisational members is the source of the firm's profit" (2000, p. 5). Yet, how much profit can be realised is largely dependent on existing power relationships. To summarise the view held by authors from a resource-based theory perspective, a product has an exchange value and a perceived use value both of which are realised at the point of sale. Therefore, "there is no firm value creation (i.e. profits), until a sale takes place" (Bowman & Ambrosini, 2003, p. 14).

Looking beyond the firm when considering economic value, authors such as Lepak et al. (2007) consider how value created by the firm can in fact be captured at an individual and societal level. At the individual level, the authors suggest that factors such as an employee's personal attributes, tacit knowledge, or unique position in a social network have the ability to increase their bargaining power to capture value from their employer. Similarly, they suggest that economic value can be captured at the societal level when a nation or a community holds unique factor or resource advantages, strong demand conditions, and competitive markets. For example, a community holding a unique natural resource supported by a thriving business community is likely to capture more value for their citizens than those communities that lack such qualities. Such perspectives highlight that a firm has the ability to contribute to value creation before an actual sale or monetary exchange takes place. As will be discussed below, perspectives that extend beyond economic profits also show how a firm has the potential to create alternative forms of value well before the point of sale.

2.4.4 Relational Value

Relational perspectives on value assume many forms, all of which pay particular attention to the nature of *relationships*. Extant literatures on relational value come largely from a strategic marketing perspective and emphasise the importance of the relationship between buyer and seller (Grönroos, 1997; 2008; 2012; Khan, Kadir, & Rahman, 2012; Wikström, 1996), between the firm and its partners (Madhok & Tallman, 1998), and between the firm the wider community in which it operates (Porter & Kramer, 2011). The underlying assumption from this perspective is that a firm cannot create value on its own. Instead, it must engage in acts of co-creation with other parties in order for value to be *jointly* created and thus realised (Grönroos 2008; 2012; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Relational value is particularly relevant in the service industry because interactions between two parties are required in order for the value of services to be determined (Kandampully & Duddy, 1999). Similarly, Grönroos (1997) suggests that a relational strategy is required to be adopted more and more by firms because of the development of the marketing environment. Increased interaction and cooperation between producers and consumers has resulted in a shift from the producer-and-consumer perspective, to one of co-production (Normann & Ramirez, 1993; Wikström et al., as cited in Wikström, 1996) where actors are expanding their traditional roles (Wikström, 1996). It is therefore of particular interest to consider the value of the *relationship*.

Value extends beyond that created for the firm by the firm to the co-productive activities of consumers who are external to the activity of wage labourers (Willmott, 2012). The idea of value co-creation is becoming more prominent in recent literature on value and Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) attribute this to the change in consumer behaviour. The role of the consumer is shifting from isolated to connected, unaware to informed, and from passive agents to active participants in their consuming experiences (Prahalad &

Ramaswamy, 2004; Caru & Cova, 2007). Therefore, we are seeing an emergence of more qualified and demanding consumers who are increasingly assuming the roles of co-producers (Wikström, 1996). Similarly, Grönroos (2008, p. 306) believes that “customers are not predominantly interested in goods or services, but in how these can be used for value creation”, suggesting the prominent role of the consumer, as opposed to solely the firm in the value creation process. Grönroos therefore suggests that a producer cannot be the sole creator of value. He refers to the firm (or producer) merely as a value facilitator. Prahalad & Ramaswamy argue that organisations can only create environments that facilitate value creation. In other words, they are unable to autonomously create value by providing a product or service. Rather, value is embedded in experiences that are co-created between the organisation and the consumer.

Work on relational value from a buyer-seller perspective assumes that customers often look for the value in the relationship they can develop with the seller as opposed to simply the value they get from a product (Lindgreen & Wynstra, 2005). Therefore, as Grönroos states (1997, p. 407), “marketing from a relational perspective...requires that a firm offers more resources and activities than a core product (goods or services) in order to satisfy the long-term value needs of its customers”. Such an approach involves interactions, relationships, and networks (Gummesson, as cited in Grönroos, 1997) that support creation of perceived customer value over time. From a relationship-theory perspective, the customer creates value together with the producer (Khan et al., 2012). For example, relational value between a firm and its customers can be created when the firm seeks feedback from its customers, or when the customers actively seek to provide the firm with feedback (Grönroos, 1997). However, as Grönroos also suggests, there are customers who do not always seek relational value and for these types of customers, a strategy based on transactional intent will suffice. The most effective strategy will depend largely on market conditions and the nature of the product and the customer.

From extant literature, it is clear that value is not simply added, but mutually created among multiple actors with different values (Ramírez, 1999). It is therefore also worth considering relationships outside of the producer-consumer relationship. Work by Porter and Kramer (2011) considers the idea of shared value creation suggesting that in order to create a competitive advantage, a firm’s value principles should focus on simultaneous economic and social advancement of the communities in which they operate. Here, there will be significant opportunity for communities and wider society to capture value because of a firm’s activities. Even work by Madhok and Tallman (1998) that comes from a resource-based theory perspective assumes a relational view where they suggest firms have the potential to realise greater value through collaborative relationships with partners. In this sense, firms combine relevant resources and capabilities with partnering firms in search of sustainable competitive advantage. However, they also argue that such relationships are frequently prone to failure when partner firms do not recognise the extent of the investment that is required to build a synergized relationship.

“A relationship marketing approach stresses the importance of multiple stakeholders” (Payne & Holt, 2001, p. 160). Yet, work from a relational perspective typically focuses on the relationship between the firm and its customers (Grönroos, 1997) and little work has been conducted that sufficiently addresses value in the context of a multiple stakeholder perspective. Payne and Holt (2001) emphasise the importance of a multiple stakeholder approach where they argue that value is created jointly between all parties involved in a relationship, a perspective shared by Gummesson (1999). Therefore, customer value, shareholder value, and even employee value must be considered together. They identify models useful in identifying frameworks for relationship value management. These include the SCOPE model, which suggests five key stakeholder groups, customers, employees, partners, suppliers, and owners (Buttle, 1999) and the six-markets model (Christopher, Payne, & Ballantyne as cited in Payne & Holt, 2001), which they argue has been the most successfully implemented model among organisations. However, Payne and Holt conclude that further empirical work is needed that focuses on the relationships and linkages between employee, customer, and shareholder value.

2.4.5 Symbolic Value

While satisfying practical needs delivers functional value, meeting self-expression needs delivers symbolic value (de Chernatony et al., 2000). Symbolic value comes in various forms and unlike the concept of value it holds relatively consistent meaning throughout the literature. A significant amount of extant research discusses the idea of symbolic value, closely relating the concept to social and cultural meanings, status (Ravasi & Rindova, 2004), and self-identity (Willmott, 2012). Work on symbolic value is commonly associated with the idea of *meaning*; it is therefore worth exploring this concept further. Whether it is in the form of social, cultural, status, or identity, some sort of ‘intrinsic value’ is applied when we attribute meaning to something. Much like the concept of ‘value’, the idea of ‘intrinsic value’ is contested in extant literature (Schroeder, 2012; Smith, 1998). Sumner (as cited in Smith, 1998, p. 540) provides an explanation for the concept, suggesting that it is something “worth having or pursuing for its own sake, not merely by virtue of some further good with which it is somehow connected”. In more simple terms, when characterising intrinsic value, Van Wyk (1990, p. 100) describes the concept as “good without being good *for anything*”.

Interestingly, in work by Burton (2004), he closely relates symbolic value to behaviour. He examines the relationship between symbolic meaning, identity, and behaviour. He suggests that membership of a group is developed and maintained through displaying commitment to the same symbolic meanings and socially acceptable behaviours exhibited among the group. It is through processes of socialisation that an individual is able to develop a self-identity. From this perspective, Mead (as cited in Burton, 2004) views the individual and society as part of a dynamic, interacting system in which the self is understood as a social

structure. In this way, Burton describes behaviour as not only functional, but also overwhelmingly expressive.

The vast amount of literature devoted to the importance of a firm being able to create symbolic value suggests that such value has the potential to create significant competitive advantage. As products are increasingly consumed for their symbolic value rather than purely their practical functions, Ravasi and Rindova (2004, p. 3) argue, “a deeper understanding of the way firms create symbolic value is needed in the management field”. Klein (as cited in Ravasi & Rindova, 2004) observes, rather than producing a product, manufacturers are increasingly buying products and *branding* them in attempts to create symbolic meaning for their customers. Ravasi and Rindova (2004) propose that the symbolic value of a product comes from a combination of cultural factors and the system of relationships among consumers, products, and firms. The authors define symbolic value as the “social and cultural meanings associated with a product, which enable consumers to use it to communicate about their identity and social and status groups membership” (2004, p.3). Similarly in Grubb and Grathwohl’s (1967) discussion on goods as symbols, they describe symbols as things that stand for, or express meaning. It is when a product holds a set of cultural meanings that consumers want to be associated with, (Baudrillard, as cited in Ravasi & Rindova, 2004) that symbolic, or ‘identity’ value is created (Ravasi & Rindova, 2008).

From this perspective, symbolic value creation is therefore a result of a firm’s ability to combine tangible and intangible resources enabling them to create value in the form of ‘meaning’ held intrinsically, as opposed to pure ‘function’ (Lawrence & Phillips, 2002). Both of which are important factors in the motivational forces behind purchasing decisions (Smithers, et al., 2008). Similar to relational value described above, authors such as Willmott (2012) suggest that symbolic meaning is also considered to be produced outside of, as well as within, capital enterprise. When discussing ‘sign value’, Willmott goes as far as suggesting that consumers are increasingly involved in the unpaid co-production of exchange value. In this way, symbolic value can be co-created between a firm and its customers (Ravasi & Rindova, 2004) when a firm is able to attribute intangible meaning to a product in order to co-create value within the consumer’s imagination (Willmott, 2012). Here, the consumer attributes intrinsic meaning to a product. Therefore, consumption of a product is not simply a material process; rather, it can be a symbolic process by which consumers shape their self-identities (Willmott, 2012). Therefore, as a result of effort exerted by the firm, the consumer uplifts value when they are able to use symbolic meanings to communicate about their self-identity. On the other hand, the firm realises value ultimately in the form of surplus value because of increased sales.

By the same theory, symbolic value can also be created for suppliers of labour when they engage in production relations (Willmott, 2012) or production oriented activities (Burton, 2004). From this perspective, Willmott (2012) asserts that as sellers of labour, we are participating in a ‘consumer society’ in

that we use our labour to occupy advantageous positions as a means of allowing participation in consumption. In addition, similar to purchasing a certain product in order to communicate self-identity, employment is something that is generally desired and suppliers of labour can therefore use their employment to communicate their self-identity or social group status. While his work focuses on the farmer as an entrepreneur rather than paid employees, Burton (2004, p. 197) argues “more needs to be discovered about the symbolic value of production oriented activities, the means by which such symbolic value is negotiated and transferred,” in order to understand the meanings behind agricultural decision-making. Work by Goffman (1959) can offer some insight here where he uses a dramaturgical metaphor to describe activities by which symbolic interactionism occurs in order to create symbolic social identity. The author distinguishes between the ‘front stage’ (behaviour observable to others) and ‘backstage’ (behaviour that occurs outside of the social setting) activities that people engage in in order to create symbolic social identity. However, literature on other ways in which symbolic value may be created, negotiated, and transferred within a firm or within an alternative food network is limited. Relating Goffman’s sense of theatre to retail environments such as farmers markets has the potential to help us understand value processes within the setting, particularly processes of a symbolic nature.

2.5 Value Within Farmers Markets

While an extensive body of literature exists on various forms of value and how they are created, distributed, and realised, the topic of value creation within alternative food networks is limited. Work by Guthman (2002) on ‘meaningful commodities’ explores the relationships between organic consumption and surplus value and rent. She questions how meanings associated with organic consumption can create value and in turn, how value is translated into meaning. However, work on value creation within alternative food networks does not extend far beyond this. An even smaller body of literature constitutes the current knowledge on value creation within farmers markets, particularly from a New Zealand perspective. The recent success of farmers markets means that they have found ways to create value different to that created by conventional food distribution channels (Lawson et al., 2008). Their very alterity serves as a source of value creation potential (Holloway & Kneafsey, 2000; Kirwan, 2004). It has been argued that specific sets of values exist amongst food producers and consumers participating at farmers markets (Smithers et al., 2008) and that the markets themselves act as sites where consumers can make value-based ‘good-food’ choices (Connell, Smithers, & Joseph, 2008). Yet, how these specific sets of values affect value creation within farmers markets is unclear.

A study conducted by Lawson et al. (2008) links farmers markets and value creation by considering how value is created through cooperation among producers at farmers markets in New Zealand. The exploratory study conducted by Lawson et al. concluded that a high level of cooperative activity was evident at farmers markets. However, it is likely that cooperation among stallholders is not the only source

of value creation at farmers markets. With the consumer being the key determinant of value, work by Murphy (2011) recognises the consumer's perspective. His research aimed to understand how customers determined value within farmers market settings concluding that quality, freshness, and perceived healthiness were the most significant value drivers. While not attributed directly to value creation, various studies examining farmers markets as small-business incubators (Brown, 2002; Cameron, 2007) suggest they have the potential to create significant value for entrepreneurs by acting as a platform for new business innovations. Being the first studies to examine value creation in farmers market settings in New Zealand, research by Lawson et al. and Murphy provide a significant opportunity for future research to build on such work and contribute to the limited knowledge in the field.

Perhaps due to the oligopolistic nature of food retailing in New Zealand, small-scale food entrepreneurs can often find it difficult to compete in the marketplace. These producers therefore need to find alternative strategies for survival such as providing specialist services and responding quickly to changing consumer demands (Lawson et al., 2008) and thus creating alternative forms of value. While research by Lawson et al. has found that significant value is created through cooperation amongst traders at farmers' markets, it is still unclear as to what other types of value are created at the producer-level, the general market-level, and at the wider community-level. It is also unclear how producers actually use such value to compete in a market that is largely dominated by two significant players.

As identified previously, symbolic value is often created because of a product being re-branded by the firm. However, while there are some exceptions, vendors participating at farmers markets are required to produce their own products. Therefore, it is of significant interest to consider how such producers may create symbolic value, different to that of many of today's larger manufacturers. Previous work on value within the food production industry includes work by Burton (2004) who highlights the symbolic value associated with farming in the United Kingdom and considers how farmers create their own identities and how they perceive the identities of neighbouring farmers through symbolic impressions. Carey et al. (2011, p. 300) describes farmers markets as "a means to express consumer values associated with food choices". Yet, little specific research has been conducted on the possible symbolic value associated with farmers markets.

A significant amount of research on farmers markets clearly stipulates the benefits of participation from both the production and consumption side. However, when it comes to attributing 'value' to such factors, the term is often used vaguely. Carey et al. (2011) suggests that farmers markets provide *valuable* support for small producers as well as creating value for Scotland's rural economic economy from the increase in activity and profits from direct sales. La Trobe (2001) suggests that where the conventional food system has enabled those who transform and sell processed food products to capture most of the value of rural produce, farmers markets offer an alternative outlet for farmers to re-capture a portion of that value. Yet, in

both cases, the authors fail to clearly define their interpretation of value, or discuss the processes by which it is created. While not specifically related to farmers markets, authors such as Guthman (2002) offer a little more informative insight as to how value creation might be conceptualised within the agricultural sector by suggesting that providing food takes work. She suggests that, in conjunction with ecological processes, labour processes transform biological material from one state to another. It is these processes by which labour value is extracted from some people and redistributed to others.

As Thomas (n.d.) suggests, differing local circumstances and requirements are the driving forces behind different farmers markets around New Zealand. For example, some markets are primarily focused on growers' and farmers' livelihoods, where others may focus more on social aspects or providing specialty foods. Therefore, suggesting that different farmers markets around New Zealand would likely exhibit different forms of value and different processes by which it is created.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter began by reviewing work by seminal authors within the alternative food network field in order to provide broad context to this research. Still a widely contested phenomenon, many authors such as Tregear (2011) suggest there is still much to be learned within the alternative food network field. Farmers markets are clearly identified as being part of an alternative food network and therefore contributing to the development of a new food economy on a global and local scale, a food economy largely in opposition to conventional food systems. Much like the case of alternative food networks, there is still much to learn about farmers markets. This holds particularly true in the case of New Zealand where farmers markets are a relatively new phenomenon and while the limited amount of extant literature is valuable, knowledge within the field is still limited.

In order to understand value processes within farmers markets, the phenomenon itself needs to be conceptualised. A review of the literature on farmers markets reveals that they are more than just simple retail outlets. Instead, they are complex sites of exchange, exhibiting high levels of social interaction between multiple actors, offering the potential for a significant amount of value to be created for and by each actor. However, extant literature on value within farmers markets from a local perspective is limited to work by Lawson et al. (2008) that examines value through cooperation among stallholders and work by Murphy (2011) that considers value from a consumer perspective. Each of these studies provides a useful base upon which to conduct further research and expand on current knowledge of value processes within farmers markets in New Zealand.

A review of the literature on the topic of value concludes that the meaning of the concept is widely contested and largely dependent on social circumstances. The nature of value and the role it plays in

various settings are inextricably linked. How value is defined will ultimately determine the role in which it plays. The subjective nature of value creation and the multiple levels of analysis used to study the topic highlight its complexity (Lepak et al., 2007). Its creation, distribution, and realisation are largely socially constructed processes involving multiple actors. Relationships between multiple actors are characterised by social and spatial interconnections, which constitute the constant tension between different interests in value creation processes. As Scaraboto (2013) suggests, the co-creation and distribution of value are fundamentally social and collaborative processes. Similarly, Arce and Marsden (1993, p. 298) conclude, “food production and consumption are essentially socially constructed activities organized by a series of discontinuous valuation processes and conflictual social relationships”. However, there has been a lack of empirical research into the processes by which value is created within social settings such as farmers markets. Given the socially constructed nature of value and the complex level of social interactions present at farmers markets, a social constructivist lens appears to be an effective tool for analysing the phenomenon.

The shift toward more sustainable production and consumption behaviour has been recognised as too significant to ignore. Together, each of the elements reviewed in this chapter (alternative food networks, farmers markets, and value) provide a base by which to examine a sustainable food system opportunity in New Zealand. The increase in the popularity of farmers markets in New Zealand reflects such a shift. It is therefore of significant interest to further conceptualise the farmers market phenomenon and to understand the processes behind their development in order to better understand more sustainable food system opportunities in New Zealand and thus be able to effectively engage in sustainable development. Similarly, authors such as Lepak et al. (2007, p. 192) suggest, “a greater understanding of value creation may help individuals, organisations, and society advance and prosper in a competitive world”.

3. Study Design and Methodological Considerations

3.1 Introduction

Building upon a growing body of literature on alternative food networks and farmers markets on a global scale, the primary purpose of this study is to extend the scope of the limited extant literature on value creation within farmers markets in New Zealand. This chapter outlines the design and methodological considerations that were utilised in order to achieve this purpose. The chapter begins by outlining the aim of the study, its objectives, and research questions. The qualitative framework by which this research was conducted is then explained and justified. Following this, methodologies and theoretical principles that were employed for data collection, analysis, and interpretation are discussed along with ethical considerations that were taken into account during the research.

3.2 Study Purpose

Studies on farmers markets are not new. However, as demonstrated in the preceding literature review the connections between farmers markets and value creation have received little attention throughout the extant literature, particularly in the New Zealand context. This exploratory study aims to contribute to the limited knowledge of the farmers market phenomenon in New Zealand (Chalmers et al. 2009; Guthrie et al. 2006) by developing a study that extends the scope of extant literature. Using the study on value creation through cooperation at farmers markets conducted by Lawson et al. (2008) as a benchmark, this study aims to explore further forms of value creation within the social phenomenon. As Brown (2002) concludes, there are conceptual and methodological barriers to overcome if a body of valid and reliable research on agricultural initiatives is to be developed. Therefore, by aiming to further conceptualise farmers markets in the New Zealand setting and using robust methodological techniques, this study aims to contribute to building a body of valid and reliable research on initiatives such as farmers markets within alternative food networks. In order to achieve this, the research questions outlined in Table 1 were formulated in order to meet the research objectives outlined in Table 2.

Table 1: Research Aim and Questions

Aim	Further conceptualise farmers markets in New Zealand in order to help small-scale food producers/entrepreneurs and the academic community further understand the role of alternative food networks and thus help to define more sustainable food system opportunities.
Research Question One	What types of value are created when small-scale food producers participate in farmers markets?
Research Question Two	How are such different types of value created, both at the producer-level and at the wider market-level?
Research Question Three	How can a more comprehensive understanding of value creation within farmers markets help to define more sustainable food system opportunities in New Zealand?

Table 2: Research Objectives

Research Objective One	Provide detailed description of what types of value are created when small-scale food producers participate in farmers markets.
Research Objective Two	Provide detailed description of how different types of value are created, both at the producer-level and at the wider market-level.
Research Objective Three	Understand how value creation within farmers markets can help to define more sustainable food system opportunities in New Zealand.

3.3 A Qualitative and Investigative Approach

“The state of prior knowledge is a key determinant of appropriate research methodology” (Edmondson & McManus, 2007, p. 1156). Therefore, following a comprehensive review of the relevant literature, the researcher decided to employ design and methodological techniques that have proven successful in prior studies of a similar nature. While Lawson et al. (2008) employed quantitative methods to explore value creation at farmers markets, as Brown (2002) suggests, a quantitative approach to studying initiatives such as farmers markets would likely prove to be very difficult due to the complexity of the social interactions that occur. Perhaps due to the subjective nature of the concept, a majority of the studies on value creation reviewed in the preceding literature review are of a qualitative nature (Edvardsson et al., 2006; Burton, 2004; de Chernatony et al., 2000). Similarly, studies on farmers markets that explore their core attributes (Guthrie et al., 2006; Cameron, 2007; Joseph et al., 2013), their sustainability value (Farmer et al., 2011; Alkon, 2008), and the complex nature of the relationships between actors and their motivations for

engagement (Smithers et al., 2008) have commonly employed a qualitative approach. It was the researchers belief that due to the complex nature of the social phenomenon in question and the exploratory nature of the research objectives, a qualitative research strategy was necessary in order to answer the research questions and thus achieve the research objectives stipulated above.

3.4 Participants

While the scope for research on alternative food networks is vast and could include anything from individual farmers, to community supported agricultural schemes, to larger organic producers, the primary objective of this research was to focus on farmers markets and their vendors. The sampling techniques utilised in this study were convenience and snowball sampling. For the purposes of convenience, farmers markets that were approached were markets within close proximity to the researcher's location (Matakana, Auckland, and Hamilton). In some cases, the researcher relied upon influential people within the market for introductions to prospective participants and subsequently, referrals from participants already interviewed for recruitment of further participants. While convenience and snowball strategies are popular sampling techniques among qualitative researchers (Bryman & Bell, 2011), the potential to gain a representative sample is limited when such methods are employed. To help minimise the effects of this limitation, the researcher aimed to obtain access to a wide range of participants in terms of location and product type, allowing for a variety of perspectives to be obtained.

One of the primary conceptual barriers to overcome in order to ensure research integrity was that of defining what in fact constitutes a farmers market and thus suitable participants. In order to ensure the integrity of participants and ensure that findings could be applied to 'farmers markets', it was the researcher's initial strategy to choose farmers markets (and their vendors) that were registered members of FMNZ. This strategy would provide the researcher with confidence that all study participants met the core criteria of being part of a true, authentic farmers market and had been verified by a governing body. However, primarily due to time constraints of both the researcher and prospective participants who were approached, the process of participant recruitment proved challenging. Therefore, the researcher found it necessary to widen the scope of potential participants to include those markets that are not registered with FMNZ. From various discussions with people involved in farmers markets all over New Zealand (members and non-members), the researcher discovered that membership with FMNZ does not suit all farmers markets for varying reasons. As a result, participants from two markets that are not registered members of FMNZ were included in this study (see Table 3). In the case of each of these non-registered markets, they had previously held memberships with FMNZ and are still widely recognised and accepted by the public as markets that "sell food produced within a local area, where vendors are involved in the growing or production process" (FMNZ, 2007-2013). Therefore, it was the researcher's belief that these markets and their stallholders constituted suitable participants for the study. The Clevedon farmers market

proved to be particularly suitable due to its convenient location and availability of vendors who were willing to participate.

The researcher sought to approach six farmers markets with the intention of interviewing the market managers/coordinators. From here, it was the researchers intention to then select one market for further in-depth analysis whereby three to four of its' vendors would be interviewed and where ethnographic data would also be collected to provide support for the interview data. However, due to time constraints and a low response rate from market managers/coordinators (one agreeing to participate, one declined due to time constraints, one declined due to having just stepped into the role, and three no-responses), the researcher decided to focus recruitment efforts on producers/stallholders. This proved extremely successful with eight responses from stallholders from various markets. Six of these were chosen to reflect a diverse product range and business type across various farmers markets in the North Island of New Zealand. While the sample size is relatively small, it is the researcher's belief that the diverse range of participants can be considered somewhat representative of the wider population. Including the one market manager, who is also a producer/stallholder at her market, a total of six participants were chosen for interviews (see Table 4). The researcher was provided with the opportunity to be involved in the Matakana farmers market so it was therefore chosen for further in-depth analysis where ethnographic data was collected.

Table 3: Farmers Markets

Market	Year Est.	Operation Schedule	Registered with FMNZ?
Clevedon Farmers Market	2005	Sun 8.30am - 12pm	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hamilton Farmers Market	2006	Sun 8am - 12pm	<input type="checkbox"/>
Matakana Village Farmers Market	Unknown	Sat 8am - 1pm	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parnell Farmers Market	2007	Sat 8am - 12pm	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cambridge Farmers Market	Unknown	Sat 8am – 12pm	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lyttelton Farmers Market	2005	Sat 10am – 1pm	<input type="checkbox"/>

Table 4: Study Participants

Participant	Year Est.	Market	Product Type
Clevedon Market Manager & Producer – Clevedon Buffalo	2005	Clevedon	Cheese
I Love Pies	2009	Clevedon & Matakana	Pies
A honey producer	2005	Various North Island markets	Honey
Grandpa BB's Muesli	2012	Clevedon	Muesli
The Humble Oatcake	2012	Clevedon, since March 2013	Baked goods
A meat producer	2006	Various North Island markets	Meat & baked goods

3.5 Data Collection

Data collection for this study involved triangulation whereby the researcher drew on three different data sources. Triangulation was employed in its most common form where the researcher engaged in multiple methods of accessing data (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2009). These were, documents, semi-structured interviews, and observation/participation. The preliminary stages of data collection primarily involved a high level of observation and collection of promotional material such as brochures and information from websites. The second source of data came from conducting semi-structured interviews with farmers market participants, and the third from ethnography. It is worth noting that the second and third forms of data were not necessarily collected in sequential order. Rather, semi-structured interviews were conducted and ethnographic data was collected simultaneously over a three-month period. This integrative approach allowed for the quality of interviews to improve throughout the course of the project as the researcher became more immersed in and more knowledgeable about farmers markets and their participants. The preliminary stages, semi-structured interviews, and ethnographic data collection processes are each discussed in detail below.

3.5.1 Preliminary Data Collection

Before conducting semi-structured interviews, it was the researcher's desire to become familiar with farmers markets around New Zealand and to engage with market managers, vendors, and customers on an informal level. As a novice researcher, this initial level of engagement gave the researcher a comprehensive understanding of the way farmers markets in New Zealand work, allowed for useful contacts to be made and helped to build a greater level of confidence within the researcher prior to interviewing. In the initial stages of data collection, two approaches were taken. Firstly, similar to an

approach taken by Farmer et al. (2011) in their study of US farmers markets, the researcher visited farmers markets on several occasions. Detailed market descriptions were formulated using comprehensive field notes. Field notes were compiled using observational data, data gained from un-structured conversations with market coordinators and vendors, brochures, and websites. This data was then used to supplement findings from the in-depth semi-structured interviews.

Secondly, the researcher attended the FMNZ annual forum held in Lyttelton in July 2013. The forum was held over a two-day period where the researcher attended the Lyttelton farmers market, participated in various tours around the region, listened to key-note speakers, attended the FMNZ Annual General Meeting and engaged with a range of FMNZ members including market managers and vendors. The forum served as a pilot study whereby the researcher was able to ask various people (members of FMNZ such as market managers and vendors) questions from the interview schedule in relatively informal settings. In these instances, the researcher was able to determine the appropriateness of the research questions and develop ideas for follow up questions. In addition, the forum also provided the opportunity for an extensive amount of ethnographic data collection, which will be discussed in detail further on.

3.5.2 Interviews

As stipulated above, six semi-structured interviews were conducted with various farmers market producers one of which was also a market manager. Prior to the interviews taking place, participants were provided with an information sheet (see Appendix Three) outlining the topics that would be covered during the interview. As a result, participants were able to give prior thought to the discussion topics, which stimulated detailed and in-depth interviews and in turn encouraged detailed findings. Potential participants were also provided with a consent form outlining their rights as a participant (see Appendix Four). Given the complexity of interactions within farmers market settings and the subjective, socially constructed nature of value creation processes, there was a need for the researcher to focus on understanding the perspectives of those being interviewed and understanding in context, their views of social life. Adopting a semi-structured approach to interviewing allowed for this. All participants were asked the same set of questions from a loosely defined interview schedule and there was no pre-defined ordering of the questions. The open-ended nature of the interview questions encouraged depth and vitality, which helped new concepts to emerge (Dearnley, 2005), as participants were able to pursue topics that were of interest to them. In addition, participants were given the choice of venue for the interview to take place. As Burns and Grove (as cited in Whiting, 2008) suggest, this freedom allowed the researcher to conduct interviews in settings where the participants felt most relaxed.

Throughout the course of the research, it became clear that in order to give the term 'value' any significant meaning, an adjective had to be placed in front of it. The researcher learned that the term is highly

subjective and for many, very vague. Therefore, after testing interview questions on FMNZ participants at the annual forum and after conducting the first interview, the original interview schedules (see Appendix Five) were revised allowing for questions to be re-framed. New interview schedules (see Appendix Six) were developed to reflect the researcher's conceptualisation of the term value and therefore better suit the context of anticipated conversations with future participants. For example, the question "what does the term *value* mean to you?" was removed and instead, the researcher allowed participants' perceptions of value to naturally come through in highly unstructured conversations about their businesses and their lifestyles. Similarly, the question, "to what extent do you believe your customers are involved in value creation?" was re-framed to become, "what benefits do you believe you are able to provide your customers?" and, "what do you do to communicate those benefits to your customers?" The re-framed questions allowed for concepts to emerge around customers being involved in value creation processes, without having to present the participant with the vague notion of *value creation*.

To ensure interviews were of a high standard, the researcher kept a *reflective diary* where notes were taken before and after interviews. Being a novice researcher and interviewer, the use of a reflective diary allowed for strengths and weaknesses of the interviews to be identified immediately. Therefore, highlighting areas where improvement was needed when conducting subsequent interviews and highlighting what follow-up questions and concepts were effective. The use of reflective note taking before and after the interviews was found to be beneficial as it was less disruptive than detailed note taking during the interviews (Whiting, 2008).

Throughout the course of the project, the researcher personally transcribed interviews verbatim. This allowed the researcher to become totally immersed in the data and provided an even more in-depth understanding of the participants opinions and experiences than if a transcription service was employed. Participants were all provided with the opportunity to have their transcribed interviews returned to them to give them the opportunity to review them before analysis was conducted. However, all participants declined this opportunity and some requested instead, to be provided with a summary of the research findings (see Appendix Seven).

3.5.3 Ethnography

There can often be differences between what people, organisations, or social settings are really like and what they formally depict themselves to be (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Ethnographic data collection was one way for the researcher to explore what farmers' markets are really like in relation to how people formally describe them. Typical in studies utilising interviews as the single method of data collection, it can often be difficult to distinguish between what people say they do and what they actually do. To minimise the effect of this and to supplement data collected from semi-structured interviews, the researcher engaged in

ethnographic data collection. This allowed the researcher to ascertain the unspoken emotional and symbolic implications of participating at the farmers market from both the producer and consumer perspectives. Similar to the approach taken by Alkon (2008) in her study of sustainable consumption at farmers markets, the researcher assumed the role of 'regular customer' and 'volunteer' in order to observe and interact with market managers, stallholders, and other customers.

In line with Gans's (as cited in Bryman & Bell, 2011) classification of participant observer roles in ethnographic research, the researcher assumed three different roles over the course of the research, all for different purposes. At the general market-level, the researcher assumed the role of what Gans labels, 'total researcher'. This entailed what Bryman and Bell (2011) describe as observation without involvement in the situation. In this role, the researcher was purely observing what was happening at the market and taking detailed notes. Similarly, the researcher often assumed the role of 'researcher-participant' whereby she was participating at the farmers market as a customer and was able to engage in interactions with market managers, stallholders, and other customers. In this participative role, detailed notes were taken while the researcher was engaged in the situation and afterwards. In comparison, the role of 'total participant' was also assumed. As the primary and most beneficial method of ethnographic data collection for this type of research, the researcher was completely involved in one farmers market. A volunteer role was assumed where the researcher assisted a vendor with the running of their stall on a weekly basis over a one-month period. This allowed the researcher to become completely involved in setting up the stall, preparing the product, interacting with customers, market managers, and other stallholders, right through to packing up the stall at the end of market day. While the members were aware of the role of the researcher, the level of participation was so great that the position of 'researcher' could not be resumed until the end of each day where notes could be taken.

Given the researcher's interest in the particular environments in which exchange was taking place and in which social interactions were occurring, photographic data collection was employed whereby the researcher took photographs in various farmers market settings. In line with Holbrook's (2005) perspective on photographic use within research on customer value, the researcher chose to utilise photographs in data collection to prompt recollection of key events and themes. This proved particularly useful in situations throughout the data collection process where recording or note taking was not appropriate. A selection of photographs has been included in appendices in order to supplement information provided throughout the thesis. These photographs aim to support research findings and provide readers with a visual illustration of reality as the researcher had observed it.

3.6 Data Analysis

As previously mentioned, given the socially constructed nature of the term 'value' and its creation processes, coupled with the complex level of interactions evident at farmers markets, this research has adopted a social constructivist perspective in terms of data analysis and presentation. Much like the approach taken by Downing (2005) in his work on narrative and dramatic processes in the coproduction of organisation and identities, the general theoretical approach to narrative in this study comes from work by Berger and Luckmann (1967) who suggest that reality reflects processes of social interaction. Berger and Luckmann argue that all knowledge of everyday reality is derived from and maintained by social interactions. Through the course of the project, it became evident that within farmers market settings, there are high levels of social interaction, relationship development, and social influence processes occurring, which act together to socially construct reality. Similarly, value can be considered as a social construct that is a by-product of human choices. Under the concept of social constructivism lies the assumption that rather than one individual acting on their own, multiple human beings develop understanding and meaning in a cooperative manner. By a similar nature, farmers markets are often described as what Granovetter (1985) describes as "embedded in social contexts". Therefore, it was considered appropriate to draw on theory from sociology, marketing, and communication fields and employ principles of social constructivism when analysing, interpreting, and presenting the research data. One of the most important elements of a social constructivist perspective is that language is an essential system through which humans construct reality. In examining value creation, a social constructivist lens allowed analysis of narratives to show how the process of value creation is developed, sustained, and transformed through interactions with multiple stakeholders over time, while interpreting the language used by participants in its natural context.

Being the most widely used framework for qualitative data analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2011) an iterative approach to analysis was taken whereby features of a grounded theory approach were applied. Throughout the course of the research, interview and ethnographic data was continually analysed utilising qualitative methods. Qualitative assessment of the data was conducted on an on-going basis whereby themes were identified. As Bryman and Bell (2011) found, thematic analysis does not appear to be a prominent data analysis method in recent studies, suggesting that it may not be particularly meaningful in terms of business and management research. However, due to the large amounts of textual data obtained from interview transcripts and ethnographic notes, conducting general thematic analysis throughout the course of this project proved useful for the purposes of this study. It allowed the researcher to realise common themes that were appearing and thus what areas to focus further data collection on to provide support for, or against the already emerging themes.

In order to satisfy the objectives of this research, it was imperative that the findings equally privileged both the forms of value and the actions/processes by which they were created, distributed, and realised. Coding each set of data twice allowed for clear recognition of each type of value and later, each action/process that was occurring in order to create, distribute, and uplift it. For example, within the first two interviews conducted economic value appeared to be a form of value that was significantly important to the interviewees. This was made clear in the first interview (Helen Dorresteyn, Clevedon Market Manager and producer) with comments such as “I have 50 stallholders now and they all need to make that regular income” and “now that it’s (the farmers market) been so successful and formed so many brands...the economic development people are very supportive”. Similarly, in the second interview (Frank Hogan, Clevedon market producer) economic value was recognised as a significant theme with comments such as “I can put this quality product on the table for cheaper than what you can buy at the supermarket” and “I much prefer to be in control...to grow the thing without incurring debt”. Such strong support for an economic perspective early in the data collection phase allowed the researcher to focus future data collection efforts on gathering support for, or against such a perspective.

General thematic analysis then allowed the researcher to conduct a simple form of coding whereby attention was given to the frequency of occurrences of themes within the data (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As a central process in grounded theory (Bryman & Bell, 2011), coding allowed for data to be labelled, separated, compiled, and organized (Charmaz, 1983). While interview participants’ stories were kept in tact, coding allowed certain themes to be separated. Coding in qualitative data analysis is considered to be a highly fluid process. Therefore, coding began soon after the collection of initial data, which allowed for the researcher’s interpretation of data to shape emerging codes (Bryman & Bell, 2011). A simple form of *open coding* (Strauss & Corbin, 2008) allowed the researcher to quantify previous thematic analysis, whereby various concepts were identified, which were later grouped and turned into categories. Again, this process was conducted twice for each data set. For example, the comments in the above paragraph were coded according to whether they related to concepts such as ‘income’, ‘profit’, or ‘business development’. These concepts were later categorised as ‘economic’. Similarly, comments of a relational nature were frequently mentioned throughout the data, often in relation to ‘community’, ‘relationships’, and ‘family’. These concepts were all later categorised as ‘relational’. For example, the comment below was considered of a ‘community’ nature and therefore coded accordingly and later categorised as ‘relational’.

“...we have very deep roots within the community. The Lions sell Christmas trees, the bowling club sold kiwifruit there for years. All sorts of things, raffles, cookbooks, maybe if Drury school does a cookbook they’ll come and sell it, it all just swings in roundabouts. It does a lot for the community but it does more for the wider community. It’s the kids you see coming out.”

(Helen Dorresteyn, Clevedon market manager and producer).

After interview transcripts and ethnographic data were coded, revealing various concepts and significant themes, it was clear that the integrity of participants' interviews and the stories told through the ethnographic data, needed to be maintained if themes were to be communicated effectively and if research objectives were to be met. A primary objective of this research was to understand, or make sense of the process of value creation at the producer-level, from the producers' perspectives. "People perceive their lives in terms of continuity and process," therefore, attempts to understand social life must not neglect the perspectives of those studied (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 531). Obtaining such detailed and rich, descriptive data meant it was crucial for the integrity of each interview script to be maintained. In order to do so, the researcher decided to reflect participants' individual stories as narratives, in much the same way as Edvardsson et al. (2006) presented data in their study of the values-based company, IKEA. A social dimension to business is increasingly being acknowledged and a large body of work concerned with stories in organisations reflects its significance (Downing, 2005). Stories, as described by Downing (2005, p. 193) "reflect actors' positioning of individual and collective identities and understanding of actions and events". As qualitative data are most effectively reported in textual form (de Chernatony et al., 2000), it was the researcher's view that the use of narratives would provide an effective way to communicate the process of value creation from the participants' individual perspectives, particularly in relation to their individual and collective identities.

Through commodity chain analysis, Foster (2006) suggests, the 'commodity' has provided a material vehicle for narrating economic change, political power, and cultural identity. Foster also suggests that a narrative technique demonstrates the connection between producers and consumers separated by factors such as class, ethnicity, and gender with the aim of showing how the meanings of things shift as a result of human actions in different social situations. It is therefore not simply about tracing the movement of something, instead it is about tracing the social relations and linkages that the movement creates and within which, value occurs. While Foster is speaking of narration in terms of tracking tangible commodities, the same logic can be applied to narration of intangible concepts in order to demonstrate the movement within which value occurs. The author explains that tracking value in motion requires attention to culture, this being, the transformation, manipulation, and movement of meanings. It was believed that such attention could be effectively provided through a rich, descriptive narrative whereby the researcher assumed responsibility for representing things-in-motion, in all their complexity and uncertainty (Foster, 2006). The narrative structure of the research findings allows the researcher to illustrate how value creation involves fluid and dynamic processes, processes that change over time.

In order to reflect the temporal nature of value creation within farmers markets, the findings section is separated into series of short exemplary events. Each series of events reflects value creation processes within a different point in time. In order to provide structured and detailed analysis of each set of events, each individual series was analysed using a matrix reflecting the three types of value (economic, symbolic,

and relational) along one axis and the three factors required for their creation (time, labour, and capital) along the other axis. Main concepts from each series of events were placed on a matrix that allowed the most significant factors to become evident. For example, analysis of the first series (4.2 – Beginnings) revealed that symbolic value creation was clearly the most prominent factor in play here and that time, labour, and capital were found to be factors that were equally committed to its creation (see Appendix Eight). This compares to the matrix that was developed for the second phase (4.3 – Preparation), which revealed labour to be the significant factor in play, contributing to all three types of value creation (see Appendix Eight). This process also showed points where various factors intersect and sometimes conflict. Discussion was developed to illustrate the significant factors present in each phase.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The researcher had various ethical responsibilities when it came to collecting, analysing, and reporting participant data. As a result of comprehensive revision of the Massey University Code of Ethical Conduct (2013), the Academy of Management's (2003-2012) Code of Ethics, and discussions between the researcher and supervisors, the study was judged to be low risk in terms of ethical considerations. Therefore, a Low Risk Notification was filed and lodged with the Massey University Human Ethics Committee before participant recruitment and data collection was conducted.

When potential participants were approached, the project was explained to them and they were provided with a written information sheet (see Appendix Three). Participants were given the chance to ask any questions and were aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time (a complete list of participants' rights is provided in the Participant Consent Form, see Appendix Four). Written consent was obtained from all participants before data collection commenced and every effort was made by the researcher to ensure that participants' comfort and perspectives were respected throughout the process. Participants' names and company/market names have been disclosed where appropriate consent was obtained. In cases where consent was not granted, alias names have been used and company/market names have not been disclosed.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the study design and methodological frameworks adopted for the study and provided explanation as to why such methods were considered most appropriate. A qualitative approach was employed involving analysis of data collected primarily from semi-structured interviews and ethnographic notes. Information gathered through these methods was collated and analysed using thematic coding and subsequently, narratives were constructed in order to ensure the integrity of the data was maintained. While the highest level of care was taken when designing the study, time and budgetary

constraints as well as the inherent nature of preliminary exploratory studies means there are limitations to the research and thus to its findings. These are discussed in detail in the concluding chapter. The methodologies utilised in this study provided the necessary framework to answer the research objectives. The findings of this study are presented and discussed in the following chapter.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

As discussed in the preceding chapter, in order to preserve the integrity of the research data and thus effectively communicate research findings, this chapter is presented in narrative form consisting of series of short, carefully selected, and constructed exemplary events. The preceding literature review revealed that one of the key aspects of value creation is that it is dynamic; a process that is in a constant state of change. Therefore, in order to communicate the temporal nature of the process the narrative adopts ‘a-day-at-the-market’ structure. The complete narrative will exhibit how different types of value are created, distributed, and realised at various points in time and in particular, how the meaning of ‘value’ can develop, change, and evolve over time. Throughout the data analysis process, it became clear that for small-scale food producers participating at farmers markets, value processes are not restricted to market day. Participants provided clear evidence of value processes occurring prior to and beyond market day, all processes that contribute significantly to, and are direct results of, activities and interactions at the farmers market. In order to capture this, the ‘day-at-the-market’ structure is extended to encompass processes that occur well before market day and the flow-on effects that occur after market day where various forms of value are again created, distributed, and uplifted.

Short narratives are presented below in order to capture what Lightfoot and Davis (as cited in Berger & Quinney, 2005, p. 9) describe as, “the essence and resonance of the actors’ experiences and perspectives through details of action and thought revealed in context”. Each individual anecdote has been constructed with the aim of capturing either a short moment in time or a brief snapshot of an individual’s perspective, thus contributing to a complete story. The following narratives comprise a mixture of those from interview data from various participants and from ethnographic data reflecting the researcher’s personal experiences. The integration of a variety of events or moments in time aims to illustrate varying perspectives and differences between actors within farmers market settings. The data have been separated into ‘phases’ in order to reflect a sequential, although dynamic process.

Following each set of events, discussion is presented in order to communicate the researcher’s qualitative analysis of the data and provide further insight beyond the raw data. Each discussion section will illustrate the type(s) of value (economic, relational, and symbolic) evident at each ‘phase’ and provide insight into the processes by which value is being created, distributed, and uplifted (through time, labour, and capital). Examining how the various forms of value intersect with the processes required for their creation allowed

for the most prominent factors to be highlighted. Further, each discussion section aims to illustrate the points of tension occurring among actors and between them and the conventional food system. Such in-depth analysis aims to reveal connections that may be hidden by the physical presence of farmers markets and the appearance of their stalls. This chapter has been written to assist in further understanding the farmers market phenomenon and to provoke questions around its true efficacy and merit in relation to wider alternative food networks and the notion of sustainability.

4.2 ‘Beginnings’ – *Self-identity and Symbolic Value*

4.2.1 The Eco-Conscious Pioneer

Reading from an article in the Australian Financial Review, Helen points out “for the first time, advanced populations are facing an era where they will die younger than their parents, and that’s food related. The supermarkets,” Helen says, “they’ve dumbed us down, they’ve dumbed us down so much that I can’t even bear the taste of mince, it’s fatty, it’s yuck...you don’t even know what you’re eating. It has its place but god I’d much rather have a ragout with chunks of real meat in it. There’s a lot of stress around and allergies and so on and I think it comes down to our food being mucked with really”. Being someone very passionate about educating people on good food Helen goes on to explain, “I think people have lost the ability (to cook) and I don’t know how we’re going to go back to teaching people how to cook again. We have a real problem because money is tight...they’re eating chicken and chips by the bucket full and the health problems that are going to come out of that, this country, we’re going to have problems”. Interestingly, Helen makes the point that people of lower socio-economic profile now eat takeaways, where in the past they used to eat extremely well. “Life’s extremely hard for a lot (of people) and then extremely easy for others,” Helen says, “there seems to be a disconnect between the two poles...there are very few people at the top end of the spectrum putting the effort in, they see it as not their issue anymore...I think that’s where we’ve lost our way a bit”.

Helen is a grower and when her kids were little she used to grow all her own produce. “I could give away heaps” Helen explains, “but there was nowhere I could sell the excess, the local shops weren’t interested. Now they’re all about being ‘local’, which is all bullshit. So I started the farmers market because we had travelled quite a bit and we knew what good food was...I just thought, this is crazy, here we are living in this beautiful place and I can’t even buy a fresh lettuce”. Back in 2005 Helen set her goals for what she wanted to achieve. She initially went to the council but they were not willing to fund it. “They thought I was barking mad...a ‘townie’,” she tells me. “So I made it a business because I had to put my own money into it”. She held a meeting in the local hall with growers in the area. She had been to Jack Lums (a local fruit and veg store) and filled up a wheelbarrow with fruit and vegetables and said to them, “when I’ve got all this shit in the wheelbarrow at the market, I know I’ve done my job”. It was a huge task for her because

she had to find people to actually grow the produce. “Why can’t you just buy a box of tomatoes and stamp ‘Clevedon’ on it for gods sake?” established businessmen would say to her. “They had no idea,” Helen said.

4.2.2 The Accidental Beekeeper

“Recently I was looking for wraps,” Allison explains to me, “and I couldn’t find anything that didn’t have preservatives or nitrates...and you know, I don’t want anything like that. Why is there so much cancer around? All this stuff, it’s all for shelf life and ultimately for money”. Allison tells me how her mother’s ‘health fanatic’ lifestyle has rubbed off on her a bit. “Also, working in a medical environment you start to value what’s important...I just think, if I can’t have natural food, then I don’t want it at all”.

When a friend asked Allison if her husband would be interested in helping with their beekeeping operation she said, “well look, I can ask him...but he’s never done beekeeping, he’s been a dairy farmer”. Reluctantly, her husband agreed to help out. “He came home with bee stings and all sorts” Allison said, “but he sort of liked the concept because it was farming but in a slightly different way”. With a small interest in business, it was actually a six-month trip overseas that allowed Allison’s husband to consolidate his thoughts before returning to New Zealand to purchase 120 hives and produce his own honey. Allison and her husband harvested that honey and thought it was quite exciting. So they took it to a 90-year old ex-beekeeper who said, “this is really special honey, this is beautiful”. In search of an outlet to sell their first harvest of honey, Allison and her husband thought, “shall we see if the farmers market has a honey producer?” Sure enough, the local market did not have a honey producer, so off they went.

4.2.3 The Business Man

Frank, a local muesli producer, joined the Clevedon farmers market in 2012 after 40 years in a career as a lawyer. “I’m 65 years old and I wanted to have a go at business. I’ve always been interested in what makes the world go around and particularly, what I might be able to offer”. Frank explains, “Coincidentally, I’ve always had a fascination with muesli”. Frank, or Grandpa BB as his customers know him, has been making muesli ever since he was a student. “It was my contribution to the food on the table,” he tells me. “When the kids were growing up, my job was to create the breakfast,” so Frank made muesli. “Then one day,” he tells me excitedly, “the idea was to see if I could extend the operation into a commercial possibility”. He made the decision right from the beginning that he was not interested in supermarkets because he did not want to compete with other muesli manufacturers for shelf space. “Immediately,” Frank explains, “I would be buying into a much bigger operation (and) giving the margin essentially to the supermarket. I don’t want to get tangled up in discounting the price”. For Grandpa BB, it’s a hobby. “I don’t need it to survive,” he explains, “I’m a great believer of not going into debt to run

your business, to be independent and not have to answer to the bank...I much prefer to be in control and to grow the thing organically, to grow the thing without incurring debt". Evidently, Frank needed to get his product out into the marketplace and the farmers market provided the opportunity for him to do that without outlaying a significant amount of capital. "What I want to do, is capture a little corner of the market," Frank tells me, "and slip under the radar". Yet, while slipping under the radar Frank tells me, "I'd like to see the thing become really established and be a very viable business that my kids and grandchildren can inherit".

4.2.4 Discussion

As discussed previously, this research has distinguished various forms of value and various factors in its creation. Data analysis processes revealed that this initial phase is largely representative of symbolic value processes, where time, labour, and capital all play significant roles. As a result of unmet personal needs or desires (our personal values being an effect of these), symbolic 'gaps' are present in our lives. For small-scale food producers, these symbolic gaps are often representative of their opposition to conventional food systems and industrial agriculture. All participants in this study expressed in some way, the various needs and desires they hold that are not fulfilled by conventional food systems such as supermarkets. The above set of narratives clearly illustrates how small-scale food producers use farmers markets in order to fulfil unmet symbolic needs and desires, allowing them to create their 'symbolic lives'. This section will discuss each narrative, highlighting how the work of small-scale food producers is driven by their desires to fulfil the symbolic gaps present in their lives. This discussion will show how these symbolic gaps determine social activity and participation within farmers markets.

In this beginning phase, Helen's case exemplifies a member of society investing a significant amount of time, labour, and capital into attempts to change socially accepted norms and thus fulfil symbolic desires present in her life. We can see that, driven by her confrontation with industrial agriculture and supermarkets, Helen has developed the farmers market in efforts to change social behaviour and redefine food production and consumption. Work by Holbrook (1994) recognises that the 'value' or 'meaning' we attribute to something is largely determined by our own intrinsic 'values'. Here, the value Helen attributes to food is largely framed by her political struggles with the conventional food system and her genuine concerns for the health of her family and for wider social wellbeing. With comments such as "they've (the supermarkets) dumbed us down so much that I can't even bear the taste of mince" and, "I think that's where we've lost our way a bit" (p. 51), Helen is communicating her intrinsic values and thus developing her self-identity, or creating her 'symbolic life'. Development of the farmers market has provided Helen with the opportunity to communicate her personal values and thus develop and maintain her self-identity through socially interactive processes (i.e. bringing local growers together in the community hall). Through such processes, we see evidence of the significant amount of effort Helen has exerted in order to

communicate what she believes in to members of the wider community. Here, Helen has committed a significant amount of time and labour into the development of the market. Even more significant is the personal capital she was required to invest due to lack of public funding for the project. It is worth noting here that many other participants in this study made similar comments around the significant amount of private capital investment required in order for farmers markets to become established.

In research by Guthrie et al. (2006) identified earlier, the development of farmers markets in New Zealand was said to be primarily driven by factors that were not related to environmental or food safety concerns. Interestingly however, here we can clearly see how food safety issues and environmental concerns have been the driving force behind the development of the Clevedon farmers market and have shaped Helen's business practice. Helen's ideological commitment to sustainable development appears to be motivating her to change the behaviour of society and create social justice within the food sector. But, is it her moral duty to do this? With the local council unprepared to become involved (this was also evident in the development of other farmers markets in the study), Helen has assumed a position in society whereby she is attempting to mitigate the social and environmental externalities associated with the conventional food system. But which actors within modern-day society are responsible for overseeing and protecting the health of society? The government? Consumer health organisations? The food-retailing sector? Or perhaps everyday consumers such as Helen? While it is beyond the scope of this research to explore the answers to such a problem, the findings of this study reveal that farmers market participants such as Helen, exert a significant amount of time, labour, and capital in order to not only create value for themselves, but also for members of wider society. Helen's case shows how her personal desires shape her social behaviour and how her social actions help her to create an identity and a symbolic life. The unavailability of fresh food and alternative options to the "yuck" (p. 51) conventional food system represent a significant gap in Helen's life. Here, through commitment of her time, labour, and capital she has been able to help fill that gap by developing the farmers market and attributing symbolic meaning to the phenomenon. For Helen, this conceptual phase is largely representative of how the symbolic meaning of the farmers market allows a connection with her family, her travels, and what she believes to be 'quality' food. As a result of this symbolic meaning, she is able to help develop and maintain her self-identity.

Similar to the way in which Helen develops the farmers market to fill an unmet desire in her life, the beekeepers are filling a symbolic gap present in their lives – what to do after dairy farming? Here, the symbolic meaning they associate with their production activities helps them to fill that gap. In a similar way to Helen's, Allison's case also illustrates how personal values shape social behaviour and production activities. Allison's upbringing, her mother's 'health fanatic' lifestyle, and her career in a medical environment have helped to shape her perceptions of 'quality' food and thus the types of food she desires. As the preceding literature review identified, the term 'quality' is one of contestation and how it is defined largely depends upon our own personal values and perceptions. Similar for both Helen and Allison, their

desires for healthy food and sustainable lifestyles, combined with their political struggles with the conventional food system, represent their perceptions of 'quality' food. For these producers, food is considered to be of 'quality' or of 'value' when it represents notions associated with health (i.e. 'preservative-free', 'real', not 'being mucked with'), sustainability (i.e. locally grown), or when it represents opposition to the industrial nature of the conventional food system (i.e. not produced for 'shelf life', not produced 'ultimately for money'). In much the same way as Helen, Allison is able to communicate these perceptions and thus her self-identity with comments such as, "if I can't have natural food, then I don't want it at all" (p. 52). In this case, Allison's personal desires have shaped the way her and her husband produce their commodity and how they conduct business. Producing a natural product and gaining satisfaction from the process appear to be the defining characteristics for Allison's business. While a significant capital investment is not particularly evident in this case (with the exception of the purchase of 120 hives), Allison's husband has committed his time and labour and has "come home with bee stings and all sorts" (p. 52) to do something that he 'likes the concept of'. For the beekeepers, this developmental phase largely represents how perceptions of 'quality' food shape the way in which they conduct business and therefore, the way in which they go about filling an unmet need in their lives. It also represents the enjoyment and intrinsic satisfaction they gain from production practices.

In much the same way, we can see how Frank's personal values have shaped the development of his muesli business and how his new business has helped to fill the symbolic gap that the end of his career has created. Here, we can see how a simple commodity has the potential to assume a significant amount of meaning beyond its pure functional value. Throughout Frank's life, muesli has become more than a simple commodity. Rather, it has become a product representative of sentimental value; of the times he consumed it as a student and when it was his "contribution to the food on the table...when the kids were growing up" (p. 52). The other factor in play here is Frank's personal interest in "what makes the world go around" (p. 52). After a 40-year career as a lawyer, he expresses interest in wanting to "have a go at business" (p. 52). As a result of the symbolic value Frank attributes to muesli, combined with his business desires, he has created a "commercial possibility" (p. 52). Here, the farmers market appears to have provided Frank with an opportunity to meet his self-expression needs in terms of his love for muesli and his desire to have a go at business, while also filling the symbolic gap that being unemployed has left him with. In much the same way as Helen, Frank has been able to utilise the farmers market in order to establish his opposition to the conventional food system. Yet, while Helen's concerns are centred on social justice, Frank's concerns appear to be of a more economic nature, largely around not wanting to compete for shelf space and not wanting to, "get tangled up in discounting the price" (p. 52), things he believes would happen if he was to distribute through supermarkets. Making it clear that he does not *need* his muesli business in order to survive, the symbolic value that Frank attributes to muesli through his fascination with the product and his desire to have a go a business, clearly eclipse the effort required to achieve his goals. For the muesli producer, this phase appears to be largely representative of how the deep symbolic meaning he associates

with muesli has allowed him to create a business opportunity and thus fulfil a symbolic desire that cannot be fulfilled by the conventional food system.

The exemplary events described in this section clearly exhibit how personal desires directly influence what these producers consider to be of value, or consider as meaningful. Each of the three examples show how the processes by which food is given meaning and thus attributed with symbolic value are essentially socially constructed. We can see here the different ways in which food is attributed symbolic value and how this symbolic value influences social behaviour and production activities. It is worth noting that similar personal desires and perceptions to the ones highlighted in the above examples were also reflected among various other participants who made it clear that their personal values and perceptions shaped their social behaviour and the way in which they conducted business. Interestingly, while the meaning of the term 'quality' varied among study participants, the term was commonly used to describe the food they desire and the products they produce. For all participants in this study, this conceptual phase largely represents symbolic gaps in their lives - gaps that are derivative of the struggles or conflict they face with industrial agriculture and conventional food systems. This discussion has illustrated the time, labour, and capital commitments required by producers when they attempt to fulfil these symbolic gaps. Here, producers are working to create symbolic value for themselves and in Helen's case, also for the wider community. This work is largely influenced by personal perceptions of value. Photographic research helped to confirm these findings. The photo provided in Appendix Nine illustrates how a producer helps to communicate their perceptions of value. Here, they use terms such as 'real good', 'different from the rest', 'old fashioned', and 'the way brownies used to be' in order to communicate the perceived value of their brownies. Interestingly, the photo also confirms many of the characteristics that extant literature associates with alternative food networks.

4.3 'Preparation' – *Adding Value*

4.3.1 Making Muesli

Preparation for the market appears to be pretty straightforward for Frank. "I'm not outlaying a lot of money," he explains to me, "because I don't have to buy fancy ovens and cleaning equipment". Every few months he hires a suite in a commercial kitchen for a day. "I get all of my 28 ingredients shipped there," including real vanilla from the islands, I learn. "A quality product," he emphasises when talking about the unique product he imports from the island of Tonga. "Then ten of us slice, dice, blend, and bake and turn all those packets of raw materials...into a vast amount of muesli". Frank went through this process just last week he tells me, now he won't need to make any more muesli for another three months. The muesli is then taken off site to a packing facility where it gets packaged into small bags and shipped right back to Frank's home. Here, it gets stored in big fish bins lining his garage walls until an online order comes in or

until it gets taken to the farmers market on Sunday. “I’ve had some advice along the way,” Frank explains, “everyone’s been very helpful, I’ve been very pleased with the way people have gone out of their way to make things workable”.

4.3.2 A \$250 Chicken

“Two days preparation and three days selling at various markets makes up a five-day working week for me” Jack, a Waikato meat producer tells me. While Jack conducts a majority of the preparation work on his own farm, he takes his animals to a local abattoir for the killing process. As Helen informed me, due to the laws and restrictions around getting things killed, it’s extremely difficult to get it done effectively. “There’s a monopoly around getting things killed...it’s actually too hard for the farmers now,” Helen explains. “Everybody wants eye fillet, sirloin, or scotch, nobody wants anything else. So actually finding a vehicle to move all those other cuts of meat is really, really hard. \$2000 worth of animal, you cut it up and it doesn’t sell you know...the killing chain requirements make it really tough”. For Jack, utilising a local abattoir means he complies with regulation but he needs to make sure he’s not losing any value out of his animals. So he uses the off cuts to make English-style pies. “Do you have any pork pies left?” anxious customers kept asking. Unfortunately, Jack had sold out and it was only 10.30am. “No, but I have lamb ones and I have some chicken ones left,” he would tell them. “I can turn one \$25 chicken into \$250 worth of pies,” he tells me proudly. “It’s really important to find those sorts of things that can add value to your business if you’re going to be successful”.

4.3.3 Eye-wateringly Hard Work

Utilising a local bakery’s facilities, Jessie’s company hand-make all their pies. “At first,” Jessie explains, “the man who owns the bakery thought we were nuts...he thought we were funny but he let us go. We made our pies and he didn’t charge us for that time at the beginning, which was very nice of him. He gave us a leg up, now we make up 20% of his business”. Ingredients for their pies come from all over the place, Jessie tells me. “Being a food technologist, I make sure that we partner with suppliers that are of quality. Initially we wanted to tap into that local aspect...but once you scale things up that gets a bit harder”. Jessie and her business partner were selling at farmers markets on both Saturday’s and Sunday’s. “We quickly realised that we couldn’t work seven days a week, one hundred and fifty million hours a week because we were burning out. It’s eye-wateringly hard work,” she explains. So Jessie’s parents now run one of the market stalls on her behalf. “Mum’s always up all night because she’s worried about what’s going to happen at the market. It took her a while to get her confidence up. There’s the fear of whether it’s going to be a good day or a bad day, are we going to make any money? It’s quite stressful,” she explains. “Preparing for the stall during the week takes up at least two days,” Jessie’s mum Josephine tells me, “I have to drive to Wellsford to pick up the pies and get them home and into the freezer straight away”. On

top of that, she makes her own olive oil and chutneys to sell along with the pies at the market. “It’s a lot more work than you think,” she tells me, “but we do it to help Jessie out,” says Josephine’s husband. “I have about two weeks worth of olive harvesting to do right now,” I can hear the stress and anguish in Josephine’s voice, “it’s hard for me to get up on the ladder and pick all those olives on my own, I’m not very tall”.

“It’s getting up early,” Jessie tells me, “It’s a big thing”. In setting up their Matakana stall, Josephine arrives at 7am, an hour before the market opens. I had arrived at 7.30am to give her a hand to find she had already engaged the help of the veggie grower from the stall directly opposite her to bring the oven and the pie warmer out. “I’ll pay him with a pie later,” she tells me. In a frazzled state she explains to me “last weekend it took me two hours to set everything up on my own. You’d think after this long that I would have it fine-tuned but I just haven’t figured out the most efficient way to set up”. Under Josephine’s instructions, I arrange pies in their correct places; arrange signage, tomato sauce, olive oil, and chutneys. “It’s so important that we present everything beautifully,” she tells me, “it’s got to look nice otherwise it won’t sell”. Amazingly, by about 8.30am people wanted hot pies. After taking care of those early morning pie eaters, the effects of waking up at 5.30am and setting up a pie shop were starting to wear on us, Josephine and I were ready for coffee.

4.3.4 Discussion

Previous studies on commodity chain analysis illustrate how through various social activities, value attributed to a specific commodity at each stage of its lifecycle can be added, changed, diminished, redistributed, or even destroyed. At this stage we see a combination of physical resources coming together with human capabilities (Amit & Schoemaker, 1993) allowing creation of economic, symbolic, and relational value. Providing food takes work and the exemplary events in this phase show how various forms of value are created essentially as a result of physical labour exerted by multiple actors. While time and capital commitments are also present here, the commitment of physical labour appears to be the predominant factor in value creation at this stage. This section will discuss how each small-scale food producer commits a significant amount of labour in efforts to realise economic, symbolic, and relational surpluses.

A relatively straightforward production process for Frank exemplifies his streamlined, systematic approach to business. Here, we see how the muesli producer adds value to simple raw materials in order to create a product of such high personal symbolic meaning. At this stage, we can see how through relational processes (i.e. engaging the help of others), simple commodities have the potential to assume significantly more value than they may hold in their original state. Employing an extra nine people in addition to utilising an external packing company, Frank is able to transform 28 different ingredients into a saleable

product to which 'Grandpa BB' can attribute meaning. As a result of such processes, Frank attributes significant symbolic meaning to his finished product. Not only does the muesli hold symbolic value for Frank in the form identified in the preceding discussion, but also as a result of production practices, Frank is able to communicate his 'success' in creating a product that he considers to be of 'quality' and thus help to develop and maintain his identity as a 'successful' producer. However, in much the same way that the terms 'quality' and 'value' are defined, our perceptions of the notion of 'success' will vary depending on our individual values. Frank's perceptions of a 'successful' producer appear to be consistent with work by Burton (2004) who suggests that increasing or enhancing production (a characteristic largely inherent of the conventional food system) has become incorporated with the ethos of being a 'good farmer'. By conforming to socially accepted behaviours, Frank is able to identify himself with other 'successful' producers. Here, he is enhancing his symbolic status, and therefore, enhancing his symbolic value surplus.

Sourcing his ingredients from places as far away as Tonga, Frank is able to gain 'quality' while remaining cost-effective. Yet, at the same time, the very ethos of the farmers market is potentially compromised. Frank's largely conventional methods of procurement appear to conflict with the values often associated with the farmers market where food is ideally from the local area. Here, we see evidence of a small-scale food producer utilising a farmers market in order to communicate values that in some respects, largely align with the conventional food system. Determining whether or not such value is sustainable is beyond the scope of this research. However, the findings of this study reveal how, for some small-scale food producers, the symbolic meanings they associate with commodities, cost-effective production processes, and the resulting economic value, can often be considered more important than the sustainable values commonly associated with farmers markets. Here, we can see how socially accepted norms within the conventional food system can also apply at a local food system level. From Frank's case, we see a distinct alignment with the conventional food system, where the very alterity of a farmers market may be questioned. For the muesli producer, this phase is largely representative of utilising efficient and cost-effective production processes in order to create a saleable product of which he hopes will provide him with economic and symbolic value over and above his labour commitments.

As mentioned above, providing food takes a considerable amount of work. This is particularly evident in the case of the meat producer who conducts the majority of his preparation on his own and appears to engage in practices that align a lot more closely with the ethos of the farmers market. Interestingly, both Frank and Jack consider 'adding-value' to be a determinant of success, another characteristic inherent of the conventional food system, albeit in a different way. While his production practices may be considered more sustainable, similar to Frank, Jack also identifies himself as a 'successful' producer. As highlighted in the previous discussion, commodities have the potential to assume a significant amount of value beyond their simple state and here we can see how simple meat off-cuts have the potential to assume economic and symbolic value. Particularly evident in Jack's case is the monetary amount he attributes to his finished

pies. Here, Jack recognises significant potential economic value before it is uplifted at the point of sale. In knowing he can “turn one \$25 chicken into \$250 worth of pies” (p. 57), Jack is able to identify himself as a ‘successful’ producer. When considering the importance of relationships between buyers and sellers, some authors (Grönroos, 2008; 2012; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004) may argue that value is not actually created at this stage. They would suggest that producers are performing various actions that simply provide the potential for value to be jointly created and thus realised at the point of exchange. By this logic, a pie or a bag of muesli would hold no value until the consumer actually attributes meaning to the commodity. However, what we can see here is that producers themselves are attributing both symbolic and economic meaning to commodities and therefore considering them to be of significant value, prior to the point of sale. While economic value may not be uplifted until the exchange process occurs, what is being realised at this stage is value in the form of intrinsic symbolic meaning. For the meat producer, this phase exhibits how the appreciation of the potential economic value of physical labour allows for the development of intrinsic symbolic value in the form of being ‘successful’. By this logic, actions of high symbolic value are often expected to yield high economic returns. An expectation shared by both alternative and conventional food networks.

In a similar way, for Jessie, the appreciation of potential economic value appears to be what drives her physical labour. In its most simplistic form, value is created here by way of pure function where raw materials are transformed into saleable pies. Derivative of her physical effort, Jessie is able to attribute her pies with symbolic ‘hand-made’ value. Perhaps the most significant factor evident at this stage for Jessie and her business partner is the extreme amount of time and labour required in setting up their business. In desperately trying to create a viable business to support each of their families, Jessie and her business partner worked to the point where they were “burning out” (p. 57). At this point, they engaged the help of Jessie’s parents to help relieve some of the stress. However, what we can see from this case is the significant stress and burden that has been placed on Jessie’s parents. At this stage, Jessie engages in various ‘backstage activities’ (Goffman, 1959) with the goal of creating economic and symbolic value over and above the effort she commits to the process. For Jessie, this preparation phase is largely representative of what can almost be described as self-exploitation in order to create a successful business.

In comparison, for Jessie’s parents, the appreciation of symbolic value appears to be the motivating factor behind their physical exertion. Here, Jessie’s parents are engaging in what she describes as “eye-wateringly hard work” (p. 57), because they want to help their daughter out. Here, symbolic value creation is evident for Josephine and her husband in the form of the meaning they associate with helping their daughter. As a result, the efforts they exert also help them to create familial relational value. Even producing their chutneys and olive oil to sell at the market require a significant amount of physical exertion at this stage. Interestingly, this phase also represents the potential for exploitation of family members in efforts to create an economically viable business, again a characteristic inherent of the conventional food

system (although this often extends beyond family members in conventional systems). Also evident in this case is the symbolic value that Josephine creates with her concern for the physical appearance of the stall. By presenting the stall and the products effectively, she is able to communicate her perception of 'quality'. In this way, she is conforming to socially accepted behaviour at the market and therefore associating with a certain group within society, thus maintaining her self-identity as a 'quality' stallholder. As a result, we see a direct connection between a well-presented stall and communication of self-identity. Here, Josephine is creating symbolic value in hopes of increasing potential economic value as a result of increased sales. Interestingly, this occurs in much the same way within conventional supermarkets. Their often perfect, colourful presentation of produce and neatly stacked shelves represent their perceptions of 'quality'. However, in the case of the supermarket, rather than seeing a connection between perceived quality and self-identity, we see a connection between perceived quality and perhaps 'value for money'.

Here, Josephine and her husband are representing their own self-identities as 'successful' stallholders by utilising the identity of the brand, which has been created by work committed by their daughter and her company's employees. Therefore, some of the value that Josephine and her husband are uplifting here can be attributed to the activities of collective actors. In cases such as this where multiple actors are involved in processes of value creation, it can often be difficult to distinguish the work of one person and therefore be difficult to determine if they are being fairly compensated in terms of realising the associated benefits of their efforts. This is similar to the conventional food system where value creation processes involve a multitude of actors and it can often be difficult to determine if each actor is being fairly compensated. For Jessie and her parents, this phase exhibits the significant amount of physical labour required in order to create symbolic, economic, and relational value of which they hope will far outweigh their physical efforts.

While the symbolic and perhaps economic value of a product may be evident, alone that does not recognise the inputs that were invested to create it. As Burton (2004) suggests, understanding value creation at the production stage can help us to further understand productivist behaviour in agriculture. Powerful actors within the conventional food production system have the potential to manipulate meanings associated with products and their consumption, therefore making it difficult for small-scale food producers to differentiate their products and create added value (Ilbery & Kneafsey, 2000). In analysing the 'backstage activities' (Goffman, 1959) involved in creating products of saleable value, it is clear that for small-scale food producers utilising farmers markets, value creation processes are largely dominated by physical labour, often involving multiple actors. Exertion of a significant amount of effort is required at this stage to transform raw biological material from one state to another. This involves a significant amount of value being extracted from producers and redistributed to others. Its redistribution is the topic of later discussions. Food production here is seen to be a socially constructed process (Arce & Marsden, 1993), whereby we can see the symbolic value of the physical work being done. However, what we do not see is whether these small-scale food producers are realising an equitable amount of value for the physical work

they are required to commit. Many would argue that even larger-scale food producers operating within the conventional food system do not realise an equitable amount of value for their physical labour efforts. For all participants in this study, this phase is largely representative of the physical lengths they will go to in order to create symbolic, economic, and relational value, regardless of whether their value creation processes align with notions of ‘sustainability’.

4.4 ‘The Point of Sale’ – *Relational Value Beyond the Transaction*

4.4.1 – The Discerning Pie Eater

“\$6.50 for a pie!” one customer expresses to me his amazement at the high-end priced pies. “Yes,” I explain to him, “but that’s a pie that’s been handmade in Auckland, using 100% free-range chicken and fresh sour cream-based pastry”. The look of disbelief on his face remained as he looked around to see an abundance of happy customers devouring their pies. “I suppose I’ll try one then,” he says as he digs into his pockets and reluctantly hands me \$6.50. “Come back and tell us what you think!” I yell out to him as he wanders off unsure of the real value for what he’s just exchanged his hard earned money. While I’m busy serving pies to customers who perhaps have a little more disposable income, Josephine is offering customers samples of her olive oil. At \$22 a bottle, it’s not an easy sell. However, once she has tempted that customer with bread dipped in her olive oil and coated with a little homemade dukkah, they are completely engaged and within 30 seconds they have learned that the olive oil has come directly from Josephine and her husband’s property about half an hour away, they’ve learned about its health benefits, and they now appreciate how much time and effort Josephine has put into harvesting and pressing those olives. Amazingly, by the end of that day we had sold all six bottles and had requests from customers for fresh olives next week. “Not a problem,” says Josephine, “come by next week and I’ll keep some aside for you”. And sure enough, our discerning pie customer was back with a full stomach and a smile on his face, to buy \$6.50 pies for his three hungry children.

4.4.2 Interesting Muesli

Frank benefits from that same level of customer interaction. “If people ask me why they should buy my muesli,” he says, “I can tell them, it’s a lot more diverse, flavoursome, nutritious, and interesting than other mueslis”. He can explain to them that his muesli has 28 different ingredients and that no other muesli gets anywhere near that number. “Nobody can add that quality into their toasting mix and come out with a product at this price,” he explains to me. “I tell them how it is, I tell them that I can put this muesli on their table for cheaper than what they would buy a decent muesli for from the supermarket”. To help his customers better understand, “I give them tasters,” Frank tells me, “once they’ve tried it...they fall in love with it and that’s been a really positive part of the development of the business”. Frank has two options for

his muesli, there's the traditional crunchy style and then there's a Bircher option. "Some people still prefer it the crunchy way...but if I can educate and introduce another option, it will gather more and more sales I guess," he explains. "The proof is in the people who come back and the feedback that I get. It's quite rewarding for me".

4.4.3 A Fear of Sales

"Initially, I didn't think I would like coming to the market because I'm not much of a salesperson. I'm a bit shy and I didn't think I'd be able to really push my product," Amanda, a Thames-based oatcake producer tells me. "But I've enjoyed it a lot more than I expected and I haven't had any trouble making the sales". Face-to-face contact is the most important element of the farmers market for Amanda. "Actually watching them shop, watching them look at my product, listening to what they say to each other, and seeing the reaction on their faces when they try them, that's what makes the difference". Amanda explains to me how that level of interaction has validated what she's done. "When you first make a product, there are so many things to think about and it's just easier if the customer is right there because you can ask them what they think of the packaging and the sizes etc.". Amanda's mini oatcakes sell quickly, "I would have stopped making those minis because they're such a hassle to make but people love them. Now I know that I'd be mad to stop". So Amanda thinks participating at the farmers market, "it's absolutely the way to go before you decide to go and sell through the shops".

4.4.4 Complaints

"You have to be prepared to not just be a grower, but to be able to market your product as well and deal with the public," Helen tells me. "I'll occasionally get people who come along complaining because they think they can't get anything". Helen explains that now, because the market is successful enough she can say to them, "well go back to the supermarket, have a flippin' paw paw, we don't need you, you don't understand". For people who like food, Helen suggests the farmers market is fantastic. But, "if you don't understand food then you won't get it," she explains. "I think the farmers market is a good place to start educating people, I don't know what the answer is but I think farmers markets are part of it," she tells me, "they offer an alternative...and an opportunity to bring variety back into peoples' diets...and introduce variety back into the supermarkets".

4.4.5 Discussion

As previously discussed, commodities often acquire different forms of value at each stage in their lifecycle. Focusing on 'the point of sale' provides an opportunity to understand value creation processes at one point in time in the lifecycle of the commodity and also at one point in time within the life of the farmers market.

This set of events clearly illustrates how social interactive processes (involving time and labour) have the potential to create a significant amount of symbolic and relational value. Economic value is evident here in the form of monetary exchange. However, symbolic and relational value creation processes appear to be the predominant factors in play at this point in time. It appears that symbolic and relational value creation processes at this stage are what allow potential economic value to be realised by the producer. Here, economic value is an outcome of work committed by producers in their attempts to fulfil their symbolic and relational needs and desires. This discussion will illustrate how, as a result of social, economic, and relational conflicts occurring within farmers market settings, producers and consumers have the potential to create and realise significant symbolic and relational value.

As consumers, we purchase certain products that we believe will provide us with a level of value over and above the monetary amount we pay for them allowing us to realise a value surplus. The first narrative in this series clearly illustrates how a stallholder at a farmers market can engage in socially interactive processes, creating relational value with their customers and attributing their product with symbolic value. This is a luxury that producers are not privileged with when operating through a structured supermarket chain where producer-consumer interaction is almost non-existent. For the discerning pie consumer, the simple chicken pie as it was in the pie warmer, held very little, if any value extending beyond the \$6.50 price tag. That was, until socially interactive processes allowed a relationship to develop between the producer and consumer, allowing meaning to be added to the pie. Through processes of social interaction in this example, food is being 're-localised', or being linked more directly with its place of origin, the farm it came from, the practices used to produce it etc. It is through these processes of re-localisation that the producer attempts to create the relational and symbolic value necessary in order to make a sale. Here, the stallholder is, to use the words of Sonnino and Marsden (2006), imbuing their products with environmental and social qualities.

Through engagement with one of the stallholders (the researcher), our discerning pie consumer was provided with various pieces of information, allowing him to make a highly informed purchasing decision. Would he have still bought the pie if he had not known that it was handmade in a location only a few miles away, using free range chicken, and unique pastry? Perhaps he would have taken satisfaction in expressing his thoughts to us and later gone to the supermarket to purchase a frozen pie for a quarter of the price, about which he would have known almost nothing about ingredients or place of origin. However, with the help of the stallholder our pie consumer was able to attribute value to a simple commodity, value that he previously may not have known existed. Perhaps knowing the pie was handmade only a few miles away stimulated his inner desire to consume sustainably, or perhaps eating free-range chicken stimulated his desire to become more health conscious? We could even go as far as suggesting that purchasing that \$6.50 pie was a means by which that consumer was able to communicate his environmental or health conscious self-identity by conforming to socially accepted behaviours and associating himself with other pie eaters.

Or perhaps he was just a very hungry consumer who fell victim to an effective sales pitch? We also see the same socially constructed processes occurring with the olive oil sales. Here, we see clear evidence of what Carey et al. (2011) describe as ‘conscious consumption’ occurring at the farmers market as a result of relational and symbolic value creation processes. This compares to what might be termed as ‘conspicuous consumption’, a feature inherent of supermarket-chain shopping. For the producers in this case, the point of sale is representative of their need to engage with the consumer in order to create relational value and communicate symbols of their physical activity (i.e. ‘hand-picked’ olives, ‘hand-made’ pies). This is similar to results found by Burton (2004) in his study of the symbolic productivist behaviour of farmers. The social significance of the relational interactions occurring here is that they allow producers to display symbols of their physical ability. In much the same way, Burton found that farmers engage in processes of ‘roadside farming⁴’ enabling them to communicate symbols of their farming ability (i.e. their husbandry skills), perhaps a feature inherent of more traditional agriculture.

Looking back at the muesli producer, we can see how the farmers market allows him to also realise the value of producer-consumer engagement. Where the pie and olive oil producers discussed above appear to communicate social and environmental qualities to their potential customers, Frank appears mainly concerned with communicating economic benefits in hopes of realising value surpluses. With comments such as “nobody can add that quality into their toasting mix and come out with a product at this price,” and, “I tell them (the customers) that I can put this muesli on their table for cheaper than what they would buy a decent muesli for from the supermarket” (p. 62), Frank is clearly eager to communicate the ‘value-for-money’ that his customers can potentially realise. This is another goal also shared by the conventional food system. However, it is clear that the ways in which such a goal is achieved differ between conventional and alternative food systems. For the muesli producer, the point of sale is representative of his ability to communicate his perception of ‘value’ and ‘quality’, which is largely centred on economic benefits. However, we can also see here how, from the time and effort Frank is required to commit in order to engage with his customers, he is rewarded intrinsically when customers return and when they provide him with feedback. Stating that, “it’s quite rewarding for me” (p. 62), suggests that symbolic value creation and realisation is also evident at the point of sale for this producer.

Relational value creation appears to be the most crucial aspect of the farmers market for Amanda. The need to interact with and obtain feedback from her customers represents a gap in the oatcake producer’s business practice; a gap often present for large-scale conventional manufacturing firms. Value creation processes made possible through the farmers market allow Amanda to fill such a gap. From this example

⁴ Work by Burton (2004) describes ‘roadside farming’ as a practice whereby the farmer invests additional resources in maintaining roadside fields to impress observers as they drive by. The investments in roadside fields are often disproportionate to the rest of the farm but it allows the farmer to display symbols of their farming ability. Therefore, enabling them to establish their position as a ‘leading farmer’.

we can see how the producer commits a significant amount of her time and effort into building relational value with her customers because it makes business sense for her to do so. Watching her customers shop is an expression of Amanda's labour where she is in fact working but she is also extracting value from her observation of others. Here, Amanda is able to realise the value of her labour when she is able to do things such as alter the layout of her product or modify her product range. Again, this is not an opportunity she would have if she distributed her product through conventional methods. For Amanda, this phase largely represents the opportunity the farmers market provides to re-capture the relational and social value that is often lost through the conventional food system.

In comparison, Helen engages in socially interactive activity at this stage with farmers market patrons allowing her to communicate the values held by the market and thus attribute it with symbolic meaning. Having achieved a certain level of success, Helen feels she is able to stand up for her personal intrinsic values and tell people to "go back to the supermarket" (p. 63), if they don't understand the concept of the farmers market and what it represents. For the market manager, social interactions at the farmers market represent her ability to communicate her ideological commitments to sustainable development. In much the same way as she did in the very first phase, here, Helen is able to attribute symbolic meaning to the farmers market, imbuing it with certain qualities that allow her to maintain her self-identity.

The development of these 'front stage' (Goffman, 1959) interactive processes has seen basic commodities adopt social symbolic significance. Here, we can suggest that commodities, or even the farmers market as a phenomenon, are only considered meaningful when they are connected to other things and other symbolic or emotional relationships. This would prove a challenging strategy for a small-scale producer to employ with a limited marketing budget. So, at the farmers market we see evidence of relational marketing strategies (employed intentionally or unintentionally) in the form of consumer engagement and co-creation at the point of sale. As Arce and Marsden (1993) suggest, the monetary value assigned to a product is closely associated with the consumer's knowledge about the commodity in question. Farmers markets clearly provide a viable way for small-scale food producers to communicate knowledge about their commodities to their prospective customers. Whether our pie or muesli consumers are attributing meaning to products, meanings that make the commodities valuable over and above their purchase price, or whether they are simply caving in to effective sales pitches, multiple forms of value are being constructed through processes of social interaction; processes that would not occur in a conventional supermarket. Here, the point of sale is primarily about socially interactive processes allowing for communication, producers being able to communicate what they perceive as valuable – whether this is in economic or symbolic form, to their potential customers.

4.5 ‘Stallholder Interaction’ – *Beneficial, Redistributive, or Destructive?*

4.5.1 *The Business Mentor*

“Because our cheese has been so good and innovative, it has cemented the reputation of the market,” Helen explains, “and on the back of that, I have a whole lot of other excellent vendors fully invested in it”. Perhaps the most significant beneficiary of Helen’s buffalo mozzarella is the tomato grower, “tomatoes and mozzarella, what could be better?” Helen asks. With a wealth of contacts in the restaurant and retail industries, “I’ve got all these vendors in touch with those contacts,” Helen tells me, “and they’ve gone off on their own tangent and got countrywide distribution, which is what you need at that top level”. Explaining the difficulties of starting a business, Helen tells me, “It’s hard because you have people trying to stick the knife in and before you know it, you’ve spent so much money and you haven’t made a bean”. Having done it herself with her buffalo cheese, Helen can offer her advice to her fellow stallholders. “It’s huge because I’m able to point them in the right direction...I’m able to help them out”.

4.5.2 *Independence*

“We have a great big event in Pirongia at the end of the month,” Allison tells me, “my husband used to come with me but I don’t like him being there with me, it’s not his forte and I like to do things my own way because I’ve gotten so used to doing it on my own”. So Allison says to the stallholder next to her, “I think I’ll be fine, I don’t think I’ll need my husband there and if I need to nip away, you’ll be there to keep an eye on things, won’t you?” He’ll have someone else there to help him out, I learn. “Yeah,” he says. In speaking about her relationships with fellow stallholders Allison explains to me, “all those people at the market, they’re all people who are doing something positive in their lives. They’re hardworking, we all have similar values and a lot of them are well established in their own right but they still continue to do the market because it’s an important part of their life”.

4.5.3 *An Ulterior Motive*

Allison is no longer the only honey producer at the farmers market. “There’s competition,” she tells me, “they’re quite different but they copy off me. I can’t do anything about that though...there will always be people like that”. Not too concerned about the competition, Allison explains to me, “I do better than what they do...they still have full-time jobs, so I don’t really feel threatened by them”. At one point, the competition approached Allison with a proposition, “we were just thinking,” they said, “how would you feel about you doing one Sunday and I do the following Sunday so we’re not here at the same time? Because we’re finding that things have gotten a little bit quieter and it’s not so viable coming every week.” Allison promptly responds, “well my takings don’t change from one weekend to the next and I just feel that

at the moment with winter, there's a shortage of stalls anyway and I don't think the market management would take to well to this because they really need us all there. If only one of us is coming, they're missing out on a \$40 fee".

4.5.4 Nit-picking

"Right from day one, the veggie growers have been interesting," Allison tells me, "because they have to specify what they grow and if they're growing something that maybe someone else is growing, then there could be a little bit of conflict". As a long-standing vendor, Allison is obviously looked upon as a trusting ear, "stallholders come to me and say they know other people are buying and reselling...There's a bit of nit-picking between the veggie growers but it doesn't concern me, I stay out of it". Jack tells me that one day at the market, the veggie growers were throwing corn at each other! "And the other meat producer over there," Jack whispers to me, "she won't even look at me". Apparently the other meat producer was not very happy arriving at the market one day to find that she had a competitor. "I think competition is healthy because at the end of the day customers want variety, they want options," Jack explains. "Surely having more stalls and more variety is going to be for the greater good of the market," he argues. From a similar perspective, Helen explains to me, "nobody is growing pears around here and I have a guy who grows them in Whanganui and brings them up (to Clevedon)". When defending her decision to allow the non-local grower to participate in the market, Helen explains that it's important for the survival of the market, "I have 50 stallholders now and they all need to make that regular income," she tells me. On the other side of it, the market manager explains, "there was a guy who wanted to buy oranges and come and sell them and I said 'no'. He was completely pissed off at me. But it's not the point (of the market) you know?" When I asked another producer about the political nature of the farmers market she tells me, "obviously there's bickering and bitching, I think every farmers market has some characters...but there's also a real camaraderie there".

4.5.5 Discussion

One of the significant features of farmers markets that differentiate them from other food retail outlets is that they exhibit a congregation of multiple small businesses selling directly to consumers in one site of exchange. Rather than just one business acting on its own, at the farmers market there are multiple actors competing against each other while at the same time, all competing against the conventional food system. Compared to what can occur when just one actor is operating alone, the existence of multiple stalls changes the scale of the potential relations and interactions that can occur within the social setting. By this nature, farmers markets allow the potential for significantly different social actions to occur than what we would see in a conventional supermarket. From the set of exemplary events in this section we can see evidence of positive and negative interactions contributing to economic, symbolic, and relational value creation

processes that occur when multiple actors come together in the marketplace. Here, we see human actors competing for the extraction of value in cooperative and non-cooperative ways. This section will discuss the relationship between economic, symbolic, and relational value processes evident when farmers market participants interact with each other.

In the first event presented here, we see evidence of the creation of economic and symbolic value as a result of business-oriented relationships between the market manager and her vendors. As a result of physical work carried out by Helen, producers have the potential to uplift significant economic value in the form of increased revenue and symbolic value in the form of becoming 'successful' producers. Here, we can also see evidence of Helen, again, pursuing her personal goals and therefore communicating her self-identity. By helping her fellow stallholders, get their product out into the market, Helen is pursuing her goal of introducing "variety back into the supermarkets" (p. 63) and thus attempting to change social practices and mitigate issues associated with the conventional food system. Here, we see a clear relationship between the relational value Helen is able to create with her vendors, the potential economic value she can help them create, and the symbolic value she realises from engaging in such activities. For the market manager, interaction with other farmers market participants is largely representative of her ability to not only help other producers realise surplus value but also of her ability to meet her intrinsic needs and desires; needs and desires that are not fulfilled by the conventional food system.

Interaction between the honey producer and the stallholder next to her show clear evidence of relational value in collegial form where a positive and trusting relationship is created between two actors within the farmers market. At this stage, Allison makes it clear that she has a symbolic desire to do things the way she likes them to be done because she has gotten used to doing it on her own. Here, her behaviour at the market is a symbol of her symbolic desire. Preferring to not engage the help of her husband when it comes to selling at the market, Allison is faced with a need for relational value in the form of help from another stallholder. In this case, socially interactive processes allow Allison to fill this need while maintaining her symbolic desire to do things her own way. Here, we can see relational value in collegial form between two traders allowing for the creation of symbolic meaning as a result of feelings of a sense of 'community' and perhaps even intrinsic enjoyment gained from socialising. Allison describes similar relational value in the form of collegial relationships between stallholders when she expresses her opinions of the other vendors. Suggesting, "we all have similar values" (p. 67) shows how producers are coming together to achieve common purpose. Allison also suggests that the farmers market is "an important part of their lives" (p.67), even though many stallholders do not obviously rely on the potential economic value. This shows how an alternative system of food provisioning has the potential to fulfil symbolic and relational needs among small-scale food producers. From such positive interactions at the farmers market, we can see producers working together to pursue their common goals of working against the conventional food system. Such processes would not be possible if these small-scale producers were acting on their own. For the

beekeeper, stallholder interaction partly represents her symbolic need to remain independent, while still fulfilling relational desires.

In comparison to the positive interaction described above, we also see evidence of negative interactions among stallholders. The findings of the study show how desires for economic surpluses are a crucial factor in determining production behaviour. Here, we can see how the extraction of economic value is fought over through negative relational processes occurring within a farmers market. In an attempt to redistribute economic value between honey producers, we can see the struggles these small-scale producers face when competing in such a small marketplace. Allison was comfortable with her level of economic profit and chose to continue trading at the market on a weekly basis as opposed to bi-weekly. As a result, the less successful honey producer was unable to uplift the potential increase in economic value. However, that potential and the ability to interact with other stallholders and discuss trading options is not a luxury that producers are subject to when they compete through the conventional food system. Instead, due to their lack of bargaining power, producers must meet the demands and comply with regulations set by the conventional food system.

In this instance, tension in the relationship between two honey producers who are competing for economic value allows Allison to communicate her 'success' and therefore, her 'status', thus creating symbolic value. Responses from a range of participants in the study suggest that satisfaction is often gained from observing poor performance among other stallholders. Here, symbolic value is created for the more successful stallholder (Allison) by confirming her own credentials as a 'successful' producer. This is particularly evident in Allison's case with comments such as, "I do better than what they do...they still have full-time jobs," (p. 66) where she compares her competitor's job status to her own. Allison believes she performs more effectively than her competitor because "they still have full-time jobs" (p. 67). While Allison's perceptions have partly been validated through her interactions with the competitor, her feeling of doing better largely comes from her socially constructed opinion that, if a producer still has a full-time job outside of the farmers market, then they must not be realising as much economic value as someone who is not employed full-time outside of the market. From this example, we can see how perceptions that may be held intrinsically, can be validated (or not) by others when they are communicated through social interactions (with other stallholders and even with the researcher). Here, perceptions of 'success' become established, allowing symbolic value to be realised extrinsically. For the honey producer, this phase also represents her ability to communicate her economic 'success' and thus achieve status as a 'successful' producer.

In a similar way that value is fought over between the honey producers, we can also see how economic, symbolic, and relational value is fought over among vegetable growers and meat producers. From this example, stallholders are again, competing for the extraction of value in order to realise a surplus over and

above their time, labour, and capital commitments. Much like in the case of the honey producers, this case also exemplifies how competition can create significant tensions between stallholders. Within the farmers market setting there is clearly the potential for social conflicts to emerge when stallholders who compete in the same marketplace produce similar commodities. Here, it might be suggested that no value is being realised and instead, any symbolic, economic, or relational value that the producers have worked to create is being destroyed when they engage in practices such as “throwing corn at each other” (p. 68). While it is beyond the scope of this research to explore in detail how value might be ‘destroyed’ or if it can in fact be destructed, the findings of this study reveal that negative relationships between stallholders exist and potentially destructive activities can often occur within farmers markets. This exemplifies the competitive nature of local food systems. Where they are commonly defined as a move toward social justice, farmers markets can often exhibit the competitive nature of the conventional food system.

From a more optimistic perspective, Jack suggests that fighting for value extraction can actually result in increased value being redistributed to consumers. The meat producer suggests, “customers want variety, they want options” (p. 68), which they gain from increased competition among stallholders at the farmers market. In attempts to create alternative shopping experiences, farmers markets often inherit features of the conventional food system. Here, we can see that if local food systems are to effectively compete with the larger conventional system, they must satisfy consumers’ needs for variety and options. So, they need to create a shopping experience that in some forms almost mimics a conventional supermarket. In this way, competition and variety at the farmers market largely parallel conventional supermarkets where consumers are provided with an abundance of variety. For stallholders to survive in a competitive environment they obviously need to effectively compete on quality, price, and social values. Therefore, they need to increase their potential value offerings to farmers market consumers. Interestingly, competing in this manner is also a practice that producers must engage in if they are selling through the conventional food system. Yet, the “bickering and bitching” (p. 68) would not be present at the site of trading. Instead, evidence of tensions would be ‘backstage’ rather than ‘front stage’ (Goffman, 1959) activities. For some small-scale food producers, stallholder interaction can represent the struggles they face when competing for value surpluses in such a small marketplace. For others such as Jack, it represents a fair distribution of value among multiple participants.

From the examples in this phase we can see the potential interactions that can occur when multiple small-scale food producers come together and compete in a small marketplace alternative to that of conventional supermarkets. In the pursuit of shared and individual goals, these producers are clearly fighting for the extraction of surplus economic, symbolic, and relational value. Here, we can clearly see the potential value creation opportunities where there are considerable economic and social rewards to be gained. Yet, what is also evident is the potential for a significant amount of value to be lost, destroyed, or perhaps redistributed, another characteristic present within conventional food systems.

4.6 ‘Farmers Markets in the Community’ – *Help or Hindrance?*

4.6.1 Shop Owners and Land Owners

“The market has done fabulous things for the community,” Josephine tells me in between putting pies into paper bags for hungry customers, “it’s just a shame that not all of the shop owners realise it. They often complain about people crowding around their shops and about our stalls being in the way and the car park being full”, she explains to me. “Yet, on market day they put tables out in front of their shops and have sales and try to join in with the market and their shops are filled with customers!”

From a more positive perspective Helen tells me, “people come out to Clevedon because of the farmers market and their wallets are ready to be opened. They’re spending money in the shops, which means that...Sunday’s a big day trading”. Leasing the land for the farmers market from the AMP, Helen explains “it’s a very good, regular source of income for the AMP, which they can then go and spend on their show or whatever they want to do. So long-term, the AMP is guaranteed income and they don’t have to run it (the market)”.

4.6.2 Educating the Kids

“The market has impacted on the whole community,” Helen tells me. “The school now has their own veg garden and they’re selling their veggies outside school, so it’s raised an awareness of that kind of thing”. With very deep roots in the community, the market has seen the Lions sell Christmas trees, the bowling club sell kiwifruit and the school sell their cookbooks. “I think most people in Clevedon are pretty proud of their market, most people know someone who’s involved in it”, Helen tells me. “I have a free stall option for kids if they want to come and sell their stuff...I just tell them to talk to Granddad because he’ll know how to grow spuds”. Helen explains how the market does a lot for the community, “but it does more for the wider community, it’s the kids you see coming out,” Helen explains passionately. The flow-on effects of the market and their producers have greatly impacted the community, particularly in an economic sense. “It creates jobs”, Helen tells me. “With our Buffalo company, it employs nine people including an 18 year old boy who’s very good but who’s not going to be a film director or an engineer. He likes farming and he likes hunting and he’s good at it. There’s a job for him”. Telling me about the teenagers she employs Helen explains, “they love it. They go down there (to the farmers market) and all the hot babes are down there, all the jocks are down there. It’s a really nice, safe environment”.

4.6.3 Coming Together

Walking around the small town of Lyttelton, only a few minutes out of the earthquake stricken city of Christchurch, I realise the extent of the earthquake damage. With few buildings left in tact, some homes and businesses have been completely destroyed, many still standing but without all four walls. Run by a non-profit organisation, the Lyttelton farmers market serves as a place for the local community to come together. “The morning after the night of the earthquake,” one of the market organisers tells me, “people – vendors and customers, still showed up at the farmers market”. She tells me about when she woke up that morning, “I asked my husband if he still wanted to go to the farmers market and we did, because we didn’t know what else to do”. Speaking of her shock, she explains to me, “it was really bizarre because everyone was down here, walking around, very quiet. But it meant that everybody could be together”. Nearly two years on, the market is still thriving. I am told about how a lot of local producers’ homes, land, and kitchen facilities were destroyed in the earthquake and how a lot of them cannot afford to re-build. “What’s been really great,” one of the organisers tells me, “some of the local bakeries around here with commercial kitchen facilities let these guys (stallholders) use them outside of their business hours. That’s been really positive because it means these guys can keep trading at the market and continue to make an income”. Another one of the organisers describes the farmers market as “a way for our community to not only be sustainable, but to be resilient”. Walking around the small market, I feel the sense of community that the market has created. Everybody knows everybody and the stallholders are all running around helping each other out. I’m sure the locals could pick me out as a tourist from a mile away.

4.6.4 Exploitation?

“Working together, working with all aspects of the community” is the notion put forward by FMNZ. One member suggests, “work together as a team and you’ll get a lot further than you would working as an individual”. Talking about her local farmers market and the wider community, one market manager says, “the community has to be the driver behind it. They see what we’re doing as the future and so they want to be part of it”. A large focus of on-going discussion between FMNZ and its members is centred on the potential for the organisation to work with schools. “But the question is,” one member asks, “are we using them for us? There’s a difference between using (the children) and sewing seeds. There may be a question around using them as a promotional tool for a commercial business”.

4.6.5 Discussion

Here, it is clear that various forms of value created within farmers markets are being distributed beyond the market and into the wider community in which they operate. While no formal research has been conducted confirming or quantifying the wider economic impact of farmers markets (Guthrie et al., 2006), we can

clearly see here the economic, symbolic, and relational impacts farmers markets have on local communities. This discussion will illustrate how the combination of time, labour, and capital committed by farmers market members creates value that extends to members of wider society whether they are directly or indirectly involved in the farmers market.

Similar to work by Guthrie et al. (2006) who suggest people often go on to shop at other stores within the community after attending the farmers market, the first example in this phase (along with responses from various other participants not reflected above), shows how farmers markets have the potential to create a significant amount of economic value for surrounding business owners. Here, a significant portion of the effort exerted by producers and market managers in the form of their time, physical labour, and capital investments, is being uplifted by nearby shop owners when they realise the economic benefit of being located near the farmers market on market day. Determining whether or not this is a fair distribution of value is beyond the scope of this research and would require assessments of large amounts of quantitative data. In addition, it would be largely dependent on the circumstances within the individual community as to whether such value was being fairly distributed. It may be fair to assume that in the first case, the Matakana farmers market exhibits an unfair redistribution of value when, in pursuit of economic surpluses, the nearby shop owners put tables out on the footpath and set up market-like stalls. Here, the business owners could be considered to be exploiting the market and the efforts exerted by its' vendors and management. This is particularly evident when they voice their complaints and cause tensions in their relationships with market participants. In this case we can see how the fight for economic value extends beyond the stallholders within the farmers market to business owners within the community. In comparison, positive relationships between farmers market participants and surrounding business owners appear to be evident within the Clevedon area. In this case, while we still cannot determine the fairness of value distribution, the findings of the study suggest that farmers markets do create the potential for positive value distribution. For farmers market participants, this phase partly represents their struggles in creating positive relational value with nearby business owners as a result of competition in the extraction of economic value. On the other hand, this phase also represents how positive relationships with members of the wider community have the potential to increase economic value for all parties.

From the second example, we can see what might be described as a highly sustainable form of value redistribution where all members of the wider community are realising benefit in some form as a result of the farmers market. Lepak et al. (2007) suggest that economic value can be captured at the societal level when a community holds unique resource advantages. This is particularly evident for the rural Clevedon community, which holds unique resources in the form of its land and knowledgeable farmers. From this example, we can see how the farmers market supports these resources and capabilities allowing for not just economic value to be realised by the wider community but also for significant symbolic and relational value to be realised. Here, significant economic value creation is evident as a result of job creation and

thus improved economic circumstances for the community. This was a popular topic among research participants who spoke of their markets creating job opportunities for university students and the younger generation. Improved economic conditions help to enhance the community's status as a desirable place to live, thus creating symbolic value. It could also be argued here that similar value creation processes occur as a result of industrial agriculture. For example, the opening of a supermarket would create employment opportunities and therefore contribute to the value of the community in which it was operating. However, the value of such development would differ among individuals, being largely dependent on personal intrinsic values.

Where the two systems appear to differ significantly is in the processes they utilise to create symbolic and relational value. Evident in this case is the "really nice, safe environment" (p. 72) Helen has created at the market for the local teenagers. Here, she has created an environment with symbolic meaning where people can engage in social interactions and create relational value in the form of community, activities that are not promoted within conventional food retailers. For the market manager, farmers markets within the community are representative of their ability to bring people together and improve the quality of life for wider society. Here, Helen is again filling economic, symbolic, and relational gaps that she believes are created by the conventional food system.

From the third example in this series, we can see how symbolic and relational value creation processes that are often not made possible through the conventional food system, are made possible through a local food system. In Lyttelton, the farmers market has served as a site for members of the community to come together after a tragedy and engage in social interaction, providing support for each other. Here, the value of efforts exerted by market organisers and vendors are realised in the form of symbolic and relational value by all members of the community. The first photo (photo A.) in Appendix Ten illustrates how relational value is particularly evident in a communal form for the town of Lyttelton. Here, the organisers of the farmers market have surrounded the site with various initiatives such as the community garden where any members of the community can go and help themselves to whatever is growing. Similarly, the second photo (photo B.) in Appendix Ten illustrates the community's 'Plenty to Share' program, an initiative supported by the farmers market where members of the community share their excess produce with others who may not have access to what they need. In addition, through participation at the farmers market, members of the Lyttelton community are able to associate themselves with the values and goals of the non-profit organisation that runs the market; values that are centred around creating a sustainable, or 'resilient' community. In comparison, when speaking of a North Island farmers market that he used to attend, one producer explained that he had to pull out because it "just wasn't supported by the community". Likely due to the geographic location he explained, "you could go to the local supermarket and the parking lot would be completely full, yet nobody was at the farmers market" (North Island producer). For those markets that enjoy community-wide support, symbolic and relational value is created here through the communal

interactions that would likely not occur in conventional food retail outlets. For those markets that do not experience such high levels of support from the local community, their symbolic, relational, and economic value creation potential is likely to be significantly low. Much like in Helen's case, for the town of Lyttelton, the farmers market is largely representative of the symbolic and relational value creation opportunities when members of a community are brought together in a site of exchange.

“Working together, working with all aspects of the community” (p. 73) highlights the push by FMNZ for relational value creation within farmers markets. Working with schools in particular was mentioned frequently in discussions with participants around farmers markets and the wider communities in which they operate. Many producers shared stories similar to Helen's, speaking of how the local school children are educated on the benefits of growing and consuming locally through participation in the farmers market. Through such actions, rather than seeing tensions between farmers markets and the conventional food system, we see potential tensions between farmers markets and wider society. While some speak of a genuine desire to educate the younger generation on the benefits of ‘shopping local’ and healthy eating, others are wary of the potential negative connotations around exploitation associated with involving children in the organisation. Such connotations frequently associated with industrial agriculture and the conventional food system (although not limited to children). For the governing body, when discussing relationships with the community, farmers markets partly represent relational value creation opportunities but at the same time, they represent the need to steer clear of the negative connotations (i.e. exploitation) that are commonly associated with the conventional food system.

Discussion on how farmers markets operate within the wider communities in which they are situated has shown how the value of efforts exerted by farmers market participants has the potential to be uplifted by members of wider society. Here, in pursuit of their own economic, symbolic, and relational value, small-scale food producers and market managers/organisers have the potential to create a significant amount of economic, symbolic, and relational value for members of the wider community. In fulfilling their own symbolic needs, farmers market participants are also filling needs at a societal level, needs that are not met by the conventional food system.

4.7 ‘The Wind-down’ – *Closing Time*

4.7.1 Exhaustion

We were down to the last half-hour of trading time at the market and it was really time to sell. “People think our pies are expensive,” Josephine explains to me, “but I still have to pay a premium for them (\$5 per pie), that's why it's really important that we sell as much as we possibly can”. So all of a sudden, our \$6.50 pies became \$5 pies, then they became \$4 pies, until we had completely sold out. After we had

cleared out the pie warmer, we were left with one large dessert pie, which we had been selling by the slice. Josephine put each slice onto a small paper plate and arranged them on a large tray. “Hot boysenberry and apple pie! Just \$2 a slice!” she yells repeatedly as she walks around the market capturing the attention of the hungry latecomers. I begin to pack things up ready to be loaded into Josephine’s car and within ten minutes she’s back, with an empty tray and a pocket full of \$2 coins. In much the same way we set the stall up this morning, Josephine has a very particular way of packing up. However, when it came to lifting the oven into the storage room, we were puzzled. Then, Josephine’s husband turns up. Rather disgruntled, Josephine explains to me, “I had told him to stay home today. There’s too much work to be done at the house and he’s too tired. He can’t manage it all”. But he just couldn’t stay away on market day. So Josephine’s husband was able to help us lift the oven into the storage room. Lucky for us, because we had no more pies left to bribe the veggie grower across the way with.

I arrived home an hour later and collapsed. I was absolutely exhausted. “How do these people do it?” I thought. “I remember when I was doing it, I would come home and just collapse. It destroyed me,” Jessie explains to me. “It’s eye-wateringly hard work. I think if you look at the hourly rate compared to the amount of work you’re doing...if you look at all the Saturday’s and Sunday’s, your income really does whittle away. I think it’s a mixture of that love”.

4.7.2 In Need of Help

Allison sympathises with me when I tell her about my exhausting experience working at the market last weekend. “I get home and unpack my car and if I sit down and have some lunch I could easily nod off to sleep...so I don’t sit for too long...you just push yourself, you have to”. Allison used to travel to Auckland to sell at the Parnell farmers market, “boy was I tired when I got home from that,” she tells me. After a day at the market, I completely understand how she feels. In justifying her exhaustion Allison explains, “you get up and you go to the market (because) it’s a buzz being there”. People often ask Allison how her husband can work so hard now that he’s getting so old. She tells me, “just after the last harvest he struggled a bit...and so now he’s got this second beekeeper who we’ve taken on”. Explaining the difficulties her husband has in letting go of control she says, “he still needs to have input because until they’ve (the new employee) really got the way he likes to do it, he’s not going to relax because our reputation is built on how good they are with doing the hives and everything for that end product”.

4.7.3 Shelf Life

Unlike Josephine, Amanda is not in a hurry to clear her stock of oatcakes before the market closes. “If I don’t sell them this week, I can take them home and sell them next week. It’s not a big deal at all,” she explains to me. “In fact, I had a pack that was vacuum packed for a year and it was absolutely perfectly

fine. So I'm really lucky like that," she tells me. Unlike the hummus man from last week, "it had been a really slow market," Amanda tells me, "so he was walking around with arm loads of hummus just giving us all hummus because you know, it's a perishable product. So that would be hard," she empathises, "I couldn't handle that". Frank tells me about another reason he doesn't need to sell through the supermarkets. "It (the muesli) will be preserved, it doesn't need refrigeration. If it doesn't sell this week, it sells next week, or next month," he explains. "I don't need to sell," he argues. "So many people talk about the hassles with supermarkets, the distribution chains and the discounting and to some extent, they're losing control. I can understand the necessity for some items that have a limited shelf life or that need refrigeration to be in the supermarket...but not for me".

4.7.4 Discussion

As market day comes to an end we can see the different levels of time and physical labour required among stallholders in their pursuits for value realisation. At this stage, in attempts to uplift the value of their time, labour, and capital commitments, we see producers engaging in social interactions exhibiting desperate hopes of extracting a maximum amount of value out of market day. On the other hand, we see how the value extraction process requires significantly less effort for others. This section will discuss the different levels of activity farmers market participants undertake in hopes of capturing the value they need in order for their businesses and for the farmers market as a retail outlet to remain economically viable.

The significant investment of capital required by Josephine and her husband to purchase the wholesale pies means it is imperative that they sell as many as they can. In this instance we can see how desperate efforts to realise a return on their investment involve the price of their product dropping far below an amount that reflects the time, labour, and capital that was committed to providing it. Here, a significant amount of economic value is lost within the farmers market. However, this example shows how with the loss in economic value for the producer, the consumer has the potential to uplift significantly more economic and symbolic value. Again, a redistribution of value is occurring where the value of efforts exerted by these small-scale food producers is being redistributed to others. In this case, attempts by the stallholder to recover capital investments, have allowed consumers to realise economic value in the form of monetary savings. Here, the consumer has the potential to realise more economic value than they would have done had they purchased the pie for its original sale price. Similarly, the consumer has the potential to co-create and realise significantly more symbolic value as a result of their consumption practices. By offering the product for a lower price to the consumer, the producer is able to co-create value in the form of symbolic meaning with the consumer. As a result of economic savings offered by the producer, the consumer is able to attribute significantly more meaning to the pie when they believe it will provide them with more value than the monetary amount they exchange for it. Often associating themselves with a lower socio-economic demographic, the pie vendors here struggle to create enough economic value to ensure their livelihoods.

Here, we might suggest that a relatively unfair distribution of value is occurring in what is depicted to be a socially sustainable food system. However, some may suggest that the conventional food system redistributes value even more unfairly when wholesalers and retailers capture significantly high proportions of value created by producers. Here, stallholders such as Josephine are perhaps, as Frank describes, 'losing control', or at least a portion of control when they engage in activities such as price discounting, activities that have become the socially accepted norm in conventional food systems.

The other significant factor evident in this example is the physical exhaustion experienced by stallholders in their pursuit of value. In this case the physical exhaustion for Josephine exemplifies her desperate efforts to uplift economic value as market day comes to a close. Even her daughter agrees that with the amount of time and effort required to run a market stall, "your income really does whittle away" (p. 77). Yet, for Josephine's husband, not being able to stay away from the farmers market on market day even though "he's too tired (and) he can't manage it all" (p. 77), exemplifies his need for relational value. On market day, this gap is fulfilled for Josephine's husband when he is able to come to the market and interact with family and friends. Here, the researcher has validated both situations. Through my own personal physical exhaustion I can see the significant amount of effort required in running a market stall. Yet, I return week after week to continue helping out simply because I enjoy the relational aspect of being at the farmers market. In this sense, the farmers market has helped to fulfil my own need for relational value when it comes to purchasing and consuming food, a need that is not met by the conventional food system. For stallholders such as Josephine and her husband, the end of market day largely represents the struggles they face when trying to uplift an equitable amount of value for the time, labour, and capital they have committed, whether this is in economic, symbolic, or relational form.

Physical exhaustion is also shown in Allison's experiences of the end of market day. Similarly, physical exhaustion for Allison's husband is also evident. In the case of Allison's husband, we can see how physical labour requirements extend beyond the 'front stage' activities at the farmers market stall, to 'backstage' (Goffman, 1959) activities of family members who are not even present on market day. However, compared to the case discussed above, Allison's husband's physical labour is largely representative of his need to maintain the symbolic meaning associated with his honey. For Allison and her husband, the success of their business is largely dependent upon the reputation they have built through selling at the farmers market. Here, continuing to exert so much physical effort and perhaps exploiting himself in his old age, Allison's husband is able to keep some form of control over production activities and therefore maintain not only the business's reputation but also his own reputation as a 'successful' beekeeper. For the beekeepers, this phase largely represents the demanding nature of the physical labour required in order to maintain a desired level of symbolic value.

From the final example in this phase, we can see how the end of market day differs for producers such as Amanda and Frank who are not desperate to clear their stock. Due to its relatively long shelf life, these producers do not need to discount their prices, which means they can ensure a fair price for the time, labour, and capital they commit in producing their products, no matter when they are sold. When she compares herself to the 'hummus man', saying, "I couldn't handle that" (p. 78), Amanda is communicating how for her, the farmers market facilitates a relatively easy distribution strategy. Selling through the farmers market allows Amanda to realise an equitable amount of economic value without having to engage in price discounting or 'hard sales', of which she had an initial fear. Symbolic value is evident here in the form of Amanda's desire to not engage heavily in the sales aspect of the farmers market, or in price discounting and negotiation activities which she would likely experience if she was distributing through the conventional system. Here, we can see how the effort Amanda exerts, particularly in her drive up to Clevedon from Thames each week, is offset by the economic and symbolic value she is able to realise when she uses the farmers market as a retail outlet. Frank's case reveals similar findings, yet for him, this phase is largely representative of his symbolic desire to remain in control of his business by not engaging with the conventional system. For producers such as Amanda and Frank, this phase largely represents how the farmers market facilitates a relatively easy distribution strategy where their efforts are outweighed by the economic and symbolic value they are able to uplift when participating in the market. At this stage, the farmers market acts simply as a convenient retail outlet for these producers to sell their products with extensive shelf life. Interestingly, the presence of commodities with extensive shelf life is one of the frequently debated merits of conventional supermarkets.

Together, the cases presented in this phase exemplify the convenience of the farmers market as a viable retail outlet for small-scale food producers. However, for some, much more time, significantly more physical labour, and a higher investment of capital is required in order to realise the potential benefits this site of exchange can provide. Here, the findings of the study reveal that the potential for economic, symbolic, and relational surpluses can often far outweigh the time, labour, and capital commitments required in order to run a farmers market stall. For some stallholders, the potential economic and relational surpluses outweigh their time, labour, and capital commitments and we may suggest they are realising an equitable amount of value in some forms. However, an equitable surplus may not be realised by all producers. For stallholders such as the pie sellers who may not realise high economic surpluses, the potential symbolic and relational value surpluses appear to outweigh their time, labour, and capital investments and potential loss of economic value.

4.8 ‘After Market Day’ – *Personal and Business Values*

4.8.1 Better than McDonald’s

“Clevedon is a lovely place to live,” Helen explains, “people will always want to live here, and there’s lots of money. But it (the farmers market) offers Clevedon an alternative future to just becoming an expensive place to live with no soul. It can still be rural; it can be the food basket of Auckland. It could be like the Napa Valley is to San Francisco”. Speaking of the benefits of the market Helen explains, “It’s positive because it’s not like we’ve put up a mall or a McDonald’s, it’s positive because it’s showcasing what’s available out here”. With high property prices in the local area she explains to me, “it’s not an option for a young person to go and spend \$8 million on a farm and then go and try to make money, it’s just not going to happen”. So what the farmers market has done, Helen tells me, “it’s actually made it conceivable that you could have a niche business and make money out of it on a smaller block around here. It’s a way to keep Clevedon rural; it’s put Clevedon on the map and it means that long-term, we don’t just see a whole lot of development and not a whole lot of anything else”.

4.8.2 Family Time

The farmers market has proven to be a successful place for Amanda to start her business. “It’s like running a business but there’s definitely a sort of cash flow thing at the start, which is really nice. You don’t obviously have to declare everything when you’re starting out...and you don’t have too much of that paperwork stuff to deal with”. But, she says she would like to get to the point where she doesn’t have to do the market anymore. “Only because of having to be away from my family in the weekends. Having time with them in the weekends is a bit precious,” she tells me.

4.8.3 Standing Strong

Opportunities to become part of the conventional food system that have arisen from the farmers market have been abundant for some small-scale producers. “I’ve been approached by shops and supermarkets,” Frank tells me, “but I’m not going to discount my price...I’m not going to buy into that. If I went into shops and supermarkets, they would soon start controlling me”. Allison tells me much the same story, “Nosh approached me...they came to the market and said they were looking for local products and asked if I would be interested. But when I gave them a price, it wasn’t satisfactory for them, they wanted less and I thought, well I’m not moving”. Putting such strict requirements on their suppliers, Allison tells me that it just wouldn’t be worth having her product on the shelves in these smaller boutique-style supermarkets.

4.8.4 Breaking Big Business

Now selling their pies in places like Nosh, Farro Fresh, and most recently, Countdown, Jessie and her business partner have aspirations to grow. “It’s our challenge now to keep innovating”, she tells me. Questioning whether they should still be selling at the farmers market Jessie tells me, “it’s a tricky one, sometimes I think that we are sort of more of a supermarket brand now. How does that look to our customers? We haven’t changed anything. Our quality is not negotiable to us. It will be interesting to see if we become too big for the market. I would hate for that to happen. It’s one we’re going to have to navigate”. Not being a multi-national company, Jessie hopes their brand won’t be associated with the negative connotations often assigned to the conventional food system. “I hope people don’t think that because they can buy our pies at the supermarket that they shouldn’t be at the farmers market”. Through big highs and lows Jessie tells me, “you have to really care and be a little bit crazy and take some risks. Not earning for a year when we set up, that was brutal...it took probably three years to make up that loss of one year. It was a long time to recoup”.

“We’re at a really good stage now,” Allison informs me, “we’ve grown and we’ve got other choices now”. As a direct result of exposure at the farmers market, Allison and her husband are now selling to exporters. Being part of numerous local economic development groups, “it’s been enriching,” Allison tells me, “because we are networking amongst each other, it’s adding another dimension (to our business)”. When I asked Allison how she still managed to do the farmers market, “I’ll never give it up,” she tells me, “I mean, we’re at a stage now where we don’t need to go to the farmers market but I’ll never give it up because I believe in it...It’s that slow movement...how it used to be for our parents back in the day when things were slower and shopkeepers had time to have a natter”. Speaking of her relationships with her customers, “I like the people who go there too, you know, they’re people who appreciate good, quality food, they like healthy, they’re knowledgeable and they’ve done their homework. They know what’s good for them and what’s not and they want to support local...they realise that they’re supporting people who get up early and do hard work and bring a great product to the market”. In summing up her success Allison tells me, “I don’t want to sound conceited but it’s all down to my husband doing a good job. If he didn’t do a good job with the beekeeping, then I couldn’t sell it”. All in all, Allison speaks of the farmers market as a really positive movement, “like in any organisation, there will always be a little bit of negativity but I would always like to have some association with it because it is a positive thing”.

4.8.5 Keeping it ‘Local’

“Some people don’t want to break big business,” Helen tells me, “some people just want to make their thing well, sell it at the farmers market, make some money and that’s enough”. Helen’s market thrives on people like that. “I have a lovely couple that sell orchids,” she tells me, “and they genuinely enjoy selling

their orchids to people who go home and enjoy them and learn how to care for them...they're giving people pleasure for weeks you know". Helen thinks her and her husband might end up just like the orchid growers, "once my husband and I have done everything we want to do, we'll retire and probably go back to growing veg for the market because we like growing vegetables and we like growing interesting vegetables. I can see myself there at 78 peddling some ridiculous melon that nobody's ever seen before because it's fun!"

It hasn't been easy for Helen. "It's not without its challenges," she explains, "I didn't make any money until last year and then I just took \$14,000. You find me someone who will work for seven years for \$14,000", she tells me. "I've had some shitty stuff to deal with, real nasty stuff, not everyone's on your side. If you stick your head up, you get it shot off in this country and that's the way it is. It's not about me looking after my financial future, it's me making sure that then continues for the good of the market because it's too important to too many people to have someone come in and de-rail it because they're jealous. That's business. It's eight years hard work and bugged if someone's going to ruin it. It's established now and it's going to be very hard to kill. It's a brand now".

4.8.6 Discussion

The exemplary events presented in this phase reveal that value creation, distribution, and realisation processes are clearly not limited to market day. As a result of time, labour, and capital efforts by producers and market managers, various forms of value continue to be created, distributed, and uplifted well beyond the weekend. Here, the economic, relational, and symbolic can be difficult to separate as they have become embedded within one another. Similarly, time, labour, and capital as the inputs into value creation processes can be difficult to separate, as they often do not occur independently. This section will discuss how economic, symbolic, and relational value are realised well beyond market day as a result of value creation activities evident in previous discussions.

At the general farmers market-level, we can see how collective temporal, capital, and physical commitments by the market manager and vendors, have created a social phenomenon providing opportunities for small-scale producers to "have a niche business and make money out of it" in a local community. The farmers market is not only providing livelihoods for local farmers but also contributing to the general economic development of the local community. Here, as a result of efforts by farmers market participants, economic value is being distributed throughout the wider community. As discussed briefly above, whether or not this is a fair distribution of value would require a greater level of analysis. However, from Helen's perspective we can suggest that a highly sustainable form of value distribution is occurring whereby, even though non-farmers market participants as members of the community may be realising the benefits of her inputs, also being a member of the community Helen is able to realise the benefits as

Clevedon experiences rural economic development. Of course, the extent to which members of the Clevedon community realise such value would be largely dependent on their own intrinsic values. According to Helen's values, rural development within the community is positive. However, some may prefer to see commercial development in the area, to see a supermarket, a mall, or a McDonald's.

Also at the general market-level, we can see how economic and symbolic value are embedded within each other. Here, in efforts to "keep Clevedon rural" and prevent the area from becoming "an expensive place to live with no soul" (p. 81), we can see how economic and symbolic values have been created in tandem. In this phase, it can be difficult to separate the symbolic value from the economic processes. We can see that as a result of the farmers market, economic value has arisen for the wider Clevedon community, which has contributed to making the local community, a desirable place to live, thus creating symbolic value for its members. In much the same way participation at the farmers market can help to develop and maintain a self-identity, the farmers market can help to create an identity for the wider community in which it operates. At the individual level, members of the community are able to create and uplift further symbolic value when they associate themselves with a rural, desirable, economically thriving community. Yet again, the meaning attributed to such associations largely depends on individualistic circumstances. For Helen, the flow-on effects of the farmers market are partly representative of the economic and symbolic opportunities for the wider community.

In a considerably different case, for Amanda, participation at the farmers market involves sacrificing precious time with her husband and children. From this example, we can see how Amanda has sacrificed familial value in order to realise the economic value opportunities of starting a small business through the farmers market where she doesn't have to "declare everything" and does not "have too much of that paperwork stuff to deal with" (p. 81). For many small-scale food producers, the relational value they gain from participation at farmers markets appears to largely fill their symbolic relational desires. However, for the oatcake producer, the flow-on effects of the farmers market reflect how participation has in fact created a relational gap in her life. Here, Amanda expresses her desires to eventually be able to distribute through more conventional methods in order to recapture the relational value she loses as a result of the farmers market. In a rare case here, we see evidence of a producer hoping to recapture value lost through an alternative system, value that is often considered to be abundant within such a system. Here, the producer's personal familial values appear to eclipse some of the meanings or values associated with the farmers market.

When discussing the struggles of becoming established and competing in the New Zealand marketplace, study participants frequently mentioned the lack of bargaining power they held in comparison to the power held by conventional food giants. From the third case presented here, we can see that while supermarkets have recognised the quality of these unique products at the farmers market, they are not willing to offer the

producers equitable prices in exchange. Here, producers are excluded from the conventional food system not necessarily by choice but because it is simply not an economically viable retail option for them. In this way, producers such as Frank who do not want to buy into the ethos of the conventional food system, therefore sacrificing opportunities to expand his businesses, are ensuring they remain in control of their business. This illustrates another example of the muesli producer's symbolic desires to remain in control and uphold his personal values. For producers such as Allison, standing up to conventional food giants is a way of ensuring that her and her husband continue to realise fair and equitable value for their honey. For producers such as Frank and Allison, business opportunities outside of the farmers market partly represent their ability to communicate their personal values and ensure equitable returns for their time, labour, and capital investments.

In comparison, the fourth case presented here exhibits the difficulty small-scale producers face in maintaining desirable symbolic value whilst maximising economic value potential. Having introduced their products into supermarkets, we can see how value such as brand identity and reputation created at the farmers market is distributed out into the conventional food system. While they may be considered to be going against the very ethos of the farmers market, the company has been able to take their 'quality' into the conventional food system, helping to achieve Helen's goal of bringing "variety back into the supermarkets" (p. 63). While they may be bringing 'quality' into the conventional food system, the pie producer highlights her concern for the potential destruction of symbolic value as a result of being associated with the supermarket. Here, we can see how economic and symbolic values can conflict.

Previous discussions on the honey producer have shown how she stands against the conventional food system, not only in attempts to capture an equitable amount of economic value but also because of her personal values. Interestingly, from the fourth case we can see how through wholesale and export activities, the beekeepers have very much become a part of the conventional food system. In much the same way as the pie producers, Allison and her husband have been able to uphold their personal values around quality and sustainable beekeeping while at the same time, enter a globalised food system. Here, the struggle for both the pie and honey producers is around being able to maximise economic value without becoming associated with the symbolic notions of industrial agriculture. Again, we can see how symbolic values can potentially be sacrificed in order to maximise economic returns. The findings of the study reveal the significant importance around being a 'successful' producer or farmer. For many, 'success' status is achieved through increased production and increased realisation of economic value, an idea very much established through industrial agriculture and conventional food systems. Again, economic and symbolic values are difficult to separate here. We can see how symbolic desires to become 'successful', often require increases in time, labour, and capital commitments in hopes of economic surpluses. However, simultaneously, other symbolic or social values have the potential to be compromised.

The other significant factor in Allison's case is the fact that while her and her husband are no longer commercially dependent on the farmers market, she will never give it up because of her symbolic belief in what the market represents. For both Jessie and Allison, the symbolic and relational value they associate with the farmers market appears to be an important factor for the identity of their brands and also their own self-identities. The relational aspect is particularly evident for Allison who discusses the customer value she realises as a result of interactions with "people who appreciate good food" and the collegial value she realises as a result of interactions with people who "get up early and do hard work" (p. 82). At the same time, Allison expresses her deep symbolic desire to remain associated with a phenomenon that represents a "slow movement", connecting her to the way things used to be for her parents "back in the day" (p. 82). For producers such as Jessie and Allison, the flow-on effects of the farmers market partly reflect the 'success' status they have achieved and how the farmers market provides them with a way to maintain symbolic value and minimise the risk of becoming associated with inherent features of the conventional food system (i.e. industrial agriculture).

In comparison to the producers described above, the final case presented here shows how some producers value symbolic and relational aspects over economic value potential. In the case of the orchid growers, the genuine enjoyment they gain from participation at the farmers market obviously outweighs any commercial potential to expand and realise greater economic surpluses. Helen expresses similar symbolic desires suggesting she would like to be at the market at 78 years old, selling "interesting vegetables" because, "it's fun" (p. 83). For people such as the orchid growers and Helen, the effects of the market partly represent meeting needs for personal symbolic and relational value.

The final section in the narrative shows how, at the general market-level, an individual's symbolic desires for social change can far outweigh the economic payoff for the work involved in achieving such a goal. Here, we can see how, as a market manager, Helen has been unable to realise an equitable amount of economic value for the efforts she has committed in creating economic, symbolic, and relational value for the wider community. In comparison to many other participants in the study, Helen makes it clear that her efforts are not about her looking after her financial future. Instead, she is largely concerned about the symbolic "good of the market" (p. 83). Helen explains how the market has become "too important to too many people" (p. 83), exhibiting the symbolic value of the farmers market to its participants (producers, stallholders, customers etc.). Here, Helen explains how her difficulties in developing a successful farmers market are not limited to her struggles with the conventional food system, rather, they extend to include wider New Zealand society. Yet, these are struggles she will not let get in the way of her pursuit for social change. For Helen, this phase partly represents the temporal, physical, and capital sacrifices she will make in order to fulfil the symbolic needs in her life, needs that are not met by the conventional food system.

This section has shown how value creation within farmers markets actually extends far beyond market-day. Each of these exemplary events has shown how farmers market participants have the potential to realise a significant amount of value as a result of their actions prior to, and on market day. Unfortunately for many, it appears they are often not fairly compensated in economic terms for the amount of time, labour, and capital they commit to being a part of the farmers market. Yet, the relational and symbolic surpluses they realise appear to far outweigh the limited financial benefits. For some other producers, the flow-on effects of the farmers market represent significant economic value realisation. However, interestingly, we can see how even the importance of economic value still appears to be overshadowed by desires for symbolic value where producers express concerns over becoming recognised as a ‘supermarket brand’ and express desires to still remain associated with the farmers market because they ‘believe in it’.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings of this study in narrative form illustrating various exemplary events before, during, and after market day. Each carefully selected and constructed narrative has illustrated a certain perspective or a snapshot of an event within a particular point in time. In this way, the essence of study participants’ experiences and perspectives has been revealed in context (Lightfoot & Davis as cited in Berger & Quiney, 2005). This sequential structure has shown the dynamic and temporal nature of value creation, distribution, and realisation processes within farmers markets through illustration and detailed analysis of different points in time. The range of events presented in this chapter has allowed for analysis of a broad range of perspectives and experiences of those participating in New Zealand farmers markets.

Each discussion section has provided detailed insight on the nature of value processes within each phase, allowing conclusions to be drawn from the study. Primarily, the study has revealed that the fundamental factor underlying participation in farmers markets appears to be the presence of significant unmet needs or desires in peoples’ lives. Whether these are economic, symbolic, or relational needs, they are gaps within peoples’ lives that are largely derivative of the actions of industrial food manufacturers and conventional food systems. In attempting to fulfil such unmet needs, farmers market participants engage in various activities and interactions in pursuit of economic, symbolic, and relational value, value that provides them with surpluses over and above the time, labour, and capital they are required to commit in order to achieve their goals. Consistent with extant literature reviewed in Chapter Two, together, the exemplary events and discussion sections presented in this chapter have illustrated the socially constructed nature of value processes within farmers markets, revealing that the very notion of value is widely contested and largely dependent upon individual values and desires. Similarly, its creation and realisation require interaction of often multiple actors.

Looking beyond the fundamental factors in play here, the study has revealed that for small-scale food producers operating within an alternative food network, pursuits of value creation and realisation are largely centred on symbolic meaning – fulfilling symbolic desires. A significant amount of the data was found to be closely related to symbolic needs and desires. Even in instances when economic or relational needs appeared to be the most prominent factors, the ultimate desire for some form of symbolic meaning was almost always found to be the underlying factor. The findings of the study reveal how small-scale food producers will go to extreme lengths in order to fulfil symbolic desires and thus create symbolic meaning for themselves and for the wider community. In order to redefine their relationships with the conventional food system, small-scale food producers will often go as far as exploiting themselves and their family members physically and emotionally because of the symbolic love and enjoyment for what they do and for their passion for the quality products they bring to the market. The photo in Appendix Eleven clearly illustrates the pie stallholders' (including the researcher's) enjoyment on market day, regardless of the little economic profit they may be realising. We have been able to see how value within farmers markets is really about a deep symbolic exchange between multiple actors within a social setting. Here, the production of surplus symbolic and relational value is what draws in stallholders and other market participants, rather than economic value alone.

The findings of the study provide insight as to how farmers markets operate vis à vis conventional food systems. As a result, we can further understand the role alternative food networks play in society and thus further conceptualise potentially more sustainable food system opportunities in New Zealand. The concluding chapter will discuss in detail the main findings of the study in relation to the original research objectives and provide insights on the theoretical and practical implications of this study.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This research has investigated value creation within farmers markets in order to further conceptualise the phenomenon and understand the role of alternative food networks within New Zealand. In doing so, this research has helped to define more sustainable food system opportunities in New Zealand. The study was primarily motivated by the researcher's personal interest in changing consumption and production behaviour on a global scale, particularly in relation to the food we produce, consume, and waste. A growing global interest in sustainable food production and consumption, particularly within the fields of management (Cameron, 2007; Murphy, 2011), agriculture (Alkon, 2008; Cox et al., 2008; Feenstra, 1997; Follett, 2009), and rural sociology (Coombes & Campbell, 1998; DuPuis & Goodman, 2005; Hinrichs, 2003; Tregear, 2011), parallel the researcher's particular interests. Authors such as Smithers et al. (2008) and Farmer et al. (2011) among others have made distinct connections between farmers markets and sustainable food production and consumption. Others such as Alkon (2008) and Lawson et al. (2008) have made connections between value and farmers markets, a largely unexplored topic. Informed by a review of local and international literature, this research sought to contribute to the field by extending the scope of limited research concerned with farmers markets as part of an alternative food network in New Zealand. This was achieved through a qualitative research strategy whereby data was collected from a combination of ethnography and six in-depth semi-structured interviews. Together, the information provided a basis upon which to evaluate value creation within farmers markets in New Zealand.

The preceding chapters have provided the background to and structure of this research. Chapter one presented the conceptual framework for the research. Chapter two went into further detail with a comprehensive literature review of seminal work on the three concepts in question; alternative food networks, farmers markets, and value. This was followed by chapter three, which provided discussion of the study design and methodological considerations. Chapter four presented the findings and related discussions, which analysed the key concepts that emerged as a result of data collection. The method used to present data in this thesis has explicated how value is variably created and unequally distributed through complex and dynamic social relations. This concluding chapter aims to review the key findings of the study in relation to each of the three research objectives and thus help to further conceptualise farmers markets in New Zealand. Firstly, a summary of the types of value evident when small-scale food producers participate in farmers markets is presented. Secondly, a summary of how different types of value are created at both the producer-level and at the wider market-level is provided. This is followed by a

summary of how these findings help us to understand farmers markets as part of an alternative food network by illustrating how they operate vis à vis the conventional food system in New Zealand. Due to the largely unexplored nature of the research topic, limitations to the study were inevitable and the potential opportunities for further research to be conducted in the field are great. A summary of these is also presented below. This chapter concludes that by further understanding the role farmers markets play within an alternative food network, small-scale food producers/entrepreneurs and the academic community can better understand sustainable food system opportunities within New Zealand.

5.2 Value Within Farmers Markets

Food production and consumption are essentially socially constructed activities characterised by valuation processes and conflictual social relationships (Arce & Marsden, 1993). After reviewing extant literature on farmers markets and collecting some preliminary data it became clear that these ‘alternative’ sites of food production and consumption all share some common characteristics; they all represent valuation processes and conflictual social relationships. Farmers markets in New Zealand appear to reflect many of the characteristics associated with alternative food networks throughout extant global literature. Each farmers market visited for the purposes of this research clearly exhibited a social setting where multiple actors with different backgrounds, identities, and motivations come together to interact, exchange, and pursue individual and collective goals in order to fulfil unmet needs present in their lives. The markets represent more than just sites of exchange where buying and selling occurs. Instead they are characterised by their social nature, creating production and consumption experiences significantly different to what we would experience in a conventional supermarket. The result of such interaction is a social phenomenon, a market, “loaded with different values” (Arce & Marsden, 1993, p. 299).

The first objective of this research was to provide a detailed description of the types of value evident when small-scale food producers participate in farmers markets. This research has in fact gone beyond this objective and provided an interpretation of the activities and claims of small-scale food producers, which has allowed for illustration of how different types of value are organised through farmers markets. This was achieved through a comprehensive review of extant literature on farmers markets and value, some preliminary ethnographic data collection, and semi-structured interviews with small-scale food producers and a market manager. The information gleaned through these processes distinguished three significant types of value, ‘economic’, ‘relational’, and ‘symbolic’. As a result, data was coded and later categorised under these three headings. The findings of the study reveal that connections between small-scale food producers and farmers markets go far beyond simple economic advantage. Instead, farmers markets provide opportunity for significant economic, relational, and symbolic value creation. Economic value was evident in various forms including, income, profits, business development opportunities, and increased employment opportunities. Embedded within experiences that are co-created, relational value was evident

through various social interactions such as cooperation and relationship development. Here, relational value was found to be evident in forms such as collegial and familial value. Similarly, symbolic value was evident in many forms including, intrinsic meaning, status, and self-identity. However, what became clear throughout the process of constructing and analysing the narratives was that each of the three categories of value can often be difficult to separate as they are often embedded within one another. Together, the discussion sections presented in the preceding chapter highlight how the types of value are closely related and intertwined. For example, economic value is often closely associated with symbolic value and vice versa. Working to create economic value, whether in monetary form or in terms of rural economic development within a community, in turn allows for the producer or market manager to not only realise economic benefit but to also realise symbolic value in the form of the creation of a self-identity or status and allows them to fulfil symbolic gaps in their lives. By a similar nature, as a result of the interactive processes required to create value, relational forms of value are evident at each and every stage and can often be difficult to extract from economic or symbolic value creation processes.

5.3 Value Processes Within Farmers Markets

After the significant forms of value evident at farmers markets were defined, in order to further understand the role value plays in farmers markets it was of particular interest to understand how it is created. This second research objective was achieved through a combination of in-depth semi-structured interviews and ethnography in the form of a significant amount of researcher involvement in farmers markets. As determined from the literature review, value creation processes do not occur independently of human actors. In other words, value cannot be created without some form of human input. The findings of this study reveal three significant factors involved in the creation of value at farmers markets, 'time', 'labour', and 'capital'. In much the same way described in the above paragraph, throughout the data analysis process it became clear that it was not easy to separate the three factors. Nor was it useful as the three factors are often closely related. It is clear from the above discussions that the three inputs do not always work alone to create value. An individual may act on their own and commit their time, labour, and/or capital to transforming raw materials into a saleable product, thus providing those raw materials with symbolic meaning or monetary value for the producer. However, such value is unable to be uplifted without some level of social interaction, such as at the point of sale allowing monetary value to be realised, or through communication of effective production methods with other producers allowing feelings of 'achievement' to be validated by others, or 'status' to be established. So, along with the commitment of time, labour, and/or capital, processes of social interaction are required in order for value to be realised within a farmers market setting. Given the significant level of physical work required at all stages of the value creation process, even alongside the investment of time or capital, physical labour appears to be the predominant factor here, crucial to the creation of any form of value.

The findings of this study suggest that value is a contingent outcome of negotiations, struggles, and conflict around its meaning. As Foster (2007) suggests, this is an inherent feature of conventional food systems. This research has shown that, similar within conventional food systems, the meaning of value within farmers markets is continually qualified and re-qualified at all stages of its development. The findings of the study have illustrated how value processes are socially constructed and socially contested. As a result, because human actions are constantly changing, it is unlikely that the concept of value will ever be stabilised within a social phenomenon such as a farmers market. Yet, similar to the conventional food system in its efforts to stabilise economic value (i.e. industrial food manufacturers using chemicals to enhance production yields; a supermarket chain using its bargaining power to capture value from farmers), it is the very stabilisation of value that many farmers market participants aim to achieve, albeit in 'alternative' ways.

5.4 Understanding Sustainable Food System Opportunities in New Zealand

The final objective of this study was to define and further conceptualise more sustainable food system opportunities in New Zealand. As a result of data collection and analysis processes, it became evident that the most effective way to meet this objective was to illustrate how farmers markets, as part of an alternative food network, operate vis à vis the conventional food system in New Zealand. This is illustrated through the perspectives of small-scale food producers and a market manager. In order to understand how alternative systems such as farmers markets operate compared to conventional food systems, it was necessary to understand the potential opportunities for value they create. It was helpful here to firstly consider the motivations behind participation in farmers markets and therefore understand what drives their development. Detailed discussions with participants revealed their desires for social justice and equality, healthy preservative-free food, sustainable agricultural development, a return to the 'slow movement' of food production and consumption, access to 'quality' food, business development opportunities, interaction with customers, and desires for 'success' among many other factors – all representing symbolic gaps or unmet needs present in their lives. While their responses varied, talk of their motivations and backgrounds to their businesses all represented symbolic gaps in participants' lives. Such symbolic gaps represented needs that are not met by conventional food systems within modern-day society. For example, the desire for social justice and equality represents a participant's symbolic need for a shift toward alternative modes of agriculture and food provisioning in order to meet social goals not achieved by the conventional food system. Similarly, a desire for a return to the 'slow movement' of food production and consumption represents a symbolic need for tradition and a desire to create a business opportunity represents a need to create an income and a particular lifestyle. In each case, small-scale food producers are not able to fulfil these needs through participation in conventional food systems that represent convenient and immediate availability of food and are largely representative of power-relations between producers and retailers. Therefore, these small-scale food producers have engaged in alternative methods of food provisioning.

Analysis of participant's motivations and backgrounds concludes that small-scale food producers utilise farmers markets in order to fulfil some of the unmet needs present in their lives.

In order to fulfil these unmet needs, small-scale food producers engage in activities and interactions of which they believe will provide them with surplus value. Of course, as this research has shown, value comes in different forms to different people, its meaning largely dependent on personal needs and desires. Through their activities and interactions before, during, and after market day, small-scale food producers are clearly in pursuit of surplus value. Whether it is in economic, symbolic, or relational form, farmers market participants are in pursuit of a certain amount of value over and above the time, labour, and capital they are required to commit in order to achieve their goals. The study has also shown how value creation, distribution, and realisation are socially constructed, interactive processes. However, the study has also shown how the ways in which value is created, distributed, and uplifted vary among small-scale food producers according to their personal values and desires. For example, where one producer may engage in relational marketing strategies in order to push sales and realise higher economic profits, another producer may heavily discount their prices in hopes of economic surplus. By a similar nature, where one producer may pursue a relational marketing strategy in order to educate society on the benefits of eating healthy foods, another producer may engage in acts of relational marketing in order to gain direct feedback from their customers. These are all activities that are often not made possible when operating through the conventional food system.

In order to develop a detailed understanding of value creation within farmers markets, it was crucial to extract key themes from the data. As mentioned in previous discussions, the creation of value requires effort and the production of food certainly requires work. Through data analysis processes, it became clear that labour or some form of physical effort is required in all instances where value is created, distributed, and uplifted within farmers markets. Similarly, data analysis processes revealed that symbolic value creation appeared to be the key theme underlying all commitments of time, labour, and capital. The preceding chapter illustrated the significance of symbolic value creation in almost all phases from preparing for the market and being at the market, to the effects well after market day. Even when economic or relational goals appear to be the most prominent factors in play, some form of symbolic meaning often motivates them. For example, efforts to create economic surplus within a farmers market setting are often motivated by the desire to fulfil a symbolic gap in ones life, i.e. symbolic desires to become 'successful', create a self-identity (perhaps as a reputable producer), or to achieve 'status' (perhaps through wealth). Similarly, efforts to create and realise relational value within farmers markets are often motivated by symbolic desires to interact with people, engage in social relations, or to create a sense of community, thus fulfilling symbolic desires. While symbolic desires to become 'successful' or achieve a certain 'status' may also be evident among actors within conventional food systems, we see how symbolic desires vary

among actors within alternative systems when considering relational value and social interactions, factors that are largely restricted within conventional supermarkets.

Interestingly, the study has revealed the extreme lengths small-scale food producers will go to in order to create and realise symbolic value. The preceding chapter illustrated the significant amount of time, labour, and capital that small-scale food producers are required to commit in order to realise some form of value surplus that will make their efforts at the farmers market worthwhile. The findings of the study have shown the extensive amount of effort producers will exert in order to engage in activities to communicate their personal values, promote social change, or to produce a product for which they have a deep symbolic relationship with, even if it means they are not realising a sufficient economic surplus in order to make it financially viable for them. Here, desires to fulfil symbolic gaps in everyday life through utilising farmers markets appear to outweigh the commitments of time, labour, and capital that are required. For example, a member of society may commit a great deal of personal time, labour, and capital to develop a farmers market in hopes of changing social behaviour and mitigating the externalities associated with the conventional food system, thus fulfilling her symbolic desire to create a 'rural' community and to live a healthy lifestyle. While she has helped to create a significant amount of value for the wider community, she is not fairly compensated financially for her efforts. Yet, she continues to commit her time, labour, and capital because of her desires to fulfil the symbolic gaps that the conventional food system has created within her life. Similarly, a producer may invest an overwhelmingly extensive amount of time, labour, and capital in order to bring a product to the market, engage in dramatic price discounts in order to clear stock and at the end of market day, walk away exhausted, with very little profit. Yet, they continue to run the market stall week after week because of their symbolic desire to help a family member achieve 'success'. Here, the findings of the study have illustrated how small-scale food producers can often exploit not only themselves but also their family members in their pursuits for surplus value. Their personal values play a significant part here where what these producers symbolically perceive as being important or being of value, eclipse all efforts required to realise or uplift it. Interestingly, this is also a feature of the conventional food system where corporate food giants will take extreme measures (i.e. exploitation) in order to achieve surplus value of various forms.

The findings of this study conclude that value creation within farmers markets in New Zealand is largely about a deep symbolic exchange between multiple actors within a network. This compares to value creation within a conventional supermarket, which is often limited to economic exchange at the point of sale, where very little, if any, symbolic or relational processes occur. In this way, we can understand farmers markets as a social phenomenon consisting of a plethora of different symbolic values. Where some values clearly align, others can sometimes conflict. Tsoukas's (as cited in Downing, 2005) view of the firm suggests that organisations are a form of life, a community, in which individuals come together to share an unarticulated background of common understanding. This study has shown that while small-scale food

producers each utilise farmers markets in order to pursue their own individual goals and fulfil different symbolic gaps present in their lives, they are also working together in pursuit of a collective goal – to achieve *alterity* to the conventional food system. Through this very alterity, small-scale food producers are attempting to mitigate the perhaps unintended consequences of industrial, conventional food systems. Looking at farmers markets as organisations, we can see evidence of a common understanding among participants. By Tsoukas’s logic, a conventional supermarket can be described as a form of life, exhibiting a site where people can come together to share common understanding. Yet, such common understanding within a conventional supermarket clearly differs from that in a farmers market setting. The findings of this study have shown how, as a result of different personal values, actors within alternative food systems and actors within conventional food systems often have different and conflicting acknowledgements of what is considered to be of value. These contradictory perceptions of value represent a lack of common understanding between small-scale food producers and the conventional food system.

Inherent in their efforts to create alterity are struggles largely representative of power relations between alternative food networks and the conventional food system. Through its power, the conventional food system has allowed the provision of inexpensive commodities that are often not representative of the work required by farmers and producers to produce them. In addition, the ability of the conventional food system to attribute certain meaning or symbolic value to products has made it difficult for smaller food producers in New Zealand to differentiate their products and compete in a marketplace dominated by two significant players. As an alternative option, farmers markets have allowed producers to re-capture a significant amount of value that is often lost through the conventional food system. It is through the re-capture of this value that small-scale food producers are able to fulfil needs and desires that are not met through conventional food systems. The findings of the study have illustrated how even though economic surpluses may be significantly low for many of these producers, the symbolic and relational surpluses appear to be the driving forces motivating participation in farmers markets in New Zealand.

As consumers, we may view farmers markets as a sustainable food option, we may view them as an expensive food option, one catering to higher-income members of society, we may view them as a social shopping experience, or simply as a site for likeminded farmers to come together to sell their produce. Whether or not we consider alternative food networks to be a sustainable food system opportunity and thus conducive to sustainable development will largely depend on personal values and personal desires. As one producer mentioned, “the farmers market is a highly sustainable way to shop but it’s highly unsustainable for the producers”. This study has shown how the time, labour, and capital that small-scale food producers commit in order to create and realise value can often be economically unsustainable. If we assume farmers markets are a sustainable food system opportunity, they can be described in much the same way Burton (2004, p. 210) describes agricultural landscapes, as “highly symbolic environments where the social value of production must be considered on par with the economic value”. However, this study has revealed that

this can seldom be the case within farmers markets. Yet, small-scale food producers continue to engage in farmers markets because the deep symbolic meaning they associate with participation, appears to eclipse all effort required.

What might simply symbolise to the regular consumer a site of exchange different to that of a conventional supermarket, the farmers market has the potential to tell a far more meaningful story for its' vendors, a story characterised by their constant economic, symbolic, and relational struggles with the conventional food system. While this study has shown that farmers markets provide the opportunity to mitigate the externalities associated with the conventional food system, due to the presence of significant power relations between corporate food giants and small-scale food producers, tensions remain largely unresolved. Perhaps achieving a 'perfect' food provisioning system, one that is sustainable, resilient, and benefits all participants in an equitable manner, will be impossible to achieve. As Magdoff et al. (as cited in Alkon, 2008) suggest, local food systems are insufficient to challenge capitalist, industrial agriculture. Instead, a complete transformation of the industrial food system would require a complete transformation of society. Perhaps it is the inherent nature of industrial agriculture and conventional supermarkets that have created such separation within society with their industrial, economically driven behaviours and "dumbed us down" (p. 52).

5.5 Practical Implications

The findings of this study reveal the importance of symbolic meaning within farmers markets as part of an alternative food network. This clearly shows that while farmers markets consist of a variety of small businesses that come together to trade in one site of exchange, the markets operate as a form of a social movement where actors express their opposition to conventional food practices and engage in creating social change. This compares to farmers markets as simply a commercial shopping experience, a view that does not recognise the symbolic complexity behind their existence. In this way, the continuance of farmers markets requires a continual reliance on the attribution of symbolic value. Therefore, when understanding small-scale food producers and the alternative methods of production, distribution, and retailing they engage in, it would be useful to consider the social and symbolic nature of their actions. Here, the development of farmers markets, their governing bodies, management, and participants could benefit from learning from social movements as opposed to rigid business models.

5.6 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Given the largely unexplored nature of the research topic and the qualitative nature of the study design, limitations to the research findings are inevitable and opportunities for further research are great. While the data collected was considered to be of rich detail, the small sample number and non-random nature of the

sampling procedure limit the ability to apply research findings to farmers markets and thus to alternative food networks on a global scale. The findings of this study can therefore only be applied to the actual markets studied. Time and resource constraints meant that increasing the sample size was impractical and therefore external validity may be considered low (LeCompte & Goetz, as cited in Bryman & Bell, 2011). However, it is the researcher's belief that the richness of the data collected partly mitigates this. Another attempt to mitigate this limitation was made by recruiting participants from a variety of geographical locations around New Zealand. While interview participants were all located in the North Island, ethnographic data collection was extended to the South Island encompassing a broad range of small-scale food producers and one farmers market. It would be of particular interest to conduct research of a similar nature in other regions such as North America, Europe, and Australia where significant growth in farmers markets is also evident.

While this study found no significant variations in responses among participants according to their geographic location, the same may not apply to research on a wider scale. For example, symbolic meaning may differ among regions on a global scale. In Burton's (2004) study on symbolic value within farming communities, he concludes that some communities place significant importance on the influence of regional histories in influencing symbolic values and self-identity. Knowledge within the alternative food network field could benefit from future research on a global scale with the aim of determining geographical differences in value creation within farmers markets.

Personal attributes and opinions of researchers can often have an effect on the way in which their data is interpreted and presented. Therefore, in order to ensure reliability and validity, it was imperative that when structuring and later analysing the narratives, the researcher did so in the most objective manner as possible. Given the nature of the study design and the individualistic nature of data collection and interpretation, the researcher's background and personal opinions naturally affected the data analysis process. Given the subjective nature of qualitative research, it is worth noting that this study required a high level of researcher involvement in terms of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The researcher was highly involved in the process of data analysis in that she was fully implicated in the construction of the narratives. While the findings of the study are largely based upon a single researcher's subjective analysis, interpretation of interview data and subsequently each narrative, involved detailed discussions between the researcher and the two research supervisors. On-going discussions between the three parties allowed for thoughts and opinions to be questioned and/or validated and for a consistent perspective to be maintained throughout the entire project. Therefore, internal reliability (LeCompte & Goetz, as cited in Bryman & Bell, 2011) can be considered high.

While this study has utilised two primary levels of analysis (market-level and producer-level), it is limited in that analysis at the customer-level has been neglected (with the exception of when some producers spoke

of themselves as consumers). It is widely suggested that value must accrue for both producer and consumer (particularly in theories of market exchange). Similarly, Foster (2006, p. 289) suggests, "Consumption...is itself a source and site of value creation". Here, it can be suggested that consumers are just as active as any other actor in qualifying value. Therefore, it is the researchers belief that future studies on value creation within alternative food networks would benefit from analysis at a customer-level allowing for a broader range of perspectives to be included.

This study has questioned the efficacy of value distribution processes within farmers markets. While it was beyond the scope of this research to determine whether or not value is being distributed equitably, the research findings provide indication that such processes do not always represent equitable outcomes for all actors. Future research on value creation within alternative food networks that considered the pursuit of a more equitable distribution of value would likely help to further understand the true efficacy and merit of alternative food networks as a sustainable food system opportunity. Whether or not a fair distribution of value could ever be attained within food systems (local or conventional), would be an interesting area of study. It may be that the distribution of value will always be an unfair and unequal process within farmers markets, unable to be stabilised by its participants.

As Tregear (2011) suggests, development of knowledge on alternative food networks could benefit greatly from varying perspectives. Future research into value processes within farmers markets and wider alternative food networks could be conducted from a wide range of backgrounds including management, marketing, geography, sociology, and planning. Further research on the progress of farmers markets as contributors to an economically sustainable food system would seem to be required.

5.7 Reflections

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, this study was primarily motivated by my personal concerns over increasing production and consumption practices on a global scale, with a particular interest in the food we produce, consume, and waste. My own personal concerns appear to reflect a symbolic gap present in my own life, a gap that has been created (intentionally or unintentionally) by conventional food systems in their efforts to maximise economic profits. A passion for food paired with a desire to adopt a lifestyle more conducive to sustainable development prompted research into alternative food networks. Interestingly, my personal symbolic desires to consume locally, live a healthy lifestyle, and promote rural development are akin to those found present among study participants. This research has caused me to question the true efficacy and merit of not only the conventional food system but also the true efficacy and merit of alternative options such as farmers markets, even though they are commonly considered to be a sustainable food opportunity. In a rather objective manner, I have been able to explore part of an alternative food network, which has allowed me to evaluate its merit in relation to my own personal values.

This has developed my understanding of small-scale food production within New Zealand and in turn, allowed me to make more informed purchasing and consumption decisions. However, the research has also shown me that there is still much more to learn about food systems, both conventional and alternative, if we are able to make truly informed purchasing decisions. From a personal perspective, as the way food systems operate in modern-day society, dramatic social change would be required before we see the development of truly sustainable and socially just food systems.

5.8 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has reviewed the preceding chapters in this thesis, discussed the main findings of the study, recognised its limitations, offered suggestions for further research, and presented the researcher's personal reflections on the project. Given the growing profile of farmers markets in the portrayal of local food systems (Smithers, et al., 2008), they have represented a useful and valuable site for research into alternative food networks. The findings of this study through narrative form have revealed a network of connections and processes that may have previously been hidden by the physical presence of the farmers market, or by the physical appearance of the individual stalls.

While research on farmers markets is not new, from a New Zealand perspective the body of extant literature is limited. This research has attempted to contribute to extant knowledge in the field by providing insight into the socially constructed nature of value processes within farmers markets in New Zealand. By further developing our understanding of the social world as small-scale food producers see it, the research has helped to define more sustainable food system opportunities on a local scale. Through processes of value creation, farmers markets and their participants are working to create an alternative, an alternative to the globalised, industrialised food system that has been so widely criticised. This research has shown that while alternative food networks may appear to be a highly sustainable food system opportunity, in many ways, they do not represent a complete commitment by all actors to sustainable development. However, similar to that suggested by La Trobe (2001), given the relative newness of farmers markets in New Zealand and the increasing rate at which they are developing, further research and monitoring of their progress is required before we can assess their true status as a more sustainable food system. They do however, represent a starting point for social change within the food production, agriculture, and farming sectors and, "as with all good spinach, it still has a bit of dirt on it" (Unknown NZ chef).

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8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix One

A Typical Farmers Market Setting

Researcher's personal photo.



8.2 Appendix Two

Categories of Alternative Food Networks

Table adapted from Venn et al. (2006).

Category	Explanation	Examples
Producers as consumers	Schemes where the food is grown or produced by those who consume it.	Community gardens Community centres with specific food projects Community food cooperatives Allotment groups
Producer-consumer partnerships	Partnerships between farmers and consumers – risks and rewards of farming are shared.	Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
Direct sell initiatives	Producers sell direct to consumers – without the use of middlemen. Commonly done face-to-face or over the internet.	Farmers markets Farm gate sales Adoption/rental schemes Mobile food shops Box schemes Producer cooperatives
Specialist retailers	Enable producers to sell to consumers more directly than through conventional supermarkets. They often sell value-added, quality or specialty foods.	Online grocers Specialist wholesalers

8.3 Appendix Three

Participant Information Sheet



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET - INDIVIDUAL

Alternative food networks and value creation: The case of farmers' markets in New Zealand

Cassandra Tozer (the researcher, completing research for partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Business Studies, Massey University), **Dr. Janet Sayers** (supervisor) and **A/Pro Craig Prichard** (co-supervisor) both Massey University.

Project Description and Invitation

The researcher would like to invite you to participate in the study "Alternative food networks and value creation: The case of farmers' markets in New Zealand".

With growing concerns among the public over issues such as sustainability, we are seeing a number of alternative food options become available. Much like in North America, Europe and Australia, the increasing number of farmers' markets popping up all over New Zealand is evidence of a phenomenon attracting a growing number of producers and consumers. The researcher is primarily interested in finding out what sorts of non-monetary value are created and how such value contributes to the success of the producers and thus to the market as a whole. You have been chosen as a potential participant in this study because the researcher would like to hear about your experiences at farmers' markets and in particular, your opinions on the creation of value in these settings.

Project Procedures

Participation in this project is completely voluntary. Should you decide to partake in this study, the researcher will require about an hour of your time in the form of a face-to-face interview. The interview will be semi-structured in nature whereby we will be having a discussion on the topics mentioned above. Open-ended questions will be used to guide our discussion.

Data Management

The researcher will request to have the interview digitally recorded in order that it can be transcribed at a later date. However, if you do not wish to be recorded or if you wish the recorder to be switched off at any time during the interview, this is absolutely fine. The researcher may take some notes in this instance.

All data can only be viewed and accessed by the researchers. As a participant, you will be provided with a copy of your transcribed interview for review before the researcher analyses it. The researcher will take the necessary precautions to preserve the identity of participants if requested. In this case, the researcher will use alias names throughout the report when referring to you and your business.

The data collected from this study will be kept for a period of approximately six to twelve months to allow time for the writing up of findings and research exhaustion. After this period, the data will be disposed of by a professional disposal service, in which case it will either be shredded or securely deleted.

Participant's Rights

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study at any time;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- you may ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.



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Project Contacts

Queries are best directed to the researcher, Cassandra Tozer. However, should you wish to contact either of the supervisors, please feel free to do so.

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This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher and supervisors named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher or supervisors, please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director, Research Ethics, telephone 06 350 5249, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz.

8.4 Appendix Four

Participant Consent Form



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PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM – INDIVIDUAL

Alternative food networks and value creation: The case of farmers markets in New Zealand

- I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.
- I agree / do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.
- I wish / do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.
- I wish / do not wish to have my personal identity disclosed.
- I wish / do not wish to have my company and / or market name disclosed.
- I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature:

Date:

Full Name - printed

8.5 Appendix Five

Original Guide Sheets for Semi-structured Interviews



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SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – MARKET MANAGERS/COORDINATORS

Alternative food networks and value creation: The case of farmers markets in New Zealand

As the interview will be conducted using a semi-structured format, the questions below are considered to be prompting questions only.

Background

1. Tell me a bit about the farmers market that you run and about what your role is:
2. How long have you been in this position?

The Market

3. How successful do you believe the market has been?
4. What are the main factors that have contributed to this success?
5. What specific things do you think make this market unique?

Value

6. What does the term *value* mean to you?
7. Specifically, what kinds of value do you think are created as a result of the farmers market?
8. Do you believe the market creates value for consumers (value that is non-monetary)? In what ways?
9. In what ways do you believe the market helps to create value for its producers/stall-holders?
10. What evidence of such value do you often see?

Talk about authenticity.

Use prompts from market website such as photos and general information.



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SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – PRODUCERS/STALL-HOLDERS

Alternative food networks and value creation: The case of farmers markets in New Zealand

As the interview will be conducted using a semi-structured format, the questions below are considered to be prompting questions only.

Background

1. Tell me about your business and the products you sell:
2. How long have you been participating at the (market name) farmers market?
3. What made you want to start this business?
4. What makes your product(s) different or alternative to others?

Value

5. What does the term *value* mean to you?
6. How do you incorporate such value into your business?
7. What specific things do you do to communicate that value to your customers?
8. To what extent do you believe your customers are involved in value creation?
9. What benefits (if any) does this have for the success of your business?

Talk about authenticity.

Use visual prompts from websites such as photos and general information.

8.6 Appendix Six

Revised Guide Sheets for Semi-structured Interviews



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SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – MARKET MANAGERS/COORDINATORS

Alternative food networks and value creation: The case of farmers markets in New Zealand

As the interview will be conducted using a semi-structured format, the questions below are considered to be prompting questions only.

Background

1. Tell me a bit about the farmers market that you run and about what your role is:
2. How long have you been in this position?

The Market

3. How successful do you believe the market has been?
4. What are the main factors that have contributed to this success?
5. What specific things do you think make this market unique?

Value

6. In what ways do you think the market benefits producers/stall-holders?
7. In what ways do you think the market benefits consumers?
8. Do you think the market benefits the wider community? How?

Talk about authenticity.

Use prompts from market website such as photos and general information.



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SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – PRODUCERS/STALL-HOLDERS

Alternative food networks and value creation: The case of farmers markets in New Zealand

As the interview will be conducted using a semi-structured format, the questions below are considered to be prompting questions only.

Background

1. Tell me about your business and the products you sell:
2. How long have you been participating at the (market name) farmers market?
3. What made you want to start this business?
4. What makes your product(s) different or alternative to others?

Value

5. What do you like about the market? What does it offer you?
6. What benefits do you believe you are able to provide your customers?
7. What specific things do you do to communicate those benefits to your customers?
8. In what ways has being part of the market contributed to the overall success of your business?

Talk about authenticity.

Use visual prompts from websites such as photos and general information.

8.7 Appendix Seven

Summary of Research Findings Provided to Participants

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS FOR PARTICIPANTS

Alternative food networks and value creation: The case of farmers' markets in New Zealand

To (Participant's name),

Recently you participated in a study of New Zealand farmers' markets and their producers, conducted by myself as a student at Massey University. Firstly, I would like to thank you for the time and effort you willingly committed to assist me with this project. Secondly, as requested, a brief summary of the research findings is presented below for your perusal.

This research sought to explore value creation processes within farmers' markets as part of an alternative food network. In doing so, the research aimed to provide small-scale food producers/entrepreneurs and the academic community insights into the true efficacy and merit of alternative food systems in relation to conventional food systems. As a result, the research has helped to further conceptualise farmers' markets and has helped to define sustainable food system opportunities in New Zealand.

As a result of interviews with various small-scale food producers and a market manager and extensive ethnographic research (where the researcher was involved in a farmers' market as a volunteer), the study found that three types of value were considered important to farmers' market participants, economic (e.g. monetary), symbolic (e.g. self-identity), and relational (e.g. relationships with other stallholders). Additionally, the research found three significant factors required for the creation of value within farmers markets, time, labour, and capital.

Through examination of how each type of value is created (through commitments of time, labour, and capital), the study concluded that farmers' markets and their participants are in various ways, working together to create an alternative to the globalised, industrialised conventional food system that has been so widely criticised. In creating *alterity*, small-scale food producers find themselves in pursuit of value, whether this is in economic, symbolic, or relational form. In their pursuits of value, producers attempt to realise a surplus over and above the time, labour, and capital they are required to commit in order to participate at the farmers' market. The study found that for some producers, realisation of a surplus value is significantly more difficult than it is for other producers. For some, significantly more time, labour, and capital commitments are required in order to create value. Interestingly, the study found that not all producers realise an equitable amount of economic benefit for their efforts. However, in these cases, the symbolic and relational value surpluses often outweigh the limited financial gains.

In attempting to further conceptualise farmers' markets, the research found that the markets operate largely as a social movement where participants are able to express their opposition to conventional food practices and engage in social change. By this nature, when understanding small-scale food producers and the alternative methods of food production, distribution, and retailing they engage in, it would be useful to consider the social and symbolic nature of their actions. The study concludes that the development of farmers' markets, their governing bodies, management, and participants could benefit from learning from social movements as opposed to rigid business models.

The study concludes that while alternative food networks may appear to be a highly sustainable food system opportunity, for many, they are not a financially sustainable retailing option. In this way, farmers' markets do not always represent a complete commitment to sustainable development. Yet, they do represent a starting point for social change within the food production, agriculture, and farming sectors in New Zealand. However, given the relative newness of farmers' markets in New Zealand and the increasing rate at which they are developing, further research and monitoring of their progress is required before we can assess their true status as a more sustainable food system than industrial agriculture and conventional supermarkets.

Again, I would like to thank you for the time you committed to this project and for the valuable information you shared with me. Your insights into farmers' markets as an alternative food system to conventional networks were instrumental in the development of the findings for this project.

Kind Regards,
Cassandra Tozer (Researcher)
cetozer@gmail.com

8.8 Appendix Eight

Analysis Matrices

Analysis Matrix for Section 4.2

4.2 - Beginnings

	Economic	Symbolic	Relational
Time	Frank "Commercial possibility"	Meeting self-expression needs. A gap in Helen's symbolic life Investment of time to create a self-identity. Communicating intrinsic values. Frank communicating his love for music. Symbolic value he associates w/ music has allowed him to create a business.	Frank connects her w/ family etc. Helen's quality of wife for the community by investing her time.
Labour	And therefore create economic value.	Investment of labour to create a self-identity. Communicating intrinsic values. Frank " Bookkeeper engaged "farming in a different way". Production practices seem to provide "enjoyment".	Helen " Helen is committing her labour in order to try and change social practices.
Capital	Helen investing her own capital because she had no help from anyone else. "grew organically, not go into debt". Very little capital at all for Frank	Investment of capital to create a self-identity. Communicating intrinsic values. Frank "	Helen "

Helen trying to change socially accepted norms through time, labour, investment in music.

Analysis Matrix for Section 4.3

4.4.3 - Preparation - Howing value

	Economic	Symbolic	Relational
Time			
Labour "activities" = "stage" - "back"	<p>↑ value of simple commodities. (although this is not yet realised). through function and compensating the veggie grower w/ a pie for his help.</p>	<p>Frank - transform ingredients to create a product w/ meaning. ↑ symbolic value of commodities. ↑ through Psychic value i.e. 'hand made'. being successful. helping their daughter out. ↑ self-identity</p>	<p>Frank's had a lot of help from others. (other employees) transforming raw materials requires multiple people. veggie grower helping out. also evidence of the relational aspect.</p>
Capital	<p>Easy for Frank who doesn't have to pay a lot of \$.</p>		<p>Help of the bakery owner saved them \$.</p>

time + capital are obviously present here as well.

8.9 Appendix Nine

A Producer's Sign at a North Island Farmers Market

(Researcher's personal photo)



8.10 Appendix Ten

Examples of Community Initiatives in Lyttelton, New Zealand

(Researcher's personal photos)

a. Community Garden Initiative



b) Plenty to Share Initiative



8.11 Appendix Eleven

I Love Pies Stall at Matakana Farmers Market

(Researcher's personal photo)

