

B&B

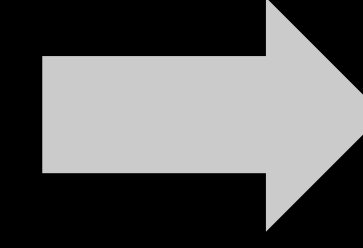


# BORN & BREAD: A HOME BAKER'S JOURNEY TO BRICK AND MORTAR

A CAPSTONE PROJECT BY ETHAN GOLDBLATT AS PART OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES MAJOR, SPRING 2015 ENVS 400

## Research Question

To what extent, if any, is localization an effective means of creating positive change?



I attempt to answer this question in the context of a regional food system, by situating myself as a bakery owner in Portland, Oregon.

The discourse of industrial agriculture and the global food system has praised the technological and scientific advances that have allowed for the provision of cheap food to billions of consumers around the world. But there is an alternative school of thought that recognizes the true cost of cheap food; the externalities are substantial, and the external costs of environmental degradation and health care are not being met (Kneafsey 2010; Lang et al. 2009). What can we do to both minimize and be held more accountable for these externalities?

I don't think that regionalization of the food system en masse is a good solution. But just as I believe an entirely regionalized food system is impractical, I believe an entirely globalized one—in which all markets are essentially looked at as one—is equally impractical and filled with inefficiencies. There must be some way to maximize efficiency by drawing from both scales.

For example, most Californians love their locally grown avocados. California is in dire need of a solution to the current water shortages. Perhaps it is a more efficient allocation of resources to source our avocados from Mexico. In each market, we can identify the goods we need, the resources we have, where there is scarcity in the

system, and then decide how and where to source those goods. The local vs global debate is wrongheaded and often leads to inefficiencies. There is a need to reframe the debate in terms of optimizing efficiency.

Kloppenburger et al. (1996) discuss the implications of the "foodshed." The term connects the cultural ("food") to the natural ("shed"), thus becoming a "unifying and organizing metaphor for conceptual development that starts from a premise of the unity of place and people, of nature and society" (Kloppenburger et al. 1996, 34). The recognition of one's place within a foodshed offers a sense of connection and responsibility to a particular area. Without this sense of place or connection to the land, the food system essentially operates as a commons, with producers overusing our collective resources and selling at too low a price.



Re-localizing the food system, and operating within reasonable foodsheds essentially privatizes the market. This faux-privatization allows for more clearly defined "property rights" (i.e. boundaries of each foodshed), making each foodshed accountable for its citizens and for the external costs of the surrounding foodsheds. However, while localized food systems may be positive in many ways for some settings, they simply cannot work everywhere. Additionally, in many cases global food networks are far more efficient than local ones could ever be.

The need for local-scale vs. global-scale goods (or often a combination of the two) changes on a case-by-case basis. In some settings we deem local "good" and global "bad" and in others the opposite is true. Because the appeal for local vs. global is so subjective and fluid, we need to reframe this debate in terms of something that we can more objectively call "good." And that is *efficiency*. In making efficiency our primary goal, we become neutral to the argument of local vs. global, and instead seek to find the optimal combination of the two.

## References

Kloppenburger Jr., Jack, John Hendrickson, and George W. Stevenson. 1996. "Coming in to the foodshed." *Agriculture and human values* 13, no. 3: 33-42.

Kneafsey, Moya. 2010. "The region in food—important or irrelevant?" *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*: rsq012.

Lang, Tim, David Barling, and Martin Caraher. 2009. *Food policy: integrating health, Environment and society*. Oxford University Press.

For further reading, please visit my website via the QR code at the top of this poster.

## Mission Statement

At Born & Bread, we aim to serve locally sourced bread/food/drink of the highest quality; and we aim to serve everyone. We value every step in the commodity chain, from our customers to our employees to the farmers who picked the grains we source. Additionally, we believe good food is a right, not a luxury. Based on a sliding scale, our prices will accommodate each customer, with those who can afford to paying the full or an inflated price, subsidizing those who cannot usually afford artisan breads. This system relies on honesty, and we will succeed or fail by it.

