

## **Abstract**

LOUGHRIDGE, KENNETH BRANDON LANG. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in the Mid-Atlantic United States: A Sociological Analysis. (Under the direction of Randall Thomson.)

In response to the globalization of agriculture and the proliferation of convenience-based and processed foods, many Americans have joined community supported farms.

Community supported agriculture (CSA) involves people paying a seasonal fee to a local farmer in return for weekly allotments of organically-grown produce. This research investigates the membership, stabilization, and success of selected CSAs in the mid-Atlantic United States. The analyses are based upon survey data from 204 members of five CSAs collected during the 2000 growing season. Interview data from each of the farmers and thirteen of the members supplement the survey data. The data are analyzed primarily with path analytic techniques in order to test hypotheses derived from a thorough search of the relevant literatures. Results show that the majority of the members of these CSAs are white, well educated, wealthy, and female. Although the respondents tend to be interested in environmental issues, alternative agriculture, and community issues, their relative level of interest does not affect their level of investment in the CSA. A higher level of member investment, however, does have a positive effect upon the organizational success of the farms in this study. Organizational success also is found to be negatively affected by the CSA's relative degree of organizational stability, a finding that contradicts some of the literature. The dissertation concludes with a discussion of the methodological, theoretical, and applied implications of these findings. These implications include the finding that while electronic survey techniques have certain advantages, one disadvantage discovered is that electronic return rates are much

lower than the return rates for U.S. mail surveys. Additionally, the process of social movement organization growth and change, as developed by resource mobilization theorists, is found to be applicable to the maturation levels of the CSAs in this study. Finally, strategies are suggested by the findings that can be used by CSA practitioners to render their membership more socially diverse, including the implementation of subsidized shares and payment plans.

**Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in the  
Mid-Atlantic United States: A Sociological Analysis**

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of North Carolina State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## **Biography**

Kenneth Brandon Lang Loughridge was born in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. In May, 1994, he graduated with a B.A. (Honours) in Sociology and Environmental and Resource Studies from Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario. Two years later, he earned an M.A. in Social Ecology from Goddard College in Plainfield, Vermont. In the Fall of 1996, he began his graduate studies in Sociology at North Carolina State University. Brandon's areas of specialization are Community and Social Change.

While at N.C. State, Brandon met Molly B. Monahan. They were part of the same cohort in the Sociology department. They were married on 20 May, 2000 and currently reside in Shaker Heights, Ohio. Molly is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea, Ohio. Brandon is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Sociology at John Carroll University in University Heights, Ohio.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Over the course of the twentieth century, there has been a host of technological, economic, political, and cultural developments throughout the world. One hundred years ago, people were generally isolated from people living in other parts of the world and had little contact with outsiders. Even in America, there was a great amount of cultural diversity that differentiated between the norms, values, and lifestyles of people living in one region of the country from another. We are now at a point in human history, however, where people are more inter-connected with one another. Technological innovations, for example, such as the telephone, the Internet, and the airplane have increased people's sense of mobility. During this time, companies have also become more internationalized, formal political boundaries have been redrawn, and people all over the world have developed an interest in purchasing American consumer goods. In short, the world has become more globalized. The proverbial global village has emerged where people living in one country can wear shoes made in another continent, watch a movie from another continent, and eat dessert made in yet another continent.

This chapter introduces the idea of globalization, explores several factors that have contributed to globalization, identifies many positive and negative consequences of this phenomenon, and discusses several responses to globalization. One such response to globalization is community supported agriculture (CSA) which is the basis of this dissertation. Community supported agriculture involves people becoming members of a local farm and paying a seasonal fee in return for weekly allotments of organically grown produce. This relationship between local residents and farmers is oriented towards

strengthening horizontal ties between community members rather than those between community members and outside agents such as vegetable brokers and the owners of large scale supermarket chains. This chapter concludes by providing a general overview of how this dissertation is organized.

### **The Purpose of this Dissertation**

There are four principal purposes that guide my dissertation research concerning community supported agriculture. The first purpose is to find out who joins these organizations and why. The second is to explore how members' interest in environmental issues, support for alternative agriculture, and degree of community attachment affect their degree of investment in their respective farms. The third purpose is to investigate the relationship between levels of member investment in their CSA and the organizational success of that farm. The fourth purpose of this study is to assess how and why CSAs have changed over time. Finally, and partly on the basis of these findings, we need to address the future of CSA.

There is a wealth of information concerning the demographic bases of voluntary associations, in general, but not a lot is known about CSAs, in particular. As such, the first purpose is to see if CSAs conform to the general patterns of other voluntary associations. Motivations for joining are a logical next step. Do people join for health reasons? Is it to generate a sense of community with others? Is it to transform agriculture? Perhaps, this varies by farm. Do members of CSAs that have been around for a while belong to them for different reasons than members of newly established CSAs?

Of the few sociological studies concerning CSA, none of them address any

differences between members with different types of membership. For example, some CSA members have working memberships, others have non-working memberships; some are full members, others are half members, and some pick up their weekly shares at the farm while others go to a drop-off point in their neighborhood. In short, some CSA members have a greater temporal and/or financial investment in their CSA than others. The second purpose of this research is to find out if members whose interests resonate with the goals of CSA are more invested in their respective CSA than members who are less interested in such issues.

The third purpose of this study is to examine if the degree of member investment in one's particular CSA affects the success of that organization. This is guided by the research question asking if CSAs with a high proportion of working members or full members are more likely to have satisfied members than CSAs with a high proportion of non-working and half members.

The fourth purpose is to see if CSAs conform to the general process of movement emergence as espoused by social movement theorists. For example, many social change theorists contend that social movement organizations (SMOs) become more conservative and stable but less spontaneous over time. Can this be said of CSAs? Is there evidence suggesting that this has already occurred? If so, what is the future of CSA in North America? Will it change the future of farming? What challenges do CSA proprietors and members face as these organizations change?

## **What is Globalization?**

In order to develop insights into why community supported farms have emerged, it is important to be familiar with the concept of globalization. Stated formally, globalization is defined as the development of extensive worldwide economic and social connections among various parts of the world (Levin et al., 2000:397). With respect to the economic connections between countries and regions, globalization involves the liberalization of international trade through the phasing out of tariffs and protective measures. This phasing out process allows foreign competitors to sell goods more cheaply than domestic manufacturers. Historically, for example, there has been a tariff placed upon American wood sold in Canada in order to induce Canadian consumers to purchase domestically grown and milled lumber. Similarly, there has historically been a tariff placed on many foreign-made garments sold in the United States in order to protect domestic textile mills in states such as North Carolina that simply have higher input costs than textile mills in the developing world.

There is also a host of social connections that are established between various regions and countries that relate to globalization. As people's access to various international foods, beverages, and clothing has increased over time, for example, many people living all over the world have developed an appreciation for these new consumer goods. As such, globalization can be seen as something that increases people's awareness about other cultures and bridges the gap between different cultures. Building upon this notion, globalization can promote a sense of unity and understanding as it exposes people to aspects of other cultures and traditions with which they are not likely to be familiar.

## **Factors Contributing to Globalization**

There are many factors that contribute to globalization which include technological, economic, political, and cultural. Technologically speaking, globalization has emerged in response to many technological innovations such as the development of the assembly line, refrigeration, and the airplane. The assembly line, for example, allows companies to produce goods more efficiently than if each individual worker were working on all phases of the production process. As documented by Marx (1975) and Taylor (1911) workers can be more productive when they have specific tasks that they repeat on a regular basis. The emergence of other technological innovations such as refrigeration and air travel allows for goods to be readily transported from one region to another. This allows for Americans to drink beer brewed in Holland that is sold for the same price as premium beer that is brewed in the United States. Likewise, it allows Chinese people to consume crab meat that was harvested in Eastern Canada without necessarily knowing the origins of their meal.

There are also several economic factors that have contributed to globalization. Guided by the prospect of increased profits, many multi-national corporations (MNCs) have set up factories in remote parts of the world in order to take advantage of weaker labor laws, lower levels of union membership, and minimal enforcement of already meager environmental regulations. This process is known as transnationalization (Bradshaw and Wallace, 1996). Many American manufacturers have shifted their manufacturing to South Asia and Mexico where workers are forbidden to organize and wages are less than one-sixth of the American minimum wage (Bradshaw and Wallace, 1996). Even though transportation costs increase when factories are relocated, those

costs are often offset by lower wages.

Building upon these economic considerations, various political agreements have been enacted that establish trading regions between multiple countries. In 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) supplanted the existing limited trade agreement between Canada and the United States to create a trading partnership between Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Virtually all of the trading barriers that had previously existed between these countries were eliminated and one of the world's largest free trade zones was created. In April 2001, American President George W. Bush met with the leaders of every country in the Western hemisphere save Cuba to explore the possibility of expanding NAFTA. President Bush envisions the development of the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) which will pave the way for free trade throughout the Western hemisphere.

The establishment of the European Union is an example of another multiple country free trade zone. In the late 1990s, fifteen Western European countries came together and have created a parliamentary government, adopted a national anthem, and established a common currency. The trade of goods between member countries is very easy and people born in one member country can live and work in any other member country. In some ways, these countries have become what may be referred to as the United States of Europe. As with NAFTA, this agreement is likely to be expanded as countries such as the Czech Republic, Greece, and Turkey seek to join the European Union. Other regions have developed similar agreements. For example, several Asian countries are members of APEC (the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum), four South American countries are members of MERCOSUR (the Southern Cone Common

Market), and CARICOM is a trade agreement that links together many Caribbean countries.

Culturally speaking, there are many factors that contribute to globalization. On one hand, for example, there is a widespread demand for such American products as Coca-Cola, Nike, McDonald's, and Marlboro in dozens of countries all over the world. Many people in Japan, Ireland, Jamaica, Russia, Cameroon, and other countries are enchanted by American goods. Americanization, as it is known, has permeated every corner of the globe and informs the consumer tastes of billions of people. On the other hand, cultural factors such as convenience and affordability also contribute to the spread of globalization. Many Western consumers desire goods that are readily available and affordable. From a business perspective, these notions of availability and affordability are enhanced when companies are able to build manufacturing plants in different countries and sell goods in multiple countries without being impeded.

### **Consequences of Globalization**

The consequences of globalization can be categorized as being either desirable or undesirable. This categorization, however, is very subjective and depends heavily upon one's politics, sense of ethics, and occupation. In other words, what one person may see as being desirable may be seen as being undesirable by others. In general, however, support for globalization resonates with a politically conservative worldview. This view places value in Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' as something that regulates the economy. Corporate CEOs and other elites are likely to endorse globalization as it does away with government intervention and can bring great wealth to business people. It can also be said that opposition for globalization resonates with a politically liberal worldview that

endorses government intervention. Moreover, liberals are likely to support such causes as worker's rights and environmental protectionism. It is worth noting, however, that opposition to free trade is not limited to liberals. Many working class people, union members, and other segments of people with socially conservative political leanings oppose globalization because it leads to job losses in the manufacturing sector when companies move elsewhere.

There are several desirable consequences of globalization. One is that it enables access to consumer goods which normally would not be accessible. This may lay the groundwork for inter-cultural contact and the promotion of tolerance, understanding, and appreciation between people from different cultures. Another desirable consequence may relate to the creation of jobs in developing countries with very high unemployment rates and extremely high rates of poverty. From a conservative perspective, desirable consequences include increased profits and the expansion of business markets.

There are also many undesirable consequences of globalization. As discussed above, many jobs in the United States and Canada have been lost as hundreds of corporations have closed down factories in those countries and shifted their manufacturing to the developing world. America's largest and most successful automobile, electronics, textile, and food producers have all closed plants in the United States only to open new ones in Mexico and other developing countries. Another undesirable consequence is that workers in many of these newly built plants in the developing world are exploited. Many of these workers work 12 hours per day, six days per week for the same amount of money that an American paper boy/girl would make

delivering newspapers after school for a couple of hours each day (Bradshaw and Wallace, 1996).

The proliferation of pollution in the countries where Western MNCs have relocated is also a concern for many people. Simply put, many of these countries do not have the financial resources to enforce their already weak environmental regulations. This means that American companies like Levi Strauss, for example, can release chemical effluent and bleach into the environment at their plant in Juarez, Mexico which was not done at their El Paso, Texas plant.

Another concern that many people share is the loss of community that is likely to accompany the spread of globalization. Historically, a strong sense of community has existed in American neighborhoods and towns. In the pre-World War II era, for instance, people living in North American cities like Chicago, Montreal, and New York would typically support local merchants and get to know them along the way. People often developed a relationship with the local butcher, green grocer, cobbler, tailor, radio repair person, and other people who provided a service. By supporting local merchants, people invested in their communities, fostered a sense of regional self-reliance, and forged their own identity that differentiated them from other groups of people. In this scenario, the horizontal linkages between community members were much stronger than the vertical links between community members and outsiders.

This loss of community thesis fits squarely within what Warren (1963) refers to as 'the Great Change'. Stated formally, the Great Change involves macro-system dominance of community sub-systems (Lyon, 1989). Put another way, the Great Change leads to a situation where the community becomes a reflection of the larger society and a

node of the macro system (Lyon, 1989). This means that linkages between a community's various social units and sub-systems are likely to become more vertically aligned with extra-community systems or outside agents than they are with each other. Warren (1963), in fact, states that the Great Change has significantly strengthened the vertical patterns of systemic linkages for locality-based economic functions while significantly weakening the horizontal patterns of systemic linkages within a community.

According to Warren (1963), the Great Change is accompanied by seven developments in society. These include an increased division of labor, increased differentiation of interests and associations, increased system relationships to the larger city, increased bureaucratization and impersonalization, increased privatization, increased urbanization and suburbanization, and, finally, changing values favoring individualism. In many respects, these developments are central to the modern Western lifestyle where people are less self-reliant than before and depend on strangers to meet basic needs such as the provision of food and clothing. Although these developments have been embraced by many contemporary Americans, Warren's position is that the negative effects of these developments outweigh the positive ones.

Warren's (1963) ideas relating to the Great Change were not new. He clearly borrowed from Toennies conception of *Gesellschaft/Gemeinschaft*, Durkheim's notions of organic and mechanical solidarity and Weber's writings concerning bureaucratization. The declining importance of community also serves as the basis of the mass society thesis as developed by Vidich and Bensmen (1958). Five years prior to the publication of Warren's (1963) book entitled The Community in America, Vidich and Bensmen's (1958) Small Town in Mass Society was published. Based upon their study of life in

the village of Springdale, New York, Vidich and Bensmen (1958) discovered that events in the larger mass society that existed beyond the local community were more important in their effects on Springdale than the events that happened in the village itself. The mass media, standardized public education, and residential mobility, for example, greatly influenced the norms, values, and behavior of the people living there.

Vidich and Bensmen's (1958) work was so important because it contradicted the prevailing view that small communities represented a distinct way of life. Young's (1996) analysis of this study is that the standardization and uniformity of small town life is the result of economic pressures. More specifically, Young (1996) argues that local merchants cannot compete with franchises and big-firm competitors. Over time, this results in a progressively smaller re-circulation of local dollars. As profits leak out of the community, local businesses are, ultimately, forced into bankruptcy which means that more horizontal linkages are severed. As these economic pressures increase, Young (1996) asserts that society becomes increasingly alienating, morally fragmented, segregating, conformist and, rational. In short, Vidich, Bensmen, and other mass society theorists outline that vertical linkages dictate virtually every aspect of community life.

Vidich and Bensmen (1958) published their findings well before the term globalization was even coined. In the late fifties, the vast majority of Americans wore clothes, traveled in cars and used electronic gadgets that were American-made. For this reason, their analysis concerns the strengthening of vertical linkages in America rather than the continent or world. Nevertheless, Vidich and Bensmen's (1958) ideas can be applied to globalization. The international scale is simply a higher unit of analysis that considers the same issues pertaining to the strengthening of vertical ties on a regional or

national level.

Another by-product of globalization is the potential homogenization of culture. As North American, European, and Asian shopping districts begin to house franchises of the same stores and restaurants that sell the same goods and foods, the richness and diversity of the world's many cultures will slowly be eroded. This notion of 'one-worldism' is appealing to some people, especially those who crave predictability. Many others, however, cringe at the possibility of the world's many cultures blending into one mass culture. Warren (1963) observed nearly forty years ago that when looking at public behavior on streets or in stores, a person would be hard-pressed to tell Pittsburgh from Atlanta or Bridgeport from Rockland. The consequences of this are that, over time, people may be hard-pressed to tell the difference between Tokyo and London or Hong Kong and Johannesburg if these trends continue.

### **Responses to Globalization**

There have been many responses to globalization over the years. Perhaps, the most public ones occurred when tens of thousands of protesters arrived in Seattle, Washington in the Fall of 1999, Quebec City in April, 2001, and Genoa, Italy in July, 2001 (Gerstenzang, 2001). Union members, students, environmentalists, advocates for maquila workers in Mexico, indigenous peoples, and members of the International Socialists were united and marched in the streets to oppose the World Trade Organization, the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, and the G-8 Summit (Gerstenzang, 2001). In Seattle, some threw rocks and yelled insults at police officers in riot gear while others were less active in their opposition (Subramanian, 2000). One small group of radical activists even threatened to blow up the Space Needle, a prominent

Seattle landmark, if the meetings were not called off. While activists were marching in Quebec City, a blockade of the Peace Bridge that connects Buffalo, New York, and Fort Erie, Ontario took place. Led by students and industrial workers, a vocal group staged a march across the Peace Bridge into Canada to raise awareness concerning the potential negative effects of the FTAA. Similar events took place in Genoa.

In addition to protests and demonstrations, many people have been doing other things in order to thwart the spread of globalization. In the United States, for example, there is a 'Buy American' movement whereby people shop with a conscience, so to speak, and only purchase goods manufactured in the United States. Many media outlets are also running stories on sweat shops and the working conditions of people employed by American companies in overseas factories.

Recalling Warren's (1963) ideas concerning the Great Change, he suggests that the most effective way to restore a sense of community is to restore horizontal ties between community members. In other words, the dominance of the macro system upon community sub-systems needs to be lessened in order for the community to become less of a reflection of the larger society. Ways in which this can be initiated include supporting local business that are not part of a larger chain, banking at credit unions and smaller banks that do not have an international presence, and voting for political candidates who have local interests at heart. Many Americans have also joined voluntary associations and established cooperative housing arrangements and other cooperative ventures such as child care groups in order to rekindle their sense of community with others. Community supported agriculture is another way that horizontal linkages between community members can be increased. Thousands of Americans have joined

small, independently owned, and organic farms as members. This means that a high proportion of the money that they spend on food goes to local growers rather than to the owners of large multi-national grocery store chains with dozens of franchises all over the continent. Historically, members did not join a CSA solely for the provision of organic produce. Rather, many of them joined in order to build a sense of community with other people who were interested in social justice and environmental issues (McFadden and Groh, 1997). Community supported agriculture would appear to have great potential to restore a sense of community among many people and serves as the basis of this study.

### **The Structure of this Dissertation**

This dissertation has a total of seven chapters. The next chapter, What is Community Supported Agriculture?, is a primer on community supported agriculture (CSA). It presents information on the origins of CSA, the guiding philosophy of CSA, the history of CSA in the United States, and the challenges of operating a successful CSA. The Kimberton CSA in Pennsylvania is also profiled in order to identify the inner workings of a long-standing and successful CSA. The size and contents of weekly shares over the course of the growing season, the cost of a seasonal membership, and other information relating to its membership is discussed.

The third chapter, Literature Review, begins by providing an overview of resource mobilization theory (RMT). The origins of RMT, its guiding assumptions, and criticisms of this theory are reviewed. After reviewing RMT, a brief overview of the voluntary association literature is given. This body of research is important because it lends empirical support for the assertions that RMT theorists make with regard to the social homogeneity of many social movement organizations and the privileged status that

many of these members enjoy. Upon discussing the resource mobilization and voluntary association literatures, the hypotheses are identified and discussed.

The fourth chapter, Methods, provides an overview of how the farms for this study were selected and integrated into the study. It also identifies how the survey was developed, pre-tested, and administered. It outlines how the interviewees were contacted and gives information relating to various aspects of the interview process. This chapter documents how the data were coded and analyzed in addition to how the hypotheses were tested. It concludes by discussing the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval process and historical effects that occurred during the data collection phase. The fifth chapter, Farm Profiles, provides an overview of each of the five CSAs that serve as the basis of this study. Information relating to the size of each farm, the number of years they have been in operation, their respective locations and number of members, other business ventures that they are affiliated with, and any innovative qualities are identified and discussed. Each of the farmers of each of the farms is also briefly profiled. Chapter 6, Results, reports the results of the survey. The chapter concludes with an overview of patterns in the qualitative data that were generated from the interviewing of several members from the farms. The final chapter, Discussion and Conclusions, offers explanations for the findings, discusses the methodological and theoretical implications of the study, and considers the future of CSA.

## **Chapter 2**

### **What is Community Supported Agriculture?**

Many sociologists have long been very interested in studying the resulting benefits and disadvantages of such issues as technological advancement, urban development, and suburbanization. For instance, Durkheim, Toennies, Redfield, and Wirth, among scores of others, examined the differences between traditional and modern communities and wrote extensively about the transition from one type of society to another. In this chapter, these ideas are discussed and related to community supported agriculture (CSA), a type of alternative agriculture that thousands of Americans support in order to access healthy produce and establish stronger bonds with others. This chapter also identifies the origins of CSA, documents its guiding assumptions, identifies its advantages and disadvantages, profiles a working CSA in Pennsylvania, and illustrates its capacity as an effective community building and development tool.

In order to understand the development of modern agriculture, Durkheim's conceptualizations of mechanical and organic solidarity are identified and discussed. Durkheim's notion of mechanical solidarity characterizes a tightly-knit community of people with high levels of social cohesion. Mechanical solidarity promotes the building of friendships and social networks among neighbors who value the importance of investing in the common good of the community by supporting local businesses and helping out others in times of need. In addition, mechanical solidarity is rooted in something called the moral economy where business dealings are guided by fairness for both parties rather than exploitation and greed. In short, mechanical solidarity values regional self-reliance and seeks to establish cooperative rather than competitive

relationships between people. Conversely, organic solidarity typifies the modern, urban lifestyle where people know a lot of people but have few close friends, tend not to trust others yet, ironically, rely on others to meet needs such as transportation and clothing provision. Moreover, business dealings are generally rooted in something called the market economy which tends to be profit driven, competitive, and exploitative. As articulated in the previous chapter, the emergence of organic solidarity relates squarely to Warren's (1963) conception of the Great Change.

With respect to food issues, mechanical solidarity is characterized by Amish life. The Amish tend to eat locally grown produce and are likely to assist in the various stages of producing the food that they consume. Organic solidarity, on the other hand, is characterized by life in present-day New York City where people are most likely to buy their food from supermarkets that sell produce shipped from all over the world. The quest for convenience also guides the consumer behavior of such people who tend to prefer meals that are easy and quick to prepare. Ultimately, the shift from mechanical to organic solidarity has been accompanied by the growing commercialization of agriculture and the increasing commodification of crops. This has placed pressure on many farmers to produce food as cheaply and therefore, as efficiently as possible in order to remain competitive.

Consequently, the face of farming in this country has changed dramatically during the last fifty years. Moreover, many small and family-operated farms that have traditionally sold their produce locally have been gradually displaced by very large corporate-controlled farms that are geared towards operating within the global economy. In the United States, for example, the average farm size increased from 175 acres in the

1940s to 429 acres in the early 1980s (Clunies-Ross and Hildyard, 1992). The current size of the average American farm is 491 acres (United States Bureau of the Census, 2000). Moreover, only one-tenth of one per cent of the American population owns half of the country's productive land and the 400 largest 'superfarms' in America produce more than every farm in Iowa, Illinois, and Florida combined (Clunies-Ross and Hildyard, 1992). In addition, Ehrhardt (1996) states that most produce is shipped an average of 1300 miles before it reaches the average American consumer. Similarly, the Institute for Food and Development Policy (1996) estimates that most American produce is shipped an average of 1500 miles before it reaches the consumer and is stored for up to 14 days before it reaches the grocery store. Finally, Kloppenburg et al. (1996) document that American produce changes hands an average of six times before it is consumed.

### **Contemporary U.S. Agricultural Policy**

Many rural sociologists and agricultural economists contend that American farms are polarized in terms of their size (Buttel and LaRamee, 1988). Browne et al.'s (1992:37) reference to the 'fallacy of the average farm', serves to re-inforce this point. Because American farms tend to differ with respect to their size, it follows that small farm operators face different challenges and opportunities than farmers who operate on a larger scale. For example, members of a small scale farming household are more likely to have off-farm jobs, use different inputs, and have more difficulty in accessing credit than members of a large scale farming household (Browne, 1995). In spite of research that shows that larger farms are not more productive than smaller farms, U.S. agricultural policies have, historically, favored large scale farming operations (Browne et al., 1992). Browne et al. (1992) contend that U.S. agricultural policy is not participatory and that it

consists of a small number of stakeholders who have a vested interest in promoting agribusiness. This sentiment is echoed by McClellan (1988) who suggests that contemporary U.S. agricultural policy favors large producers as it is oriented towards mechanization and accumulation.

### **What is CSA?**

The USDA estimated, in 1980, that only one per cent of American farmers were practicing non-conventional agricultural methods while this number has tripled since then (Reganold, Papendick, and Parr, 1990). One such non-conventional or alternative agricultural practice is known as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), sometimes referred to as subscription farming. In this arrangement, shareholders subscribe to a local farm for regularly provided allotments of produce over the course of the growing season (United States Department of Agriculture, 1993). In short, CSA seeks to establish a partnership between consumers and farmers that revolves around the production of organic produce (Van En, 1995). Moreover, it challenges people to view food as more than a commodity to be exchanged through a set of impersonal market relationships or a bundle of nutrients required to keep our bodies functioning (Kloppenburger et al., 1996). As such, CSA permits people to see the centrality of food to human life as a powerful template around which to build more localized market relationships among persons, social groups, and institutions who have become distanced from each other (Kloppenburger et al., 1996).

In general terms, CSA involves a group of people who usually pay a few hundred dollars in advance to a farm in return for a share of organically grown produce ranging from 4 to 40 pounds once or twice per week (Cicero, 1993). Some CSA farms deliver

weekly shares to people's homes while others either set up convenient pick-up centers or house the produce on the farms, themselves (Cicero, 1993). In addition, some CSA farms offer discounts for weekly assistance, known as working shares, and variable rates depending on a family's ability to pay, while others expect no work in return for membership (Kittredge, 1996). Some CSAs use tractors and other accouterments of modern farming while others use horses, human labor power or have adopted a no-till policy in order to reduce erosion (Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1996). Finally, some farms are operated exclusively as CSAs while others have a percentage of farmland dedicated to growing produce destined to be sold in the open market and/or a percentage of farmland dedicated to other non-CSA enterprises such as cattle raising (Cicero, 1993).

CSA seeks to provide consumers with fresh and organically grown produce that is affordable and eliminates the role of the produce or vegetable broker, thereby returning profits directly to the farmer. Thus, a partnership is established between producer and consumer that reflects aspects of traditional agriculture in that people know where their food is grown and how it is being grown. According to an informational booklet published by the University of Massachusetts Cooperative Extension Service:

**CSA is a partner of mutual commitment between a farm and a community of supporters which provides a direct link between the production and consumption of food. Supporters cover a farm's yearly operating budget by purchasing a share of the season's harvest. CSA members make a commitment to support the farm throughout the season, and assume the costs, risks and bounty of growing food along with the farmer or grower. Members help pay for seeds, fertilizer, water, equipment maintenance, labor, etc. In return, the farm provides, to the best of its ability, a healthy supply of seasonal fresh produce throughout the growing season. Becoming a member creates a responsible relationship between people and the food they**

**eat, the land on which it is grown and those who grow it** (UMass Extension, 1997: 2).

Thus, a mutually supportive relationship between local farmers, growers, and community members is established that results in an economically stable farm operation. In this arrangement, members are assured the highest quality produce, often at below retail prices, while farmers are guaranteed a reliable market for a diverse selection of crops (Van En, 1995). This win-win situation rewards the CSA farmer by re-establishing a sense of economic viability to his/her operation and rewards the CSA member by acquiring healthy food at affordable prices.

Without question, CSA is a more broadly defined set of ideals than a concrete set of ordered principles. According to the USDA (1993), for example, each CSA project is designed to meet the needs of its participants, meaning that tremendous variations exist, including the level of financial commitment and active participation by the shareholders, financing, land ownership, legal form of farm operation, details of payment, and food distribution systems. As such, some CSAs bag and deliver groceries to people's homes while others simply have a big shed where people choose and bag their own produce (Bowman, 1991). Often, CSAs that deliver tend to charge more per share than those who do not deliver shares to their members. In CSAs where people bag their own produce, there is, often, a surplus table where members put food that they do not want. If no other members claim this produce, it is generally donated to local food banks and soup kitchens (Bowman, 1991).

CSAs fall into two categories which include the consumer-initiated model and the farm-initiated model (Kittredge et al., 1996). The former takes place when a community

group acquires land, sets a budget and hires the farmers while the latter takes place when a farmer decides to start a CSA and attract members as an alternative to current marketing practices (Kittredge et al., 1996). All five of the CSAs in this study are farm-initiated. Regardless of a group's chosen approach, Bowman (1991) states that the critical triad of needs in forming a dynamic CSA is comprised of good farmland close to willing consumers and a willing farmer. Thus, any group of producers and consumers with a similar interest in affordable and organically grown produce with access to a requisite amount of productive farmland has the capacity to form a successful CSA.

The principal distinction between CSA and pick-your-own, roadside stands, and the traditional marketing of vegetables is that CSA members often pay their membership fee in advance of the growing season. Moreover, members explicitly agree to accept less than the projected harvest if a crop is damaged or fails (Bowman, 1991). This annual commitment of members gives farms a sense of security where setbacks are absorbed collectively rather than by the individual farmer. Thus, if a farmer's attempt at growing cauliflower is unsuccessful, s/he is still compensated for his/her work at a fair-market price. Van En (1995), for example, documents that after a rainstorm dumped 8 inches of rain in three hours, the winter baking squash had to be picked prematurely. Rather than the farmer losing \$3500, however, the hundred members basically lost \$35 per share which is likely to be off-set by greater than expected yields of other crops (Van En, 1995).

In most cases, there is also a core group that is made up of the farmers, distributors, other employees, and committed volunteers who make decisions concerning short and long-term goals, seasonal expenditures, publicity, outreach, and social events

(UMass Extension, 1997). Many successful CSAs also have a core group of committed volunteers who help to manage distribution sites, plan the harvest, and recruit new members (Hendrickson, 1996). In addition, members of the core group assist in the development of a detailed annual budget for the CSA that details wages, maximum membership, price per share, and any other pertinent aspects of the operation (Clunies-Ross and Hildyard, 1992). Among other things, this allows the farmer or farmers to spend more time farming and less time performing administrative tasks that can be performed by willing members. Moreover, it fosters a sense of togetherness and teamwork which are essential contributing factors to any successful CSA endeavor.

### **The Origins of CSA**

According to Cicero (1993), CSA has been an integral part of Japanese society since the mid-1960s. In 1965, a group of Japanese women who were concerned about the increase in imported foods, the consistent loss of farm land to development, and the migration of farmers to the city, approached a family farm with the idea of providing them with regular allotments of fresh fruits and vegetables (Van En, 1995). The farmer agreed, a contract was born, and the first '*teikei*' concept emerged which literally translates into partnership but philosophically means 'food with a farmer's face on it' (Van En, 1995). CSA has also been widely adopted in Switzerland, since the early-1980s, and has based its success on long-term thinking, the spirit of cooperation, and commitment of farmers and consumers to become successful in meeting their food needs in a sustainable manner (Vander Tuin, 1992). The Swiss CSA beginnings were in Baden when a farm owner and local people came together to form the group Tomnibur which translates into Jerusalem artichoke (Vander Tuin, 1992). Both of these countries would

seem to have cultures more favorable to communitarian experiments than the United States.

The person who is generally credited with bringing CSA to the United States is Jan Vander Tuin who, in 1985, left a CSA in Switzerland to start a similar project in South Egremont, Massachusetts with Robyn Van En (Bowman, 1991). Van En (1995), a leading CSA advocate, farm operator, and executive director of the non-profit group CSA North America (CSANA), dubbed their proposed endeavor ‘community supported agriculture’ which is a term that has been used since. Over the course of the last 17 years, CSA has spread throughout North America and scores have been formed and supported by people interested in health, environmental, and economic justice issues. In 1993, for example, the USDA (1993) estimated that there were more than 400 CSA farms in the United States while researchers at the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems at the University of Wisconsin-Madison estimated that, in 1996, there were an estimated 1000 CSAs in North America (Hendrickson, 1996). These range in size from a farm in eastern Pennsylvania that farms a quarter of an acre and offers 12 shares to others in Northern California that farm multiple acres and offer hundreds of shares (Van En cited in Bourne, 1991; Devault, 1991).

### **The Association between Rudolf Steiner and CSA**

When CSA emerged in the United States, many of its practitioners were heavily influenced by the ideas of Rudolf Steiner. Steiner was a philosopher, educator, theologian, farmer, and architect who has written dozens of books and articles, and given lectures all over the world. He was born in 1861 in the former Yugoslavia but lived and taught all over the world. Steiner’s legacy is that he developed an innovative approach to

agriculture known as biodynamics and an innovative approach to education known as Waldorf Schooling.

When CSA emerged in the mid-1980s, the majority of practitioners used biodynamic growing methods (Moore, 1997). According to Wildfeuer (1995), biodynamic agriculture is based upon a meta-physical understanding of the Earth that combines spirituality, philosophy, and scientific knowledge. This is an approach to agriculture that is oriented towards long-term ecological stability. A central tenet of biodynamic agriculture is that the farm is seen as being a closed system and nothing is added to the soil and gardens that does not come from the soil itself. The ideal of the self-contained farm, for example, is based on a farming system that has the right number of animals to provide manure for fertility while being fed from the farm (Wildfeuer, 1995). According to Steiner, the recycling of vegetable waste, manure, leaves, food scraps, and other life forces contain the vitality to build up the soil which is seen as being alive and the basis for the quality of the food grown in the soil. As a soil enhancing strategy, biodynamic farmers use a variety of tinctures and preparations that are used to organize the chaotic elements within compost piles (Wildfeuer, 1995). Biodynamic farmers also follow cosmic rhythms and conduct various farming activities, such as planting and harvesting according to moon phases, in an effort to promote balance and maximize the nutritional quality of the food that they grow.

Moore (1997) also states that most early CSAs had an association with a Waldorf schooling community. Waldorf education is rooted in the philosophical notion that learning is an artistic process that is most successful when it speaks to a child's individual experience. Waldorf educators see teaching and learning as being a holistic enterprise

that is often associated with concepts such as creativity, self-discovery, experiential learning, integration, independence, continuity, and self-expression. Waldorf students cycle through twelve grades like public school students but have fewer classes over the course of the day than students in a more conventional setting. A central aspect of the Waldorf system is the main lesson which is an uninterrupted morning lesson that relates to a particular topic or theme. This theme is studied intensively for one month. For each main lesson, students create a main lesson book which charts their learning and development over the course of that month. Proponents of Waldorf education see the lesson book as the product of learning. In these main lessons, every student learns about language, math, and science. They also study music, athletics, drama, and arts including crocheting, pottery, and woodworking in order to develop manual dexterity, coordination, and patience. Internationally, there are more than 600 Waldorf schools and this approach to education is considered to be the largest independent schooling movement in the world. In North America, there are approximately 100 of these schools.

### **The Guiding Assumptions of CSA Practitioners and Members**

The guiding assumptions of CSA practitioners are rooted in two basic notions. One is that farms must be viewed in ecological terms. The other is that CSA has the potential to foster cooperative and meaningful relationships between people by bringing them together to support a project that they believe in. Because CSAs tend to exist on a very small-scale and strive to be ecologically balanced, the following assumptions tend to be shared by CSA practitioners: First, the conventional practice of monocropping is inefficient and depletes the soil (Lovell, 1991). Second, pesticide use is harmful to all living beings and should not be used in agricultural practices (Van En, 1992). Third,

agribusiness has commodified the practice of growing food and has centralized many aspects of food production (Clunies-Ross and Hildyard, 1992). The following corollaries of these three assumptions are also shared by virtually all CSA practitioners: First, polycropping guards against erosion and nutrient loss. Second, organic and/or bio-dynamic farming practices do not harm the environment and should be used whenever possible. Third, small-scale farming can successfully operate outside of the global economy and serve to decentralize all aspects of food production.

During the twentieth century, farms have not only become much more mechanized and automated but farmland has also been concentrated into larger and larger holdings and fewer and fewer hands (Berry, 1982). This has been accompanied by the increased use of machines, genetic engineering, monocropping, and pesticides which has completely transformed the face of traditional agriculture. Kloppenburg et al. (1996: 114-5) ask:

**Where are we now? We are embedded in a global food system structured around a market economy that is geared to the proliferation of commodities and the destruction of the local. We are faced with transnational agribusinesses whose desire to extend and consolidate their global reach implies the homogenization of our food, our communities and our landscapes. We live in a world in which we are ever more distant from one another and from the land, so we are increasingly less responsible to one another and to the land.**

The agro-industrial complex, for example, is characterized by increased specialization and the geographical segmentation of production. Over time, this perpetuates the phenomenon of globalization by centralizing strategic assets, resources, responsibilities, decisions, and farming operations, themselves (Robinson, 1997). In short, this means that farmers need to align themselves with seed companies and distributors, increase their

yields and maximize their efficiency in order to remain competitive in the global marketplace.

The conventional agricultural practice of monocropping, the planting of a single crop strain over vast areas, leads to the depletion of soil nutrients, the increased susceptibility to pests and crop diseases, the genetic uniformity of crops, and require heavy pesticide applications for protection (Ehrlich and Ehrlich, 1991). The hidden costs of pesticide use to American farmers and the public, however, include increased health care costs for people who apply the pesticides, work in the fields that have been sprayed with pesticides, eat food that has been sprayed with pesticides, and consume water in regions with pesticide-contaminated water-tables (Ehrlich and Ehrlich, 1991). Moreover, the pesticide 'treadmill' is a very serious problem that involves pests developing higher levels of genetic resistance over successive generations to pesticides which requires higher and, ultimately, even higher doses to kill them effectively (Ehrlich and Ehrlich, 1991). Unfortunately, for many farmers who do not have the financial resources to wean the land off chemicals and restore the natural processes that ensure fertility and keep pests in check, they have little option but to remain on the pesticide 'treadmill' even if it jeopardizes the long-term sustainability of their farms (Clunies-Ross and Hildyard, 1992).

Another important aspect of modern agribusiness is that agro-chemical companies have expanded their interests well beyond fertilizers and pesticides to seeds. This vertical integration of agribusinesses means that large multi-national petro-chemical and pharmaceutical companies such as Shell, ICI, and Ciba-Geigy have purchased nearly 1000 international seed houses to become three of the top ten seed providers in the world (Clunies-Ross and Hildyard, 1992). With the concentration of seed production into fewer

and fewer hands, the range of available seeds will lessen, and traditional strains will be difficult to access thereby exacerbating the homogenization of crop varieties and produce around the world. In the United States, agribusiness is also aligning itself with food retailing and processing companies in order to increase their control over food production from ‘seedling to supermarket’ (Clunies-Ross and Hildyard, 1992).

Wendell Berry (1982) refers to conventional farming practices as ‘community-killing agriculture’ and to modern agribusiness which has promoted so-called efficiency at the expense of community and quantity at the expense of quality. Food production has, unfortunately, become profit-driven and operates according to the business principles of efficiency, utility maximization, competitiveness, and calculated self-interest that characterize the market economy (Kloppenburger et al., 1996). Sustainable agriculture, on the other hand, is characterized by the moral economy which borrows from Durkheim’s concept of mechanical solidarity to describe exchange mediated by trust, respect, fairness, and face-to-face interaction (Kloppenburger et al., 1996). Kloppenburger et al. (1996) state that self-reliant locally or regionally based food systems comprised of diversified farms that use sustainable practices stand counterposed to the global food system. This is because their goals are to supply fresher, more nutritious foodstuffs to small-scale processors and consumers to whom producers are linked by bonds of community as well as economy.

According to Robert Rodale (1972), the term ‘organic’ was developed by his father, J.I. Rodale, in the late 1930s to describe the natural method of gardening and farming that simply posits ‘if it’s synthetic, avoid it’. The elder Rodale is considered to be the Father of the alternative agriculture movement. He established the Rodale Press

and the Rodale Institute in eastern Pennsylvania in the 1940s. Both of these organizations continue to serve the needs of organic farmers all over the world. On a philosophical level, Rodale (1972) contends that organic living is a state of mind that recognizes the interdependence of all living beings and places humans within nature rather than as guardians of nature.

An often-cited USDA report entitled “Report and Recommendations on Organic Farming,” published in 1980, concludes that organic farming is energy-efficient, environmentally sound, productive, stable, and tends toward long-term sustainability (Reganold, Papendick, and Parr, 1990). This reflects, in part, the principals of sustainable or alternative agriculture which is a system-level approach to understanding the complex interactions within agricultural ecologies. Alternative agriculturalists seek to address such farming issues as high energy costs, groundwater contamination, soil erosion, loss of productivity, depletion of fossil resources, low farm incomes, and risks to human health and wildlife habitats (Reganold, Papendick, and Parr, 1990).

Hamlin and Shepard (1993) state that an agricultural system that enhances community, individual freedom, perceptions of self-worth, and social equality must stem from a system that is in the hands of many small proprietors. This outlook is rooted in the belief that centralized food production desensitizes people to important food issues and decreases their awareness concerning the effects of pesticides, labor violations, and genetic engineering. Homogenization is another consequence of the global market place and constrains people’s abilities to purchase produce varieties that do not store well or take longer to grow than others. In a USDA research brief looking at CSA, it is stated that:

**Since our existence is primarily dependent on farming, we cannot entrust this essential activity solely to the farming population-- just 2% of Americans. As farming becomes more and more remote from the life of the average person, it becomes less able to provide us with clean, healthy, life giving food or a clean, healthy, life-giving environment** (United States Department of Agriculture, 1993: 1).

Clearly, proponents of CSA seek not only to raise the profile of general agricultural issues but to also assist small-scale farmers and carve out a niche for them. By directly supporting small-scale farms, CSA proponents circulate money within a local system thereby ensuring that their spending benefits their community. Perhaps, most importantly, it gives people the chance to invest in food production practices that complement their worldview. It also provides the farmer with the opportunity to spend people's money in a manner that is consistent with their beliefs.

### **The Main Goals of CSA**

According to Van En (cited in Bourne, 1991), CSA creates a direct connection between the people who will be eating the food and the people who are growing it. Thus, Van En (1992) states that the main goal of CSA is to develop participating farms to their highest ecological potential and to develop a network that will encourage and allow other farms and people to become involved. Another important goal, which is related to the previous one, is that CSA has the potential to empower people, first, on an individual level and then on a community level to sensitize themselves to food issues and become involved in producing the food that they eat (Van En cited in Bourne, 1991). Clunies-Ross and Hildyard (1992:68), state that:

**At issue is the question of power, of who controls the land, inputs, production, marketing, research, decision-making and policy, and with what aims and priorities in mind. In that respect, what unites these groups, from farmers to environmentalists, from consumers to**

**animal welfare campaigners, is not an identical vision of the future, but the desire to regain an element of control.**

Thus, CSA affords consumers the opportunity to control the quality of the produce that they eat rather than blindly accept the standards of quality set by national grocery store chains (Stone, 1988). Most importantly, CSA gives people the power to choose what they eat and toward whom they will direct their money in return for food. It also gives people the power to reject hybridized and pesticide-laden produce grown in other countries where workers are exploited and profits are directed toward vertically-integrated multi-national corporations that perpetuate globalization, efficiency, and mass-consumerism.

### **CSA as a Social Movement**

CSA has united thousands of people throughout the world who share disdain for modern agricultural practices. They believe that small-scale and organic farms that grow a diversified range of crops can restore farming's place as a community-based activity. Through international, national, and regional conferences along with newsletters, media exposure, university assistance, and other sources of support, proponents of CSA are coming together, gaining momentum, and seeking to redefine the relationship between the farmer and the consumer. Lovell (1991:107) outlines that:

**CSA is a grassroots action which allows people to reclaim their rights to appropriate and healthy agriculture and an actual relationship with the land. CSA can create a new social structure for a community, providing an arena for people to gather and work together in rhythm with the seasons and cycles of the farm, cleaning, storing, canning, drying, and cooking their produce.**

This sentiment resonates with the mission statement of the Philadelphia Community Farm in Osceola, Wisconsin which reads, "To restore health and vitality to people,

animals, plants, and to the Earth” (Cicero, 1993). Undeniably, the growth of CSA has, according to its proponents, shattered the myth of existing expertise with a new set of questions concerning the efficiency and quality of agricultural production along with the need for increased community self-reliance and control (Freundlich, Collins, and Wenig, 1979). In turn, this has motivated people not only to call for more responsible methods of production, soil treatment, crop rotation, and pest management but also to take more of an active interest in how their food is grown, processed, and distributed.

### **The Advantages of CSA**

The win-win nature of CSA brings advantages to both consumers and farmers. The CSA consumer, for instance, benefits because all produce is garden fresh and fully ripe and most often picked just before it is either delivered or picked up. Also, there is an assortment of fruits, vegetables, and herbs which are not always sold in grocery stores (Ehrhardt, 1996). Moreover, consumers are offered varieties of produce beyond the most popular ones that have been genetically altered to withstand long periods of storage, that stand up to rough conditions during picking, packing, and shipping in order to appear colorful on the store shelf (Kittredge, 1996). Meanwhile, the farmer benefits because there is an early cash flow at the time of planting rather than at harvest, so that the grower can concentrate on the horticultural aspects of the operation since marketing is completed at the beginning of the season (Ehrhardt, 1996). Through direct sales to community members, for example, farmers also receive better prices for their crops, gain some financial security, and are relieved of the burden of marketing (United States Department of Agriculture, 1993). This increased financial security also benefits farmers by

increasing their credibility when approaching banks or credit unions for either mortgages or loans (Van En, 1995).

CSAs also benefit society, in general, because they pay farmers enough to keep operations financially soluble which means that CSAs are a way to keep land in farming (Kittredge, 1996). Moreover, CSA members are supporting a regional food system that secures the agricultural integrity of their region, re-invests money into local ecologically sound agriculture, and fosters a community building experience whereby people get to know their neighbors and the people who grow their food (Van En, 1995). CSA, for instance, can help to bridge socio-economic gaps by bringing together people, on the one hand, who collect food stamps with those, on the other hand, who pay extra to have food delivered to their homes (Van En, 1995). Ehrhardt (1996:2) claims that:

**Perhaps the most important thing is that the nature of the relationship between the grower and the consumer is changed, shifting from adversarial to cooperative. The greatest long-term benefit goes to the land itself. CSA encourages sustainable farming practices, which do not degrade soil and water.**

Many CSA proponents would, in fact, agree that CSAs embody an emerging ecological perspective which places the ethics of life and nature as the working criteria to screen and guide development for a sustainable future (Nozick, 1992). This ecological dimension, rooted in sustainability, is exemplified by the fact that share prices are designed to include the full cost of production and attempt to keep farms economically viable and environmentally sustainable by providing a just compensation for labor, equity, investment, and degradation of the land (Bowman, 1991).

## **The Challenges of CSA**

One of the biggest challenges of CSA is to stagger crops so that everything matures at different times and can produce yields throughout the entire growing season rather than in periodic bunches. According to Stone (1988), it is a given that CSA members do not want to receive 80 heads of lettuce or 95 pounds of carrots all at one time. Rather, members are most satisfied when they receive a regular assortment of diversified produce throughout the entire season (Stone, 1988). Thus, a main challenge is to have enough variety to make eating vegetables interesting all year-round by learning how to grow a number of different crops, how to stagger the crops, and how to test-start the crops to determine the best taste and appearance (Innis, 1994). Other challenges of CSA revolve around learning which fruits and vegetables grow best in one's region, how much produce should go into an individual weekly share and how many people should be involved (Devault, 1991). Many CSAs have negotiated all of these challenges and they are by no means debilitating. Rather, these obstacles, can be overcome with a little bit of patience, hard work, and perseverance.

## **The Disadvantages of CSA**

The principal limitation of CSA is that it is not well-suited for all farm operators and consumers. Farmers and consumers are severely restricted if they do not work together in developing mutually appealing plans that outline such things as the variety of produce, delivery schemes, price, quantity of shares, and duration of commitment. Most importantly, a commitment to negotiation and adaptation is critical to overcoming problems, experimenting to see what works best, and making any corresponding adjustments. Guinness McFadden, a farmer in Potter Valley, California, for instance, had

a very difficult time introducing new varieties into his garden, staggering plantings, and getting people an amount of food that was not too much for them (Devault, 1991).

Neither McFadden nor his supporters were well-suited to the CSA concept because they did not work together in mutually educating one another concerning weekly share items, the preservation of produce through canning and freezing, and appropriate delivery mechanisms. After one year, McFadden ended up abandoning the CSA idea because, in addition to the above-mentioned problems, he simply believed that his CSA farm grew too quickly and became unmanageable (Devault, 1991).

### **Kragnes' Secrets for Success**

Besides good farmland, willing consumers, and a willing farmer, many CSA farmers can also increase their chances for success by working closely with shareholders, educating them about important food issues, offering them cooking and storage tips, and asking for their feedback. According to Verna Kragnes (cited in Cicero, 1993), successful CSA leaders share six secrets for keeping shareholders involved with their endeavor as long-term partners which include:

- 1. Making the farm feel like a second home;**
- 2. Getting members' kids on your side;**
- 3. Remembering that many members know next-to-nothing about growing food;**
- 4. Digging out your best recipes;**
- 5. Growing something different; and**
- 6. Asking members how they like the CSA**

The first point, making people feel involved is important because it re-inforces people's sense of connection with each other that can be enhanced with such things as scarecrow building competitions, rotten tomato fights, and harvest festivals. Getting members kids interested, the second point, is critical in fostering a family-level understanding concerning important food, environmental, and social issues that most children, if not most people, take for granted.

The third point, remembering that many people do not know a lot about the food they eat, is important as the CSA farmer needs to educate people about farm issues, gardening techniques, and storage methods. If people are not familiar with such ideas, their abilities to help on the farm and use all of their food will be diminished. Providing recipes, the fourth point, is also important so that people expand their range of cooking options and use all of their food without eating the same meal every night. The fifth point, grow something different, relates to the previous point as a diversity of produce keeps members from getting bored with the same food every night. The final point, ask members how they like the CSA, gives members the option to voice any concerns and make any suggestions to improve their arrangement.

### **A Profile of a CSA in Pennsylvania**

The Kimberton CSA is profiled in order to offer insights into the changing content of the weekly allotments of produce that are offered over the course of a typical growing season in the northern United States. The Kimberton CSA, located in Kimberton, Pennsylvania was started in March, 1987 by Barb and Kerry Sullivan who, upon investing \$10,000 of their own money, attracted forty families who committed to paying them an average of \$600 per share, roughly \$20 per week, in return for a season's

worth of fresh produce (Stone, 1988). During the first year, families received fresh produce twice a week for seven months from early May until mid-December for one membership share. Families were not required to work on the farm but were required to pick up their weekly allotments and were invited to the farm to assist in tasks relating to planning, planting, weeding, and picking as well as for a seasonal harvest festival. Over the course of the growing season, families received everything from beans, beets, and cantaloupe to spinach, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, and turnips (Stone, 1988). Interestingly, the yields for some crops such as cauliflower, corn, leeks, and rutabagas were much lower than anticipated but the yields for other crops, including beans, cucumbers, and tomatoes were much higher than anticipated.

A typical share in May, for example, included 3 heads of lettuce, one half pound of mustard, one half pound of radishes, and one and a quarter pounds of spinach (Stone, 1988). Meanwhile, in late July, members received 1 pound of beets, one and a half pounds of carrots, 2 pounds of cucumbers, 2 heads of lettuce, 3 ounces of marjoram, one and a quarter pounds of onions, one and a half pounds of peppers, two and a half pounds of potatoes, 4 pounds of spaghetti squash, and 6 pounds of tomatoes (Stone, 1988). In late September, members received generous amounts of basil, broccoli, cabbage, celery, eggplant, kale, lettuce, parsley, peppers, potatoes, winter squash, and tomatoes (Stone, 1988). In late October, the semi-weekly harvest included 2 pounds of broccoli, 2 pounds of kale, 4 pounds of potatoes, and 1 pound of spinach (Stone, 1988).

As mentioned earlier, negotiation, experimentation, and adaptation are very important aspects of a successful CSA project. When planning for 1988, for example, Stone (1988) notes that the members of the Kimberton CSA felt that the amount of food

per share was too much for many families so it was suggested that the amount of food per share and the cost per share be lowered. Everybody agreed upon this at the February membership meeting and shares were halved in size and available for between \$270 and \$370, depending on the person's or family's ability to pay based on their income (Stone, 1988). Many of the members of the Kimberton CSA are also members of the Kimberton Waldorf School, the second oldest Waldorf school in America. Based upon this information, it can be seen that weekly allotments can be very diverse. In addition to illustrating the unpredictability of CSA, this profile also shows how farmers can learn from their past experiences and implement changes fairly easily.

### **CSA as a Community Building and Development Tool**

CSA proponents are likely to agree that it extends well beyond growing great organic produce and dividing the bounty equally among members as it nurtures a cooperative community spirit and fosters a deep sense of respect for the Earth (Cicero, 1993). CSA embodies an ethic or understanding that farming is the lifeblood of communities that directly effects people's sense of interaction with each other, their appreciation for nature, their physical and spiritual well-being, and their lifestyles.

Kittredge (1996:260) states that:

**To the extent that alternative institutions recenter our lives in small, local groups of people with whom we have mutual obligations, they can rebuild human community. CSAs, in particular, can satisfy the most fundamental human need and do so in a way that provides us with a delicious enjoyment, bonds us in useful work together, and humbles us with continual consciousness of our place in the wonder of nature.**

Innis (1994) states that the potential for CSA to bring families and neighbors closer together is enormous and can successfully restore a sense of community among people

yearning for connection with others. In fact, CSA brings people together in the same way that barn building, quilting, joint harvesting, and church repair have in past decades (Kittredge, 1996). Thus, CSA has the potential to foster a sense of togetherness among people and empower them to become more collectively minded, long-term oriented, and committed to revitalizing their communities.

Using the jargon of community development practitioners, CSA also satisfies the criterion of community re-investment through import substitution and sweat equity (Nozick, 1992). This is because import substitution seeks to keep money circulating within a given community by promoting a sense of self-reliance and giving people the chance to meet the majority of their needs on a local level. Similarly, sweat equity allows people to invest in projects with their time and effort rather than in strictly financial terms and this allows them establish a sense of ownership and subsidize their income through labor and other volunteer activities. With reference to CSA, import substitution empowers people to reduce their dependence upon grocery chains and invest in local farms. Meanwhile, sweat equity allows people of limited financial means to become CSA members and subsidize their membership through assisting with aspects of the operation.

### **Prospects for the Future of CSA**

Several years ago, Community Supported Agriculture of North America, Inc. (CSANA) predicted that there would be 10,000 CSAs in the United States by the year 2000 (Cicero, 1993). Although such growth has not been attained, supporters of CSA remain optimistic that many more CSAs will emerge. In addition, Van En (cited in Cicero, 1993) projected that CSAs will one day feed everyone from Weight Watchers

group members and college students to hospital patients and prisoners. Moreover, Van En (1995) envisions that the underlying concept of CSA can extend to almost any cottage industry and bring about such things as community supported auto mechanics whereby people pay a yearly fee in advance which the mechanic can use to pay for a new lift that s/he could not otherwise afford in return for regular service. Barter and trade exchange programs are also likely to further complement CSA projects by allowing other growers to exchange grapes, maple syrup, and a variety of other goods in return for weekly shares (Gibson, 1993). Finally, many proponents agree that CSA can become even more successful if they become a permanent rather than seasonal alternative to grocery shopping by offering such things as organic meats and breads (Cicero, 1993).

### **Conclusion**

Community supported agriculture seeks to foster feelings of community and ecological sustainability by bringing together farmers and consumers in an arrangement that is mutually beneficial. Consumers benefit from CSA because they are provided with weekly allotments of fresh produce at an affordable price and can learn much more concerning how their food is produced. Farmers, on the other hand, also benefit because they are guaranteed markets and rewarded at a fair market value for their labor, and equity. In short, CSA initiates a win-win situation that not only benefits farmers and consumers but it also benefits society, in general, by opposing the use of pesticides, monocropping, and other aspects of modern farming in favor of organic and polycropping methods that enrich rather than deplete soil and do not pollute the natural environment.

In closing, CSA is an innovative alternative to conventional agriculture that can sensitize people to important food issues, enhance their sense of community, and promote an ecological sustainable lifestyle that is oriented towards positive health, long-term thinking, and cooperating with others. The next chapter reviews the sociological literature pertaining to resource mobilization theory and voluntary association in order to better understand the demographic bases of CSA membership, reasons why people join such organizations and, the emergence of social movement organizations.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Literature Review**

In order to understand community supported agriculture better, two sociological literatures are examined. The first, resource mobilization theory, is a theory of social change that examines how social movement organizations recruit members, develop goals, and set out to achieve those stated goals. The second literature examines trends in participation in voluntary associations over time. More specifically, the voluntary association literature identifies the social bases of group membership, considers how membership patterns have changed over time, and explores international group membership trends.

These literatures complement each other in three very important ways. First, a central unit of analysis within the resource mobilization literature is the social movement organization which fulfills all of the characteristics of a voluntary association. This is because social movement organizations maintain an organizational structure and bring people together to fulfill a range of desired goals. Second, the resource mobilization literature is much more theoretical than the voluntary association literature. This allows for several theoretical insights made by resource mobilization theorists to be used to explain patterns and trends within the voluntary association literature. Third, the voluntary association literature is much more empirical than the resource mobilization literature. This allows for many statistical findings to be used to offer evidence in support of the theoretical assertions made by such resource mobilization theorists as Olsen, Gamson, Lipsky, McCarthy, and Zald. In short, these two literatures point to the same general conclusions which can be synthesized and used to garner insights

concerning many important facets of community supported agriculture.

In this study, the resource mobilization and voluntary association literatures are merged in order to understand community supported agriculture. The resource mobilization literature is used to identify the role of CSA members as agents of social change. The voluntary association literature is used to explain the social bases of CSA membership and reasons why people join such organizations. This chapter begins with a brief overview of social movement emergence. In this section, the five interrelated components of social change are identified, the term social movement is defined, and two theories of social movement emergence are discussed. Next, an overview of the resource mobilization theory literature is provided. Following this, an overview of the voluntary association literature is given.

This chapter concludes by stating the hypotheses that serve as the basis of this study. These hypotheses are grounded within the two above-mentioned literatures in order to understand if and why some people are more likely to join a CSA than others. A conceptual model is used to depict the hypothesized relationships between member characteristics and member interests, member interests and the investment in the member's CSA, member investment and the success of the organization, and organizational stability and organizational success.

### **Social Movement Emergence**

Social change is defined by Vago (1999:9) as “the process of planned or unplanned qualitative or quantitative alterations in social phenomena that can be analyzed in terms of five interrelated components.” The first of the five components is the identity of change which corresponds with the specific social phenomenon that is being changed,

namely behaviors, attitudes, and authority structures. The second component of social change is the level of change which differentiates between individual, group, organizational, institutional, and societal change. The third component is the duration of change, and this corresponds with the length of time associated with the social change activities. Magnitude of change is the fourth component, and it identifies whether change entails reform or revolution. The fifth component of social change is rate of change. This component differentiates between slow and fast change processes.

Supporters of community supported agriculture can be seen as agents of social change because many of them are working to redefine American agriculture. This is done by supporting local farmers, purchasing their food directly from the farmers, and endorsing organic growing methods. Based upon Vago's (1999) definition of social change, the identity of change relating to community supported agriculture is two-fold. This is because proponents of CSA are seeking to change people's perceptions of conventional agriculture along with urging them to support a farming system that is more locally based. The level of change associated with CSA is currently oriented towards individual and group level change. This is because CSAs are generally oriented towards attracting individual people and families to become members.

With respect to the duration of change, community supported agriculture is long-term because CSA advocates seek to develop a farming system that is sustainable and able to continue indefinitely without depleting soil nutrients, water sources, and other essential resources in farming. The magnitude of change is based upon incremental changes and the reformation of those farming practices and policies that are seen as being anti-ecological. Finally, the rate of social change based upon CSA has been, thus far,

generally slow but it is likely to pick up speed as people become more aware of the problems associated with chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and the genetic modification of seeds. Based upon Vago's (1999) definition of social change, the above-information suggests that proponents of community supported agriculture are to be considered to be fairly conservative in their quest for change.

Social change is often actualized through the efforts of a social movement. A social movement is defined as being an organized effort undertaken to promote or resist social change using both institutionalized and non-institutionalized forms of political action (Marx and McAdam, 1994). In other words, social movements tend to embrace a range of tactics and goals that are designed to work within or outside of accepted political channels. The women's movement and the environmental movement are examples of social movements. People associated with the environmental movement are generally concerned about issues relating to pollution, acid rain, and deforestation but their tactics and goals are often very different. For instance, members of Earth First!, a radical environmental organization, have been known to sabotage logging equipment and spike trees. Those tactics, however, are not endorsed by more mainstream environmentalists who favor more conservative strategies such as passing out leaflets, getting petitions signed, and lobbying governmental representatives.

Because members of social movements often have a wide range of tactics and goals, social movements are seen as being a collection of different social movement organizations (SMOs). Social movement organizations are generally comprised of people with similar tactics, goals, and organizational strategies who maintain a specific agenda within a much larger movement. It is my contention that CSAs are social

movement organizations within the wider alternative and/or sustainable agricultural movement. Community supported agriculture, for example, seeks to promote the use of organic growing methods, support local farmers, and generate a sense of community among members. It is important to note that these interests are subsumed by the alternative and/or sustainable agricultural movement which has brought together scores of activists, farmers, lobbyists and educators not only to raise awareness concerning issues relating to pesticide use and genetic engineering but also to offer solutions to many of these problems. Like the environmental and women's movements, the alternative and/or sustainable agriculture movement is very diverse and exists on a continuum that accommodates both radicals who seek to revolutionize society and reformers who prefer to work within the system.

#### *Two Theories of Social Movement Emergence*

Social change theorists contend that there are at least two general ways in which social movements emerge. One school of thought is that there is a strain in society which thrusts people into collective action. Smelser's (1962) theory of collective behavior or strain theory, as it is sometimes known, suggests that a particular problem or strain, such as uncertainty, anxiety or widespread social isolation, has the potential to galvanize people into a group and promote a set of harmonious, trusting, and meaningful relationships among them. In fact, once people join forces with others, many of their fears are alleviated since they feel as though something is being done. Without question, people join CSAs precisely because they do not feel a sense of connection with the people from whom they purchase their food. CSA thereby provides people with the opportunity to become active members of a food producing community.

Resource mobilization theorists are in full agreement that a strain in society serves as the impetus for social movement emergence. Another guiding assumption of strain theory is that people have the resources to create and maintain a social movement. Resource mobilization theorists, however, assumes that the availability of resources is not equal for everybody. Thus, resource mobilization theorists contend that the success of the social movement depends upon the members' collective access to cultural, social, and physical capital such as leadership skills, social networks, and money. These serve to raise awareness, bring people together, and pay for travel costs and other expenses. In short, resource mobilization theory contends that wealthy people and those with the time to join various groups are more likely to be able to overcome their isolation and anxiety than people of fewer means and those who do not have the time to invest in group activities. Resource mobilization theory explains better than strain theory why people join some types of social movements, especially those, like CSAs, where membership is often expensive and time consuming.

### **Resource Mobilization Theory**

As stated above, resource mobilization theory suggests that social change is the product of an organized and well-funded effort to change the status quo. This is not a radical theory, however. Resource mobilization practitioners tend to be more reform-oriented than revolutionary and seek to work within established realms of command and governance. In part, this is because social change is seen as being most likely to occur during periods of economic prosperity when social movement organizations can access financial support from government sources and a growing number of people with discretionary incomes and time to invest in group activities. Therefore, social change is

most likely to occur when activities complement rather than clash with government initiatives. This is a predominant theory in the social change literature and its practitioners, assumptions, and connection to community supported agriculture are discussed in the following pages.

*The Work of McCarthy and Zald*

The theoretical groundwork for resource mobilization theory (RMT) was laid in the mid to late 1960s. This is when Olson's Logic for Collective Action (1965), Gamson's Power and Discontent (1968) and Lipsky's (1968) article entitled "Protest as a Political Resource" were published. Nevertheless, the two people credited with coining the term resource mobilization and developing its accompanying ideas are John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald. Their book entitled The Trend of Social Movements in America: Professionalization and Resource Mobilization, published in 1973, links together the rise of affluence in the 1950s and 1960s with the success of the Civil Rights movement in the mid to late 1960s. It is McCarthy and Zald's (1973) contention that governmental surplus led to the creation of more social programs such as President Johnson's War on Poverty which thrust people into various forms of collective action. Moreover, increased prosperity gave blacks and liberal whites more access to resources which facilitated and guided their efforts to mobilize. It was during this historical epoch that external groups with money such as labor unions, liberal philanthropic foundations, and church groups also began to provide resources to those seeking to mobilize.

A central feature of The Trend of Social Movements in America, is that McCarthy and Zald (1973) identify the three major sources of mobilizable resources. The first source consists of conscience constituents who supply the movement with resources.

This category consists of individuals and organizations who are not direct beneficiaries of the movement. Rather, they are the ones intent on doing what is right. The second source consists of people who sympathize with the movement and provide resources to those who are mobilizing but are not part of the beneficiary base. The third source consists of non-constituents who exist independent of the movement but can be coopted by the movement as it emerges. In short, this suggests that if beneficiaries are powerless, they need outside help in order to achieve their goals. This outside help can be accessed either from people who will benefit from their efforts or from those who will not be affected by their efforts.

With respect to community supported agriculture, CSA members, themselves, can be seen as the conscience constituents. There are also many individuals and organizations, including land grant universities and the United States Department of Agriculture, that donate seeds, land, farming equipment, and office equipment to CSAs all over the country. These people and groups represent the second source of mobilizable resources. The third source of mobilizable resources includes neighboring farmers and other people who have offered assistance and guidance to many CSA farmers over the years. For example, a neighboring farmer may have a surplus of wooden crates that s/he is willing to give to a CSA farmer. These resources are not as dependable as the others but often result in mutually beneficial arrangements for both parties.

In a paper published in a 1977 volume of the American Journal of Sociology entitled "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," McCarthy and Zald explain the basis of RMT and examine 10 theoretical assertions referred to as

illustrative hypotheses associated with their theory. Each of these assertions is stated below. Following each assertion, its relation to CSA is identified.

First, the authors postulate that as society becomes more prosperous, the social movement sector (SMS) has access to more resources. During the decade of the 1980s, a period of prosperity for many upper income groups in America, the number of CSAs grew tremendously. Second, as the SMS increases, new SMOs (social movement organizations) and SMIs (social movement industries) compete for resources. An SMO is defined as being a complex and formal organization which identifies goals that are part of a wider social movement (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). An SMI is a collection of SMOs that share the same goals. McCarthy and Zald (1977) explain that an SMI parallels the concept of industry in economics and SMOs represent firms within that industry. This trend characterizes the situation in places like metropolitan Washington D.C. and Western Massachusetts where there are multiple CSAs that compete with each other for members.

Third, as resources available to conscience constituents increase, SMOs and SMIs respond to preferences for change. This is a fairly common-sensical point which suggests that as CSA members invest more time and money into the farms, their needs will be catered to in order to decrease the possibility of them ending their membership. This point serves as the rationale behind farmers conducting mid-season and end-of-season surveys. If the farmers determine that certain members do not like a particular crop, they can produce less of it next year in order to keep members happy with their membership. Fourth, the more an SMO depends upon isolated constituents, the less stable will be the flow of resources to the SMO, and the greater the share of its resources will be directed

towards advertising. This, again, is a basic point which outlines that if the CSA is not financially stable, the farmers are likely to invest a higher percentage of time and money into attracting new members.

The fifth point states that the more competitive an SMI, the more likely that new SMOs will offer narrow goals and strategies. This relates to CSA in that newer farms are less likely than older ones to experiment with new crops and growing methods that are less predictable than established crops and growing methods. Sixth, McCarthy and Zald (1977) postulate that older and established SMOs will fare better than newer ones in the cycle of SMI growth and decline. Older CSAs, for example, are likely to be more financially secure than newer ones thereby allowing them to absorb financial losses during periods of economic recession. Seventh, the larger the income flow to an SMO, the more professional the staff is likely to be. This relates to CSA in that income is likely to be correlated with the number of members. If the number of members is high, the farmer will have to spend more time in the field and less time performing administrative tasks. Because more administrative tasks would also need to be done, additional staff members are likely to be hired in order to order seeds, deliver the shares, and coordinate the finances of the farm.

Eighth, the larger the SMS, the more likely it is that social movement careers will develop. With regard to CSA, this point suggests that as the demand for organic and local produce increases, the more opportunities there will be for more farmers to start CSAs. Ninth, the more an SMO is funded by isolated constituents, the more likely workers are recruited for strategic purposes rather than organizational work. This suggests that if resources are provided to an SMO from divergent sources that employees

will be hired to fulfill specific tasks relating to the interests and goals of the different constituents. With respect to CSA, if some members desire fruit as part of their share, the farmer may need to solicit outside assistance in order to meet that need. Finally, tenth, the more an SMO is made up of people with discretionary time at their disposal, the more readily it can develop support for short-term goals. This is because people with a degree of free time can meet for spontaneous events. With respect to CSA, this suggests that members with a high degree of discretionary time can be called at a moment's notice to plant a new crop or cover delicate crops before an impending hurricane.

Canel (1997) outlines how resources can be classified as being one of two types. The first type is material resources which includes money, facilities, and means of communication while the second type is non-material which includes legitimacy, loyalty, authority, moral commitment, and solidarity. As expected, different resources are mobilized depending upon the goals, tactics, and opportunities presented to a particular SMO. In order to mobilize either type of resource, however, a group must have good leadership, be organized, and have political opportunity. Leaders are especially important because they identify and define grievances, develop a group sense, devise strategy and, in general, facilitate mobilization (Canel, 1997).

In the appendix of a volume of collected essays edited by them, McCarthy and Zald (1987) consider the trend of social movements in America. They contend, for example, that the number of participants in social movements in America is likely to continue to remain high since so many citizens are middle class and able to mobilize various material and non-material resources. From here, they identify the most likely social groupings of Americans that are likely to participate in social movements.

Educated people are one group seen as being involved because they have high rates of political participation, tend to be interested in political issues, and are likely to be active members in some sort of voluntary organization. McCarthy and Zald (1987) also assert that there is a positive relationship between affluence and leisure meaning that wealthier people have more time to dedicate to social causes. Thus, wealthier people have both material and non-material resources at their disposal. Students are also identified as a group that is likely to be over-represented in social movements because of their flexible schedules. This flexibility in schedule is also something that many professionals, including professors, lawyers, and executives have more of than many service sector employees and working class people have. McCarthy and Zald (1987) also include a section that identifies other factors that contribute to an increase in social movement activity such as church and foundational support of SMOs, increases in government funding, and more full and part-time employment opportunities within SMOs.

Once again, resource mobilization theorists contend that there is always sufficient strain in society to motivate people to organize and plan some sort of collective action (Marx and McAdam, 1994). Rather than focusing on the motivation for change, resource mobilization theorists outline that the key determinant for change lies in access to organizational resources which is heightened during times of economic growth and prosperity (McLaughlin and Khawaja, 2000). In doing so, resource mobilization theory problematizes the degree or amount of movement activity without addressing the content or goals of such activity. Marx and McAdam (1994) also posit that prosperity serves to mobilize people and create social movements in two ways. The first way is that people tend to have more discretionary income which allows them to offer more support for

social movements and become beneficiaries. The second is that economic growth has historically promoted social change by increasing the direct and indirect flow of resources to the disadvantaged people in society. Interestingly, Schwartz and Paul (1992) note that consensus movements, ones with at least a level of 80% public support, are likely to mobilize many more resources than conflict movements such as the Ku Klux Klan.

In an empirical study that considers aspects of collective action in Israel's West Bank, Khawaja (1994) tests a variety of hypotheses relating to resource mobilization. For example, he tests the relationship among economic hardship, collective action, access to resources, and organizational strength. Using data collected from Israeli and Palestinian newspapers in the West Bank, Khawaja (1994) reports that there is a positive relationship between wages and propensity for collective action, that there is a positive relationship between GDP/capita and collective action and that there is also a positive relationship between organizational strength, measured as a dummy variable indicating whether or not organizational elements are present, and collective action. In short, Khawaja's (1994) findings offer support for many of the assumptions that are associated with resource mobilization theory.

Within an organizational setting, Torres, McIntosh, and Zey (1991) state that the more autonomy and decision-making opportunities the participant has, the greater the mobilization of resources. The authors also report that resource mobilization is associated with two measures of commitment which include shared involvement and loyalty to the organization. Resource mobilization was not found to be related to the identification with goals and values.

In another study, McCarthy and Wolfson (1996) explore the mobilization of resources by various SMOs in the movement against drinking and driving. Specifically, they are concerned with how three features of mobilization, namely agency (i.e. number of annual public appearances), strategy (i.e. legislative action), and organizational structure (i.e. number of annual membership meetings) account for different levels of local mobilization. Using data collected in 1985 as part of a study of members of 458 chapters of RID-USA and MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving), the authors report the following: the number of members in a group has the greatest positive effect on agency measures; a group's revenue has the greatest positive effect on strategy measures; and revenue and number of members has a positive effect on organizational structure, although it is much higher for revenue. The authors report that hours of volunteer labor do not affect many of the agency, strategy or organizational structure variables. McCarthy and Wolfson (1996) conclude by stating that the mobilization of volunteers is less predictable than the mobilization of membership and revenue.

#### *Two Models of Resource Mobilization*

Canel (1997) states that there are two main approaches within RMT. The first is known as the political-interactive model which is practiced by Tilly, Gamson, Oberschall, and McAdam. The essence of this approach is that a political model is used to examine social processes that give rise to the formation of SMOs. In other words, emphasis is placed upon how horizontal links are established between people seeking to change political interests and access resources. The second model, known as the organizational-entrepreneurial model, is principally practiced by McCarthy and Zald. This approach sees the SMO as being a business and sees leaders as being social movement

entrepreneurs within a social movement industry who are competing for a supply of finite resources. As you can see, this approach applies organizational theory to SMOs and focuses on things such as organizational dynamics and resource management. For the sake of this dissertation, the organizational-entrepreneurial model is applied to community supported agriculture because CSA practitioners operate their farms as a business and do not typically spend much time or money seeking to change or alter political interests.

### *The Importance of Being Organized*

Ferree (1992) outlines that there are two central assumptions of RMT relating to the importance of being organized. The first is that social movement activities are not spontaneous and disorganized, and the second is that social movement participants are not irrational. Consequently, being organized is, precisely, what allows people to work together and access as many resources as they can. Useem (1998:218) contends that organization is one of the most central aspects of resource mobilization and states that:

**Organization provides resources, such as pooled labor and leadership; it schools participants in civic cooperation and public mindedness, and extends the interpersonal bonds through which recruitment takes place. Resources, public spiritedness, and social bonds, in turn, help make possible the hard work often needed to sustain collective action. Organization also permits the 'bloc' mobilization of preexisting groups directly into movements.**

This is a very important observation because it once again, views SMOs as being very business-like and professional. In many respects, this is counter-intuitive since many people characterize social activists as being counter cultural, aloof, and emotional.

### *RMT and the Maturing Social Movement Organization*

Building upon this idea of organization and professionalism, resource mobilization theorists assert that maturing social movement organizations (SMOs) become increasingly organized over time. Marx and McAdam (1994) identify, for example, how many social movement organizations such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) evolved and changed over time. Their principal point is that many social movement organizations become increasingly financially secure and stable as they matured. Marx and McAdam (1994:95) go as far to say that:

**When compared to the early movement, then, the mature movement is likely to be larger, less spontaneous, better organized, and largely led by formal organizations that have gradually come to replace the ad hoc committees and informal groups that directed the movement at the outset.**

This process of change is evident in the progression of the environmental social movement, in general, and environmental SMOs such as Greenpeace and the Sierra Club, in particular. Greenpeace was founded, for example, by a small group of radical environmentalists who directed most of their efforts towards various actions such as spray painting the coats of baby seals and maneuvering Zodiac boats between whaling vessels and pods of whales. Over time, however, Greenpeace grew in size and replaced direct action with less controversial activities such as governmental lobbying and educational campaigns (Watson, 1982). In part, this move toward reform was based upon an interest in retaining many of the recently joining members who represented a large source of income for the organization but tended to oppose acts of violence (Watson, 1982). Based upon this, it can be seen that an implicit assumption of resource mobilization theory is that there is a fixed spectrum and distribution of political

preferences and outlooks. One short-coming of this theory is that it has difficulty in dealing with cases where that distribution shifts abruptly either to the left or to the right.

In a similar vein, Zald and Garner (1987) outline many aspects of the growth, decay and change of SMOs over time. As far as they are concerned, SMOs undergo three types of changes over time. These include goal transformation, organizational maintenance, and oligarchization. Goal transformation is often associated with the diffusion of goals and the pursuance of a broader range of targets. Zald and Garner (1987) also make it quite clear that all forms of goal transformation are always in the direction of greater conservatism. In response to these developments over time, it is certainly possible that some members of a given social movement organization may become dissatisfied with that group's direction. In many cases, dissatisfied members of churches, environmental groups, and other social movement organizations have left their groups and created new groups that are less conservative. For example, Paul Watson, one of the founding members of Greenpeace, left the group once it expanded beyond its original goal of saving whales (Watson, 1982). Watson created his own organization, the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, that focused explicitly on the protection of marine mammals. Unlike Greenpeace, this group has not sought to raise awareness concerning other environmental issues such as deforestation and acid rain.

Organizational maintenance is described as being a special form of goal transformation whereby the primary activity of the SMO becomes the maintenance of membership, funds, and other accouterments of organizational existence (Zald and Garner, 1987). This process of change is also accompanied by conservatism since groups do not want to risk financial insolvency. In other words, maturing SMOs are not likely

to take radical stances on issues, precisely because they do not want to alienate members and run the risk of reducing their number of members. Finally, oligarchization involves the greater concentration of power into the hands of a minority of group members. Over time, it is expected that as groups grow in size, many members will maintain a less active role in the day-to-day operation of the organization. This notion is heavily influenced by Weber's (1946) writings concerning bureaucratization. Weber (1946) outlines that bureaucracy is a form of organization that coordinates diverse tasks among a large number of people who are organized in order to complete a collective goal. Weber (1946) identifies specialization, predictability, and rigidity as being central characteristics of many bureaucratic arrangements. He also identifies that bureaucracy is an instrument of social control that allows those people at the top of an organization's status hierarchy to direct the affairs of the organization.

In addition to changing over time, social movements focus on some types of issues instead of others at particular points in time. For example, the women's movement focused less upon the harmful effects of pornography in the 1970s than it did in the mid-1990s. Similarly, the environmental movement focused more on the harmful effects of nuclear power in the 1980s than it currently does. This is due to three factors. First, since many social movement organizations are funded by members, they address issues of interest to those members. Because the dynamic of membership changes over time, it follows that the issues change over time. Second, groups that receive government funding are likely to be reluctant to direct their efforts toward challenging certain government rules and regulations. This reluctance may disappear as government support diminishes or other issues emerge. Third, employees, members, and volunteers of social

movement organizations are not likely to have the time to deal with every single social problem that is addressed by their organization. Therefore, these people need to direct their efforts toward the most pressing issues which are likely to change over time.

### *RMT as the Dominant Paradigm*

Zald (1992) contends that it became clear by the mid-1970s that RMT had become the dominant paradigm with respect to social movement research. As far as he was concerned, Zald (1992:327) felt that the usefulness of this theory lay in its ability to challenge outdated approaches and offer “fresh and provocative” ways to look at the dynamics of social movements. Zald (1992:327), for example, declared that “it [RMT] became so dominant that its assumptions have often been assimilated as the routine and unstated grounds of much contemporary work.” Perhaps RMT reached its zenith in 1977 when there was a conference sponsored by the National Science Foundation at Vanderbilt University that brought together dozens of RMT advocates. In the quarter of a century since then, RMT has continued to guide the research of many sociologists and remains the dominant framework for addressing anything to do with social movements.

### *Social Capital and Resource Mobilization*

Social capital includes features of a social organization such as trust, reciprocity, shared norms, and social networks which facilitate coordinated actions and improve the overall efficiency of society (Putnam, 1993). Putnam (1993) asserts, for example, that trustworthiness allows a group to accomplish more than a group lacking trust. Putnam (1993) also identifies that when neighboring farmers share tools, they are using their social capital, allowing them to be more productive and efficient with less social capital and fewer resources.

In his classic book, Bowling Alone, Putnam (2000) uses various polls and data sets to create a social capital index. Items in the social capital index are based upon questions asking respondents about their likelihood of voting, if they think that most people are honest, their number of organizational memberships, their frequency of volunteerism, and their likelihood of attending public meetings concerning town and school affairs (Putnam, 2000). His research revealed that social capital is positively correlated with tolerance for racial integration, civil liberties, and gender equality and negatively correlated with television viewership and tax evasion. Putnam (2000) also reports that the US states with the highest social capital indices have better schools, lower violent crime rates, lower rates of television viewership among kids, higher rates of economic equality, and higher rates of civic equality than those states with lower social capital indices. Methodologically speaking, Putnam's (2000) measure of social capital may reflect social integration more than anything. Putnam, however, is likely to explain that these are related concepts.

In an article entitled "The Strange Disappearance of Civic America," Putnam (1996) identifies the effects of generic social processes such as suburbanization and the growth of chain stores throughout America upon the American spirit of community. Putnam (1996) also explains how the changing role of women since World War II has contributed to the decline of social capital in this country. In fact, Putnam (1996) states that when most women were housewives, they generated a lot of social capital from assisting with church suppers, PTA meetings, and neighborhood coffee klatches. Although he refers to the feminist revolution as being welcome and overdue, Putnam (1996:41) also states that "the emergence of two-career families might be the most

important single factor in the erosion of social capital.” Putnam (1996) also outlines that the decrease in marriage rates has had a negative effect upon social capital since married people, in his view, tend to be more trusting and civically engaged than non-married people.

With respect to social change, Oberschall (1973) contends that social networks are vital to mobilize resources because they provide group coherence and strong horizontal links which are key facilitators of collective action. Among other things, these links promote the development of a group identity and solidarity which increases people’s capacity to be communicative, cooperative, learn about organizational dynamics, and develop leadership skills. Without question, social capital is crucial within social movement formation because as Diani (1997:134) puts it “mobilization processes rely heavily upon previous networks of exchange solidarity.” In addition, the promotion of trust, identification with others, and alliance building are all very important when people come together to form a movement or SMO.

According to Proietto (1995), resource mobilization can only take place once enough social capital is generated to overcome the resistance of other organized bodies of social capital in the form of counter-movements, government agencies, and cultural traditions. In other words, an SMO’s chances of success are greater when members have higher social capital than the organizations that they are seeking to change. Moreover, social capital increases access to social and political elites who may be able to offer support for a group’s cause. Diani (1997) also maintains that social movements and SMOs not only rely on social capital but they also reproduce it. This happens, for example, when people get to know each other more by working together for a common

goal. In this respect, social movements and SMOs promote solidarity which lays the groundwork for later insurgency. Diani (1997) cautions, however, that social capital can be eroded through the emergence of factionalism, egotism, and social hierarchy.

### *Criticisms of RMT*

There have been many criticisms of resource mobilization theory since it was developed in 1973. For example, Piven and Cloward (1994) assert that resource mobilization theorists see protests as being more organized than they really are. In other words, they charge resource mobilization theorists with overstating the structural requisites of protest. Canel (1997) also problematizes the notion of seeing agents of social change as rational actors who decide to participate in a social movement only if the costs outweigh the benefits. This is, in fact, acknowledged by Zald (1992) who agrees with the assessment that RMT does not deal well with enthusiasm, spontaneity, and conversion experiences. Zald (1992) also acknowledges that RMT may underestimate the importance of changes in public opinion and attitudes with respect to the attainment of goals as has happened in the anti-smoking and women's movements. Finally, Canel (1997) and several others problematize the fact that RMT focuses more on how social movements develop rather than why they develop.

Perhaps the biggest criticism of RMT is that it has been interpreted by some as having an explicit rational choice theoretical bent to it. Critics charge, for example, that resource mobilization rewards self-interest and promotes free riding by allowing people to benefit from the changes brought on by the efforts of other people. Stated more formally, it makes little sense for an actor to join in collective action when s/he can ride free on the coat-tails of others (Fireman and Gamson, 1977). Based upon Fireman and

Gamson's (1977) response to some of these concerns, they state that, in general, the free-riding problem is overstated and that free riding is more tolerable in some situations, such as a political demonstration, than others, such as a strike. Schwartz and Paul (1992) also contend that the free rider problem can be alleviated when four conditions are met. These conditions include maintaining the following: an abiding sense of group fate; a belief in the viability of group action as a strategy; an equal capacity among members to contribute and the existence of sufficiently dense ties between members that prompt them to respond when free riding occurs (see Coleman, 1988). As such, the issue of free riding is considered to be relative in that it can be managed in many situations.

#### *RMT and Community Supported Agriculture*

Once again, RMT outlines that social change is most likely to occur when a group of people are able to pool together physical, social, and cultural capital that can be used to plan strategies and fund various events that advance their cause. Resource mobilization theory is a very effective tool in explaining why certain people join social movement organizations, including CSAs, and what the social bases of these organizations are. Moreover, RMT can be used to assess the success of a CSA, explain the longevity, or lack thereof, of a CSA, and offer insights into how these organizations adapt and change over time, especially during different economic conditions.

The voluntary association literature is explored next because it uncovers people's motivations for joining various associations, including social movement organizations. It builds on resource mobilization theory by identifying demographic trends in group membership across time and space. Several studies have also been conducted on CSAs, themselves, which can help uncover levels of physical, social, and cultural capital among

CSA members. These are very important findings because they can be used to see if CSA members have the necessary mobilizable material and non-material resources to achieve their goals. Other findings relating socio-economic status, and community integration will also be identified.

### **Voluntary Association**

Because CSAs follow certain organizational principles and bring people together to fulfill certain needs and desires, they are considered to be a type of voluntary association. The voluntary association literature is very extensive and dates back to the early nineteenth century. Toqueville (1961) and Durkheim (1902), for example, were very interested in issues relating to why people join groups and what kind of people join certain kinds of groups. These theorists and others contended that voluntary associations played a vital role in society because they provide a setting for people to engage in expressive activities and strengthen their ties with others (see Babchuk and Booth, 1969). Furthermore, voluntary associations are important agencies in that they often support the normative order and serve to re-inforce important values (see Babchuk and Edwards, 1965). In other words, many people join voluntary organizations such as church groups and food banks that are oriented towards helping people and bettering the community.

#### *Two Theories of Voluntary Association*

Janoski and Wilson (1995) outline two different theories of voluntary association which include the normativist perspective and the status transmission perspective. The normativist perspective is based upon the work of Durkheim and suggests that people join groups as an expression of solidarity that is learned through the family and other social structures. According to this perspective, the family is the most powerful agent of

socialization in society. A family's exposure to and involvement in voluntary organizations depends on two things which include the network of social relations in which the members are embedded and their respective degrees of integration into society. In short, this perspective outlines that people's level of activity depends upon their number of social ties. Ultimately, this points to the fact that those with many social ties such as those people who work full time, have roots in the community, have children, and are married will have more social ties than those who do not work, do not have roots in the community, do not have children, and are not married. From this perspective, it can also be said that joining produces more joining since belonging to one group increases a person's network of social relations and number of social ties (Janoski and Wilson, 1995).

The status transmission perspective is based upon the writings of Weber. This theory posits that socio-economic factors such as education and occupational prestige are the driving forces behind voluntary association (Janoski and Wilson, 1995). In other words, the principal determinant of volunteerism is one's current socio-economic position meaning that people with lower socio-economic status do not have enough disposable income, time or social capital to join a voluntary association. For example, elites in society are said to join voluntary associations to stake business contacts and because it is part of their job. Many elites are also said to be recruited by voluntary associations to raise the profile of the organization in order to attract more members.

In their paper, Janoski and Wilson (1995) test the efficacy of Durkheim's normativist perspective and Weber's status transmission perspective. Using data collected during three waves of the Youth-Parent Socialization Panel Study collected in

1965, 1973 and 1982, the authors tested two hypotheses. The first states that participation in community-oriented groups such as church, fraternal, neighborhood, and service organizations is explained through social integration variables. The second states that participation in self-oriented groups such as business, professional, trade unions, and veterans organizations is explained by socio-economic variables. Both hypotheses are supported.

These findings reveal that a person's participation in community-oriented groups is based upon the level of participation of their parents in similar groups when they were younger. This study also outlines that a person's participation in self-oriented groups is not only based upon their income, education level, and occupational status but also the income, educational level, and occupational status of their parents. These findings suggest that a person's interest in belonging to a particular voluntary association are influenced by his/her parents' interests and his/her parents' class status. In closing, the authors conclude by stating that further research in this area needs to be conducted.

#### *A Typology of Voluntary Association*

In their classic piece entitled "A Typology of Voluntary Associations," Gordon and Babchuk (1959) identify twelve different types of voluntary association (see Table 1).

Table 1: Gordon and Babchuk's (1959) Typology of Voluntary Associations

	High Accessibility		Low Accessibility	
	High Status	Low Status	High Status	Low Status
<b>Instrumental</b>	Young Republicans	KKK	League of Women Voters	Lithuanian American Council
<b>Instrumental-Expressive</b>	Kiwanis	American Legion	American Sociological Society	Alcoholics Anonymous
<b>Expressive</b>	Boy Scouts	YMCA	Daughters of the American Revolution	Omega

Source: Gordon and Babchuk (1959)

First, the authors assert that voluntary associations can be considered to be either instrumental, instrumental-expressive or expressive. Instrumental groups tend to be goal-oriented and often exist either to promote or resist changes in society. Gordon and Babchuk (1959) claim that the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored [sic] People) is a highly visible example of an instrumental group in that they have an agenda which involves educating Americans to accord full rights and opportunities to African Americans. Similarly, a cooking group that people join in order to learn more about food preparation would be another example of an instrumental group. An expressive group, on the other hand, is one that people tend to join in order to have fun, cultivate meaningful relationships with others, and develop a personal sense of fulfillment. Expressive groups do not have specific goals that are to be met within a certain period of time. Rather, the goals are more general and amorphous. A tennis club would be an example of an expressive organization in that people often join them to pursue leisure and fraternize with friends. Meanwhile, an instrumental-expressive group

is one that embodies many characteristics from both types of groups. An example of such a group would be a national veterans organization that operates on an expressive level locally but an instrumental level nationally. Woodard (1986; 1988) asserts that churches are another example of instrumental-expressive groups since activities are pursued that seek to both promote or resist change while also cultivating the human spirit.

Second, the authors claim that voluntary associations can also be considered in terms of their degree of accessibility. Some organizations are more exclusive than others because membership is limited to people with certain achieved or ascribed characteristics. For example, a professional organization such as the American Medical Association (AMA) is a group that only medical doctors are eligible to join based upon the activities and mission of that group. Similarly, sororities exclude men on the basis of their sex and many religious organizations exclude people who are not born into a particular religion.

Third, Gordon and Babchuk (1959) contend that all voluntary associations have different status conferring capacities. As such, groups with both high and low levels of accessibility can be seen as either having high or low status. The AMA is an exclusive group with high status, for example, because members are well educated, have high occupational prestige and make a lot of money. Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is another fairly exclusive group in that most members share a specific quality but their level of status is lower since notions of alcoholism often conjure up negative images. Meanwhile, the Young Republicans and the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) are both considered to be fairly inclusive instrumental groups but the former has much higher status than the latter. This status differential is based upon the fact that the actions of the KKK are rooted in hatred and do not resonate with the beliefs of most Americans while the Young Republicans

have a much better public image. Moreover, many members of the Young Republicans are considered to be so-called children of the aristocracy and have an air of legitimacy.

I contend that CSAs have high levels of status and low levels of accessibility. These farms tend to have high levels of status because the members are likely to be well educated and have high levels of occupational prestige (see below). Another issue is that CSA members are likely to be health conscious and interested in consuming whole foods. This is an important consideration because many sociological studies reveal that there is a relationship between class status and health. It is also worth noting that CSAs have a low degree of accessibility. Even though people are not excluded from joining based upon their sex, education or occupation, CSA membership can be very expensive. The monthly payments are not only high, but members often pay their seasonal fee in advance of the growing season, which is something that not everybody afford to do. Finally, it is my contention that CSAs are instrumental-expressive voluntary associations. This is because people join for the goal of accessing organic produce while, in many cases, also seeking to develop meaningful relationships with farmers and other members. It is important to recognize that CSAs are instrumental-expressive voluntary associations because it shows that these organizations satisfy a variety of different needs that many people have. For example, CSAs provide people with organically grown food while also providing them with a sense of camaraderie, belonging, togetherness and personal fulfillment.

#### *Measuring Voluntary Association*

In an often cited study, Palisi (1968) asserts that the concept of voluntary association is meaningless since it is operationalized so differently across different

studies. Palisi (1968) contends that there is a lack of consensus with respect to what voluntary association is and that this lack of standardization makes for poor cross-study comparisons. Palisi (1968) also problematizes the existing criteria for determining what constitutes a voluntary association and calls for the development of empirical and standardized measures to be developed. For example, he notes that some studies consider profit making organizations, such as local chambers of commerce and labor unions, to be voluntary while others do not. Similarly, some studies consider church groups to be voluntary while others dismiss that notion since many people are born into a religion where membership is often based upon ascribed social characteristics. Palisi (1968) notes, however, that most researchers are in agreement that when people are coerced into settings like jails, that membership is not seen as being voluntary.

Babchuk and Booth (1969) echo many of the same concerns in their paper which was published six months after Palisi's. They problematize the existing research for two principal reasons. The first is that different definitions of voluntary association were being used, and the second one is that most studies were based upon cross-sectional samples which did not allow for any changes over time to be documented.

#### *Why do People Join Voluntary Associations?*

Studies show that people join voluntary associations for a variety of different reasons. A person may join a cooking class, for example, to develop his/her cooking skills and learn new recipes. Similarly, another person may join a cooking class in order to make friends or meet a potential love interest. In short, there is not a discernable pattern as to why people join groups. It is worth noting, however, that many reasons for joining voluntary associations relate to the pursuit of leisure and self-improvement.

### *Why do People Join CSAs?*

With respect to CSA, there have been several studies that have examined why people join such organizations. In their study of 192 CSA members living in Western Massachusetts, Cooley and Lass (1998) report that 93% of the respondents answered that quality of produce was an important reason for joining while 34% answered that it was the most important reason. Ninety-seven percent of those surveyed answered that support for local farming was an important reason for joining while 17% answered that it was the most important reason. Seventy-two percent of the respondents stated that they joined, in part, because of environmental concerns, 59% stated that they joined, in part, because of food safety concerns and 59% stated that they joined, in part, because of food donations to the needy and other acts of community service.

In their study of CSA, Kane and Lohr (1997) report that the top six reasons for joining were access to organic produce, access to fresh produce, access to locally grown produce, support for local farmers, to improve health, and to help the environment. Cicero's (1993) study of 150 members, most of whom were working members, reveals that the top three reasons for joining, include, first, a sense of reconnection with the land; second, healthy food; and third, a commitment to building community. Based upon the above-mentioned findings, it can be seen that many people join a CSA for environmental reasons, because they are supporters of alternative agriculture, and because they have an interest in community-related issues.

In her case study of a CSA in Michigan, DeLind (1999) explains that she became involved with the organization because she was very interested in building a sense of community with others. In this very self-reflexive piece, DeLind (1999) recounts the

trials and tribulations that she endured when starting up a CSA in an East Lansing neighborhood. DeLind (1999:3) states that she had “grown tired of the academic privilege of observing and critiquing from afar.” In a response to growing feelings of alienation and in an interest in reclaiming the ability to meet some of her food needs, she started a CSA called Growing In Place in the summer of 1995. Although DeLind did not know a lot about farming, she was willing to learn as much as she could and make the necessary sacrifices to make this endeavor successful. “Full of high purpose, if not missionary zeal” is how DeLind (1999:5) describes the coming together of a group of mostly academics with little to no agricultural experience and a very ambitious vision.

For DeLind (1999), cultivating a sense of community was the desired goal with the growing of produce being an important by-product of this process. Not everybody felt this way, and as the first summer unfolded, it became apparent that DeLind and her core group of members had very different ideas. Many, for example, felt that the distribution of food was paramount and that people needed to get their money’s worth of produce in order to be satisfied. It did not take long for DeLind (1999:6) to develop, what she refers to as a “slow-burning indignation” towards most members. She began to view core-group members as being too business-oriented and other less involved members as lazy, uncommitted, and undeserving.

After three years, DeLind (1999) stepped down as president of Growing In Place. She had grown cynical about the prospects of building a sense of community among people who she felt were really only bound together by an interest in chemical-free and fresh vegetables. Many members had told her that they liked the idea of getting wholesome vegetables but that they did not necessarily view it as a community building

tool. One member also told her that if he wanted a sense of community, he could go to his dance community, his church community, interact with teacher colleagues or e-mail high-school friends. Although DeLind is still a member of Growing In Place, she still cannot help being troubled by the fact that it is run like a business. She acknowledges that she may be too idealistic but also contends that the spirit of CSA is antithetical to the ideas of profit generation.

### *Membership Retention*

Another important point is that different voluntary associations have different rates of turnover among the members. Some groups, like the Boy Scouts or youth sports leagues, have certain regulations concerning age, meaning that members cycle through every two or three years. Other groups, like the AARP, have minimum age requirements while others, including college fraternities have maximum age requirements. In other instances, members of groups such as Narcotics Anonymous are likely to have members become less active in the organization as their goal of sobriety becomes easier to maintain.

Membership turnover among CSA members tends to be fairly high. Cicero (1993) reports that the turnover rate at the Philadelphia Community Farm was approximately 50% during its formative years. Kane and Lohr's (1997) research shows that 13.7% of those surveyed would not renew their current membership while 22.6% were not sure. In Kane and Lohr's (1997) study, the most common concerns that people had included the over-supply of produce and the demands that membership placed upon people's time. It is also possible that members do not renew their CSA membership because they are moving out of the area. Cooley and Lass (1998) report that those CSA

members surveyed were generally quite satisfied with their membership. Some members did have some concerns, however, as 14% of the respondents indicated that they found there to be a lack of variety in the produce provided and 11% were concerned about their lack of choice. Twenty-four percent of those surveyed also stated that too much food was provided resulting in waste. Although most of the respondents welcomed the idea of visiting the farm, 23% found the prospect of a visit to be an inconvenience. Two percent of the respondents were also concerned about the value of their shares and approximately half of them believed that their CSA share cost the same or more than buying the same varieties and amounts in local stores.

#### *Demographic Correlates of Voluntary Association Membership*

By the mid-1960s, a number of empirical studies had been undertaken in order to discover the demographic bases of voluntary association. The consensus was that voluntary association participation tended to be highest among the wealthy, people who have lived in their current community for a long period of time, married people, home owners, and men (see Komarovsky, 1946; Martin, 1952; Reissman, 1954; Foskett, 1955; Zimmer, 1955; Freeman et al. 1957; Scott, 1957; Wright and Hyman, 1958; Zimmer and Hawley, 1959; Hausknecht, 1962). Although many of the early studies considered the relationship between race and voluntary association, the results are mixed. In general, the most common type of voluntary association joined by African Americans is the church group. Curiously, however, there has been a great deal of controversy surrounding whether or not church groups can be considered to be voluntary organizations. Consequently, results tend to reflect whether or not the researcher includes church group as a voluntary organization. Many early studies also found that there did not appear to be

any significant difference in voluntary association membership between urban and rural dwellers. Moreover, many early findings have shown that rates of voluntary association are highest among middle-aged people.

### *Socio-economic Status*

The relationship between personal wealth and voluntary association membership is explained by the fact that wealthy people lead a comfortable existence and that they have the time and the money to be able to join groups. Moreover, because wealthy people are often highly educated and have high occupational prestige, they are likely to belong to book groups, cooking clubs, country clubs, professional organizations, and other groups that racial minorities, poor people, and people without college educations typically do not join either because they are not invited to join them or they are not interested in joining them. This follows Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory which suggests that luxuries in life can only be pursued once a person is able to meet his/her immediate needs such as accessing food and shelter (Maslow, 1992). In other words, it is assumed that people who are struggling for survival and having trouble making ends meet are not really concerned with anything but getting by. Thus, learning how to cook exotic foods, deconstructing classical literary pieces or having cocktails at the club after a round of golf is not part of their world. They would also not be able to reciprocate verbally and otherwise in relations with wealthier and more educated people.

The majority of empirical studies concerning voluntary association clearly point to the fact that socio-economic status is positively related to group membership (see Babchuk and Booth, 1969; Phillips, 1969; Hyman and Wright, 1971; Cutler, 1976; Hoyt and Babchuk, 1981; Olson et al., 1989). Another related finding is that current socio-

economic status is a better predictor of voluntary association than one's 'station of origin' (Hyman and Wright, 1971). Cutler (1976) also states that socio-economic characteristics are the best predictors of voluntary association participation and that is why it is highest among people at their peak income earning years and among men who, on average, have higher yearly incomes than women (see below). Occupational prestige has also been empirically linked to voluntary association participation (see Oropesa, 1987) as has employment status (see Olson et al., 1989).

In their study of members of seven CSAs in an North Carolina and Tennessee (N=253), Kane and Lohr (1997) report that 59.7% of the CSA members earn at least \$50,000 per year while 18.2% of them earn at least \$100,000 per year. Their research also reveals that 83.1 % of the CSA members have college degrees and 47.1 % of them have advanced degrees. Similarly, Kolodinsky and Pelch (1997) state in their study of 277 active members of three different CSAs in Vermont that income and CSA membership are positively correlated. They also report that people who are college-educated are more likely to belong to a CSA in Vermont than people without a college degree.

### *Age*

The curvilinear relationship between age and voluntary association has been explained in many ways. Several sociologists, for example, contend that middle-aged people are more likely to belong to voluntary associations because they are in their peak earning years and have the discretionary income to pay for club membership and yearly dues. Using the logic of the status transmission explanation of voluntary association, it can also be said that middle-aged people may also belong to instrumental groups such as

the Rotary Club in order to establish business contacts with others and enhance their wealth. It is important to note that the curvilinear nature of this relationship is explained by the fact that younger people do not often have the time or money to belong to groups while older people may not have the energy or physical ability to be actively involved in a host of different groups.

Many empirical studies have been conducted that concern the relationship between age and voluntary association, and the consensus is that this relationship is curvilinear (see Babchuk and Booth, 1969; Cutler, 1976). In another study, Knoke and Thomson (1977) consider the relationship between voluntary association and family life cycle stage rather than age. They use eight family life cycle stages which include young single, young marrieds, young parents, young parents with older children, older parents, older couples, and older singles. Using the NORC General Surveys from 1967 and 1974, the authors report that the relationship between voluntary association membership and family life cycle stage to be curvilinear for both periods. Although there are not any published studies that report a negative relationship between age and voluntary association membership, two studies reveal that the relationship is positive instead of curvilinear (see Hyman and Wright, 1971; Olson et al., 1989). Although there are not any empirical studies pertaining to CSA that consider the age of members, several descriptive writings suggest that CSA members tend to be middle-aged (see Van En, 1995; Lovell, 1991; Henderson, Gussow, and Van En, 1999).

### *Community Integration*

Researchers explain the positive relationship between the length of time a person lives in a community and voluntary association membership in several ways. Principally,

people who have lived in a community for a long enough time are likely to have gotten to know neighbors and become integrated into the community. This is the basis of the normativist perspective concerning voluntary associations. This posits that community integration is said to promote a sense of togetherness which is seen by many sociologists as a pre-requisite for joining groups. This relationship is most likely mediated by home ownership since home owners tend to be less transient than people who rent. In other words, long term residents are likely to own the homes that they live in meaning that they also have a vested interest in protecting the value of their investment by joining neighborhood associations such as a neighborhood watch organization.

The positive relationship between length of time living in a community and voluntary association membership is supported by the findings of Babchuk and Booth (1969) and Olson et al. (1989). In their study of residents of East Lansing, Michigan, Olson et al. (1989) report that home ownership is also correlated with group membership. This is explained by the fact that home ownership is highest among people who are in their peak income earning years. As mentioned above, people who do not own homes are not likely to have the same disposable income as those who do own homes which will impact their capacity to join a voluntary association. There have not been any studies that consider the empirical relationship between CSA membership and community integration. Many authors have, however, speculated that CSA promotes a sense of togetherness and belonging among members (see Bourne, 1991; Ehrhardt, 1996).

#### *Marital Status*

The research concerning voluntary association also suggests that married people are seen as being more active than single, divorced, and widowed people in voluntary

organizations. The guiding logic behind this relationship is that married people tend to have more financial security than their unmarried counterparts. Many married people have full-time jobs and own homes which may prompt them to join professional organizations and neighborhood associations. Many married people also have children and join voluntary associations such as the Boy Scouts, the local chapter of the parent teacher association (PTA) and youth soccer teams based upon the interests of their children. This relationship is supported by the empirical findings of Babchuk and Booth (1969) and Olson et al. (1989). There have not been any studies that have been published that consider the marital status of CSA members. Based upon the fact that many CSAs offer full shares<sup>1</sup>, it can be assumed that many members are married and have children.

### *Race*

As articulated above, different studies point to different results concerning the patterns of voluntary association among white and black Americans. Upon reviewing the literature, there is no consensus regarding joining tendencies among people of different races. In part, this is a methodological issue since some studies include churches, one of the most common voluntary groups for African Americans, while others do not.

Layng (1978) asserts that churches are an integral form of voluntary association yet they are excluded from several important studies under the guise of being more instrumental than expressive. Layng (1978) finds this restriction of churches to be

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<sup>1</sup> A full share is designed to be enough food to feed two non-vegetarian adults two non-vegetarian children for one week during the peak season. All of the CSAs in this study offer full shares.

arbitrary and charges that it has contributed to misleading findings. For example, Layng (1978) states that rural blacks and lower class urban blacks seldom belong to voluntary associations which are not church groups. In fact, Layng (1978) states that blacks are even more active in voluntary organizations, including churches, than whites because they provide a forum to celebrate their ethnic consciousness, represent an adaptation to poverty, and compensate for their rejection by white society. Moreover, Layng (1978) outlines that voluntary associations function to provide black people with opportunities for self-expression and status recognition and enhancement by performing important tasks and being elected to important positions of leadership. In fact, this ability for voluntary associations to confer prestige upon members is precisely why these organizations are so important to black people whose status is generally lower than that of white people in mainstream American society.

Hyman and Wright (1971) report that black Americans are joining at a faster pace than white Americans, but white Americans are slightly more likely than black Americans to join voluntary associations, excluding labor unions. On the other hand, Kutner (1976) concludes that when controlling for income, the rates of voluntary association participation among blacks is equal to that of whites. This finding is also supported by Knoke and Thomson (1977) who report that there are not any significant differences between whites and non-whites in their number of voluntary associations when controlling for sex, life cycle stage, and education. In addition, Kutner (1976) concludes that lower income groups can be ranked in terms of their participation with blacks ranking first, whites and Mexican Americans, second, Italian Americans, third, and Puerto Ricans, fourth.

Using data collected in southwest Chicago in 1980 through telephone interviews with people who stated that they were black, Woodard (1986) reports that black people with high status occupations or those with high levels of education are more likely to belong to instrumental and expressive organizations. He also states that rural Southern black people are more likely than urban Northern black people to hold membership in instrumental and expressive organizations.

In a follow-up article based upon the same data, Woodard (1988) explores the effects of social class upon voluntary association membership among urban blacks living in southwest Chicago. His results show that African Americans with high occupational and/or high educational status are more likely to belong to instrumental and expressive voluntary associations. He also states that African Americans with low occupational and/or low educational status are less likely to belong to expressive-instrumental voluntary associations, namely church groups, than African Americans with high levels of occupational and/or educational status. This within-race variation was also reported in the Hoyt and Babchuk (1981) study. Their results show that Americans with Czechoslovakian and Swedish heritage belong to more voluntary associations, on average, than people with English and Irish heritage. People with either German or Danish ethnic heritage lie between these two groups. There are not any social scientific studies that consider the racial and ethnic backgrounds of CSA members. The majority of descriptive writings pertaining to CSA characterize CSA members as being overwhelmingly white (see Henderson, Gussow, and Van En, 1999; Innis, 1994; Moore, 1997).

## *Gender*

Finally, men are characterized as belonging to more voluntary associations than women. Early researchers attribute this relationship to the family life-cycle and assert that upon marrying, many women have children and quit their jobs. When women drop out of the work force, they tend to terminate their affiliation with work-related organizations. Similarly, early researchers contend that upon bearing children and nursing them, women are too busy to be part of any groups. Empirical findings concerning this relationship show mixed results. Babchuk and Booth (1969) and Knoke and Thomson's (1977) results show that men were more active in voluntary associations than women. In addition, Cutler (1976) reports that when controlling for educational attainment and family income that men in both samples had a higher average number of voluntary association memberships than women. Olson et al. (1989), on the other hand, state that men and women were equally as likely to belong to voluntary associations.

Popielarz (1999) conducted another study that considers the relationship between gender segregation and voluntary association involvement. In other words, she was interested in uncovering any special features of what she refers to as female-dominated groups (between 90 and 100% of the members are women) and male-dominated groups (between 0 and 10% of the members are women). Using data collected as part of the Niches and Networks project during the summer and fall of 1989, Popielarz (1999) makes three general conclusions. First, men and woman are equally as likely to belong to at least one voluntary organization. Second, women are more likely than men to belong to gender segregated groups. Finally, women's groups primarily restrict members to

contact with people who are the same age and have similar educational, work, and marital status.

In their study of seven south-eastern CSAs, Kane and Lohr (1997) report that 84.6% of the members are women. This is likely to be a reflection of the household division of labor where household tasks, such as food shopping, in many American families are gendered. In other words, many American women who are married undertake the majority of cooking and cleaning-related tasks in the home. Meanwhile many American men who are married are seen as being the family breadwinner and often do not undertake household chores. This has a deeply rooted cultural basis and is referred to as the second shift (see Hochschild, 1989). This refers to women who have full time jobs and who are also responsible for household tasks.

#### *Other Factors that Influence CSA Membership*

It is also worth noting that this research reveals that there are other factors that influence CSA membership. For example, Kolodinsky and Pelch (1997) report that people with little time to preserve and little space to store canned fruits and vegetables along with those with children under the age of 12 are not likely to join CSAs while people who currently purchase organic produce and have heard of a CSA through word of mouth are likely to join CSAs in Vermont. Kane and Lohr (1997) report that 68.3% of the CSA members in their study routinely purchase organic produce, 66.7% consider themselves to be environmentalists, 70.1% of them are vegetarian and 27.5% of the respondents live in an urban locale while 53.4% live in an a suburban setting.

### *Trends in American Volunteerism over Time*

Hyman and Wright (1971) make several conclusions. First, the majority of Americans do not belong to voluntary associations. Second, a relatively small proportion of Americans belong to two or more voluntary associations. Third, between the mid-1950s and the early 1960s, there was a small increase in voluntary association memberships among Americans.

Rotolo (1999) explores trends in American volunteerism over time. Using GSS data spanning from 1974 to 1994, he identifies that the relationship between the number of memberships that a person has and age is curvilinear (upside-down U-shaped). He also states that voluntary association memberships are higher among women and married people. Other findings include that voluntary association membership is positively related to education, the number of memberships during this twenty year period is U-shaped and 1984 was the year with the lowest mean memberships per person. Moreover, Rotolo (1999) reports that between 1974 and 1994, unions, fraternal organizations, sports-related groups, and Greek organizations experienced decreased levels of participation while church-related organizations, hobby clubs, literary groups, professional associations, school-related organizations, and veterans groups experienced increased levels of participation.

Popielarz and McPherson (1995) are interested in the lack of diversity within specific voluntary associations. Their thinking is guided by the notion that group homogeneity is based upon the fact that members who are typical of the association in terms of their age, race, education, and sex stay in the group longer while atypical members leave the group at higher rates. Using data collected as part of the Ten Towns

Project in Nebraska during the summer and fall of 1989, two hypotheses are tested. The first, referred to as the niche edge hypothesis, states that groups lose fastest those members who are atypical of the group in terms of their social characteristics. This complements Rosabeth Kanter's (1977) contention that people of a social type that is heavily under-represented in an organization will suffer various detrimental effects. The second hypothesis, known as the niche overlap hypothesis, states that groups lose fastest those members who are subject to competition from other groups that recruit people with similar social characteristics. Both of these hypotheses are accepted and Popielarz and McPherson (1995) conclude by suggesting that these findings can be used to address the social homogeneity that exists within many voluntary associations.

#### *International Trends Concerning Voluntary Association*

Many studies have been conducted that consider international trends in voluntary association. Thomson and Armer (1983), for example, conducted a study based upon data collected over two waves in Kano, Nigeria. Palisi (1985) explored patterns of voluntary association membership among male respondents living in London, England; Los Angeles, California, and Sydney, Australia. Lipset (1986) and Curtis et al. (1989) examined the differences in patterns of voluntary association between Americans and Canadians. In a similar study, Curtis, Grabb, and Bear (1992) tested the hypothesis that Americans are more likely to join voluntary associations than people living in various European countries. The findings in these studies point to the fact that Americans have higher rates of group membership than people from other countries. There are mixed results, however, concerning the demographic bases of group membership around the world.

### *Voluntary Association and Social Capital*

In general, studies show that there is a positive relationship between voluntary association membership and social capital. As articulated earlier in the chapter, social capital includes features such as trust, shared norms, and reciprocity that promote a sense of togetherness. Baum et al. (1999) consider the relationship between volunteerism and social capital in Adelaide, Australia. Based on a sample of 2,542 people over the age of 18 living in South Australia, the authors sought to uncover the rate of volunteerism, why people volunteer, and the differences in social capital between volunteers and non-volunteers. Results show that 13.5% of the respondents considered themselves to be volunteers and 81.4% of them do so to help people, 62.8% do so to gain a sense of satisfaction, and 46.8% of respondents do so to meet people. Upon considering rates of social participation in the form of such activities as visiting friends, going to a social club, and playing a sport, volunteers have a consistently higher rate than non-volunteers. Upon considering aspects of civic participation including activities such as signing a petition, attending a protest meeting, and being involved in a resident or community action group, volunteers also have a consistently higher rate than non-volunteers. Finally, volunteers have higher rates of helping neighbors and being helped by neighbors. In short, the authors conclude that volunteers have higher rates of social capital than non-volunteers but caution that more research needs to be undertaken on this topic.

Marcello and Perrucci (2000) explore the relationship between group membership and civic involvement. Based on data collected in interviews of 1,021 members of secular, religious, and other small groups that incorporate aspects of both, the authors established a measure of civic engagement based upon answers to 6 different questions.

Contrary to their expectations, Marcello and Perrucci (2000) report that civic engagement is not correlated with education, occupation, sex, age, and income. Their results also reveal that members of groups with a mix of secular and religious characteristics are the most civically engaged, while members of religious groups are the least likely to be civically engaged. Members of groups with a combination of secular and religious qualities also reported having the greatest sense of unity and belonging while the members of secular groups have the lowest sense of unity and belonging. Among their conclusions, the authors contend that the growth of religious groups may, in fact, result in the decline of social capital. They also warn that it cannot be assumed that all forms of civic engagement have the same social impact.

Using data collected by the Center for Political Studies in 1972 and the General Social Survey in 1967, 1974, and 1975 Thomson and Knoke (1980) test several hypotheses. The first hypothesis states that members of minority ethnoreligious groups belong to more voluntary associations than members of the dominant ethnoreligious group. This taps into the notion of compensation mentioned by Layng (1978) in that it recognizes that whites have more opportunities for status achievement which makes social and political participation less crucial for them than for blacks. The second hypothesis states that voluntary association membership increases voting turnout among minority groups more than among the dominant group. The third hypothesis states that ethnoreligious group identification by minority group members will increase voting turnout more than identification by the dominant group does when controlling for voluntary association membership. Results show that the first hypothesis received mixed support in that white Catholics are more likely to belong to voluntary associations than

white Protestants but both groups are more likely to belong to voluntary associations than blacks. The second hypothesis was rejected thereby suggesting that the relationship between voluntary association membership and voting turnout is not mediated by religious affiliation. The third hypothesis was also rejected thereby suggesting that identification with ethnoreligious groups does not affect voting turnout.

In his study, Hanks (1981) is concerned with the relationship between youth involvement in voluntary organizations and early adult political activity. Using data collected as part of the National Longitudinal Study (NLS) of the High School Senior Class of 1972, Hanks (1981) states that when controlling for social class background, ability, academic performance, and self-esteem, adolescent participation in voluntary organizations is positively related to early adult political activity. Hanks (1981) also reports that adolescent participation in voluntary associations positively impacts a person's discussion of the issues, his/her campaign participation, voting rates over 2 years, and early adult involvement in voluntary organizations. These findings resonate with many of Putnam's (2000) contentions concerning the generation of social capital.

#### *Voluntary Association and Life Satisfaction*

Several researchers have found that there is a positive relationship between voluntary association membership and life satisfaction. Using data collected by the NORC consisting of 600 adults living in an unidentified New England state, Phillips (1969) reports that positive feelings such as happiness and fulfillment are directly correlated with social participation. Phillips (1969) also states that negative feelings such as unhappiness are generally unrelated to social participation and that the difference

between the scores on the positive and negative feelings indexes is a major determinant of happiness.

Neal Cutler's (1982) paper concerns the relationship between voluntary association participation and life satisfaction. Using data from a national-level study conducted by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan in 1971, Cutler (1982) tests 4 hypotheses. The first hypothesis states that there is a positive relationship between the number of voluntary associations that a person belongs to and his/her satisfaction with life. The second one states that life satisfaction among older people is positively associated with the number of voluntary associations geared for older people that they belong to. The third one states that satisfaction with organizational involvement among older people is positively associated with the number of voluntary associations geared for older people that they belong to. The fourth hypothesis states that a person's satisfaction with his/her organizational involvement is positively associated with his/her life satisfaction. Of the four hypotheses, only the third one is accepted. In his discussion section, Cutler (1982) recognizes that the relationship between voluntary association and life satisfaction is much more complicated than he originally assumed.

#### *Implications of the Voluntary Association Literature*

Perhaps the biggest implication of the voluntary association literature is that different people have different group joining tendencies. This research points, for example, to the fact that members of voluntary associations tend to be middle-aged, married, financially well-off, and well-educated. Similarly, studies pertaining to aspects of CSA membership reveal that members tend to be affluent and well-educated. Based upon these studies, it can also be seen that CSA members tend to be mainly women who

are family-oriented and concerned about environmental and health issues. The finding that the majority of CSA members are women, however, contradicts the trend in the literature that men are more likely to belong to a voluntary association than women. Perhaps the biggest implication of this literature is that CSA members appear to have the necessary material resources in the form of high earnings to become what McCarthy and Zald (1973) refer to as conscience constituents of small, local, and organic farms.

### **Hypotheses**

This section considers the 8 hypotheses that serve as the basis of this study. The first two hypotheses consider who joins these organizations and motivations for joining them. The final six hypotheses consider the effects of differences among members.

#### *Hypothesis 1*

The first hypothesis relates to the demographic bases of CSA membership. Based upon the consistent findings in scores of past studies pertaining to voluntary association membership, in general, and CSA membership, in particular, it is hypothesized that the CSA members tend to come from the higher levels of income and education in American society. This is an important test because it will help to identify how well CSA fits in with a resource mobilization theoretical framework. Based upon the findings of Kane and Lohr (1997), it is also hypothesized that there is a higher percentage of women who belong to the CSAs this study than exist in the wider American society. It is hypothesized that there is a higher percentage of Democrats, married people, and whites who belong to the CSAs this study than exist in the wider American society. Finally, it is expected that the majority of the CSA members in this study are middle-aged. In general, based upon the high socio-economic status of CSA members in other studies, Weber's

status transmission is expected to explain patterns of CSA membership better than Durkheim's normativist explanation.

### *Hypothesis 2*

Based upon Cooley and Lass' (1998) finding that CSA members are interested in environmental issues, it is expected that people join CSAs in order to promote the use of sustainable farming methods. It has also been shown that people join CSAs in order to access organic produce and support small farmers (see Cooley and Lass, 1998; Kolodinsky and Pelch, 1997.). Therefore, it is expected that members have joined CSAs based on their interest in supporting alternative agricultural methods. Past studies also suggest that people tend to join CSAs in order to foster a sense of togetherness with others. Cicero's (1993) study shows that people often join a CSA in order to build a sense of community with local people. Thus, it is hypothesized that members join these organizations in order to build a sense of community with others.

### *The Conceptual Model*

The remaining hypotheses are based upon a three stage conceptual model.

(Figure 1 about here)

The first stage of this model predicts that a member's length of residence in his/her community, household income, number of children who live at home, and sex (1=female) have a positive effect upon the three member interests which include environmentalism, support for alternative agriculture, and community attachment. The second stage predicts that the three member interests have a positive effect upon a member's degree of investment in his/her CSA. The final stage predicts that the degree of member investment has a positive effect upon the organizational success of a CSA. It

is also predicted that there is a positive relationship between the organizational stability of a CSA and its organizational success.

### *Hypothesis 3*

The third hypothesis considers the effects of certain demographic variables upon a member's level of environmentalism. More specifically, it is predicted that environmentalism among CSA members is positively affected by length of residence, household income, and number of children living at home. It is also expected that the female CSA members in this study have higher levels of environmentalism than the male members.

Length of residence is expected to be associated with environmentalism among CSA members because people who have lived in their current community for a long time are likely to own homes and be interested in preserving the character of their neighborhood. This can be done through efforts to protect the natural environment. Income is expected to affect environmentalism positively among CSA members for two reasons. First, environmental quality is regarded as a luxury by the public and becomes less important as economic conditions worsen (Dunlap and Dillman, 1976). Second, members of lower classes have often experienced poor physical conditions which render them less aware of their polluted and overcrowded surroundings (Van Liere and Dunlap, 1980).

It is also expected that the number of children that a CSA member has living at home has a positive effect upon his/her concern for environmental issues. This is because parents, in general, are likely to be concerned about the state of the planet as their children age and have children themselves. It is expected that female CSA members

are more environmentally-minded than male CSA members. This is guided by the notion that young girls are socialized at a young age to be nurturing and caregiving (Blocker and Eckberg, 1997). In short, it is assumed that since women are more caregiving than men, they are, by extension, more empathetic than men which translates into greater levels of environmental concern (see Blocker and Eckberg, 1997).

#### *Hypothesis 4*

Hypothesis 4 predicts that length of residence, income, the number of children who live at home, and sex (1=female) have a positive effect upon support for alternative agriculture. The relationship between length of residence and environmentalism is considered in order to see if people who have lived in their current neighborhood for a long period of time have an interest in supporting local farmers. Income is expected to be associated with support for alternative agriculture because wealthier people are more able than poorer people to focus on the aesthetic aspects of human life (Van Liere and Dunlap, 1980). In short, wealthier people are more likely to be willing to pay extra money for organically grown produce than poor people because of its appearance, taste, and potential long-term health benefits.

The number of children living at home is expected to be associated with support for alternative agriculture, in part, because rural dwellers tend to have more children than urban and suburban dwellers (United States Bureau of the Census, 2000). This means that they are likely to be aware of issues that farmers face and have an interest in supporting local farmers. It is also expected that female CSA members are more supportive of alternative agriculture than male members. Again building upon the woman-as-caregiver explanation (see Blocker and Eckberg, 1997), it is expected that

women are more caregiving and nurturing than men which translates into higher levels of concern for the effects of pesticide run-off and exposure to chemicals among farm-workers.

#### *Hypothesis 5*

The fifth hypothesis predicts that a member's length of residence, household income, and number of children who live at home have a positive effect upon a member's degree of community attachment. It is also predicted that female CSA members have higher degrees of community attachment than male members. Length of residence is expected to be associated with community attachment because residents are likely to develop a greater sense of belonging in their community over time. This is the basis of the systemic model of community attachment which has been supported in many empirical studies (see Kasarda and Janowitz, 1974; Fernandez and Dillman, 1979; Heffernan et al., 1981; Goudy, 1981; Bardo, 1985; St. John et al., 1986; Sampson, 1988; Stinner et al., 1990; Goudy, 1990; Cowell and Green, 1994). It is also expected that income has a positive effect upon community attachment among CSA members. This is because wealthier people are more likely to own homes and have an interest in local affairs than poorer people (see Goudy, 1981).

It is expected that the number of children that a CSA member has who live at home will have a positive effect upon community attachment. This is because the parents of multiple children are likely to befriend the parents of their children's friends through involvement in activities such as the PTA and youth sports. It is also expected that female CSA members have higher levels of community attachment than male members.

This is because women are less likely to work full time than men which gives them more time to participate in community activities.

#### *Hypothesis 6*

The second stage in this conceptual model considers the relationship between member interests and the degree of member investment in the organizations themselves. Based upon the findings of Koldinsky and Pelch (1997), it is expected that there is a positive relationship between the interests of members and their degree of investment in their respective CSAs. More specifically, it is assumed that members whose personal goals resonate with the general goals of CSA will be more actively involved in the organizations than members whose personal goals do not resonate with the general goals of CSA. As such, it is expected that members with higher degrees of interest in environmental issues, support for alternative agriculture, and levels of community attachment will be more invested in the organizations than members with lower degrees of interest in environmental issues, support for alternative agriculture, and levels of community attachment.

#### *Hypothesis 7*

The third stage in this conceptual model hypothesizes that an increased level of member investment in the organization positively affects the success of the organization. This is based, in part, upon McCarthy and Zald's (1977) contention that the more an SMO depends upon isolated constituents, the less stable will be the flow of resources to the SMO. In short, the more active and involved members become, the less isolated and fragmented they are likely to be which will lead to a more stable flow of resources. Over time, this is expected to render the individual organizations more successful. This

finding is supported by the research of Torres, McIntosh, and Zey (1991). Thus, CSA members who visit their CSA frequently and pick up their weekly shares at the farm are likely to be more integrated into their farms which is seen as being a determinant of organizational success.

### *Hypothesis 8*

The eighth hypothesis predicts that there is a positive relationship between organizational stability and organizational success. In other words, it is expected that the more organizationally stable a CSA is, the more likely it is going to be successful in meeting the needs of its members. Resource mobilization theorists outline that organizational stability takes place once a secure membership base is established (see McCarthy and Zald, 1977). Once farmers are confident that a stable membership base exists, they can invest time and money into pursuing goals relating to the mission of the organization instead of expending effort to attract new members. This means that the farmer of a stable CSA is likely going to spend most of his/her time and money on growing crops. In contrast, the farmer of an unstable CSA is likely going to direct more efforts into attracting new members.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has provided an overview of the literature relating to resource mobilization theory and voluntary association. Specific attention is given to empirical studies that relate to community supported agriculture as it relates to each of these topics of inquiry. Upon discussing these literatures, the hypotheses that serve as the basis for this study are identified and discussed. Based upon consistent findings in the voluntary association literature, it can be seen that CSA members tend to be a privileged group of

people. Most of the hypotheses presented in this chapter are based upon a three stage conceptual model that predicts the inter-relationship between member characteristics, member interests, the degree of member investment in their respective CSAs and organizational success. The next chapter, Methods, identifies how several scales and measures were created, how the data for this study were collected and coded, and how the farms in this study were selected.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Methods**

In this chapter, the methods used to conduct this research will be introduced and discussed. For example, the operationalization of independent and dependent variables, site selection, survey design, and data management are examined in the following pages. Information pertaining to approval of the North Carolina State University Institutional Review Board is also provided.

#### **Measurement**

Concepts were operationalized as variables in order to test the hypotheses that were generated from the literature review. Five of the variables are indices that measure support for alternative agriculture, community attachment, the degree of member investment, organizational stability, and organizational success. The single-item variables tend to be measures of member demographic and member participation characteristics.

#### **Dependent Variable**

There is one dependent variable that is used in the path analytical model. It is a measure of organizational success.

##### *Organizational Success*

The organizational success scale is a three item scale. The theoretical and actual ranges extend from a minimum value of 3 to a maximum value of 9. The first item is based upon responses to a question that asked respondents to rate their level of general satisfaction with their CSA on a scale of 1 to 10. As with the farm visiting variable that is discussed above, the group in the lowest third of satisfaction level was assigned a score

of 1 while those in the middle third were assigned a score of 2, and those in the highest third were assigned a score of 3. The next item is based upon the likelihood of those surveyed to resume their membership next year. Those who planned to renew their memberships were assigned a score of 3 while those who did not plan to resume were assigned a score of 1<sup>2</sup>. The third item is based upon a variable that is a ratio between the number of years a member has belonged to his/her CSA and the number of years that his/her CSA has been in operation. A ratio was used since each of the CSAs in the study have been around for a different number of years. Based upon the ratios, those in the bottom third were assigned a score of 1, those in the middle third were assigned a score of 2, and those in the top-third were assigned a score of 3. The resulting measure has a mean of 6.84 and a standard deviation of 1.84. There are 171 cases associated with this measure meaning that 33 dropped out due to missing cases in the data set. The alpha coefficient for this measure is .5136.

### **Intervening Variables**

Three composite measures have been created that serve as intervening variables in the path analytical model. A measure of environmentalism from the survey is also included as an intervening variable in the path model. Information relating to each of these measures is provided below.

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<sup>2</sup> Once again, a 3 and 1 classification scheme was used to clearly differentiate between members who planned to resume their memberships for the 2000 growing season and those who did not.

### *Environmentalism*

This measure is based on the survey question that asks respondents to identify their degree of environmentalism on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is the lowest possible answer and 10 is the highest possible answer (see Appendix C, question number 51). This variable has a mean of 7.43 and a range that extends from 2 to 10.

### *Community Attachment Scale*

The community attachment scale is comprised of four variables that have been extensively used by sociologists in past studies to gauge community integration and related issues. The first variable asks respondents if they feel at home in their community of residence. A score of 1 corresponds with 'no', 2 corresponds with 'probably', and 3 equals 'yes'. The second variable asks respondents how they would feel if they had to move. A score of 1 corresponds with 'pleased', 2 equals 'indifferent', and 3 conforms with 'very sorry'. The third variable asks respondents how interested they are in local community issues. An answer of 1 equals 'not very interested', 2 equals 'somewhat interested', and 3 corresponds with 'very interested'. The fourth variable asks respondents how actively involved they are in neighborhood activities. An answer of 1 equals 'never', 2 equals 'sometimes', and 3 corresponds with 'always'. The community attachment scale has the same theoretical and actual range that extends from 4 to 12. The mean is 9.81 and the standard deviation is 1.53. This scale has an alpha coefficient of .6405 and consists of 170 respondents. Thirty-four cases are missing from the analysis due to missing cases in the data set.

### *Alternative Agriculture Scale*

A composite measure of support for alternative agriculture has also been generated that consists of four different questions with the same response set. Each of the questions is a six-item question whereby 5 corresponds with 'first reason for joining', 4 equals 'second reason for joining, 3 equals 'third reason for joining, 2 corresponds with 'fourth reason for joining', 1 coincides with 'checked as a reason for joining but not ranked, and 0 equals 'not a reason for joining'. The first variable asks if members joined the CSA for organic produce. The second variable asks respondents if they joined the CSA for local produce. The third variable asks if members joined to support local farmers. The fourth variable asks members if they joined the CSA to support small farmers. This measure yields an alpha of .6197. The theoretical and actual ranges extend from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 14. The mean is 7.55 and the standard deviation is 4.38. All two hundred and four respondents are included in this scale.

### *Degree of Member Investment*

The degree of member investment scale is a two-item scale. This measure has a theoretical and actual range that exists from 2 to 6. The first item measures how many times a member has visited his/her CSA over the course of the 2000 growing season. The group with the lowest third of number of visits was assigned a score of 1 while those in the middle third were assigned a score of 2 and those in the highest third were assigned a score of 3. The second measure considers how members pick up their weekly shares. Members who go to the farm to pick up their weekly shares are assigned a score of 3

while those who receive it another way are assigned a score of 1<sup>3</sup>. This composite measure has a mean of 2.77 and a standard deviation of 1.15. There are 159 cases in this measure. Forty-five cases are not part of the analysis meaning that 45 respondents did not answer one or both of these questions. This measure has an alpha coefficient of .6126.

### **Background and Independent Variables**

Information relating to the independent variables used in the multivariate analysis is provided in the following paragraphs. These are all single-item independent variables except for the organizational stability measure.

#### *Background Factors*

There are four demographic variables that are used in the path analytical model. The first variable is the member's length of residence in his/her current community of residence. This is a continuous-level variable. The range extends from a minimum value of 1 year to a maximum value of 32 years. The average is 7.02 years.

The second variable, income, is an ordinal-level variable<sup>4</sup>. A response of 1 coincides with a household income of \$15,000 or less per year. A response of 2 equals an annual household income between \$15,001 and \$35,000. A response of 3 corresponds with an annual household income between \$35,001 and \$55,000. Next, a response of 4

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<sup>3</sup> The 3 and 1 classification scheme was maintained in order clearly differentiate between members who were actively involved in picking up their shares and those that were more passively involved.

<sup>4</sup> Research has shown that respondents are typically less comfortable revealing their exact income than they are revealing a grouping that it falls within (see Dillman, 2000). For this reason, an ordinal-level measure was developed instead of a continuous-level one.

equals an annual household income between \$55,001 and \$75,000. A response of 5 corresponds with an annual household income between \$75,001 and \$95,000. Finally, a response of 6 coincides with a household income in excess of \$95,000 per year. The modal category for this variable is the last response. Almost one-third (33.2%) of those surveyed answered that they had an annual household income in excess of \$95,000.

The third variable considers the number of children that members have who live at home with them. This is a continuous-level variable with a range that extends from 0 to 4 and has a mean of 1.21. The fourth variable is based upon the sex of the respondent. This is a dichotomous variable and 82.3% of those surveyed are women.

### *Organizational Stability*

Organizational stability, is a composite measure that is based upon three items. The actual and theoretical ranges extend from 3 to 9. The first item, organizational maintenance, reflects the relative amounts of energy and money that are directed towards maintaining existing members and attracting new ones. The second item, goal transformation, is based upon whether or not the farms have a broad range of goals. The third item, bureaucracy, reflects how bureaucratic each of the CSAs in the study are. Based upon data I collected from my tours of the farms and my meetings with the individual farmers, I rank ordered the farms from high to low for each of the variables that make up this measure. The classification scheme for each of the three items is based upon a three point system where a point of 1 corresponds with low, a score of 2 equals medium, and a score of 3 equals high.

With respect to the first item, organizational maintenance, From the Ground Up and Seven Springs were each assigned the maximum score of 3. This is because these

farms are the only two in the study that have paid farm managers whose job it is to address member concerns, coordinate the newsletter, and perform other public relations-oriented tasks. Good Food for Good People and Jake's Farm were assigned a score of 2 because they perform outreach activities but they are not as extensive as those performed by the employees of From the Ground Up and Seven Springs. Shepherd Farm was assigned the lowest possible score of 1 because the farm is a one-person operation and the farmer does not have the time to invest in member outreach-based activities. As described in the next chapter, most of the members of Shepherd Farm are members of the same church and efforts have not really been made to attract other members who are not affiliated with that church.

The second item, goal transformation, is based upon whether or not the farms have a broad range of goals. Using the same coding scheme as outlined above, members were assigned a score of 1, 2 or 3 on a farm by farm basis. From the Ground Up, Good Food for Good People, and Jake's Farm were assigned the maximum score of 3 because the CSA component of the farm is one income stream among several. From the Ground Up, for example, is affiliated with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and exists, in part, as a model of alternative agriculture that people can visit and learn about a wide range of watershed and conservation issues. The farmers at Good Food for Good People, meanwhile, sell produce and canned goods at a local farmer's market and grow shiitake mushrooms that are sold to local restaurants. Similarly, the farmers at Jake's Farm have a kite store, have considered opening a bed and breakfast, and grow a large amount of gourmet greens that are sold to restaurants and supermarkets throughout North Carolina. The Seven Springs CSA was assigned a score of 2 because the farmers do engage in other

small business ventures but not to the same extent as the 3 farms listed above. Shepherd Farm was assigned the lowest score of 1 because the farmer's goals do not really extend beyond cultivating organic produce to be sold through a CSA.

The third item, bureaucracy, reflects how bureaucratic are each of the CSAs in the study. From the Ground Up was assigned a score of 3 because this is the only farm in this study with a clear administrative hierarchy. For example, the farm has an executive director, a head grower, a grower, several interns, and several office employees with different ranks and degrees of status. In short, From the Ground Up is the most business-like CSA in this study. The Seven Springs CSA was assigned a score of 2 because there are 4 main employees with different ranks and a clearly demarcated set of responsibilities and duties. The organizational structure is not as hierarchical as that of From the Ground Up, however. Finally, Good Food for Good People, Jake's Farm, and Shepherd Farm were assigned a score of 1. This is because these farms have two or fewer employees who work together and perform most jobs without being segmented from each other. Moreover, these farms are in my estimation the least business-like of the five in this study. The resulting measure has a mean of 8.02 and a standard deviation of 1.47. Based upon this scale, each of the farms has been assigned an organizational stability score. The alpha coefficient is .7842.

### **Additional Variables**

Three additional variables were created that were not used in the path analytical model. They were not included because the variable considered conditions that were not present in all five of the farms in this study. The first variable asks respondents if their children attend a Waldorf school. Based upon the survey results, 5.9% of those surveyed

have a child or children who attend a Waldorf school. This variable was not included in the path analytical model because the members of Shepherd Farm and Jake's Farm do not have a Waldorf school within driving distance of their respective CSAs. Members were also asked if they were working or non-working members. Almost 17% answered that they were working members. It is important to note that Seven Springs is the only CSA in the study that offers working memberships. That is why this variable was not included in the path analytical model. Three-quarters of the members of Seven Springs are working members. Members were asked if they are full members or half members. More than half (55.1%) of those surveyed answered that they were full members. This means that 44.9% of those surveyed answered that they were half members. It is worth noting that Shepherd Farm and Jake's Farm do not offer half shares. Because half shares were not offered to all of the members of these five CSAs during the 2000 growing season, this variable was not included in the path analytical model.

In the next chapter, the three variables that are listed above are considered as they relate to several other demographic and member participation variables. For example, differences in environmentalism between working and non-working members are assessed and analyzed. Many of these variables, including environmentalism, support for alternative agriculture, community attachment, income, CSA satisfaction, number of farm visits, the number of years they have belonged to a CSA divided by the number of years it has been in operation, member investment, and organizational success, are considered in the previous paragraphs.

For the purposes of exploratory analysis, other variables related to the Waldorf schooling measure, working status of members, and full time status of members were included in the analyses. For example, a voting scale was created based upon

respondents' voting behavior, an important dimension of social capital, in order to assess its impact on CSA investment. Each survey asked respondents to answer if they always, sometimes or never vote in local and Federal elections<sup>5</sup>. In each of these questions, 3 coincides with never, 2 equals sometimes, and 1 is associated with always. For the purposes of this question, these variables were reverse-coded and placed in a voting scale. The voting scale has a theoretical and actual range that extends from 2 to 6. The mean score is 5.56, the standard deviation is .97, and the alpha coefficient for the scale is .8359. The number of responses is 181. Twenty-three cases were dropped from the scale due to missing cases in the data set.

Members were also asked questions relating to the amount of produce provided as part of their CSA membership and the distance that they live from their CSA. These are both continuous-level variables. On average, 66.31% of the produce that was consumed by respondents was provided by their CSA. The range for this variable extends from 5% to 100%. On average, respondents lived 24.62 miles from their CSA. The minimum response for this variable was 3 miles while the maximum was 65 miles. Members were also asked how many times they visited their CSA over the course of the 2000 growing season. On average, respondents visited the farm 2.22 times. The minimum response for this variable was 0 times while the maximum response was 30 times.

### **Selecting the Farms**

The first stage in selecting the farms was to conduct an Internet search relating to alternative agriculture. A keyword search for 'Community Supported Agriculture'

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<sup>5</sup> The question asking respondents if they vote in state elections was not used since all of the From the Ground Up members who reside in Washington D.C. do not have any state-level political representation.

generated many matches for web sites of CSA farms around the world. One farm that came up repeatedly in my searches was called From the Ground Up (FGU) located in Upper Marlboro, MD. Upon reading about this CSA, I contacted the farmer and arranged to have a tour in early September, 2000.

The farmer, named Rob Vaughn, showed me around the farm and described its partnership with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and the Capital Area Food Bank in Washington D.C. Rob also expressed interest in my research. After touring the farm, I met with my advisor and decided to focus my research on CSAs in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. This decision was made, in part, because there is not any published research that relates to CSA in the mid-Atlantic region of the country. Therefore, upon considering CSAs in a region that has not been previously studied, many insightful comparisons can be made with other studies conducted in New England and the South regarding the effects of climate, the length of the growing season, and the cost per share upon membership characteristics.

While showing me around From the Ground Up, the farmer told me about a CSA-related website. This website ([www.csacenter.org](http://www.csacenter.org)) displayed the contact information of farms around the country. Using this web site, I was able to access another listing of CSAs by State and Province. I limited my search to farms for Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina for two reasons. First, there has not been any published research concerning the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Second, farms in this region were within driving distance of my home in Raleigh, North Carolina. Since each of the farms had between 12 and 100 members, it was estimated that one or two CSAs from the above-mentioned three states would collectively have between 250 and 500 members.

This was seen by my advisor and me as being enough respondents to garner the insights that I needed in order to complete my study.

As part of this website, there were two CSAs listed for North Carolina and four listed for Virginia. I initiated contact with the farmers from both CSAs in North Carolina and two of the four CSAs located in Virginia, and arranged to meet them for a tour of their respective farms. Only two CSAs in Virginia were selected in order to ensure that the farms from one state did not have too much bearing on the aggregated results. One of the farms was selected because it is one of the few East Coast CSAs that offers working memberships. Of the three remaining Virginia farms, two of them were in Northern Virginia and, based upon their websites, catered mostly to residents of Washington D.C. In many respects, they appeared to be similar to From the Ground Up, my choice from Maryland. Therefore, the other Virginia CSA was chosen for inclusion because of its distance from metropolitan Washington. Since From the Ground Up has such a large membership base, only one farm in Maryland was selected. Both CSAs listed for North Carolina on this website were chosen for this study. Clearly, the selection process for these farms was not random. I tried to include a wide range of types of CSA in order to capture the diversity that exists among CSAs.

A total of five farms, therefore, were selected to be part of this study. Two of the farms are in North Carolina, two of them are in Virginia, and one farm is located in Maryland. In the early fall of 2000, I met with the farmers of each of the CSAs and toured their respective farms. In every case, the farmer or farmers showed me around the farm and told me about the history of each CSA. I also told each of the farmers about my research interests and asked them if I could include them in my study. As I spoke with

the farmers, I framed my request as being a win-win situation. They would benefit from learning more about their membership without having to spend time developing and coding the survey. Meanwhile, I would benefit by having access to their membership rosters thereby enabling me to survey and interview members. Each of the farmers appeared to be very interested in my research and all of them agreed to let me either take on all of the farm's end-of-year survey responsibilities or send out my survey in addition to their own survey. Once all of the survey results were entered into the computer, I prepared a final report that was mailed to the farmers of each of the CSAs in this study.

### **Developing the Survey**

Even though most CSAs have their own end-of-year surveys, they tend to be neither very thorough nor amenable to easy coding since the majority of the questions are open-ended. Rather than using a typical CSA survey as a template, I developed a survey instrument that addresses issues that are pertinent to the farmers as well my own academic interests. The final version of the mailed survey was accompanied by a one-page cover letter and a return envelope that was addressed to me and affixed with the necessary postage (see Appendix C). The survey, itself, consisted of 59 mostly closed-ended questions. In the early fall of 2000, the survey was pre-tested on 50 undergraduate and 15 graduate students at North Carolina State University. Many suggestions were made and several questions were modified.

### **The Format of the Survey**

In this age of mass communication, many social scientists, market researchers, program evaluators, and pollsters have experimented with new ways to administer surveys. For example, Internet and e-mail surveys have become widely used over the last

several years. With an Internet survey, the respondent uses the computer mouse to answer questions and submit the finished product. With an e-mail survey, the respondent receives an e-mail with the survey often attached as a separate file. Upon opening the file, the respondent can answer the questions and submit the finished product fairly easily. In the following paragraphs, an overview of Dillman's (2000) Tailored Design Method is provided. Dillman (2000) advocates the use of e-mail surveys and paper surveys in combination with each other. This is the approach that was followed with respect to this research.

#### *Dillman's Tailored Design Method*

Internet and electronic mail surveys have become very popular in recent years. In a reformulation of his Total Design Method, Dillman's (2000) book entitled *Mail and Internet Surveys- The Tailored Design Method* details many of the steps in successfully administering an electronic mail survey. The Total Design Method, for example, relies on the carefully planned process of sending out four waves of a questionnaire at specific time intervals. It tends to be very labor intensive and expensive but often yields response rates in the 70% range. The Tailored Design Method, on the other hand, relies on multiple methods and is more technologically advanced than prior methods. It can save researchers time and money, and is particularly well suited to shorter surveys that researchers administer in rapid succession with very little time elapsing between different waves.

In addition, Dillman (2000) outlines nine design principles for e-mail surveys. The first step involves utilizing a multiple contact strategy. This principle was followed in that paper copies of the survey were sent to CSA members who did not respond to the

e-mail versions. Second, Dillman (2000) urges survey administrators to personalize all e-mail contact. This is the only principle that was not followed. Because there were 389 e-mail surveys that were sent out to members, it was decided that such an endeavor would have been too time consuming. Therefore, the cover letter was introduced with the statement “Dear CSA Member.” Third, Dillman (2000) advocates that survey researchers keep the cover letter brief in order to allow respondents to answer the first question without scrolling down. This principle was followed as the cover letter for this survey was less than one full page.

Fourth, Dillman (2000) identifies the importance of informing respondents of alternative ways to respond such as printing and mailing or faxing the completed survey. This principle was followed. Respondents were given a fax number, phone number, and address where they could reach me to either ask a question or return a survey. Several respondents printed out the completed surveys and mailed them to me in order to preserve their anonymity. Dillman’s (2000) fifth principle involves the inclusion of a replacement survey with the reminder message. This principle was also followed. Sixth, it is important to limit the column width of questions in order to avoid wrap-around text. This principle was followed. In the case of long questions, they were simply spread over multiple lines. Seventh, Dillman (2000) suggests beginning with an interesting but simple question. This was also done. The first question asked respondents to identify their degree of satisfaction with their CSA membership on a scale of 1 to 10. Eighth, it is stated that respondents should be asked to place the letter X in answer boxes to indicate their answers. This was also followed. Ninth, Dillman (2000) advocates reducing the

number of response categories for each question. This was also followed and most of the responses include five or fewer possible answers.

In his book, Dillman (2000) also goes over some of the limitations of an electronic mail survey. For example, he states that, since many people are not familiar with e-mail or do not have access to it, it may not be suitable for administering surveys to all groups of people. He also writes extensively about anonymity and confidentiality. For example, e-mail surveys cannot be anonymous since the researcher will always be provided with the e-mail address of respondents who return the survey. He also states that if the same version of a survey is e-mailed to multiple respondents at the same time that everybody on the list can access the e-mail addresses of the other people on the list. In short, Dillman (2000) makes it clear that e-surveys can be very effective research tools but that they are not necessarily suited to research concerning sensitive topics and groups of people that may not have access to computers such as the elderly and the poor.

### **Administering the Survey**

The first mailing of the finalized survey was sent out in 12 November, 2000. The farmers at two of the CSAs, Shepherd Farm and From the Ground Up, correspond with virtually all of their respective members via e-mail. Almost all of the members of these two farms receive electronic versions of newsletters and updates, in addition to the end-of-year surveys administered by the farmers. These farmers prefer using e-mail because it saves them money on postage and paper along with time that would be spent copying pages and filling envelopes. Consequently, all seven of the surveys that were administered to the members of Shepherd Farm as part of the first wave were sent electronically. Out of the 240 members of From the Ground Up, two hundred and four of

them (85.0% of the total) were sent electronic versions of the survey as part of the first wave. All of the members of Seven Springs, Jake's farm, and Good Food for Good People were sent U.S. mail versions of the survey. In addition, the 36 members of From the Ground Up who did not have corresponding e-mail addresses were sent a copy of the paper version via the United States Postal Service.

#### *Administering the Electronic-Mail Survey*

Following Dillman's (2000) design principles, I sent out 389 electronic mail surveys to the members of Shepherd Farm and From the Ground Up over two waves (see Table 2). The farmer from Shepherd Farm sent me the e-mail addresses of seven of the farm's fourteen members<sup>6</sup>. Each of the seven members whose e-mail addresses I was given was sent an electronic copy of the survey as an attachment in Microsoft Word<sup>7</sup>. This meant that the members would click the attachment icon thereby loading the survey and cover letter in Microsoft Word. They would then proceed to complete the survey and have to hit the copy icon before going back into their e-mail program and pasting the contents into a return e-mail back to me. This procedure was explained in the cover letter.

I was also supplied with the e-mail addresses of 204 out of the 240 total members of the members of From the Ground Up. In the first wave, 204 surveys and cover letters

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<sup>6</sup> The farmer of Shepherd Farm was reluctant to give me the e-mail addresses of the members of his CSA without their permission. So, he asked all of the members via e-mail if they would be interested in completing a copy of my survey. Seven replied that it would be okay and the farmer proceeded to pass on their e-mail addresses to me.

<sup>7</sup> Microsoft Word was selected because it is the most widely used word processing software package used in North America (Dillman, 2000).

were sent as e-mail attachments in Microsoft Word and 36 photocopied versions were sent via the United States Postal Service (see Table 2). Several members replied saying that they did not use Microsoft Word and requested that I re-send the survey either by conventional mail or as part of the e-mail message, itself, which is referred to as the in-line text of the message. The surveys that were subsequently e-mailed as in-line text were simply copies of the survey that were pasted into an e-mail message that could be completed and returned without having to use the attachment function. The primary benefit of this method is that it is fairly easy for the respondents to answer, but in-line versions are difficult to format and may appear cluttered. This is precisely why Dillman (2000) advocates the use of short questions in the survey in order to limit the amount of wrap around text.

#### *Administering the U.S. Mail Survey*

Upon speaking with the farmers at Seven Springs, they told me that my survey could be used as the farm's official end-of-year survey if I agreed to certain conditions. They wanted the survey to be strictly anonymous, they did not want any of the information used for marketing purposes by other farms, and they wanted it to be made clear in the cover letter that members did not have to answer questions that made them feel uncomfortable in any way. Moreover, the farmers insisted that only one wave of the survey be administered in order to save paper. After unsuccessfully negotiating for a second wave, I agreed to all of these terms and sent cover letters and self-addressed stamped envelopes to the farmers in mid-November, 2000. The farmers placed the envelopes with the surveys in a weekly share as opposed to mailing them out. Of the 90 people who belong to Seven Springs, 46 of them returned surveys which accounts for

51.1% of all members (see Table 2).

The farmers at Jake's Farm were also reluctant to give me their membership rosters. They wanted to preserve the anonymity of their members. The farmers were also uncomfortable with the idea of sending out surveys to people who have already completed them. After unsuccessfully negotiating for a second wave, I sent surveys, cover letters, and stamped envelopes with my address on stamped envelopes that would be addressed and mailed by one of the farmers. All told, 10 out of the 20 members of Jake's Farm completed the surveys representing a response rate of 50.0% (see Table 2).

The farmers at Good Food for Good People were quite happy to provide me with a list of their members. In late October, one of the farmers mailed me a list of the names of the farm's 18 members. From there, I sent out two waves of the U.S. mail survey to the members and was mailed back 12 completed surveys which is a return rate of 66.6% (see Table 2). Because I had the names of all of the members, the surveys were numbered before they were administered in order to track response patterns. This allowed me to keep track of the names of the members that returned the completed surveys. As such, the second wave of surveys was only mailed to members who did not return surveys mailed out in the first wave. As previously mentioned, the farmer of From the Ground Up provided me with the e-mail and U.S. mail addresses of the farm's 240 members. As part of the first wave, 36 U.S. mail surveys were administered to those members who did not have an e-mail listing. The next U.S. mail wave was administered as part of the third wave to all of the CSA members who did not respond to the earlier wave of the U.S. mail survey or the earlier two waves of the e-mail survey. In total, one

hundred and twenty-nine completed surveys were returned by the 240 members of this farm representing a response rate of 51.6% (see Table 2).

### Survey Return Rates

Table 2 identifies the survey return rates and the member response rates associated with this research.

Table 2: The Format of the Returned Surveys

	GF4GP	Shepherd	FGU	7Springs	Jake's	TOTAL
<b>WAVE 1</b>						
e-mail version	n/a	35.7%	26.5%	n/a	n/a	21.6% (47/218)
US mail version	55.5%	n/a	38.9%	51.1%	50.0%	48.8% (80/164)
<b>WAVE 2</b>						
e-mail version	n/a	22.2%	8.0%	n/a	n/a	8.8% (15/171)
US mail version	25.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	25.0% (2/8)
<b>WAVE 3</b>						
e-mail version	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
US mail version	n/a	n/a	40.3%	n/a	n/a	40.3% (60/149)
TOTAL RETURNS	12/18	7/14	129/240	46/90	10/20	204/382
Response Rate	66.6%	50.0%	53.8%	51.1%	50.0%	53.4%

Overall, the return rates were higher in the first wave than the following two waves. Slightly more than one-fifth (21.6%) of the electronically mailed surveys were returned and roughly one-half (48.8%) of the U.S. mail surveys were returned as part of the first wave. As part of the second wave, less than 10% of the electronically mailed surveys were returned and one-quarter of the U.S. mail surveys were returned. As part of the third wave that was limited to only U.S. mail surveys, the return rate was slightly more than 40%. The overall response rate was 53.4% (n=204).

### *The Electronic-Mail Survey*

Two e-mail waves were sent out to the members of Shepherd Farm and FGU members whose e-mail addresses I had (see Table 2). As discussed above, the response rate for the first wave was higher than the second wave but below each of the three U.S. mail waves. In total, roughly one-third (30.6%) of the returned surveys were electronic versions.

Of the seven respondents from Shepherd Farm, all of them completed the survey that was e-mailed to them as an attachment in Microsoft Word. Five of the surveys were returned as part of the first wave while two were returned as part of the second wave. As with Shepherd Farm, the return rates for the electronic surveys administered to members of From the Ground Up were much higher in the first wave than the second. Forty-two electronic surveys accounting for 26.5% of those sent out were returned as part of the first wave while only 15 out of 171 (8.8%) were returned as part of the second wave. Fifty-five of the returned surveys from FGU members were done by e-mail accounting for 42.7% of the total number of surveys from that farm. In addition, 76.4% of all of the returned electronic surveys from FGU were of the attachment variety while 23.6% of them were in-line text message versions of the survey.

### *The U.S. Mail Survey*

Once again, only one wave was administered to the members of Seven Springs and Jake's Farm. For that reason, the return rate is identical to the response rate for these two farms. Two waves of the U.S. mail survey were administered to members of Good Food for Good People. The return rate for the first wave was 55.5% while the return rate for the second wave as 25.0%. Seventy-four of the returned surveys from members of

From the Ground Up were returned in one of the two U.S. mail waves. Overall, 57.3% of the returned surveys from this farm were administered via the USPS.

### **Coding the Survey Data**

The first wave of surveys was sent out on 11 November, 2000 and the first surveys were returned via e-mail the next day. The cut-off date for the survey was 31 January, 2001 meaning that surveys received after that date would not be included in the study. As it turns out, the last survey was returned on 28 January, 2002. Therefore all of the returned surveys are included in this analysis. In the Fall of 2000, a codebook was constructed to facilitate the data entry process. Using SPSS version 10, variable names were created and the data were entered in February and March of 2001. The data entry was checked in April, 2001. Many of the respondents also offered a considerable amount of information to the open-ended questions and also added many margin notes. These were typed in a separate document and used in conjunction with the survey data to shape and guide the analyses and the follow-up interviews.

### **Initiating and Conducting Interviews with CSA Members**

In addition to collecting the survey data, interviews were conducted with each of the farmers and thirteen members. There was at least one member who was interviewed from each of the five farms in this study. This triangulation of methods was used in order for each stream of data to complement the other. In other words, the interviews provided a forum to further study trends in the surveys and follow up on issues relating to the hypotheses. Thus, greater detail and clarity was provided concerning the role of community building within CSA, how members perceive the financial value of their membership, and ways in which their CSA experience could be improved.

With respect to the format of the interview, I asked questions relating to how involved members were with their respective CSAs, how they picked up their weekly shares, and if they thought that their CSA was socially homogeneous. The majority of the questions related to the hypotheses and were asked in order to explain further many of the trends in the data. The interviews were loosely structured and threads were followed as they came up. It is also worth noting that all of the interviews were tape-recorded with the permission of the respondent. The shortest interview was 45 minutes, and the longest was one and a half hours. In general, most of the interviews lasted for about one hour. In the weeks and months following the interviews, they were transcribed, coded with margin notes, and used to supplement the analysis of the survey data findings.

The final question on the survey asked respondents if they would be willing to be interviewed concerning their experiences as a CSA member. The possible answers for this question were 'yes', 'maybe', and 'no'. Below the final question, I also made the following statement: "If you answered either A [yes] or B [maybe], please contact the survey administrator..." It was important to include such a statement because the surveys were anonymous for members of 2 of the farms meaning that I would be unable to contact them if they were, indeed, interested in participating in an interview.

Because members were asked if they would be willing to be interviewed about their experiences as a CSA member, there is the potential for a self-selection bias among those with whom I spoke. It is possible, for example, that the most enthusiastic and the least enthusiastic members of the sample are the most likely to express interest in being interviewed because they feel so strongly about issues pertaining to CSA. In other words, members who had a wonderful experience are likely going to be more interested in

sharing that with me than a member who had an uneventful experience. Likewise, if a member had a miserable experience, s/he is likely going to be more interested in communicating her/his feelings to me than a member whose experience was generally uneventful.

As the surveys were being returned over the late months of 2000 and January, 2001, I received approximately 20 e-mail messages from members of the farms saying that they would be willing to be interviewed. Six other members included a note at the end of the survey that included their contact information and a message that I could contact them about planning an interview.

In the late spring of 2001, all of the survey data were entered into the computer and I initiated contact with those farm members who expressed an interest in being interviewed. Because the CSAs were spread out, I decided to interview members of farms that were close to each other at the same time. From the Ground Up is in southern Maryland and is not that close to the other farms in the study. It seemed logical to interview all of the interested members of From the Ground Up at the same time and meet people affiliated with the other farms at a later date. In June, I e-mailed the members of From the Ground Up who had expressed interest in being interviewed about setting up various times and places to meet. Unfortunately, each of the FGU members whom I e-mailed got back to me and expressed that this was not a convenient period of time to meet but that they would be willing to meet later in the summer.

It was most convenient for me to conduct my out-of-town interviews over the course of the two week-ends that followed Labor Day week-end. I e-mailed the interested CSA members about my intentions and was able to schedule 11 interviews

over the course of those two week-ends. Between Friday 7 September and Monday 10 September, I interviewed 5 members of the three farms west of Raleigh that include Seven Springs, Good Food from Good People, and Jake's Farm. During Friday afternoon, I interviewed one member of Seven Springs at his home in western Virginia. On Saturday morning, I interviewed 2 members of Good Food for Good People in western Virginia at a garage sale that they were helping out with, and then drove to western North Carolina where I interviewed a member of Jake's Farm in the afternoon. On Sunday morning, I interviewed another member of Seven Springs at her home in the western part of Virginia. I, then, proceeded to go to the house of a member of Good Food for Good People for an afternoon interview only to find a note explaining that a family emergency had arisen and that the member had to cancel the interview. On Monday morning, I interviewed another member of Seven Springs at a Roanoke coffee shop.

My plan was to interview the interested members of From the Ground Up over the course of the next week-end which was the week-end of the 15th of September. As the events of 11 September unfolded, however, I was not sure if it was appropriate to proceed with the interviews. Ultimately, I decided to e-mail the FGU members and ask them about their feelings concerning the interviews, and every member responded that it would be okay with them to pursue the interviews. On the morning of 14 September, I drove to Annapolis, MD and interviewed a member at the main office of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation which is a source of funding for From the Ground Up. I conducted 2 interviews on Sunday, 16 September. The first took place over lunch at a café in Greenbelt, MD and the second one took place in the home of a couple in Takoma Park,

MD. On Monday 17 September, I interviewed a member at her house in Silver Spring, MD and another over lunch at the University of Maryland in College Park. I also interviewed 2 members of Shepherd Farm. I interviewed one member at her home in Zebulon, NC on the morning of 5 October and another member at an athletic complex near North Carolina State University in the early evening of 10 October. In all, I interviewed at least 1 survey respondent from each of the five CSAs in the study accounting for a total of 15 different members.

### **Historical Effects**

During the interview phase of this research, several CSA members were interviewed before the tragic events of 11 September, 2001 while several others were interviewed shortly after the terrorist bombings of the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington D.C. It is difficult to assess empirically any historical effects, however, since the interviews were fairly loosely structured. I did talk about the terrorist bombings with several of the members but this was not a prominent theme in any of the interviews. Moreover, every person whom I interviewed was very supportive of and excited about CSA so there is not any variation to attribute to a particular news event. This, in part, reflects the self-selection bias of interviewing people who volunteer to be interviewed. In other words, many of the CSA members who agree to be interviewed are likely to feel very strongly about it in one way or another regardless of any historical effects.

### **Institutional Review Board**

Before interviewing any members of the CSAs in the study, I followed the University's guidelines for research on human subjects. In short, all field research needs

to be approved by the NCSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) which consists of several faculty members from different departments. The purpose of the IRB is to ensure that research subjects are treated in a respectful and ethical manner by researchers who are affiliated with NCSU. Moreover, the IRB seeks to ensure that research subjects are aware of the purpose of the research that they are participating in and understand that they can withdraw from the research at any time.

In the Spring of 2000, I filled out all of the necessary IRB paperwork and submitted an overview of my research (see Appendix D). One important part of my IRB application was the informed consent form to be signed by all of the CSA members who were interviewed. The informed consent form provided a brief overview of my research, gave my contact information as well as the contact information of both my supervising professor and the head of the IRB. It also made it very clear that the research subjects could refuse to answer any questions that they did not want to answer and that they could end the interview at any time. All of the interviewees signed the informed consent forms that now have been filed away as per the IRB guidelines.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has provided material related to the methodology of this research. How the farms in this study were selected, how the concepts were operationalized, the development, administration and format of the survey, and issues relating to the interviewing process were discussed. The coding of the data and scale construction were also examined. The next chapter, Farm Profiles, identifies important descriptions of each of the five farms that serves as the basis of this study. Information regarding the location, size, innovative features, and history of each farm is presented in detail.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Farm Profiles**

As previously mentioned, there are five farms in this study, all of which are located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. These farms are very different with respect to size, degree of member involvement, and share delivery systems. Nevertheless, they each fulfill the basic requirements of CSA in that they provide weekly allotments of organic produce to paying members over the course of the late spring, summer, and fall. This chapter provides a description and general overview of each of the farms, and chronicles the respective histories of each of these farms. This chapter concludes with a table that summarizes important information about each of the farms.

#### **From the Ground Up**

From the Ground Up (FGU) is a five acre CSA located in Upper Marlboro, Maryland which is 15 miles due south of Washington D.C. The CSA is one component of the Claggett Farm which is owned and operated by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF), a non-profit agency that promotes ecological sustainability through education and outreach programs. The Claggett Farm is 285 acres and has been owned and operated by the CBF since 1980. The property was donated by the Charles Claggett family with the understanding that the farm continue to operate as a working farm while also serving as an educational resource. In fact, by eighth grade, 80% of the students in the Maryland public school system visit the farm and learn about issues pertaining to coastal ecology, habitat preservation, and sustainable agriculture. The CBF also maintains a small herd of cattle on the farm to experiment with various organic raising and rotational grazing techniques.

Although many of the activities conducted at Clagett Farm, including the CSA, are funded by the CBF, From the Ground Up receives half of its funding from the Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB). The CAFB funds and directs activities that are oriented towards providing marginalized people with healthy food. For example, the CAFB purchases several shares per season and distributes the weekly shares among many needy people in Washington D.C. In addition to the CSA support, produce is also grown to be sold at an inner city farmer's market. On Fridays, produce is sold by the pound at the Anacostia Farmer's Market which attracts many poorer inner city residents. They have also started to sell produce by the pound at an inner city housing project on Wednesdays. Furthermore, on Mondays, an FGU representative usually drops off vegetables at the soup kitchen located in the Church of the Brethren which feeds scores of disenfranchised people a hot lunch every day.

By CSA standards, FGU is quite large as it consists of 240 members living throughout the metropolitan Washington D.C. area. FGU was not always so big, however. It started out as a much smaller CSA, known as Chesapeake CSA, that centered around the Washington Waldorf school and the Acorn Hill Children's Center. This CSA was managed by a group of volunteers and shareholders who tended to be very active in all facets of the day-to-day operation. Upon being offered institutional and financial support through the CBF, the Chesapeake CSA moved to Clagett Farm and FGU was born. At this point, several people were hired to take care of the farming and managerial responsibilities which resulted in higher share prices and the reduced need for direct member involvement. With less on-farm responsibilities for members, the

membership base also increased as people from all over the region could join and have fresh produce delivered to them without having to go to the farm to regularly work.

The farm was managed by Matthew Hora until the middle of the 2000 growing season when he resigned from that position. Many of Matthew's jobs were taken over by Rob Vaughn, formerly the head grower, and Rob's old position was filled by Carrie Cochran, formerly the head intern at the farm. Rob has been affiliated with the farm since 1998 while Carrie started in 1999. Rob is in his early to mid-twenties, is white and is very laid back and relaxed. Carrie, also in her early to mid-twenties, is white and a little more upbeat than Rob. Rob and Carrie are a couple and live together in an old farm house on the property of the farm.

With respect to the CSA itself, an individual shares cost \$336.00 in 2000 while a family share cost \$608.00. From the Ground Up also offers a limited number of partner and supporting shares. A partner share cost \$150.00 and is available to 20 people who currently receive WIC or food stamps. Meanwhile, a supporting share is a sum of money beyond one's own share price that is pooled together to pay for supporting shares. Members are also asked to sign a contract which states "I understand that farming can be unpredictable, and that there are occasional weather related problems, which might affect the size or diversity of my share. I expect and trust the farmers and farm staff to do their best."

The growing season for this CSA extends from late May until early November which allows for roughly 24 weeks of deliveries. During the growing season, Carrie usually spends two afternoons per week delivering shares. On Mondays, for example, she goes to six different drop-off locations in southeast, northeast, and northwest

Washington D.C. along with Annapolis, Maryland. On Thursdays, Carrie goes to another six drop-off locations in Upper Marlboro, Silver Spring, Bethesda, Kensington, and College Park, Maryland. At all but one of the drop-off points, bagged shares equal in size and weight are placed outside doorways, in corridors, and on front porches where members can pick them up later that afternoon and evening. At the DuPont Circle drop-off point, however, in an affluent section of Washington DC, Carrie set up crates of individual vegetables along the wall of an office building and tells members how much of each item that they can take. Forty-four of the members pick up their shares at this location and do so between 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. on Mondays. This pick-up system also applies to the 40 members who pick up their shares at the farm.

As part of their attempt to attract lower income members, FGU offers a very flexible payment plan. Upon joining, members pay a 25% non-refundable deposit and proceed to pay the remainder in 25% installments due by 1 June, 31 July, and 30 August. Rob conceded, however, that this system has been very difficult to keep track of and non-payment has become a big problem. Several members also have small garden plots of their own at the farm which they can use to grow food. As an added incentive to visit the farm, people who pick-up their shares can pick flowers to take home with them. FGU also has a regular newsletter which is sent electronically to members with e-mail accounts. The newsletters contain recipes and information on farm happenings. They also host an end of year harvest festival where members are encouraged to come to the farm and explore the place where a lot of their food is grown.

Although the farm is completely organic it is not certified organic and Rob mentioned that there are not any immediate plans to initiate the lengthy certification

process. In past years, they have experienced drought but are also resisting the idea of incorporating irrigation into their farming system. Rob and Carrie do, however, plan to expand their relationship with the CAFB and hope to be able to offer more organically grown food to those in need. They would also like to plant fruit trees and be able to offer fruit in their shares. They have also considered tapping into the specialty produce market and growing more gourmet vegetables that could be sold privately to restaurants and stores in and around Washington D.C.

### **Seven Springs Farm**

Seven Springs Farm is located in Check, Virginia. The farm itself is 111 acres with 4.5 acres dedicated to CSA endeavors. The produce is grown in six or seven large beds that are on different points of the property. Most of the land surrounding the garden beds is wooded but land is also cleared for two homes, an equipment storage area, and a barn. There is also a large earth-bermed root cellar close to the lower fields. Various hoses can be readily seen as one of the farm's employees recently created some drip lines and sprinkler systems to irrigate the crops.

Seven Springs Farm is maintained by three people. Polly Heiser is a white woman, perhaps in her late thirties, and has been working on the farm for ten years. Polly is paid on a salaried system by the farm's owners and also gets to live in one of the houses on the property. Ron Juftes is a white man in his early forties who has also been with the farm for 10 years. He lives in the other house on the property and is also paid on a salaried system. A third person involved with the day-to-day operation is named Mark and he has also been involved with Seven Springs Farm CSA since its inception. During the 2000 growing season, there was also an intern named Karen.

There are 90 members of Seven Springs Farm who collectively purchase the equivalent of 50 full shares per season. Some members have full shares while the majority of members have half shares. The price of the share is variable since members are designated as being either working or non-working. A full working share cost \$610 in 2000 while a full non-working share cost \$770. Meanwhile, a half working share cost \$360 in 2000 while a half non-working share cost \$440. As it turns out, sixty of ninety members are working members of the farm who have regular on-farm responsibilities that they undertake. Ron, Polly, and Mark have recently raised the non-working rates by a significant amount as an incentive for non-working members to become working members. A payment plan is also offered whereby people can pay in four equal payments over the course of the growing season or nine equal payments on a monthly basis. For people who are not on time with their payments, they are levied a 1 to 1.5% monthly interest charge.

As working members, people are mostly responsible for activities revolving around the distribution of shares. Working members with full shares are required to work 16 hours over the course of the growing season while those with half shares are required to work 8 hours per season. Working members go to the farm on revolving Tuesdays and Saturdays, and help with such activities as cleaning, weighing, dividing, and bagging produce. Working members also pick up the shares of other members who live near them and coordinate their delivery or pick-up time and place. The majority of cleaning, weighing, dividing, and bagging takes place in the barn where there are several big tables, sinks, and scales.

Seven Springs Farm does not solely offer a vegetable share. They also offer a fruit share, an herb share, a bread share, a cheese share, a regular garlic share, and an elephant garlic share to members. Similar to the philosophy held by Tenley Weaver and Dennis Dove at Good Food for Good People, Polly, Ron, and Mark buy organic fruits and loaves of bread from neighboring people in a cooperative effort to promote regional self-reliance. They also offer a gourmet share in partnership with Chestnut Creek Farm. This allows for members to be contacted when, as they put it, 'unusual goodies' such as shiitake mushrooms, duckling, other game birds, and asparagus are ready for distribution. If members are interested in purchasing such foods, they are placed in the weekly share and billed at the end of the month. Every week, a bag note is placed in the shares which keeps people up-to-date concerning what they should expect in the coming weeks and other farm news.

Another innovative feature of Seven Springs Farm is that a fund exists to subsidize the share price for people of limited means. Seven Springs offers supporting memberships to people and offer newsletters and invitations to on-farm events for between \$10 and \$25 per year. They also solicit donations from people who are interested in subsidizing the low income share. Nobody applied for the subsidized share in 2000 so the money will carry to the next year. A free share is also given to members of the New River Community Action group in Floyd and is divvied up by its members. Seven Springs also has a free table in the barn where members can place unwanted produce and drop-off hosts also collect unclaimed shares which are given to an organization called RAMhouse which is a home set up by the Roanoke Area Ministries

for victims of domestic abuse. Another interesting facet of Seven Springs farm is that the farmers rely upon many biodynamic farming techniques and methods.

In addition to the CSA, Ron, Polly, and Mark operate a mail order business enterprise that specializes in organic soil amendments, liquid fertilizers, growing mixes, and row covers. As it turns out, Ron spends most of his time working with the business while Polly does most of the farming, and Mark handles a lot of the organizational duties. With respect to future plans, Ron, Polly, and Mark are strongly encouraging members to form a core group and take over a lot of the planning activities themselves. Among other things, this would increase the already high level of personal investment by the members in the organization while also allowing the farmers to do more of what they do best which is to farm. Ron, Polly, and Mark have also considered creating some orchard space and renting space to nearby livestock farmers.

### **Good Food for Good People**

The Good Food for Good People CSA is located in Floyd, Virginia which is approximately 30 miles North-west of Roanoke and 25 miles North of Blacksburg. This CSA is 10 miles away from Seven Springs CSA. The farmers are Tenley Weaver and Dennis Dove who live together on the farm and generate all of their income from farming related endeavors. Tenley and Dennis are both white and are in their early forties. They do not have any children together but live with Tenley's daughter named Summer Rain whose father, incidentally, lives on the farm next door.

Dennis started Buttercup Gardens in 1992 as a CSA and supplemented his income by selling produce at the Blacksburg Farmer's Market. During that time, Tenley grew organic produce that was sold to restaurants and health food stores in and around Floyd.

In 1998, Dennis and Tenley combined their business enterprises and established the Good Food for Good People CSA as a component of Buttercup Gardens/Full Circle Farm which moved to Tenley's property. The farm, itself, is 27 acres with 2 acres dedicated to certified organic growing. During 2000, there was an intern named Sally who lived in a small trailer on the property. On the property, there is also a barn, a greenhouse, a house, and an earth-bermed cooling shed/root cellar. Tenley and Dennis do not have a large electric cooler so they rent a cooler at a local health food store.

Tenley and Dennis have continued to generate three streams of income from their farming. The first leg of their farm, as they put it, involves wholesale distribution to restaurants. They specialize in growing shiitake mushrooms, an expensive gourmet variety, along with other vegetables which are sold to local eateries. Their second stream of income comes from selling produce at the Blacksburg Farmer's Market every Saturday. They also sell shiitake mushrooms at this market in addition to canned goods such as sauerkraut and apple butter. The third stream of income comes from the Good Food for Good People CSA which runs for 24 weeks during the growing season and represents one-quarter of the farm's net income.

Good Food for Good People consists of 18 members, most of whom live in Blacksburg and, according to Tenley and Dennis, are affiliated with Virginia Tech University. There is only one drop-off location which is the Blacksburg Farmer's Market and members pick up their shares every Saturday morning. A single share in 2000 cost \$325 per season while a family share cost \$465.00. To bring the members to the farm, there is an annual field day in late October where people are invited to the farm, learn about growing methods, and get to know each other.

Tenley and Dennis have developed an innovative system to keep people from paying for weeks that they will not use if they are out of town for parts of the summer. Their system is based on vouchers where the members essentially pay for 20 weeks out of a possible 24 and simply present one of their vouchers in return for food knowing that they are allotted twenty of them. Members can also use more than one voucher per time and get a double or triple share if they are particularly attracted to a week's share that contains produce they want to can, if they are having guests for a meal or know that they will miss more than four of the drop-off days.

There are several other innovative features of this CSA. For example, they have two draught horses which are used to pull an old-fashioned plough. The draught horses replace modern tilling machinery such as tractors which tend to compact soil, create lots of noise, and spill diesel fuel and oil in garden beds. The use of these horses has environmental benefits while also restoring a human element in farm jobs such as planting and harvesting which have become mechanized over recent decades. Tenley and Dennis are also huge proponents of seed saving and planting heirloom varieties of crops which ties in with their interests in sustainable farming. In addition to the draught horses and heirloom varieties, Tenley and Dennis also use a solar powered pump which carries water from a spring on the farm to the crops via a drip irrigation system.

Tenley and Dennis have a conception of CSA that differs from many others in the movement. They see CSA as a cooperative effort that provides local farms with the opportunity to join forces and pool resources. For example, they routinely buy fruit such as kiwis and figs from nearby certified organic farms which they often include in weekly shares. In fact, they work with 60 different growers in a five county area to supplement

their weekly shares. Some people may argue that this violates the spirit of CSA but Tenley and Dennis contend that it broadens the selection of produce that they can offer while allowing them to grow what they grow best. Moreover, they cannot afford to dedicate a portion of their farm to fruit trees that take 20 years to mature and finally bear fruit.

In terms of future plans, Tenley and Dennis plan to plant raspberries and asparagus to further diversify the range of crops that they grow. Each takes about 3 years to bear fruit but they are willing to be patient. They would also like to establish a winter share and offer crops grown in the greenhouse like potatoes and greens throughout the colder months of the year. Finally, Tenley and Dennis have never offered a newsletter and do not plan to start one in the near future. As far as they are concerned, they get enough face to face contact with members every Saturday morning to get to know them, offer cooking tips, and answer any questions.

### **Jake's Farm**

The CSA known as Jake's Farm is located in Candler, North Carolina which is on the outskirts of Asheville. The farm which is surrounded by many foothills and mountains is eleven acres in size, and is located on the Beaverdam Creek. Chris Sawyer and Missy Huger are the farmers and have been married for eight years. Chris and Missy are both white and in their fifties. They do not have any children together but Chris has a 14 year old son from a previous relationship. They named the farm after one of their dogs, Jake, shortly after buying it in early 1998.

Neither Chris nor Missy had any sort of experience with farming before they bought this parcel of land. In fact, Chris has a background in construction and Missy was

a corporate executive living in Los Angeles. In the mid-1990s, Chris fell from a construction scaffold and broke both of his arms and hurt his back. Unable to continue working after his fall, Chris retired from construction and received a settlement which allowed them to purchase what became Jake's Farm.

When Chris and Missy bought the land, a lot of work needed to be done. Although this land has been used to cultivate corn and tobacco, it had lain fallow for ten years or so and was overgrown with brush. Moreover, it did not have any sort of living accommodations. So, they built a house, dug a well, established a septic system, and created a driveway from the road to their home during the course of the spring of 1998. During this time, they also hired a crew of workers to clear all of the brush.

While grading the driveway, Chris decided to establish two upper terraces for a possible home garden in the warmer months. As months passed, Chris enrolled in an agriculture class at a nearby college and his vision expanded from having a small home garden to a larger commercial garden. During this time, he also applied for organic certification from the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, enrolled in more classes, and joined the Carolina Organic Growers (COG) which is a marketing co-operative based at the Asheville Farmer's Market. In the late Spring, Chris was, unfortunately, injured in a car accident and could no longer work as hard on the farm. So, one full-time and two part-time workers were hired to help with all of the work that needed to be done.

According to Chris and Missy, their first summer was filled with learning and experimentation. Many different vegetables, herbs, and flowers were grown but most were composted since the organic certification process had not been completed. As the fall approached, the organic certification process was complete and Chris and Missy built

a large, heated, greenhouse for cold season growing. They started by growing mesclun mix which was sold through COG and to a few local customers. The way COG works is that a retail chain such as Whole Foods Market or a restaurant makes a request to COG for a certain amount of produce. People at COG then proceed to alert the 32 member farms that 65 pounds of basil, for example, have been requested and member farms respond by saying that they can provide a percentage of that particular order. During 1999, Chris and Missy continued to grow a diverse range of herbs and vegetables, and expanded their participation within COG. They also created more garden space for a total of 4.22 acres, purchased a large freezer to store produce and began to sell produce at four local Farmer's Markets including those in Waynesville, Black Mountain, Biltmore, and Asheville.

After a successful year in 1999, Chris and Missy decided to integrate CSA into their farm. They volunteered to be part of a farm tour sponsored by the Carolina Farm Stewardship which served as a great way to recruit members. In their first year, 2000, the CSA had 20 members living in and around Asheville. Rather than paying by the season, Chris and Missy experimented with 4 week membership blocks. The guiding logic behind this was that people would not have to commit for an entire season and people could opt out for a period if they were going on holiday. A full share cost \$85 for four weeks and half shares were also available. With respect to the method of delivery, Missy delivers weekly bundles to the house of a member in each general region which serves as a distribution point for neighbors. Another interesting feature of this farm is that the farmers have been practicing seed saving techniques and seek to use as many heirloom

varieties of crops as possible. Finally, they use a drip method of irrigation using water that is pumped right from the river.

With respect to the future of Jake's Farm, Chris and Missy are very ambitious. For example, they would like to offer winter shares by dedicating greenhouse space to their CSA endeavors. Chris also mentioned that he would like to dig out a pond, farm catfish, and offer catfish shares as part of the CSA. Curiously, Jake's Farm is one of the few CSAs that does not offer a weekly/monthly newsletter and there are no plans to start one in the near future. Chris does, however, plan to put his knowledge of construction to good use by building worker's quarters. Jake's Farm is listed on the new international WWOOFing directory and the farmers hope to attract WWOOFers (willing workers on organic farms) from all over the world who essentially work for free in return for training, lodging, and food. Chris also talked about building a dwelling to be used as a bed and breakfast, a barn to facilitate on-farm member gatherings, and a commercial processing kitchen to aid in preserving foods and preparing more of what he calls ready-to-eat food. Finally, Chris and Missy's long term goals include attracting more CSA members and phasing out the COG and Farmer's Market activities, and hiring a farm manager to allow them to embrace their retirement.

### **The Shepherd Farm**

The Shepherd Farm is located approximately 20 miles East of Raleigh, North Carolina in a small town called Zebulon. The farmer is Kenneth Barnes, a white man in his early forties, who works full time for the USDA in the tobacco division for nine months of the year. He is on furlough for three months in the summer which is when he does the majority of his CSA activities. Kenneth neither lives on the land that he farms

nor owns it. Rather, the land that he farms is leased from an older retired Methodist minister whom Kenneth refers to as Mr. Clyde. Kenneth farms one-half of an acre of land which is not certified organic. When asked why he has not pursued organic certification, Kenneth responded that there is too much paperwork and that it would mean having to power wash the tractor that he shares with Mr. Clyde before every use since Mr. Clyde is not one hundred percent organic.

Kenneth has an extensive agricultural background. He has a two year agriculture degree from N.C. State University, and was a full time farmer from 1979 to 1984 when he got his job with the USDA. While with the USDA, he discovered CSA and decided to begin one on his own. His first full year was 1999 and he had 15 members, many of whom were from his church. Unfortunately, Kenneth's first year was not as successful as he had hoped. Twelve of the fifteen members dropped out after the first year and Kenneth suspects that too much food was offered to them and the experience was really not what they expected it to be.

Two years ago, 2000, was Kenneth's second year of operating the Shepherd Farm. Unlike in times past when he has done all of the work on his own, he set up a type of internship where a young woman who eventually joined the CSA worked for free in return for being taught some tricks of the trade. He had 14 members who could either pick up their weekly allotments at one of two locations in Raleigh or go to the farm, itself, and take a share from Kenneth's walk-in cooler. There was an added incentive of access to free flowers to cut for those who picked up their shares at the farm. Members who picked up their shares at the farm could also do so at their convenience since Kenneth left the doors to the cooler unlocked. In 2000, the growing season lasted for 16

weeks. Some of the shares were smaller than expected due to heavy rain in July.

Kenneth's distribution system involves picking the produce that is mature and dividing the total amount by the number of members. This was described as a very time consuming and scientific process where all of the produce is weighed to make sure that everybody gets exactly the same amount. Kenneth does not allow item substitutions except for rare instances and has donated shares that people could not pick up or items that they did not want to needy families in his church.

Kenneth has a regular newsletter that is distributed to members via e-mail. He also conducts his own mid-season and end-of year member surveys via e-mail. Kenneth was hoping to have an end of season pig-pickin' with vegetarian options for the non-meat eaters but found it very difficult to find a time that suited everybody. He did, however, host a beginning of the year blessing for the members to come to the farm. Every member that came to this blessing also received several potted herbs to bring home and cut on an as needed basis. Although a nice gesture, Kenneth did this because he found cutting herbs every week to be time consuming and laborious. It is worth noting that Kenneth consults county extension agents quite regularly. He also borrowed a \$5,000 pump from NCSU that irrigates his crops using the drip method.

Kenneth is very active in his church and decided to name his CSA Shepherd Farm because, as he put it, God is his shepherd. According to Kenneth, a Christian ethic involves being a good steward of the land and leaving the land in the same or better shape than it was inherited. In fact, this Christian orientation is an innovative feature and something that does not characterize the majority of CSAs. A second innovative feature is that Kenneth, like his counterparts at From the Ground Up, CSA and Seven Springs

Farm, allows members to pay for their shares in three installments rather than one large installment up-front. Kenneth's system is that people pay half at the beginning of the growing season and the rest in two installments of \$75 by the end of May. This allows people to join who would not ordinarily be able to pay \$300 in one lump sum payment. Similarly to the farmers at From the Ground Up, Kenneth asks every member to sign a contract that states that there are not any guarantees with CSA. This is especially important in light of pending court cases where members of two different CSAs assert that their respective farmers took their money without making any reasonable efforts to provide food.

With respect to the future, Kenneth has oscillated between wanting to expand his operation and wanting to shut it down. On one hand, Kenneth expressed sincere excitement concerning the future of Shepherd Farm. For example, he has looked into buying some land of his own or leasing another plot. On the other hand, he made it very clear that farming a half acre while working full-time was more work than he could handle. He also alluded to the fact that his wife thinks that he spends too much time with the CSA and would be delighted if he was to stop doing it. Kenneth mentioned that he was basically confronted with two viable choices. The first one involved expanding the CSA to accommodate between 75 and 100 members, and making it his full-time job. The second option involved scaling down his operation in order to make it more manageable. Ultimately, however, Kenneth was promoted at the USDA which entailed working a full twelve month schedule and he decided to completely suspend his CSA operation.

## **Summary**

A table is provided below which summarizes important information concerning each farm in this study. Information relating to farm size, location, share price, and other details is provided in this table.

Table 3: An overview of the Farms in this Study

	<b>From the Ground Up</b>	<b>7 Springs Farm</b>	<b>Good Food for Good People, CSA</b>	<b>Jake's Farm</b>	<b>The Shepherd Farm</b>
<b>Location</b>	Upper Marlboro, MD	Check, VA	Floyd, VA	Candler, NC	Zebulon, NC
<b>Farmers</b>	Rob Vaughn Carrie Cochrane	Ron Juftes Polly Heiser	Tenley Weaver Dennis Dove	Chris Sawyer Missy Huger	Kenneth Barnes
<b>farm size/CSA acreage</b>	285 acres / 5 acres	111 acres / 4.5 acres	27 acres / 2 acres	11 acres / 4.2 acres	n.a. / 0.5 acres
<b># of members</b>	250	90	18	20	14
<b>type of shares</b>	Full and half	full and half	full and half	full and half	full
<b>share price</b>	\$608/\$336	working: \$610/\$360 non-working: \$770/\$440	\$465/\$325	\$85 for 4 weeks	\$300
<b>installment plan</b>	Yes	yes	no	no	yes
<b>working shares</b>	No	yes	no	no	no
<b>certified organic</b>	no	yes	yes	yes	no

Table 3 (cont'd): An Overview of the Farms in this Study

	<b>From the Ground Up</b>	<b>7 Springs Farm</b>	<b>Good Food for Good People, CSA</b>	<b>Jake's Farm</b>	<b>The Shepherd Farm</b>
<b>innovative features</b>	funded by 2 non-profits- CAFB, CBF	free table, fruit, bread, cheese, herb, garlic, and gourmet shares	item substitutions, draught horses	4 week cycles, seed saving	Christian orientation
<b>Biodynamic</b>	no	yes	no	no	no
<b>delivery method</b>	many pick up locations in DC and suburban MD & farm	delivery is taken on by working members who come to the farm	one pick up location in Blacksburg	several sites including farm	several sites including farm
<b>other business related activities</b>	organic beef cattle, farmer's market in DC	organic fertilizers, soil amendments	Blacksburg farmer's market, shiitakes	kite store, Carolina Organic Growers	he works full-time for the USDA
<b>future plans</b>	more low income members	have members establish a core group	expand network of partners, fruit shares	Catfish, winter shares, and WOOFers	buy some land

## **Conclusion**

This chapter outlines the history of the CSAs in this study. Specific attention is provided relating to the respective sizes of each of the farms, the number of members they have, and the delivery systems that they use. The next chapter, Results, provides tests of the hypotheses and conceptual model that is at the end of Chapter 3, the Literature Review. The basis of the next chapter is a path analytical model that identifies the relationships among the concepts discussed in the Literature Review.

## Chapter 6

### Results

This chapter identifies and discusses my findings in a series of tables that relates to the hypotheses presented at the end of Chapter 3. Findings from the qualitative data collected during the interview phase of the research are examined toward the end of the chapter. The five-farm total mean, or mode and information relating to each of the farms, is provided for the univariate statistics. The path analytical and regression models are based upon the aggregated data of the five farms<sup>8</sup>.

#### Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis predicted that CSA members are generally affluent and well educated. Based upon findings in other studies, it was predicted that CSAs have a higher proportion of Democrats, high income earners, people with college and graduate degrees, married people, whites, and females than exists in the wider American society. It was also predicted that the majority of CSA members is middle-aged. Based partly upon the information provided in Table 4, this hypothesis seems to be supported.

(Table 4 about here)

Table 4 offers a demographic profile of the members of the five CSAs that serve as the basis for this study. This table shows that 67.2% of those surveyed at the end of the 2000

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<sup>8</sup> Although the respondents from From the Ground Up account for more than half respondents in this study, a series of t-tests reveals that there is no significant difference in responses between the members of that farm and the members of the other four farms in the study. The variables that were tested include member satisfaction, age, number of types of voluntary association memberships, number of years lived in one's current community, number of children living at home, religiosity, environmentalism, community attachment, alternative agriculture, degree of member investment, organizational success, and organizational stability.

growing season identified as being Democrats, while 47.0% of American adults identified as being Democrats during that same year (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000). Among those surveyed in this study, 33.2% answered that their household income exceeded \$95,001 per year, 45.2% stated that their annual household income was more than \$75,001, and 68.5% said that their annual household income was in excess of \$55,001 per year. In comparison, 61.3% of Americans had an annual household income below \$49,999 and only 20.1% had a household income greater than \$75,000 per year (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000). Based upon the survey results of this study, 94.2% of the respondents obtained a four-year college degree, and 71.5% earned a graduate or professional degree. During that time period, the United States Bureau of the Census (2000) reports that 17.0% of Americans had a four-year college degree and an additional 7.5% had either a graduate or professional degree.

In addition, the average age of respondents when they completed the survey was 40.69 years, with a range from 23 to 76 years. None were under 19, and 3.0% were 65 or older. Almost sixty-seven percent of the participants were currently married, while 59.5% of Americans over the age of 18 are married (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000). Ninety-two percent of those surveyed answered that they were white, and only 1.7% answered that they were black while, the United States Bureau of the Census (2000) reports that 82.2% of the country's population was white and 12.8% was black. Finally, 82.3% of those who returned the survey stated that they were female, while 51.1% of the American population was female at that time.

## **Hypothesis 2**

The respondents' motivations for joining their respective CSAs are considered in order to test the hypothesis that predicted that CSA members are interested in environmental issues, support alternative agriculture, and are interested in community-related issues. This information is important because it can be used to uncover whether a member's reasons for joining resonate with the main goals of CSA.

(Table 5 about here)

Table 5 considers why the members in this study joined their particular CSA. In aggregate terms, the two most common reasons that members joined their respective CSA were to obtain organic produce and locally grown produce. Almost 86% of the respondents said they joined for these two reasons. At least half responded that they joined their respective CSA to support local farmers, for environmental reasons, and to support small farmers. For example, slightly more than three-quarters of those surveyed answered that they joined, in part, to support local farmers. Slightly more than two-thirds said they joined, in part, for environmental reasons, and almost 60% said they joined, in part, to support small farmers. Roughly 40% of those surveyed answered that they joined in order to improve their eating habits. Slightly more than 15% of those surveyed indicated that they joined their respective CSA in order to obtain cheaper produce, while slightly less than 12% joined to meet like-minded people. Finally, approximately 7% of those surveyed joined their respective CSA in order to learn more about food issues.

It was also predicted that respondents joined their particular CSA for reasons that relate to the goals of CSA. More specifically, it was hypothesized that people join their respective CSA to promote the use of sustainable farming methods, support alternative

agriculture, and build a sense of community with others. The high proportion of members joining for environmental reasons offers evidence that members tend to endorse the use of sustainable farming methods. The high proportion of members joining to obtain organically grown produce, purchase locally grown produce, and support small farmers offers evidence that members are interested in issues relating to alternative agriculture.

There is mixed support, however, for the claim that the CSA members in this study are interested in community-related issues. The finding that more than 80% of the members in this study joined their respective CSA to support local farmers offers evidence that members are interested in community issues. This is because supporting local merchants is an example of import substitution (see Chapter 1), where people invest in locally owned businesses rather than chain stores that are often owned by people who do not live in the community. Based upon Warren's (1963) writings, supporting local farmers can strengthen the horizontal ties among community members. The finding that less than 20% of the respondents joined in order to meet like-minded people, however, suggests that the strengthening of community bonds was not a primary reason for joining their respective CSAs. For this reason, this hypothesis is partially accepted.

### **The Path Model**

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the following hypotheses are based upon a three-stage conceptual model (see Figure 1). The first stage predicts that member characteristics such as income level and sex influence the level of interest members have in issues that relate to the goals of CSA. The second stage predicts that the more interest members take in issues that resonate with the goals of CSA, the greater their investment in the

organization. The third stage predicts a positive relationship between levels of member investment in their respective CSA and the organizational success of those farms. The model also predicts a positive relationship between the organizational stability of each of the farms in this study and their respective levels of organizational success. A path analytical model was developed as a means of assessing the inter-relationships between member characteristics, member interests<sup>9</sup>, levels of member investment, organizational success, and organizational stability.

(Figure 1 about here)

Specifically, this model tests for the influence of a member's length of residence, household income, the number of children currently living at home, and a member's sex (the four member characteristics) on their degree of environmentalism, support for alternative agriculture, and degree of community attachment (the three member interests). It also tests the effects of the three member interests on levels of member investment. Next, the model tests the effect of member investment on organizational success. In addition, it tests the direct effect of organizational stability on organizational success.

As a saturated model<sup>10</sup>, Figure 1 tests for many of the unanticipated direct and indirect effects among the exogenous and endogenous variables in the model. The direct and indirect effects of the member characteristic variables and member interests upon

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<sup>9</sup> The three variables that comprise the member interests scale are used separately since the alpha coefficient for the combined measure is negative.

<sup>10</sup> A saturated model is defined as being a model in which all possible effects among variables are present (Bohrnstedt and Knoke, 1994).

organizational stability are not considered. Similarly, the direct effect of member investment upon organizational stability is not considered.

In order to simplify the presentation of the regression coefficients for Figure 1, the coefficients and the error terms are presented in Table 6.

(Table 6 about here)

Table 6 shows the individual regression coefficients for each of the models that were executed as part of the path analytical testing process. Five different regression models were executed in order to assess the direct effects<sup>11</sup> between variables and composite measures. All coefficients in the different models, including the saturated model, are treated as statistically significant. This is because this research is not intended to make inferences from a sample to a population. Rather, I am principally concerned with uncovering patterns and trends among the members of the five CSAs in this study.

Each of the member characteristic variables were included in all the models. The environmental, alternative agriculture, and community attachment measures were included in the models designed to explain the variation in degree of member investment and organizational success. The member investment and organizational stability variables were also included in the organizational success model. The results of these regressions are discussed in the following sections. The substantive significance of these findings serves as the basis for the next chapter, Discussion and Conclusions.

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<sup>11</sup> A direct effect is defined as being a connecting path in a causal model between two variables without an intervening third variable (Bohrstedt and Knoke, 1994).

Because of space constraints, the inter-correlations among the member characteristic variables were not included in Figure 1. Table 7 illustrates the inter-correlations among length of residence, household income, number of children living at home, and sex of members (1=female).

(Table 7 about here)

Based upon these results, it can be seen that there is a slight positive correlation between the length-of-residence variable and income (.204). There is a also slight positive correlation between length of residence and the number of children living at home (.168). Female respondents are more likely to have lived in their current community of residence (.108) for a slightly longer time than male respondents. Household income is slightly positively correlated with the number of children living at home (.177). Female respondents are slightly more likely than male respondents to have children living at home (.085).

### **Hypothesis 3**

The third hypothesis predicts that environmentalism is positively associated with length of residence, income, and the number of children living at home. It is also hypothesized that female members in the study are more environmentally-minded than the male members.

(Table 8 about here)

With respect to the effect of the four independent variables upon environmentalism, it can be seen that length of residence, income, and the number of children living at home have a negative direct effect upon environmentalism. Sex has no effect upon

environmentalism. Consequently, this hypothesis is rejected. The explanatory power of these three variables is very low as the  $R^2$  is only .035. For people who belong to a CSA in this study, neither income, number of children living at home, length of residence nor sex increases their level of environmentalism. As seen in Table 8 and Figure 1, there are no indirect effects between these variables, meaning that the direct effects equal the total effects.

#### **Hypothesis 4**

It was also hypothesized that length of residence, income, number of children living at home, and sex (1=female) are positively associated with support for alternative agriculture. The effects of the four independent variables upon support for alternative agriculture are mixed (see Table 8). Length of residence and sex (1=female) have a positive direct effect on support for alternative agriculture, while income and number of children living at home have negative direct effects on support for alternative agriculture. Therefore, this part of the hypothesis is partially rejected. The  $R^2$  is .009, which is virtually non-existent. Once again, there are no indirect effects between these variables, meaning that the direct effects equal the total effects.

#### **Hypothesis 5**

Hypothesis 5 states that length of residence, income, and number of children living at home positively affect community attachment. This hypothesis also states that female CSA members have higher degrees of community attachment than male members in the study. The effects of three of the four independent variables upon community attachment are positive (see Table 8). A member's length of residence, income, and sex (1=female) have a positive direct effect on community attachment. The number of

children living at home has a negative direct effect. Once again, this part of the hypothesis is partially rejected. As with the other two member interests, the  $R^2$  is very low (.062), meaning that the explanatory power of this model is negligible. Similarly, there are no indirect effects between these variables, suggesting that the direct effects equal the total effects.

### **Hypothesis 6**

Hypothesis 6 predicts that CSA member interests have a positive effect upon member investment. In other words, it was expected that the more a member is interested in issues that relate to CSA, the higher that member's investment in that organization would be. The results, however, show that the direct effects of environmentalism, support for alternative agriculture, and community attachment upon degree of member investment do not correspond with the hypothesis.

(Table 9 about here)

Community attachment ( $B=-.177$ ) has the greatest negative direct effect upon member investment, followed by support for alternative agriculture ( $B=-.064$ ) and environmentalism ( $B=-.019$ ). There are no indirect paths between these variables, meaning that the direct effects equal the total effects.

The direct effect of a member's length of residence ( $B=.415$ ) upon degree of member investment is much higher than the total effect ( $B=.236$ ). This is because the total effect is mediated by environmentalism, support for alternative agriculture, and community attachment, which are all negatively related to one's degree of member investment. Similarly, the direct effects of children at home ( $B=.106$ ) and sex ( $B=.061$ ) are positive, while the total effect of each of these is negative. The direct and total effects

of income upon degree of member investment are both negative, but the magnitude of the total effect is greater than the direct effect. Thus, the intervening effects of environmentalism, support for alternative agriculture, and community attachment negatively influence the total effects of the member characteristics upon the degree of member investment.

Based upon these findings, it can be said that a member's length of residence has the greatest independent effect upon degree of member investment. For every additional child that lives at home, there is an increase in member investment among the CSA members in this study. These findings also suggest that female members are slightly more invested than male members. Moreover, for every categorical increase in a member's income, there is a decrease in member investment. With respect to the overall model, the above-mentioned variables explain 23.6% of the variation in degree of member investment (see Table 6).

### **Hypothesis 7**

Hypothesis 7 states that investment positively affects the organizational success of the CSAs in this study. The direct effect of degree of member investment upon organizational success corresponds with this hypothesis. As shown in Table 10, there is an increase in organizational success with every corresponding increase in member investment when controlling for the other variables in the model ( $B=.218$ ).

(Table 10 about here)

Length of residence and sex (1=female) have the highest direct and total effects upon organizational success. The independent total effects of these variables upon organizational success are very high. This is largely the result of the indirect effect of

these variables through member investment. Degree of member investment not only has a fairly high direct effect upon organizational success, but it also increases with length of residence and is higher for women than for men (see Table 9). A member's household income and the number of children living at home each have negative direct effects and positive total effects upon organizational success. The positive total effect of income on organizational success is a result of the high indirect effect of community attachment. The positive total effect of the number of a member's children living at home is due to the high indirect effect of the degree of member investment.

Community attachment has a positive direct effect and a slightly larger total effect upon organizational success when holding all of the other variables in the model constant. The increased total effect results from the indirect effect of member investment. Environmentalism has a slight positive direct effect and a larger total effect upon organizational success. Support for alternative agriculture has a slight negative direct effect and a slight positive total effect upon organizational success. Overall, this model explains 29.9% of the variation in organizational success (see Table 6).

### **Hypothesis 8**

The last hypothesis states that organizational stability has a positive effect upon organizational success. The findings show that stability has a modest negative direct effect ( $B=-.168$ ) upon success (see Table 10). There are no indirect effects between these variables, suggesting that the direct effects equal the total effects.

### **Additional Variables**

Three additional variables will be considered that were not included in the path analytical model. Certain relevant variables were not included in the path model because

the full range of responses was not offered to members of each of the five farms in this study. For example, a measure of Waldorf education was not included in the path model because the members of Jake's Farm and Shepherd Farm are not within driving distance of such schools. Similarly, the variable that distinguishes between working and non-working shares was not included since only the members of Seven Springs are offered such shares. Lastly, the variable that distinguishes between full and half shares was not included since the members of Shepherd Farm and Jake's Farm are offered only full shares

The Waldorf schooling measure is based upon whether parents have children who attend a Waldorf school. This is seen as a fourth member interest since Waldorf education united many CSA members in the 1980s and 1990s (see Chapter 2). In fact, many early CSAs such as the Kimberton CSA in Pennsylvania were affiliated with a Waldorf school (see Chapter 2).

(Table 11 about here)

The information in Table 11 offers insight into how the members with children who attend a Waldorf school differ from members who either do not have school-aged children or have school-aged children who attend a different type of school. This table reveals that members whose children attend a Waldorf school have a slightly higher interest in environmental issues but less interest in alternative agricultural and community building issues than the other members. This table also shows that members whose children attend a Waldorf school score higher on the member investment scale than the other members, which lends support for the hypothesized relationship between member interests and their degree of investment in their CSA.

The next two variables are additional measures of member investment. Working members, for example, are more likely to invest time in their CSA than non-working members, since they are required to go to the farm and help the farmers pick weeds and bag and deliver the weekly shares. Likewise, full members invest more money into the farms than half members since they are paying more money for larger weekly shares.

Table 11 shows that working members are more interested in environmental issues than non-working members but less interested in alternative agricultural issues. They also score less on the community attachment measure than non-working members. Working members are more likely to have children living at home and they have slightly lower incomes than their non-working counterparts. In addition, working members are likely to be more satisfied with their membership than non-working members. Yet they tend to have belonged for fewer years than non-working members, relative to the number of years that the CSA has been in operation. Finally, working members are more likely to be involved in their CSA and score higher on the organizational success scale than non-working ones. This lends support for the hypothesized relationship between the degree of member investment and organizational success.

With respect to any differences between full and half members, Table 11 illustrates that full members are more interested in environmental issues and alternative agriculture and score higher on the community attachment measure than half members. Full members, on average, have fewer children living at home than half members and they tend to have slightly higher incomes than half members. Full members are less satisfied with their membership and have belonged for fewer years relative to the number of years that the CSA has been in operation than half members do. Full members are

likely to score lower on the degree of member investment scale and lower on the organizational success scale. This finding does not offer support for the hypothesized relationship between member investment and organizational success.

Table 11 also provides information relating to four other variables that were included in this study for exploratory purposes. With respect to voting, for example, this table illustrates that Waldorf-belonging members, on average, score higher on the voting scale than members who do not belong to such groups. It also shows that working members are more likely to vote than non-working members and half members are more likely to vote than full members. This table also suggests that the CSA produce that is received by Waldorf-belonging members, on average, represents a larger percentage of their overall produce intake than it does for members who do not belong to Waldorf schools. Working members consume more CSA produce as a percentage of the overall produce that they consume than non-working members but there is no difference between full and half members. Upon considering the distance that members live from their respective CSA, Table 11 outlines that Waldorf-belonging members, on average, live closer to their CSA than members whose children do not attend such a school. On average, non-working members live closer to their CSA than working members and full members live closer to their CSA than half members. Finally, it can be seen in Table 11 that non-Waldorf-belonging members visit their CSA, on average, more frequently than members whose children attend a Waldorf school. Working members, on average, have more farm visits than non-working members and full members have more farm visits than half members.

### **Summary of the Quantitative Data**

In summary, these data reveal certain patterns. First, the four member characteristics are negatively associated with interest in environmental issues. Second, two of the member characteristics (length of residence and sex) are associated with support for alternative agriculture. Third, three of the member characteristics (length of residence, income, and sex) are associated with community attachment. Fourth, none of the three member interests are positively associated with member investment but three of the four background factors are related to investment. Fifth, member investment is associated with organizational success. Finally, organizational stability has a negative effect upon organizational success.

### **Results from the Qualitative Data**

As described in the previous chapter, the 5 farmers and 13 of the CSA members were interviewed as a part of this study. Several clear themes and patterns emerge from the tape-recorded interviews. For example, everybody whom I interviewed was enthusiastic about CSA membership. Almost all the members interviewed had been a member of their current CSA for multiple years. Moreover, most of the people interviewed stated that they planned to resume their membership next year. Of the four people interviewed who did not plan to resume their membership, two were members of Shepherd Farm, which was discontinued after the 2000 growing season. Two others were members of farms that changed pick-up locations and no longer delivered weekly allotments to an area that was local for them.

In general, the members I interviewed are characteristic of the overall membership in terms of their interest in healthy eating, socio-economic status, and

physical fitness. All members interviewed were attracted to the idea of healthy food and sought out organically grown fruits and vegetables. Another common theme from the interviews is that the members welcomed the idea of eating foods that were in season and local to their bioregion. When asked if they found the unpredictability of CSA crops to be a source of concern, all the people interviewed said they welcomed the element of surprise and enjoyed the challenge of preparing new meals. Many of the members interviewed said they enjoy cooking and experimenting with new recipes.

I would characterize each of the CSA members I interviewed as well educated. Among the employed respondents, many had well-paying jobs with high occupational prestige, such as university instructor, counselor, author, and nurse practitioner. Seventeen of the interviewees were white and one was Asian. I interviewed many members at their homes and would characterize those members as being middle and upper class. The members were also of very different ages. Among those members with children, many were hopeful that CSA could aid them in instilling a preference for nutritious food in their children. Two of the members interviewed are divorced, three are single, and the rest are either married or cohabiting with somebody.

I would also characterize all of the members whom I interviewed as being very health-conscious. Each appeared healthy and fit. This is, of course, a subjective assessment, but virtually all the members talked of self-improvement and the quest for a healthy lifestyle. Many are also concerned about social justice and environmental issues. This conforms to the findings in the survey. I spoke with several members about the social and environmental implications of conventional farming, bringing up such issues as workers' exposure to pesticides and watershed contamination. Many members made it

clear that they are attracted to CSA, in part, because it allows them to invest in food production that seeks to work in balance with nature. This is achieved by not using toxic pesticides and fertilizers that lead to environmental degradation. Several members told me about their belief in spending money with a conscience, refusing to invest in companies that exploit workers and degrade the natural environment. Many of these members had also experimented with co-housing, regional barter exchange programs, and bulk food-buying programs.

Member after member stated in the interviews that community building was very important for them. Virtually all members said that they feel connected with other members but have not really made many friends. The members seem to like chit-chatting with other members at pick-up sites and member gatherings, but have not gotten to the point of initiating any deeper connections with others. One factor limiting community building appears to be time. All the members explained that they were very busy and had many demands on their time. This meant that they could not be as involved with their respective CSA as they would like. Of the three members from Seven Springs, none was a working member. All had belonged to the farm for many years and started out as working members but opted for non-working memberships during the 2000 growing season. Each explained that s/he enjoyed working on the farm but were simply too busy to continue doing so.

I talked with each of the members whom I interviewed about the lack of diversity of CSA members. All agreed that CSA was socially homogeneous. By and large, the members were shocked to learn that many of the subsidized shares offered by From the Ground Up and Seven Springs went unclaimed year after year. I also talked with many

members about the increased corporatization of health food stores. There was consensus that large food store conglomerates that specialize in selling organic produce and whole foods such as the Whole Foods Market have a very corporate feel to them and seem to attract wealthy, white, professional-looking clientele. All the members with whom I talked about the tendency of health food stores to get bigger felt conflicted about this pattern. They enjoyed increased access to different types of organic produce and other natural foods. Conversely, however, they all expressed concern that many smaller, independently-owned health food shops could not compete with the larger stores. The immense buying power of larger stores, for example, allows them to sell goods at a cheaper price than smaller stores. Using Warren's (1963) terminology, this relates to globalization in that the support of large, health-food-store conglomerates has the potential to weaken the horizontal ties among community members and strengthen vertical ties with outside agents (see Chapter 1).

In many respects, the interviews did not offer as many insights concerning CSA member benefits and concerns as I had expected. Many of the interviews were predictable in that all of the members embraced the notion of CSA, were familiar with the principles of CSA, and were attracted to the idea of consuming locally grown and organic produce. I was able, however, to generate some insights concerning the farms from different perspectives. For example, the two members of Shepherd Farm who were interviewed were extremely satisfied with their memberships but had very different opinions concerning the religious overtones of many the CSA activities. One of the members whom I interviewed was an active member of Kenneth's church, friends with his wife, and attracted by the fact that Kenneth is a very religious man. Conversely, the

other member of Shepherd Farm whom I interviewed considered herself an atheist and found the various blessings that she attended to be too dogmatic. Kenneth's reading of Biblical verses and the response of the chorus with other verses was actually a negative experience for this member.

Another insight I gained from the interviews is that CSA, in many respects, seems to work well for traditional couples who incorporate a gender-based division of labor into their daily routines. Community supported agriculture worked extremely well for three couples: the man worked full-time and did not typically cook or shop for groceries; the woman did not work outside of the home and focused upon domestic activities such as child care, shopping, cooking, and cleaning. One of the biggest reasons why traditional marriage appears to be so compatible with CSA membership is that women have enough time to pick up their weekly allotments and prepare the food. Simply put, cooking whole foods, which can be very time-consuming, may not be suited to couples where both partners both work outside the home because neither has the time or energy to cook meals that are not processed for convenience.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter identifies the results of the analyses. Each of the hypotheses is discussed as it relates to the goals of this study. The chapter concludes with a treatment of the major themes and patterns that emerged from the face-to-face interviews. The interpretation of the results shown in these tables serves as the basis for the next chapter. The following chapter, Discussion and Conclusions, offers sociological explanations for the findings and considers the future of CSA.

## Chapter 7

### Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter serves three major purposes. First, the hypotheses that guide the conceptual model are discussed, based upon the findings in the various tables.

Explanations are offered for the hypotheses that are not supported by the findings.

Second, qualitative data from the interviews with farmers and farm members are woven into the discussion to further explain certain patterns and trends. Third, several applied, theoretical, and methodological implications of this research are examined. Such issues as strategies that CSA farmers can use to render their farms more diverse, the changing face of CSA, and the future of CSA are considered. In addition, the direction of future research concerning resource mobilization theory, voluntary association, and community supported agriculture are identified and discussed.

#### Discussion

This section will consider each of the hypotheses. It will discuss the findings and explain why the hypotheses were accepted or rejected.

##### *The Social Bases of CSA Membership*

The findings in this study concerning the demographic bases of membership are generally consistent with the wider CSA and voluntary association literatures. As hypothesized, the majority of the members in this study are financially secure, well educated, white, middle aged, and have children. Roughly two-thirds of those surveyed are also supporters of the Democratic Party, married, and work full-time. There has been no previous research concerning the relationship between political affiliation, marital status, and employment status on the one hand, and CSA membership on the other.

These findings are, however, consistent with the wider environmental and alternative agriculture sociological literatures. It was also found that the majority of respondents are women. This finding conforms to the findings in other studies relating to CSA membership but does not conform to the findings in the majority of studies that relate to voluntary association. In general, these findings also relate better to Weber's status transmission explanation of voluntary association than they do to Durkheim's normativist explanation.

One reason women are more likely to belong to a CSA than men may be the gender-based division of household labor. In most traditional couples, the husband is the breadwinner and the wife is the caretaker. Typically, wives in traditional marriages do not work outside of the home. The responsibilities of traditional wives tend to include child care, shopping, food preparation and cleaning. Even in many non-traditional couples, where both partners are employed outside the home, women tend more than men to undertake domestic responsibilities relating to cooking, cleaning, and child-rearing. This is known as the second shift, whereby women work full-time during the day only to come home and work all evening on domestic tasks (see Hochschild, 1989). Because many working and non-working women fulfill many domestic household responsibilities, including shopping and cooking, it follows that they are more likely to belong to a CSA than men. This is especially relevant to CSA since such a high percentage of members are either married or living with someone.

According to the survey data, 55.5% of the female survey respondents who are married do not work outside the home. Conversely, only 10.0% of the married male respondents do not work outside the home. Based upon these findings, it can be seen that

more than half of the married female respondents are stay-at-home wives and mothers. This suggests that CSA is compatible with traditional marriage where wives have the time and money based upon their husband's earnings to pick up weekly shares, wash vegetables, and cook meals.

One explanation for the paucity of low-income CSA members relates to Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs". Simply put, a person struggling for survival will most likely not make the consumption of organic produce a priority. Poor people tend to be much less concerned than wealthier people about their long-term needs because they are focused on meeting immediate basic needs. In addition, many low-income people do not have cars, which may limit their ability to pick up their weekly shares<sup>12</sup>.

A related issue pertains to computer usage. Since two of the farms in this study communicate to members exclusively by e-mail, members without computers are unlikely to be able to keep up with farm events and schedule changes. Moreover, many low-income people work multiple part-time jobs, work overnight shifts, are single parents, and do not have the time to cut, wash, and cook vegetables. These factors may also limit their likelihood of being able to pick up weekly shares at a pre-assigned time. This fits in with a resource mobilization explanation because members need money, a material resource, in order to pay for their membership, get to the pick-up sites, and

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<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, a member of From the Ground Up, responding to a question about reasons for joining a CSA, said lack of a car prompted membership. This respondent said, "Having a share is easier and more convenient than shopping and carrying [groceries] home from the store. I pick up my share near a metro that directly connects to the bus that stops nearest my home. The store is not accessible". I would, however, characterize this response as being an outlier that does not reflect the reality of the majority of those people surveyed.

remain up-to-date concerning delivery patterns. Similarly, members need time, a non-material resource, in order to pick up their weekly shares, prepare the produce, and learn how to cook new foods. These resources tend to be differentially accessible according to socio-economic status.

Another concern expressed by several members in the survey was that many of the foods provided by the CSA were too “yuppie”. This is an issue of cultural capital since not everybody is likely to be familiar with such foods as shiitake mushrooms, arugula, and purple basil. In short, it makes perfect sense that a person would not want to join an organization that provides unfamiliar foods. Most importantly, this means that CSAs will remain exclusive in the sense that they are likely to appeal most to people who enjoy gourmet foods, a small segment of the population. The ‘gourmet food’ explanation may also help to explain why the two farms that offer subsidized shares have trouble finding people to apply for them. In other words, people in need of economic assistance may not have the same appreciation for gourmet varieties of food as other people. Alternatively, they may be embarrassed because they either have never heard of some of the foods or do not know how to prepare them.

Perhaps another reason why CSA is so homogeneous has to do with how members find out about CSAs. Of the members in this study, 54.0% (109) found out about their respective CSAs through word of mouth. The concept of homophily describes the tendency of social networks to consist of people whose education, income, and cultural capital are similar. Privileged people who tell their friends and neighbors about CSA are likely to attract more privileged people to the movement. In addition, 10.9% (22) of those surveyed learned about their CSA through a poster or advertisement,

5.4% (11) learned about their CSA over the Internet, and 6.4% (13) learned about their farms through a combination of these. When I asked the farmers where they display their posters, they said they place them in health food stores and food co-operatives. Once again, to the degree that the clientele of such stores are self-selected by socio-economic status, exposure to publicity will also show a class bias. This logic also applies to the Internet, which is another source of exposure for the farms.

#### *CSA Member Interests*

As hypothesized, a high proportion of those surveyed joined their CSA for environmental reasons and to support alternative agricultural methods and practices. These findings are consistent with the results of other studies of why people join CSAs. For example, several studies show that people join CSAs to obtain organically grown produce and to support small farms. A typical response to the survey question asking why members joined their CSA states:

**To have a more direct connection between our family, our farmers, and our food and we believe that [sic] the concept of CSA and think that there needs to be more land protected from development this way.**

There is mixed support for the hypothesis that CSA members are interested in community-related issues. As mentioned in the previous chapter, more than 75% of the respondents joined in order to support local farmers, but less than 12% of them stated that they joined in order to meet like-minded people. Based upon my interviews with many members, this is because the CSA members in this study are already integrated into social networks of like-minded people and are too busy to expand those networks. This explanation fits in with DeLind's (1999) experiences as the president of a CSA in

Michigan (see Chapter 3). DeLind (1999) found that most of the members of her CSA had little interest in anything but the provision of fresh and organically grown produce.

The high percentage of members who joined their CSA in order to support local farmers is, nevertheless, an important finding. This illustrates that the majority of CSA members in this study support the re-circulation of local dollars. Using Warren's (1963) terminology, this represents evidence that CSA members are seeking to strengthen their horizontal ties with community members while, presumably, reducing their vertical ties with people outside the community. Spending money locally is one of several ways that community members can resist the effects of globalization.

Somewhat counter-intuitively, only a small proportion of those surveyed stated that they joined in order to have access to cheaper produce and learn more about food issues. Because CSAs can often provide organically grown produce for the same price that supermarkets and health food stores sell conventionally grown produce, it follows that some people may join in order to save money. In part, this is likely influenced by the fact that many of the members surveyed are financially secure to the point of not having to be cost-conscious about their food expenditures. It also points to the fact that people join for reasons beyond saving money.

Finally, less than 7% of those surveyed stated that they joined their CSA in order to learn more about food issues. This, again, is surprising since CSAs serve as a great resource of information about organic agricultural practices such as inter-cropping and the use of certain flowers to protect crops from certain pests. CSAs also provide people with the opportunity to cook new foods, which can broaden the kinds of meals people prepare and consume. In short, CSA offers people the opportunity to be actively

involved with the food that they eat, which is why their professed lack of interest in food issues is somewhat surprising. Perhaps this is also linked to time issues. Because many members work full-time and lead very hectic lives, they may not have the time to learn about food issues even if they are very interested in them. Alternatively, the CSA members in this study may already be knowledgeable about food issues and feel that they will not learn anything new as part of their membership. Further research concerning this finding is needed.

### *The Social Bases of Member Interests*

It was also hypothesized that the three CSA interests (environmental issues, alternative agriculture, and community issues) are positively associated with length of residence, a member's income, and the number of children living at home. It was further hypothesized that female members would be more interested in these three issues than male members. Based on the findings, the results of the hypotheses are generally mixed. Out of the twelve hypothesized relationships, 5 support the hypotheses and 7 are rejected.

With respect to environmentalism, each of the four hypothesized relationships are rejected. These findings suggest that for CSA members, a relatively homogeneous group of people who are environmentally-minded, length of residence, income, number of children living at home, and sex have no noticeable effect on environmentalism. This seems to go against the majority of the findings in the environmentalism literature. For example, many studies have shown that women and high income earners are more environmentally-minded than men and lower income earners (see Blocker and Eckberg, 1997; Dunlap and Dillman, 1976). There are several possible reasons for this. First, the range in responses to the environmentalism measure is quite narrow and most of the

responses are grouped tightly around the mean. This could mean that for the respondents in this study, there is such little variation in environmentalism that it cannot be explained by demographic variables. Likewise, the disproportionately high number of women and wealthy people among members makes it more difficult to detect any differential impact of the sex and income variables on interests.

With respect to support for alternative agriculture, the results are mixed. Following the logic of the hypotheses, the number of years that a member has lived in his/her community is a very weak predictor of support for alternative agriculture. The findings show that the female CSA members in this study are only slightly more supportive of alternative agriculture than the male members. Income and the number of children living at home, however, are negatively associated with support for alternative agriculture. As with the environmentalism measure, it is likely that these relationships do not conform to the literature because there is not much variation in levels of support for alternative agriculture among the CSA members in this study. In general, there is a high degree of support for alternative agricultural growing methods and practices among the CSA members in this study.

Three of the four independent variables have a positive effect upon community attachment. This shows that this hypothesis is partially rejected, at least for people who are already CSA members. The only variable that is not positive is the number of children living at home. This suggests that a CSA member's degree of community attachment diminishes with every child living at home. This may be because the parents of multiple children are so busy with parental responsibilities that they do not have time to participate in community events, interact with neighbors, and develop a sense of

belonging in their community. As with the two previous member interests, this finding may be attributable to the fact that the majority of the CSA members in this study have high degrees of community attachment. Therefore, there is little variation to be explained by independent variables.

Another member interest, Waldorf education, was not included in the above analysis because the members of two farms did not even have access to such schools. Consequently, this is a condition that was not available to members of each of the CSAs in this study. Only three of the respondents are affiliated with a Waldorf school. This is, without question, a very low number. Nevertheless, this is an important variable since Waldorf schooling was so inextricably linked to the early days of CSA (see Chapter 1). The results show that the three members in this study whose children attend a Waldorf school are slightly more interested in environmental issues than members who do not support Waldorf schools. But they are less interested in alternative agriculture and community issues than non-Waldorf supporting members (see Table 11). Once again, these findings should be viewed with caution because of the low number of members who have an interest in Waldorf education. These findings may be worth building upon in future studies.

#### *Degree of Member Investment*

The findings also show that for CSA members, interest in environmental issues, support for alternative agriculture, and community attachment do not have a positive effect upon a member's investment in the CSA. In fact, these data show that as environmentalism, support for alternative agriculture, and community attachment

increase, there is a slight decrease in degree of member investment. Therefore, this hypothesis is rejected, at least for people who are already members of a CSA.

The explanation for the inverse relationship between community attachment and member involvement may be that the members who visit the farm the most regularly do so to increase their sense of community in a more distant group. In other words, those members who are the least integrated into their community of residence may go to their CSA on a frequent basis precisely because they want and need to generate a sense of community with others. As DeLind (1999) shows, members who are already well integrated into a cohesive social network do not see the CSA as a means of expanding that network. A member of From the Ground Up, for example, explained to me that she is very politically active concerning food issues, has a strong feminist sensibility, and is involved with several women's groups. She also schools her two young children at home and is involved with various home-schooling parent groups. Even though she is very committed to her CSA and very satisfied with her membership, she is able to find time to visit the farm only three or four times a year. In short, she is very interested in issues that resonate with the goals of CSA but too busy to involve herself in many of the farm's day-to-day activities.

As shown in Table 9, it can also be seen that the degree of member investment in a CSA is affected by other member characteristic variables that extend beyond member interests. For example, Table 9 reveals that length of residence has a substantial independent effect upon one's degree of member investment. The total effect of length of residence upon degree of member investment mediated by environmentalism, support for alternative agriculture, and community attachment is also fairly high.

Table 9 also shows that the number of children living at home has a direct positive effect upon one's degree of member investment. Based upon the qualitative data, this finding can be attributed to the fact that many parents place value in taking their children to the farm that they belong to in order to acquaint them with nature and teach them about food and health issues. When mediated through the three member interest variables, however, the total effect of the number of children living at home negatively affects the degree of member investment (see Table 9). This is likely because parents with younger children are less likely to be involved in social change organizations and neighborhood activities because of the extra time needed to tend to their children's needs.

Based upon the findings, it can also be said that the female members in this study have somewhat higher degrees of member investment than the male members. There could be several reasons for this. First, as described above, the data suggest that many CSA members in the sample are married and follow traditional gender roles. The husband is likely to be the breadwinner, while the wife is likely to be responsible for domestic activities such as cooking, cleaning, and child care. This may mean that stay-at-home wives and mothers have a more flexible schedule that can be used to invest in their family's health and education needs, including CSA participation. It is possible, therefore, that women are more invested in their CSA than men because they are the primary caregivers of their children and take the children to the farm to learn more about food issues. As with the number of children living at home, the total effect of sex upon degree of member investment is negative when mediated through environmentalism, support for alternative agriculture, and community attachment.

Finally, the lower a CSA member's household income, the higher his/her degree of member investment. When mediated through the three member-interest variables, the total effect of income upon member investment is even lower. This is likely because many lower-income members may opt for working memberships, when available, because they are much more affordable than the non-working ones. In addition to import substitution, community developers often use the term sweat equity. Sweat equity involves people paying less money for something and working off the difference. A classic example of sweat equity takes place in many small, independent health food stores where members receive a 10% to 25% discount if they work in the store a certain number of hours per week. Thus, lower income people are more likely than wealthier members to be attracted to the idea of working shares because they can work off part of the membership dues<sup>13</sup>. Because they have working shares, they are going to have higher degrees of member investment than wealthier members.

There are two additional measures of degree of member investment that were not integrated into the path analytical model. Any differences, for example, between working and non-working members were not assessed in the path model because only one of the five CSAs in this study offers working memberships. Similarly, the differences between full and half members were not integrated into the path analytical model since one of the CSAs, Jake's Farm, offers only full shares.

Upon considering the differences in working and non-working memberships, it can be seen that working members are more interested in environmental issues than non-

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<sup>13</sup> The average household income of working members in the study is lower than the average household income of non-working members (see Table 11).

working members (see Table 11). It can also be seen that non-working members are more interested in alternative agriculture and community issues than working members. On average, working members scored 3.89 on the degree of member investment scale, while non-working members scored, on average, 2.61. Working members score, on average, 1.28 units higher than non-working members and 1.12 units higher than the average member (2.77). These findings are to be expected, since working members need to visit the farm in order to fulfill their tasks, which is an indicator of member investment.

With regard to the differences between full members and half members, it can be seen that full members, on average, are more interested in environmental issues, alternative agriculture, and community issues than half members. Half members, however, tend to be more invested in their CSA. This is somewhat counter-intuitive since full members are likely to be more integrated into their respective CSAs than half members. Full members pay much more money per growing season than half members and they receive much more produce per week. The reasons for this finding are not clear and future research should include this question.

The measure of degree of member investment comprises two variables. The first is the frequency of farm visits and the second is based upon whether members pick up their weekly shares at the farm. Table 11 shows that full members have, on average, almost 2.5 more farm visits per season than half members. This suggests that full members are likely to be more invested in their CSA. Half members are, however, much more likely than full members to pick up their weekly shares at the farm. This is why they tend to have slightly higher levels of investment than full members. This is another finding that researchers may consider testing in future studies.

There are many reasons why some members choose half shares over full shares. One of the most obvious ones is that a full share is enough produce to feed a family of four. This means that single people and couples without children cannot likely consume a full share's worth of food every week. Another reason is that members may travel during the summer months on family vacations and work-related trips. A member of Seven Springs, for example, explained to me that since his job requires him to travel, he is not able to consume a full share's worth of food every week. He also mentioned that he does not really have the time or the skills to can or freeze food, and therefore anything that he did not eat would have to be thrown out. He is a long-time member of the CSA, very active in social justice issues, and very attracted to the idea of CSA, but he just did not have the time to be as involved as some other members. Interestingly, this member started out as a working member but had to drop back because of his hectic schedule. Similarly a member from Shepherd Farm explained in a completed survey that:

**When I am here, it [CSA] is great! When I am not here, I am usually at my son's at the beach, so we either don't pick things up or don't have time to fix them. I suppose we could take them to the beach, but we just kind of come and go and it isn't convenient, which is a real shame. If I had a freezer, I could freeze some, but of course that takes time too, and I take care of many of my grandchildren on a regular basis, and that doesn't leave me much time for freezing and canning, or perhaps I should say energy.**

This member appears to derive benefit from her membership but is not as involved with the organization as other members. I also spoke with a couple who collectively maintained a half share through their membership at From the Ground Up. They were very satisfied with their membership and felt part of a community. One of the reasons they opted to go with a half share, however, was to limit the possibility of wasting food.

They both made it clear to me that their satisfaction with their membership would actually decline if they began to waste food because too much was provided weekly and they simply could not consume it.

Recalling DeLind's (1999) experiences as the president of a CSA in Michigan, where she developed a slow-burning indignation towards members whom she perceived were less invested in the organization, I assumed that there was a gulf dividing the committed CSA members from the less committed ones. I made the faulty assumption that CSA members could be lumped into two distinct camps. The first camp includes those members whose primary purpose is building community and who see the provision of organic produce as a bonus. The second camp includes members who join mostly for the provision of produce. Upon conducting this research, I do not think that this typology of members exists. Rather, I now believe that all CSA members are interested in issues that resonate with the goals of CSA, but that some members have made their membership more of a priority than other members.

### *Organizational Success*

As hypothesized, a member's degree of investment in their CSA has a direct effect upon the success of that organization (see Table 10). This follows the logic of resource-mobilization theory. The path analytical model also reveals that two of the member characteristics, length of residence and sex (women=1), and two of the member interests, environmentalism and community attachment, have a direct positive effect upon the success of the organization.

Length of residence has a positive direct effect upon the organizational success of a CSA. The total effect is much higher than the direct effect. This is likely because

people who have lived in their communities for a while have had the opportunity to be members longer than members who have recently moved into the community. Similarly, a member's sex (1=women) has a fairly high direct effect and an even higher total effect upon organizational success. Put another way, CSAs with higher proportions of women are likely to have higher degrees of organizational success than ones with higher proportions of male members. Women may be more satisfied with the CSA than men because they are less likely to work outside the home and have more time and more flexible schedules to dedicate to their CSA and cooking meals.

A member's household income has a slight negative direct effect upon the organizational success of a CSA. A member's household income, however, has a fairly high positive total effect upon the organizational success of a CSA. The negative direct effect may be attributable to the fact that lower income members may not have the money to renew their membership in the next year. In addition, they may not be as satisfied with their membership as those with higher incomes because it represents a higher percentage of their total income. This may limit them from shopping for other foods during weeks where the shares are not as bountiful as others. The reason that the total effect of income upon organizational success is positive is the strong positive relationship between income and community attachment.

The number of children living at home has a negative direct effect upon the organizational success variable. This finding is surprising since there is an increase in member investment for every additional child living at home (see Table 9). Moreover, there is a positive relationship between member investment and organizational success. Perhaps this is because actively involved parents with multiple children do not have the

time or the energy to continue their membership next year, since raising children can be time-consuming and fatiguing. Thus, parents with multiple children may not have time to go to their pick-up sites, prepare whole foods, and develop new recipes. Some parents noted on the surveys and in the interviews that they have trouble getting their children to eat the vegetables that they prepare. This may also affect the relationship between children and organizational success. The total effect of the number of children living at home upon organizational success is positive. This is, largely, because of the mediated effect of member investment.

With respect to the member interest variables (see Table 10), environmentalism has a positive direct and a larger positive total effect upon organizational success. Support for alternative agriculture has a negative direct but positive total effect upon this variable. Third, community attachment has a positive direct and total effect upon the organizational success of a CSA. This relationship between community attachment and organizational success may also arise because members with a high degree of interest in their community are likely to have lived there for a while, meaning that they have had the potential to belong to their CSA, provided that it was in operation, for multiple years. In general, these findings suggest that CSAs will have high degrees of success when members are interested in environmental issues, support alternative agriculture, and maintain high levels of community attachment.

Contrary to the hypotheses, the organizational stability of a CSA has a negative effect upon the organizational success of that organization. This finding suggests that as a CSA in this study expands its range of goals, directs resources into maintaining the membership base, and becomes more hierarchical, it will be less successful in meeting

the needs of its members. Although the farmers of a more stable CSA are likely to have more time and money to pursue goals that relate to the mission of the organization, this does not appear to contribute to organizational success. As with many other findings in this study, more research is needed concerning the relationship between organizational stability and organizational success.

The data in this study also show that the largest CSA in the study, From the Ground Up, has the least satisfied members in the study, the third lowest rate of members who plan to resume their membership next year, and the members with the lowest average years ratio of the five farms. In short, the largest CSA in the study appears to be the least successful CSA in the study. This begs the question asking how this farm became so big if many of the members are less satisfied with their membership, less likely to resume their membership, and less likely to have been members for as many years as the members of the other four CSAs in this study. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the metropolitan Washington D.C. region has a much higher population than the regions where the other CSAs in this study are located. Because of this, there is likely to be more consumer demand for what a CSA offers which explains why this farm grew so quickly. Chapter 3, it is outlined that resource mobilization theorists posit that the larger the income flow to an SMO, the more professional the staff is likely to be. Another feature of RMT is that as organizations expand their membership, more employees are hired to fulfill responsibilities associated with the maintenance of the organization (see Chapter 3). Perhaps this explains the low level of organizational success for From the Ground Up. Without question, future studies pertaining to CSA should consider the relationship between farm size and organizational success.

Upon considering the three items in the organizational stability measure, the inverse relationship between organizational stability and organizational success appears to make sense. Organizational stability is made up of three equally weighted variables, which include organizational maintenance, goal transformation, and bureaucracy (see Chapter 4). These findings suggest that as CSAs become more stable, the less successful they will be in meeting the needs of their members. In other words, the more organizationally stable a CSA becomes, the less likely members will be satisfied, will resume their membership, and will have belonged for many years.

Although this finding flies in the face of resource mobilization theory, it is important for several reasons. First, it suggests that CSA members are attracted to the decentralized and spontaneous dimensions of CSA. Put another way, as CSAs become more hierarchical and business-like, members may not see much of a difference between their CSA and a local grocery store. As such, they may discontinue their CSA membership precisely because they joined in order to escape the anonymity that accompanies many formal and bureaucratic settings. Second, this suggests that success can be defined in many different ways. The measure of success in this study is based upon a member's conception of success, which may be very different from a CSA practitioner's conception of success. In other words, things that members may view as contributing to organizational success such as friendly employees, diverse crops, and flexible delivery times may actually be viewed as taking away from the success of the organization because they cost money and require more time. Similarly, what may contribute to organizational success from a CSA practitioner's view, qualities such as guaranteed income, streamlined deliveries, efficient production, may be viewed as

negative qualities among the members. These dimensions of organizational success relate to Ritzer's (1996) concept of McDonaldization, which is discussed in the next section.

It is also worth noting that the measure of organizational success may be biased in favor of the new farms in the study. Because Jake's Farm was in its first year during the 2000 growing season, all members were given for purposes of this study a maximum ratio of 1.0 for number of years belonging divided by the number of years that the farm has been in operation. Similarly, Shepherd Farm was in its second year of operation during the 2000 growing season, meaning that all members received a ratio of either 1.0 or 0.5. This is important because very few of the members of From the Ground Up and Seven Springs received such high ratios, since those farms have been around for so many years. Recall, for example, that FGU started out as the Chesapeake CSA and very few members of the Chesapeake CSA still belong to FGU. In fact, only two of the members of From the Ground Up have belonged to both CSAs since their inception, meaning that only 2 receive the maximum ratio.

The principal benefit of using a ratio is that it offers a standardized figure and allows figures to be compared across the different farms in the study. As articulated above, however, the principal drawback is that it may offer a misleading value for the oldest and newest farms in the sample. If a variable that simply considered the number of years that a member has belonged to the CSA were used, the results would likely have been different. This was not used since each of the farms have been in operation for a different number of years meaning that members have been eligible to belong to certain farms for a longer period than others. Perhaps, a variable that considers growth over the

past two years could have been used. This would have been problematic, however, for the members of Jake's Farm since that CSA has only existed for one year.

The information in Table 11 also illustrates that organizational success is associated with Waldorf schooling. The Waldorf schooling finding makes sense since people who are involved in these schools are likely to be more knowledgeable about CSAs. As previously mentioned, however, this finding should be treated with caution since there is such a small number of Waldorf-schooling members in the sample. Differences between Waldorf-schooling and non-Waldorf-schooling members is something that should be addressed in future studies that relate to CSA. Hendrickson (1996) states that many successful CSAs have a core group of committed members (see Chapter 2). It is worth noting that none of the CSAs in this study have such a group of members.

The data in Table 11 also shows that organizational success is associated with working memberships and half memberships. It follows that CSAs with working members have higher degrees of organizational success than ones without them. This is because working members are likely to get more out of their membership and be satisfied with it, since they are so involved in various facets of the farm. It also follows that organizational stability is higher in CSAs with higher proportions of half members. As described above, half members may be more satisfied with their membership than full members because, with their food shares more manageable in size, they are less likely to waste any excess. Because there has not been any previous research that considers any differences between working and non-working members and full and half members, future researchers may consider building upon these findings.

In the second chapter, Verna Kragnes' secrets for CSA success are identified. Kragnes, a CSA practitioner in Wisconsin, outlines six strategies that are used by successful CSA farmers to maintain their long-term viability. Of the six strategies, all of the CSAs in this study use three of them. For example, the farmers at each of the five CSAs in this study assume that members know very little about farming issues, grow something different in order to maintain diverse weekly shares and ask members about their experiences through end-of-year surveys. Only Seven Springs, however, makes the farm feel like a second home to its members. This is primarily due to the fact that this farm offers working memberships. In general, the other CSAs in the study do not actively encourage members to regularly visit the farm. Similarly, only From the Ground Up has children's programs that are designed to acquaint children with food issues, the fifth strategy. The last secret for success has to do with the provision of new recipes to members. The farmers associated with Jake's Farm and Good Food for Good People do not do this. If success was measured by these six items, From the Ground Up and Seven Springs would be considered the most successful CSAs in this study as they use five out of the six strategies. The remaining three CSAs in this study, Good Food for Good People, Jake's Farm and Shepherd Farm use three of the six strategies. The effects of these strategies represent another research question that researchers should address in future studies concerning CSA.

#### *Additional Variables*

For exploratory purposes, four variables were considered as they relate to Waldorf education, whether members are working or non-working members, and whether members are full or half members. With respect to Waldorf-belonging members, they are

more likely to vote, likely to consume more produce provided by their CSA as a percentage of their total produce consumption, live further from their CSA, and visit the farm fewer times than members whose children do not attend a Waldorf school (see Table 11). These results must be treated with caution since there are so few Waldorf-believing members who responded to the survey.

Table 11 illustrates that working members are more likely to vote, consume a higher percentage of produce provided by their CSA as a percentage of their total produce consumption, live further from their CSA, and visit their CSA more frequently than non-working members. Working members live, on average, 11 miles further from their CSA than non-working members yet visit the farm almost two more times per season, on average, than non-working members. This finding relates squarely to issues of member investment and should be addressed in future studies. Half members are more likely to vote, live further from their CSA, and visit the farm less frequently than full members (see Table 11). Although full members visit the farm almost 3.5 more times, on average, and pay \$234 more per share, on average, than half members, there is no difference concerning the amount of produce consumed that is provided by the CSA for each group. The data shows that for both types of members, the produce provided by their CSA accounts for roughly two-thirds of the total produce that they consume. This finding is somewhat counter-intuitive since full members pay much more for their share and receive much more produce as part of their share. This is another finding that should be considered in future studies.

## **The Implications of this Research**

This research reveals four major findings. First, it identifies that CSA members are privileged. Second, it shows that members are interested in environmental issues, support alternative agriculture, and maintain high levels of community attachment. As it turns out, however, degree of interest in these issues does not affect the degree of member investment in the respective CSAs. Third, it suggests that there is a positive relationship between degree of member investment and the organizational success of the CSAs in this study. Finally, and counter-intuitively, this research demonstrates that the more successful CSAs in the study are less organizationally stable than the less successful ones. The implications of these findings are discussed below.

### *Broadening the Social Bases of CSA Membership*

Because CSAs are socially homogeneous, one implication is that poorer people, people of color, and other traditionally under-represented groups in American society are not likely to join them. This is unfortunate because CSA offers members the opportunity to eat healthy foods, learn new recipes, be more active in meeting their food needs, and make new friends. There are, however, several approaches that farmers can use to render CSA more socially diverse. First, farmers could advertise their farms in places other than health food stores and co-ops. By placing posters throughout lower income neighborhoods, for example, new people may find out about a particular CSA and even join. Farmers and various CSA members could also visit local community centers and churches and host information seminars that focus on nutrition, farming issues, and the goals of CSA. This may attract a small number of members to CSA who, assuming that they have a positive experience, can tell their friends and family members about this

innovative approach to food production and consumption. This is likely to generate a sense of trust between CSA practitioners, on one hand, and people who are not familiar with this approach to food production. Over time, this may generate a snowball effect in which more members of historically marginalized groups learn about CSA and, ultimately, express an interest in becoming members themselves.

CSA farmers can also offer payment plans and subsidized shares to people of lesser means. Payment plans have been used to allow members to spread their payment over a period of months. This is likely to benefit lower income members, since they are not likely to be able to make a big payment in advance of receiving any produce. This may be inconvenient for the farmers, as it would require them to do more book-keeping, which can be very time consuming. A related issue is that CSA members have historically paid their dues in advance of the growing season to give the farmer an operating budget and keep him/her from having to seek out a loan from a bank. Unfortunately, many farmers do not offer payment plans because they need as much money as they can get in order to purchase seeds and equipment in the early spring. Offering subsidized shares, on the other hand, is not likely to leave the farmer without an operating budget. This is because subsidized shares are often purchased with money from members who pay a little bit extra per growing season. Thus, if a member can afford to pay a little extra, it does not affect the farmer's purchasing power but it can really help a lower-income member. The only issue becomes generating a sense of interest in these subsidized shares, which can be done through several of the strategies outlined above.

### *The Changing Face of CSA*

In their classic article, Gordon and Babchuk (1959) differentiate between instrumental and expressive voluntary associations (see Chapter 3). Gordon and Babchuk (1959) characterize instrumental voluntary associations as being oriented towards achieving goals that lie outside the organization. An example is the NAACP's fights against racial injustices in the country's legal system. Expressive groups, on the other hand, exist in order to provide activities for members as an end unto itself. Examples are recreation and the development of friendships (Gordon and Babchuk, 1959:25). An instance is the Boy Scouts of America, an organization that teaches young boys survival skills, patriotism, courage, and self-reliance.

Rather than stating that CSAs exist on all points along the voluntary association continuum, where some are expressive and some are instrumental, I contend that the CSAs in this study are tightly grouped in the center of the continuum and exhibit aspects of both. Thus members are investing in an organization that exists in order to redefine agriculture by eliminating the use of toxic chemicals and raising awareness in newsletters and e-mail alerts concerning other consequences of conventional agriculture. Moreover, members receive weekly allotments of produce. Therefore a host of instrumental goals exists outside the organizations themselves. Meanwhile, CSA membership often provides members with many activities such as blessings, farm tours, work-days, and pot-lucks, which represent more expressive functions.

It is also my contention that when CSA started, many were more oriented towards the expressive function of community building than they are now. Recall when CSA emerged in Western Massachusetts in the early 1980s. The farms were small,

incorporated many biodynamic growing methods, and brought people together, mostly as working members, to meet their collective food needs. In addition to farming, most early CSAs were also affiliated with Waldorf schools, where other members of the CSA would teach members' children. In short, many early CSAs existed in order to build a sense of community and forge meaningful friendships among members. This is evidenced, in part, by the fact that virtually every early CSA would have a core group of members that assists the farmer(s) with planning events, completing paperwork, hosting regular pot lucks, and coordinating harvest festivals.

According to several important figures in the CSA movement, the majority of contemporary CSAs are different from their predecessors of the early 1980s (see Henderson, Gussow, and Van En, 1999; McFadden and Groh, 1997) Very few CSAs use biodynamic growing methods and even fewer are currently associated with the Waldorf schooling movement (Lovell, 1991). None of the CSAs in this study has a core group of members and, of the dozens of North American CSAs that I have visited and/or learned about on the Internet, none has any core groups. Many CSA members seem to be attracted to the idea of community building, but they also join for practical reasons, namely the provision of local produce. Based upon the interview data, it seems that the CSA members in this study are less involved in the farm than members were in past years, yet still feel rewarded by the fact that they often interact with other members, visit the farm occasionally, and maybe attend an annual potluck or harvest celebration.

An example of this transition is characterized by the evolution of From the Ground Up CSA in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. From the Ground Up actually started out as the Chesapeake CSA which was associated with the Washington Waldorf school and

the Acorn Hill Children's Center (see Chapter 5). In short, this went from being a small, volunteer-based organization with mostly working members and a core group to a very large, hierarchical organization with paid administrators and farmers. As the organization increased in size, paid employees took over many of the duties previously performed by volunteers, working memberships were no longer offered, the share price increased, and the sense of community was diluted. This shows that the expressive functions of this CSA have decreased over time. The hiring of professional farmers and administrators, however, has made this CSA a more effective instrumental organization.

In many respects, the maturation of From the Ground Up clearly follows the logic of resource mobilization theory. This is because resource mobilization theory asserts that social movement organizations become increasingly organized and conservative over time (see Marx and McAdam, 1994; Zald and Garner, 1987). For example, an administrative hierarchy has emerged among farm employees that was not there when the farm was much smaller. The CSA has developed a chain of command with the farm manager at the top followed by the head grower, head intern, and other interns. Jobs have also become more segmented and specialized. In fact, a division of labor has emerged in which employees have specific organizational niches and responsibilities, such as marketing, planting, or delivering. This quest for specialization is another bureaucratized aspect of this particular CSA that occurs in many maturing SMOs (Marx and McAdam, 1994). There are many new rules and regulations concerning pick-up locations and times. Members of Chesapeake CSA were afforded more flexible pick-up times than members of From the Ground Up, who typically have a one hour window per week to pick up their shares.

The survey data can be used to garner insights into how CSAs change over time. Because each of the five farms has been around for a different number of years, relationships between the number of years that a CSA has been in operation and other variables relating to organizational stability can be empirically assessed. Using bivariate correlations, there is a very strong correlation between the number of years that a CSA has been in operation and bureaucracy (.587). There are also strong correlations between organizational maintenance and the number of years that a CSA has been in operation (.875) and organizational stability and the number of years that a CSA has been in operation (.526). This information must be viewed with caution since it was collected at one point in time. Nevertheless, it shows that the older CSAs in the study are more bureaucratic, economically diversified, and organizationally stable than the newer CSAs. These findings resonate clearly with the assumptions of resource mobilization theory.

### *The Future of CSA*

A central tenet of resource mobilization is that social change is most likely to occur during times of economic prosperity (see Chapter 3). Following this logic, CSA membership is likely to be high when people can afford to belong to their respective farms and low when people cannot afford to pay for their membership. Based upon the diminishing economic health of the United States, it stands to reason that CSA membership rates are likely to decrease as economic conditions worsen. This relates to Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" theory in that people are not likely to seek out organically grown produce if they cannot meet their basic needs.

As part of each of the interviews with CSA members, I asked a series of questions relating to the importance of community building within CSA. During an interview with

one of the members discussed above, I stated that From the Ground Up could be viewed as a collection of strangers who come together for weekly allotments of food. The member seemed to be very irritated by this statement and responded in a defensive tone by saying:

**I wouldn't say that; that's a little harsh.... Just because we don't do things outside of the CSA doesn't mean we don't have a community. I mean I know the people at my pick-up and we are friendly and we talk about what we made with the produce last week and what we're going to do and are we ever going to stop getting this garlic? I feel very connected to these people. I don't know them intimately and my kids don't play with theirs, but we go to the farm, we see each other, and there is sort of an instant connection with just the fact that I know people care as much about the Earth and the environment as I do.**

My conversation with this member shows that her CSA membership provides her with a sense of community. In fact, she went as far as to say that she opted not to join a CSA that was closer to her home because it did not have the same number of on-farm events and as much member interaction at pick-up sites as From the Ground Up. Undeniably, this member derives much more from her membership than the provision of fresh, local, and organic produce. However, I predict this will become less central to the concept of CSA as it matures and develops over time. I expect that CSA will become more business-like and impersonal.

As many small-scale and independent merchants become more popular, they often choose to become more efficient and predictable in order to meet the increased consumer demand. Ben and Jerry's Homemade, Inc., for example, began as a two-person

operation in Burlington, Vermont, in 1978<sup>14</sup>. Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield began their multi-million-dollar gourmet ice cream enterprise in a renovated gas station. They were both responsible for making the ice cream, packaging it and selling it to local patrons. Cohen and Greenfield embodied the spirit of mechanical solidarity. Their operation was small in scale, they undertook many different responsibilities, they maintained face-to-face contact with the customers, and they were renowned for how well they paid their small number of employees. This was, indeed, a cottage industry in which the taste of the ice cream often differed batch-by-batch.

By the early 1980s, people throughout Vermont and, ultimately, North America began to learn about Ben and Jerry's ice cream. In response to their growing success, Cohen and Greenfield decided to sell pints of their ice cream to grocery-store chains and other stores throughout Vermont. This increased their popularity and led to an increased demand for their products. By the mid-1980s, Cohen and Greenfield chose to open a big factory in Waterbury Center, Vermont. This allowed them to manufacture more ice cream. Since they were able to produce more, they hired sales people and a marketing staff to increase consumer demand for their products. They also made the decision to purchase a fleet of delivery trucks and began to deliver the ice cream all over New England. By the mid-1990s, Ben and Jerry's ice cream was being sold in stores all over the country. They also began to sell franchising rights for scoop shops that business

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<sup>14</sup> The information in this paragraph and the following two paragraphs is from Ben and Jerry's official web-site ([www.benjerry.com](http://www.benjerry.com)).

people were able to purchase. Currently, there are Ben and Jerry's scoop shops all over North America.

In August, 2000, Unilever purchased Ben and Jerry's Homemade Inc. Ben and Jerry's is no longer a cottage industry. It is a multi-million-dollar business with a board of directors and thousands of stockholders. Although the company maintains a commitment to social justice and donates millions of dollars to charitable causes, it has become more corporate. There are too many employees for them to all know one other, there have been many tensions between workers and management, and the ice cream is mass-produced in huge batches. In short, Ben and Jerry's has become more bureaucratic and large scale. Without question, Ben and Jerry's has evolved into a corporation that more closely resembles Durkheim's notion of organic solidarity.

This process of growth and change is not meant to be characterized as being inevitable. Cohen and Greenfield, like many business-people, have been confronted with various business decisions over time. Rather than choosing to remain small in scale, they made a conscious decision to expand production and expand the range of consumer products that are produced. This resonates with resource mobilization theory in that Ben and Jerry's maturation follows the growth pattern of many social movement organizations (see Zald and Garner, 1987). For example, Zald and Garner (1987) contend that many social movement organizations develop a wider range of goals, become more conservative and bureaucratic, and become more hierarchical over time (see chapter 3). In the same way that the executive director and other high ranking employees of social movement organizations such as Greenpeace have made decisions

favoring the diffusion of goals and the attraction of new members, the decision-makers within Ben and Jerry's have made decisions relating to the scope of their operation. This process of growth does not, however, characterize all ice cream companies and environmental organizations. Pierre's Ice Cream in Cleveland, Ohio produces gourmet ice cream. This profitable company has been in existence for many years, yet it has not expanded to the same extent as Ben and Jerry's. Similarly, Earth First!, an environmental organization, has been in existence for almost as long as Greenpeace yet remains a grassroots and small scale group.

Borrowing from Ritzer (1996), it can be said that Ben and Jerry's has become McDonaldized. Ritzer (1996) explains that McDonaldization involves six dimensions. The first is that jobs are, typically, tightly scripted and simple. The second is that there is an emphasis on efficiency. The third dimension of McDonaldization is that workers are timed. Ritzer (1996) explains that the fourth dimension is that the work is routinized. This is, in part, a by-product of the fact that the jobs are tightly scripted and oriented towards efficiency. The fifth dimension is that technology controls the pace of work. Finally, the last dimension of McDonaldization is that the work is dehumanized. This applies to most menial jobs in the sense that there is little intrinsic reward and job satisfaction from doing the same repetitive task every day over the course of one's working life.

Without question, decisions have been made within Ben and Jerry's to McDonaldize the operation as their ice cream became more popular. Similarly, as many Americans learn more about nutrition and the value of pesticide-free produce, consumer

demand for organic fruits and vegetables is likely to increase. If this happens, CSA farmers may choose to become more McDonaldized in order to meet the increased demand. For instance, farmers may decide to hire drivers and unskilled laborers to bag and deliver shares to members. They may choose to hire accountants and office employees to manage the financial affairs of the operation. Similarly, they may decide to hire marketing people and Internet web designers to maintain a larger sales base. In short, the possibility of CSAs being able to remain cottage industries while meeting increased demand appears unlikely unless more CSAs emerge around the country. Of course, if more CSAs are established, there will not be as much pressure placed upon farmers to meet an elevated demand.

In many respects, some CSAs have already become McDonaldized. For example, business enterprises such as Green Earth Organics<sup>15</sup> and Front Door Organics<sup>15</sup> have emerged in many larger North American cities such as Montreal and Toronto. They take the idea of CSA to an entirely new level. As with other CSAs, these two business enterprises sell season-long memberships. There are several features, however, of these newly established CSAs that differentiate them from other, more traditional, CSAs. For example, the CSA is not owned by a farmer. Rather, it is operated by an entrepreneur who deals with multiple vegetable brokers and farmers. Members can also buy other organic items, such as coffee and fruit, that are not part of the weekly shares. Third, organic produce is sold to non-members. Anybody with a valid credit card can purchase

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<sup>15</sup> Green Earth Organics ([www.greenearthorganics.com](http://www.greenearthorganics.com)) and Front Door Organics ([www.frontdoororganics.com](http://www.frontdoororganics.com)) are Internet-based businesses that can be accessed via the world wide web.

a week's half share, a week's full share, or individual items via the Internet. Because every business transaction is done on the computer, there is not any face-to-face communication between buyers and sellers. Members and non-members simply place their orders and have their allotment delivered right to their front door.

Clearly, this embodies a much more impersonal and business-like relationship between the food provider and the consumer. Interestingly, CSA was originally developed to eliminate the middle-person and take vegetable brokers out of the buying-and-selling equation. Yet, entities like Green Earth Organics and Front Door Organics often rely on vegetable brokers to fill their orders and provide them with produce. It is also quite clear that these CSAs do not provide any opportunities for community building among members.

#### *CSA as a Response to Globalization*

In spite of such concerns, however, community supported agriculture can limit many of the negative consequences of globalization. As documented in the first chapter, globalization emerges when people living in a given community develop strong ties with people outside their community, thereby reducing their sense of community with local residents. This involves people going to chain restaurants owned by people who do not reside in their community, buying newspapers published outside one's community, and even shopping for food at supermarkets that are part of an international chain. This is the basis of the mass society thesis, which states that as the vertical ties between community residents and residents from other communities increase, the cultural distinctiveness of each community is reduced.

CSA can strengthen a community's horizontal ties in two very important ways. The first involves people investing in a local business. By supporting a CSA, members keep local dollars circulating within the community. This allows local merchants to be competitive with chain firms. Another way of thinking about this is that every dollar directed toward CSA is a dollar that is not siphoned away from the community. If the farmer, in turn, spends those dollars supporting locally-owned seed stores, restaurants, gas stations, and clothing stores, other people in the community benefit. The benefits of this arrangement are likely to increase substantially as the seed store, restaurant, gas station, and clothing store owners spend their money supporting other locally-owned enterprises, including the CSA.

CSA also has the potential to strengthen a community's horizontal ties by bringing local community members together. Many CSAs have hosted work-days, pot-lucks, and weeding days which served to increase the inter-personal contact among members. As CSAs become more McDonaldized and less oriented towards community building, however, this is likely to be limited. Although this research reveals that most CSA members do not join in order to generate a sense of community with others, they tend to have high degrees of community attachment, be interested and active in local affairs, and maintain a high sense of belonging in their communities.

#### *Other Community Supported Business Enterprises*

In Chapter 2, Robyn Van En (1995) outlines a vision of a world with community supported auto mechanics and other community supported cottage industries such as candy manufacturers. I agree that this is possible, in part, because the payment of a certain amount of money up-front in return for regular allotments of various locally

produced goods and services can be convenient and exciting. Many Americans, for example, currently belong to beer-of-the-month, wine of-the-month, soap-of-the-month, and other 'of-the-month' clubs that fit squarely with the premise of CSA: you pay a certain amount of money up-front and get monthly allotments of certain goods from local businesses. Many people find this arrangement convenient because the goods are often delivered right to a person's front door. Many people also enjoy the surprise of having a twelve-pack of beer arrive at their home from a small craft brewery.

As outlined above, it is likely that these business enterprises will become more McDonaldized over time. For example, as more and more people join a soap-of-the-month club, the demand for certain brands of hand-made soap is likely to exceed the supply. For this reason, soap makers may decide to McDonaldize their operation to meet the increased demand for their product. They may choose to hire more workers, initiate a division of labor, and invest in more machinery and equipment. Does this mean that these businesses should not be supported? I personally do not think so. The possibility of a small business becoming McDonaldized should not dissuade consumers from supporting that operation. If it gets too big, the consumer can always find another small business to meet his/her needs. The other possibility is that the soap maker discussed above can always use the increased demand as a reason to increase prices for the hand-made soap. This is likely to lower the demand for the soap and maintain its qualities as a cottage-industry.

My partner and I invested in the idea of community supported movies with a local chain of theaters. We paid \$150 up-front for a movie pass and were allowed to see any film that was playing in these theaters at any time over the 13 months our pass was valid.

This was a wonderful arrangement that gave the theater owners enough capital up-front to refurbish the oldest movie house in Raleigh, North Carolina, without having to draw on much bank credit. At the same time, it allowed us to view movies that we would not ordinarily see because of the substantial admission fee.

The movie pass is similar to a CSA in that it is difficult for the consumer to predict what s/he has paid for. For example, holders of the movie pass cannot anticipate which movies will be shown and how many will be shown. The consumer must trust that a fair number of movies will be shown and that they will be of interest. As it turns out, these theaters show mostly alternative films, so it follows that somebody who likes Hollywood films will get less out of the pass than somebody who prefers films that are out of the mainstream. This also relates to CSA in that it is best suited to people who consume a lot of vegetables. Like a CSA member who said in an interview that belonging to a CSA felt like getting free bags of groceries every week, it actually felt like we were seeing free movies after having the movie pass for a couple of months.

In many respects, there are not a lot of differences between paying a certain amount of money for seeing an unlimited number of films and paying money for unlimited car maintenance or oil changes, as outlined by Van En. The basic premise can be applied to virtually anything that involves consumers in need of a service and people who can provide that service. With regard to Van En's claim (cited in Cicero, 1993) that CSA will one day feed everyone from prisoners and hospital patients to college students and members of weight watchers, however, I am less optimistic. My personal sense is that CSA will remain fairly obscure as long as Americans are attracted to often-tasty yet fattening, overly processed, and convenience-based foods. Simply put, I do not think that

there is enough of a consumer demand for large quantities of organic produce in contemporary America to make CSA a household word. This is unfortunate because CSA gives people the opportunity to eat healthfully, learn more about food issues, experiment with new recipes, invest in their community, and even develop a sense of community with others.

### **Limitations of this Study**

The biggest limitation of this research is that there is a large number of missing cases in the path analytical model. Dozens of cases were dropped from the path model because many questions were not answered by all of the respondents. Many respondents commented that the survey was too long and that they did not have the time or energy to complete it. Perhaps, if the survey consisted of fewer questions, there would have been fewer missing cases. Another potential limitation relates to the measurement of organizational success. First, this measure assumes that CSA members and CSA practitioners share the same conception of success. As described above, however, determinants of success for members are likely to differ from those among CSA practitioners. In future studies, different measures of success should be established. One measure should consider the business interests of the farmer; another measure should consider the levels of general satisfaction among members.

Another limitation is that these data were collected at one point in time. Time-series data would be helpful in assessing ways in which CSA has changed over time. The inclusion of a comparison group would also be helpful in assessing differences between CSA members in a particular region and a representative sample of non-CSA belonging people who live in that area. As it stands, this research only allows for differences among

CSA members to be assessed and analyzed. The inclusion of a comparison group allows for differences among CSA members to be assessed in addition to differences between CSA members and non-CSA members to be assessed and analyzed.

### **The Need for Future Research**

In order to understand community supported agriculture further, more research concerning this topic of inquiry is needed. Future studies can generate more insights concerning this topic of inquiry by exploring issues relating to membership recruitment and retention, concerns that members may have, and the potential for CSA to improve people's quality of life through healthy eating. Specifically, future studies should assess differences between Waldorf schooling and non-Waldorf schooling members. In addition, future research concerning differences among full and half members and working and non-working members is needed. This study shows that a small number of the participants joined in order to learn about food issues. This is something that also needs to be addressed in future studies.

Next, the finding that the half members in this study are more invested in their respective CSA than full members should be addressed. The inverse relationship between organizational stability and organizational success is something that future researchers may consider investigating. This is important because many CSA practitioners are likely to assume that the more stable their organization is, the more successful it will be. In short, this information can be used by CSA farmers to render their operations more successful. These findings can also be tested as they apply to other social movement organizations such as environmental groups, food cooperatives, and self-help groups. Finally, research pertaining to CSA in other regions and countries is

needed in order to see how these farms differ across spatial boundaries with different populations of people, climates, and governmental policies concerning food issues.

There is also a significant gap in the literature relating to how CSA has changed over time. Virtually every study has been based upon data collected at one point in time. Future studies could add to the literature by using time-series data to understand better how CSAs change over time. Time-series data could generate insights into why some members belong for more seasons than others by tracking the tendency of CSAs to become more bureaucratic and business-like over time and showing benefits and drawbacks associated with newly implemented features such as payment plans and subsidized shares.

## **Conclusion**

There are four major findings in this study. First, this research shows that the majority of the members of the CSAs in this study are wealthy, white, middle-aged, well-educated and female. Results also show that the members joined to access organic produce, to access local produce, support local farmers, for environmental reasons and to support small farmers. Second, the three member interests (interest in environmental issues, support for alternative agriculture, and community attachment) do not affect levels of member investment. Third, there is a positive relationship between levels of member investment and the organizational success of the CSAs in the study. Finally, there is an inverse relationship between organizational stability and organizational success.

The findings in this study conform to the findings in other studies concerning resource mobilization theory and voluntary association in general, and community supported agriculture in particular. This study also builds upon prior studies by testing a

host of models, seeking to uncover the relationships between CSA member characteristics, member interests, degree of members' investment in their respective CSAs, and the organizational success of each CSA.

Including this study, empirical investigations pertaining to CSA have been conducted in the southern region of the United States, the mid-Atlantic region of the country, western Massachusetts, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Michigan. The findings in these studies complement each other and show that CSA members from various regions of the country share many similar characteristics. Nevertheless, as more CSA studies expand upon many of the same themes, more generalizations are likely to emerge, which will allow people to understand this social phenomenon better.

Without question, as more research is conducted on CSA, more people are likely to find out about it and develop an interest in it. As CSA becomes a more mainstream idea, it is likely to attract a wider segment of the population. Who knows? As more people find out about this new approach to meeting one's food needs, CSAs may become as commonplace as farmers' markets and road-side vegetable stands.

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Appendix A

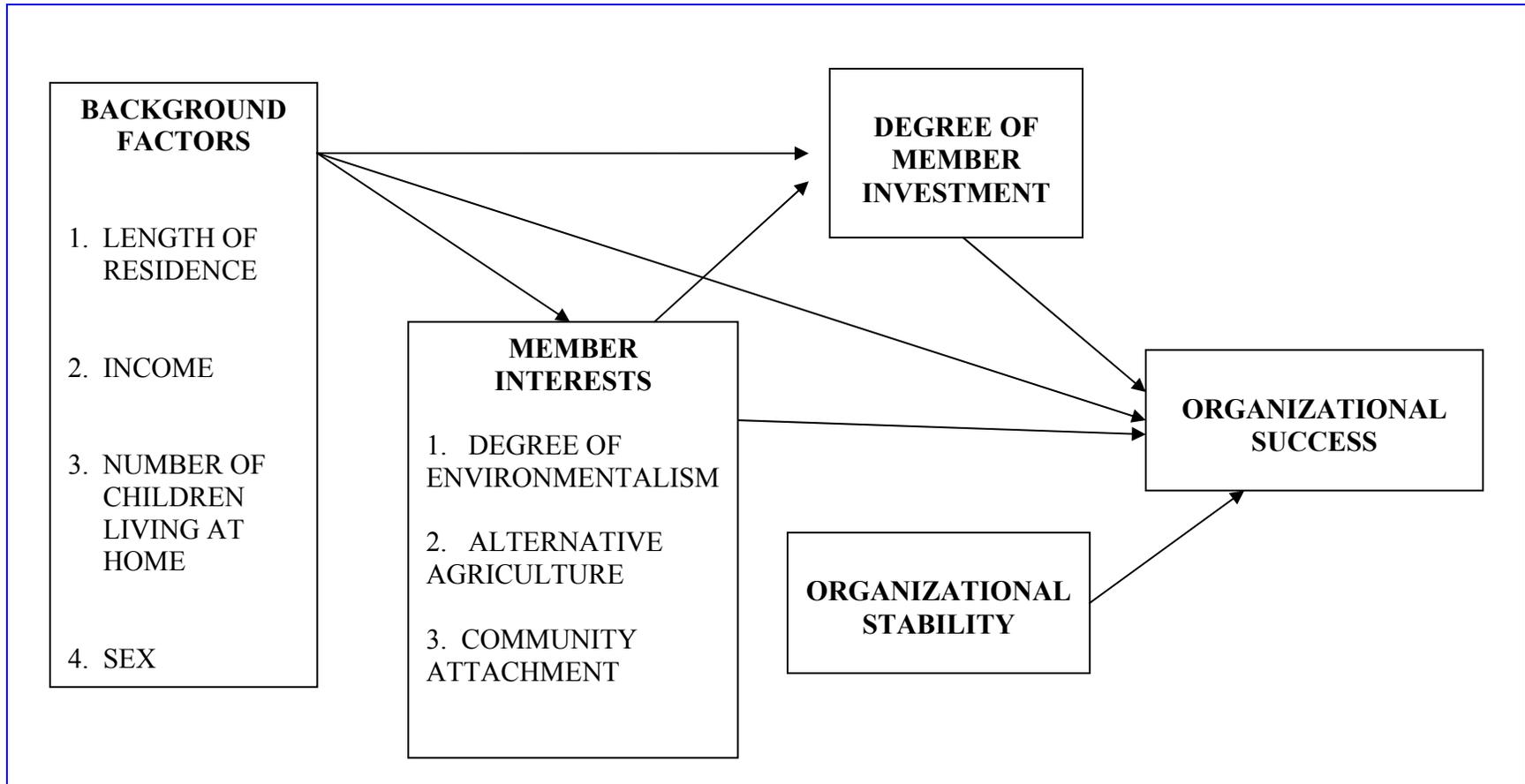


Figure 1: The Conceptual Model

## **Appendix B**

Table 4: Demographic Profiles of the CSA Members and the wider American Population<sup>a</sup>:

<b>Variable</b>	<b>7Springs</b>	<b>Jake's</b>	<b>GF4GP</b>	<b>Shepherd</b>	<b>FGU</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>U.S.</b>
(%) Urban	16.7 (7/42)	40.0 (4/10)	16.7 (2/12)	33.3 (2/6)	67.7 (84/124)	50.8 (99/195)	n/a
(%) Female	82.4 (28/34)	88.9 (8/9)	70.0 (7/10)	71.4 (5/7)	83.5 (101/121)	82.3 (149/181)	51.1%
(%) Married	67.6 (23/34)	55.6 (5/9)	100 (11/11)	42.9 (3/7)	65.8 (79/120)	66.9 (121/181)	59.5%
(%) Anglo-American	90.9 (30/33)	100 (8/8)	100 (11/11)	71.4 (5/7)	92.2 (107/116)	92.0 (161/175)	82.2%
Age (mean)	47.0 (33)	40.8 (8)	50.3 (8)	41.2 (6)	38.2 (114)	40.7 (169)	n/a
(%) With children	84.8 (28/33)	44.4 (4/9)	90.9 (10/11)	50.0 (3/6)	47.5 (57/120)	57.0 (102/179)	n/a
Number of children (mean)	2.28 (29)	1.5 (4)	1.90 (10)	2.67 (3)	1.73 (56)	1.92 (102)	n/a
(%) Kids in public school	58.3 (7/12)	50.0 (1/2)	33.3 (1/3)	100 (2/2)	46.9 (15/32)	51.0 (26/51)	n/a
(%) Graduate/Prof. degree	65.7 (23/33)	55.6 (5/9)	90.9 (10/11)	28.6 (2/7)	74.1 (83/112)	71.5 (123/172)	7.5%
(%) Work full time	53.1 (17/32)	77.8 (7/9)	36.3 (4/11)	71.4 (5/7)	70.1 (82/117)	65.3 (115/176)	n/a
(%) Professional jobs	55.2 (16/29)	66.7 (6/9)	71.4 (5/7)	60.0 (3/5)	41.4 (46/111)	47.2 (76/161)	n/a
(%) Protestant	44.1 (15/34)	14.3 (1/7)	50.0 (5/10)	57.1 (4/7)	24.3 (28/115)	30.6 (53/173)	n/a
Religiosity scale (mean)	7.00 (33)	4.86 (7)	5.73 (11)	4.71 (7)	4.80 (115)	5.28 (173)	n/a
(%) Non-vegetarian	70.5 (31/44)	60.0 (6/10)	83.3 (10/12)	100 (6/6)	68.6 (81/118)	70.5 (134/190)	n/a
(%) Earning > \$55,001	71.5 (30/42)	11.9 (1/9)	90.9 (10/11)	42.9 (3/7)	71.3 (82/115)	68.5 (126/184)	n/a
(%) Democrat	47.5 (19/40)	50.0 (4/8)	83.3 (10/12)	57.1 (4/7)	74.5 (82/110)	67.2 (119/177)	47.0%

<sup>a</sup> The numbers within parentheses indicate the total number of respondents in the modal category divided by the total number of people who answered that question from that particular farm. In the case of continuous level variables where the mean is to the right of the variable name, the number of respondents is in parentheses. The figures for the wider American population are from the year 2000 which is when the data for this study were collected. The data are from the 120<sup>th</sup> edition of the Statistical Abstract of the United States (United States Bureau of the Census, 2000).

Table 5: The Reasons that Members Joined the CSAs<sup>a</sup>:

<b>Variable</b>	<b>7Springs</b>	<b>Jake's</b>	<b>GF4GP</b>	<b>Shepherd</b>	<b>FGU</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
(%) Joining the CSA for						
...Organic produce	89.1 (41/46)	100 (10/10)	83.3 (10/12)	85.7 (6/7)	83.7 (108/129)	85.8 (175/204)
...Locally grown produce	82.6 (38/46)	100 (10/10)	75.0 (9/12)	100 (7/7)	86.0 (111/129)	85.8 (175/204)
...Support local farmers	71.7 (33/46)	80.0 (8/10)	75.0 (9/12)	85.7 (6/7)	77.5 (100/129)	76.5 (156/204)
...Environmental reasons	54.3 (25/46)	50.0 (5/10)	75.0 (9/12)	57.1 (4/7)	72.9 (94/129)	67.2 (137/204)
...Support small farmers	56.5 (26/46)	50.0 (5/10)	75.0 (9/12)	71.4 (5/7)	59.7 (77/129)	59.8 (122/204)
...Improve eating habits	47.8 (22/46)	60.0 (6/10)	33.3 (4/12)	85.7 (6/7)	34.1 (44/129)	40.2 (82/204)
...Cheaper produce	0 (0/46)	40.0 (4/10)	0 (0/12)	0 (0/7)	20.9 (27/129)	15.2 (31/204)
...Meet like-minded people	17.4 (8/46)	20.0 (2/10)	0 (0/12)	0 (0/7)	10.9 (14/129)	11.8 (24/204)
...Learn about food issues	4.3 (2/46)	0 (0/10)	0 (0/12)	0 (0/7)	9.3 (12/129)	6.9 (14/204)

<sup>a</sup> The numbers within parentheses indicate the total number of respondents who joined for a particular reason divided by the total number of people who returned completed surveys from that particular farm.

Table 6: The Standardized Regression Coefficients from the Path Analytical Model (Standard Error in Brackets):

	<b>Environmentalism</b>	<b>Alternative Agriculture</b>	<b>Community Attachment</b>	<b>Member Investment</b>	<b>Organizational Success</b>
Length of Residence	-.088 (.032)	.031 (.069)	.138 (.026)	.415 (.022)	.252 (.042)
Income	-.091 (.111)	-.041 (.255)	.180 (.093)	-.200 (.074)	-.113 (.142)
Children at Home	-.080 (.160)	-.067 (.386)	-.106 (.145)	.106 (.112)	-.291 (.204)
Sex (1=female)	.000 (.390)	.048 (.952)	.062 (.349)	.061 (.274)	.305 (.471)
Environmentalism	-	-	-	-.019 (.057)	.100 (.098)
Alternative Agriculture	-	-	-	-.064 (.024)	-.071 (.042)
Community Attachment	-	-	-	-.177 (.066)	.146 (.114)
Member Investment	-	-	-	-	.218 (.180)
Organizational Stability	-	-	-	-	-.168 (.147)
R <sup>2</sup>	.035	.009	.062	.236	.299

Table 7: The Correlation Matrix for the Predetermined Variables

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Length of Residence (1)	1.0			
Income (2)	.204	1.0		
Children at Home (3)	.168	.177	1.0	
Sex – Female=1 (4)	.108	.014	.085	1.0

Table 8: Interpretation of Effects in a Model of CSA Member Interests

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Predetermined Variable</b>	<b>Total Effect</b>	<b>Direct Effect</b>
Environmentalism	Length of Residence	-.088	-.088
	Income	-.091	-.091
	Children	-.080	-.080
	Sex (1=female)	.000	.000
Alternative Agriculture	Length of Residence	.031	.031
	Income	-.041	-.041
	Children	-.067	-.067
	Sex (1=female)	.048	.048
Community Attachment	Length of Residence	.138	.138
	Income	.180	.180
	Children	-.106	-.106
	Sex (1=female)	.062	.062

Table 9: Interpretation of Effects in a Model of CSA Member Investment

Dependent Variable	Predetermined Variable	Total Effect	Indirect Effects via...					Direct Effect
			1	2	3	4	5	
Member Investment	Length of Residence	.236	-.107	-.033	-.039	-	-	.415
	Income	-.412	-.110	-.105	.003	-	-	-.200
	Children	-.407	-.099	-.131	-.283	-	-	.106
	Sex (1=female)	-.089	-.019	-.016	-.115	-	-	.061
	Environmentalism	-.019	-	-	-	-	-	-.019
	Alternative Agriculture	-.064	-	-	-	-	-	-.064
	Community Attachment	-.177	-	-	-	-	-	-.177

1=environmentalism  
 2=alternative agriculture  
 3=community attachment  
 4=member investment  
 5=organizational stability

Table 10: Interpretation of Effects in a Model of CSA Organizational Success

Dependent Variable	Predetermined Variable	Total Effect	Indirect Effects via...							Direct Effect
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Organizational Success	Length of Residence	1.617	.012	-.040	.284	.633	.111	.185	.179	.253
	Income	.570	.009	-.112	.326	.018	.108	.113	.221	-.113
	Children	.096	.020	-.138	.040	.324	.119	.087	-.065	-.291
	Sex (1=female)	1.373	.100	-.023	.208	.279	.199	.202	.103	.305
	Environmentalism	.299	-	-	-	.199	-	-	-	.100
	Alternative Ag.	.083	-	-	-	.154	-	-	-	-.071
	Community Att.	.187	-	-	-	.041	-	-	-	.146
	Member Investment	.218	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.218
	Org. Stability	-.168	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.168

1=environmentalism

2=alternative agriculture

3=community attachment

4=member investment

5= through environmentalism through member investment

6= alternative agriculture through member investment

7= community attachment through member investment

Table 11: Descriptive Statistics for Members with Different Educational Interests and Degrees of Involvement in their CSA (n in parentheses)

<b>Variable</b>	<b>All Members</b>	<b>Waldorf</b>	<b>non-Waldorf</b>	<b>Working</b>	<b>non-Working</b>	<b>Full</b>	<b>Half</b>
environmentalism	7.43 (182)	8.33 (3)	7.44 (176)	7.50 (30)	7.41 (150)	7.52 (97)	7.33 (81)
alternative agriculture	7.55 (204)	5.67 (3)	7.58 (198)	6.94 (33)	7.78 (167)	8.03 (109)	7.06 (89)
community attachment	9.81 (170)	9.33 (3)	9.82 (164)	9.38 (26)	9.88 (143)	9.96 (94)	9.60 (73)
children at home	.79 (174)	2.33 (3)	.73 (168)	1.08 (26)	.74 (144)	.74 (102)	.91 (66)
voting	5.56 (181)	5.67 (3)	5.55 (175)	5.61 (28)	5.55 (151)	5.52 (99)	5.60 (78)
income	4.29 (184)	4.33 (3)	4.28 (178)	3.94 (32)	4.37 (150)	4.56 (95)	3.99 (85)
percent CSA produce	66.31 (198)	76.67 (3)	66.41 (192)	74.58 (33)	64.72 (163)	65.72 (106)	66.24 (88)
distance from CSA	24.62 (160)	34.33 (3)	24.67 (154)	33.58 (33)	22.39 (126)	23.40 (80)	26.0 (77)
csa satisfaction	7.49 (195)	8.0 (3)	7.50 (189)	8.00 (31)	7.37 (162)	7.44 (108)	7.53 (83)
farm visits	4.91 (195)	2.65 (3)	4.80 (189)	5.97 (33)	4.40 (160)	5.45 (104)	2.03 (87)
years ratio	.31 (201)	.66 (3)	.31 (195)	.25 (33)	.33 (166)	.26 (109)	.37 (88)
member investment	2.77 (159)	3.50 (2)	2.75 (154)	3.89 (18)	2.61 (139)	2.69 (91)	2.88 (64)
organizational success	6.84 (171)	8.00 (3)	6.84 (165)	7.00 (28)	6.80 (142)	6.64 (94)	7.05 (74)

## Appendix C

### The Survey and the Cover Letter

North Carolina State University  
Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
NCSU Box 8107 Raleigh, NC 27695  
Phone: 919/515.3180  
Fax: 919/515.2610

10 November, 2000

Dear CSA member:

My name is Brandon Loughridge and I am a graduate student in sociology at NC State University in Raleigh. I am very interested in community and environmental issues and am researching CSA in the mid-Atlantic region.

As part of my research, I am helping Rob and Carrie with their end of year survey. The purpose of these surveys is to identify strengths and weaknesses of your CSA, levels of member satisfaction and ways that your CSA can be improved. This information will be used by the farmers when planning for next year. This information will also be used by me to consider if and why certain social groups are more active in CSA than others.

Please take a few minutes to answer the questions in the survey. It should take 10 or 15 minutes. This information is very important and your voice is needed to improve the quality of your CSA membership. Many of these questions are opinion based, so if you are unsure, please record the closest response. Once completed, please mail the survey back to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided. If you would prefer an e-mail version, please let me know and I will send a paperless version to you.

In addition, the surveys are confidential meaning that this information will not be shared with anybody. It will only be used by myself and the folks at From the Ground Up CSA. In the top right corner of the first page, I have written a number which allows me to keep track of which surveys have come in and which have not. If you wish, you can make the survey anonymous by tearing off this number. Regretfully, if the number is torn off, you may get either a reminder notice or a second copy of the survey since I will not be able to track response patterns.

If you would like a copy of the overall results, please let me know I and I will gladly provide them to you. If you have any questions, please use the above contact information or e-mail me at: [loughrkb@server.sasw.ncsu.edu](mailto:loughrkb@server.sasw.ncsu.edu).

Best,

Brandon Loughridge

## 2000 CSA Member Survey

1. On a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest), please identify the number that best reflects your general satisfaction with your CSA membership over the last year.

Not at all  
satisfied

Extremely  
satisfied

1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6\_\_\_ 7\_\_\_ 8\_\_\_ 9\_\_\_ 10\_\_\_

2. How many growing seasons have you been a member of this farm?

\_\_\_\_\_ seasons

3. What kind of share do you currently have?

a. Full share \_\_\_\_\_

b. Half share \_\_\_\_\_

4. Is it a...

a. Working share \_\_\_\_\_

b. Non-working share \_\_\_\_\_

c. Subsidized share \_\_\_\_\_

5. In general, has your CSA membership fallen below, met or exceeded your expectations?

a. Fallen below them \_\_\_\_\_

b. Met them \_\_\_\_\_

c. Exceeded them \_\_\_\_\_

6 . Please rate you level of satisfaction with the following aspects of your CSA activities:

	Not at all Satisfied				Extremely Satisfied
a. Quantity of produce	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___
b. Quality of produce (taste, look)	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___
c. Freshness of produce	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___
d. Variety of produce	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___
e. Quality of newsletter	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___
f. Distribution of produce	1___	2___	3___	4___	5___

7. Over the course of the growing season, how many times did you visit the farm?

\_\_\_\_\_ times (if 0, skip to 9; if >0, go to 8)

8. Why did you visit the farm? (Check all that apply)

a. For a member gathering \_\_\_\_\_

b. To pick up weekly shares \_\_\_\_\_

c. To work on the farm \_\_\_\_\_

d. To learn more about the farm \_\_\_\_\_

5) Other \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify below)

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9. Before joining the farm, how did you hear about it? (Check all that apply)

- a. Through a friend \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Through an poster/advertisement \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Over the Internet \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Other \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify below)
- 

10. Approximately, how far is the farm from your home?

\_\_\_\_\_ miles

11 . How do you usually receive the weekly allotments?

- a. Pick-up at a drop-off point \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Pick-up at the farm \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. They are delivered to my home \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Other \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify below)
-

12. Why did you join the CSA? (Check all that apply and PLEASE RANK THE TOP 4)

- a. Cheaper produce \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Organic produce \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Locally grown produce \_\_\_\_\_
- d. To learn more about food issues \_\_\_\_\_
- e. To support local farmers \_\_\_\_\_
- f. To support small farmers \_\_\_\_\_
- g. To meet like-minded people \_\_\_\_\_
- h. To improve my eating habits \_\_\_\_\_
- i. General concern for the environment \_\_\_\_\_
- j. Other \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify below)

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13. Please mark with an x the answer that best reflects your thoughts.

1	2	3	4
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE

Since joining the CSA, I feel that...

a. ...I have become integrated into my CSA community. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_

b. ...I am helping to protect the natural environment. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_

c. ...I am helping to change society for the better. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_

d. ...I know more about food issues. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_

e. ...CSA membership has opened my eyes to the importance of being part of a community. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_

f. ...I have a more positive outlook on the world. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_

14. Since joining the CSA, has your consumption of produce, in general, increased?

a. Yes \_\_\_\_\_

b. No \_\_\_\_\_

15. What percentage of your total vegetable purchases were provided by the CSA during the growing season?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

16. Has your CSA participation affected the amount of time spent in food preparation?

a. No, it is about the same amount as before \_\_\_\_\_

b. Yes, it is more \_\_\_\_\_

c. Yes, it is less \_\_\_\_\_

17. Did you find the weekly shares to be...
- a. Too big \_\_\_\_\_ (please go to Q. 18)
  - b. The right size \_\_\_\_\_ (please go to Q. 19)
  - c. Too small \_\_\_\_\_ (please go to Q. 19)
18. What did you do with the extra food?
- a. Canned/Froze it \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Threw it out \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Composted it \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Gave it away \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify below)
19. Based on your weekly allotments, do you think that the price of your share was...
- a. Too expensive \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Fair \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Too cheap \_\_\_\_\_
20. Do you plan to continue your membership for the next year ?
- a. Yes \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. No \_\_\_\_\_

21. Which, if any, of the following are concerns that you have with your current CSA membership? (Please check all that apply and RANK THE TOP THREE)

- a. You are moving out of the area \_\_\_\_\_
- b. It is too time consuming \_\_\_\_\_
- c. The pick-up location is not convenient \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Too much produce is offered \_\_\_\_\_
- e. It is too expensive \_\_\_\_\_
- f. The experience is not what I expected \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Other \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify below)

22. How would you describe your place of residence?

- a. A large city (>100,000 people) \_\_\_\_\_
- b. A mid-sized city (50,000-99,999 people) \_\_\_\_\_
- c. A small city (10,000-49,999 people) \_\_\_\_\_
- d. A town (2,000-9,999 people) \_\_\_\_\_
- e. The country(<2,000 people) \_\_\_\_\_

23. Do you consider yourself to be...

- a. Urban \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Suburban \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Rural \_\_\_\_\_

24. How many years have you lived in your current place of residence?

\_\_\_\_\_ years

25. Do you generally feel at home in your community of residence?
- a. Yes \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Probably \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. No \_\_\_\_\_
26. If you had to move away from your community of residence, how would you feel?
- a. Very sorry \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Indifferent \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Pleased \_\_\_\_\_
27. How interested are you in local community issues?
- a. Very interested \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Somewhat interested \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Not very interested \_\_\_\_\_
28. How involved are you in local community issues?
- a. Very involved \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Somewhat involved \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Not very involved \_\_\_\_\_
29. Thinking about your home community of residence...
- a. ...how many people would you say you know?  
\_\_\_\_\_ people
  - b. ...what proportion of all of your adult friends would you say live there?  
\_\_\_\_\_ %
  - c. ...what proportion of your adult relatives and in-laws live there?  
\_\_\_\_\_ %

30. How many friends do you have that live within a 10 minute walk from your home?

\_\_\_\_\_ friends

31. How frequently do neighbors visit with you socially in your home?

a. Never \_\_\_\_\_

b. About once per month \_\_\_\_\_

c. About once per week \_\_\_\_\_

d. Usually twice or more per week \_\_\_\_\_

32. How frequently do you visit with neighbors socially in their homes?

a. Never \_\_\_\_\_

b. About once per month \_\_\_\_\_

c. About once per week \_\_\_\_\_

d. Usually twice or more per week \_\_\_\_\_

33. Please mark with an x the answer that best reflects your thoughts.

1	2	3	4
STRONGLY	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY
AGREE			DISAGREE

a. Real friends are easy to find in this community? 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_

b. I feel very much that I belong in my community. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_

c. Everybody in my community takes pride in how it looks. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_

d. The town/city council gets a lot of things done. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_

e. Voting on the local level is more important than voting at the Federal level.

1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_

34. Please mark with an x the answer that best reflects your thoughts.

1	2	3
Yes, always	Sometimes	Never

a. I am actively involved in neighborhood activities. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_

b. I share extra food with neighbors. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_

c. I vote in local elections. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_

d. I vote in state level elections. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_

e. I vote in Federal level elections. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_

35. What is your sex?

a. Male \_\_\_\_\_

b. Female \_\_\_\_\_

36. What is your current marital status?

a. Married \_\_\_\_\_

b. Divorced/Separated \_\_\_\_\_

c. Not married but living with somebody \_\_\_\_\_

e. Single \_\_\_\_\_

f. Widowed \_\_\_\_\_

37. What is your ethnicity?

a. Anglo-American \_\_\_\_\_

b. African-American \_\_\_\_\_

c. Hispanic-American \_\_\_\_\_

d. Native-American \_\_\_\_\_

e. Asian-American \_\_\_\_\_

3) Other \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify below)

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38. What year were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

39. Do you currently have any children?

a. Yes \_\_\_\_\_ (please continue to Q. 40)

b. No \_\_\_\_\_ (please skip to Q. 44)

40. How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

41. How many of your children currently live at home with you? \_\_\_\_\_

42. How many of the children that live with you attend school? \_\_\_\_\_

43. Do your children attend... (Check all that apply)

a. Public school \_\_\_\_\_

b. Home school \_\_\_\_\_

c. Private (non-religious) school \_\_\_\_\_

e. Private (religious) school \_\_\_\_\_

f. Waldorf school \_\_\_\_\_

44. What is your educational background?

- a. Less than a high school diploma \_\_\_\_\_
- b. A high school diploma or equivalent \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Some college \_\_\_\_\_
- d. A community or junior college diploma \_\_\_\_\_
- e. A college degree \_\_\_\_\_
- e. A graduate/professional degree \_\_\_\_\_

45. What is your current employment status? (Check all that apply)

- a. Work full-time \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Work part-time \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Full-time student \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Part-time student \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Unemployed but looking for work \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Retired \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Disabled and not working \_\_\_\_\_

46. If you work, what is your occupation?

\_\_\_\_\_

47. What is your religious affiliation?

- a. Protestant \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Catholic \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Jewish \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Islamic \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
- f. I am not affiliated with any religion \_\_\_\_\_

48. 1. On a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest), please identify the number that best reflects your general religiosity.

Not at all										Extremely
Religious										Religious
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

49. Please answer the following questions relating to environmental issues:

	Yes, always	Sometimes	No, never
a. Do you recycle?	_____	_____	_____
b. Do you compost?	_____	_____	_____
c. Do you carpool?	_____	_____	_____

50. How concerned are you with the following environmental issues?

	Big concern	Small concern	Not a concern
a. Acid rain	_____	_____	_____
b. Global Warming	_____	_____	_____
c. Ozone depletion	_____	_____	_____
d. Desertification	_____	_____	_____
e. Deforestation	_____	_____	_____
f. Garbage disposal	_____	_____	_____
g. Water pollution	_____	_____	_____
h. Litter on the street	_____	_____	_____
i. Traffic issues	_____	_____	_____

51. On a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest), identify the number that best reflects your degree of environmentalism?

Low High

1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6\_\_\_ 7\_\_\_ 8\_\_\_ 9\_\_\_ 10\_\_\_

52. Are you currently a vegetarian?

a. Yes \_\_\_\_\_

b. No \_\_\_\_\_

53. What is your current (total family) annual household income

a. Below \$15,000 \_\_\_\_\_

b. Between \$15,001 and \$35,000 \_\_\_\_\_

c. Between \$35,001 and \$55,000 \_\_\_\_\_

d. Between \$55,001 and \$75,000 \_\_\_\_\_

e. Between \$75,001 and \$95,000 \_\_\_\_\_

f. More than \$95,000 \_\_\_\_\_

54. On the Federal level, which political party do you usually support?

- a. Democrats \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Republicans \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Greens \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Reform \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Unaffiliated \_\_\_\_\_

55. What groups do you currently belong to?

- a. Religious group (e.g., Church) \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Civic group (e.g., Rotary Club) \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Youth group (e.g., Scouts) \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Sports group (e.g., Soccer team) \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Outdoors group (e.g., Outing club) \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Other groups (please specify below)

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- g. I don't currently belong to any groups \_\_\_\_\_

56. Is there anything that you would change about the CSA?

- a. Yes \_\_\_\_\_ (please go to Q. 57)
- b. No \_\_\_\_\_ (please go to Q. 58)

57. What would you change about the CSA?

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58. If there any additional issues, concerns or stories that you would like to relate, please write them below.

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59. Would you be willing to be interviewed at your home or another location about your CSA involvement by the survey administrator in the late fall or early spring of next year?

a. Yes \_\_\_\_\_

b. Maybe \_\_\_\_\_

c. No \_\_\_\_\_

If you chose A or B, please contact the survey administrator or the farmer at the following number:

Brandon Loughridge

phone: 919/515.3143 x. 69

e-mail: [loughrkb@server.sasw.ncsu.edu](mailto:loughrkb@server.sasw.ncsu.edu)

Thank-you for your time...

## **Appendix D**

### **Institutional Review Board Materials**

#### **IRB Proposal Narrative (15 February, 2001)**

##### **A. Introduction:**

1. I am interested in studying aspects of community supported agriculture (CSA) in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Community supported agriculture is a form of subscription farming where shareholders typically pay an up-front seasonal fee in return for weekly allotments of organically grown fruit, vegetables and/or flowers over the course of the growing season. On one level, CSA seeks to establish a partnership between consumers and farmers that revolves around the production of organic produce. On another more general level, CSA seeks to build community among people interested in learning more about food issues, supporting local farmers and eating healthy food.

CSAs, it is worth noting, come in all shapes and sizes. The length of the growing season, variety of produce, seasonal fees, delivery procedures, number of members, levels of membership participation and allotment sizes are all likely to vary depending on the location of the farm and the interests of the members. Some CSAs, for example, offer working shares whereby rates are reduced when members work a certain number of hours per month. Meanwhile, other CSAs have begun to offer half shares that are better suited for single people.

One purpose of my research is to uncover why people join CSAs and why CSAs have such a high rate member turnover. My principal research question, however, examines the potential of CSA as a community building tool. In other words, I would like to study how and why people come together to support local farmers, what benefits

they derive and what problems they face. In short, I am seeking to understand if people tend to join CSAs for access to fresh and, often, economical organic produce and/or if they join for other reasons such as the quest for personal fulfillment by being part of a growing community? Although CSA is the basis of my dissertation, I also plan to weave together community attachment, voluntary association and alternative agriculture literature.

The primary importance of this research is that it will serve to expand the CSA literature which remains rather limited and undeveloped. Because so few studies have considered any aspects of CSA, it is very worthwhile to build upon existing studies, offer additional analysis and pave the way for future studies. This study will contribute to the CSA literature by seeking to uncover regional characteristics of CSAs in the mid-Atlantic States.

Another reason why this study is important is that it may challenge some of the assumptions of modern agriculture or agri-business which remain the ideological cornerstone of food production in the United States. As such, this study may raise questions concerning conventional agricultural methods and offer criticisms which may not have been previously considered by stakeholders in this issue. Without question, in order for the modern and alternative agriculture debate to expand, more research needs to take place and more information generated. Moreover, this study will seek to offer a viable framework to initiate the transition process from conventional to alternative agriculture. This can serve to guide the interests of people seeking to make the transition, themselves, to a more ecological lifestyle.

2. These interview data will supplement data obtained from the farmer/owners of 5 CSAs in the mid-Atlantic region that have offered me access to their end of season surveys completed by members at the end of the 2000 growing season. Together, the surveys and the interview data will constitute the basis for my dissertation in sociology.

**B. Subject Population:**

1. There will be approximately 24 people interviewed for this study. I plan to interview three members of The Shepherd Farm, three members of Good Food for Good People CSA, five members of Seven Springs Farm, three members of Jake=s Farm and ten members of From the Ground Up, CSA.

2. Subjects from the 5 CSAs that are part of my study have already indicated to the farmers that they would be willing to be interviewed by me. Each of the farms sent out a letter towards the end of the growing season asking if anybody would be interested in being interviewed by me about their experiences with their CSA. My next step would be to contact each of the responding members in order to figure out a mutually accommodating time and place to meet for the interview.

3. These will be face-to-face interviews that I expect to take no longer than one hour to conduct. The total amount of time may, however, depend on the direction of the interview. These interviews will be loosely structured so that probes will be given and threads will be followed. If a respondent is particularly talkative, the interview will be longer than if a respondent is more subdued.

4. The only eligibility requirements of the research subjects is that they have belonged to one of the 5 CSAs that are part of my study for the 2000 growing season and that they have expressed interest in being interviewed.

5. With respect to sampling issues, a sample of all members will not be taken. Rather, all of the members who express interest in being interviewed will be interviewed as long as a mutually agreeable time and place can be determined.
6. There is no existing relationship between the researcher and any of the CSA members.
7. My target group of respondents does not include members of any of the listed vulnerable populations.

**C. Experimental Procedures:**

1. There is not an experimental component to or dimension of this research. Every respondent will be asked a series of related of questions.

**D. Potential Risks:**

1. There are not any potential physical, psychological, financial, social, legal or other risks associated with this research.
2. There will not be any questions which the subjects are likely to consider invasive, sensitive or too personal.
3. The respondents will not be presented anything that will appear to be remotely offensive, threatening or degrading. In addition, nothing will be introduced into the course of the interview that could produce unusual levels of stress or anxiety.
4. With respect to confidentiality, each of the respondents will be assigned a 3 digit code number that will appear in the place of their names on audio tapes and transcribed interviews. The first number of this code, will correspond to their farm and the second two will start at 01 and be assigned to people in the temporal order of the interviews. For instance, if the first person to be interviewed is from the farm with the code number 3, their number would be 301. The code number 404 would be assigned to the fourth

person to be interviewed who is a member of the farm with the code number 4. A master list that connects the 3 digit codes with the contact information will be kept in a file in a drawer of a locking filing cabinet. The transcribed interviews and the audio tapes with the recorded interviews will be kept in another drawer of the locking filing cabinet.

The reports will also be written in aggregate terms meaning that patterns in the data will be much more important than individual statements. Moreover, anything relating to the identities of members like names, age and place of residence will not be revealed in the final written product.

5. All of the interviews will be recorded with an audio tape recording device. The tapes will be stored in a locking file cabinet drawer and will be in a drawer that is separate from the file that contains the file that has the names and personal information of the respondents and their respective three digit codes. Once the interviews have been transcribed, the audio cassettes will be erased with a large magnet and all of the labeling information (i.e. the three digit code and date) will be taken off of the tape. Upon being rendered blank, the cassettes will be set aside to be used again for other purposes.

6. There is absolutely no deception or hidden agenda associated with this research. If respondents feel uncomfortable answering a question, they can let me know and we will simply move on to the next one or terminate the interview.

**E. Compensation:**

1. The respondents will not directly benefit from being interviewed. There will be no financial compensation or any gifts given to them. The respondents are likely to benefit indirectly, however, since I will share my aggregated research results with each of the five farmers in my study. As such, if a respondent really likes or, alternatively, dislikes a

particular aspect of the CSA that they belong to, there is a chance that this information may be passed along to the farmer. Upon hearing this information, the farmer may choose to change aspects of his/her CSA based upon this feedback.

2. Because there is no compensation given to the respondents in this study, there are no penalties for withdrawing from the interview. If a respondent chooses to terminate an interview, their wishes will be respected and the interview will end immediately.

3. There is no class credit to be given for this assignment.

**F. Collaborators:**

1. There will not be any additional researchers who will be associated with this project in a collaborative manner.

**G. Additional Information:**

1. See attached interview schedule.

2. See attached informed consent form.

### **Interview Schedule**

These are to be fairly structured interviews that ask a series of questions relating to how the respondent=s found out about CSA, what they really like and dislike about the CSA that they belong to and ways they think that their CSAs can be improved.

This general interview schedule will also be pre-tested on one person who is fairly familiar with CSA. Based upon the success of the pre-tested interview, resulting modifications may be made.

1. How did you first learn about CSA?
2. How long have you been a member of your current CSA?
3. What prompted you to join?
4. What are the benefits of being a CSA member? Why?
5. What would you like to see changed about your CSA? Why?
6. Do you think that people join your CSA to save money on organic produce or does it go beyond that?
7. Would you say that your CSA is bringing people together and building community? If so, why? If not, why not?
8. Do you feel like you are integrated into your farm community? If yes, why? If not, why not?
9. Is community building something that interests you? If yes, what are some of the ways that this could be expanded?
10. Some CSAs have working shares where people work off part of their fee in return for doing a couple of hours of work per month. Is this something that would interest you? Why/why not?
11. Have you ever been to your CSA farm? If yes, why? If not, why not?
12. Do you plan on resuming your membership for next year? If yes, why? If not, why not?

**Informed Consent Form**

**Title of Study:** An Investigation of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in the Mid-Atlantic United States

**Principal Investigator:** Kenneth B. Loughridge

**Faculty Sponsor:** Randall J. Thomson

You are invited to participate in a research study. The primary purpose of this study is to explore what benefits people derive from belonging to CSAs.

**Information:**

This study will be based on a series of approximately 24 interviews with members of 5 different mid-Atlantic CSAs. The interviews will last approximately one hour and CSA members will only be interviewed once each.

**Risks/Benefits:**

There are no risks involved with this research. The principal benefit of this research is that this information will be used to raise awareness concerning CSA.

**Confidentiality:**

The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made only available only to persons conducting the study unless you specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

**Contact:**

If you have any questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, K. Brandon Loughridge at NCSU Box 8107, Dept. of Sociology, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC 27695 or 919/858.9911. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Matthew Zingraff, Chair of the NCSU IRB for the Use of Human Subjects in Research Committee, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/515.7856) or Mr. Matthew Ronning, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Research Administration, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513.2148).

**Participation:**

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

**Consent:**

I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Subject=s signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator=s signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_