Local Food Actions and Motivations in the Highlands Neighborhood of Denver, CO

Samantha R. Lester

University of Denver

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LOCAL FOOD ACTIONS AND MOTIVATIONS IN THE HIGHLANDS NEIGHBORHOOD OF DENVER, CO

A Thesis

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Samantha R. Lester

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Advisor: E. Eric Boschmann
Abstract

This study evaluates the local food movement within the Highlands neighborhood of Denver, Colorado. There are several potential outlets for local food within the Highlands and it is a diverse demographic community, which creates an interesting and relevant research area. This study evaluates the reasons behind the local food movement through qualitative research of community members, local restaurant owners, community garden members and community organizers as well as through participant observation. The goal of this research is to narrate what one neighborhood within a progressive city is experiencing within the local food movement. The local food movement was found to be present through many outlets such as a farmer's market, locally committed restaurants, several community gardens, locally committed households, several local food stores, local food-oriented community groups and a general desire by the residents to participate in a community-based effort working towards sustainable food systems. The motivations behind participating in the local food movement were found to primarily be building and fostering community, an increasing population that has the means to support local food and finally, a network of people and organizations that reach farther than just one neighborhood. This study has the ability to supply urban planners, city officials and community organizers in many U.S. cities with information about land use, sustainable food systems, the role of community and the purpose and benefits of local food concept.
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Chapter One: Introduction

Over the evolution of time, people have become increasingly separated from the process of food production. For a long time in history humans were intimately connected to nature and the environment that surrounded them; however, in recent centuries the evolution of agriculture and the advancements in technology have allowed for us to separate ourselves from nature and see ourselves as an organism outside of the natural world instead of being intricately linked to it. These advancements, including the selection of grains, the domestication of animals, the mechanization of culture methods, and the recent hybrids and GMOs of the Green Revolution have all led to the ability to produce and store large amounts of food (Todd and Todd 1984). This can become problematic because without the respect and the understanding of natural ecosystem services that provide for many necessities of human life, a threat to the survival of biodiversity and even human life is very realistic. Today, many problems have arisen and will continue to arise from the current food production practices. Among these problems are obesity in some parts of the world, mal-nutrition in others, disease such as diabetes and heart disease, urban food deserts, contaminated food due to lack of regulation, and many others. Because of these problems, people have become much more concerned with where their food comes from and how it is produced. In areas of the world where it is economically feasible to purchase based upon knowledge of production practices, people have become much more supportive and interested in buying healthier food.
our modern society, it has become standard to be exposed only to food that has traveled several miles, is packaged up nicely and is anything but local or fresh. In a matter of about one and a half centuries modern, western society has completely isolated itself from the role of nature in food production. Living in an urban setting, which most of the world does, does not require a separation from food production.

This research is principally focused on the local food movement within the Highlands neighborhood of Denver, CO. The evaluation of the local food movement within Highlands and to what extent this neighborhood embraces the movement is the goal of this research. Denver is an interesting study site because of the diversity of the metro neighborhoods. Each neighborhood has its own personality and is uniquely characterized by the community members. Denver has a number of programs, organizations and initiatives being carried out to improve the ecological, agricultural and over all environmental quality of the city (Table 5). Denver is a city that continues to implement sustainable initiatives on many levels and this increasing interest and attention makes it a good site in which to conduct this research. The study here can be utilized to aid non-profit organizations, policy makers and urban planners in assessing the most efficient and beneficial practices to be implemented in the urban area of Denver. This research can benefit the academic community as well as the real world through aiding non-profit organizations who work toward food justice and food insecurity by promoting the local food movement and sustainable agricultural programs in an urban setting. Research such as this can also provide urban-based scholars and planners in the U.S. with useful information about how to implement an alternative development agenda, even though these movements are primarily a European trend (Mayer and Knox 2006).
The overall goal of this thesis research is to bring to light the many facets there are to the local food movement and to also highlight how one neighborhood in Denver is participating in this movement and therefore creating a healthier community and environment. The qualitative approach to this research seeks to dig deep into the community fabric and draw personal experiences and viewpoints from community members and organizers in order to gain a strong idea of how a collective group of people living in the same area support and participate in the local food movement.

The following sections will cover the many aspects of this research and the local food movement. Previous literature that illuminates the history of urban agriculture through the current rise of local food consciousness will be discussed. The research questions will be clearly outlined followed by a definition of the study area and the methodological details. Finally, the findings and discussion will conclude the research outlined here and will summarize the common themes as well as the possible directions for future research.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

The History of Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture in U.S. history.

In the U.S. urban agriculture has experienced a recent increase in interest and according to the United Nations, 25% of urban households are involved in gardening, landscaping and food gardens (Brown and Jameton 2000). Though most of this involvement refers to lawn care, there has been a recent increase in the number of people involved in urban agriculture of many kinds. There has also been an increase in demand for locally grown, organic products. People in the U.S. have been interested in urban agriculture for several past decades, due to various reasons.

One of the earliest advocates of the urban garden is perhaps, Ebenezer Howard. Howard, the author of Garden Cities of Tomorrow, was a visionary who held the idea of garden cities at the center of sustainability and human environment re-integration. Published over a century ago, his book focused on the idea that the marriage of town and country was the key factor in sustainability for urban areas (Howard, 1902). According to Howard, the alienation of humans from nature was a significant discrepancy in the way that modern culture had evolved. Howard's view of a systematically zoned and specifically planned garden city aligned itself with similar ideas of that of Karl Marx (Clark 2003). To Marx, capitalism is at the root of this barrier between humans and the earth, and consequently, the environment takes a beating through pollution.
A fellow intellectual of the time, William Morris (1999), was also of the belief that town and country should be married. Morris believed that the backyard should serve a purpose that benefits us in the household, no matter how difficult or impossible it seems; garden space was a necessity in his opinion (Morris 1999). Morris had a vision to renovate the grimy cities of the early twentieth century into a flourishing garden that would re-introduce humans to nature, therefore creating long-term sustainability. The influence of Morris' vision eventually led Howard to the formulation of his own idea of garden cities (Clark 2003).

Even though Howard's idea of a network of garden cities did not become the standard of building and urban planning throughout the country and the world as a whole, he did offer deep insight into the human-environment relationship. Howard (1902) describes this relationship in the following quote:

All that we are and all that we have comes from it. Our bodies are formed of it; to it they return. We are fed by it, clothed by it, and by it are we warmed and sheltered. On its bosom we rest. Its beauty is the inspiration of art, of music, of poetry. Its forces propel all the wheels of industry. It is the source of all health, all wealth, all knowledge (Howard 1902, 18).

Howard's early, yet visionary view of the human-environment alienation from one another is intriguingly unique for its time. To the twenty first century mind, Howard's idea of small, ecologically based communities seems a bit unrealistic and utopian to be implemented in a developed country such as the U.S. Howard's ambitious vision of a world of garden cities, however unrealistic and utopian it is, offers valuable advice for integrating humans and the environment.
The current increase of interest and involvement in urban agriculture throughout the U.S. can be called an echo of earlier trends (Brown and Jameton 2000). Families struggling with unemployment and food security during the Great Depression of the 1930s reacted by adopting household gardens in order to get by (Lawson 2005). In Lawson's book, City Bountiful: A Century of Community Gardening in America, she found that in 1931 the Godman Guild Community Garden in Columbus, Ohio cost $984 to maintain and produced an estimated $13,000 worth of produce (Lawson 2005). This impressive figure is an example of how beneficial these gardens can be to households of all incomes. During World War I and II, civilians who were left at home were encouraged to support the war effort by using Victory Gardens. These vegetable gardens that were grown at home in the backyard were a way to decrease household expenditure on food as well as a way to support the military by donating food to help feed soldiers. These gardens contributed a large portion of vegetables for those at home as well as a sense of community for civilians who were not overseas. Brown and Jameton's (2000) article, Public Health Implications of Urban Agriculture, found that in 1944 twenty million gardeners grew 40% of the nation's fresh vegetables (Brown and Jameton 2000). Compared to today, this figure is extremely impressive because most of the fresh produce people eat is not locally grown.

In the 1970s, another boost in urban agriculture occurred as part of the ecology movement. In 1973, an estimated eighty million Americans were gardening as a hobby (Lawson 2005). People experimented with living off the land and they began to feel a responsibility for protecting and preserving nature (Brown and Jameton 2000). The
inflation of food prices also gave people a reason to experiment with urban agriculture and cultivating their own food to try to combat high food prices. This era of support for urban agriculture led to the reformation of legislation in 1976-1977 when the House of Representatives voted to support six cities across the country with 1.5 million dollars for the Urban Gardening Program (Brown and Jameton 2000). In Lawson's book she states that in 1976, the federal government supported urban gardens through the USDA Cooperative Extension Urban Garden Program, providing gardening education and support in twenty-three major cities (Lawson 2005). The 1970s were full of political action and organization. A few examples of grassroots coalitions and organizations that sprouted up during this decade had names such as the Boston Urban Gardens (BUG), the Green Guerillas in New York, the Philadelphia Green, Milwaukee Shoots 'N Roots, and San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners (SLUG) (Lawson 2005). Finally, the American Community Gardening Association (ACGA) was formed in 1978 on a national level. In the 1990s, urban agriculture in the U.S. was not as prominent as in the 1970s and 1980s. Organizations continued to form, but it was a much quieter operation as a whole around the country. This leads to the current urban agricultural trends and funding options, which stem from government, business, and philanthropic sources (Brown and Jameton 2000). The urban agriculture movement is alive and well in the twenty first century and is focused on sustainability more than ever. There are several different methods of involvement and activism that work for the common goal of sustainable agricultural practices such as buying from natural food stores, using community gardens,
participating in advocacy organizations, farmers' markets, and research centers around the country (Hassanein 1999).

**LDCs.**

Much of the literature found on urban agriculture focuses on international examples and case studies of mostly developing and less developed countries (LDCs). Developed countries such as the U.S. can extract lessons from some of these LDCs by practicing organic and sustainable urban agriculture. Urban agriculture encompasses many different aspects of geography such as economic geography, urban ecology, urban planning and management and cultural and social geography. Each of these interdisciplinary subject fields is found at some point in the literature. There is a wide array of studies that have been carried out concerning the different topics in urban agriculture.

**Poverty alleviation.**

The majority of the literature found on urban agriculture was related to alleviating poverty and providing hunger relief for the underprivileged class within urban settings throughout the world. Many LDCs rely on the practice of urban gardening in backyards and community plots in order to provide enough food for the surrounding community. When industrialized farming was introduced to the world and the U.S. in particular, the market was flooded with cheap food. In LDCs, the small scale farmers were replaced with farmers who could produce on a larger scale and could produce specialized products to be exported instead of meeting the needs of the country itself (Drakakis-Smith 1997). The U.S. became one of the countries that exports flooded to and today, much of the food
consumed is transported from abroad. In the subject area of economic geography and how it relates to urban agriculture, several case studies of cities around the world were found. Much of the literature provides strategies for increasing the ability of the poor to take advantage of urban agriculture. Retention of peri-urban land for cultivation, development of new spaces within the city for urban agriculture and the reversal of agriculturalists relinquishing food crops for capital intensive cash cropping were found throughout the literature.

Buffalo City in Eastern Cape, South Africa is a prime example of how urban poor are attempting to help themselves and alleviate their own poverty by means of growing their own food. It was found in Buffalo City that both men and women participate in urban farming and that more space should be created for these gardening spaces in urban areas in order for these people to continue to help themselves (Phiri 2008). Cuba is an interesting example as well. In the last fifteen years, Cuba has become a prime example for successful urban gardening because of the collapse of the Soviet Union and consequently the collapse of agricultural infrastructure and trade benefits (Koont 2009). Perhaps cities in developed countries such as Denver can take some of the techniques that yield positive results from these LDCs and put them into practice.

**Food security.**

Food security is a growing concern all over the world. As Smith (1998) states in his article *Urban Food Systems and the Poor in Developing Countries*, "In many cities in developing countries, hunger, and malnutrition are common amongst the poor, even when food is relatively abundant" (Smith 1998, 207). People are affected by hunger, even in
Denver. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farming is a recurring topic throughout the literature that can aid in alleviating hunger. Food from CSA farms comes from peri-urban farms and provides fresh vegetables and fruit, and sometimes meat and dairy products, as a form of subscription farming, allowing a household to pay a certain amount per month for a share of whatever is in season. CSA farms are one form of urban agriculture and are another form of alleviating food security issues in urban areas (Andreatta, Rhyne, and Dery 2008).

**Transportation.**

Factors such as transportation costs continue to affect the ability of households to afford food, causing growing concern in countries in Western Europe and the U.S. The issues of transportation, fossil fuel use and the effect of climate change on the current agricultural system appear in much of the literature. Transitory threats for food security are emerging around the globe in the form of supply problems, increasing global demand and geopolitical tensions (Polack, Wood, and Bradley 2008). The term 'food miles' is of growing popularity. Food travels an average of between 2,500 and 4,000 km from farm to plate, which is a 25% increase since 1980 (Halweil 2002). A statistic such as this emphasizes the fact that as the supply of fossil fuels diminishes, the ability to transport goods long distances does as well. Every day in cities throughout the U.S. an army of trucks, planes, trains and ships haul in tons and tons of food, which is environmentally and economically inefficient (Nelson 1996). Not only is the cost of transportation threatening the economic viability of the agricultural system, but the effect of climate change will also have an effect as well and unfortunately, the poor will be the first to
suffer (Gregory, Ingram, and Brklacich 2005). A study of the potential ‘foodsheds’ in New York State found that the state could only provide itself with 34% of its own food needs (Peters, Bills, Lembo, Wilkins, and Fick 2008). Although studies like this provide some hope for a measurable way to predict the agricultural capability of regions in countries like the U.S., it exposes the issue of population related to food security.

**Biodiversity.**

A portion of the literature found focused on the issue of biodiversity within urban areas. Biodiversity is significant to sustainability and environmental health. Denver is a metro area and therefore poses threats to the biodiversity that is found within the city boundaries. The trend of large-scale urbanization and urban sprawl has caused a great loss of biodiversity. Urbanization and agriculture are two of the main threats to biodiversity around the world (Ricketts and Imhoff 2003). Many of the areas in which cities are expanding and becoming denser overlap with areas where different species of animals, birds, insects, reptiles and other organisms maintain their habitat. Cities can be considered the most profoundly altered ecosystems on the planet because within their boundaries are some of the most diverse ecological conditions (Collins et al. 2000). Urban agriculture, if carried out sustainably, can preserve the ecosystems that are in danger of losing a place in cities and urban areas. Private gardens within cities are considered a place of great significance for wildlife (Thompson, Austin, Smith, Warren, Angold, and Gaston 2003). Even the smallest organism can play a part in the larger ecosystem which provides several services for humans. Creating space for urban gardens
can provide space for these organisms to have a habitat and therefore, benefit humans (Newman and Jennings 2008).

**Planning and land use.**

Planning and land use are two of the most significant obstacles in urban agriculture in the U.S. The placement of urban agricultural areas is a strategic task because many factors must be taken into consideration, such as zoning policies, land composition and available resources. The concept of community and regional food planning is relatively new and there are not many sponsored plans that deal exclusively with food systems within communities (Raja, Born, and Kozlowski Russel 2008). With the support of planning authorities, many benefits could be recognized. Benefits include converting urban wastes into resources, putting vacant and under-utilized areas into productive use, conserving natural resources outside of the cities while improving the environment for urban living as well as using urban wastewater and solid waste to be used as inputs that close ecological loops when processed on idle land and water bodies (Smit and Nasr 1992). Ebenezer Howard is arguably one of the earliest planners that combined a sophisticated sense of design with social concern (Miller 2002). Howard brought about the concepts of the neighborhood unit, traffic-free housing areas, design of housing groupings and townscape, which evolved to form a language of community planning and can be seen today in New Urbanist communities (Miller 2002). Many new and green development practices are becoming ever-more present in urban areas throughout the country, but planning must incorporate the integration of human and nature into more decisions in order for the environment to be positively affected through
preservation and restoration. Resolving the human vs. nature duality may be achievable within certain sustainability techniques implemented and carried out through planning initiatives (Talen and Brody 2005).

Most urban and community gardens are implemented on a strictly temporary basis. This can become devastating to the community who come to rely on the food produced, as seen in a study of the South Central Farm in Los Angeles, California (Lawson 2007). This garden was formed out of civic concern for the health and well-being of the community after the Rodney King beatings and other civic disturbances (Lawson 2007). The Los Angeles Regional Food Bank was able to meet its nutritional needs by providing for 350 primarily Latino households, while at the same time improving the community spirits (Lawson 2007). After the land was sold back to the original owner, the gardeners were evicted and food security was once again an issue (Lawson 2007). This study highlights the need for planning and land management officials to be informed as to how integral the use of public space for urban agriculture is. It also brings up the need for educating community members on the stipulations of garden implementation. Understanding how local food practices and expectations can affect a community on an economic, planning, social and cultural level could potentially aid in preventing these kinds of situations in an urban area like Denver.

**Community and wellness.**

Much of the literature on urban agriculture discusses the contribution to the sense of community wellness in urban areas. The physical contact with the earth and the organization and leadership that is required to make urban agriculture function is a way to
connect the community to each other and to the surrounding environment in a positive manner. The social and psychological benefits of urban agriculture are exemplified in Hynes’ (1996) book as she discusses an urban garden in San Francisco. Students visiting the farm were asked to shed light on how the garden affects them. Students responded as learning qualities such as responsibility and unity, respect for life and self-control (Hynes 1996). Utilizing urban gardens as a tool for educating youth in urban areas has great potential. Activities that are physically challenging and stimulating for youth would undoubtedly contribute to issues of crime and apathy that are experienced in several urban cities in the U.S. Another example is found in the Waldhorf School’s agenda; to teach children using techniques that develop the head, heart and hands is an opinion of how growing food and an experience with nature can affect a child on several different levels (Ableman 1998).

Health discrepancies between class and race in a developed nation like the U.S. can be seen through accessibility to affordable and nutritious food. According to a previous study, it is typical to find more supermarkets and natural food stores in predominantly white neighborhoods and typical to find small, local grocery stores and meat and fish markets in racially mixed neighborhoods (Moore and Diez Roux 2006). These ethnic and racially mixed neighborhoods tend to have lower incomes, making it harder to purchase the more expensive, fresh, nutritious food. An example of this can be found throughout Denver in many of the smaller, organic and local grocery stores, which are typically not affordable to the lower-middle and lower classes. Many immigrant and ethnically rich neighborhoods have several small, locally owned grocery stores, which do
not always provide nutritious food at an affordable cost (Moore and Diez Roux 2006). In
relation to health discrepancies, urban agriculture can provide healthier food and a means
of closing the gap between the different socio-economic classes. Growing your own
food, no matter your race or income, is cheaper than buying food such as produce and
other fresh items from a grocery store.

There are several social and economic benefits found within the realm of urban
agriculture. The sense of community, public health, psychological therapy, youth
involvement in the community, strong leadership, organization and activism are all
potential benefits. Community gardens in metro areas all over the U.S. and in Denver
can potentially recognize these benefits. By evaluating what one neighborhood in
Denver is doing in relation to local food, policy makers, planning officials and educators
can gain an idea of the community they are working for.

The Rise of Local Food Consciousness

Defining 'local'.

Geographically, the term 'local' is a complex, yet very important concept.
Throughout the literature on the local food movement and research on sustainable food
systems, the term has proved to contain different definitions. The most prevalent
definitions throughout the literature as well as the qualitative research were found in
mileage boundaries. All of the restaurants and households interviewed considered within
state, and approximately 250 miles to be local. The In-Season Local Market found within
the Highland neighborhood boasts an inventory comprised of products strictly 250 miles
or closer. Much of the qualitative research found that local is a very subjective and
malleable notion; local can literally indicate food grown within the neighborhood, but can
also reach up to 250 miles from home, or even be within the U.S. The guiding paper for
this research designated a 30 mile boundary as the definition of local in regards to
produce for the study site. The study site, being rural and well-served by several
specialty and green grocers, butchers, bakeries, fishmongers, sweet shops and delis as
well as larger food stores are all located within the small rural town center (Blake, Mellor
and Crane 2010). Several farmer's markets served by farms approximately 15 miles
away, along with major national supermarket chains constitute what is considered local
for this town. This is an interesting concept, as a farm is considered local as well as a
supermarket chain because they are within a 30 mile boundary of the same town. To
some, local can imply that the produce/food is available for purchase within a boundary,
while to others local implies the production of food within a boundary. The qualitative
information gained from the research completed in the Highlands neighborhood
considered local to mean that the food is actually produced within a certain boundary,
versus bought within a certain boundary; those boundaries changing depending on the
subject. As stated above, it can be seen how easily the term local becomes extremely
subjective and complex. A common theme found from the research was that many
people do prefer to assign some kind of mileage boundary to the term. For the purpose of
this research, no specific boundary is given in order to be designated local because the
purpose of the research is to simply explore a community and its individuals' perceptions
of the local food movement and why it is important. The research here cannot claim a
certain definition for what local means because the different interviewees, individuals and community members encountered during research all brought their own concept of local to the table. This research is concerned with examining how the community of the Highlands perceives, supports and expresses local in five different categories. If a definition of local were to be assigned to the research here, it would make sense to designate a 250 mile boundary, or within the state of Colorado boundary for the production of food due to the qualitative information gained from the community. In summary, this term contains many layers of a concept that deals with specific boundaries in some cases and in others, a conceptual and more fluid idea of where food is grown in relation to a community.

Perhaps the most agreed upon conclusion of local is that it is a complex concept. No matter the interpretation, it is absolutely an intricate concept that can be useful for evaluating food systems. The model paper used for this research defines local as a “complex intersection of provisioning decisions and practices that household food buyers undertake in the context of food availability…” (Blake, Mellor, and Crane 2010, 409). In this context, local is related to the skill of shopping and decision making on the part of the consumer. This is a useful perspective of the term local because it brings forth the role of the consumer in the local food movement. Local food is intimately tied to both the producer and the consumer. One cannot exist without the other; therefore, defining the term local in regards to both of these participants is important. The term local is associated with the idea of place as well. For the purpose of this research, local does not take on a specific distance or mileage characteristic that designates food as local or not;
however, much of the research within the neighborhood found that food produced within a 250 mile boundary, or within the state of Colorado was the most agreed upon definition.

Perhaps a more explanatory view of local is presented in the idea that “…we are reflexively and dialectically tied to many and diverse locals around the world” (Feagan 2007, 23). This concept supports the fact that local can mean different things to different people. The term local can mean something completely different between someone living in the slums of India and someone living in a redeveloping urban neighborhood of Denver, CO. Local can also mean different things to the same person. Feagan (2007) discusses the ‘sense of place’ that is associated with the local as well. He states that because of the confused and overwhelmed sense of identity that is brought on by globalization, people desire a comfortable and familiar sense of place that embodies the values, the food and the traditions they can most closely identify with (Feagan 2007). This attachment to territory and to place continues to have importance even within the rapidly modernizing and standardizing landscape and society (Feagan 2007). Local can, therefore, represent these values and identities that people feel in danger of losing in the currently homogenizing world.

The qualitative research here explores the different interpretations of the concept of local. This research rests upon the definition of local as an overall attitude and a concept in which people strive to produce and consume within the boundaries they have negotiated within their own personal dimension. Defining local in specific terms can have certain consequences and can leave out certain viewpoints (Blake, Mellor, and
Crane 2010). Making local food a social fact can truly bring out the inequalities within society because what is local and attainable to one portion of the urban population may be the complete opposite of another. For the purpose of this research, the term local is considered to be a concept or an attitude that is characterized by the consumer and is malleable in regards to who is interpreting. There can be a specific mileage or measureable distance that constitutes what is local or not, but for the purpose of this research which is evaluating the local food outlets within a neighborhood of Denver, local food and its interpretation is a subjective concept that evolves organically depending on the context.

**A national look at local food.**

Denver is not alone in its local food initiatives; many cities have become concerned with the concept of local food. In fact, all around the nation and even internationally this trend and overall concern for food produced sustainably and locally is gaining momentum. There are several national publications that prove the local food movement has taken off. For example, the *New York Times* houses an immense library of recently published local food related stories from their own archives along with other sources from the web. Some of the titles and resources are “If It’s Fresh and Local, Is It Always Greener?”, local harvest guides, a Slow Food U.S.A. link, local food directories, an Eat Well Guide, a Seasonal Ingredient Map, a Regional Farm and Food Project link, local food blogs, links to farmer’s markets, links to several resources that concern Michael Pollan, environmental commons resources, buying local guides, eating local challenges, council on the environment of New York City, videos and much more.
Simply from one online news source, an overwhelming amount of information was readily available in several different forms and in several different subtopics of local food. Michael Pollan is perhaps one of the best examples of the local food movement through the media and through popular literature. Pollan has published several books strictly focused on local food production and consumption and the issues with the current system: Food Rules, In Defense of Food, The Omnivore’s Dilemma (& Young Readers Edition), The Botany of Desire, and Second Nature. He has also published numerous articles since 1988 through present day that all fiercely discuss and criticize the current food production system in the U.S. and around the world. These can be found in sources such as New York Times Magazine, The New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, Travel and Leisure and many more. Another outlet for local food on a national level was revealed in a search of a popular online book retailer. Several books on local food were found, including titles such as “Eat Where You Live”, “Local Food”, “The Town That Food Saved”, “Eating Local: The Cookbook”, “Edible: A Celebration of Local Foods”, “Bringing the Food Economy Home”, “Coming Home to Eat: The Pleasures and Politics of Local Food” and “The Locavore’s Handbook”. These titles were the most popular for online searching and give good insight into what the public is reading and buying in regards to local food on a national level. Another good example of local food becoming a growing movement on the national level is the Huffington Post. This online news source has an entire section dedicated solely to local food, supporting farmers, food policy, food guides and everything related to local food.
Throughout the literature such as national publications, newspapers, magazines, books and scholarly work, there is evidence that some cities are active within the local food movement, for a variety of motivating factors and with many different models. As stated above, there is much attention being paid to local food, sustainable agriculture, urban farming, etc. on a national level through the media. From trends seen in the literature and in the media, it can be stated that certain cities are more active than others within the realm of local food. Post-industrial cities such as Detroit, Chicago and St. Louis along with cities in the west and northwest region such as Vancouver, Portland, Seattle, and also cities in the northeast region such as New York City, Boston and Washington D.C. have all proven to be prominent fixtures within the local food aspect of sustainable food systems. For example, at the 2011 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers there was much new research that dealt with food systems and sustainable issues related to agriculture. Some of these titles include "Reimagining Detroit: The Politics of Abandoned Land", "Discourse and Practice: A Political Ecology of Urban Agriculture in Chicago", "The Organization of Community Garden Spaces in Toronto, Ontario", "Sustainable Urban Gardening: Findlay Market, Cincinnati, Ohio" and "Cultivating Agrarian Urbanism: Immigrant Communities and Agricultural Knowledge in U.S. Cities". This research spans many sub-fields of food systems: food justice, land use and politics, policy, immigrant populations and community building. There are hot beds of interest in local food and the cities mentioned above are a part of areas that are becoming increasingly active within the umbrella topic of sustainable food systems. These cities are all very different and therefore, from the literature examined in this
research and from online knowledge gained from sustainable food jobs websites, national newspapers and magazines and also through popular media, these cities all have different motives and ambitions for becoming active in this movement.

For example, the post-industrial cities such as Detroit, Chicago, Cincinnati and St. Louis are all cities that suffer from recent increases in unemployment; therefore leaving a population affected by poverty and in some cases, with a lot of abandoned and vacant land within the city. These cities are interested in land-use practices for growing food and also in food justice issues. A specific example can be found in Chicago through Growing Power, an urban farm and 'living museum' started by Will Allen. His efforts can be seen in both Chicago and Milwaukee. Will was a farmer with land to spare and in 1993 he began his initiative with a core group of teens who needed a place to work.

Cities found in the west and northwest are not only areas that are conducive to growing food due to excess rain and/or sunshine, but are also areas not affected as severely by the recent economic recession and therefore, the people there are able to participate in the kind of urban gardening, farmer's market and selective, local shopping practices that sometimes can require a higher income. Basically, these cities are involved with the local food movement based on the motivation of urban farming as a hobby, gardening as a leisure activity and community builder and also because less unemployment and higher incomes allow for the shopping practices that support local food at high-end, locally-supplied markets, such as Whole Foods and Trader Joe's. A concrete example of how the local food movement is alive and well within this region comes from Portland, Oregon in the form of Ecostrust; an organization that helps develop
ideas and put them into action along with providing funding for public, private, for-profit and nonprofit organizations that are committed to the overall goals of economic opportunity, social equity and environmental well-being. Ecotrust aligns itself with term ‘reliable prosperity’, which was borrowed from prior board member, Jane Jacobs.

Specific examples of how Ecotrust promotes and supports the local food movement in Portland, the northwest and even further are through their Farm to School program which strives to improve school lunches and increase food literacy, through Edible Portland, a quarterly magazine highlighting the seasonal fare in their region and through FooHub which is an online directory and marketplace that helps regional food buyers and sellers to connect and do business. There are several organizations and initiatives in this region similar this as well as ones that are much smaller and more grass-roots oriented. Overall, this part of the country is heavily concerned with sustainable food systems and is a major influence on the local food movement throughout the country.

The cities found in the northeast and mid-Atlantic regions of the country are active within the local food movement for a couple of reasons. Washington D.C. for example, is a hot bed for policy and law-making in regards to sustainable agriculture. Several of the sustainable food jobs listed online are positioned within the nation's capitol and pertain to promoting policies that support small farms, healthy food and more often than not, food justice issues. New York City is extremely active within local food through an enormous amount of small, grass-roots local food organizations and even through large non-profit organizations striving to end hunger (i.e. Food Bank for NYC), promote healthier food and also to be more self-sustaining in such a heavily populated
area. In New York City, a good example of the effort to promote sustainable food systems is found in the Greenmarket Farmers Markets; it was founded in 1976 with the mission of providing an avenue for small, regional family farms a place to sell their produce as well as an avenue for all New Yorkers to access fresh, nutritious and locally grown food. The climate and landscape of New York is very conducive to growing food, but flaws and gaps in distribution in the U.S. mean that the food grown only miles from the city is likely not to be consumed there. Also, New York City has an immense and dense population, therefore utilizing all of the possible food resources, such as these smaller family farms is important in providing not only enough food, but healthy food for the residents found here. Today, Greenmarket Farmers Market has become the largest and most diverse outdoor urban farmers market network in the country and hosts 53 markets from 230 family farms and fishermen who cultivate over 30,000 acres of farmland protected from development. This relationship between the city residents and the surrounding farmers has helped to stimulate a rejuvenated interest and concern for healthy, sustainable and locally grown food in a large city.

Different regions of the country that are active within the local food movement have different 'flavors' or motives behind what drives interest and support, but what has been found in this research is the common thread of community as well as health concerns. There are many layers to what constitutes the local food movement, or sustainable food systems within the U.S. and all of these layers play a part in how the local food movement is carried out in different cities.
It is no secret that local food is currently a hot topic around the country and Denver is among the cities that are active within the movement. As can be seen in Table 5, there are several locally committed organizations that are purely dedicated to promoting, funding and advocating for local food right here in Denver. From the research conducted here, it seems that Denver is active within the local food movement because there is a market for it and because the climate (especially the abundant sunshine) is conducive to growing food. In the current state of the economy, Denver has a relatively low unemployment rate, meaning that comparatively, people are able to allocate more of their income to higher quality and consequently more expensive food. One of the most obvious and popular outlets for local food in Denver can be seen in the tremendous amount of locally committed restaurants. It can be observed quickly when in town or even through conducting an online search that there is an enormous amount of restaurants that pride themselves on providing locally grown products and entire meals that have not traveled over 250 miles. This is perhaps the most visible outlet of local food within Denver. Another visible source of local food within Denver is the large amount of green space, community gardens and urban farms. There are several organizations that work towards keeping these spaces natural and green as well as viable for producing food. There are other indicators of local food within the city as well. *The Denver Post*, for example, is host to articles describing the food ‘renaissance’ within the city that supports community gatherings, seasonal eating and local ingredients. *The Denver Post* also provides a cheat sheet for Colorado’s signature locally grown products that can be picked up at the farmer’s markets. Another important news source in Denver
is the *North Denver Tribune*, which caters to the demographic of Northwest Denver and the study site in this research. This newspaper covered the Food Producing Animals Ordinance extensively, which passed and now allows residents to own and house six to eight chickens and ducks as well as two dwarf goats to provide a household with eggs and milk. This process was very controversial and lengthy, but now without much hassle and for relatively cheap, people can be host to these food producing animals as they could to any other house pet. As can be seen, there are many outlets for local food both nationally and locally within Denver. Newspapers, online sources, popular literature, entertainment such as documentaries, festivals and restaurants, green spaces, urban farms and gardens and the many organizations conducting it all are part of this local food movement. Denver can be considered a leader in the local food movement just as Portland, Chicago and New York City are, due to the outlets found here and the many organizations solely dedicated to the ideals of local food.

**Research on Local Food**

**The slow food and slow city movements.**

The Slow Food Movement was founded by Carlo Petrini in 1989 and inspired the beginning of examining the value of food, where it comes from and the sense of community that can be gained in working together to produce high quality food products. Plans to open a McDonalds in the Piazza de Spagna in central Rome horrified Petrini, and thus, the Slow Food Movement was born (Mayer and Knox 2009). The manifesto of the Slow Food Movement claims its purpose as "rediscovering the flavors and savors of
regional cooking and banishing the degrading effects of fast food” (Mayer and Knox 2009, 24). The Slow City Movement, or Città Slow, followed in 1999 founded by Paolo Saturnini. Four Italian towns began to apply Slow Food practices and ideas to urban planning, creating the Slow City Movement (Mayer and Knox 2009). As of 2006, over 77 cities had joined the movement and become committed to providing healthy, natural food as well as a healthy and unique sense of community and over 300 cities had inquired about joining the movement (Mayer and Knox 2009). There are six key areas that are evaluated: environment, infrastructure, urban quality, local products, hospitality and education (Mayer and Knox 2009). The Slow City Charter is meant to be used as something of a blueprint for future urban development.

Literature found concerning slow food heavily emphasizes the concept of quality of life and the slowing down of society in general. Globalization and the spread of capitalism are critiqued as the reason for restless landscapes and the loss of distinctiveness in cities all over the world (Knox 2005). For the past twenty or thirty years, the world has experienced change on a level never seen before, which has resulted in a 'fast world' that cannot sustain a sense of place or an individuality typically seen between different cities and cultures (Knox 2005). This homogenizing of cultures and economies throughout the globe has watered down cultures that were typically vibrant and completely unique. The idea of a sense of place or a sense of cultural identity is a recurring theme found in the Slow City and Slow Food Movement literature. As Mayer and Knox (2009) state, the Slow City Movement is truly a "reflection of how much places matter to people" (Mayer and Knox 2009, 22).
The idea of a 'slow world' and a 'fast world' is outlined in the literature. The slow world is considered the impoverished places and regions, which accounts for about 85% of the world's population, while the fast world is the remaining portion that acts as direct producers and consumers who are active in telecommunication, materialistic consumption, news and entertainment (Mayer and Knox 2009). In short, "Authenticity is slow; standardization is fast. Individuality is slow; franchises are fast. Silence is slow; noise is fast. Trees are slow; concrete is fast. Cycle paths are slow; parking lots are fast" (Mayer and Knox 2009, 25).

An interesting idea found in the literature claims that as global habits spread and the global culture begins to evolve into a more uniform identity, local values and characteristics become exceedingly more valued. It seems as though as local and national authorities are deprived of their abilities to regulate and tailor their individual, cultures and societies more and more support for regionalism arises (Knox 2005). As this trend extends, people start to feel the need and desire for familiarity and unique identity linked to the place where they live or are from. Place is defined by Knox as the center of meaning and the context of peoples' actions (Knox 2005). A connection between the material world and themselves is what essentially defines what place is for most people (Knox 2005). The literature found on the Cittaslow Movement is best described as having the goal of creating a sense of place, unique identity and individuality through a set of criteria and values that can be measured in various ways.
Local consumption networks.

This thesis uses Blake, Mellor and Crane (2010) as a guide for carrying out qualitative research in local food motivations and actions. Their study seeks to identify how retailers aim to sell local food, how consumers understand the concept of local and how consumers go about processing the differences between these two. Overall, the study aims to examine the debates over the term local regarding food by studying how local is understood through consumer-retailer relations. The study is carried out through a series of interviews with producers as well as consumers in the small town of West Yorkshire, United Kingdom. In total, eleven household individuals were interviewed from seven different households. The authors aimed to interview individuals from households representing different life stages such as couples with and without children, older couples with children that have moved out, retired couples, etc. All of the research was carried out throughout the autumn of 2004 to the spring of 2008. Along with interviews, online information as well as participatory observation and interviews of retailers within the town was carried out. Three different outlets for the retail landscape in this area were examined: Tesco (nationally dominant grocery industry), Booths (regional chain focused on shifting to quality) and Cascade Fruits (fruit and vegetable delivery that is convenient and local and committed to the local community and economy of the town). A thirty mile radius was designated as being considered officially local for produce for West Yorkshire. The authors of this study interviewed the same participants twice and sometimes three different times. The observation and interviews resulted in a descriptive analysis of how these household members go about making decisions to buy
food and what the important factors that influence these decisions are. The perception of what the term local means is discussed as a complex network of "provisioning decisions and practices" that these household members grapple with in relation to food availability and marketing strategies (Blake, Mellor, and Crane 2010, 409). The thesis research outlined here aligns with the model study in how it similarly aims to understand how the concept of local food is carried out in a neighborhood of Denver as well as how people interpret that meaning and what drives people to participate in the local food movement. The study proposes that constructing a formal definition for local food is not only difficult, but also exclusionary (Blake, Mellor, and Crane 2010). There are consequences to defining what local food is in a concrete manner. The concept of local food runs the risk of becoming exclusionary by favoring those with wealth and privilege along with further marginalizing minorities or lower-income populations; it becomes an issue of whether or not people live in the regions or have the available education that lends toward access to local food options (Blake, Mellor, and Crane 2010). The similarities in research methods, study area and results support this study as an example for the research discussed here. There is a very conceptual element to the research, making this paper an exceptional guide to follow. The ideological analysis used in the paper will help to strengthen the analysis of this study.

Limitations of this model study are the bias found in the group of interviewees. The authors state this limitation and explain that the small town of West Yorkshire is a mix of relatively affluent and middle-class, white, older consumers. This demographic definitely comes with its own personal perspective and therefore, bias. West Yorkshire
was chosen for this model study because of the fact that it is somewhat self-contained and offers a large variety of retail options. This demographic was also chosen to conduct research on buying and processing the concept of local food because with such economic and overall social stability, these middle class people have the flexibility to cook with raw ingredients, have the necessary shopping skills and concerns that lend toward local food interest (Blake, Mellor, and Crane 2010). This demographic is described as not worried about having enough to eat; therefore, they can make decisions of one kind of food over another. The use of an economically stable, or even privileged, group of people is argued to offer more information about the shopping practices and the decision negotiations of consumers, than those who are less well-off (Blake, Mellor, and Crane 2010).

The thesis research here also has its limitations and because of the qualitative nature of the research a bias and particular perspective are sure to surface. It is impossible to acquire an interview or any small-scale qualitative research that does not take on the viewpoint of the person being consulted. Each person interprets the world in their own unique manner, different from everyone else, but this experience can lead to very powerful and personal findings that reveal important information to the researcher. This thesis research has its own bias that is evident through the interview responses, but in a larger context, these interviews help to add several different perspectives on how local food is conceptually interpreted in the Highlands. These interviews, the participatory observation and the literature examined all add to the narrative of the local food movement in the Highlands.
Common Themes in Literature Review

In summary, there are many main threads of research on local and urban agriculture. The key points to be taken from this literature that are relevant to this study are discussed below. The idea that humans have become increasingly isolated from the process of food production is an important part of this story. Humans have sterilized and separated the process of producing food from everyday life. Since the majority of humans now live in urban areas, much of this food production process has been further removed from the sight of people, creating a rift between the natural environment and people. Food in general is one of the most important parts of sustaining human life; therefore, understanding the natural processes and interactions that take place in producing and consuming food is an important part of our society. From the literature, it can be seen that food production does not have to only take place in large sweeping fields set outside of the city. Bringing food back into the neighborhood on a small-scale that incorporates the surrounding community can do a substantial amount of good for people as well as the environment. Ecological benefits are numerous when factors such as transportation, harmful chemicals, economic stress and all of the related topics mentioned above are eliminated from the food production process.

The western, more developed world can learn a great deal from the international studies that have taken place on food production. Countries such as the U.S. can gain a lot of knowledge about best practices and could potentially be able to fine tune many of these methods thanks the infrastructure and the financial resources available here that are
not available in LDCs. Overall, the literature examined above provides several over-
arching ideas that can contribute to understanding and improving the local food
movement and how we as a society view the role of food in our lives.
Chapter Three: Research Questions

In this research, I seek to answer the following questions:

1. How is the local food movement expressed within the Highlands neighborhood of Denver, CO?
2. What evidence of the local food movement is seen in the Highlands and in what forms?
3. What is the motivation for those involved in the local food movement?
4. What are the overall trends existing within the realm of local food in the Highlands?

To answer these questions, interviews, observation, participatory observation and literature review of several publications, journals, both on national and local levels are used to evaluate five primary categories within Highlands:

- Community gardens
- Farm-to-table restaurants
- Food retailers
- Community groups, organizations & members
- Households

These categories were evaluated using varying qualitative methods and were chosen due to the presence and the variation of possible subjects and evaluation prospects for each.

This study aims to address the subject of how local food is experienced on a neighborhood scale, in a city that is active in local food initiatives. This research also addresses the motivations and reasons for why people are interested and concerned with local food. The different forms of evidence for local food are evaluated within the
neighborhood and the overall trends are examined in hopes to gain a better perspective on why the local food movement is present in this area and how it relates to the rest of Denver and the country as whole.

The Highlands neighborhood is one small part of the Denver metro area and cannot be generalized to describe the entire city; however, this neighborhood can be considered a local food hot bed within Denver due to the amount of community participation, awareness, support and overall evidence found here. Nationally, the Highlands is found to be participating in the local food movement through many of the avenues and actions written and reported about. Such outlets as community gardens, farmer's markets and locally-committed restaurants are trends found throughout the U.S. in regards to the local food movement. Internationally, the Highlands is a neighborhood that has a very different take on local food than other parts of the world. The definition of local is a tricky one and has different conceptual meanings throughout the world. Local food is expressed in varying ways from country to country and culture to culture. For example, in parts of the less-developed world, local food can be experienced through sustaining a rural family on a half acre, or through a backyard or balcony garden in a large, heavily-populated city. In parts of Europe, local food can take on the image of preserving tradition, culture and place through using only local products, shopping within one's own town or village and through striving to maintain a sense of uniqueness in a quickly globalizing world. In the Highlands, there can be seen bits and pieces of these examples, but on an international scale, the Highlands participates in the local food movement through unique ways that are specific to the demographic and socioeconomic
make-up of that particular neighborhood, in that particular city and country. Throughout
the globe, in cities and all the way down to neighborhoods, there can be seen common
trends and practices within local food, but as it was stated previously, local is a very
subjective concept and therefore is expressed in many different forms and outlets
throughout the world. The Highlands neighborhood proved to be a prime study site for
several reasons. It was previously known that this neighborhood is particularly
concerned with sustainable food systems and supportive of the local food movement.
Because of this, the Highlands was considered to be a good neighborhood to study due to
the fact that there would indeed be actions, and overall activity within the local food
movement. This participation was followed up with the question of why the community
is active within this movement. The Highlands provided a substantial amount of research
subjects, interviewees and opportunities for participatory observation. This
neighborhood is worth studying because it can provide a snapshot of how the local food
movement looks in a U.S. city, on a neighborhood scale. This is not to say that this study
can describe how the local food movement looks in every neighborhood of every city, but
it can give some common trends and themes of what is going on in local food around the
country.

This study aims to contribute knowledge for urban planners and officials in the
way of providing examples and information of community food systems on a small,
neighborhood scale. This kind of study can contribute information about U.S. cities,
which was found to be somewhat lacking within the literature. Places that are less
developed as well as European cities and neighborhoods are much more prevalent in the
research. This scale of study within the U.S. can contribute information tailored to the culture, which can potentially aid those interested in bettering our food system through communities around the nation using a small-scale example.
Chapter Four: Study Area

The study area of the Highlands is an interesting area and one that can be difficult to characterize due to the socioeconomic diversity. The boundary of the Highlands is negotiable, based on who you ask. For the purposes of this study and to eliminate potential confusion, the boundary delineated by the community group, the Highlands Mommies, is used because it includes a large portion of the area most conceptually consider the Highlands and also includes major roads as boundary lines, making it easier to visualize. The specific boundaries are from I-25 on the east, 50th Ave on the north, Harlan St. on the west and Speer Blvd. on the south. This boundary includes the four neighborhoods of Highland, West Highland, Berkeley and Sunnyside. The Denver neighborhood map can be seen in the appendices. Together, these neighborhoods are referred to as the Highlands. Although there is a geographical boundary stated here, it must be explained that conceptually, the boundary of the Highlands is subject to change according to who is being consulted. The Highlands truly seems to be more of an attitude rather than a geographical or even political boundary. The Highlands Mommies have put a geographical boundary on the neighborhood; however, this does not mean that someone in another area or simply from a different demographic would agree. The terminology also varies slightly based on who is speaking, but for the purposes of this study, the term the Highlands will be used in reference to the above mentioned boundaries. This term is
the plural form and therefore is the most logical, being that all four of these neighborhoods are being evaluated as one entity within the study.

The Highlands includes remnants of the once very high population of Italian, Irish and German immigrants. Today, many of the community members are second or third generations of these immigrants as well as the Hispanic population and a new and growing Asian population, namely Vietnamese. The neighborhood was founded in 1858 and despite the recent redevelopment some of the older historic buildings have been spared and are what makes this neighborhood unique. The redevelopment connected the Highlands to downtown with the Millennium Bridge and the Highland bridge. This accessibility has created more of a market for new and modern housing within the Highlands while still maintaining much of its historical and cultural feel. The Highlands is home to several different forms of urban lifestyles. Within the neighborhood, many new restaurants and boutique-like shops have emerged, creating a cozy environment of local businesses that are unique to the area. There are several shops, organizations, restaurants and community groups within the area that are committed to local food and all that it stands for.

This neighborhood was chosen as a study site for several reasons. Around Denver, the Highlands is known to be a thriving and growing community. The redevelopment, which began in the 1990s, sparked a large interest in this area as a place for new business, the renovation of old residences and a prime location for new, modern development. It is just west of downtown and accessible from the highway, which is very close to the area and acts as the eastern boundary. The Highlands is the home to 11
community gardens sponsored by DUG as well as a farmer’s market, several farm to 
table restaurants, many food retail options and several community organizations 
dedicated to local food. There are also other community organizations that help to foster 
the sense of community such as Highland United Neighbors Inc. and the Highlands 
Mommies, to name a couple. This neighborhood was chosen as a research study area 
because of the commotion surrounding local food and its strong presence within the 
community. Choosing this neighborhood guaranteed a source that has a wealth of 
information pertaining to the current trends of local food at a neighborhood level and 
guaranteed that there would be plenty to study within the local food movement. This 
neighborhood and the trends found here cannot be generalized to the rest of Denver or the 
nation as a whole, but does offer insight into how the local food movement is carried out 
in one neighborhood that shares some characteristics of other neighborhoods around the 
city and country. This neighborhood was chosen because of the strong presence of 
community, the opportunity for research subjects and the many local food outlets found 
here.

The Highlands is a substantial study area, with many aspects of local food being 
actively pursued. The area is made up of varying walks of life, socioeconomic status and 
cultural groups with their own traditions and customs. The Highlands has become 
considered a more affluent neighborhood due to the redevelopment of the Central Platte 
Valley in the 1990s and 2000s. According to local community members from the El 
Oasis and Shoshone Community Gardens, the neighborhood is an amalgamation of 
people from different backgrounds. Because the Highlands is comprised of four different
neighborhoods, there are differences that can be seen when walking or driving through the area. Within the four neighborhoods that comprise the Highlands, there are several smaller areas that differ greatly in cultural personalities and overall feel. Some of the area is redeveloped with modern architecture and high-priced housing, while other parts of the area boast historical, older housing that resembles the architecture of the late 19th century. There are also areas of the Highlands that have low-income, section eight housing for people experiencing poverty and less fortunate conditions; although these areas are disappearing rapidly with the redevelopment that is occurring. A good example of the differences can be seen on the block that Shoshone Community Garden is located. It contains a new modern loft complex next to a historic home from the 1890s which is situated across the street from an affordable housing development. In summary, the Highlands is regarded as a redeveloping and up-and-coming neighborhood with housing prices to match.

The racial definition of the neighborhood is one that has been and still is currently changing within the past decade and is evidence of the redevelopment and the socioeconomic and racial shift that is currently taking place. Two major racial groups comprise these four neighborhoods within the Highlands: White Non-Hispanic/Latino and Hispanic/Latino. The Hispanic influence, or remnants thereof, can be recognized more clearly depending on what part of the neighborhood you are in. The Highlands is a rather large neighborhood and the statistics outlined in Table 1 narrate the demographic population that lives in this area. Creating a snapshot of what the Highlands looks like statistically is tricky due to the current changes in racial populations and the 2010 Census
data, which is not yet released in its entirety; however, The Piton Foundation has recently provided 2010 Census data on some of the changes and racial shifts that have occurred within the last decade. Figures 1, 2 and 3 and Table 1 outline some of these statistics. As of the Census 2000 data, the Hispanic population still dominated the statistical realm of the neighborhood, however it can be seen from the most recent Census in 2010 that the Sunnyside and Highland neighborhoods are two of the areas in Denver that experienced the largest decrease in Hispanic population; approximately by 1,382-3,860 people. The Highland, West Highland and Berkeley neighborhoods are now considered a White Non-Hispanic majority population. The Sunnyside neighborhood experienced one of the largest decreases in Hispanic population throughout the metro area, but still maintains a Hispanic majority population at 59%. Although there are still small parts of the neighborhood of the Highlands that can be characterized as Hispanic, it was evident during observation of the area that the Hispanic population is no longer the majority. Redevelopment, housing price increases and an overall cultural shift has driven out the previously Hispanic and lower income majority.
Figure 7 Relative Change In Hispanic Population, 2000 to 2010

Figure 8 Relative Change In Hispanic Population, 2000 to 2010 (zoomed-in image)
The Piton Foundation releases 2010 Census data as it is available and recently has posted briefs concerning race and the trends surrounding. The most current 2010 data is discussed here. Figures 1 and 2 from The Piton Foundation show that the singular neighborhood of Highland had an overall shrinking population due to redevelopment. The Hispanic population dropped by 3,780 while the white population increased by 1,800, creating 1.5 white people for every one Hispanic; a change from twice as many Hispanic residents as white in 2000 (The Piton Foundation 2010). Overall, the neighborhood decreased by 2,000 residents, which could be accounted for by housing prices increasing and a youth population that is decreasing (The Piton Foundation 2010). Families with incomes not suitable for rising housing prices could account for a loss in youth and overall population in Highland. The general trend found in racial shifts was a significant move of Hispanic and other racial minorities to the suburbs, with the white population moving towards the urban center (The Piton Foundation 2010). This trend follows suit with many cities around the country where the upper and upper-middle classes are redeveloping urban centers and moving back into city limits.

Figure 3 demonstrates the change of racial/ethnic majorities by neighborhood in Denver from 2000 to 2010. It can be seen that the Highland neighborhood (#4) in 2000 was listed as a neighborhood with the Hispanic/Latino population being greater than 50%. In 2010, Highland is listed as a neighborhood with a population of White being greater than 50%. Table 1 also depicts this racial shift with the Hispanic/Latino population as 66.8% in 2000 dropping to 37% in 2010. In summary, the sole neighborhood of Highland experienced an overall population loss with a racial shift of
Hispanic/Latino majority to a White majority due to redevelopment (The Piton Foundation 2010). This trend exhibits the current shift that has occurred throughout the entirety of the four neighborhoods that comprise the Highlands: population decrease along with a shrinking Hispanic population and increasing White population. It could be inferred that the take off of the local food movement in this area is attributed to a racial shift from a majority Hispanic population to a majority White population, which could potentially earn more money and have a more expendable income.

![Figure 9 Denver Neighborhood by Racial/Ethnic Majority, 2000 and 2010](image)

Table 1 shows Census 2000 and 2010 data for various indicators within each of the four neighborhoods and Denver as a whole. These indicators were chosen as a means of providing a snapshot of the Highlands through financial information, age, population and race. The available 2010 Census data was included and demonstrates the White,
Hispanic and total populations for each neighborhood, along with the percentage of
Hispanic population for each neighborhood. This was included as it is the only 2010 data
available and is important in understanding the racial shifts occurring and the current
racial make-up of the study site.

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<td><strong>Denver</strong></td>
<td><strong>Berkeley</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Household Income</td>
<td>$55,128.61</td>
<td>$48,202.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Persons in poverty</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Home Sale Price</td>
<td>$216,741.00</td>
<td>$178,307.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>554636.0</td>
<td>8891.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Population 25-34</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Population Hispanic</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Population Non-Hispanic White</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2010</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicator</strong></td>
<td><strong>Denver</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>600158.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Hispanic</td>
<td>2214.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Hispanic</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population White Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>5585</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9  Demographics of the Four Highlands Neighborhood (based on U.S. Census 2010)

The established network of community gardens, locally-supportive restaurants,
businesses and the backing of community members along with other small urban
agriculture projects all make Highlands a desirable area to study due to the wealth of
activities both community and business-oriented that support local food.
Chapter Five: Methodology

To understand how local food plays out in the Highlands area and relate it to what drives this movement, this study evaluates actions and motivations through five primary categories. Each category represents a key avenue through which local food occurs. The categories of community gardens, farm-to-table restaurants, food retail stores, households and community groups within the Highlands were researched through semi-structured interviews using a questionnaire guideline for each, participatory observation, observation, literature review of journals and textual analysis of national and local publications.

The methods of this research include all qualitative analysis in order to be able to tell a narrative in regards to the local food movement in the Highlands. According to Hay (2010), qualitative research can be broadly described as “elucidating human environments and human experiences within a variety of conceptual frameworks” (Hay 2010, 5). There are two main questions that qualitative researchers are concerned with: the individuals’ experience and social structures. In this research, the social structure of the local food movement within one large neighborhood is being brought to light by way of looking at individual experiences as well as larger, more conceptual views of community groups and organizations. The social structure of the neighborhood is evaluated through qualitative methods in order to better understand the reason for such a
social trend or phenomena. The two primary forms of qualitative research conducted here take the form of oral interviews with individuals and participant observation.

Interviews were chosen as one of the primary form of research because peoples' own words can truly shed light upon social structures, such as the local food movement within the Highlands (Hay 2010). The majority of the participant observation conducted was that of a proactive role. Participant observation faces ethical and biased tensions because of the influence that the researcher can have on the event or community being researched (Hay 2010). The participant observation research here was taken from the viewpoint of an outsider that had a genuine as well as an academic interest in the community and tensions were avoided by only disclosing the researcher position to those who were interviewed. For the most part, the researcher was simply a member of the community and participant observation was carried out without much of an influence on the community as a whole as well as the individuals within it. Participant observation was chosen as one of the primary forms of research because of the nature of the research question and also because it allows the researcher to be an outsider as well as an insider for the community being studied (Hay 2010). This viewpoint was very informative and allowed for a comprehensive look into the Highlands and the local food movement within the neighborhood. Minimal textual analysis was used as a research method, but overall the literature review of several publications and journals as well as some analysis of local food in national publications was helpful in grasping the historical elements and the overall scope of local food within the U.S. as well as internationally. One academic
journal article was used as the model paper for the study due to its discussion and focus on local consumption networks (Blake, Mellor and Crane, 2010).

Within the Highlands, several interviews were conducted with community organizations, community members, household members, community organizers and restaurant owners. Interviews were all carried out in person, aside from one that was conducted through email text. Semi-structured interviews were the approach taken with each subject. An interview guide was used to direct the interviews and make sure that the dialogue stayed on task, but the guide was used as just that and all of the interviews stayed content-focused and were organized around ordered, but flexible questioning (Hay 2010). The researcher’s role was that of an interventionist that redirected conversation in order to not stray from the topic (Hay 2010).

In addition, much participant observation was carried out in order to gain intimate insight into the Highlands community from different aspects. The research here took the approach of uncontrolled observation, which is described as “directed by goals and ethical considerations, but is not controlled in the sense of being restricted to noting prescribed phenomena” (Hay 2010, 243). This uncontrolled participant observation emphasizes the act of listening as a method to supplement visual observation. Listening became an important part of the participant observation in this research. Primary observation is a further distinction that describes the researcher's role in this study as a participant in as well as interpreter of human activity (Hay 2010). Participant observation is closely related to social anthropology and overall is an approach that geographers use to understand how place is related to everyday life (Hay 2010). This concept supports
participant observation as a research method for this topic because the local food movement has a strong connection to the sense of place within a community. Participant observation was also found as a strong complement to interviews because it offers the researcher the opportunity to move beyond the formalized (or semi-formalized) nature of the interview and both involve listening (Hay 2010). Participant observation is concerned with experience of the researcher as well as observations of the experience of the subjects. Every participant observation situation is unique and therefore, can be very difficult and elusive to define and describe systematically (Hay 2010). The benefits of this method should not be diminished by this, however. Overall, uncontrolled and primary participant observation proved to be a most appropriate and enlightening form of research for the questions chosen. This method was able to give insight into individual and community experiences and interactions related to local food within the Highlands.

Qualitative research offers extremely helpful insight and results, but of course has its weaknesses and disadvantages. The qualitative approach to defining local food in the context of a certain place and location provides for a very personal account and description. That being said, this can lead to a strong sense of bias when conducting research. It must be recognized that with qualitative research comes a personal perspective, which is subjective and very specific to the individual person or group being questioned. In recognizing the limitations and potential faults of all qualitative research, it is important to highlight the benefits as well, such as results that offer very interesting and detailed information. The guiding paper for this research is appropriate based upon the series of interviews, the use of online publications and research and the participatory
observation. This model study looks at the conceptual understanding of the term local, how people interpret the term and also how they put that interpretation into action by way of decision making in consuming food. The illustration of meanings related to place and the understanding of local make this paper an ideal guide to base further research on.

The community gardens were examined primarily through participatory observation. As a co-garden leader for the Shoshone Community Garden in the Highland neighborhood, much valuable information was attained regarding local food, attitudes toward local food and the overall sense of community and commitment to the local food movement. Through continued dialogue and community experiences with members of not only Shoshone Community Garden, but some of the surrounding gardens as well, uncontrolled, primary participant observation research was carried out in great length. Taking on the role as a community member and leader in this garden was of substantial importance in acquiring a sense of place for the area and the entire network of community gardens as well as what they promote and how they interact.

There are several locally-focused restaurants within the Highlands neighborhood. Three of the most well-known and locally-minded restaurants were interviewed in-depth. These restaurants are prominent businesses within Denver as a whole and have received national recognition for their commitment to local food. The in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the owners and managers of these restaurants were extremely helpful in gaining an inside look into the more commercial side of the local food movement. Restaurants are businesses; they are a for-profit model, therefore the perspective on local
food was very interesting and provided much information into why and how such an endeavor can thrive and be sustainable as well.

The food retail stores within Highlands were counted and organized into a data Table 3 that ranks each entity according to the type of food available for purchase. The table is as exhaustive as possible, cataloguing every food retailer of any kind that was available for recording. The ranking values are defined in a separate table, which explains each rank value in more detail. This table is for the use of creating a picture of the food availability within the neighborhood. A closer look at the kinds of food retail allows for a more in-depth evaluation of what food is available to the surrounding community. The coordinator of the Highlands farmer’s market was interviewed, adding to both the food retail as well as the community groups and organizations categories of research. The interview offered great insight into an outlet of local food that is situated right within the community and completely dedicated to providing and supporting the local food movement.

The community groups and organizations category of the research was carried out through in-depth interviews, participatory observation and the examination of online publications. The former council woman’s aid of District 9 was interviewed. This interview was extremely helpful in getting a unique political perspective on local food. Through being an apprentice for an NSA (neighborhood supported agriculture) small business, an immense amount of valuable information on local food and how it affects and is received within the Highlands community was gained. This kind of participatory observation has proved to be invaluable because of the level of immersion within the
community that was attained in working for the for-profit local food business for an entire growing season. A community organizer from the neighborhood (and from Shoshone Community Garden) was interviewed as well. This interviewee has had 13 years of community garden experience as well as over 40 years of overall community experience within the Highlands. This interview was also invaluable, specifically for the historical element that was brought to the research. Online publications concerning the community organization called Highlands Mommies were also examined. This particular group offered much insight into the overall sense of community, which is important in understanding on a neighborhood scale. A neighborhood is smaller than a city or region, therefore familiarizing oneself with community publications and organizations proved to be helpful in gaining an idea of what is important to the community and what kind of communication is being circulated within the neighborhood. The Highlands Mommies organization led to the household and individual level of research conducted.

Household interviews were gained primarily through the Highlands Mommies online community organization/forum. This is an online community organization based in the neighborhood and comprised of over 2,500 women. Three in-depth, semi-structured interviews were carried out with members of Highlands Mommies by way of sending a request for research interviews through their online forum. These interviews were extremely valuable because they truly were able to capture the household level perspective on local food and what people living in this neighborhood are thinking about in regards to local food initiatives. It must be stated that these interviews were targeted towards a specific demographic: women and households within this neighborhood.
boundary who are interested in at least talking about food. This demographic avenue was chosen for interviews because it truly captures the essence of what Highlands is as a neighborhood. Many of these women fall within the income bracket found in the demographic tables above, as well as the age bracket and the race classification. The majority of the Highlands is made up of the white, upper-middle class population with one or two children families or young professionals. The Highlands Mommies group follows this trend and therefore represents the neighborhood quite well, which is why it is justified to interview these members as the voice of households within the Highlands. Overall, the Highlands Mommies were interviewed because this demographic is the best reflection of the Highlands on the household level and what is going on in the way of local food at the household and individual scale.

A community is made up of several different components. These five categories were examined in hopes of collecting a substantial amount of information regarding local food practices, ideologies and motivations. All five categories offered interesting and enlightening information that help tell a narrative about the Highlands as a whole and how local food is carried out in this particular area of Denver, CO.
Chapter Six: Findings

The research outlined here is qualitative and the methods employed are not intended to generalize, but rather are intended to provide rich detail about the study area and its components outlined below.

Community Gardens

The community gardens within the Highlands are all very unique and have their own profiles. Some gardens are large, some small, some are locked, some are open, and some were established prior to DUG being an organization, while some are very new and developing. The age and the size of the gardens did not necessarily dictate the kind of participants, however. The Highlands is home to the oldest as well as the largest community garden found within DUG. Through interviews with community members as well as participatory observation, it can be determined that these gardens are diverse and have many different kinds of people from all different walks of life. Immigrant populations, young families, mentors to young kids in the neighborhood, older community members with long-standing ties to the neighborhood and young professionals are all examples of the participants within the Highlands community plots.

During many field visits for observation and participatory observation, young families were seen working and congregating in their plots in many gardens. These young families seem to be a large portion of the newer community members flocking to the Highlands and also are large part of the activity that can be observed within...
Highlands. Families were observed walking around the neighborhood, frequenting the restaurants and the local businesses as well as the farmer's market.

Conversely, there is a small bit of evidence that these gardens are also a place for less privileged community members to explore urban agriculture and help supplement their diet; many of these community members tend to be of the immigrant population. That being said, in the Highlands, the community gardens are not primarily used for survival. In most cases, the less-privileged residents of the Highlands that participate in the gardens are young children who are mentees of community members or simply neighbors to the gardens who are children and are curious of the produce. Denver as a whole is not a city that uses urban agriculture as a method for survival according to Community Organizer 1. He claimed that in the Highlands, community gardens are used for building community and fostering a sense of place and connection among residents. This is not to say that people in Highlands do not benefit greatly both nutritionally and financially from being a part of community gardening, but it is primarily used as a hobby that contributes to the sense of community in the neighborhood.

Through observation and participatory observation, it can be stated that the Highlands has several avenues in which local food is found within the neighborhood. There are eleven community gardens that are Denver Urban Gardens (DUG) sponsored. These gardens take the form of elementary school gardens, community gardens and peace and honor gardens. Some of the gardens are locked and some are always open. Each garden has its own unique personality, which is a reflection of the participants. Each
garden is distinct in its own way and all are used by the local community to benefit the patrons who rent plots within them.

Figure 4 depicts the spatial distribution of the eleven gardens found throughout the four neighborhoods that comprise the Highlands. Figure 5 shows the distribution of all of the DUG gardens throughout Denver. The gardens are rather evenly spread out, distributed throughout the entirety of the metro area. The highest density of gardens seems to be found within the downtown metro area as well as west of I-25. This is not surprising due to the fact that urban gardens serve the purpose of catering to those who live in high density, heavily populated areas. The closest thing to a cluster of DUG community gardens is found in the downtown area of Denver, which is an area that houses new redevelopment and gentrification in conjunction with a more underprivileged and lower-income population. The gardens found in this cluster could easily be serving both populations. The study area of the Highlands neighborhood supports this claim that both low income and moderate to high income residents benefit and use the DUG community gardens as means of leisure and food sustainability. Overall, the DUG community gardens are distributed evenly throughout the metro area, with the highest density of gardens being found downtown and spreading thinner as you go further in every direction away from the city.
Figure 10  Highlands Neighborhood DUG Community Gardens
Denver Urban Gardens in Metro Denver

Sam Lester
The question of who participates in the community gardens in Highlands is not easily answered. The Highlands neighborhood is one in rapid transition, which can be seen in the Piton data that demonstrates the racial shifts from 2000 to 2010. That being said, this neighborhood, and the community gardens found within it, demonstrate both the old and the new populations. The eleven community gardens found within the Highlands have proven to be a true mix of residents, ranging from young professionals, families and people with a moderate to high income to older, immigrant and lower-income residents. Data was acquired from DUG outlining the percentage of low-to-moderate income residents per census tract from 2000. Through ground-truthing, DUG has found that the percentage of low-to-moderate income residents in the census tract where the garden is located matches almost exactly the participants of that garden. In Table 2 it can be seen that many of the gardens are comprised of 50% or more low-to-moderate income residents. This supports the notion that community gardens in Highlands support low-income residents, which is the mission set forth by DUG. It should be stated, however, that the new 2010 census data acquired through the Piton Foundation found that the neighborhood has experienced an overall increase in white population (now a majority) and a decrease in Latino population in this neighborhood. The data that was available for census tract/garden income from DUG indicates that every garden studied here has an approximate 50% of low-to-moderate income participation rate; the new Piton Foundation data from 2010 could have the potential to support the notion that this has changed and the census tract/gardens now support a new population with a higher income, meaning the gardens would have less than
approximately 50% of their participants being low-to-moderate income and more with a moderate-to-high income. This shift in racial make-up and therefore, possible shift in income could explain the observations of young professionals and young families that were found to be very active within the community gardens, the local, high-end restaurants, and the farmers market. Through participatory observation as well as the data shared by DUG, there were many different kinds of families and individuals found to participate in these community gardens. Overall, the neighborhood of the Highlands is changing and experiencing many demographic transitions, which can be seen through the mix of people who participate in the eleven community gardens.

The typical species grown in each community garden were those typical of the seasons. The majority of the gardens grew typical cool and warm season crops such as lettuce, greens, root crops, broccoli, cauliflower, squash, peppers, melons, strawberries, etc. Most of the gardens contained some plots that grew decorative flowers and pollinator attractors such as sunflowers, nasturtiums, and pansies. The honor and peace gardens focused much more on decorative species and were not as packed full with vegetables. In general, the community gardens grew a wide variety of the species possible to grow in the dry Colorado climate zone 5 and most of the plants and herbs were grown for food with some minimal decorative flare.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Garden Name</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>% Low-to-Moderate-Income</th>
<th>Age of Garden</th>
<th>Size of Garden</th>
<th>Ethos of Garden: Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mount St. Vincent Garden</td>
<td>Berkeley</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>Est. 2009</td>
<td>2,286 sq. ft.</td>
<td>Create a sense of place and community within the neighborhood; unlocked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academia Sandoval School Garden</td>
<td>Highland</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>Est. 2002</td>
<td>3,215 sq. ft.</td>
<td>Connect children to healthy, sustainable food &amp; lifestyle; locked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookbinding Garden</td>
<td>Highland</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>Est. 2001</td>
<td>6,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>Create a sense of place and community within the neighborhood; unlocked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Oasis Garden</td>
<td>Highland</td>
<td>70.32</td>
<td>Est. 1989</td>
<td>16,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>Create a sense of place and community within the neighborhood; the biggest garden of DUG; locked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honor Garden at Valdez School</td>
<td>Highland</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>Est. 1996</td>
<td>5,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>Connect children to healthy, sustainable food &amp; lifestyle; locked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pecos Garden</td>
<td>Highland</td>
<td>70.32</td>
<td>Est. 1976</td>
<td>12,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>Create a sense of place and community within the neighborhood; pre-dates DUG as an organization -- the oldest garden; locked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden Name</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Estimate Size</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoshone Garden</td>
<td>Highland</td>
<td>70.32</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>5,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>Create a sense of place and community within the neighborhood; pre-dates DUG as an organization; unlocked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace Garden (Troy Chavez Memorial Community Garden)</td>
<td>Sunnyside</td>
<td>84.75</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>10,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>Promote peace among community members; memorial for community garden leader who died in 1990's gang violence in Denver; unlocked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quigg Newton Garden</td>
<td>Sunnyside</td>
<td>69.87</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2,500 sq. ft.</td>
<td>Create a sense of place and community within the neighborhood; unlocked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edison Community Garden</td>
<td>West Highland</td>
<td>45.18</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>4,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>Create a sense of place and community within the neighborhood; unlocked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland Gardens Village Garden</td>
<td>West Highland</td>
<td>45.18</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>5,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>Create a sense of place and community within the neighborhood; locked</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 Highlands Neighborhood Denver Urban Gardens Demographics

Overall, the community gardens were found to act as a stimulant for community building; they function as a way to bring people together in the name of food, the environment and help create a sense of place within varying communities. The data that DUG provided for what percentage of the census tract (and therefore, garden) was comprised of low-to-moderate income supported the notion that within the Highlands, the gardens differed in their members and their personalities, but it was clear that the
majority of the usage was for hobby, leisure, socializing and most of all, strengthening the surrounding community.

**Farm-to-table Restaurants**

Highlands is home to several restaurants that are committed to local food. This study interviewed three specific restaurants in Highlands that are known for their focus on the local aspect of food and community. In general, the restaurants have similarities in their ambitions, their local food commitments and their overall ideology of local food.

A common theme found among the restaurants that were interviewed are the reasons that the owners had for starting a business focused on local food. The higher quality of locally produced food was one commonality. Growing food in your own backyard, within the same neighborhood or even within the same state for that matter dramatically decreases the amount of miles food must travel from farm to plate. The food is fresher and therefore higher in quality, nutrients and overall taste. Supporting the local economy is another common theme among reasons for restaurants like these existing. Because the restaurants are buying from and selling to people within the same community, or state, the money is circulated within the local economy. Support of the local economy also aids in creating a stronger sense of community. These ideals were expressed as immensely important for all three restaurants interviewed. Another common theme found among the restaurants motivations for local food was the desire to be environmentally responsible and reduce the environmental footprint. The restaurants almost all have their own gardens, or small beds that they grow certain ingredients that are expensive or that are in season. Restaurant 1, for example gets about 80% of their
food from local sources during the growing season. Restaurant 1 also has 6.5 of their own raised beds in a nearby backyard plot as well as a farm outside of Denver that they are able to cultivate. Many of the raised beds are somewhat productive through winter and are covered in order to continue growing crops such as radishes, arugula and other herbs. The owner of Restaurant 2 also claimed that about 80% of the food comes from a local Colorado source. Many of the specialty items (i.e., shrimp) obviously are imported or shipped from other areas of the country or abroad. Restaurant 2 works with about 8 farmers from around Colorado. Restaurant 3 also grows some limited, small crops in order to supplement the menu that is locally centered. Restaurant 3 also offers a dinner special of restaurant grown food mixed with other locally grown food. A rooftop garden is also in the plans for Restaurant 3. All of these local efforts are for many reasons, but the common theme of being environmentally responsible was very prominent throughout every restaurant interview.

Each restaurant was also very committed to the idea of community within the Highlands. Each restaurant has different programs and efforts in place that are aimed at integrating the local community with the idea of supporting locally grown food. Restaurant 3 offers a raw food and vegan option occasionally due to the demand within the local community. Restaurant 3 is also involved with fundraising for a local high school as well as Slow Food Denver, the neighborhood association (H.U.N.I.) and the local elementary schools in regards to education on food and agriculture. Restaurant 1 is involved with the local community as well. The Highlands Farmer’s Market takes place every weekend, but Restaurant 1 offers a farm stand on Thursday evenings in order to
benefit the people who live directly in the community. Owner 1 explained the farm stand as a way for people living within Highlands to be able to come get their produce, a good meal and beat the crowds of the weekend farmer's market.

Table 3 is a table of local food restaurants as well as community organizations within Highlands specifically. The table aims to express the ideologies that were articulated during interviews and other research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization/Business/Individual</th>
<th>Overall Ideology</th>
<th>Local Food Goals &amp; Commitment</th>
<th>Trend in Clientele</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant 1</td>
<td>Local food makes sense and we should be doing this already</td>
<td>10% from raised beds in-house, 80% local farms in peak season, support local community, provide high quality food, use less transportation resources</td>
<td>Mostly local community members (foodies), moving toward destination restaurant, out-of-towners visit frequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant 2</td>
<td>Uphold strong values</td>
<td>Reduce environmental footprint, support local economy, provide best produce possible, 80% local in peak season</td>
<td>Destination restaurant, with some local clientele</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant 3</td>
<td>Build community through local food</td>
<td>Reduce use of fossil fuels, better quality of food with less transport</td>
<td>Mix of clientele, mostly community members, higher end patrons willing to pay true price of food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland Farmers' Market</td>
<td>Help the community support their community</td>
<td>Support small local business, keep money circulating within the community</td>
<td>Young couples, young families with dog and expendable income from the local neighborhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local NSA</td>
<td>Food production can and should happen within</td>
<td>Grow food within neighborhood in a multi-plot urban farm, bring members of community</td>
<td>Members of the Highlands neighborhood are eligible to donate their yard space, NSA members sign up for produce, first-come first-serve, farmer’s market patrons are</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Food Retail Stores

Research found that there were several, varying food retail stores found within the Highlands neighborhood boundaries, all with different ranks of 'localness' and classifications. It can be concluded from examining the list that there are in fact several places where food can be purchased. There are many different kinds of food retail found within the four neighborhoods of Highlands. Many of the food retail stores were found to be designated as ‘multi-purpose/limited food’ which lends to the thought that the most available and abundant place to find any kind of food was typically a gas station or convenient store. That being said, many of the commercial and conventional grocery stores and supermarkets were found to be on major roads and interspersed throughout the four separate neighborhoods. There were typically more gas stations than other kinds of stores, but the overall spatial distribution and number of grocery stores seemed to be reasonable in regards to access. There were pockets of specialty stores as well. The Highland and West Highland neighborhoods were home to several specialty stores that undoubtedly carry higher quality and imported goods which are not readily available to all demographics. The food retail table gives interesting insight into what kinds of stores are available, but for further research, the question of access could be addressed. Just because a grocery store exists does not mean that everyone within a certain mileage can actually access it. Also, the pricing of the stores would be an interesting study because
many of the stores ranged in the kinds of products carried and their quality. A geocoded map of these food retailers overlaid with transportation lines could be helpful for further research. This table does, however, show an exhaustive list of where these retailers fall (neighborhood) and what kinds of places are available. Overall, the Highlands does not appear to be a food desert due to the amount of stores, grocery, supermarket and specialty alike, which are available. Food access could very easily be much less for certain people depending on where they live and their access to transportation, but because of the proximity and amount of these stores, food desert seems to be too harsh of a classification. The sheer amount and variation of food stores within the Highlands lends to the idea that food is not scarce and it is relatively abundant within the neighborhood in some way, shape or form. This food retail table was able to shed light on what kinds of food is being sold and bought and also, just how local the Highlands is. Overall, the neighborhood was found to be relatively local in its available food store options due to the cluster of specialty and local stores found within the boundaries of the Highlands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Retailer</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Rank of &quot;Localness&quot;</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>King Soopers</td>
<td>Grocery Stores, Supermarkets &amp; Super Stores</td>
<td>Conventional/Commercial</td>
<td>Berkeley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Si Hay Miscelanea</td>
<td>Grocery Stores</td>
<td>Specialty</td>
<td>Berkeley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safeway</td>
<td>Supermarkets &amp; Super Stores, Grocery Stores</td>
<td>Conventional/Commercial</td>
<td>Berkeley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Eleven Stores</td>
<td>Convenience Stores, Gas Stations</td>
<td>Multi-Purpose/Limited Food</td>
<td>Berkeley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Eleven Stores</td>
<td>Convenience Stores, Gas Stations</td>
<td>Multi-Purpose/Limited Food</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Circle K</td>
<td>Convenience Stores, Gas Stations</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Multi-Purpose/Limited Food</td>
<td>Berkeley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennyson Sun Mart</td>
<td>Convenience Stores</td>
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<td>Berkeley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store Name</td>
<td>Store Type</td>
<td>Store Type Details</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop 'N Save</td>
<td>Grocery Stores, Supermarkets &amp; Super Stores</td>
<td>Conventional/Commercial</td>
<td>Edgewater (West Highland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save-A-Lot</td>
<td>Grocery Stores</td>
<td>Conventional/Commercial</td>
<td>Edgewood (West Highland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamales By La Casita</td>
<td>Grocery Stores</td>
<td>Specialty</td>
<td>Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Grocers</td>
<td>Health &amp; Diet Food Products, Grocery Stores, Grocers-Specialty Foods</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny Corp</td>
<td>Grocery Stores</td>
<td>Conventional/Commercial</td>
<td>Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Foods, Inc.</td>
<td>Supermarkets &amp; Super Stores</td>
<td>Conventional/Commercial</td>
<td>Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety Super Market</td>
<td>Grocery Stores</td>
<td>Conventional/Commercial</td>
<td>Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salwan Market</td>
<td>Grocery Stores, Convenience Stores</td>
<td>Specialty</td>
<td>Highland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leprino Foods Company</td>
<td>Supermarkets &amp; Super Stores, Dairy Products-Wholesale</td>
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<td>Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Mercadito Mexican Food</td>
<td>Grocery Stores, Mexican &amp; Latin American Grocery Stores</td>
<td>Specialty</td>
<td>Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save-A-Lot</td>
<td>Grocery Stores</td>
<td>Conventional/Commercial</td>
<td>Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leever's Supermarket</td>
<td>Grocery Stores, Supermarkets &amp; Super Stores</td>
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<td>Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Convenience Stores, Gas Stations</td>
<td>Multi-Purpose/Limited Food</td>
<td>Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Season Local Market</td>
<td>Grocery Stores, Specialty Stores</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Eleven Stores</td>
<td>Convenience Stores, Gas Stations</td>
<td>Multi-Purpose/Limited Food</td>
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<td>Katz Co.</td>
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<td>Specialty</td>
<td>Highland</td>
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<td>St. Killian's Cheese Shop</td>
<td>Specialty Stores</td>
<td>Specialty</td>
<td>Highland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Savory Spice Shop</td>
<td>Specialty Stores</td>
<td>Specialty</td>
<td>Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seafood Landing</td>
<td>Specialty Stores, Seafood Markets</td>
<td>Specialty</td>
<td>Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberta's Chocolates</td>
<td>Candy Stores, Specialty Stores</td>
<td>Specialty</td>
<td>Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nosh Nest</td>
<td>Specialty Stores</td>
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<td>Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clyde's Sausage &amp; Ground Beef Company</td>
<td>Specialty Stores, Meat Shops</td>
<td>Specialty</td>
<td>Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polidori Meat Processors</td>
<td>Specialty Stores, Meat Shops</td>
<td>Specialty</td>
<td>Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver Bread Company</td>
<td>Specialty Stores, Bakery</td>
<td>Specialty</td>
<td>Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One World One Market</td>
<td>Grocery Stores</td>
<td>Conventional/Commercial</td>
<td>Jefferson Park (Highland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Dollar Store</td>
<td>Department Stores, General Merchandise, Variety Stores</td>
<td>Multi-Purpose/Limited Food</td>
<td>Jefferson Park (Highland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safeway</td>
<td>Grocery Stores, Supermarkets &amp; Super Stores</td>
<td>Conventional/Commercial</td>
<td>Jefferson Park (Highland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Eleven Stores</td>
<td>Convenience Stores, Gas Stations</td>
<td>Multi-Purpose/Limited Food</td>
<td>Jefferson Park (Highland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store Name</td>
<td>Store Type</td>
<td>Food Type</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Eleven Stores</td>
<td>Convenience Stores, Gas Stations</td>
<td>Multi-Purpose/Limited Food</td>
<td>Jefferson Park (Highland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valero Corner Store</td>
<td>Convenience Stores, Gas Stations</td>
<td>Multi-Purpose/Limited Food</td>
<td>Jefferson Park (Highland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond Shamrock</td>
<td>Convenience Stores, Gas Stations</td>
<td>Multi-Purpose/Limited Food</td>
<td>Jefferson Park (Highland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSH Gas &amp; Food Stores</td>
<td>Grocery Stores, Convenience Stores, Gas Stations</td>
<td>Multi-Purpose/Limited Food</td>
<td>Lakeside (West Highland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Foods Market</td>
<td>Grocery Stores</td>
<td>Conventional/Commercial</td>
<td>Sloan Lake (West Highland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King Soopers</td>
<td>Grocery Stores, Supermarkets &amp; Super Stores</td>
<td>Conventional/Commercial</td>
<td>Sloan Lake (West Highland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly Market</td>
<td>Grocery Stores</td>
<td>Conventional/Commercial</td>
<td>Sunny Side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every Day Store</td>
<td>Grocery Stores</td>
<td>Conventional/Commercial</td>
<td>Sunny Side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nest Fresh Eggs, Inc.</td>
<td>Eggs, Poultry, Grocery Stores</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Sunny Side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn Food Products</td>
<td>Specialty Stores</td>
<td>Specialty</td>
<td>Sunny Side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Eleven</td>
<td>Convenience Stores, Gas Stations</td>
<td>Multi-Purpose/Limited Food</td>
<td>Sunny Side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tejon Market</td>
<td>Grocery Stores</td>
<td>Conventional/Commercial</td>
<td>Sunny Side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Azteca Mexican Food Co.</td>
<td>Grocery Stores, Food Products-Wholesale, Grocers-Wholesale</td>
<td>Specialty</td>
<td>West Colfax (Highland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doen Foods</td>
<td>Supermarkets &amp; Super Stores</td>
<td>Conventional/Commercial</td>
<td>West Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunflower Farmers Market</td>
<td>Grocery Stores, Fruit &amp; Vegetable Markets</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>West Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x-Press Food Store</td>
<td>Grocery Stores, Convenience Stores, Food Products</td>
<td>Conventional/Commercial</td>
<td>West Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas N Save</td>
<td>Grocery Stores, Gas Stations</td>
<td>Multi-Purpose/Limited Food</td>
<td>West Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T &amp; T Food Mart</td>
<td>Grocery Stores, Convenience Stores</td>
<td>Multi-Purpose/Limited Food</td>
<td>West Highland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 12 Food Retail Stores in the Highlands Neighborhood**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank of “Localness” Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Term</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional/Commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-purpose/Limited Food</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 13 Food Retail Table Definitions**
Community Groups and Organizations

Local food community groups and organizations are found within Highlands and Denver as a whole. The two entities interviewed and researched here are the Highlands Farmer’s Market and a local NSA. Both of these provided great insight into how local food is expressed on a collective and more community-based level within the neighborhood.

The farmer's market is an avenue in which the Highlands is participating in the local food movement. The farmer's market includes farms from around Colorado as well as an NSA that are all proponents of local food. This organization is an outlet for those on both the producing and consuming sides to actively participate in promoting sustainable food systems. The interview with the coordinator of the farmer’s market stressed the fact that many vendors from outside of Colorado want to participate, but overall, they try to keep the market as in-state as possible. The farmer’s market seems to be an avenue in which not only healthy, local food is bought and sold, but also an avenue for building community, similar to the community gardens. The interview shed a substantial amount of light on the local food commitment and the activity of the local community. The coordinator stated in her interview that the Highlands is a 'neighborhood that gets it', as in a neighborhood that understands the concept of supporting the local economy and appreciates a grass roots effort to keep the local community strong. The coordinator also stated that the typical patron of the Highlands farmer's market is a small, young family, almost always with a dog with a bit of an expendable income. This is an interesting fact because it suggests that the farmer's
market could be not just to get healthy produce, but a very distinct experience that those with the money to pay for sustainably grown produce in Colorado get to enjoy. The farmer's market is just one aspect of the local food movement that can be seen in the Highlands. There are various forms of urban agriculture being carried out, but through research, interviews and observations it seems that the farmer's market is a communal and almost trendy way to participate in local food.

The Highlands is home to a unique form of urban agriculture: Neighborhood Supported Agriculture. An NSA is similar to Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), but instead of growing food on a large plot of land in the peri-urban area of a city, an NSA cultivates front and back yards in a particular region of a city. It is still essentially subscription farming, where participants work for a share of produce or pay annually for a share. This form of urban agriculture is a major contributor to the local food movement within the Highlands. Being able to point down the street to where your food is grown within the city is the epitome of local. This NSA in the Highlands is one of the outlets for local food in the neighborhood and is gaining traction around Denver as a whole. Extensive participatory observation as well as a preliminary interview was carried out in order to gain knowledge of how this sort of operation works as well as the influence and affect it has on the local community related to food. As an apprentice for the 2011 growing season with this NSA, much insight was gathered as to how local food is carried out through one model of urban farming.

This particular NSA supports approximately fifty four shares of produce once a week to the surrounding community. Eleven front and back yards are cultivated using all
organic practices and the remainder is sold at the local farmer’s market. This model proved to be a very successful option for growing food in and for the local population. Many of the shareholders were local community members as well as volunteers. The business solely runs on volunteer work, aside from the owner. This model also provided a good building block for community due to the economic trust and backing from the shareholders/community members that must be invested before the urban farm can even begin to produce. It was evident through spending time with the volunteers and other community members involved with this business that the NSA was more than just growing food to eat. Many times, conversation was held about much broader ideals that revolve around the environment as a whole and the over-arching food production system that is currently in place. This community business created an avenue for peaceful activism; a way in which community members could actively participate in bettering the current food system and agricultural system. Overall, people seemed to be acting locally, but truly thinking globally. The bigger picture was a constant theme in the dialogue that was held in conjunction with work.

In order to understand better the scope of local food within Denver and the Highlands, a more comprehensive look at local food organizations in the city of Denver was taken. Table 6 outlines many of the major local food-oriented organizations found within Denver. This was helpful in getting a grasp on what the major issues are that are being observed and how they relate to the Highlands. Overall, many of the objectives and missions are very similar. Some of the differences stem from food justice concern, to nutrition in schools, to immigrant populations, etc. The Highlands was found to be
circulating the same issues found in these other organizations and it was especially enlightening to see the interactions among the different owners, organizers, leaders and even volunteers of these groups. As an intern for the Denver Botanic Gardens 2011 season, connections were found with the Urban Farm at Stapleton, the Highlands NSA researched here, Slow Food Denver, the Shoshone Community Garden and Compass Montessori School which houses an on-campus working farm. The local food community within Denver was seemed to be very interconnected and reach beyond neighborhood boundaries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denver Botanic Gardens (CSA at Chatfield)</td>
<td>Establishing community and reconnecting people with their food, first partnership between health care provider and a botanical garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heirloom Gardens/Sustainable Food Denver</td>
<td>Strengthen Community through cultivating yards within the Highlands neighborhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Urban Farm at Stapleton</td>
<td>Improve lives of children in high-risk urbanized neighborhoods, create sense of positive self-regard and self-reliance along with a strong work ethic and hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver Urban Gardens</td>
<td>Grow community and develop a thriving and connected network of deeply-rooted community gardens operated by local residents and institutions throughout urban neighborhoods in Denver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow Food Denver</td>
<td>Link pleasure of food with a commitment to community and the environment, preserve food traditions and heritage, support local food producers, promote sustainable agriculture, influence food policy, protect biodiversity, educate members and children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grow Local Colorado</td>
<td>Volunteers dedicated to promoting local food, community and economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver Urban Food Hub</td>
<td>Facilitate conversation about food justice and food security, connect at-risk populations with organizations working to solve the issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver Yard Harvest</td>
<td>Bring fresh produce to those who would go without it from homeowners fruit trees and other plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver Fair Food</td>
<td>Grassroots, human rights organization working to end modern day slavery and sweatshop labor in Florida ag.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver Urban Homesteading</td>
<td>Promote local agriculture and good food, help educate the public, reconnect people with local food production, sell high-quality products, promote sustainability and self-sufficiency, provide meeting place for local food and agricultural activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revision International/Re:farm Denver</td>
<td>Address the lack of access and affordability of health food,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
including locally grown, organic produce in low-income areas (food deserts)

| The Growhaus | Support the growth of healthy, self-empowered communities in a neighborhood of Denver and beyond through education, improving food access and urban agriculture |

Table 14 Local Food Organizations in Denver

**Households**

Interviews were conducted within the Highlands Mommies online community organization. Three households were interviewed in hopes of gaining a perspective on local food from a smaller, family-oriented angle. This organization was chosen because of its focus on the local community and because of the fact that everyone who participates is part of a household within the specified Highlands boundaries. It is recognized that this is a specific demographic that may have different values, traditions, income levels and personal experiences that separate it from other parts of the Highlands community; however, this organization is very representative of the local food movement within the Highlands and is one of the best avenues for exploring the local food movement on a household level within the neighborhood.

All interview subjects were asked their perception of what local means. Two of the responses claimed that within the state counts as a local product. One of the subjects explained that local depends on the source and the product. All of the subjects mentioned that ideally, locally would be growing your own food and dining within the neighborhood. The perception of local is an interesting concept within the Highlands neighborhood. It can be concluded that the concept of local truly does shift and transform based on who is being questioned. The common theme seen throughout this research is that within the state of Colorado is typically considered to be local.
Each household was questioned about their personal commitment to local food. A common response to this was the fact that local food becomes more of a priority based on the season; therefore, in the summer it is much easier to eat locally because of the growing season. One of the subjects made an interesting comment about life stage and how it relates to a local commitment. As a student, with limited income, it is much more difficult to support local business and buy more expensive food. The idea of how past experiences and family shapes one’s perspective on local was also brought up within the interviews. This was an interesting topic because it tied local food back to the idea of community and to how personal relationships are related to food and shape one’s view.

The issue of location and how it relates to local food was also discussed. Where you live heavily influences your diet and to what extent local food is supported. Many of the subjects commented on how the Denver area as a whole, especially the Highlands neighborhood, fosters these kinds of discussions and the support of local food.

All three interview subjects stated that growing food in their backyards was common practice and something that was an important part of their lifestyle. Food items such as peppers, tomatoes, beans, herbs and some fruits were common among the subjects. Many of the reasons for growing food in one’s backyard circled around an economic benefit as well as a fun and enjoyable hobby for the family. Two of the three households participated in making their own cheeses and jams in order to cut costs as well as a health benefit.

The interviewees were questioned about how often the family eats out and where the primary shopping was done. Two of the families claimed to eat out once a month or
less, while one family claimed to eat out 2 to 3 times per week. The family who eats out frequently spoke a lot about the same three farm-to-table restaurants that were interviewed for this research. The sense of community and people knowing each other was a prime selling point for this family. They enjoyed having places where they know the owners, the chefs, the waitresses and the other patrons. All of the families claimed to shop at at-least three different locations to get everything they need. Sunflower Market was the one grocery store that made every family’s list. Other stores included Safeway, King Soopers, Whole Foods, Sam’s and the local farmer’s market. One family claimed to frequent other specialty shops, some of which are not found within the Highlands, such as Marczyk’s Meat and Tony’s. The Highlands’ specialty shops such as Killian’s, Denver Bread, Savory and Seafood Landing all made the lists for food retail.

When asked about food access within the Highlands, mixed responses were collected. Two of the women claimed that food access was high and very accessible. These women claimed that there were several retail options to choose from when grocery shopping. Mommy 2 mentioned how there were several walk-able food retail options within her area of the Highlands. Mommy 2 also mentioned that when there is this amount of local options, you are sometimes forced to eat locally because making good decisions to support the local community and be environmentally responsible is easy. Mommy 1 was found to be on the other end of the spectrum, claiming that the food access within the Highlands is not ideal. She claimed that local is not always convenient, which is a drawback. According to her, Sunflower Market is not the quality that is desired and not one store has all of the high quality and local products that her family
desires. She must go to several stores to get the local products they desire in that household, which is an inconvenience. Overall, Mommy 1 claimed that there are enough resources to get what they want and what they need, but there is not an excess of these resources, which was desired. Mommy 3 summarized the fact that it is more expensive to get local food, which ultimately reduces the food access for her family.

All of the women interviewed made comments relating to the Highlands becoming the face of local food for Denver. All women agreed that local food is a trend that can be seen throughout the city, but the Highlands, unlike other neighborhoods, has the community organization with groups like Highlands Mommies that can mobilize and be an outlet for local food. Neighborhoods like Park Hill and West Wash Park were mentioned as other locations that local food is increasingly becoming more of a priority, but they lack the organization that the Highlands has at this time. One of the women commented on how the Highlands neighborhood is a prime demographic for something like this to become so popular because the Highlands is more affordable than the suburbs, but less affordable than other areas like Park Hill. Certain types of families target the Highlands when in the market to move and buy a house. According to Mommy 2, people are willing to make the financial sacrifices for local food in the Highlands as opposed to other areas of the city. Overall, the Highlands has the resources of idea sharing, networking and an overall influence and level of power thanks to an organization like Highlands Mommies.
Chapter Seven: Discussion

The following statements are summary findings from the research conducted here on the five outlets for local food within the Highlands.

Restaurants

There are several restaurants that are farm-to-table and there are commonalities between them and their motivations.

The business sector of the Highlands is perhaps the most outwardly visible example of support and participation in the local food movement. For example, Owner 1 stated in an interview that a local food commitment stems from a desire to be more environmentally responsible and a desire to support the local economy. According to Owner 1, higher quality food comes from less transport and doing local business. Growing food locally 'makes sense' and is something that 'we should already be doing'.

There are several restaurants within the Highlands that have some kind of local commitment to growing, selling and preparing food. It seems that many of these restaurants, who are self-titled as farm-to-table, have accepted a social and environmental responsibility for how food is grown and how business is done in relation to food systems in the U.S.

The overall feeling that was gained from the interviews with each restaurant was that these restaurants truly do care about the environment and being ecologically and
locally responsible. That being said, these are for-profit businesses and many of these restaurants claimed they were also considered destination eateries. Every owner interviewed explained that the local community is important, but also that most of the clientele is not typically from the Highlands area; it is a destination restaurant for patrons from all over Denver. The term ‘foodie’ was used to describe the typical patron of these restaurants, meaning that the majority of the clientele drawn to these restaurants are in support of local food, but also have the income to support it through buying more expensive, high quality products.

Gardens

The community gardens in the Highlands are a main outlet for local food, for building community within the neighborhood and are comprised of a diverse group of participants ranging from immigrants to young families to low-to-moderate income residents and to young professionals. All of the participants can financially benefit from growing their own food, but many of the community gardeners grow as a hobby and not to survive.

One commonality between all of the gardens is that they are in high demand and all have waiting lists for community members. The community gardens are a very visible way that the Highlands is active within the local food movement. Growing food in your own backyard, or across the street, is a very direct way to support local food and community. The community gardens are a very valuable way for the Highlands to support itself and its members with healthy food.
There are different ethos when it comes to community gardens in the Highlands. Some are traditional, long-established and locked gardens, while some are new and unlocked with a younger population of professionals and small families.

An interview with Community Organizer 1 (a community gardener and organizer within the Highlands) revealed many interesting characteristics of the local food and urban farming movement within the neighborhood. As explained by this subject, the community gardens can be split into two different categories. One is composed of the older residents who are very established within the neighborhood and have a more territorial outlook on the gardens. These gardens are typically the locked gardens and are used more for preserving the community that has existed there for generations. Many of these 'old school' gardens are made up of the second and third generation, established immigrant communities. When the Highlands first began as a neighborhood, it was an immigrant community that had expanded up the hill from the Platte River which ran through the middle of the city. Irish immigrants moved in first, then Italian immigrants and finally, the Hispanic population. These communities have been established within the Highlands and through the architecture and even through these gardens can be seen today. The 'old school' approach to community gardening is much more territorial and closed off and is carried out by the older, more permanent residents of the Highlands.

The newer perspective that was explained in the interview with Community Organizer 1 described these community gardeners as mostly young people and families, such as newlyweds, that desire to be in an urban setting, but also care about the environment and want to create a more sustainable lifestyle. These gardeners are very
interested in building community and for the most part, community gardens are a hobby and a trendy activity rather than a means of survival. These gardens are typically unlocked, making them seem more welcoming to the surrounding community. There are people who want to lock all of the gardens to help decrease produce disappearing from plots, but for the most part, these gardens are open to all within the community.

The overall goals and purposes of gardens and urban agriculture in the Highlands are for building community instead of for survival. In the interview with Community Organizer 1 the concept of community was continually brought up. This subject insisted that the purpose of these community gardens in a neighborhood such as the Highlands is truly for the purpose of building community. The gardens are meant to be a place that people can gather and interact with each other as well as the natural environment. There are plots within some of the gardens that are strictly community plots for everyone to share, which fosters the cultivation of a community outlook and a public good. For example in the Shoshone Community Garden (which was one of the avenues for participatory observation in this research) a community strawberry patch and herb patch is a standard practice and resource for all of the garden members as well as those living near who want to partake. Community Organizer 1 mentioned the notion of figuring out how to 'balance out the idea of community versus me'. This was an interesting remark to make because although the gardens are supposed to be an avenue for community building and interaction, we as humans can become very territorial with space. There is a segregation that can become very prominent within the network of community gardens in
a neighborhood. Locking a garden is one example of this; it seems to create a boundary
between the inside community and the rest of the neighborhood.

**Food Retail**

Food Retail within the four neighborhoods that comprise the Highlands is
ultimately abundant and there are several food outlets of varying 'localness'.

The Highlands is an area that is far beyond a food desert. There are several types
of food retail available within the neighborhoods that comprise the Highlands, which
cater to different populations. There are supermarkets, local food stores and shops,
smaller grocery stores, specialty shops for cheese, wine and bread, health food stores,
convenient stores, ethnic markets, quick marts, etc. The neighborhood has many options
for consumption of food retail, which allows for the community members to make
shopping decisions when choosing where to buy food from. There are cheap and
expensive places to shop, meaning that not everyone could purchase food from the same
location, but the options are available for where to shop for food.

Further research could potentially geocode these food retailers in order to see the
spatial distribution of the stores and shops that offer food. Many of these businesses were
found through the online Yellow Pages as well as Google Earth and Yelp.com, which all
offer a map that creates a visualization of the spatial distribution. It was observed that
many of the retail locations fell on large and busy roads with only a few areas that
seemed to be lacking in options. The southwest area of West Highland was an area with
very few food retail options. Many of the food retailers were primarily found on the
eastern side of the four neighborhoods. This can be attributed to the smaller streets and more clustered housing and overall increased density closer to downtown. As you follow the map west, the spacing gets larger between food retailers due to the spread of the city and the wider streets and increased green spaces.

**Households**

At a household level, local food is an important and popular issue in the Highlands. Growing small items in one’s backyard, shopping for local products and participating in sustainable food practices are common household trends.

From the interviews acquired through the Highlands Mommies organization, it was found that local food is of great importance within the typical household found in the Highlands. Many of the households were found to participate in the local food movement in a variety of ways. Growing food in the backyard, even if limited, is a common trend. The shopping practices of households are another trend found that supports local food. Many of the shopping practices described involved frequenting several locations in order to find locally grown products. The household view on local food was an interesting one that allowed for a closer look into what people and families are concerned with in the Highlands related to food. Convenience was a primary concern for all of the households. The households all contained at least one child and therefore could be attributed to the concern over convenience. Overall, the household interviews were telling about the current trends of shopping in several locations and growing minimal small items at home during the summer months. The interviews support the
notion that local food is an important part of many families' lives in the Highlands and
quality, healthy and organic products are sought out. These interviews portray yet
another avenue in which local food is carried out within this neighborhood, on an
individual household scale.

**Community Organizations**

There are several community organizations and groups in the Highlands that
promote local food and help foster the sense of community through sustainable food in
the neighborhood. The Denver metro area includes many local food-focused
organizations and the network extends beyond one neighborhood.

The two local food organizations interviewed within the Highlands were the
farmer's market and the local NSA. Both of these entities are solely focused on providing
local products and supporting the local food movement within the boundaries of the
Highlands. The presence of local food in the Highlands became evident quickly when
research began. These community organizations that are based within the neighborhood
were some of the most prominent influences found. Overall, the neighborhood contained
many facets and outlets for local food, but the community organizations were the outlets
that made an impression on a larger scale. This was perhaps due to the
interconnectedness of the local food movement within Denver. These two organizations
that were part of the research through interviews and in-depth participant observation
brought to the surface the relationships between other entities and individuals involved in
local food throughout the city. It was amazing to see how far the web of local food
extended, while at the same time maintaining the local, grass-roots foundation. Everyone seemed to know everyone else that was ever involved with sustainable food within Denver, which in itself seemed to create a sense of community on a scale larger than that of the neighborhood level. In general, the community organizations in the Highlands were committed to supporting the local food movement within the neighborhood, but it was very apparent that the efforts spanned city-wide and created a larger network of people and organization dedicated to supporting all aspects of sustainable food. The collaboration of those who started and owned these organizations, groups and small businesses along with many people who were dedicated volunteers and supporters were found to be responsible for this interconnected community working towards promoting and supporting local food.

**Overall Theme of Findings**

The overall theme of the findings for how local food is carried out in the Highlands is that the demand for local products is increasing, whether it is because of quality of food, a desire to be more environmentally conscious, an economic convenience or because the incoming population’s values align with the local food movement. There is no doubt that the Highlands is an active community within the local food movement. This is playing out through a variety of ways such as a farmer's market, locally committed restaurants, several community gardens, locally committed households, several local food stores, local food-oriented community groups and the general desire to be a part of a progressive, community-based effort working towards sustainable food.
systems. Throughout the observations made, participation in the local community and
interviews and research of the neighborhood in general, I have found that the motivations
behind participating in local food are related to building and fostering community, an
increasing population that has the means to support local food and finally, a network of
capable, local food organizations and participants that span wider than just one
neighborhood.

The research conducted here has proven that the Highlands neighborhood of
Denver, CO is an area within the city that is active within the local food movement; a
movement that is gaining traction around the country as a whole. The many outlets for
local food found within the neighborhood were found to promote, support and advocate
for healthier and more accessible food and a strong sense of community that includes
people from the surrounding neighborhood. It was found that within the Highlands,
many of the common themes seen in research that focuses on other cities and regions
around the U.S. are also evident in the neighborhood as well as Denver as a whole. The
motivations behind the local food movement in the Highlands and in Denver (economic
advantage, food justice, health concerns) were parallel to those found in other areas
around the country. Overall, the local food movement and all of its many layers is
becoming more and more popular both in Denver and other cities in the U.S. In the
Highlands, it was found that community gardens, farm-to-table restaurants, several food
retail options, individual households and many community organizations are all active
within the local food movement and help to promote and sustain the varying goals that
span across the borders of many cities, states and regions. The research here has proven
that much of the participation in local food initiatives was not due to survival, but rather was due to a desire for a healthier, more sustainable lifestyle as well as a hobby, leisure activity and also as a way to foster and build community within the neighborhood.
Chapter Eight: Conclusion

The research here evaluated the Highlands neighborhood of Denver, CO in regards to the local food movement and the actions taken by a community to promote and support sustainable food. The research questions asked how local food is being carried out within this particular neighborhood as well as the overall motivations of those involved. Qualitative research was carried out in the form of semi-structured interviews, observations, in-depth participant observation and some textual analysis of journal publications and local and national articles. The Highlands neighborhood was chosen as a study site due to the presence of local food efforts there as well as the potential for abundant and informative research subjects and opportunities. Five categories of local food outlets were evaluated: community gardens, community organizations and groups, farm-to-table restaurants, households and food retail stores.

The five local food outlets evaluated brought to the surface the many motivations for participating in the local food movement within the Highlands. The desire to keep money circulating within the local economy was a common theme found among the restaurant and business owners. The concern over healthy food was another large influence on why one would concern themselves with this movement, particularly within the households interviewed. The convenience and economic benefits of growing a portion of your own food was another reason found for participating in the local food efforts examined. The food retail stores evaluation found that there are several locations
to purchase food, some of them being natural food stores, some supermarkets and many of them being ethnic markets, gas stations and convenient stores. It was found that many of the food retail stores were located near large and busy streets with public transit options, therefore supporting the notion that the Highlands is probably not a food desert and does have a relatively adequate supply of food retail stores.

A deeper examination of the main findings of this research can be narrowed down to one central theme that continued to arise: community. Within the research, other themes were found that shed light on the local food movement in the Highlands, but one idea seemed to weave its way into every situation, observation, conversation and interview. The concept of community is an integral part of what is considered local. It was found through dialogue with several people as well as through writings about local food that building and supporting community is just as much a part of the local food movement as the actual food is. Food proved to be a useful tool in bringing people together who live within the same community. The aspiration to build a community that is connected through a natural process such as growing food and supporting those who do, proved to be the primary concern of those working in the community gardens, those who owned local businesses and restaurants and those who were members of surrounding households.

The research conducted here had limitations, as any research does. Qualitative research can be challenging due to the interactions with other people and simply getting people to be interested or cooperate. The neighborhood studied here is active within local food and therefore, many opportunities presented themselves for interviews and

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participant observation. With all qualitative research, however, comes the issue of biases. Limitations with this include the specific targeting of certain groups (households) that were interviewed due to the fact that it was known they were interested and in order to be interviewed, you had to indicate interest in talking about local food. Other limitations also include the seasonal aspect of local food. The growing season in Colorado takes place during the warm months and therefore much of the participant observation and general observations could only be conducted throughout the summer months. For possible future research, it is suggested that a more in-depth spatial analysis of the Highlands neighborhood is completed. There are several aspects of the neighborhood that provide interesting research questions, which made it difficult to narrow the study. The Highlands is still quite a diverse neighborhood within its boundaries and a more comprehensive look at the demographic make-up of the neighborhood along with other information on the spatial distribution of food retail in conjunction with transportation lines would be very interesting to analyze the true access to all of the listed food stores. Future research in this area could also include an analysis of the varying economic status within the four neighborhoods and could shed light on the financial disparity seen in certain parts of the Highlands. There are several pockets within the Highlands that are strikingly different on an economic level and the visual representation of that would give a good snapshot of the neighborhood as a whole. Overall, the research here provides a substantial amount of information about one neighborhood in Denver, CO that is active within the local food movement. The local food movement in the Highlands was found to be expressed throughout the five different categories evaluated and the concept of
building and fostering a sense of community within the local geographic area and economy were of the utmost concern within the research conducted.

The local food movement is a current trend found throughout the globe, but comes in many variations and forms depending on the location. The literature found on local food specifically came in the form of international studies done in parts of Europe or in LDCs. In LDCs, local food, or sustainable agriculture in general, is studied because of the opportunity it affords to provide for oneself and alleviate poverty. Much of the literature touched on examples from other countries that are experimenting with sustainable agriculture as a reinvented form of sustainability or as a practice that has been established for most of history. The capacity to sustain oneself through agriculture has been around for all of human existence, but in the western world has recently become a renewed trend. In parts of Europe, the local food movement is becoming more predominant due to the recent concerns of the environment and perhaps has succeeded there so well because of the differences in how those countries and cities developed and grew compared to the U.S. This study gives insight into an example from a modern U.S. city, which was found to be lacking within academic journals. As stated above, most of the academic research has examined either international LDC sites that are practicing sustainable agriculture for various reasons, or western European sites that are returning to the local and historical agricultural traditions. This study allows for a look at a western, modern city that is experimenting with the local food movement, in spite of the extremely large and corporate agricultural system that is currently dominating almost all of the food outlets within the nation. The agricultural system within the U.S. has become so
corporately moderated that there is hardly any place for small farms that produce food on
the local level, for the local economy and in the name of safe and healthy growing
practices. This study examined one neighborhood that is putting forth several efforts to
create a place for these local producers as well as creating a community of local
consumers. Popular media has brought forth many of the concerns and efforts
highlighted within the local food movement, but this study hopes to contribute to the lack
of academic research conducted in the name of local food within the U.S. With all
parties who are interested and willing to participate in the local food movement, perhaps
a change can be made in the way food is produced, handled and distributed within our
society. Research such as this can be utilized by urban planners, city officials,
politicians, non-profit organizations, local community organizers and members of all
sorts who are interested in supporting and continuing the local food movement and the
ideals it represents. This research contributes to understanding the mindset of a
neighborhood community in regards to the local food movement and also contributes a
personal, individualistic point of view into what local food means and why it is
important. These pieces of information can be applied to understanding local food in the
context of other U.S. cities and can help to foster more knowledgeable citizens and
officials as well as further the notions of the local food movement within our society.
References


## Appendix A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restaurant/Organization Code #</th>
<th>Owner Code Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant 1</td>
<td>Owner 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant 2</td>
<td>Owner 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant 3</td>
<td>Owner 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 1</td>
<td>Community Organization 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 2</td>
<td>Local business 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Garden</td>
<td>Community Organizer 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlands Mommy 1</td>
<td>Mommy 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlands Mommy 2</td>
<td>Mommy 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlands Mommy 3</td>
<td>Mommy 3</td>
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*Table 15 Interview Codes*
## Appendix B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Attitude, conceptual, evolving based upon the producer and the consumer’s interpretation; could be in-state, within certain mileage (250mi, 100mi, etc), could be within city limits, or within the neighborhood; subjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locavore</td>
<td>Someone who is committed to eating and consuming local products; typical to have small animals, participate in urban agriculture and sustainable food systems in general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foodie</td>
<td>Someone who is concerned with high quality food; typically has an expendable income with which to purchase high end food; local food, imported food, overall high quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td>A conceptual understanding of and attachment to a location that includes not only the absolute, but the ideological sense of familiarity and uniqueness associated with the location; typically tied to experiences and history within the location; abstract concept with no concrete boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>From Slow Food Movement (&amp; Slow City Movement); emphasis on place and uniqueness of a certain area or region or city; value of particular unique characteristics; aligns with local food by valuing the strengths and the specialties of an area, especially related to food and customs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16 General Definitions
Appendix C

Figure 12  Statistical Neighborhoods of Denver
Appendix D

Interview Questions

Restaurant owners and managers.
- Does your menu align itself with any local food goals? (i.e. serving only local products, etc.)
- Where does the majority of your food come from?
- What are the benefits of using local food?
- Why do you use the food you do? Is it for marketing? Is it purely for health reasons?
- Do you notice a trend in patrons? Socioeconomic trends?

Specialty stores, shops and grocery stores.
- What is your commitment to local food?
- What kind of food/products do you stock in relation to where the food comes from?
- Why do you stock and sell the food you do?
- Are your patrons from the local neighborhood or farther surrounding areas?

Community groups.
- What is your group/organization's view on local food?
- What are some actions taken by your group/org. to promote local food/products?
- How do these actions/initiatives serve the community as a whole?
- As a community group, do you think that local food should be a priority? If so, why? If not, why?

Households.
- What is your interpretation of local?
- Do you have a personal/household commitment to local food?
- Do you grow any of your own food? How much? Make any of your own food such as bread/cheese, etc.?
- How often do you/your family eat out?
- Where do you shop for food? Several places? One supermarket? Primary food retailer for you?
- Do you frequent any specialty shops?
- How would you characterize Highlands in regards to local food? Unique within all of Denver? Similar neighborhoods in Denver? Very active or not?
- Does Highlands Mommies have any local foods initiatives? Food trading, etc.
- Why do you believe local food in Highlands is growing? From household perspective, why support local food movement?
- How would you describe food access within Highlands? Abundant? Sparse? Does it depend on location within neighborhood?
Appendix E

Informed Consent Form

CLASSROOM RESEARCH (Local Food Actions & Motivations in the Highlands Neighborhood of Denver, CO)

You are invited to participate in a study that will explore the local food actions and motivations behind the local food movement in Highland, Denver, CO. In addition, this study is being conducted to fulfill the requirements of a master's thesis in Geography. The study is conducted by Samantha Lester. Results will be used to evaluate how the local food movement plays out in an urban neighborhood and to receive a grade in the course. Samantha Lester can be reached at (314)960-1552 or Samantha.Lester@du.edu. This project is supervised by the course instructor, Dr. Boschmann, Department, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208, Eric.Boschmann@du.edu.

Participation in this study should take about 15-30 minutes of your time. Participation will involve responding to 4-5 questions about your participation in the local food movement, whether it be through community gardening, involvement in a local business or involvement in community organization in Highland. Participation in this project is strictly voluntary. The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort you may discontinue the interview at any time. We respect your right to choose not to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your responses will be identified by code number only and will be kept separate from information that could identify you. This is done to protect the confidentiality of your responses. Only the researcher will have access to your individual data and any reports generated as a result of this study will use only group averages and paraphrased wording. However, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. Although no questions in this interview address it, we are required by law to tell you that if information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, it is required by law that this be reported to the proper authorities.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the interview, please contact Susan Sadler, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-3454, or Sylk Sotto-Santiago, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 303-871-4052 or write to either at the University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

You may keep this page for your records. Please sign the bottom of the page if you understand and agree to the above. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher any questions you have. I have read and understood the foregoing descriptions of the study called Local Food Actions & Motivations in the Highland Neighborhood of Denver, CO. I have asked for and received a satisfactory
explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form.

Signature _____________________ Date _________________
Signature _____________________ Date _________________

___________ I would like a summary of the results of this study to be mailed to me at the following postal or e-mail address: