

How to measure and eventually regulate localness?

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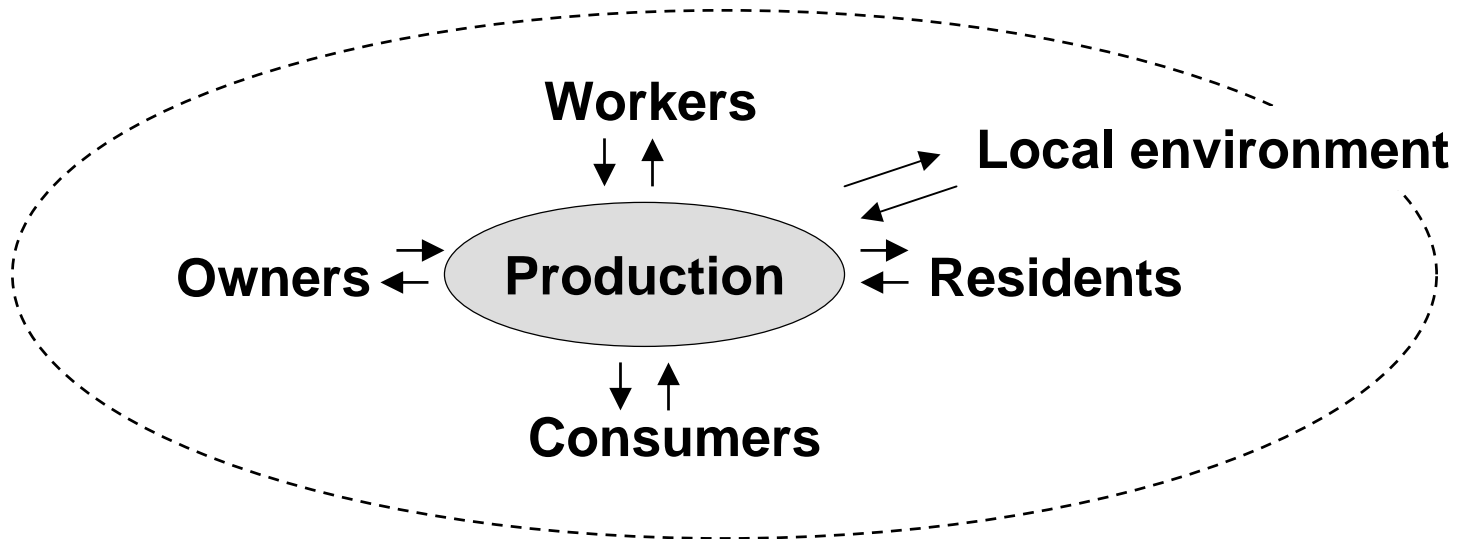
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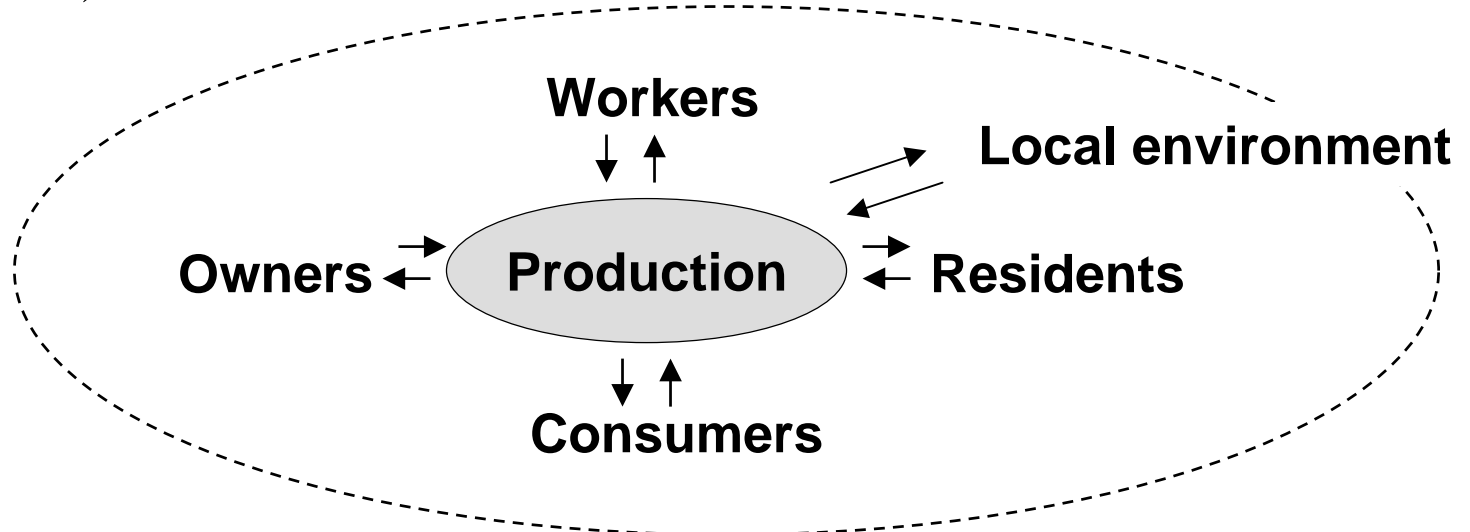
Outline

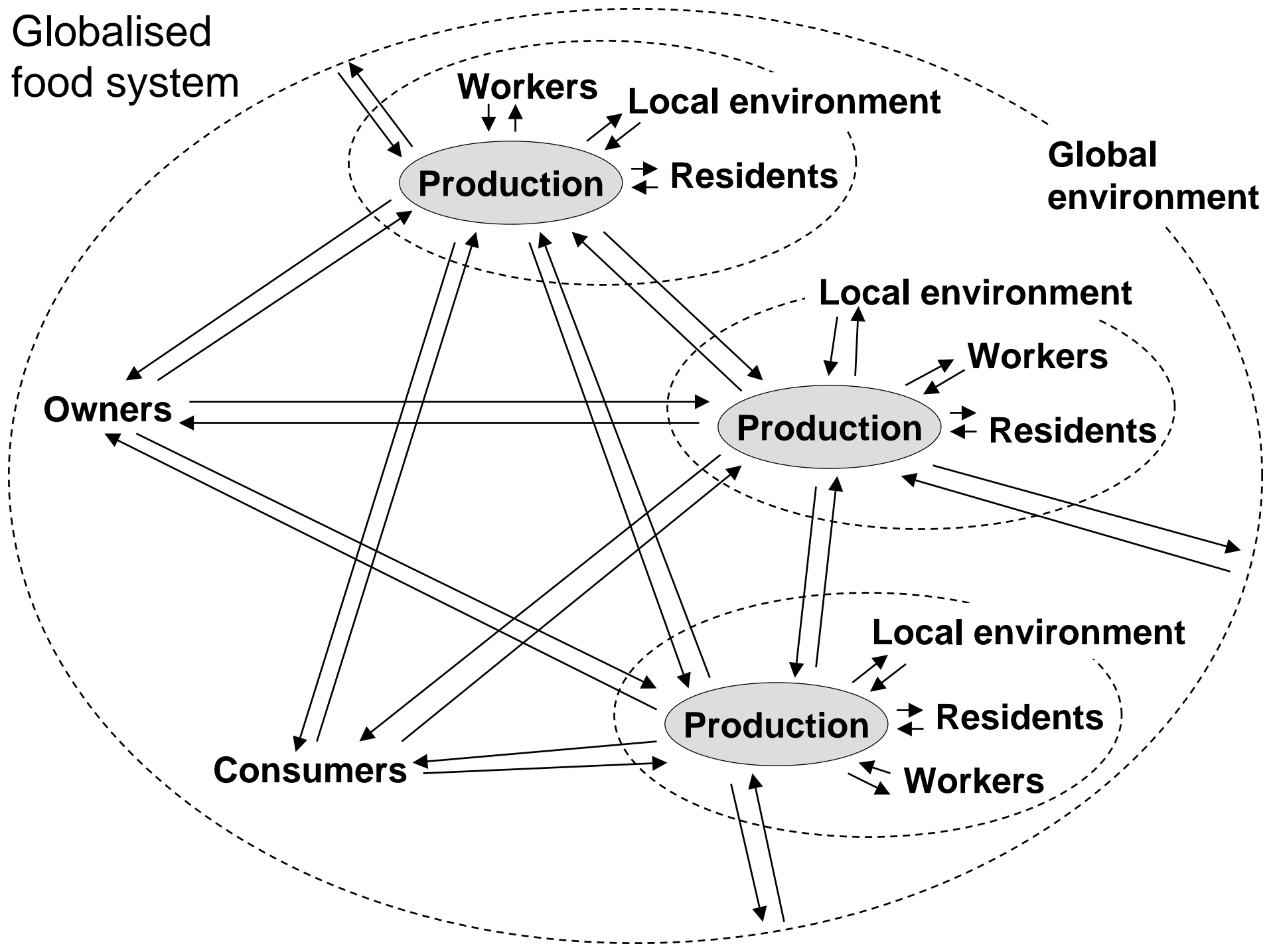
- What is localness?
- Forces and perspectives on localness
- How to measure localness?
- Can localness be regulated?



Localised food systems

- Owners, workers, consumers and residents may be the same persons (or not)
- Arrows denote flows of value (commodity and money exchanges, external costs and benefits)





Two driving forces that work against localness

Globalisation

The erosion of the barriers of time and space that constrain human activity across the earth.

Functional differentiation

The splitting into specialised units and systems.

Enables spatial differentiation and thereby reinforces globalisation

What is localness?

Localness is not just a question of spatial distance

Spatial integration
*ecological and
structural relations*

Social integration
*community and
personal relations*

localness

Economic integration
*market relations
cooperative relations*

(Modified from Kjeldsen 2005)

Two incarnations of organic agriculture

“Certified organic agriculture”

- Produces for the market
- Premium prices
- Governed by regulations and controls

- No rules on trade, transport, power relations, etc.

- New risks of errors and fraud

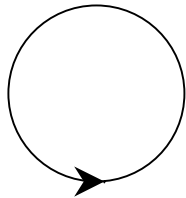
“Non-certified organic agriculture”

- Produces for subsistence and local markets
- No premium prices
- Governed by tradition and personal relations

- Relies on valuable traditions or local awareness and knowledge

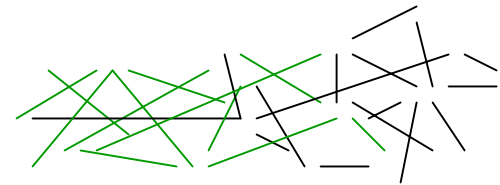
Three perspectives on localness in relation to regulation

Organic values perspective



self-organising system

Market perspective



market networks

localness

Public alternative perspective

organic | conventional

opposition

Regulation

No existing rules on trade and transport

- *New regulation on issues related to localness?*
- *Labels?*
- *Branding?*

Localness issues

- *Growing global trade*
- *Distant transport with food, feed, etc.*

Globalisation

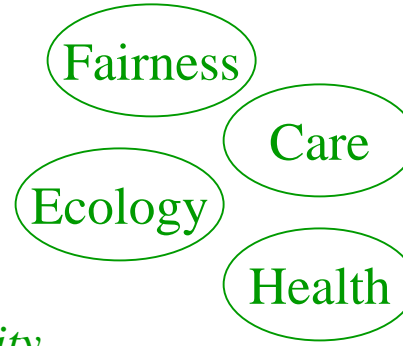
Functional differentiation (specialisation)

Driving forces

Market competition (conventional + organic)

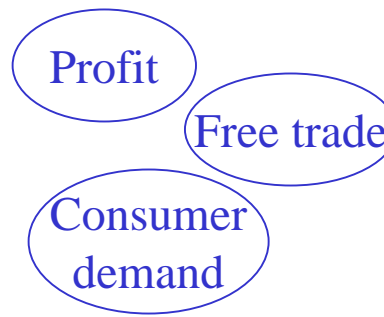
Organic values perspective

- (Un-)fair trade*
- Commodification*
- Ecological (in-)justice*
- Lack of transparency*
- External effects on the environment*
- Loss of functional integrity*



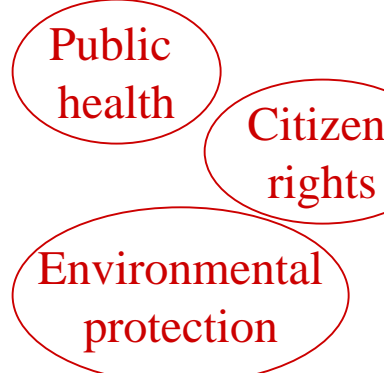
Market perspective

- Growth in turn-over*
- Economic efficiency*
- Cheaper inputs*
- (Un-)fair competition*
- Transport taxes, tariffs*
- Direct marketing income*



Public alternative perspective

- Rural development*
- Food safety*
- Food security*
- Pollution & climate change*
- Animal transport issues*



How to measure localness?

“Simple” measures:

Distance of trade (place of production to place of consumption)

Distance of transport (actual transport path)

More sophisticated measures:

Food miles (may include the transport of ingredients, package, etc.)

Life Cycle Analysis (may include the form of transport, external costs, subproductions, number of steps in the chain, etc.)

How to measure social integration?

What to make of economic integration?

The question of how to measure localness **cannot be decided independently of how to regulate it**, because there are limits to what can be known and measured (hence the need for precaution)

Can localness be regulated?

The role of branding?

Required labelling of localness:

- pictogram of food miles or ...?
- = the consumer chooses, which is good, *but...*
- = she may act on precautionary concerns

Is origin enough?

Local is not just distance

Rules on localness in the regulation:

- a distance limit (200 miles or what? and why?)
- = *in direct conflict with the goals of free trade ...*
- “fixing” issues of localness into the “package” of organic
- = can handle more complex and varied issues than the consumer
- = problematic consequences can be addressed more directly and rules may be contextualised to reflect regional differences, crop differences, etc.
- = but will these rules honour the precautionary concerns of consumers?

How local is local?

How much can we do with regulation?

Comments and questions are most welcome!

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