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**THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF DR. WILLIAM HEFFERNAN AND THE
MISSOURI SCHOOL OF AGRIFOOD STUDIES***

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ABSTRACT

“The Missouri School” refers to a collection of faculty and students studying agrifood systems who have been connected to the Department of Rural Sociology at the University of Missouri–Columbia. Heavily influenced by the populist pragmatist William “Bill” Heffernan, Missouri School analysts focus their attention on structural arrangements, power relationships, and spaces in which struggle for change might result in alternatives to the prevailing system. This article is an introduction to the special issue of *Southern Rural Sociology* devoted to research and theorizing done by students and faculty of the Missouri School. It includes an overview of the development of the Missouri School as told by Heffernan himself, followed by a summary of the articles in this issue.

Since Dr. William “Bill” Heffernan officially retired from the Department of Rural Sociology at the University of Missouri in 2000, several of his colleagues and former students have felt a strong desire, and need, to preserve the several decades of his personal stories and experiences, and his theoretical and methodological contributions, to pay tribute to the value of his work in the field of rural sociology. Following a tribute to his work organized through and presented at the 2008 annual meeting of the Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society (AFHVS) held in New Orleans, LA, many contributors believed that creating a special issue of *Southern Rural Sociology* (*SRS*) was warranted, if only as one humble effort to honor this scholar and advocate. With the support of several contributors whose work is highlighted in this collection of articles, we have chosen, as an introduction to this issue, to weave together a narrative based on Bill’s own words. This is followed by a summary of the contributions to this special issue focused not only on the legacy

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of the Missouri School of Agrifood Studies, but also on its continued development and application.

A REVIEW OF THE EVOLUTION OF “THE MISSOURI SCHOOL”

We conducted a personal interview with Bill in December 2008 on his family farm in Rocheport, Missouri. In typical Heffernan fashion, Bill and his wife Judy treated us and our families to an enjoyable weekend with plenty of good food and conversation. Bill allowed us to interview him for several hours, and he shared notes with us from his AFHVS presentation and a celebration held in his honor at the University of Missouri–Columbia. Together, this material gave us a valuable framework from which we could develop a road map of the Missouri School history and evolution over the past four decades along with Bill’s notable contributions toward building and sustaining it. Readers of this article will no doubt quickly realize that we have only sketched a basic framework here, as told by one person. This article is meant to provide background and context to the works presented in this issue of *SRS*. We hope to flesh out Bill’s narrative and his perspective on the Missouri School in other venues. This introduction is one small step in what would surely be a long walk.

The Early Days

Raised on an Iowa farm as the oldest son, Bill had every intention of returning to the family farm and remaining a permanent resident of that area after graduating from college in 1961. Though he did return for a few years, he was well aware that farmers had faced tough financial times in the 1950s, and the 1960s appeared even less promising. With many young people leaving rural communities during that period, Bill eventually did so himself. Shortly after graduation, he served as an International Farm Youth Exchange delegate to Iran, held by the Iranian Community Development Agency. Reflecting upon that experience, Bill said he was not convinced that applying the American model of agriculture to social problems in the peasant villages of Iran would improve their social well-being. He felt the need to first determine the social costs and benefits of our own system before exporting that system to other countries where one could predict even greater community disruptions.

Since the end of WWII, the structure of agriculture had been undergoing major change, moving toward ever greater corporate concentration coupled with the use of hybrid seed corn, fertilizer, chemicals, and higher-priced equipment becoming the norm. On the Heffernan family farm in Iowa, economic risk was increasing with a

reduction in the price of corn, as well as in net income. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) was denying the fact that the family farm system was changing. Bill's main interest, then, was to understand the causes and consequences of these changes better.

Within a year or two after Bill entered graduate school in 1963 at the University of Wisconsin, early waves of Peace Corps volunteers were returning home and were attracted to the study of rural sociology at departments such as those at Wisconsin and Cornell. They comprised a critical mass of graduate students at these universities, influencing the classroom experience with their personal testimonies of international development work. Mainstream rural sociology then, however, was focused on demographic studies, education, occupations, adoption/diffusion, and quantitative research methodologies. Functional theory dominated and was being used to provide justification for the existing social order. The "middle range" approach to theory examined communities and organizations and implied an avoidance of macro economics. The prevailing school of thought did not fit Bill or the Peace Corps volunteers, as they searched for a more critical perspective than functional theory. Graduate students like Bill and Richard Rodefeld, among others, symbolized a new strain of rural sociologist. With Keith Warner as his major advisor, and through his teaching and research assistantships, Bill developed an understanding of organizational theory, a background that would later serve him well in studying agrifood systems. In fact, the first content course he taught was industrial sociology. Bill's second area of interest was stratification. Though he wanted to do a dissertation on agricultural issues, Bill ultimately focused on status inconsistency, completing in 1966.

Bill commenced his academic career as a faculty member at Louisiana State University (LSU) in 1967. His first major research effort was to revisit the 1944 Goldschmidt study of Arvin and Dinuba, California, later presented through the book *As You Sow* (Goldschmidt 1947). Bill said he had been introduced to the Goldschmidt study in an undergraduate class, which was part of the reason he chose rural sociology as his disciplinary area. Bill knew that Goldschmidt had lost his position in USDA because of his study. Bill notes, "We, as young Rural Sociologists, did have some forewarning of the possible consequences of such a research agenda. I was able to navigate the sometimes troubled waters, but some of my colleagues were not so fortunate and followed the path of Goldschmidt."

Bill selected a position at LSU because he wanted to study the contract production broiler industry in Louisiana. With the support of then department chair Al Bertrand, Bill was field pretesting his research questionnaire within his first

year. This research was more quantitative than Goldschmidt's study, and Bill added the new structural term "corporate-integratee" to the previously utilized "corporate-farmhand" and "family farm" structures, insights that Bill attributes to the work of University of Missouri Agricultural Economist James Rhodes. In industrial sociology, Bill was using three similar terms of production systems—craft, cottage-industry, and factory (see Heffernan 1972). This groundbreaking study with poultry producers in Union Parish set the stage for a career of work, including two additional follow up studies (see Heffernan and Lind 2000).

According to Bill, one of the main works shaping his thoughts at this time was *Individual Freedom and the Economic Organization of Agriculture* (1965), written by institutional economist Harold Breimyer of the University of Missouri Department of Agricultural Economics. In this book, other essays, and in presentations, Breimyer made it clear that the traditional, competitive family-farm system was not being restructured because it had in any way failed to provide food for this society. The problem was corporate structural arrangements increasingly dominating and controlling the system through coordinated marketing strategies. Breimyer noted that there were many government safe guards and regulations to assure that markets remained competitive and fulfilled their obligations to provide adequate food for society, but they only existed to the extent that there was broad-based societal preference and commitment to this form of production. Building from Breimyer's insights, Bill wanted to explore what was happening with the dominant agrifood system. Why was it becoming ever more centralized, and what were the implications of these changes to farm families, their communities, and the broader society?

The First Generation of Missouri School Scholars

It was his intellectual alliance with Breimyer and Rhodes that encouraged Bill to apply for a Rural Sociology position at the University of Missouri in 1969, for which he was subsequently hired by then department chair Daryl Hobbs. Rhodes and Breimyer were good colleagues from a different department on campus.

As Bill arrived in Missouri, the National Farm Organization (NFO) and the Farm Bureau (FB) were in conflict, with associated sometimes violent conflict spilling over onto farms and communities in the region. Bill accompanied Rhodes and Breimyer to a meeting in St. Louis with heads of farm organizations, and he organized a conference day focusing on the Sociology of Agriculture. During this period, Jim Hightower began discussing concentration in agriculture (see Hightower 1975). From there, Bill began to research and publish his work with

these notable agricultural economists, as well as with Missouri graduate Gary Green (see Green and Heffernan 1984). Soon, though, the institutional economists and natural resources economists started to retire, relocate to other institutions, and/or get marginalized by the agricultural economics administration at Missouri. The neo-liberal economists influenced by the Chicago School of economics were leading the dominant neoclassical economic paradigm across the country and replacing the institutional economists. While this was occurring, however, the Sociology of Agriculture was gaining in strength. Bill notes:

We in Rural Sociology, however, were called on less and less to take part in activities in the Agricultural Economics Department. In fact, the growing difference between the economic perspective and the sociological perspective was becoming increasingly clear. In many ways, the Missouri School of Sociology of Agriculture replaced the grand old Missouri School of institutional economists.

The Role Played by Judy Heffernan

Bill's wife, Judy Heffernan, has undeniably been an important participant in his work and the development of the Missouri School as a whole. As Bill tells the story, Judy worked for the Methodist Church, at an multidenominational level. Around 1987, the American Jewish Committee stated its concern about the farm crisis and wanted to organize a conference around this issue. This Committee wanted to collaboratively develop a declaration that Protestants and Catholics would be willing to sign jointly. Judy wrote the declaration statement before the meeting, and after an extensive discussion, the multidenominational group approved it with only two minor editorial changes. This type of advocacy and activism around issues of faith and justice permeated what was coming to be the Missouri School, and "they weren't ashamed of it," Bill emphasized.

As the 1980s farm crisis unfolded, Bill and Judy worked together more regularly. They received an invitation from the Mexico, Missouri University Extension office to come to the community and talk about stress. They bought a stack of Styrofoam boards (2" x 4"s) to use for a demonstration of their message, with each board symbolizing different stressors associated with daily life on the farm. They kept stacking up the Styrofoam pieces until they fell on the floor, as Bill explained:

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Judy had the family stresses, all the things you disagree with within the family. I came in with all the stress that occurs on the farm. But on a family farm, you bring the two of these together. So I had the cattle get out.... That first one [meeting], I mean, we were dumbfounded, just looking at each other. We didn't know it was going to be this; we just had them rolling.

The next day, their presentation was the major story in the local newspaper. The Director of Extension asked Bill to chair a committee to examine how Extension could respond to the farm crisis. He recalls, "What people were experiencing was something other than stress. For stress, they could get help, but this was different."

A holiday season phone call from Calvin Beale within the U.S. Department of Agriculture to Bill informed him that the House Agriculture Committee wanted a study done for the 1985 Farm Bill to help those being forced off the farm by determining what their needs were. Bill asked for \$7,000 to do the study. Though Judy was not currently at the University of Missouri because of budget cuts, she helped Bill interview forty families in Chariton County, Missouri, with a four-month completion deadline of May. Bill notes: "That's a shorter time than most sociologists do research, but we were able to devote time to it, and of course that became one of the classic studies for everyone." Through their interview project, Bill and Judy had witnessed a type of "collective depression" that moved from one family to another (see Heffernan and Heffernan 1986). This depression was contagious. They tried to help bankers understand the farmers' situation. Bill had met a banker who had to foreclose on his brother. Even bankers committed suicide. Bill noted, "I had to get out of it; Judy continued."

Section 1440 of the 1985 Farm Bill was testimony to their effectiveness as a research team, as it provided funds to help address farm crisis stress, with approximately eighteen states eventually receiving support. The study highlighted the need for mental health assistance. Bill and Judy became the "darlings of rural mental health people." In 1988, they received an award for outstanding research from the National Rural Mental Health Organization. In a year and a half, they had been in thirty-three states in the US and six provinces in Canada doing the presentation. As Bill noted, "We were Rural Sociologists. The whole was created by the sum of the parts [Bill and Judy]. It was hard to compete against a team." Subsequently, Missouri Extension field staff wanted to hire Judy to serve as a specialist for their counties and to set up a hotline to help Extension staff deal with people's needs in their communities. Bill continued:

So what we learned early on, what was happening is we were getting burnout from Extension people, and what happened was the people who were doing the most good, helping the most people, families that were in trouble, were the ones that would just lock up and leave....We had two phone lines coming into my office. We never knew when the phone rang whether it was going to be Paul Lasley...always got a funny story...or whether it was a suicide call.

The farm crisis was the “ultimate in the social upheaval because of the change in the structure of agriculture.” More farms were lost in the 1950s compared with the 1980s. Mostly, though, parents stayed on the farm. The children left the farm. People got by through purchasing fewer inputs. Things had changed by the 1980s. Bill explained:

The old saying on the farm was at cut time the family just tightened the belt. When the major input on the farm was labor, then that would be the input that would go... but once labor became just a small percent of the total input into that farm, tightening the belt didn't have much impact. If farmers came back in the 1960s, they may have made it because land and inputs were cheap. If farmers wanted to come back during the 1970s, they had to borrow money and get big. With the low prices of the 1980s, they were toast...and so who went under? It was young families and then the grandparents.

Bill talked about the farm crisis in his classes, but not too directly. He and Judy believed that they saved some families, but lost some too. The project provided the Heffernans some background for their future work. They really developed their reputation during the farm crisis. They always worked closely with the news media and never had a bad story written about them. They knew how to develop trust with people—colleagues, students, and the public.

The Next Generation of Scholars

By the 1990s, the Sociology of Agriculture was a recognized specialty in the Department of Rural Sociology. The University of Missouri hired Jere Gilles and later acquired Alessandro Bonanno and Sandy Rikoon, a forklorist. Alessandro greatly increased the visibility of the program through his writings and international involvement. Sandy expanded the environmental emphasis of the

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program. Bill is quick to point out that graduate students provided the extra critical mass needed to establish the school of thought and body of work later considered the Missouri School. Doug Constance, Mary Hendrickson, Bob Gronski, Mike Seipel, Leland Glenna, and Andy Raedeke joined the Department by the early 1990s.

The “Missouri School” label was identified when one of these students attended a meeting and found out that there was a name being used concerning this eclectic group of researchers. As Bill tells the story,

[T]hose of us at Missouri did not select the name. The name was originally given to us by members of the International Sociological Association Research Committee on Sociology of Agriculture. We were a bit slow to accept the short-hand identification of our work, but we came to appreciate the recognition. It did acknowledge that “the team” encompassed a number of colleagues and administrators from an array of departments within the college and across campus.

Bill had developed a proposal to form a “think tank” of sorts at the University of Missouri focused on the Sociology of Agriculture. Although his initial funding pursuits were not fruitful, the concept essentially developed on its own and through the 1990s the program included the group of graduate students previously listed, and subsequently Anna Kleiner, John Green, Phil Howard, and David Lind. Additionally, Elizabeth Barham was hired as the first female faculty member in the Department of Rural Sociology, and she helped bridge the two major programs in the department, namely sociology of community with sociology of agriculture, food and environment. Bill explained, “We were giving papers at RSS [Rural Sociological Society] and AFHVS. It was a critical mass. We needed this for a Rural Sociology department. There were at least four faculty members in the Sociology of Agriculture—Bill, Jere, Alessandro, and Doug, and then Judy [Heffernan] and Mary.” Bill continued:

The issue was power—political economy—the role of power and how it shapes everything else. Power changes communities. MNCs [Multinational Corporations] could crush whatever national food system a country had... We [the Missouri School] swamped the world. We have a name now...

The context of the times, especially in terms of political economic change, is critical to understanding the development of the Missouri School. Following on the tails of the not-too-distant farm crisis of the 1980s, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was being discussed and promoted by major corporations. For example, when NAFTA passed in the early 1990s, Cargill built a plant in Alberta, Canada, illustrating the underlying thread of concentration of power and problems coming from that. The US retail sector was still decentralized, but then centralization accelerated in the 1990s. Retail stores in Europe had already started to consolidate. By the end of that decade, consumers were protesting.

In this environment, individuals contributing to the Missouri School were getting involved in collective action and started to talk about debates over structure versus agency. Armed with the now famous “concentration study” (Heffernan, Hendrickson, and Gronski 1999) based on research to inform advocacy and the development of alternatives, Mary and Bill were starting to cover the state with the newly re-formed Missouri Farmers Union (MFU) to discuss issues with concentration. After a thorough investigation of concentration in the realm of production, the Missouri School then began to study concentration in retailing, thereby taking analysis from the seed to the plate. Bill notes:

Input suppliers were concentrating—buying out other firms but using the same names. ConAgra had poultry in Portugal and Spain but under other names. The Missouri School saw the need for international research for studying international organizations (e.g., MNCs). Mary and I knew more about the food chain in Europe because they were US-based firms (e.g., Cargill and Bunge).

Mary and Bill were examining the supply chain in Europe and laying out the data for others studying similar structural patterns. As Bill contends, vertical concentration chains were a major contribution from growers to suppliers (e.g., Cargill and Monsanto) to retail:

It was the best of academia. The Wageningen School had a major identity.¹ The Missouri School was a counter-school...It was structure vs. agency at that point. We [Mary and Bill] did work on the alternatives.

¹As Bill explains, the Wageningen School focused on agency as a catalyst for structural change. As retail was concentrating in Europe in the 1990s, consumer boycotts were effective; actions by citizens could produce change.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of big firms? Focus on weaknesses—can't develop trust like a local food system...there's my farmer'...when you have a few minutes with a customer, you want to educate them.

Bill's fight continued with neoclassical economists. He was not as interested in the abstract theory; however, he always respected the theorists—Bill Friedland, Larry Busch, Clarence Lo, and Ken Benson. He says that he benefitted from being close to Arts and Sciences people—from being a joint department [Sociology and Rural Sociology] at the University of Missouri. The theory that came out of the Missouri School was based on the empirical evidence, as Bill notes:

That's the role we played—we had to have the theory. ...we broke beyond functionalism—a critical analysis; we broke the bounds that were confining [Merton's theory]. We had to fight for legitimacy every step of the way; we first had to deal with the adoption-diffusion people. In the 1960s, Rural Sociology departments were the darlings of agriculture colleges. They knew how to disseminate information to rich farmers.

For Bill and other critical-minded Rural Sociologists, getting research published in the dominant journals was part of the challenge. They could not get their work published anywhere for a while. Bill's Louisiana poultry study was published in *Sociologia Ruralis* (see: Heffernan 1972), yet he first had to take out his methods section for that to occur. Wisconsin was trying to be a top quantitative-oriented department in the early years. People were tied in with agricultural economics departments and bought into the neoclassical school of thought. This stifled critical analysis and debate. Bill explained:

Size [of farm operation] was a measure of structure that they used. There was no sociological theoretical grounding in size. They all used census data relative to size. Linda Lobao got it more straightened out.²

²Lobao (1990) places the Goldschmidt debate in a broader contextual framework on inequality, finding that the structure of the local economy and the creation of inequality are associated with the capacity of producers and their households to modify the conditions of production. Using counties as the unit of analysis, Lobao finds that as industrialized farming takes hold, the potential for future well-being in an area tends to decline.

When size is used, there is no relationship; when structure is used, there is a relationship.

THE MISSOURI SCHOOL TODAY

Bill contends that Agrifood Studies is strongest in independent rural sociology departments. As for the future of the Missouri School at the University of Missouri, he believes they need a “center” behind the work of Mary Hendrickson (see Hendrickson 2009) and Sandy Rikoon; otherwise, there is not much hope for the Missouri School at its home institution. Debates over sustainable agriculture are changing each year. Missouri needs to maintain a core faculty to build the reputation to attract Ph.D. students. Bill argues that the dominant issue within what has become the Sociology of Agriculture and Food, or Agrifood Studies, is at the international level. Much of what has happened has occurred at the community level, but larger forces are so entrenched, he emphasizes:

With almost half of the world’s population having an annual income of less than \$800, who is going to feed them? It won’t be the firms. That’s the real crisis.

In rural areas, when tied into a local, self-sufficient system, they could survive. The effort now is to force them off the farm or make them become part of the market system. They are going to starve. The dueling vision is where it is at (see: Stokstad 2008). The global food system is the crisis...Now there is oil; we are using a model from the industrial age when labor was important—still using it with agriculture. It makes us very inefficient regarding other inputs. This system will not work. We need to decentralize the energy system and food system. We need a model to use local systems. The problem is that large capital goes with large systems.

Bill claims that there are two major sides in the debate: the agribusiness firms versus the social scientists. Bill notes that the Missouri School redoubled its efforts in the past few years as firm concentration at all stages of the food system became global. Bob Gronski and Mary Hendrickson are credited with greatly enhancing the Missouri School’s visibility at the international level, bringing together insights from the applied academics and nongovernmental organizations. Discussion of their work by Stokstad (2008) has helped to legitimize the alternative visions at the global level.

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Bill concluded our interview with a point about David Korten's book *When Corporations Rule the World* (2001):

He [Korten] makes the point that corporations look to neoclassic economic theory for their legitimacy...for example, they justify larger and larger size firms by arguing increased efficiency backed up by the principle of economies of size...but increasingly, civil society is looking to sociologists to provide the academic legitimacy to support their vision for the food system.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS SPECIAL ISSUE

Several notable theoreticians and practitioners from the Missouri School of Agrifood Studies have contributed to this special issue of *Southern Rural Sociology* by sharing their theoretical and applied perspectives. All but one contributor either attended the University of Missouri as a graduate student in rural sociology and/or worked there as a faculty member or postdoc researcher in the department (see Appendix for short biographies of the contributors).

The first article by Alessandro Bonanno, entitled "Sociology of Agriculture and Food Beginning and Maturity: The Contribution of the Missouri School (1976–1994)," explores the development of the sociology of agriculture and food, as a separate substantive area from rural sociology, both domestically and internationally. Alessandro argues that Bill's theoretical and methodological approach to studying this area is grounded in the American tradition of pragmatic democracy, as exemplified by the classical work of John Dewey, emphasizing practical outcomes and radical democracy. The Missouri School thus has developed a strongly grounded approach to the development of macro theory.

The second article by Doug Constance, entitled "Contested Globalization of the Agrifood System: Sanderson Farms and Seaboard," presents two case studies of agribusiness expansion in Texas. Doug uses the "contested terrain" framework for studying the globalization of poultry and hog production, as an alternative to the structuralist and post-modernist interpretations of the processes of globalization. His work illustrates the importance of case study to the Missouri School approach to research.

In the third article, "Visualizing Food System Concentration and Consolidation," Phil Howard discusses the different visual models and analogies of the agrifood system that have emerged from the Missouri School. For example, Bill and Mary have used the food system "hour glass" to describe the concentration of

power within the system, especially in processing, the primary conduit between producers and consumers. Bill has also utilized a chain to illustrate the various links (actors) within the food “chain.” Phil explores the use of electronic visual tools by graphically portraying changes and increases in the concentration in the organic food system. Large data sets that contain evidence of the growth in corporate power are more clearly depicted and understood through tree maps, cartographic maps, cluster diagrams, taxonomic tree/timelines, and animations. In all, Phil’s work demonstrates the state of the art and science of studying corporate concentration, a key element of the Missouri School framework.

In the fourth article, “Agribusiness Concentration, Intellectual Property, and the Prospects for Rural Economic Benefits from the Emerging Biofuel Economy,” Leland Glenna and Daniel Cahoy explore the promotion of biofuels as a rural economic development strategy. Commodity producers are often assumed to be key beneficiaries of this emerging industry; however, intellectual property rights and agribusiness concentration can restrict producer access to and profitability from this industry. The authors outline the potential implications for farmers and rural communities, and in doing so, provide support for the need to explore and understand corporate concentration and the impacts of power on decision making.

In the fifth article, “World Trade, Farm Policy, and Agribusiness Accountability: The Role of Reflexive Modernization in Constructing a Democratic Food System,” Bob Gronski and Leland Glenna analyze responses to recent global trade policies and related organizations, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). While critics of these trade policies and agreements argue that they favor the continued growth of transnational agribusinesses at the expense of small farmers, consumers, and the environment, opponents in the US have means by which they can promote the interests of alternative agriculture, environmental protection, and food sovereignty. Bob and Leland apply the theory of reflexive modernization to highlight the ability of various advocacy groups to influence the policy process. Their article sheds light on the struggle between the dominant agrifood system and attempts to critique it and provide alternatives.

“Escaping the Bondage of the Dominant Agrifood System: Community-Based Cooperative Strategies,” by John Green and Anna Kleiner, provides a sociological/historical account of the challenges faced by limited resource and minority farmers, and then reviews how civil society organizations have worked to promote and implement important changes to food production and marketing strategies. Furthermore, they show that such community-based organizations have pursued public policies to counter the dominant system of industrialization and

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corporate concentration. John and Anna use social movement and livelihoods theories to articulate the position of limited resource and minority producers in the southern US and how these producers have been successful at developing local responses as community-based cooperatives and other organizations.

Finally, Mary Hendrickson, in “Creating Alternatives: Community Responses to the Global Food System,” presents a structural analysis of alternative food systems through the case of the Kansas City Food Circle, with which she has collaborated for several years. Weaving in her personal narrative as a theorist, applied researcher, practitioner, and outspoken activist, Mary’s case study shows the struggle in which farmers, consumers, and communities engage as they seek to create sustainable alternatives within existing political, social, and economic structures. Although everyday “praxis” can create spaces for transformative food systems, the extent to which broad-based social change can be achieved remains unknown.

This collection of interrelated articles illustrates both the important legacy of the Missouri School of Agrifood Studies and the promise of the directions its students have taken it. Clearly, the authors were deeply and profoundly influenced by Bill Heffernan, and their commitment to studying the intersections of structure, power, and struggles for change is testament to this. However, just as Bill would want them to do, these authors have taken the work in new and exciting directions. In them and their students, the Missouri School will live on.

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