EXAMINING MOBILE MARKETS AS A RESPONSE TO FOOD ACCESS BARRIERS

by

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(Under the Direction of Jerry Shannon)

ABSTRACT

Food access is an important and complicated front that impacts millions of people nationally. This study works to provide an understanding of how two mobile markets function in two communities in the state of Georgia to help offer insights to responding to food access barriers across the state and the country. Both of these mobile markets work to provide access to food to households that encounter one or more barriers to food access. While both mobile markets share similar goals and even some methods in providing food, they differ in a few critical ways in terms of operations. The design and structure of each market is significantly different. Because different needs and attributes of a population may require specific structuring, having an evaluation of the two market models used can serve as a resource for the setup and implementation of future market initiatives. This study demonstrates the ways in which mobile markets work to expand access to food as well as the limitations that they encounter. In addition to evaluating the different models in terms of effectiveness and functionality, this study also examines the ways that mobile markets contend with the neoliberal food system.

INDEX WORDS: food access, food justice, food politics, mobile markets

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Doing research is hard. Writing a thesis is hard. Striving to do activism toward a more just food system is hard. Being a nontraditional, first generation student makes all of this even harder. While I hope that this content will start some interesting conversations around food justice and mobile markets, this thesis is not a demonstration of perfection. It is a demonstration of resilience and persistence. In food justice work collective action and ethics of care come up frequently. These features are also true in supporting a graduate student.

I absolutely could not have persisted without the patience, love, support, and motivation of my husband, Brian. He endured many meltdowns, tears, and frustration through this process, and I am thankful to have him by and on my side. I also must thank my parents Sandy and Mark, who made sure I was well fed through the long days and nights and for their unconditional love and support through all of my endeavors. My best friend, Samantha Stevens, who took this journey on with me and has never stopped pushing me forward with humor, grace, and empathy, I am incredibly thankful for. Finally, I have to acknowledge the two women who founded these two mobile markets. They have taught me the skills needed to be a true community leader. They are compassionate and passionate about the work they do, and I respect their efforts and the immense amount of time and support they gave me to do this work. We should always make space to honor the land and histories of the spaces in which research takes place. With regard to the space that I occupy, I would like to acknowledge the Creek and Cherokee peoples.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

There are many contributors to hunger and nearly all of them stem from injustices embedded in our food system. These injustices are results of a history of institutionalized racism, the lack of equitable economic and development policy, unsustainable agriculture, lack of affordable housing, wage gaps, and the list continues. The food justice movement and literature (among others) demonstrate ways to think about and grapple with these deeply rooted causes to hunger. One big piece of the hunger puzzle is access to food. Many barriers, often symptoms of the root issues mentioned above, make it challenging for certain households to access healthy, culturally appropriate, and equitably sourced food options. Issues around food access are complicated and multifaceted. The thought of subverting a behemoth system such as our national and global food system is daunting. While efforts toward more long term and sustaining change are needed, many food movements and activists are starting smaller, with their own communities to tackle barriers to food access. One initiative gaining popularity in recent decades is the use of mobile markets. Mobile markets are community-based approaches to addressing food barriers that can look like pop-up farmers' markets, a repurposed vehicle like a bus, or a number of other iterations that bring in fresh produce to a community. This project operates on two levels: 1) assessing the ways these mobile markets open up non-capitalist food spaces through an emphasis on community commons, and 2) evaluating the different organizational approaches of the mobile markets for an informed understanding of efficient modes of contending with community food access barriers.

It is important to clarify terms that will be used throughout this thesis and are often used in wider literatures on food justice and food barriers. Just as the barriers that contribute to food access issues are layered and entwined, so too are the terms used to talk about hunger and food accessibility. This project looks at addressing the experience of hunger through food access barriers, but it is important to understand that hunger is experienced and discussed through an array of terms. To begin, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations describes food access as referring to a household's ability to acquire food (FAOUN, 2006). Food insecurity is another term that is important to this conversation around food access and hunger. The USDA describes food insecurity as a household's inability to obtain consistent access to food. The relationship between food access and food security is undeniable as one's inability to access food may result in food insecurity, however they remain distinct in that food access measures barriers to obtaining food while food security is a household's inability to obtain adequate, reliable food. Another concept closely linked to food security and food access is that of food deserts. According to the USDA, food deserts are areas or neighborhoods that are low income and have low access to grocery stores or other food sources. All of these terms touch on different facets of hunger and often overlap one another, but it is important to make the distinction between the various ways we assess hunger and talk about hunger. Using only one term to understand hunger in a community can be extremely limiting and risks missing the entire story. Discussing and thinking about hunger in more holistic ways can help generate more holistic programming and solutions to addressing the varying needs of different groups within the community or neighborhood. The word community can take on a variety of definitions and meanings. For this research, community is defined as, "a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or

settings," (MacQueen et al., 2001, p.1929). Each market community in this research is geographically bounded by neighborhoods whose characteristics and needs may vary from location to location.

The food justice and food access literature will help provide a more in-depth discussion around language used to examining issues around food access as well as reinforce the importance of intentional language in discussing experiences of hunger and disparities in access to food. Additionally, the food access literature provides an understanding of local barriers to food access in communities. Communities, like other ecosystems consist of a variety of groups, stakeholders and power structures. In this project the communities discussed are physically bounded by the county lines of where the markets are taking place. The locations of the markets are then selected within the community in spaces that lack infrastructure to support healthy food options for that specific area. It is important to be mindful that communities are not homogeneous entities and that there are often competing values, needs, and barriers that arise. This project explores the ways that different groups with communities participate or do not participate in expanding food access. The food justice literature provides the context for how our food system became so laden with racist, sexist, and classist discriminations. It provides the foundation for understanding how the barriers to food access came to be and the action needed to respond with sustainable solutions. It allows for a critical lens for examining mobile markets. Additionally, this project draws on the literature of food politics to analyze the ways in which mobile markets may create spaces to counter capitalist modes of producing and consuming food as well as exploring ways that they provide communities with autonomy to generate political change. It is this piece that may speak to addressing the food system at a larger and deeper level, which is a frequent critique of mobile markets.

Part of my research asks how mobile markets contribute to a more transformative food politics. The term food politics broadly encompasses policy, legislation, and even ideology around the ways we produce, distribute, and consume food. Food politics is a tremendous piece of the food (in)access puzzle and I was admittedly surprised to observe the ways in which these mobile markets addressed food access barriers. The markets did bring in fresh food to low access areas. The organizers worked to be very deliberate about the methods used in obtaining food, the land that was selected to produce food, and were thoughtful in deciding who gets the food produced and what kinds of transactions would be most appropriate for their market. This, in a number of ways exemplifies how mobile markets can be anti-capitalist spaces that intentionally work to uncover and respond to economic disparities and promoting community autonomy by selecting public land that is accessible for growing food, using organic methods for food production, gathering input from community members on what to grow, and not charging money for the exchange of goods. Our current food system thrives off of profit and monetary transactions which lend to the exploitation of labor. These mobile markets operate in near opposition to monetary transactions, one market is completely free to consumers. Organizers also emphasized that the markets utilized common land, especially land not privately owned, to build space for community gathering, offer social outlets for people to meet, and exchange goods. This made me consider the market spaces to function more similarly to that of the idea of The Commons. These goods being exchanged are not limited to food items such as produce and bread, but also in terms of information (i.e. nutritional information from nurses or as recipe suggestions from a neighbor) and expanding social capital. These tendencies also intentionally or unintentionally in some cases, promoted community autonomy. In one example, the community completely supported the mobile market and other community members without money

exchanged or using outside food. They grew their own food for their own consumption and they alone made the choices about where to grow, how to distribute, and who to prioritize in giving away the food within the community. Engaging in spaces that act more as the commons than the traditional capitalist centered places of transactions, utilizing methods of production that emphasize equity and sustainability, and creating spaces for building social capital not only all contribute to an increase in immediate access to fresh food, but also demonstrate opportunities to contend with food politics in more transformative ways.

This project also evaluates the functionality of two mobile market models. Both markets are located in North Georgia and work to bring more nutrient filled food options to their community members. Additionally, the markets bring other resources such as health screenings, nutrition information, and cooking demonstrations. While the goals of the markets are similar in that they want to expand access to healthy food options to their respective communities, they differ notably in design and structure. I evaluated the two markets on their design such as how and where they set up the markets, what they included in their markets (both in terms of food as well as other resources), and how they targeted residents and facilitated participation. The two markets operated under two unique models, one that was not membership based and largely open to the public while the other utilized a membership only model. An evaluation of market models is important for a few different reasons. First, it provides a means for assessing a community's needs. Second, it provides insight into considering various populations within communities that an organization is interested in targeting (e.g. a market might specifically want to support a specific neighborhood or perhaps a group with underlying health conditions or maybe senior citizens in a community). An evaluation of differing market models can be helpful as a pragmatic resource for other groups striving to do similar work in their own communities. This evaluation

will allow others to analyze which model or which aspects of the different models might work best for their community's needs.

I hope that this project will provide a resource for communities, nonprofits, policymakers, researchers, foodies and others interested in addressing food access barriers and working toward a more just food system. This research will contribute to the growing knowledge around alternative food movements by examining the challenges, efficacy, and benefits that mobile markets provide to low food access communities. This project offers a critical evaluation of two market models as they attempt to expand food access to their communities. It addresses the obstacles they each experienced as well as insights into market logistics that may be helpful for other groups looking to do similar work. I also hope this project will open up more room for conversations around the ways mobile markets can be utilized as more transformative spaces for food politics and the ways that they can serve as a counter to the capitalist food regime.

Food access disparities exist for a number of reasons. A history of racist food production and policy, wage gaps, geographic location, and inadequate transportation systems are examples of larger, systemic issues that contribute to unequal access to fresh foods. These markets work to address the symptoms (low food access, food insecurity, hunger, health conditions of people) of those systemic issues by bringing in fresh food and resources to communities who are most affected by low access to food resulting from one or more barriers. With that said, one of the most current and viable critiques of mobile market projects is that they are superficial at best; only providing a band aid to the much deeper issues around food access. While I agree that many alternative movements indeed fall desperately short in producing any real sustainable change for our food system, I also hope that this project will shed some light onto the possibility that mobile markets may actually work deeper than initially believed while also confronting the immediate

needs of community members experiencing hunger. If mobile markets are used in an intentional way that engages with the systemic issues around capitalist modes of production and consumption, addresses the ways that race and gender impact a community's ability to gain access to food options, and generate spaces that build community, inclusivity, and social capital, they possess the potential to offer a more transformative approach to food injustice. This project offers insight into mobile markets that goes beyond simply putting food on the table.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review and Framing

Food Access

What is food access and why is there a problem?

There are numerous barriers to food access. These barriers are layered and multifaceted making it challenging to devise sustainable solutions to expanding access to food. Barriers may include inadequate transportation options, low income, expensive housing, health and mobility issues, among many others (Huang, 2012). Food access according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, means "adequate resources for acquiring appropriate foods for a nutritious diet" (2006). Food insecurity, as described by the USDA, is a household's inability to obtain consistent access to food in order to thrive. While not necessarily interchangeable, food access and food insecurity are directly bound together as the inability to access food may significantly impact a household or an individual's food security. According to the USDA, the national rate of food insecurity in 2018 was 11.1% meaning that approximately 41,204,000 Americans were unable to obtain adequate nutrition on a regular basis (www.usda.gov). The state of Georgia exceeds the national average food insecurity rate at a little over 15% (https://map.feedingamerica.org/). Athens-Clarke County has a staggering food insecurity rate of 21.6% (https://map.feedingamerica.org/). Food insecure households are more likely to experience hunger and chronic health conditions.

Limitations of food access terminology

"What I would rather say instead of "food desert" is "food apartheid", because "food apartheid" looks at the whole food system, along with race, geography, faith, and economics. You say "food apartheid" and you get to the root cause of some of the problems around the food system. It brings in hunger and poverty. It brings us to the more important question: What are some of the social inequalities that you see, and what are you doing to erase some of the injustices?"

(Karen Washington, interview with The Guardian, 2018)

Food access is not just about food deserts. The problem with using one term to define or describe hunger is that these indicators of hunger are too narrow. For example, using caloric intake as a means for indicating hunger is problematic because it assumes that people have the same caloric needs which is dangerous since often calorie intake is gauged by using a sedentary lifestyle when many malnourished people engage in manual labor and are very active. This would then mean that they are actually experiencing an even greater calorie deficit (Lappe et al, 2013). Additionally, this terminology is typically used to measure sustained hunger beyond a year, however that excludes experiences of temporary hunger from situations such as spikes in food prices (Lappe et al, 2013).

Another term frequently used in discussions around hunger and food access is food insecurity. As previously mentioned, food insecurity is defined as the inability of a household to acquire consistent and reliable food (www.usda.gov). It is useful to understand the parameters of food insecurity as it can overlap with issues of food access. Food insecurity rates are also often used as indicators to target low food access communities. In this project, I refer to barriers experienced in communities such as physical and financial abilities to obtaining food. The

various terms and factors used in talking about hunger are useful, but it is important to be aware that they are almost always overlapping and intermingling with one another meaning that to use blanket terms alone like "food desert" likely is not capturing the whole story.

Karen Washington, a food justice activist and a co-founder of Black Urban Growers, pushes people to use "food apartheid" instead of using terms such as "food desert" because of how incredibly limiting the latter label can be. Using appropriate terminology and intentional branding can help drive more productive conversations around finding solutions to systemic problems manifesting in our food systems. In the 2018 interview with The Guardian, she stated her belief that when it comes to accessing food, we have to include race and economics in the conversation.

As Washington alludes to in her interview, the terms we use to talk about hunger and access matter. Relying on narrow terms and shallow understandings of food access makes it very hard to capture the whole picture of hunger that communities experience and thus inhibit a more holistic approach to expanding food access. Terminology and methods of measuring hunger are important when it comes to targeting populations for programming. With that in mind, we should be careful about the stringent use of some definitions, and the (usually unintentional yet dangerous) potential for the narrative that we choose to use to perpetuate barriers instead of eradicating them.

Physical barriers to food access

There are numerous community barriers to an individual's or a household's ability to access food including household income, inadequate transportation, geography, mobility, age, and more systemically race, gender, and policy. These factors are complicated, often interlacing with one another and are embedded and embodied throughout our food system. The most

prominent barriers to food access according to Wolfson et al are physical access to food, affordability of food, income of a household, and availability of culturally appropriate foods (Wolfson et al, 2019).

Physical access means geographic location, transportation options, and/or physical mobility. Physical access can also refer to the presence of food deserts (Wolfson et al, 2019). People in these areas may have inadequate transportation options or there may not be a supermarket available in their geographic location. Another aspect to physical access to food is mobility. Coveney and O'Dwyer suggest that compounding upon geographic location, barriers such as transportation and mobility are primary culprits of limitations to food access (2009). This is an issue more commonly seen among aging residents in communities that are no longer able to drive or walk to obtain food due to health-related issues (Huang et al, 2012).

The use of private cars in the U.S. has a significant impact on access to food. Typically, neighborhoods and cities are designed around the use of cars as the predominant mode of transportation (Coveney et al, 2009). This presents inequities in accessing food for households who do not own a car and rely heavily on public transit, especially if these households reside in food deserts or areas of limited access to food supplies. Coveney and O'Dwyer divided individuals who do not possess a car into two groups. The first group they recognized consists of individuals who do not own a car because of financial purposes. The second group consists of the elderly or disabled persons who are unable to utilize a car because of health conditions. Both groups are impacted by their lack of car ownership when it comes to accessing food retail. The typical options available to these groups are public transit and personal networks such as relying on neighbors or family members to drive them to the store. This can be extremely restricting and influences what food individuals choose to buy.

Studies have shown that there is a significant increase in public transit use among the lowest income households as opposed to using a personal car to travel for grocery shopping (Shannon and Christian, 2016). Shannon and Christian found that 93% of tours involved a car for household incomes above $25,000, but that drastically declined to 79% for households whose income fell below $25,000. Their research found that many households travel significantly further than the closest food retail option and emphasizes a need for greater transit options. Transportation is a critical barrier to food, especially for lower income households who may not have a personal vehicle to use for grocery trips and are more reliant on public transit systems and/or friends and family members as transportation networks. In addition to mobility referring to transportation, it may also refer to a person's physical ability to walk in order to gain access to food options. Individuals who experience chronic health issues and/or are older and no longer able to drive or walk to a bus stop, experience increased mobility barriers.

Financial barriers to food access

In addition to physical barriers to food, affordability is another distinct barrier to food access. Households that struggle with poverty also tend to be the most food insecure. Low income households are three times more likely to be food insecure than other households (Holben and Marshall, 2017). While low income households are more at risk for being limited in their access to foods, individuals or households living off of a fixed income may also experience difficulty accessing food. Deep structural issues around housing policy and economic policy can contribute to low income communities along with lacking legislation that addresses poverty. A major component to extending food access has to incorporate making the food that is being brought in affordable.

Food Politics and the Capitalist Food System

"Neoliberalization reinforces the notion that we are each of us completely responsible for whatever life outcomes we have experienced. It aims to make us as vulnerable as possible, and hence more easily exploited."

(Eric Holt-Gimenez, 2017,p.15)

There is a misconception that people are hungry because there is not enough food, however during the Green Revolution the "world produced over 1.5 times enough food for every man, woman, and child on the planet" (Holt-Gimenez, 2017, p.116). Our global food system has shifted into an obsession of profit and over production which has ironically resulted in record hunger across the planet (Alkon et al, 2011). The neoliberalization of our food system has had detrimental impacts on people and our planet. It has contributed to the loss of 75% of the entire world's agrobiodiversity, utilizes 80% of the fresh water and has been linked to producing 20% of greenhouse gases while successfully stripping millions of peasant farmers of their livelihoods and thrusting many into displacement (Holt-Gimenez, 2017).

Capitalism commodifies our food by integrating labor, technology, resources, and markets together to produce goods (or commodities) which are then sold at a higher rate than what it initially cost to make them (Holt-Gimenez, 2017). This process often results in the exploitation of labor, particularly farmworkers. It has also stripped communities of common grounds for growing food through land grabs and privatization of property. The capitalist cycles of exploiting labor, overproducing/producing for profit, stifling access to land, and monopolizing production including equipment, seeds, chemicals, and other means of creating large scale farms continues to produce injustices throughout the food system. Understanding the ways that

capitalism thrives and impacts all aspects of our food system from farm labor to trade policy to affordable housing to farmers' markets, is important for devising productive strategies for real and just change. Food justice movements demand more rights for producers and consumers instead of global markets to combat neoliberal policies that have contributed to food insecurity alongside global capital (Trauger, 2014).

Community autonomy is a tool that activists and communities can foster to create more radical change. Empowering communities to produce and consume their own food and develop their own food politics is one goal that many alternative food movement projects work to do. This can be messy though. The line between community autonomy and segregation often gets blurred even though autonomy is imperative for communities to make decisions around food (Trauger, 2014). Oftentimes those who are defining the very parameters of food system change in a community are coming from a powerful place of privilege. This often can look like an outsider (usually a white person, often affluent) coming into a community (usually of color, often low income) to fix their problems (Guthman, 2011). This is counterproductive for promoting autonomy and empowerment. However, being mindful and getting as many community members at the table as possible can help to facilitate autonomy and self-sufficiency within a community. This conversation around community autonomy is helpful for this project as I observe the ways these two projects work (or may not work) to empower their communities to be more autonomous. Additionally, incorporating a focus on community autonomy into localized food movements such as mobile markets could potentially be a method to make some more meaningful connections to the food system at large while empowering the local spaces as well.

Additionally, Eric Holt-Gimenez discusses rebuilding the commons as a strategy for battling capitalism. By restructuring land and rebuilding the commons, communities could regain

the ability to have sustainable access to food at minimal costs, however he warns that "If the commons is used to produce good for market rather than for subsistence, low prices in the market can lead to the overexploitation of the commons" (Holt-Gimenez, 2017, p. 112). If communities can utilize their autonomy to rebuild the public sphere in which they have a common space to grow food for themselves in a self-sufficient way as opposed to contributing to the market, then this could be a productive way to de-commodify food and challenge the neoliberal food system. By the commons, I am referring to a community space that offers a place to share resources. Traditionally, this refers to a common land. I use the term the commons here to imply natural resources such as food grown, but also social resources such as nutritional information that may be provided by a nurse or the sharing of recipes, gardening tips, and other information among community members. By imploring this concept of the commons, community autonomy can be promoted because the community produces goods (food, information) to be consumed by their own community. It allows for the community to gather and make decisions about how they want to utilize space and distribute resources. Operating within a shared space gives each member of the community a vested interest into caring for and preserving the space. This is certainly a concept that can be woven into the plans for mobile markets as organizers consider space for the markets to occur as well as how to generate community buy-in.

Holt-Gimenez is not alone in his promotion of the commons as a way to counter capitalist modes of food production and provide a space for shared resources. Amy Trauger also provides examples of temporary commons such as urban community gardens which seek to promote sustainability, health, and shared social and natural resources (2017). She describes a tradition in Lisbon called *baldio* which allows unused parcels of land to be treated as a commons where

people will graze their animals or grow food (2017). Additionally, she provides the example of the Horta do Mount community garden as a space of temporary commons that strived to facilitate food sovereignty (2017). She says:

"Land, as the commons, had historically been the resource base that made agricultural production possible and to which farmers contributed collectively as a means of building ecological capital. Land is now simply seen as the staging area for the conversion of commodities into other commodities.." (Trauger, 2017, p.53).

Borčić also recognizes that alternative food movements have the capacity to transform spaces into the commons as an act of resistance to the corporate food regime (2020). For a community to achieve this transformation of space of commodity to space of commons, Borčić explains that, "Urban spaces become commons when they are appropriated, cared for, managed and shared by city dwellers who feel not only a right to inhabit and use these spaces but a collective responsibility towards them," (2020, p. 5) In her work, she explains the creation of the commons not as a bounding of territory, but of an ongoing social process that reshapes social and physical contexts.

Mobile markets can achieve this by being thoughtful about the land they use to produce food and hold markets. Some things to consider in this regard would be accessibility of the land, is it a space that is welcoming to all community members or is there an history of tensions that occupy that space, and who owns the land. In addition to being intentional about land and site selection, organizers should also be intentional about including voices from across the community to understand what the varying needs and recommendations are. Additionally, interacting with community members in person or through surveys or questionnaires, like we see in these market models, can help markets prioritize the needs of their specific community

members. While the markets, particularly the Walton market, worked to build collective action toward shifting the foodscape in their communities, this can also be a limitation. In particular Trauger and Borčić discuss constructing the commons as an ongoing process that requires all community members to participate and be included in order to achieve a true common space, temporary or otherwise. Because mobile markets and alternative food movements at large are often targeted toward specific areas in a community or populations, they inherently do not include the community as a whole. This can present a limitation to the notion of creating the commons, however, if community mobile market projects can think creatively about how to engage the whole community it could still be a project worth pursuing. The collective action piece from all community members as an important aspect to the establishment of the commons is an area that would need to be looked at closer for alternative food movements. The Walton market may start to chip away at this aspect with their community campaigns that work to engage the broader community into the project, but it is still limited in who all they are able to reach with these campaigns. Additionally, markets should be thoughtful in their methods of producing and/or acquiring foods to provide. This may look like organic farming or gardening practices. Spaces should be welcoming and inclusive to all community members and goods should be distributed in equitable ways as they seek sustainable change for their community.

Food Justice

What is food justice?

"The challenge for food movements is to address the immediate problems of hunger, malnutrition, food insecurity, and environmental degradation while working steadily toward the structural changes needed for a sustainable and equitable food system."

(Alkon & Agyeman, 2011, p. 325)

The food justice literature provides a framework for understanding how barriers to food access are perpetuated and a critical lens for examining how mobile markets respond to these barriers. Food justice is situated within social justice broadly, utilizing food as the means for intervention within power and structural systems (Sbicca, 2018). More specifically, food justice consists of prioritizing the autonomy of communities to produce and consume their own food, food that is culturally appropriate, nutritious, and ethically grown and distributed (Agyeman and Alkon, 2011). Poverty and racism are tremendous underlying factors that maintain barriers to access food and persist in the structural food system.

There is undoubtedly a demand for structural change in our food systems, however despite realizing this, food justice movements tend to be colorblind as well as class blind. They tend to ignore the histories of people of color and simultaneously often fail to recognize the privileges of their strongest supporters (typically more affluent white community members) (Alkon et al, 2011). The colorblindness of food movements allows us the luxury of overlooking the class and income disparities as well as ignoring histories of race-based discrimination. Consequently, these barriers prevent those living in low income communities, and/or often communities of color, from accessing food in sustainable, culturally appropriate, affordable, and healthful ways. Structural racism reifies economic inequalities and hardships by systematically excluding individuals and groups based on race (Alkon et al, 2011). Policy is lacking in terms of addressing poverty which plays a tremendous role in achieving food justice. Even with major movements such as the Civil Rights Movements, legislation does not explicitly address poverty (Coles et al, 2018).

A number of progressive approaches and movements have arisen to address food injustices in the corporatized food system. Unfortunately, many market-based approaches such as farmers' markets, CSAs, and yes, mobile markets, are criticized for only addressing superficial changes and are not challenging the structural inequalities that continue to reproduce these barriers. A more radical approach is desired and one that often incorporates sovereignty and simultaneity within this framework of food justice.

Some feminist geographers propose the concept of visceral politics as another means for grappling with the immediacy of alleviating hunger coupled with the simultaneous need of addressing systemic change. Within this concept of visceral politics, the embodiment of food politics and food practices and behaviors is acknowledged. The food justice literature already recognizes that food is politicized, but visceral politics encourages scholars to consider the link between food as material (experienced through the body) and ideologies around food (Hayes-Conroy et al., 2008). While food is material it is also an ebb and flow of power dynamics, cultural relationships, cravings, tastes, and it maintains strong belief systems (Hayes-Conroy et al., 2008). If an entity (whether governmental or nonprofit) can understand a person/community's ideologies and personal sensations around food, then they have a better opportunity to mobilize community members around issues of food politics (Hayes-Conroy et al., 2008). Removing the experiences of food from silos and instead investigating them at the intersections (material/immaterial, biological/political, sensory/historical) could be more meaningful when applied food justice. To illustrate this point, Hayes-Conroy et al. provide the example that "the sweet taste of ice cream is not decidedly uplifting for all minded bodies; rather, memory, perception, cognitive thinking, historical experience, and other material relations and immaterial forces all intersect with the individuals' sensory grasp of the world, complicating

one's visceral experience with the ice cream eating event" (2008, p.465). Incorporating visceral politics into a means for being more intentional and deliberate with planning and praxis in alternative food movements could be an important feature of future food justice work.

One such approach is the food sovereignty movement. Food sovereignty is focused around the democratization of the food system. This includes movements to redistribute land and water rights, to dismantle monopolies over seeds, food production, and agriculture, and to center the poor while engaging with the power structures that enforce a neoliberal agenda in our food system (Holt-Gimenez, 2011). Food sovereignty is not about chipping away at pieces of problems, but instead works to radically overhaul the food system by challenging policy and advocating for the poor and underserved, often in international spaces. "Food sovereignty is only possible if it takes place at the same time as political sovereignty of peoples" (Nyeleni 2007, 16). Nyeleni matter-of-factly states the important truth around being intentionally simultaneous. It is not enough to talk about land rights without also talking about rights to seed. It is not enough to establish sustainable farming practices and not talk about wages and wellbeing of the farmworkers. It is not enough to talk about food insecurity without talking about dismantling agricultural monopolies. It is not enough to create safety nets and not conversate around economic and development policies.

Mobile markets and farmers' markets alike are market-driven strategies used to try to counter disparities in the food system, though these approaches are almost always well intentioned, they can be problematic. Alkon provides discourse analyzing the issues around market driven strategies within food movements. A few of the issues of market driven strategies are that they provide a message that individual consumption is a favorable route toward social changes, they are inherently undemocratic, and fresh local food tends to be more expensive

(Alkon, 2012). Additionally, initiatives such as a farmer's market tend to be seasonal, so they are still unable to provide year-round access to food. Alkon's *Black, White, and Green* uncovers the overlooked privileges of a farmer's market in North Berkeley. The affluence present at this market seems to be at odds with dedication to social justice. She suggests the following instead of using market-based solutions to achieve food justice: demand for increase in autonomy, movement toward growing food for yourself and not the market, a policy-oriented approach to food justice and collective action toward food sovereignty (Alkon et al, 2011). Alkon also points out in her book, *Black, White, and Green* that market-based approaches are restricting in their ability to address root causes to food access inequities such as wage gaps and institutionalized racism (2012). Like Karen Washington explains with her concept of the food apartheid, food justice and access to equitable food goes deeper than just bringing in fruit and vegetables to a community. Poverty and wage gaps must be addressed and alleviated. Sustainable agricultural methods must be accepted and practiced. Racialized and gendered systems must be dismantled. All of these must happen in tandem alongside expanding access if we truly want to solve issues around hunger and build a sustainable and just food system for all.

Again, both Washington and Alkon critique, market-driven strategies such as mobile market models and the language we use around food for not being anti-capitalist and anti-racist enough (if at all in some cases). Instead, alternative food movements such as farmers' markets, mobile markets, and CSAs have been criticized as perpetuating disparities and promoting whiteness (Alkon, 2012). Their primary work of extending access and education regarding fresh produce to communities is too shallow to subvert a capitalist food system. Guthman, like Alkon and many others, argues that using the market model approach to contest market driven inequalities implies that the model assumes that change can only come from consumer choices

and does not consider the myriad other factors that impact an individual's food choice such as housing, economic, development, and farm policies (Guthman, 2011).

While there have been numerous instances where alternative food movements have indeed been too complicit with the agenda of neoliberal food politics, I argue with this project that there may be space for these movements like mobile markets to work in a more transformative way. There are, unfortunately, numerous instances that the food justice literature discusses of alternative food movements being, quite frankly, grossly ineffective as a means of transformative food politics, but somewhat successful in addressing urgent matters of local hunger (ironically, mobile markets are a perfect example of this). In other words, they can and do succeed in terms of putting fresh food into the hands of those who are limited in access to such food choices. They can also intervene quickly to get food to people in need whereas the change needed to equal access to food will be a long evolution. With that said, it is traditionally believed that the extent of mobile market benefits stops there and does nothing or very little in terms of addressing root causes to low food access such as systemic racism and capitalist modes of producing, distributing, and consuming food that lead to disparities in our food systems.

However, it is possible for these projects to move beyond emergency food aid and address systemic issues by being deliberate in the ways that they create spaces by being selective about the location and land that will be used, using sustainable and equitable means of obtaining foods to be provided at the markets, giving away goods or charging minimally for the goods, and by working to be as holistic and intentional in their strategies at bridging gaps in food access as possible. Holistic strategies should include intentional practices around food production, meaning incorporating sustainable farming and/or gardening methods, developing community autonomy by including the community in decisions around what food they want to consume and

thus what food they want to grow, creating a commons through the land selected as the site for food production and/or the space for the exchange of goods (the physical space where the mobile markets will exist), and being intentional about identifying whose voices are missing at the table when it comes to conversations around food access. Additionally, examining ways their projects could contend with the deeper issues within our food system by creating a political space for community members to engage in could also fall under this concept of holistic strategizing. This could be as simple as providing information on agriculture or economic policies that can help community members be more informed and learn about ways that they can be politically involved to create the change they want to see. This involvement may be as simple as residents becoming more informed through resources provided about who they want to vote for and what policies they want to be advocated or it could be community members mobilizing around food and political activism. By incorporating more encompassing strategies into these types of projects, it is possible to promote and foster community empowerment. Mobile markets that work to include these aspects can be the catalysts for political change while also addressing the immediate needs of hunger within the community.

These organizers need to work as agents of change by thinking through each step of the process from a radical framework. Radical does not equate to drastic changes to mobile markets in terms of what to offer at the markets and who should be targeted, but more of a mindset of considering how will an entity source its food or resources, how will it sell/give away its products, how will it engage with systems around production of food as well how does it intend on distributing food. Furthermore, these initiatives need to be aware of the relationships that consumers have to the food being offered. Is the food culturally appropriate for the community? Is the food wholesome? Is the food comforting and familiar? How quickly can the food item be

prepared? How can shelf life be extended if necessary? Holistic strategizing requires moving past just bringing food into a space, but to better understand spaces, community members themselves, and the community's relationship to food. Additionally, offering a mode for community empowerment across different groups within the community and autonomy is another vital and viable pathway to addressing systemic issues that mobile markets have the potential to generate. This can be achieved by thinking more deeply about land ownership and utilizing spaces that are welcoming common spaces for the community. Having activities, music, and other civic events share the space with the mobile market is one way to encourage the gathering of community members and foster relationships. This space can be used to facilitate conversations around food and how the community wants to think about and interact with the food system. It can also be a point of pride for communities to discuss ways they think they are doing well. For example, a community might be very proud of the fact that their community garden completely sustains a neighborhood with fresh vegetables and herbs during the year. This can then generate momentum around the community wanting to foster further autonomy over their food and food choices. This empowerment has the potential to allow communities to engage more deeply with the systemic issues that they specifically encounter (wage gaps, lack of healthcare in the area, racialized or gendered boundaries, transportation concerns) and devise holistic solutions to approach those issues.

The food justice framework provides me with a critical lens to analyze the markets and to situate the project within the greater food justice movement by identifying the gaps in food justice work. For example, by better understanding spaces where privilege is overlooked, where relationships to food is ignored, and glossing over systemic issues such as institutionalized racism, communities can better address these gaps and devise more meaningful ways of

engaging with them. It allows for a deeper look into barriers that include the whole food system including production methods, farmworkers' wellbeing, distribution methods, and impacts on the consumer. It is necessary to understand what is happening at the macro of our food system to see how the micro is impacted. The food justice literature provides these macro and micro insights. While a lot of the literature views alternative food movement strategies like mobile markets to be largely ineffective at addressing structural issues within our food system, this project can contribute to this literature by examining the ways that mobile markets do tackle barriers to food in communities as well as acknowledge the systemic contributions to these barriers by employing a praxis of holistic strategizing and empowering communities. Mobile markets have the capacity to mobilize community members around issues of food politics. The food justice literature can provide the framework for understanding where gaps exist and how community members can contribute to a more transformative food politics. By utilizing a food justice framework, mobile market projects can be better equipped to contend with these larger structural barriers.

Mobile Markets as Spaces for Transformative Food Politics

"..mobile markets leverage the same principles that fuel the Food Truck movement: the provision of a high quality product to consumers in an otherwise untapped market. With lower overhead expenses and greater flexibility than bricks and mortar stores, mobile markets are an excellent means of addressing food access inequalities where conventional markets have hitherto failed."

(2012 annual report Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food and Agriculture, p. 8)

Alternative Food Movements (AFM) are numerous efforts and social movements that challenge the industrial food system and the problems that it creates (Galt, 2017). AFMs

emerged decades ago and continue to grow to respond to the corporatized and neoliberalized food system that created concerns around environmental degradation as well the health and wellbeing of humans and animals (Grauerholz and Owens, 2015). Examples of AFMs are farmers' markets, urban gardening, community gardens, and CSAs (community supported agriculture). Projects like these have sprouted up all over the country to respond to issues around food access and inequity. Additionally, in recent decades, mobile markets have emerged as an AFM to specifically address issues around accessing affordable, healthful foods by going into targeted communities that experience physical barriers to food access. Mobile markets that bring fresh produce into low food access communities serve as a branch of AFM efforts as a response to food insecurity. The Rural Health Information Hub defines mobile markets as food markets that travel to a targeted location to expand food retail.

The development of mobile markets came about as a response to community barriers to food access. Barriers to food access are anything that provide obstacles to accessing food, most frequently including physical access and affordability (Wolfson et al, 2019). Examples of physical barriers may include mobility issues, limited access to transportation, and geography. Mobile markets are able to address these barriers by targeting low income or at-risk locations and offering low cost items directly to the community (Robinson et al, 2015). Because they go directly into a targeted community, issues of transportation, mobility, and affordability may drastically be decreased (Robinson et al, 2016).

Traditionally, mobile markets have received their food supplies from food banks and other emergency food agencies. However, increasingly, they are adopting alternative, arguably more sustainable methods of obtaining food supplies such as utilizing local organic farms or community gardens. Mobile markets may take the form of a repurposed bus, pop up farmer's

market, or food truck. The idea behind mobile markets is to bring in fresh produce options to low income and low access communities in order to provide a supplemental food retail option. Many mobile markets utilize and encourage the use of SNAP benefits which allows customers to get more for their money. SNAP is the supplemental nutrition assistance program that helps qualifying individuals obtain food. Mobile markets offer direct community-based approaches to expanding access to food, especially to residents that are low income, elderly, and immobile, because the markets bring fresh produce directly to these targeted communities (Robinson et al, 2016). Because mobile markets charge a price that may be minimal, wholesale, or even free, the products are much more affordable for residents than the traditional grocery store and the ability to utilize SNAP, if offered, helps increase the amount of produce individuals can buy, maximizing the use of their dollars.

Hsiao et al found a general link between mobile markets and increased intake of fresh fruits and vegetables which may have positive implications on the health of these households (2018). Their research indicates that mobile markets may help promote healthier lifestyles by providing affordable and more easily attainable fresh produce options. They also found that these markets may help build community by providing a means and space for community members to gather. They did find that education regarding preparing meals and nutrition may be needed as well as finding ways to integrate community involvement within the operations of the markets. While studies have shown that mobile markets may provide greater access to fruit and vegetables which may lead to healthier eating, often times consumers did not how many servings of fruits and vegetables they should be eating on a regular basis or they may not possess the knowledge or skills to prepare foods (Zepeda et al, 2014). Therefore, one of the challenges for mobile markets may be to find ways to include nutrition education.

While it has been demonstrated that mobile markets may be excellent avenues to gaining access to fresh fruits and vegetables, there are obstacles that this approach to food access faces. Hsiao et al recognize that mobile markets run into issues with sustainable methods of operation as they are typically reliant on volunteer work and often subsidized products (2018). One of the louder critiques of mobile markets, and often AFM projects at large, is that they are too superficial in addressing the root causes of injustices within our food system. The literature tends to view these approaches (at best) as responses to immediate needs of hunger, increasing physical and affordability access to foods, but not having a strong role in grappling with the neoliberal structural issues that perpetuate through our food system (Robinson et al, 2016). Because the focus on these projects tends to be on the here and now of food access, they are often viewed in a way as limited to performing the work needed to contest the racist and capitalist system in which our food networks (both locally and globally) are situated within. The demand then is for a more transformative politics of food that promotes self-sufficiency and autonomy in communities to propel collective political actions to achieve a sustainable and equitable food system. My research shows that this is a reasonable demand of mobile markets. By creating spaces that promote a community's autonomy and the idea of the commons, a shared space, a community can be empowered. Again, community consists of various groups with a shared geographic space to which the commons would create a shared space for these groups. Issues within the community become more visible to community members and because members are vested in their community it can be proposed that they would feel more compelled to address these issues. This fosters a sense of trust and caring among community members. If mobile market models can establish and maintain these ideals around civic engagement, then they can help mobilize communities around a change of food politics such as legislation, policy, and ideas

around our food system which is needed to create lasting change. Mobile markets possess the ability to create spaces for change by incorporating holistic strategies that encompass the whole food network in the community and foster community autonomy which empowers communities. This can be achieved while simultaneously providing easier access to healthful food options.

This paper recognizes the historical limitations that mobile markets experience as functioning as market-driven approaches while also exploring ways that these spaces may be able to shift into more of a transformative alternative food movement through intentional and holistic strategizing. This project contributes to the literature around evaluating specific market models for efficacy and functionality. It examines the ways mobile market models contend with community food access barriers. Additionally, it posits that mobile markets have the potential to create spaces for more transformative food politics to take place by empowering communities through autonomy and resources. The primary goal of this thesis is to provide an examination that can be used for other community members, researchers, and activists who are working to address food access issues in their communities that provide immediate interventions to address hunger and long-term strategies to promote structural change toward equity in the food system.

CHAPTER 3

Setting and Methods

Statement of Problem

Food access is an important and complicated front that impacts millions of people nationally. This study works to provide an understanding of how two mobile markets function in the state of Georgia to help offer insights to responding to food access barriers across the state and potentially the country. Both of these mobile markets work to provide access to food to households that encounter one or more barriers to food access. They are both operating with funds provided through a nonprofit entity in the forms of donations, grants, or in house supplied goods such as the vegetables that they grow onsite. Both markets are concerned with aspects of the health of the groups that they serve. While both mobile markets share similar goals and even some methods in providing food, they differ in design and structure. One market maintains a non-membership model which resembles a typical farmer's market that is open to the public. The other market is strictly membership only which means only members can participate in the market. The differences in design are important, because different needs and attributes of a population may require specific structuring that one design may offer over the other. This is a crucial aspect for other initiatives to consider so they can devise plans that are most effective and efficient for their targeted population. Having an evaluation of the two market models can serve as a resource for the setup and implementation of future market initiatives. This study demonstrates the ways in which mobile markets work to expand access to food as well as the limitations that they encounter. To summarize, this project analyzes the structure, design, and implementation of the two different models to better understand how effective they are in

expanding access to food. On the micro level, mobile markets address urgent needs around hunger within the community, while on the macro level this project opens up a conversation around the utilization of mobile markets as a more transformative food politics project by promoting community autonomy and incorporating intentional practices. To provide an example, Walton Nonprofit deliberately wanted to focus their efforts on bringing food to the working poor who also had a chronic health condition. In order to ensure that they were targeting their desired population, they formulated a questionnaire to collect data on participants when they applied to be market members. Additionally, they knew that the buy-in of the community at large would be important for the success and sustainability of their markets, so they built partnerships with churches to provide the sites and volunteer base to facilitate markets and partnered with businesses to help grow additional food outside of the community garden that was intentionally selected to be grown on county land at the local jail.

Research Questions

1. In what ways do these two mobile markets attempt to expand access to food in low food access communities?
2. In what ways do the models and structure of the markets impact their effectiveness and functionality?
3. In what ways do these markets create spaces that counter capitalist approaches of production and consumption within the food system?

Research Design and Methodology

This qualitative research project utilizes a case study design to evaluate two mobile market models on their efficacy in addressing issues around food access barriers in two communities. Interviews and participant observation are the methods that were used to collect data in addition to document review. It should be noted that originally, IRB approved focus groups of market participants who had responded to market surveys. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic made it impossible and unethical to request participants who were predominantly vulnerable due to health risks and/or age to engage in this activity. Due to lack of resources among participants, shifting to an online platform was not practical. Interviews of the each of the mobile markets' founders were used instead of the focus groups for this project. I recognize that this may be limiting in capturing the experiences of marketgoers who utilized the spaces, but I did find the interviews to be incredibly illuminating in many other ways. The IRB submission was updated to reflect these changes and the IRB number for this study is STUDY00006624.

The review of documents while not used explicitly for data collection, was helpful for supporting data such as providing information around demographics of market participants and underlying health conditions participants reported having. These documents included market surveys, market application questionnaires, and sales sheets from the markets. Interview transcripts and field notes were coded manually and analyzed using discourse analysis. Below, the research setting, methods, and analysis are discussed in more detail.

Research Setting

This project examines the effects of mobile markets in communities experiencing one or more barriers that have resulted in food insecurity or limited access to food. It looks at two mobile markets operating in different areas in Georgia, coordinated by two different nonprofit

organizations, but both working to expand access to fresh food. Both the Athens Nonprofit and the Walton Nonprofit markets have experienced some evolution in their multiple seasons. They are similar in that they are interested in providing local fresh produce options to community members. While maintaining similar goals, they operate in notably different ways.

Athens Nonprofit was primarily focused on expanding access to fresh fruits and vegetables to community members without a specific population in mind. It was important for them to be in areas deemed low access and to serve a wide array of community members by utilizing a public farmer's market style approach. They targeted specific geographic locations such as low income or affordable housing neighborhoods within the Athens area instead of specific population types such as a particular age group. In contrast, Walton Nonprofit specifically wanted to target the working poor who also had chronic health conditions as their agenda was to influence their community members' choices to live healthier lifestyles. Offering fresh fruits and vegetables to this population could give them more options in obtaining healthful foods and help mitigate health risks.

In addition to understanding the differences to how each of these nonprofits targeted their populations, it was also helpful to examine the ways that they designed their markets. For example, Athens Nonprofit employed an open, farmer's market approach so that all community members could access the market. Walton Nonprofit utilized a membership-based approach to limit participants to only those that met their target population criteria of being both working poor and experiencing chronic health concerns.

Both organizations understood that greater issues of economics and often times, racism were embedded issues that manifested the lack of access within their communities. They strived to contend with these root issues of food inaccess in different and varying ways. They were both

very intentional in how they acquired their food for the markets. They both (mostly) grew their own food cultivating organic practices in their gardens. Where they could not grow their food, such as instance where a late frost devasted crops, they sourced from other local and organic businesses. Keeping food local and incorporating organically grown food options were important aspects to both organizations that strived to chip away at the massive conventional agriculture system. Additionally, they were both very intentional about how participants could pay for their products. Charging a minimal cost or nothing at all was a deliberate mode for combating the barrier of affordability but also as a counter action to the capitalist, for-profit transactions that typically occur (such as at traditional farmers' markets).

Athens Nonprofit

The first mobile market I was introduced to, was an initiative started by a University of Georgia student who had partnered with Athens Nonprofit for logistical support to bring access to fresh food to low-income neighborhoods in Athens. The primary objectives for this market were to provide a supplemental source of fresh food in food retail deprived areas as well as affordable options to fresh food as these can be quite expensive in grocery stores. There were two iterations or seasons of this market. The first was a pilot program that lasted 6 weeks and selected three locations in Athens to set up the market. They attended each location once a week. The locations selected were communities where Athens Nonprofit already had relationships and, in some cases, may have already been active in other community projects there.

The markets were set up in spaces where community members often gathered which was very helpful for the market. Because these communities were already well acquainted with the nonprofit, they had a sense of trust with utilizing the markets, and they were gathering in these specific spaces already. Though the locations were selected in an attempt to reach people who

resided in areas of low food access, there was not a targeted population per se. For example, one location was a Boys and Girls Club where the children were the main ones interacting with the market, learning about different vegetables, and engaging in cooking demonstrations. However, when their parents came to pick them up, they would often shop the market in response to their child's excitement about the foods that were being presented at the market. So, this location engaged children from the Boys and Girls club as well as their parents. Another location was selected at an affordable housing unit for residents over 62. Again, the same objectives of expanding affordable access to fresh fruits and vegetables in a low access area remained, but this time residents may be experiencing food insecurity issues due to limited mobility and fixed incomes. Because this market took place inside the communal space of the apartments, it was easy to access as people gathered there frequently and did not have to leave their community. Again, the nonprofit already had ties to the community through other projects so there was a level of familiarity.

The produce that was offered was heavily subsidized through grant funding. They strived for the produce to be local coming from local farms and much coming from the nonprofit's own farm and community garden. The produce was then sold at the markets at wholesale or even less. For participants who were SNAP eligible, they were able to double the amount of produce they bought by using their SNAP benefits.

The participation was high, and the markets well received. The student founder, again alongside the nonprofit, decided to expand the project. The objectives remained the same, but mostly different locations were selected, and the frequency of markets changed. Throughout both seasons, the nonprofit selected the locations. This time four sites instead of three were selected. Not all of the locations were familiar with the nonprofit this time. Again, produce was heavily

subsidized by grant money and donations and was sourced from local community gardens and farms. Unlike the pilot program where they went to every location weekly, this time they would attend one location each week equating to a monthly visit to each place. The season would last four months this time instead of six weeks.

I volunteered at one of the nonprofit's community gardens and learned about this new project they were taking on with mobile markets. These markets included a cooking demonstration, the produce market, and nurses and a physician from a local hospital that performed health screenings and provided nutritional information. When we arrived at the community centers in each of the locations, we would set up a table to display the produce and the student founder would provide a cooking demo using the produce that was available at the market. The cooking demo was used to help residents become familiar and comfortable with cooking with items that they may not use regularly such as eggplant. There was an understanding that an education piece needed to be included as it was recognized that there was a possibility that participants may be unfamiliar with some of the produce provided. The cooking demonstrations would be a helpful and entertaining way to get residents to interact with the food options and to learn about varying food preparation techniques. An added bonus was that they could try the samples from the cooking demonstration before committing to buying a food item.

Additionally, health screening resources were provided at the markets by a local hospital. A nurse and a physician from the hospital would meet us at the location and provide handouts about nutrition and health. They would also set up a table to answer questions and take blood tests. Often alongside barriers to food access, the same populations also experience barriers to healthcare access, so incorporating health screenings were an important added resource to the

market. Information about nutrition is a natural overlap with health and food so it seemed like a good fit to include both resources in one space.

Anyone from the community that happened to be in that site was welcome to participate in the market as it was not limited to residents only or a specific group. While there was no indicator of who might be shopping at the market, since these locations were set inside community centers it can be assumed that customers were primarily from that location. These were typically relatively small markets maxing out between 20 and 30 participants at a time. This model defined their target population broadly. The goal was to serve low access food areas where residents may have difficulty getting to food retail and to provide an affordable option to fresh produce. Two of the three locations were affordable housing units in Athens that are specifically targeted toward adults aged 62 or older. Nearly every resident in these locations is living off of a fixed income. Many reported having chronic health concerns such as diabetes, high blood pressure, as well as other issues such as having trouble standing or walking for extended periods of time. The other location is a low income, predominantly African American neighborhood in Athens that has had ongoing concerns of gentrification in recent decades.

The design of this particular model was to resemble a small farmer's market with fresh vegetables and herbs available to purchase at low subsidized prices. Additionally, residents who used SNAP could double their produce making it an even more affordable option compared to grocery stores. This market also included additional resources such as cooking demonstrations and health screenings, not unlike a traditional farmer's market.

Walton Nonprofit

Walton Nonprofit has a similar goal of expanding access to fresh produce to community members, but they had a very specific focus on health. Because they were primarily concerned

with serving community members who suffered from one or more chronic health conditions, they decided to target their population to the working poor who also experienced at least one chronic health condition in the household. Like Athens Nonprofit, they underwent multiple seasons or iterations of their market and during their first iteration they operated much like Athens Nonprofit's market. It was designed to be a farmer's market, open to the public and set in strategic locations. Getting started with this project they partnered with another nonprofit in the area. It was a faith-based nonprofit that provided them with the location to hold the market which was also near where they operated a thrift store. This partner additionally ran a food bank in the area had established a relationship with the Walmart distribution center that was housed in there. The food for the market was primarily provided by this partner from the food bank or from Walmart donations. There was a massive turnout at these markets, often exceeding 100 participants at a time. They quickly realized that this model was not going to work for them for a variety of reasons.

The first reason was that the lines to get into the market created emotional and contentious spaces. The market would open at 6:00 pm and participants would arrive many hours before to wait in line as it was first come, first served as long as supplies lasted. This created tensions with the partner's thrift store that was maintaining operating hours and had market shoppers hanging out in front of the store waiting for the market to open. Additionally, many arguments and fights began to break out in the lines. The lines had to go. In addition to the lines being problematic, Walton Nonprofit could not be certain they were actually reaching the population within their community that they were trying to target because there was no way of knowing who was attending the markets. They also realized that using food from the food bank was problematic. While emergency food aid from places like food banks do provide calories to

food insecure people, the food is often processed and lacking in nutrients, which for their population of working poor with already existing chronic health conditions could actually be detrimental to their health by exacerbating their health issues with unhealthy food options.

The culmination of these issues moved them to utilizing a membership only model. To become a member, a person completed a free application. The application also included a questionnaire that allowed them to collect some data on those that would be using the market. Members were presented with a lanyard to show in order to gain access to the market. They also received reusable shopping bags. This eradicated the issue with the line because only members were allowed to attend so the capped number of individuals that could participate alleviated the issues that the line had produced. It also helped them ensure they were targeting their desired population of working poor community members who also had underlying health conditions by collecting data from the applications. They also not only changed up the location but have been able to offer markets at multiple locations throughout the county to provide more access. Eventually this would result in them purchasing and remodeling an old school bus to use as their mobile market which now travels to three different locations weekly for members of those specific markets to shop and is a means to provide additional pop-up markets in the event of excess production of food throughout the year.

Additionally, they moved away from relying on the food bank and Walmart for food donations for their market. They decided that they wanted to produce food in the community to be consumed by the community. To achieve this, they worked with the Sheriff's Office and were able to gain access to a plot of land located at the county jail to establish a community garden. The inmates could volunteer to work in the garden for planting, maintaining, and harvesting and could receive a half day off of their sentence for every day that they volunteered. The market's

founder also told me that the inmates that volunteered to work in the garden were excited about the project because they were able to get outside and feel connected to the community. For some, according to informal feedback provided by the nonprofit, their families utilized the markets that this garden fed, so some inmates felt they were still able to help provide for their families even though they were in jail. This information was provided by the nonprofit. I understand that there is a history of prison labor in farming that is extremely problematic. This is a history that groups would want to be mindful of as they incorporate various groups and individuals into their plans. More research would be required to ensure that the inmates participating truly had choice in this work and felt compelled to do it for intrinsic or material value. The scope of this project did not investigate this aspect of the market deeply, but does acknowledge there are tensions around inmate labor, particularly around agricultural production. Both the history of agriculture and the prison system in the United States have roots in slavery and racism (Browne, 2010). There have been numerous instances in history and even still today, where prison labor (predominantly Black and Brown prisoners) is exploited (Browne, 2010). Browne provides a vivid example of this on page 79 where he says:

"Louisiana's famous Angola Prison illustrates this history best. In 1880, this 8000-acre family plantation was purchased by the state of Louisiana and converted into a prison. Slave quarters became cell units. Now expanded to 18,000 acres, the Angola plantation is tilled by prisoners working the land—a chilling picture of modern day chattel slavery" (2010).

One of the greatest tensions with utilizing prison labor is being able to ensure that it is truly voluntary and that it serves as a resistance to institutionalized racism and not oppresses in any way. An example of where prison labor and gardening were successful in being a more liberating project than oppressive exploitation of labor, is Catherine Sneed's creation of The

Garden Project which helped inmates cultivate horticulture skills by growing food in the prison garden that she created (Pudup, 2008). The food harvested from the garden was then donated to emergency food aid programs (Pudup, 2008). According to Pudup, for this particular project, having inmates garden to give back to the community had a positive impact on both the community and the inmates (2008). It can be a very delicate boundary to find, and organizers should be incredibly mindful of their intentions with incorporating prison labor into alternative food movement projects.

A grant purchased the materials and plants for the garden. In addition to the community garden, the nonprofit started a couple of community campaigns to grow food. The first was called Grow a Row, where businesses, organizations, or anyone in the community would commit to growing one crop. The nonprofit would provide technical support and come build raised beds for them, but they had to have a contact person that was responsible for the garden. This was appealing for novice gardeners because they only had to commit to growing one thing, it was very simple and much less intimidating than starting an entire garden. The harvest would be donated to the markets. Additionally, the nonprofit acquired numerous buckets from the Sheriff's Office and created a bucket campaign that targeted home gardeners. Residents in the community could grab a bucket and fill it with extra food from their home gardens to be donated to the markets. These projects were very successful. This year the markets are completely, 100 percent locally grown. The markets offer fresh produce directly from the community and for market goers the food is completely free. They can shop and fill their reusable bags with items that they would like, but they don't pay anything for the food they choose. They call it "neighbors feeding neighbors".

The food is produced by a community garden facilitated by the nonprofit in addition to community sources of food that are totally free to market members. The markets occur three times a week and are held at churches in each targeted location. Churches were intentionally selected because again, this served as an opportunity for another entity in the community to take ownership. Churches typically have the physical space to hold a market setting and they usually have a built-in pool of volunteers to help out. This takes some of the logistical strain off of Walton Nonprofit while also igniting a sense of community empowerment. Members belong to one of the three market locations. Membership to that location is typically determined by geography, however depending on circumstances exceptions can be made. For example, if a member works closer to one location and it would be more convenient to stop by on their way home from work than to attend a market closer to their home address, an exception can be made.

Summary

This project examines two mobile markets that operate under two different models (non-membership and membership). Both markets strived to bring in more fresh food options to their communities to address barriers around access to food. Both markets were also concerned with aspects of health of community members, though to differing degrees. Both of the markets offered nutritional information and cooking demonstrations along with healthcare providers from the community. Both focused on offering a more affordable option to fresh produce. Geographically, both are located relatively close to one another in northeast Georgia.

In contrast, the design of the markets differed significantly in that one was non-membership based and the other utilized a membership structure. Athens Nonprofit targeted specific neighborhoods or affordable housing communities for their markets. While Walton Nonprofit was primarily concerned with reaching the working poor who also had underlying

health conditions such as diabetes. In terms of offering an affordable option to fresh food, the Athens market provided heavily subsidized produce and the ability to utilize SNAP benefits. The Walton market provided their food items at no cost. The frequency of each market varied as well. For Athens, the market occurred in a different location each week, resulting in a monthly market for each neighborhood. The Walton market was offered weekly. The criteria that I used for comparing and analyzing the effectiveness of these models are considering the frequency of the markets, the affordability aspect of the markets, the locations selected for the markets and the public versus membership approaches to the markets as they relate to addressing barriers of physical access and affordability to food options in their respective communities.

Methods:

Interviews

I interviewed both founders of the market projects. Both interviews lasted around one hour each. The questions were focused around three main topics: motivation and objectives for the market, design and structure of the market, and results and implications of the market. I asked specific questions on what their objectives were that they were hoping to achieve by offering a mobile market in their community, how they targeted populations and selected sites, and why they used the structural design that they did (non-membership versus membership). We also discussed challenges they each encountered and how effective they feel their market model worked with regard to meeting their objectives.

Because of the COVID pandemic, the interviews could not be completed in person. Instead, I recorded a Zoom meeting for each interview. I had the recording saved as an mp3 file and had the files transcribed. Drawing from discourse analysis, I manually performed thematic coding of the transcripts using an inductive method to capture resounding themes and topics. I

coded each transcript multiple times and then used a spreadsheet to track themes and keep notes for every round of coding. I reviewed the words and language used multiple times, by reading the transcriptions thoroughly as well as listening to the mp3 file. This method was productive for identifying key themes among the interviews. Those themes consisted of locally sourced food and building community partnerships.

The interviews served to be incredibly helpful for answering my research questions and gaining a better perspective of the markets from the founders' points of view. It was interesting to hear the evolution stories of both of these projects.

Participant Observation

I was able to perform participant observation by being a volunteer for the mobile markets through their respective nonprofits. By participating in the markets as a volunteer, I was able to closely observe the markets spaces. Volunteering for the markets meant that I showed up to each location, helped setup for the markets by arranging the produce, and helping with tables, signage, and other general setup. I helped customers select produce options. At the Athens Nonprofit markets, I was responsible for the sales of the market. At the Walton Nonprofit market, I helped fill shoppers' bags with their preferred vegetable choices. As a volunteer, I was able to interact directly with market participants and observe the markets. After each market concluded and we were finished packing and cleaning up, I immediately took notes. I took note of how individuals interacted in the market, anecdotes they provided in conversation, and any other relevant details I observed while volunteering at the market including what was available for that particular market.

Similarly, to the coding of the transcripts from the interviews, my field notes from the markets were also coded for themes. Coding was done manually by highlighting themes and

corresponding ideas from the notes. These were then compiled into a spreadsheet for analysis. Just like the interviews, the notes underwent multiple rounds of coding. I used an inductive method to my coding as I was more interested in seeing what themes came about in a more organic way than searching for predetermined themes. I felt that for the nature of this project, that would be a more productive approach.

A major theme across both market notes was "health concerns". Another theme that was derived from across both sets of coding was "familiarizing market goers with produce" (typically through cooking demos or in conversation). In addition to the shared themes, the notes from the Athens Nonprofit markets specifically, resulted in a consistent theme of "culturally appropriate foods". For Walton Nonprofit, "partnerships" came up repeatedly.

The firsthand perspective I gained by interacting with market goers, other volunteers, and the spaces helped me to understand how these markets functioned and how they were utilized by their communities. The market observations were an imperative primary data source for this project.

Document Review

There were several documents that I was provided with directly from the nonprofits as well as some that I created with or alongside the organizations that I reviewed for this project. Promotional materials such as brochures and flyers as well as social media campaigns were helpful for me to review in terms of understanding how the nonprofits targeted and advertised the information for the markets. This is beneficial to consider when analyzing the ways nonprofits (or any entity) might communicate information about their project. However, this was not a significant source of data collection, but instead offered helpful supplemental information to the broader project. In addition to promotional materials, there were three primary documents

that I found most helpful in supporting the data collected from the interviews and the observations to produce a more holistic picture of this project. Those documents were a market survey from Athens Nonprofit, a membership application for Walton Nonprofit, and the sales sheet used at the market for Athens Nonprofit. Walton also tracked participation at the markets but since they did not charge anything for the products, there was not a similar sales sheet available.

I created and conducted the market survey at each location of the Athens Nonprofit markets. The market surveys were collected in person at the markets and the questions from the survey frequently provoked conversations which contributed to my observations and field notes. The brief survey consisted of five open-ended questions:

1. How did you get to the market today?
2. What are you shopping for?
3. What items would you like to see offered at the market?
4. How many times a month do you think you would use the market?
5. Where do you normally get your food?

I did code the survey responses for themes manually and using an inductive approach. The responses supported themes and comments made throughout the interviews and observations. They also helped to provide supplemental information to answer my research questions.

The membership application questionnaire was conducted by Walton Nonprofit. The questionnaire is part of the free application process for their membership only markets. This document provided information on the average age of applicants, income levels, SNAP eligibility, as well as indicating if they have a chronic illness. If they did have a chronic illness (90% reported having at least one) they were prompted to indicate which illness they had (hypertension, diabetes, COPD, etc.). The breakdown of the chronic illnesses reported is below in Table 1. Again, while this was not a significant source of data collection for the overall

project, this was incredibly helpful for understanding how this organization collected data in order to target their efforts and work to be effective in achieving their goal of impacting the health of their community members. I find this document important to discuss here, because like conducting the market surveys, it can be helpful for other organizers to see what types of data collection methods have been done and are feasible to do to evaluate objectives and outcomes. The data from the table below was gathered from the questionnaire responses which were provided by the Walton Nonprofit director.

Table 1.

Table of Most Prevalent Chronic Illnesses Among Market Participants	
% of participants with Hypertension:	55%
% of participants with Diabetes Type II:	35%
% of participants with Diabetes Type I:	2%
% of participants with Asthma:	12%
% of participants with COPD:	8%
%of participants with Heart Disease:	19%
% of participants who have or have had any type of Cancer:	12%
% of participants who have High Cholesterol:	34%
% of participants who have Acid Reflux:	30%

Finally, the sales sheet from the Athens Nonprofit was helpful for reviewing the participation at the markets and for seeing how many transactions were SNAP benefits, versus credit card use, versus cash. Overwhelmingly cash was utilized, but just over 14% of all transactions were from using SNAP. For this market, tracking participant activity and how they paid for items was helpful information. Documents similar to this could serve as another way

future efforts might track engagement. The document review was helpful in answering my research questions because it allowed me to gain insight into how the organizations selected their populations, what criteria they used (if any), who participated in the markets, and what participants wanted from the markets through the surveys that were provided.

These three methods of interviewing, participant observation, and document review worked well together to support and highlight key themes. By interviewing the founders of each of the market projects I gained a better understanding of the motivation and objectives of the market as well as the history of the projects. I could not have gained this information solely by participant observation or reviewing documents. The data gathered from the interviews supplemented my participant observation notes greatly. It was important to be able to directly interact with the markets as a volunteer and be able to speak with market participants. Knowing the background and objectives of the markets from the interviews allows me to have a more complete picture of the project. I observed the market logistics and participated in them, but I understand why the markets had the specific model that they did or experienced certain limitations because of the explanations from the interviews. It is evident from the coding that there is overlap in themes from the interviews that were conducted and my participant observation, for example "partnerships." I was able to observe the interactions among varying partners that the nonprofits worked with while I volunteered at the markets, but after speaking with the founders, I gained an understanding of how and why those relationships were established to begin with. Again, while participating in the markets I was able to observe how some partnerships elevated the participation and interactions with the markets and how other market locations struggled or were unsuccessful because a close partnership did not yet exist. While this was something I noted in my field notes, it was also something that came up in the

interviews with both founders. They both discussed the importance of partnerships. For Walton, they were very intentional about selecting partners and cultivating relationships. They were successful in achieving this after some time and much effort. For Athens, the few partners they were able to make in the brief time the markets were going, proved to be valuable. The Athens founder also recognized that it was due to a lack of partnerships that one location in particular struggled with participation.

The documents that I reviewed also supported the other two methods in meaningful ways. The market surveys that were conducted captured how marketgoers perceived the market which is an important aspect of the project that I could not have gained from the interviews with the founders. The surveys also helped highlight observations I made in my notes. For example, in my notes I discussed the items that participants made comments about wishing they could see more of, or that were not there at all or that they may have been unfamiliar with. In the surveys, participants listed out foods that they wanted to have at the markets. The sales sheets from the markets also noted what items were available at each of the markets which helps to track vegetables and herbs that were most popular. This theme from my observation notes, the market surveys, and the sales sheets can be helpful for the nonprofits to prioritize certain foods, especially with multiple data points illustrating which foods marketgoers want most. The document review process was helpful for supplying important supplemental information that supported discussions from the interviews. For example, I was able to access a sheet that organized the chronic health conditions that Walton members were experiencing. This supports the narrative the Walton founder provided when she discussed the focus of their organization on the working poor who had at least one chronic health concern. This sheet provided the exact

conditions and how many conditions members experienced. Each of these methods informed and supported each other to construct a more robust understanding of the markets.

Chapter 4

Findings

In this section I will discuss the findings from the data and how they respond to the three research questions. The section will be organized by research question, which will be in bold text. Themes that emerged from the data may serve as subheading in italics. The three research questions that this thesis worked to answer are:

1. In what ways do these two mobile markets attempt to expand access to food in low food access communities?
2. In what ways do the models and structure of the markets impact their effectiveness and functionality?
3. In what ways do these markets create spaces that counter capitalist approaches of production and consumption within the food system?

In what ways do these two mobile markets attempt to expand access to food in low food access communities?

The primary goal for both of these market projects was to expand access to healthy food choices to their respective community locations. Were they able to achieve this? The simple answer is an overwhelming yes. They did in fact bring healthful food options to areas within their communities. After analyzing the market survey results during the document review from the Athens Nonprofit markets, participants actually wanted an increase in the markets. Most participants suggested at least twice a month or more for each location citing that because they experience uncertainty with when they can get groceries, the mobile market has been and would

be incredibly helpful to supplement grocery store trips. With Walton, members belonged to specific markets based on their geography and were able to increase their access to healthy food choices through the weekly markets.

Locally sourced food

In terms of supplying food for the market, a resounding theme that emerged from the interview transcripts and observation notes, was that of locally sourced food. It was important to both organizations to supply food that was as close to home as possible. In some ways, they achieved this in similar ways such as having a community garden. However, each organization's evolution to producing their food for the markets is unique.

For example, Athens Nonprofit primarily used their own community garden and organic farm to grow produce for their markets. They used both their community garden and farm for other farmers' markets that they host as well as their CSA program so logistically this was a fairly easy process for them. Because they were stretching produce across multiple projects though (their own farmer's market, their CSA program, and now the mobile markets), they sometimes needed to supplement. They would do this by utilizing other farms in the Athens area to strive to maintain their goal of keeping food as local as possible. The Athens Nonprofit interviewee discussed that in the early stages of the markets there was a late freeze that devastated the crops at both the farm and the community garden (the main sources of food for the markets). They did not produce enough to be able to supply all of the markets sufficiently. They could have chosen a market or two to supply but fulfilling the needs of all the markets was problematic. In her mind, the only thing they could do was to purchase food from a store or retailer to sell at the markets to supplement in order to be able to have a presence at each market location. They decided to purchase produce from a co-op grocer in Athens. She recalled in her

interview with me a little bit of tension that arose around this. The nonprofit as an organization was adamant about keeping food locally grown and felt that even though the purchases were made through a co-op grocer, the food was produced outside of Athens, sometimes by quite a distance. The organization felt strongly about promoting local farms and business to stimulate the local economy and rally support around local farmers. The primary goal of the mobile markets though, was to expand food access and while it was preferred that the food be local to the Athens area, it was more important that fresh food was available for the markets. Ultimately, they were successful in supplying enough food to each of their market locations, even if it meant they had to supplement from the co-op instead of a local farm.

Walton Nonprofit also established a priority of locally sourced food, but for different reasons. The ways in which they obtained their food for their markets transformed significantly over the market seasons. They started out relying on emergency food aid from the local food bank which was typically not very nutritious. Since health was a primary component of their project, receiving food from the food bank that was high in calories but low in nutrition would not be sustainable for the mission of their project of expanding food access to the working poor who also experienced at least one chronic health condition. Additionally, they did not want to be reliant on another entity for all of their food and wanted the ability to have more control over the food that they could offer instead being at the mercy of whatever donations were available through emergency food aid. Self-sufficiency soon became another priority for them.

These revelations lead to the organization devising a diversified means of growing their own food for their markets. They employed a "grow a row" campaign. Businesses and organizations across the county could grow one row of a single crop. One place might grow squash, another corn, and so on. The organization would come out and build the beds and supply

the seeds and tools needed to maintain a garden but in order for them to do that, the business or organization needed to have a point person that oversaw the garden and was committed to the project. This became quite successful because it was relatively low maintenance and easy to do. The produce harvested from these rows were contributed to the markets.

In addition to the grow a row project, they started another campaign that targeted home gardeners. Buckets were supplied and any home gardener in the community that had extra produce or just wanted to donate some of the food from their gardens could fill up a bucket and drop it off to be donated to the markets. Again, this was widely successful because it was simple for residents to do and it promoted a sense of community by growing food within the community to be consumed by the community. The interviewee explained that they would take lots of pictures to post to social media that contributed to this idea of neighbors feeding their neighbors. She says, "..we are always posting pictures of our market because one of the things that people like is to complete that circle. So, they know they donated squash and then they see pictures of our market where people are getting squash and they're like 'I grew that.' Which then it completes that feeling of 'I feel really good because I grew that. I'm helping my community. I am seeing people getting it and benefiting from it. I want to do it again.'" Having the broader community contribute to the food supply for the markets, especially under this notion of "neighbors feeding neighbors" was tremendously important in their food supplies for the markets.

Finally, the Walton Nonprofit received a grant to establish a community garden to grow more food to offer at the markets. They partnered with the Sheriff's Office to use land in front of the county jail to grow their community garden. Between the community garden, the grow a row campaign, and the bucket campaign, this past year Walton's markets were 100% self-sufficient

by supplying all of their own food from the community to be consumed by members of the community.

Relying on local food sources can be challenging as you are at the mercy of weather and nature. As we saw with the Athens Nonprofit, a single freeze can have a significant impact on the ability to produce food. However, the advantages, at least in both of these cases, tend to far outweigh the risks of poor weather or disease of crops. For Athens, while the primary focus of expanding fresh food options was prioritized, the ability to support local farms and gardens and contribute to a local economy was an important benefit that they strived to be intentional about with their project. For Walton Nonprofit, self-sufficiency while simultaneously providing fresh and healthful food options for their markets was of utmost importance to carry out their markets' goals.

Affordability

Affordability, as mentioned previously in this thesis, is an important barrier to accessing healthy food options. Affordability was also a crucial aspect to both Athens Nonprofit's and Walton Nonprofit's efforts in expanding access to food in their communities. The Athens Nonprofit project founder felt that they were able to overcome the affordability barrier by allowing marketgoers who used SNAP to double up on produce. SNAP benefits were allowed at each of the markets and shoppers were allowed to double the amount of items by using SNAP. She says in the interview, "I think that having the ability to double SNAP or even just accept SNAP dollars is really important. And so that definitely helped meet the financial barriers that a lot of people faced." According to the sales report from these markets, which was examined during the document review analysis, about 14% of all transactions at the markets were EBT/SNAP which means those individuals were able to receive twice the amount of produce.

This allowed shoppers to get more bang for their buck which was important as many indicated that they were living on a fixed income. Additionally, the produce was heavily subsidized through monetary donations and a grant, so it was still much cheaper even for individuals not using SNAP benefits.

The Walton Nonprofit also helped to eradicate the barrier of affordability by providing all of their goods for free. Marketgoers did not have to pay a penny for the produce, bread, and even eggs that they received from the mobile markets. In our interview, the Walton founder recognized that, "the CDC had come out with a report talking about the biggest barriers for certain populations, especially vulnerable populations to being able to live a healthy lifestyle and do preventative wellness in their life was access and affordability to produce. Those were two things that I saw in our community that we had issue with, both access and affordability as well." Acknowledging that affordability was a fundamental barrier for their population, Walton Nonprofit strived to provide their food and services for free. They were able to achieve this because a lot of the produce supplied was grown in their community garden which was funded by a grant and then labor was volunteered by community members or inmates or the food was donated by home gardeners and businesses participating in the grow a row campaign. Since targeting the working poor was their primary population, the affordability barrier was an important one they wanted to extinguish. Providing the food for free overcame this barrier most effectively. This is because their population experienced a number of financial barriers. She reveals that, "Our market is absolutely free. Some of our members may have SNAP and we want them to be able to have that SNAP for going and buying flour or rice or something like that, some commodities that they can buy at the grocery store." She continues to say that, "Also, pretty consistently throughout the years since we've been able to evaluate our members and

collect data, we stick around 40% of our members who do not receive any type of assistance from other programs because they're outside of the income for receiving that assistance because of the number of people in their household or whatever. But yet they will struggle to be able to put healthy food on the table." By providing access to free fresh foods, they were able to help diminish the effects financial barriers to fresh food.

Building partnerships

The importance of building community partnerships was another significant theme that arose across both interviews. Solid partnerships were praised as having a powerful impact on the success of the markets just as the lack of partnerships in some instances were associated as the culprits for struggles for other markets.

The Athens project, though only in its infancy, accrued the partnerships of a local hospital to provide health screenings and nutrition information, a nonprofit to handle project logistics, The Office of Sustainability from the University of Georgia for funding and support, and local farms to supplement produce. Having these partnerships were immensely helpful in providing supplies and logistics for the markets as well as getting the markets into communities. Partnerships with other groups helped to provide a source of labor (volunteers from the nonprofit), added benefits (doctors and nurses to provide health information) and probably most importantly, they provided supplies such as the produce for the markets. While this project was fairly young when I started working with them, they quickly realized how important expanding partnerships would be to their success and were relatively fruitful in their efforts to establish relationships. In the interview, the founder attributed their most successful markets to locations where established relationships and partners already existed. Likewise, she attributed the lack of partnerships in some market locations to their lack of participation and disinterest in the market.

She acknowledged that the need for partnerships is crucial by commenting, "the Athens Nonprofit (pseudonym used) had good relationships with those locations as well (sites that had high market participation) which I think was really important. Because we weren't just coming and being like, 'Here's our mobile market.' We were able to work with those places in the communities to make sure that that was something they would actually want in their communities." She also recognized that a major reason for the obstacles that the project encountered were due to the lack of partnerships. She recalls one site in particular that they really struggled to get any participation in and mentioned that she later found out that the nonprofit did not have an established partnership with that neighborhood and come to find out, the neighborhood did not view the nonprofit very favorably which is why she believed that they did not receive participation for that specific market location.

While coding the transcripts from the Walton Nonprofit interviewee, I counted nearly twenty unique community partners which included other nonprofit organizations, governmental entities, senior centers, churches, hospice agencies, local farms, a local dialysis center, Georgia Organics among many others. Walton spent a great deal of time expanding their web of relationships to support their community projects. They identified key groups or people that could help in some capacity with their project. For example, they recognized that the dialysis clinic would likely interact with the population that they were trying to target and so building a partnership with them helped them to reach their population with promotional materials and information about the markets. This was something that they were intentional about as they wanted the project to encompass the greater community and not just the pockets they were striving to serve. To promote self-sufficiency and community autonomy, it was necessary to have community partnerships to facilitate rapport and trust while also assisting with the logistics

of providing supplies and labor. Having strong partnerships enabled them to get additional help with promoting and communicating to the communities more broadly, like with the dialysis clinic.

Partnerships also generated sources outside of the nonprofit for labor. Churches often have a pool of volunteers that can help with community projects. Additionally, churches typically have adequate space to hold mobile markets, so these partnerships were incredibly helpful for space and labor. In addition to church and nonprofit volunteers, the inmates from the jail where the community garden was located could volunteer labor to maintain and harvest the garden and in return, they could take half a day off of their sentence. By having labor outside of the nonprofit, they could really expand their efforts. Partnerships also help facilitate community buy-in like with the grow a row project which helped to promote ownership of their food system.

Utilizing locally sourced food, mitigating issues around affordability by allowing the use of SNAP or giving food away for free, and building strong partnerships are the primary ways that these market models worked to expand access to more healthful food options. By using locally sourced food, the Athens nonprofit helped to promote the local economy and it helped to subsidize the food that was provided to the markets. For the Walton markets, using locally sourced food provided them with self-sufficiency which is important for sustaining the project for the long term. The use of SNAP and heavily subsidized produce at the Athens markets helped combat the barrier of affordability by offering cheaper options for produce than traditional food retailers. Walton gave all of their food away at their markets which allowed marketgoers to utilize SNAP benefits at traditional grocery stores. As demonstrated by both of these groups, the establishment of community partnerships can help or the lack thereof may break, the success of the markets across locations. In places where there were strong, enduring partnerships

established, the markets had a greater impact and reach. In places where there were little to no partnerships established, market participation was essentially nonexistent.

In what ways do the models and structure of the markets impact their effectiveness and functionality?

The market models, while continuingly evolving for both groups over the course of the projects, were fundamentally the most influential factor in achieving the markets' goals. In the interviews, both founders definitively decided that their model was effective in expanding access to fresh and healthy food choices to community members. There are advantages and limitations of each market model used in terms of effectiveness and functionality. Below, I will discuss what worked well for each model and what limitations they encountered.

Non-membership market model

Athens Nonprofit utilized the non-membership market model, meaning that the markets were open to all community members without regard to specific population criteria. The markets were structured within common areas such as a neighborhood gathering space or a common room in one of the affordable housing complexes. The markets were setup very much like a traditional farmer's market where goods were brought in, displayed, and shoppers could select what they wanted from the available produce items and then pay with cash, credit card, or EBT/SNAP to complete their transaction. Cooking demonstrations were built into the structure of the market to offer opportunities to become more familiar with food items and cooking techniques, provide free samples, and provide a little engagement between the nonprofit volunteers and the community. The markets traveled to a different location each week, resulting

in each location experiencing a monthly market. The food from the market was intentionally sourced by the nonprofit's community garden and farm when possible.

Advantages of non-membership model

One of the aspects that worked well with this model is that the nature of the mobile market traveling to various locations allowed the potential to reach more community members, especially since no membership was required. In our interview, the founder of the project explains that, "it kind of flipped the model of a grocery store where the people have to go to the grocery store, but with the mobile market, it just comes right to the people. So if they are having to work multiple jobs or they're raising a family and they don't necessarily have time, or if they don't have a vehicle, the grocery store trip could take multiple hours if you're having to switch bus lines and everything." In this single quote, she touches on a multitude of barriers to food access that this market helped to alleviate.

One of the greatest barriers to healthy food options is transportation and/or physical access (Wolfson et al, 2019). The founder describes in her quote above and throughout our conversation that the markets contended with these barriers by bringing the food directly into neighborhoods that experienced limited physical access and/or have known transportation issues. As most of the locations were selected in or near senior living communities, this was especially helpful. According to the market surveys taken at the markets, participants felt grateful to have the opportunity to have a market in their community that they could easily walk to instead of relying on a loved one, neighbor, or public transit to make arduous grocery trips. By traveling to multiple locations each month, more areas could be covered increasing accessibility across the community. Affordability was another important barrier that she felt they were successful in overcoming. Low-income households are three times more likely to be food insecure than other

households and affordability of food plays a major role in a household's ability to obtain fresh food (Holben and Marshall, 2017). Because the food primarily came from the nonprofit's farm and community garden the prices were heavily subsidized making the produce very cheap for marketgoers. Additionally, SNAP eligible shoppers could double their produce, getting more bang for their SNAP bucks.

One intriguing aspect of the non-membership model is its unique ability to reach across multiple populations in a community. By utilizing a traditional farmer's market model that is open to all community members, a diverse range of populations and households can be reached. The founder felt that this was a really positive aspect of this model. She mentions interacting with children, families, and senior citizens across the scope of the market project. The founder provides an example saying:

"So I think one interesting part of the mobile market was that we were able to reach everyone from children to older adults or senior citizens. So, we were able to go to the Boys and Girls Club and reach the younger generation and really teach them and work with them through a few demonstrations, or cooking demonstrations. And we were able to use the produce that we were selling that day, so they could kind of feel a connection to it. And then when their parents would come to pick them up, they would be so excited to show their parents like, 'Look at what we have today and look at what we cooked. We can buy this.'"

Limitations

One of the major limitations to this market model's structure regards the frequency of the markets. As indicated by participants on the market survey and in my participant observation notes, only having the market once a month was extremely limiting in a variety ways. From the market participants perspective, they need to have continuous access to food throughout the

month and not just once. Plus, the market only supplied fresh, perishable food, so they could not access canned or frozen foods to get them through the rest of the month, so having the market multiple times a month would be more beneficial. From the founder's perspective, she found that the frequency made it difficult to build consistency with the markets and cultivate rapport within the community. She mentions that on multiple occasions they needed to remind people of who they were and why they were there since it felt so irregular.

In terms of food supply, the markets primarily only provided fresh produce and herbs. I had a conversation with one of the market participants who explained, that while having access to fresh produce is very nice, it still means he has to find a way to get to the store to purchase milk, eggs, toilet paper, and other necessities. He suggested having more items available or offering a free shuttle service to take residents to a local store to buy their remaining groceries.

One of the more evident limitations of this model is that the nature of the non-membership model means that it is exceedingly hard to know if you are reaching households and individuals that would most benefit from a mobile market (low income, low access). With knowing very little about the individuals who participate in the market or without targeting a specific population, it is impossible to know the extent that this particular model was able to overcome food access barriers to those who experienced the barriers most deeply.

Additionally, reliance on locally grown food can be limiting as the founder noted when discussing the late freeze that ruined crops. This is a scenario where having strong partnerships across the community who could help supplement food supplies could be particularly helpful.

Advantages of membership market model

The membership model exhibited a number of advantages. One unique benefit to the membership model was that the nonprofit was able to collect data on participants and target their

specific population of working poor individuals with at least one chronic health condition. The questionnaire included in the free membership application indicated the financial needs of the applicant as well as the health condition(s) that they experienced. They could even indicate which chronic health concern they specifically had. The application process of the membership model allowed the organization to target the population they were most concerned with reaching, collect data, and cap market participants. Capping participants may sound like a disadvantage, but it actually ensured that each member would receive the equal and maximum amount of food each week that was available. Capping participants also alleviated their issue of shoppers loitering and growing agitated waiting in line with no assurance that once they got into the market, there would be anything left for them to get.

Another advantage of the membership model and being able to control and predict the number of marketgoers was that the organization was able to make the food absolutely free for those members. Members could come get eggs, bread, herbs, and produce and not have to pay a cent. When I asked the founder about the possibility of incorporating SNAP like so many other alternative food movement projects strive to do, the Walton founder recognized that a portion of their population were SNAP eligible, however their goal was to allow those individuals to be able to utilize those SNAP benefits on other staples such as rice, increasing their overall food intake per month. This benefit of the membership model is tremendous in overcoming the financial barrier to food access, by essentially eradicating it altogether by not charging for products and promoting the neighbors feeding neighbors theme throughout their project.

The other important advantage to this model was their frequency of markets. They held weekly markets with random pop-up markets when there was a surplus in the harvest. The weekly markets allowed members to have access to food each week. This frequency also helped

to establish strong relationships. When I volunteered with this market, I observed that nearly every member knew nearly every volunteer very well. They talked about families, sports, the weather, and other casual conversations. You could tell that these individuals were really comfortable with one another. This trust not only contributes to the success of a market, but also contributes to empowering a community where members can lean on one another, trust one another, and grow and distribute food together to overcome barriers to food access.

Limitations

One of the limitations of the membership only model is that you are only accessing one specific population within a community. On the one hand this can be very helpful for programming, but on the other hand it means that there are other community members that are not able to participate in the capped membership only markets. Another potential limitation of not charging marketgoers for the food is that you absolutely must have strong community partners to help with supplies and food or some sort of flourishing funding option to be able to continue to provide markets. For Walton, they had many established partners for labor and seeds and materials, but for other membership models that are striving to provide free or very minimal costs to shoppers this can be extremely challenging. In our interview, the Walton founder indicated that a limitation they encountered was that their participants had to be able to cook for themselves as most of the food provided at the markets was not already prepared. For individuals who did not possess the resources, skills, or ability to cook the food they would not benefit from the market, so it was imperative that participants had to be able to cook for themselves.

It also takes a great deal of time and energy to get a membership model like the one Walton exhibits to be successful. They spent years building relationships, programming, and getting specific about their mission and target population. With immediate issues of hunger, time

can be a very real barrier to membership models of this nature. Though that time is well spent in the long-term and appears to offer a more robust program, for small organizations or new groups with limited relationships or funding, this could be limiting in what they are able to achieve with their markets.

Both market models have clear advantages and limitations in terms of their design, structure, and ability to sustain. Groups looking to employ one of these models should have a clear mission and specific goals to see which model might be most appropriate for their community's needs. With either model, taking time to build relationships and trust within the community is of utmost importance.

In what ways do these markets create spaces that counter capitalist approaches of production and consumption within the food system?

While providing immediate aid to and within communities experiencing food access barriers is critical and a primary component to these markets, there are some interesting ways these markets work to counter disparities generated by capitalism in our food system. First, they grow food for their themselves and not for the market. This is especially true for the Walton Nonprofit who grew 100% of their markets' food supply and then gave it away to residents of the Walton community. This action of growing food for their own consumption versus contributing to the broader market is anti-capitalist in nature (Holt-Gimenez, 2017). They demonstrated this with three strategies for generating their own food supplies. Their grow a row campaign that engaged with community businesses and organizations provided the opportunity and means for the entity to grow a crop that they intentionally would be giving away, knowing that the food would go to someone in the community. Capitalism works to commodify our food

and often times results in high prices for healthy food or creates limitations to accessing food. The Walton markets worked in opposition to the capitalist mindset by being self-sufficient in providing their own food for their own consumption. The food was not produced as a commodity to be sold, but as a means to eat and make healthy choices about food.

Additionally, the bucket campaign, touted as a neighbors feeding neighbors campaign, promoted ownership of food inequities across the community and not just within pockets where households might be the ones experiencing food access barriers. Home gardeners donated food grown from their homes and yards, again under the pretense that the food would go to feeding neighbors in the community. By utilizing their social media platforms Walton Nonprofit was able to show the community images of the food that they grew and images of it going to residents in the area. This helped promote the cycle of community members growing food to feed their own community members.

The third source of food production that they utilized was a community garden. Athens Nonprofit also utilized this aspect of anti-capitalist food production. For both community gardens, they were grown on borrowed land. Walton, growing on unused land in front of the county jail and Athens Nonprofit repurposing space at a disused school. Both worked to demonstrate through the community gardens that this land and space is for the community. Events were held in the gardens for community members to gather and engage with the space, especially at Athens Nonprofit's garden. The community gardens grew a significant amount of the fresh produce and herbs available for the markets. Not producing food for profit or the market is inherently anti-capitalist. On top of that, the strategies employed by Walton Nonprofit help to empower the community to be engaged and involved and by rewarding the community

with feel good local images of their efforts and results. This empowerment can be self-fulfilled. This concept can also facilitate more awareness of inequities in our food system.

Additionally, the market spaces themselves were fashioned to act as a common ground, a neutral and welcoming space for neighbors and community members to interact. In Walton, they were able to achieve this by utilizing unused county land in front of the jail to grow food, host markets, and have community events for community members to gather. The entire public has access and can exchange material goods such as eggs as well as social goods such as information and network building. Often music or other entertainment would be provided to entice participants to linger and feel welcomed. It was very common for me to see pools of people sitting at tables amongst the market chatting and catching up. It was a space for neighbors to exchange ideas and grow social capital through networking building, information sharing, and coming together in a common space. These facets of the market spaces feel to me like the notion of the commons as described by Eric Holt-Gimenez who suggests that by restructuring land and rebuilding the commons, communities could regain the ability to have sustainable access to food at minimal costs which is exactly what these markets strived for, especially Walton Nonprofit's model (2017). These markets have demonstrated that mobile markets have the capabilities of creating spaces of commons that share natural resources as well as social resources. Through their growing techniques, intentional selection of land and sites for growing and selling or giving away food, and the ways they encourage participants to interact with the space generates a sort of commons. Nurturing this can lead to deeper engagement with political factors of the food system through awareness of food inequities the community experiences.

Another way these markets contended with capitalist notions of our food system was through their labor efforts. Both markets operated almost entirely by volunteers and the founders

themselves. Walton was very intentional about partnering with churches who typically have a sustainable pool of volunteers to help with projects like this. Additionally, inmates at the county jail in Walton could volunteer in the community garden and would be compensated with half a day off of their sentence with each day they volunteered. This is another way they tried to reach community members in Walton. They included the inmates on a community concern and provided an opportunity for them to engage with the community in a positive and meaningful way.

Additionally, the markets strived to promote community autonomy to build empowerment around food choices. In Walton, by growing whatever they wanted at their homes and throughout the community, the Walton community had autonomy over what they wanted to produce and how they wanted to produce it. Nearly all sources choosing organic practices. Community members were also openly asked at markets and events what they wanted to eat so they could incorporate those foods in the next season. Markets surveys taken at the Athens Nonprofit gave marketgoers the opportunity to voice food that they would like to have more of. Both Athens and Walton strived to utilize organic and permaculture practices in their food production. Avoiding commercialized means of food production such as avoiding pesticides and using their own or heirloom seeds also challenges the notion that these are solely capitalist market-driven approaches.

Finally, the ultimate method, that Walton Nonprofit in particular, contends with a capitalist approach to the food system is that they give their food away. The organically grown food that is harvested voluntarily from community members is then given away to other community members. This completely disrupts the modes of the capitalist food system that survives and thrives off of for-profit food transactions. In this case, an ethic of giving away food

because all of their community members deserve to eat well challenges the notion that mobile markets cannot be more anti-capitalist and do more transformative work.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Discussion

While both of these market models were successful in expanding access both physically and financially within their communities, some questions come to mind. Is bringing in fresh produce enough to address hunger and food insecurity? Are these models sustainable? It is evident that both market models maintain a number of advantages and limitations. However, since both nonprofits achieved their goal of expanding access to food in their communities, does market model really matter? Why is examining the advantages and limitations of the market models helpful?

In terms of eradicating hunger and food insecurity in a community, bringing in fresh produce is simply not enough. Community members still need access to other food staples such as meat, rice, flour, and other goods that were not available at the markets. Through my conversations with both organizations, increasing access to fresh foods was important but not meant to be the solution to eradicating all hunger in their communities. They wanted to offer community members better options in the food that they could access. Marketgoers in Athens mentioned that since their grocery trips were so sporadic as they were dependent on neighbors and loved ones to drive them, it was rare that they purchased very much fresh, perishable food, so having the markets helped give them the ability to access an increased amount of fresh food than they normally would have had. For Walton, the founder very deliberately said, “this is not a feed the hungry project”. The goal was never to end hunger in the community, but instead to give at risk community members more healthful options to make lifestyle changes to improve their

health. Increasing access to healthy food options can help community members experiencing at least one, possibly more, chronic health conditions have more choices in the food that they consume that can have an impact on their overall health.

Sustainability is an important component to alternative food movements like mobile markets. Sustainability refers to the ability of the organization to continuously offer an effective market that reaches the intended population(s), practices sustainable methods of sourcing food, and ideally, would be self-sufficient. The Athens market model has the potential to be sustainable, but ultimately was not and has since dissolved as a project. The Walton model demonstrated key ways that market models can work to becoming self-sufficient and sustain year after year.

The first thing that they did was establish community partnerships. As mentioned previously, I counted over twenty unique community entities that the nonprofit developed relationships with. In addition to building partnerships, the Walton founder encourages future groups to also find "the champion." By this, she means finding someone within the partnership or neighborhood that can really help take ownership of the project. These champions can be the individuals that bridge gaps between a neighborhood or entity with the nonprofit and the mission of the project. For example, having churches buy into the project, take ownership, and get their networks involved in volunteering and providing space for the markets to happen was paramount. Additionally, for the grow a row initiative, Walton required that there be a champion of that project that would see the growing process through from seed to harvest. Partnerships and champions within these partnerships help facilitate trust with the community, develop reliability, and in practical terms helps to alleviate some of the logistically work involved with running a mobile market. Admittedly, developing an extensive network of partnerships can take a time, so

patience is an important ingredient in developing sustainable alternative food movements. This contrasts with the Athens market that had few partnerships, essentially no community champions and in some instances no connections at all. The founder lamented that in some market locations this was detrimental. Additionally, having all of the logistical work of supplying the food, setting up the markets, providing the resources, and supplying the labor came solely from the nonprofit without the larger community having any ownership in the market project, contributed to this model not being set up well to be sustainable. Expanding the scope of the market project into the communities in more intentional ways may have helped build the network of partnerships needed and expand trust in the community.

The other way that the Walton project demonstrated more sustainability was their effort to becoming completely self-sufficient. They no longer relied on companies like Walmart or food banks to provide food (that were often questionable in nutritional value). The markets' food came completely from the community. Their campaigns facilitated this theme of neighbors feeding neighbors which empowered the community to want to feed themselves and each other with the food that they grow. This allowed the community to make choices about what food they wanted to grow and to eat which contributes to a more autonomous local food system.

Market models do matter. Different organizations will have different goals and missions as different communities will have varying needs. While there are some attributes of each model that are similar such as prioritizing locally sourced food, the ways the models differed allowed the nonprofits to tailor to their specific needs or goals. For Athens, the goal was to bring in more fresh produce with a feeling of a traditional farmer's market. Their model reflected this. For Walton, they were primarily focused on acting as a catalyst for healthier lifestyle choices in their community, and their mobile market model reflected that. This project examined the advantages

and limitations of each market model and while both felt that they achieved their goals of expanding access to healthy food options, they did so in different ways and for different motivations. Identifying that market models matter is helpful for future organizations designing mobile market projects so that they can have the tools to analyze what their mission is, who their target population is, what frequency might be best for their goals, what their needs are, who are the partners in the community, and how they intend to carry out the logistics of their project. If establishing a more long-term sustainable market is a priority, a model that resembles the Walton markets might be more appropriate. If the goal is to provide a smaller scale, supplemental market, then a model more like the Athens market may make more sense for a group. The advantages to the Athens' market model are that they were able to intersect across various population types such as children, families, and senior citizen within the community. This could be helpful for communities with diverse populations or for a project that wants to reach across generations or other groups in the community. An advantage of both models is that they physically came into areas where there was limited access to food retail which helped mitigate the barriers of transportation and physical access to healthy food. For organizations that are currently not able to completely provide their own supply of food for free to their constituents, an alternative of allowing the use of SNAP benefits such as offered in the Athens model could be more practical and still address concerns around affordability. Additionally, as observed with the Athens market, they utilized a donation from a local hospital to also lower the costs of goods sold at the markets, making the food cheaper. This could be another option that organizations employ as a way to make food more affordable. The advantages of the Walton market are that it became self-sufficient in providing its own food and labor which allowed them the ability to give away food for free which makes this model quite sustainable. A model like this takes time,

patience, and intentional efforts to engage with the community and build lasting partnerships. The nature of this model is to cultivate healthier lifestyle choices within their community and to empower a specific population of the community through access to free healthy food that would otherwise be severely limited. For communities that are relatively small and do not have a number of entities that they could build partnerships with, this may be challenging. The founder of the Walton markets suggests that groups think "creatively" and to optimize "what you have." Most communities have schools or jails or other entities that a group could strive to forge relationships with to get started. Market models matter in that depending on what your goals are, community needs are, who you have in your community, and the scope of your project, one model may be more effective over another. If a community has a desperate need for healthy emergency food access, then a model like the one Athens offers may be most practical. If the desire is to help shift the ways community members think about food and make choices around food, a more sustaining model like Walton's may be more applicable to those goals.

Examining the strengths and weaknesses of each model is helpful for future initiatives to be more intentional about how they plan projects and execute them in their communities. Groups can pick and choose the features that would work best for their community and mission. These are not the only market models that exist, and more research should be done to examine others, but this is a good starting point that offers two unique models that have similar goals and logistical capabilities but differing approaches at structure.

Recommendations for research and for practice

More research is needed in understanding how mobile market projects can be successful in creating shared spaces like the commons and how that can lead to political activism within a community. Future mobile market research can examine how the community engages or does not

engage with food politics and how local efforts can lead to more political change. Mobile markets may also be key advocates for promoting awareness around sustainable farming and gardening methods as observed in these two markets and more can be done to see how this may affect perceptions community members have regarding how their food is produced.

In terms of future mobile markets being created by nonprofits or other community groups there are a few recommendations. First, be specific about your mission and your goals and really work to understand who you are as a group and a project. Build partnerships in the community. Take time to cultivate strong, genuine relationships with community members and community partners. Be deliberate throughout your entire planning process and be mindful about how you want to source food, distribute food, and engage with the community.

Concluding remarks

This project examined two mobile market models in Georgia to assess the efficacy of the markets in expanding access to food to low access areas within their respective communities. This thesis discussed the various barriers communities may experience resulting in limited access to food sources. These two mobile market projects worked to grapple with the barriers of limited physical and transportation accessibility as well as affordability of healthy food choices. Both nonprofits operating the markets shared a similar goal of wanting to bring in fresh food items such as herbs and vegetables to areas within their communities that experienced these barriers and thus experienced low food access. However, each nonprofit employed a different mobile market model. The Athens Nonprofit utilized a non-membership model which resembled a traditional farmer's market. The Walton Nonprofit used a membership only approach to their market.

Through participant observation, document review, and interviews with the founders, I was able to assess how each organization's model impacted their ability to expand access to food in their communities. Each model maintained its own advantages and limitations. These should be considered greatly when an organization or group is planning an alternative food movement like a mobile market. In the interviews both founders felt strongly that their goals of expanding access by bringing fresh food into neighborhoods and making it affordable was a success. It is evident that both models can work and depending on the mission of the organizers one may work more efficiently than the other.

In addition to comparing and analyzing two different market models, these markets, especially Walton Nonprofit, demonstrated approaches to going beyond offering emergency food aid and engaging with more deeply rooted issues of our food system. The intentionality that they used throughout the evolution of their market contributed to a successful anti-capitalistic, healthful, local food system. They were deliberate about what their mission was and who they were targeting in their community. They were mindful of every step of the planning process from labor to growing food using organic methods, to devising community campaigns to cultivate autonomy and empowerment to making sure that the market participants received quality healthy food for free that was grown by their own neighbors. This intentionality brought about results from their market model that motivate me to believe that mobile markets can be more transformative approaches to food justice. By creating spaces that resemble the commons with shared resources both natural and social, giving away food, growing food for your own consumption and not to enter the market, and practicing equitable labor and gardening/farming methods, mobile markets can generate a more locally just food system. This can bring about awareness of the politics of food justice and can generate momentum within a community to

work for a deeper change in our food system. This project demonstrates the potential that alternative food movements such as mobile markets have in terms of acting as a mode for a more transformative food politics while simultaneously addressing community barriers to food access.

While being anti-capitalist was never explicitly stated as a goal or feature that either organization was striving for, the Walton founder and I discussed the politicization of food in our interview. She explained how many community members perceive local organic food as elitist. She says to overcome these perceptions they are very intentional about their messaging to the community. They strive to use language that is politically neutral and to find common ground that reaches across the political spectrum. She says, "Everybody eats. Everybody. Everybody in the community eats. We're in the South, so pretty much everybody loves to eat. We love food. We're Southerners. So that is a common ground right there. So, you just build from that common ground. Then everybody gets on board." She acknowledges being highly aware that their community is very conservative leaning from a political standpoint and because food is politicized it is crucial for them as an organization and for their mission to be mindful of this and intentional with their language. While perhaps not an intentional goal of this market model, working to integrate a shifting perspective on food politics and doing anti-capitalist work within the project was certainly a side effect that emerged. The Walton model specifically leads me to believe that mobile market models can generate the foundations of a more transformative food politics by restructuring land use as common space to produce food in sustainable ways to give away to community members to consume within the community and to be inclusive of the greater community at large. Do organizations need to use explicitly anti-capitalist rhetoric or messaging for their projects to do anti-capitalist? As previously stated, doing anti-capitalist work was never mentioned as a goal or intention for either of these markets. Yet, we can see with the

Walton markets in particular that their practices and actions are in nature anti-capitalist. By striving to be inclusive and active in promoting autonomy in the community, restructuring land as a public sphere, giving away food instead of commodifying it, and using equitable labor practices, they demonstrate the ways that mobile market projects can function in anti-capitalistic ways. It may even behoove some organizations (Walton serves as an example of this) to strategically not use politicized rhetoric in their missions or goals given the political leaning of their community. According to my observations, it does not seem that mobile markets need to openly state that subverting the capitalist neoliberal food system is a goal of their project, though I wonder what projects that do blatantly have this as a motive look like. This provides an interesting new way of thinking about how mobile markets can not only be used to expand access to healthy food and provide important immediate food interventions but can also shift the politics around the food system.

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