

Administrators, Vendors, and Consumers: Social and Economic Interactions at  
Portland State University Farmers Market

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## Abstract

Key Words: Thirdspace, Farmers Market, Fetishism of Ideology, Gatekeeping, Vendors, Consumption, Authenticity

Farmers Market conjures up images of fresh tomatoes, bundles of leafy greens, rugged farmers selling their produce, families with reusable tote bags, a pint of blackberries, the ones that are just sweet with no inkling of bitterness. The Farmers Market conjures up an image of affluence of the new gilded city; people who can afford to spend \$14 on two pounds of cherries, \$10 on a loaf of bread, \$13 on a small wedge of cheese. Farmers Markets seem to be appearing in more and more neighborhoods in more and more cities. Where did this boom of Farmers Markets come from? What space does the Market occupy? Who has access to the space of Farmers Markets? What does it mean to have access to the Farmer Market? The contemporary Farmers Market is formed out of the demise of the American public markets which left an authenticity vacuum in the American food system in the last half of the 20th century. The Farmers Market occupies a unique thirdspace, that is built and influenced by the administrators, vendors, and consumers. This space holds unique economic and social interaction and capital that are foreign to the broader American social and economic structures, and the American food system.

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## Introduction

If one were to strip away the asphalt, cement, bricks, and mortar of cities, what would be left of urban life? The first principles of the urban are to be found in what is known as primitive trade... In trade, surpluses of goods and services in one location are exchanged to meet desires that cannot be satisfied adequately through production in another location. Because it takes place between relative strangers, that is, people who do not have sustained ties with each other, such trade is conducted in places outside the settlements of actors involved. The resulting markets, fairs, and bazaars can be temporary, periodic, seasonal, or permanent (Rotenberg 2012, 32-33)

Without a market, a place to trade or sell goods, is there a reason for people to gather in cities? Rotenberg argued as apart of a larger article, Towards a Genealogy of Downtowns, that places to trade or sell goods are the foundation of urban areas. Their origins may function as a place for trade, but markets have acted as a catalyst for creating community, sharing ideas, and spreading culture. Markets are where humanity spreads knowledge from one part of the world to another. Markets are more than places to buy food; they are microcosms for all human relationships and interactions. Over the past one-hundred years, the global food system, and in particular, the American food system has become increasingly globalized and de-localized. Part of this shift saw the death of almost all American public markets (i.e., Pike Place Market [Seattle], The Washington Market [New York City], Grand Central Market [Los Angeles]). The American city of the 19th and 20th Centuries revolved around these markets. They held the same societal and cultural standing as a city hall or the courthouse (Tangiers 2008, 24-26).

The public market was abandoned for the supermarket. The supermarket is a private space void of all the aspects of the public market that made it a community space. The void that is created by the supermarket is both an alienation from the producers and alienation from the community. The last thirty years have seen a renaissance of markets, with Farmers Markets popping up

across the country at an exponential pace (USDA Farmers Market Directory). These markets are not the community markets seen across the world or the American public markets of the 19th and 20th centuries. They are unique spaces that function as a thirdspace where social and economic interactions between vendors and consumers amalgamate with the construction of the space by the administrators.

Walking north by the student union of Portland State University on a sunny Sunday morning in the middle of September, the voices of children calling for their parents could be heard, as a group of college students were looking but not buying. The vendor was selling apples checking IDs of two bearded 20-something men before giving them the tastes of his homemade cider. There was a civil argument over how many potatoes are an equal trade for a bottle of honey. The debates over how the Timbers will finish their season, what chances do the Ducks have this year, a few snippets of the most recent presidential debate, and tidbits of local news were overheard. As I continue past the apple and cider vendor, a vendor selling hand-milled grains caught my eye. Traversing through the sea of patrons, canvassers, and vendors, I feel a firm, purposeful hand on my shoulder. The hand belongs to my friend Ahmed, whom I had not seen in almost a year. We exchange pleasantries, and he brings up his work with a fishmonger named Linda. I explain the focus of my ethnography, which piques his interest. Ahmed explains how he is walking around the market, looking for various groceries that he is picking up for Linda from other vendors. He explains his need for romaine lettuce, which by now is sparse being that it is past its season, but none-the-less we set off in search of the lettuce. The search for lettuce leads us to converse about our lives, but the search for lettuce appears to be for nothing. After some time walking with Ahmed, I break off in need of coffee and after I pay I receive my

espresso. I sit on a bench facing away from Spunky Monkey Coffee and am reminded The Farmers Market is a space that has given me comfort and support. It is a place where my imagination can run free. It is a place that holds deep importance to me and so many others for many different reasons. It is a place that gives me the comfort of home.

**Description:** The Market isn't just produced; honey or bread are sold at the market. Linda Brand Crab Seafood is a staple of the market.



The thirdspace of the Farmers Market is manifested through the constructed physical space by administrators, the constructed social space by vendors, and the constructed imagined space by consumers. Thirdspace is a social theory that I borrow from Edward Soja, who adopted it from Homi K. Bhaba. Soja examines thirdspace as the real and imagined Portland State University Farmers Market is a thirdspace. Thirdspace is The Portland State University Farmers Market is thirdspace where conceptions of how people think of the market, how the market is used by vendors and consumers, and the deliberate acts of placemaking by the administration.

The thirdspace of the Farmers Market is where any and all conceptions of access and purpose exist and are put into conversation with each other. Because there were deliberate acts of placemaking which formed the market, but the market does not exist in a vacuum. From Lewis & Clark students taking their families there when they visit. To buskers, playing music for a few dollars. To the ACLU, trying to fundraise to a clientele that one man told me is their “money maker.” To fundraisers, the Farmers Market is the place to go to make money. Or the two baskets of groceries that Jay trades his honey for at the end of every market day. Or me writing my thesis about this space. It could be argued that these were the intended uses of the market, that the market was and is a space for the community to use as it needs. That is an idealistic way to think about it; it is a private space with certain intended uses,

*Thirdspace* too can be described as a creative recombination and extension, one that builds on a *Firstplace* perspective that is focused on the “real” material world and a *Secondplace* perspective that interprets this through “imagined” representations of spatiality. With this brief and, I hope, helpful and inviting introduction, we are ready to begin our journeys to a multiplicity of *real-and-imagined* places (Soja 1996, 6)

Thirdspace, by its very definition, is the amalgamation of the intended and imagined uses for space. That is what a Farmers Market is, and this is where the Farmers Market exists. It is also the space that the entirety of the social and economic interactions that I experienced and viewed at the PSU Farmers Market. The created space of the Farmers Market owes much of itself to the acts creating the space by the administrators.

The contemporary farmers market is a complex thirdspace that holds many similarities to the community markets around the world and a time gone past. But in many other aspects, they function differently. They function not simply as a place of built community or to buy goods, but they also function as a space of dialectics, inclusiveness, and exclusiveness. The Farmers

Market, which owes its growth in recent decades to the lack of authenticity in the American food system, is a space to localize the food system well, also fetishizing the idea of the Farmers Market. The act of localizing the food system is considered an authentic practice. Where historically the function of the public market was to provide affordable, safe perishables to urban areas, the farmers market exists to nourish the souls of the consumer while providing a space for vendors to have agency. It is in this thirdspace is where the uniqueness of the American Farmers Market becomes evident. The space the Farmers Market occupies may be recurring weekly, but it is not permanent. It does not hold a permanent space. It is mercurial, occupying a space for a couple of hours one day a week the disappearing only for that space to return to its other uses. Through a case study of the Portland State University Farmers Market, I examine the social and economic interactions between administrators, vendors, and consumers in the space of the contemporary, American Farmers Market.

### **Methods**

My research revolves around a broader personal interest in Farmers Markets, but I localized my work to the Portland State University Farmers Market. Through an ethnography of the PSU Farmers Market, I examine the social and economic interactions within the thirdspace of Farmers Markets. It should be acknowledged that there are concerns surrounding validity. This stems from multiple aspects of the research and of me as the narrator. I am a biased narrator in my love and appreciation towards Farmers Markets. And as a firm believer in the importance of slow foods and eating local, I, along with many others, see the farmers market as a lynchpin for both of those. I come to examine the Farmers Markets not simply as a sociologist or

anthropologist, but as a consumer of the market, as a cook who values the relationships that the space of the market allows me to forge. And for the quality of the ingredients that are available at the Market.

The body of my ethnographic work came at the Portland State University Farmers Market. Additionally, the email exchange I had with Trudy Toliver, the Executive Director of Portland Farmers Markets, helped shape this thesis. The conversation I had with vendors and consumers were casual conversations back and forth. I received approval from each of my participants to use our conversation in my thesis. For some of my participants, I took the liberty of using a pseudonym for them. Of the three categories of participants, I had difficulty with having weekly conversations with consumers. For the participant observations, I used snippets from conversations to form a narrative that depicts the overall experience of the PSU Farmers Market. Along with that, I have interwoven my own narrative and views in the section of the consumer, because I have been, and am a consumer of the Farmers Market. As such, I never held formal interviews but constructed my fieldwork off of casual conversations, email, and observation.

As mentioned, I acknowledge my personal views of Farmers Markets. I am an ardent supporter of Marketing. I believe in the value of knowing the person or people producing our food. Like Trudy and Jay, I believe that food is medicine. Coming from that angle, I examined the various social and economic relationships, which constitute a space that brings me comfort, and I hold near and dear to my heart. I did my best to work with and around my biases and limitations to thoughtfully examine the contemporary Farmers Market.



A scene from behind the Salmonberry Good Stand at the Ballard Farmers Market in the Ballard neighborhood of Seattle, Washington

### **Literary Review**

It becomes clear when reading about the benefits of community marketing and localizing our food system, there are winners, and there are losers. This idea of the contemporary Farmers Market is put into conversation by Alison Hope Alkon through her book, *Black, White, and Green: Farmers Markets, Race, and the Green Economy* along with an article by Fernando J. Bosco and Pascale Joassart-Marcelli, *Spaces of Alternative food* primarily discuss the contemporary Farmers Market through conversations of consumption and neoliberalism.

Specifically, in the piece by Alkon, the concepts of race at the Farmers Market were discussed. I used the work of Chin, Soja, Bourdieu, and Erickson, among others who contribute social theories that apply to the broader analysis of the social and economic interactions at Portland State University Farmers Markets.

## **Part 1 Contextualizing the Market**

### **1. Defining Farmers Markets and Other Key Terms**

Through this section, I will define and clarify terms associated with Farmers Markets. Some of the terms that will be clarified and defined are Farmers Market, public markets, and community markets. From those three key terms, there are other associated terms that I will be putting into conversation with one another. The definitions of the three key terms of Farmers Market, public market, and community market were made known through other theorists' work but will be defined to add clarity to the broader work.

Farmers Market, as a proper noun, is explicitly the Market that I examine, and others like it and refer to Farmers Markets in their contemporary form. When referring to any contemporary or historical open-air markets, bazaar, flea market, and including contemporary public markets, I will use the community market as an all-encompassing term. It should be noted that though there are contemporary markets where farmers sell goods all over the world as well as farmers' markets throughout history, for the sake of continuity and clarity, I will refer to them simply by the broad term community market. My choice of using the term community market to -generally describe markets is contrary to the definition of contemporary "public markets" as depicted by Theodore Morrow Spitzer and Hilary Baum in *Public Markets and Community Revitalization*,

“In addition to the old-fashioned public market buildings, today’s definition of public markets also embraces many farmers’ markets, craft markets, and even some flea markets” (Spitzer & Baum 1995; 1). Instead, I will reserve The term public market only to define “old-fashioned” public markets that were prevalent in every American city through the 19th and until the mid 20th century. This is still within the historical definition of public markets presented by Spitzer and Baum, “Traditionally, a public market has been defined in the United States as a municipally owned and operated building in which vendors sell fresh food from open stalls” (1). The definition of public markets is directly attached to the building that it is in and who operates the market. The building is a permanent structure for the explicit purpose of marketing that is publicly operated. This is also supported by Helen Tangiers in Public Markets. I choose to use the term public market in this way to establish clarity, opting to use the term community market to depict all markets, including public markets and Farmers Markets.

## **2: Historicizing Farmers Markets Through a Brief History of the American Public Market**

As depicted by Rotenburg, markets in some form of another are central to the idea of human civilization, specifically to cities and urban areas. Through this section, I seek to depict the history of community markets, specifically in regards to public markets in the United States of America in the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries. Along with how the contemporary Farmers Market was guided by the history of the American public market, and specifically from the void left by the closures of urban public markets during urban decline in the second half of the 20th century.

The American public market, is centrally located within the city, is a public space operated by the city, and used specifically for the market. The public market is as much about the act of marketing as it is about the space that it occupies,

Among the first records of market activity in the colonies is a 1634 entry in the diary of Governor Winthrop of Massachusetts, showing that a court order had established a market in Boston, to be held every Thursday. A few years later, in 1639, Boston constructed its first public market building at the center of town, leading to the town dock” (Spitzer & Baum 1995; 9-10).

The building of a permanent space for a community market is what makes it a public market.

The importance of physical space is key to understanding what a public market is. As Rotenberg, Spitzer, and many others depict marketing is a base function of any town or city. Marketing will happen in any condensed place of people where those very people do not have the time nor space to farm for themselves. Though the first of the central public markets in the United States appears in Boston in the mid-1640s, the development of the public market was tethered to the construction of these market buildings, which in other parts of America, was not generally seen widely until the 18th and 19th centuries.

A key tenet of the public market is that it is owned and operated by the city. The public market function is similar to a public commodity, to provide a distinct, clean place for farms and producers to sell goods, “Traditionally, a public market has been defined in the United States as a municipally owned and operated building in which vendors sell fresh food from open stalls” (Spitzer & Baum 1995, 1). The public market, at its ideal, was a place of equality, where everyone had to shop for their fresh goods. It was a public place for all the citizens of the city. The central market acted more similarly to a courthouse or city hall than a grocery store. This was the case with the first public market in Boston, which was opened by the government for the

good of the public. Other public markets follow a similar structure in that they are operated by the city or by a department affiliated with the city. The public market served a purpose as part of the public regulatory sphere operated by the city, state, and the United States Department of Agriculture. The public market and the public market building was the required point of sale for agricultural goods and other foodstuffs. This centralized food system that at its top level was regulated by the USDA, which the public markets fall under the Office of Markets (Tangiers 2008, 24-30)(Spitzer & Baum 1995).

There are multiple reasons that led to the decline of the American public market, coinciding with World War II. First was a lack of money to fund public markets, beginning in the 1930s and through the 1960s. With less money and care available, the often ornate public markets fell into disrepair, were abandoned, “local governments often redirected the revenues derived from market rents toward meeting other municipal obligations. As a result, the market facilities deteriorated until they were no longer safe to use or economically viable” (Spitzer & Baum 1995, 10). Many cities could not justify the amount of money that was spent to subsidize and upkeep these markets. That paired post-World War II urban decline and white flight saw little financial investment in urban cores, that money instead went to the suburbs.

Paired with this lack of funding and the rise of private grocers and later supermarkets (i.e., Safeway, Fred Meyers [potentially a hypermart], QFC), and hypermarkets (i.e., Walmart, Target, Costco) provided a competitor for the public market. They were not just privately run but were increasingly affordable with the advancements in refrigeration and preservation technology, which allowed food to be shipped over vast distances. That paired with the development of large agri-business and industrial farming, which saw the creation of large corporate farms, which

were single crop-specific farms. Finally paired with new food safety laws that favored large industrial farming over small multi-crop farms, the public market was a skeleton of its former self (Spitzer & Baum 1995, 10-13) (Tangiers 2008, 27-31).

The American public market which was formed to regulate and encourage the sale of fresh food to the rapidly urbanizing America. It was a place made by the government, “Local government made an effort to ensure its success not only by imposing regulations but also by carefully considering site, financing, public support, simplicity and flexibility in design, and location convenient to buyers and sellers” (Tangiers 2008, 25). The public market as an entity built the tradition of face to face interaction between producer and consumer. It was through these relationships and the space that the market occupied that it became an important place for citizens of the city and those who relied on it to sell their goods. The decline of the American Public Market is multifaceted, the birth of agri-business and industrial agriculture, suburbanization and urban decline, the rise of supermarkets, along with a larger shift on how Americans viewed their food. The American food system left the public sphere and entered the private, “By that time (the 1940s), however, their monopoly over food sales generally had been lost, and the markets often fell into a state of decline” (Spitzer & Baum 1995, 10). It has to do with the perfect storm of overlapping reasons nationally, along with specific city and regional reasons.

Along with the many reasons given above, the regional reasons for the decline in Public Markets can be seen through the decline in Pike Place Market from the 1940s through the 1960s. The decline of public markets on the West Coast, specifically in Seattle and Portions of California has to do with the internment of Japanese Americans who before WWII made up the

vast majority of farmers selling in these public markets. This is especially evident in the case of Pike Place Market in Seattle, Washington. Through the 1910s to the 1930s, Japanese Americans, at times, outnumbered all other sellers at the market 4-1 (Shorett & Morgan 2007, 95). In 1939 the Market issued 515 “farmsellers licenses.” After Executive Order No. 9066, which authorized the internment of Japanese-Americans, that number dropped to 196, and by 1949, it had fallen to 53 (Shorett & Morgan 2007, 103 & 113). A Market cannot exist if there is neither enough people in the city to support it, or enough farmers to sell at it. And with that, the Pike Place Market as space to feed the city ended, through being “saved,” through urban renewal funding and its’ preservation as part of the Pike Place Market Historic District. Pike Place Market became a landmark and representative of the soul of the city. Pike Place Market is not alone; the American public market in the traditional sense is dead. It has been dead for the better part of a half-century, replaced by industrial agri-business and supermarkets. Supermarkets are entities that are non-places that are, for the most part, devoid of community.

## **2.1 History of Public Markets in Portland**

Portland has a unique history with public markets, which sets it apart from many other American cities in that the city did not assist in the construction of the first of the cities market. However, the city explicitly called for the building of a market in the first years of the city’s existence. It did not come to fruition until Captain Alexander P. Ankeny, a successful capitalist and city councilor, paid for the construction of the “Ankeny Block” near the Willamette River between Ash and A (now Ankeny). In 1868 the Central Market and Theater were built at the “Ankeny Block,” the market consisted of 28 stalls in an indoor arcade. The area of the “Ankeny

Block” has since become the location of the Portland Saturday Market, a weekly arts and crafts market, “The Central Market proved popular both commercially and culturally, attracting a clientele more elegant than common. Ornate displays and musical variety shows punctuated market transactions. The marketplace opened early and closed late and quickly became the centerpiece of many a downtown Portlander’s social plans” (Eigo). This was not to last; the Central Market shuttered its doors in 1885. Over the following decades, no one market took prominence, with many community markets forming and then closing around the city. The market blocks continued to be an essential space for marketing.

Significant Italian immigration beginning in the 1860s and at its height, around the turn of the century, led to the creation of the Italian Ranchers and Gardeners Association (IRGA). The IRGA was associated with one of the most famous market areas in the city, Italian Row. Italian Row was an organically formed market area where people would sell on the street or out of shops. Italian Row was in East Portland on 2nd, near the river, and was formed around 1883. The IRGA also operated a market on the banks of the Willamette, on the west side of the river. In 1908, the IRGA relocated the market to back east of the river, where they formed the Eastside Italian Market. Though the Eastside Italian Market remained successful for the next two decades, it primarily served populations of East Portland. With the IRGA moving away from the west Portland waterfront, there was a need for a central market on the west side. That was fulfilled by the formation of the Carroll Public Market in the late 1910s. The Carroll Public Market was the second market to be opened by the Producers’ and Consumers’ Public Market Association. Two months after its opening, the city took over operations of the market. It was operated out of building along Yamhill Street, growing to take up a six-block stretch of downtown Portland. The

city required the market to be moved due to the logistical issues of having a market on Yamhill Street was too small and old of a street to handle the large amount of daily traffic that the market brought. This led to the city ordering the construction of the Portland Public Market on the waterfront in downtown Portland.

Construction started in 1933, and it was completed in 1934. It was massive, stretching for multiple blocks between the Morrison and Hawthorne bridges on Front Street (Now Naito Parkway). The reason the Portland Public Market failed is well the Carroll Public Market functioned on authenticity and loyalty between vendors and consumers. The Portland Public Market was a market that was devoid of the loyalty and community and instead favoring, “modern supermarket economies of scale.” (Eigo) It never was able to function to the scale that was anticipated for it, because the market never built a following, and was unable to keep consumers or vendors. The Portland Public Market shuttered its doors in 1942,

In the wake of the post-war suburban sprawl and the decentralized shopping patterns it signaled, the idea of a central Portland market seemed sorely outdated, more a novelty than anything. In a world that valued consensus and homogeneity, the notion of local color and flavor proved idiosyncratic. The urban public market no longer seemed attractive nor useful (Eigo)

Other markets functioned in Portland but none ever regained any prominence. Public Markets and other community markets, like so many other public markets across the country fell victim to de-urbanization, industrial agriculture, and suburbanization. The lavish building that was built for Portland Public Market was first leased to the U.S. Navy in 1943, then to the Oregon Journal in 1948. In 1969, the Portland Public Market was demolished to make way for McCall Waterfront Park.

### 3. Birth of the Contemporary Farmers Market

A farmers market is something that is not unique to this time period. It is not unique to this region. It is not unique to America. It is something that has existed as a community market where farmers and producers of foods of all sorts have sold their goods to city dwellers. However, the contemporary Farmers Market is unique to the US during this time period, and the boom of the contemporary Farmers Market is situated in the 1990s. Though there were farmers markets before the 1990s: Eaton Farmers Market (Eaton, Pennsylvania: Est. 1752[oldest continuously operating farmers market), Berkeley Farmers Market(Berkeley, California: 1988), Dane County Farmers Market(Madison, Wisconsin: 1977), to name a few. In the 1990s, there were less than 1,000 USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) registered Farmers Markets, and today there around 10,000 USDA Registered Farmers Markets. The functions of the contemporary American Farmers Market are unique, in that they function on unique social and economic interaction to the space of the Farmer Market.

The Farmers Market is birthed out of the decline of the American public market beginning in the 1940s through the 1950s (see section 2). The American Farmers Market grew out of this space of some people yearning for authenticity. The supermarkets and mega malls which were emblematic of the second half of the 20th-century suburbanization are non-authentic spaces, “Downtown farmers’ markets and ethnic food stores underline their image as oases of authenticity in a Wal-Mart wasteland, encouraging real estate developers to reinvest and making urban living marketable” (Zurkin 2007,725). This was seen through want for authentic food where you new the producer, that the food was healthy, and that vendors could have a place to sell their goods directly to the consumers. This is the same authenticity that Spitzer and Baum

point to as the problem and investment in community markets is the answer. Conversations of Authenticity as a descriptor of actions taken at the market; is derived from Zurkin.

If the goal in establishing the Market is to reconnect people to producers and form a community around that, they are searching for authenticity, “As a social theorist, Rousseau developed a structural grounding for the authenticity of individual character. Men and women are authentic if they are closer to nature -- or to the way intellectuals imagine a state of nature to be -- than to the institutional disciplines of power” (Zurking 2007, 729). An urban setting is as far from nature as just about any part of society. PSU Farmers Market is set in downtown Portland on a college campus, no more than a few hundred meters from a highway entrance. The roar of passing cars only droned out but the cacophony of voices of the market. The market functions as a mediary where nature, through food, is brought into the city. Space where authenticity has air to breathe. A Farmers Market, like a specialized butcher, or artisanal baker, functions on a notion authenticity built on a connection to nature. Authenticity within the value of face to face interactions, reconnecting vendors with consumers.



Portland State University Farmers Market: One of the largest Farmers Markets in the United States and the case study that I am examining. Operating year-round with more than a hundred vendors.

## **Part II: Case Study: Portland State Farmers Market**

### **4. Historical Background of the Market**

9:30 on a Saturday morning, I lock up my apartment and make my way two miles over to Portland State University on the south end of Downtown Portland. On this particular Saturday, I decided to take advantage of the sunny fall day and walk. As I make my way of taking a left onto the tree-lined Park Blocks, the Market still is out of view. The South Park Blocks are 12 blocks of crisscrossing paths, with small grassy areas, towering oak trees, monuments, and modern art. On this particular Saturday morning, the paths are carpeted with a rainbow of damp fallen leaves in various states of decay. The walk south on the Park Blocks leads me past other folks going towards the Market, returning from the Market with bags full of produce, cheeses, loaves of bread, and other goods. It also leads me past groups of individuals who also reside in the park but have no intention of attending the market. Passing the Portland Art Museum, the double tent of Springwater Farm comes into view. Springwater Farm with their wicker baskets filled with dozens of varieties of cultivated and foraged mushrooms. This is the first of the 140 or so stalls at the Market the last Saturday of October. And the beginning of the three-block stretch of the South Park Blocks in the middle of the Portland State University campus, which has been home to the Portland State University Farmers Market since 1996.

The Market was founded as a seasonal market with a few dozen vendors and has since blossomed into a weekly Saturday market with anywhere from around 100 stalls up to over 200 stalls in the summers. The PSU Farmers Market is the flagship market of Portland Farmers Market. Portland Farmers Markets was founded in 1992 by three local activists Craig Mosbaek, Ted Snider, and Dr. Richard Hagan. The Portland Farmers Market was originally established

with 13 vendors at Albers Mill, an old mill building in northwest Portland next to the Broadway bridge. Since Portland Farmers Market moved to PSU, they have expanded to include four other Farmers Markets in Portland; Shemanski Park Market, Kenton Farmers Market, King Farmers Market, and Lents International Market.

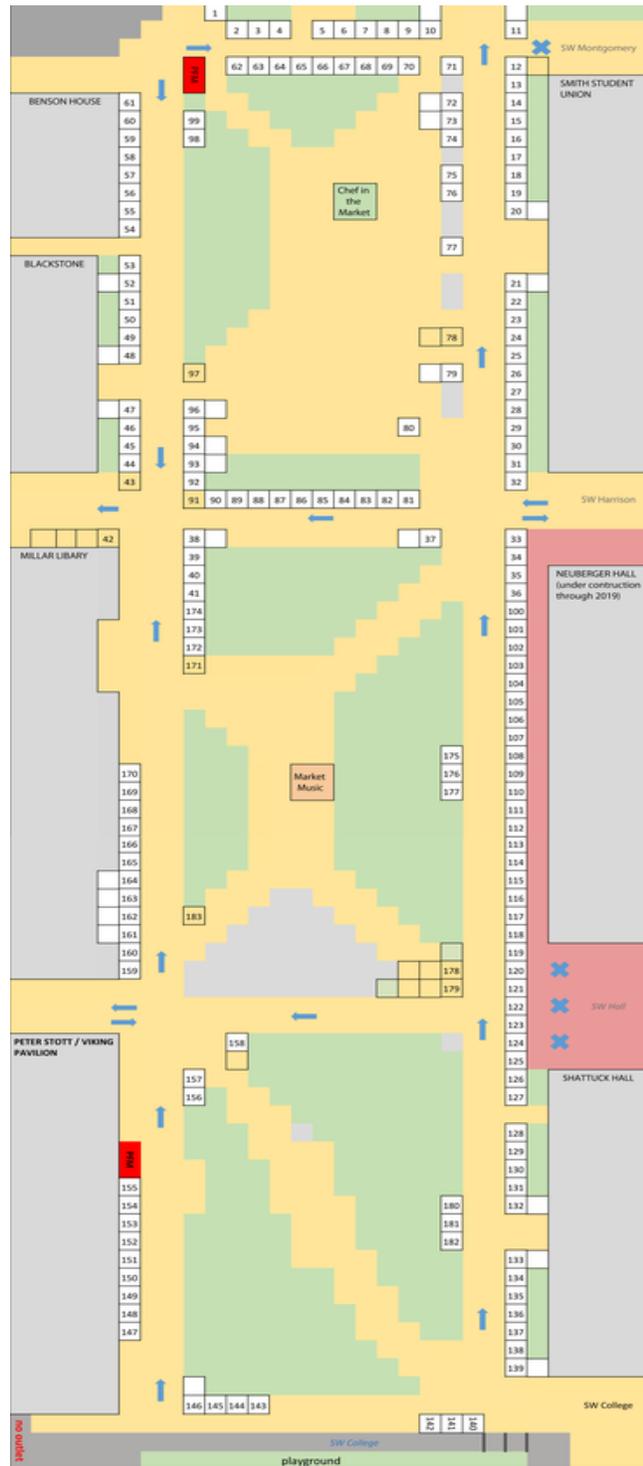
The PSU Farmers Market Stretches for three blocks of the South Park Blocks.

The Farmers Market functions on the main pathways. There are smaller interweaving pathways which run diagonally between the major pathways. These are the areas where people sit and eat food from the market or sip coffee. There are bins for the reusable plate-ware and cutlery, which the vendors serve their food on. There are spaces for live music, cooking demonstrations, and community-building events. Producers (farmers, bakers, beekeepers, butchers, along with others) and any people who are selling meals(soups, xian bing, biscuits & gravy, along with other foods) make up about 65-75% of the stalls at the market and are on the more northern portion of the market, especially on the paths oriented north to south. The stalls selling meals I will call food stalls are everything from small family-run popup restaurants, which primarily sell only at the market, and others are offshoots of established food trucks or restaurants. The PSU Farmers Market is especially accessible via public transit and is more accessible via public transit than it is by personal automobile. It is accessible via streetcar, light rail, and bus, a half-block north, the purple and green streetcar lines have stops, two blocks east the green, yellow, and orange MAX lines have stops, and there are quite a few bus stops as well.

Where the diagonal paths cross, there are little plazas where Portland Farmers Markets sets up events. On this particular Saturday, I walked past the Spunky Monkey Coffee forgoing coffee due to a 15 person line. Passing by their steampunk espresso machines, I walk over the

awkward built-in benches in the small plaza. There are groups of children with their parents all huddled over pumpkins. A young boy with dirty blonde hair and a truly joyous smile proudly holds up a pumpkin twice the size of his head, showing off his artwork. The size of the pumpkin proves to be too difficult for the young boy to hold up on his own. As the pumpkin tumbles out of the boy's hands, his mother manages to catch it, averting the tears that almost certainly were on their way. Past two large bins filled with yet to be used pumpkins, another tent acts as an informational and promotional tent from Dave's Killer Bread. An overly enthusiastic woman is behind the table, encouraging me to taste their new pumpkin spice bagels. Though I am not overly keen on anything pumpkin spice, she finally grinds me down until I try the dry, cold bagel. Dave's Killer Bread is one of the main sponsors of Portland Farmers Market and where Dave's Killer Bread got its start.

**Description:** Above is a map of the PSU Farmers Market with the North end of the Market on the top of the map, For example, the direction I was walking in from on my first description is the upper left-hand corner where I was entering the market by stall 1, which would be Springwater Farm. This is a map of the PSU Farmers Market from November 2, 2019. The map is updated weekly based on which vendors are in attendance. The map is situated south to north; bottom-up. Attached is a link to the PFM website where you can see the most up to date map about which stalls are at the Market any given Saturday<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>Link to the most recent map <https://www.portlandfarmersmarket.org/our-markets/psu/>

## 5. Administrators

A slightly damp Saturday at the beginning of September acts as a prelude for the rainy months that are ahead. But even with that reminder, the leaves are still green, and the summer tomato harvest is at its best. Passing by the various stands with tomatoes of every shape, size, and color imaginable. I want nothing more than to stop and take a bite out of any number of them. But on this particular Saturday; I am intent on having a conversation with Jay from Boysco Honey. As I approach his stand just across the path from the PSU library, I first say hello to my friend and vendor, Aiden. He is set up next to Boysco Honey, and the week before encouraged me to have a conversation with Jay. This Saturday, I was intent on having that conversation. Jay immediately began talking about the food as medicine, and the nutrients within raw honey, as the conversation further intensified, every twenty-thirty seconds a new person would come up, and he would suck them into the conversation that I was having with him we discussed the importance of the farmers market in re-authenticating our food system. This notion of food as medicine is reiterated by Trudy Toliver, the Executive Director of Portland Farmers Markets, along with co-founder of Portland Farmers Markets Ted Snider.

Who are the administrators of the Market? And what is the purpose of the Administrators of the Market? As is the case with other Farmers Markets, administrators at the PSU Farmers Market can be broken into two groups, those who work at the Market, and those who operate above the market. At the Market, the people in charge of overseeing the functioning of the Market are both people who work for Portland Farmers Markets and volunteers for Portland Farmers Markets. They do the job of overseeing the vendors and consumers at the farmers market, along with operating the “Market Manager” stall, which functions as information stand

but also a place where people can learn about special programs or receive Double Up Food Bucks. The other portion of the administrators are Executive director and others on the board of directors of Portland Farmers Markets. The role of administrator is one that is necessary for the construction of the American Farmers Market but is also the least visually evident Saturday to Saturday at the South Park Blocks. From Ross to Trudy, to Matt. They all fall under the umbrella of administrator.

The administrators make deliberate choices when it comes to when the market is open, where the market is located, and how the market presents itself. The Executive Director of Portland Farmers Markets is Trudy Toliver. She has been the Executive Director for the better part of a decade. Under her watch Portland Farmers Markets has expanded to other locations around the city, along with expanding the PSU Farmers Market to a year around Market, she helped found the Farmers Market Fund (FMF) in 2012. Matt is both a vendor and an administrator. He began as one of the co-owners behind Choi's Kimchi and over the last decade, has transitioned from selling as many days a week as possible and throughout the entire year at Farmers Markets across the city to selling regionally in grocery stores and only selling part-time at Portland Farmers Markets. He has taken up a role on the board of directors of the market, transitioning from vendor to vendor and administrator.

The founders of Portland Farmers Market, founded it to re-localize the food system and to support local farmers. This is similar to the purpose of the American public market of providing safe food in a centralized location where middlemen could not interfere in the pricing and selling of the goods; well also supporting local farmers. With the rise of the supermarket, it became near to impossible in the U.S. became a wasteland of supermarket chains, which

succeeded in alienating the consumer from the producer. By the 1990s, there was a burgeoning national movement with the explicit goal of constructing spaces to localize the food system. Through re-connecting producers and consumers, there was an explicit goal to change how Americans, especially those in cities, viewed their relationship with their food. This was the goal of forming Portland Farmers Markets. In the words of co-founder and farmer Ted Snider who came on to the project to form a Portland Farmers Market in the early 1990s, “ I spent five years slaving away every Saturday morning to set up and run the [Portland Farmers Market](#) and watched a resurgence of small agriculture and direct marketing that has changed the way America thinks about food and farmers” (Perkins 2016). Ted Snider, along with being an activist for local food, he is a farmer. The purpose of constructing the space of the market was to localize the food system. To give a space for farmers like Ted Snider to have a space to sell directly to consumers. And furthermore, counter the impersonal nature of the American food system, which alienates producers and consumers alike.

The practice of localizing the food system through constructing the space is an authentic practice, as is depicted by Zurkin. The Farmers Market is an authentic space, “The success of the farmers’ market at Union Square is intertwined with the desire to consume a special kind of authenticity: real food, locally grown” (Zurkin 2007, 736). Though Zukin is depicting the Union Square Farmers Market, PFM and PSU Farmers Market both succeed in establishing an authentic space constructed re-connecting consumers and producers. The stated goal of the administrators for the market is to help localize the food system in Portland, “As growing/producing and eating food is the very basis of human existence, we want to continue to ensure that local food is available to local people and that they know about the benefits of consuming it” (Trudy Toliver

2019; Np). The main purpose of the Market is to localize how the people of Portland eat.

Considering that it is the main purpose of the market, then through localizing the food system, administrators are helping construct and authentic space.

### **5.1 Administrators as Constructors of Physical Space**

The physical space of the Market is constructed by Administrators. Though they do not have full control over how the space is thought of and used, they construct the physical space itself. The first act of construction of physical space was establishing the Market by the three founders of PFM. Administrators continue to construct the physical space though deciding when the Market is happening, where it is happening, who is selling at the Market. These are the basic tenets of constructing the physical space, who? What? Where? Beyond those base aspects of construction, they also construct the physical space through events at the Market that go beyond who, what, where. Through choices to have programs for kids, to have organized live music, or chef demonstrations. Further actions of constructing the physical space such as opening a new market or programs like Double Up Food Bucks are acts of constructing that are similar to the construction undertaken by the founders of the Market.

The range of different acts of construction seeks not just to establish the space of the Market but to also instill a sense of community. In the way the public Market was a city center and community center, by it being the intermediary between farmers and the city. The Farmers Market is not the soul intermediary between farmers and the city. Instead the space itself needs to be constructed, the feelings of community, and centrality are partially constructed by the administrators of the Market. In this way the administrators construct the physical space of the

Market. The constructed physical space of the Market is the primary way in which Administrators contribute to the thirdspace of the Farmers Market.

The physical space of the Farmers Market is unique, at least in part, in comparison with other community markets due to the temporary nature of the space. The Market on every other day of the week, the three-block section of the South Park Blocks returns to the students, faculty, workers, as the fulcrum of Portland State University. For a few hours, a few days a week, that space belongs to Market. The rest of the time, that space belongs to the people of Portland State University. And just down the way, on the north end of the South Park Blocks, past the Portland Art Museum, near Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, the South Park Blocks becomes the space for many of the people who are not welcome in the Market. Those who simply do not belong in the space of the Farmers Market. Every Sunday (PPoP) hands out clean needles through needle exchange. And throughout the rest of the week, the South Park Block often is a space where the destitute and forgotten of our society often reside. The South Park Blocks and Portland State University are spaces that hold other purposes the majority of the time. The Market is both a brief intermission to the space it occupies and to the people who usually occupy the space. The constructed physical space of the Market is temporary by its very nature.

## **6. Vendors:**

“For the fledgling entrepreneur with limited resources, public markets offer a unique environment in which to sell their products. Few other places offer the opportunity to enter retailing with so little risk or capital” (Spitzer & Baum 1995, 27). Though Spitzer and Baum are discussing public markets, the same sentiment applies to Farmers Markets. At the PSU Farmers

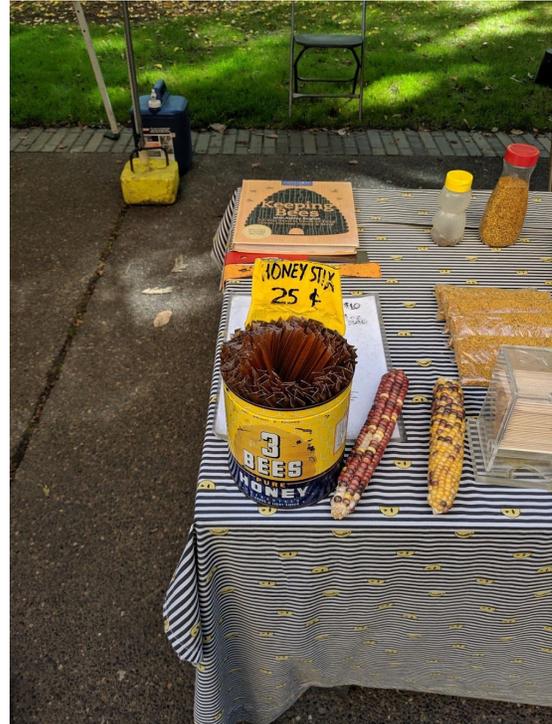
Markets, over a hundred vendors are given a space where they can affordably sell their goods to whomever without a middle man. This can be space for vendors to use as a stepping stone to broader commercial appeal, for instance, Dave's Killer Bread or Choi's Kimchi. At its best, the Market is a place of pure opportunity and equality. It is a ladder for small businesses to survive and thrive. The primary function of the Market is to reconnect the producers and consumers. The Market does these things to give a space to producers to sell their goods. It is there that the input of the vendor is added into the thirdspace of the Farmers Market. For vendors like Matt of Choi's Kimchi, the market was and is a stepping stone to a more commercially viable business. To vendors like Jay of Boysco Honey, it is a space not just to sell honey but a space to educate people on the health impacts of raw honey and issues in our broader food system. For vendors like Ahmed and Aidan, the Market is a wage labor job that so many college students have. No one group of the market is any more important than any other group. But vendors are the lifeblood of the Market. Questions of authenticity and localizing our food system are pivotal to the vendor. The goal of the construction of physical space by administrators was in part to embed the space with a sense of community that was central to the historic American public market. Within the space of the Market, vendors construct a social space built on creating an intra-vendor community. The space of the Market is home to the community of the vendors, and their interactions with each other.

How administrators construct the physical space of the market, vendors construct the social space of the market. If one of the primary goals of the farmers market is to push back towards the American food system, this succeeds within intra-vendors social space. The intra-vendor community is the constructed social space of the Farmers Market. The Market is

adapted to meet the needs of the vendors beyond the explicit purpose of selling their goods at the market. This social space is primarily constructed through barter economy between vendors.

Within this, not all vendors have the same access to the barter economy.

**Description:** Boyasco Honey, with sticks of honey being sold to as a healthy sweet treat for walking around the market. To the right there is a bag of bee pollen, behind the honey stick bin, there is a sheet of all of the health benefits of each of his honeys. Behind that there are some books on beekeeping. This is a snapshot of Jay. He is there to provide the sweetness of honey well also bombarding you about the scourge of the FDA and honey as medicine.



**Description:** Aidan, he is a college student and an artist. He only works the PSU Farmers Market and no other markets during the school year.



## 6.1 Wage Labor and the Market

Aidan and Jay, their stalls are just across the path from the PSU Library. They both are passionate about what they are selling. Whether it is sausages in the case of Aidan or the honey for Jay, they both get their early to set their stalls up. They both entertain consumers with samples. Maybe a rustic fennel sausage, or would you rather try the 30 wildflower honey? They are both vendors, but they are not equal. Aidan is a student, working for Olympia Provisions selling their sausages at the Market. Jay started recreational beekeeping in the early 1980s, becoming a full-time beekeeper in the late 1980s and now manages around 2400 bees. He sells over 20 varieties of honey, from blackberry to buckwheat. He owns his labor, Aidan does not. What does it mean to have a one-man beekeeping operation next to a company that sells their cured meat across the country and has multiple restaurants? This goes directly against the idea of the Market to give a space for the producer to reconnect to the consumer. The space of the Market is deliberately established to act as a space for advancement for producers if they wish. Former vendors like Dave's Killer Bread, which now financially supports the Market, other vendors like Matt of Choi's Kimchi, where his company has transitioned away from vending at the Market. For other vendors who can no longer attend the Market, but want to continue to sell at the Market often will higher people to sell at the Market. Aidan and Kate are both people who are wage laborers at the Market. Aidan and Kate are emblematic of a small number of vendors, vendors that are not producers, and instead just sell at the Market. Though Aidan and Kate are both wage laborers, their roles at the Market are different from each other.

Olympia Provisions is a local establishment formerly known as Olympic Provisions. Olympia Provisions began at the Farmers Market, selling artisanal sausages and cured meat. But has since expanded to multiple restaurants and sold in grocery stores and specialty food stores across the region. Aidan vends for Olympia Provisions at the PSU Farmers Market, holding down one of the first spaces which sold Olympia Provisions. He is a friend from before I began the process of writing my thesis. And at the Market, he is one of my main interlocutors to the social space of vendors. Aidan is paid by the hour along with sales incentives. But beyond his base wage, he is also given 12 dollars worth of Olympia Provisions goods per market day. Along with 50 per-cent off any additional Olympia Provisions goods he wants. Aidan is the only person vending for Olympia Provisions, setting up the stall, taking down the stall. The producers of Olympia Provisions sausage are not at the Market and do not directly interact with the consumers in this space. Instead, it is Aidan's job to interact with consumers.

Spring Hill Farms, was an institution of Portland Farmers Markets. They were large and occupied five stall spaces at the PSU Farmers Market. They have sold at Portland Farmers Markets since the old days of the Market at Albers Mill. In November of this year, Spring Hill Farms ceased operations with the owners deciding that it was time to retire. Kate is a vendor for Spring Hill Farms at the PSU Farmers Market. She has worked for them for a number of years and enjoys the work greatly. Like Aidan, she is also an artist. Unlike Aidan, she works with a number of other folks who were either farmers for Spring Hill Farm or wage laborers like her self. This a divide between vendors like her and vendors like Aidan, where Aidan is the sole representative of Olympia Provisions interacting with consumers at the Market, she is assisting

and working with producers and wage workers for Spring Hill Farms She is given a set amount of the product for each shift worked at the Market

## 6.2 Barter Economy

“You have three options with what you produce, you can eat it and not have to pay for food, you can sell it to get money to buy other essentials, or you can trade it to get bread or cheese or something else you don’t produce” (Nathanial from Foodwaves). Nathanial is a farmer and activist. The farm that he is a partner in is nonprofit, which seeks to teach people about the food they eat and how to produce your own food. He came to the world of farming as a way to discover authenticity that he felt was missing in his previous activism. The barter economy percolates into every interaction at the Farmers Market, especially between vendors. Part of this economy is within the community of the Market, a spirit of camaraderie of the Market. From Jay, to Kate from Spring Hill Farms, Aidan, the Market is great because of the community of the Market. The community of the Market is most evident through the barter economy. In this case, I am focusing on the barter economy between vendors. The economy that exists through trade and negotiation.

A constant of a Saturday at the Market are the negotiations that happen between Jay and the many vendors who want a bottle of one of his many varieties of raw honey. Sitting with Jay, a vendor from another stand, a tall, slim, bearded man with rather good posture comes up to us. His greasy hair slicked back into a tight bun and a bag of red and yellow sweet peppers firmly in his hand. He wants to trade those sweet peppers for a bottle of blackberry honey. Jay counters

asking for two bunches of kale on top of the sweet peppers. After some back and forth, the deal of sweet peppers and two bunches of kale is accepted. Trading honey for other products is a weekly occurrence for Jay. It is an essential part of him putting food on the table during the week. He estimated that he filled two milk crates worth of traded products every Saturday. For Jay, the process of taking part in the barter economy at the PSU Farmers Market is rather straightforward. He harvests the honey from his beehives and instead of consuming it, or selling it, he trades it. For Aidan, his role in the barter economy is slightly different. In his case, he doesn't produce what he sells but is still able to take part in the barter economy. The most important part of the barter economy has something to trade with. He gets his goods to trade through a few different modes. This is through his employer, giving him \$12 of cured meats and preservatives that he sells. Along with the \$12 of goods he is given, he also can buy anything he sells for half price its market value. From there, he is able to have the goods he sells as goods he can trade. And through this, he can take part in the barter economy.

**Description:** This is another photo of some of the varieties of honey offered by Jay, some of the varieties of honey are relatively common (wildflower or clover, and others are less common like Meadow Foam).



## 7. Consumers:

A man, probably in his thirties, of average height and lean build, with dark, longish brown hair and a scraggly but thick facial hair. His skin, covered in a layer of grime and dirt, that longish brown hair, matted in thick clumps. His clothes appear like they have been worn longer than they were ever intended to be worn. The man's eyes firmly point down and a few feet in front of his feet. His eyes appear defeated. The man holds a stench that overpowers the porky fried aroma of Xian Bing. He moves through the crowd like Moses parting the Red Sea. The man is unwanted by the others in his community. The man holds a sign which reads,

Homeless need cash  
 4 a shelter for the night  
 God Bless

This man is not welcome in the market. He is not welcome in his city. This man is not welcome to exist. The man exists in the physical space of the market but is prevented access from the idea of the market and the community of the market.

The question Who has access to the Farmers Markets? What does it mean to have access to the Farmers Market? Though the answer should be: everyone, the market should be a space where inequalities are leveled. But it is evident in the depiction of the homeless man that not everyone is welcome there. Instead of physical barriers: like walls or rules instituted by the administrators, there are barriers constructed on the basis of social and economic capital. The notions of social capital are developed by Pierre Bourdieu,

Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group– which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word (Bourdieu 1986; 248-249)

The social capital of the Market is constructed through real and imagined purposes, along with ideas towards the Market. The economic barriers for entry are built on the cost of vegetables and artisanal goods in the United States; the Market is expensive. The economic and social barriers for entry function as gatekeepers preventing access to the physical and imagined space of the Market. The costliness of the Market, which forms a barrier for entry, also depicts the Market as a status symbol that also assists in the formation of the social capital of the Market. Being able to shop at Farmers Market is a status symbol. In Portland, being eco-conscious is highly valued.

The construction of social capital associated with the imagined space of the Market is built on; eco-conscious politics, which are valued in Portland and the act of shopping at the

Market functioning as a status symbol. The Farmers Market as an Idea is often affiliated with “liberal, open-minded” culture. “Liberal, open-minded” culture is social capital built on the act of being green, using green energy, tote bags, shopping local, and being vocal about sustainability. In the way that social capital affiliated with “liberal open-mindedness” assists in the construction of social capital affiliated with the act of marketing, the act of marketing assists in the construction of social capital affiliated with “liberal-open mindedness.” The other aspect of social capital affiliated with the Market is constructed as a status symbol. It is a sign of affluence and privilege to shop at the Market.

The Market and people who attend it and occupy it hold a collective social capital, of knowing and understanding the space of the Market. It is a built space with many unique norms and customs. Bartering and haggling are acceptable, conversations with vendors are encouraged, reusable tote bags some receptacle to carry your haul is non-negotiable. For people that have spent their entire lives functioning in the supermarket economy, the setting of a farmers market is foreign. In the supermarket haggling is forbidden, if you forget a reusable bag you are given a paper or plastic ones, you never meet your farmer or producer. In Portland, there is an understanding that a person’s Social Capital associated with the Market, both forms part of the barrier for access to the Market, well also being what is gained upon access to the space of the Market. These barriers function as gatekeepers preventing access to these spaces. This social capital does not come from the vendors or the administration, it comes from consumers and is promoted by consumers. The notion of authenticity, social cues, cultural understandings, form in part the non-monetary creators of this social capital. These are all things that are being consumed, the consumer is as much consuming the good that the vendors are selling as they are

consuming the ideology of the Market. Consumers construct the imagined space of the Market; the ideologies and capital placed on the Market were produced by the consumers and are reinforced and reproduced by them. Accessing the space of the Market is two-folded, partly it results in gaining access to the products sold at the Market, and second, it is access to the imagined space.

### **7.1 Gatekeeping: Access and Social Capital**

It is commonly understood that the economic cost of the Market is a deterrent for many would-be patrons. This can be seen from bread to produce and is especially evident when it comes to animal products, where the cost can be substantially more when it comes to Farmers Markets. Whether it is the can of Tuna, which at the Market is half the size of ones you can find at the grocery stores and cost \$14 for a three-pack. Or it is the honey which can cost two or three times as much as you would pay for it in the store. When for the most part the real cost of food is visible, and it creates some glaring realities in our food system. The costs of the Market often make it untenable for many people to access the Market. The Farmers Market, no matter how “open” of a space it is, is an exclusive space. It is a space with specific barriers for entry — the cost of the Market, one of the gatekeepers of the Market.

The social theory of gatekeeping and the specific definitions I am using derive from works Frederik Erickson and Karen O’Reilly, whom like other sociologists and anthropologists primarily depict gatekeepers as people, “These are ‘gatekeeping’ events because one person, the interviewer, has authority to make decisions about the social mobility of interviewee” (Erickson 1976, 112), and, “Gatekeepers are sponsors or individuals who smooth access to the group. They

are the key people who let us in, give us permission, or grant access” (O’Reilly 2009, 132). Both of these depict the gatekeeper as a social or societal barrier that prevents someone access to a space that they currently do not have access to. In the case of the Market, it is not a person; people are the ones trying to tear down gatekeeping barriers to the Market, it is embedded knowledge of required in the space of the Market and the economic costs of shopping at the Market. At the PSU Farmers Market, it is not the work of individuals to prevent access to the Market it is intellectual and economic barriers.

There are also deliberate acts from the administrators that can help deconstruct the financial barriers of the Market. Through the founding Farmers Market Fund (FMF), the Market becomes a more economically inclusive space, especially within the funding of Double Up Food Bucks. This program helps people who are some of the more food insecure people in the Portland area and across Oregon gain access to healthy, local, sustainable food. FMF functions more broadly than just at the PSU Farmers Market, at markets across the state. Double Up Food Bucks through doubling up to ten dollars of SNAP benefits. Programs like this make the Market more accessible well, also making “authentic” food more accessible to people who are usually excluded from these spaces.

Through accessing market patrons, not only gain access to the goods that are produced by the Market, but they also gain access to the physical and imagined spaces of the Market. A part of this imagined space is one constructed from social capital associated with the Market. Gaining access to the Market is two-folded; a person can gain access to the imagined space of the Market well, also denying access to the economy of the Market. It is the imagined space of the Market, which is the primary commodity of the Market, that is because anyone who gains access to the

Market can access it without the need for wealth. This is especially true for college students and young people who do not have the money to afford the Market. It's her second date with that girl who goes to PNCA, the person with a septum piercing and few Americana tattoos. They go to the Market for a morning of coffee and conversations. They are walking from stall to stall, not buying a thing. Taking photos of the freshly picked flours, tasting artisanal jams, and honey, some homemade lavender-infused ricotta is absolutely delicious. Nevertheless, they are still not buying anything. They consume the space; there is a pride in commodifying the capital associated with the Market.

## **7.2 Consumption of Authentic Space: The Market as a Commodity**

The imagined space of the Market is constructed through challenges of access to the space, social capital produced and reproduced by the consumers, and consumption of space itself. The thirdspace of the Market is constructed and commodified through the real and imagined uses of the space. Through gaining access to the Market, patrons consume the space itself.

The air is clear and crisp; it is unseasonably cold for the last weekend of September. I attend the Market with the explicit purpose of getting a cup of coffee and relaxing with a few friends. With no intent to do any research, enjoy the Saturday at the Market. Walking around with Sarah and Can we get to talking about the space that we are in. Heading south past the PSU Student Union, stopping at every stand with samples from local cheeses, to jams, to hummus. Sarah interrupts our tasting and mentions a person from one of her classes over by a stall selling an assortment of vibrant flowers along with bunches of herbs and large stocks of Brussel sprouts.

The person from Sarah's classmate is walking with two older people that appear to be her parents. This scene is typical for first years; bring your parents to the PSU Farmers Market the first time they visit. Often it wasn't to shop but instead to show them the Farmers Market, show that they knew how to navigate the space. That as new residents of the city, they already had a handle on this social and culturally relevant space. Students at the Market aren't there to purchase ingredients instead there to exist and consume in the space of the Market. They are consuming the space and using the social capital attached to the space.

The space which is being consumed in the Market is tethered to authenticity attributed to the Market. The space of the Market was constructed to re-localize our food system. This is an act of re-authentication, constructing the Market as an authentic space. Under this system, authenticity and the authentic space is as much of the commodity of the Market as what is being sold by vendors,

Basic as it may be, the need to shop for food - or to socialize over a nice cup of latte - becomes a means of manipulating authenticity. Consumption spaces promote different kinds of authenticity for different communities of experience, while even consumers of alternative spaces participate in working out the details of this fabrication ( Zurkin 2007, 734)

People attend the PSU Farmers Market to consume authenticity, through not only the products of the vendors but of the ideology of authenticity. Though attendees of the Market are consuming authenticity, they are also attaining the social capital of the Market. And in a broader sense, by consuming this authenticity, market-goers hold more social capital in the broader Portland. In Portland, "authentic" experiences are valued, and explicitly under the umbrella of authenticity as "natural." By attending the Market, a person consumes an authentic experience that is valued by the broader Portland society. The imagined space of the Market manifests itself as an authentic

space. By consuming an authentic space, the consumer gains social capital affiliated with the Market.



A small Jazz duo, which I did not catch the name of performing songs for 25 or so onlookers at the south end of the market across from the vendor who sells fresh pizza from a wood fire oven.

## Conclusion

PSU Farmers Market is a unique thirdspace constructed through the physical, social, and imagined spaces occupied and produced by administrators, vendors, and consumers. It is a space the multifaceted in its broader world impacts and its meanings. It is a space where the American food system, constructed on the dissociation between vendor and consumer, is challenged. It is because of this constructed physical space of the Market that succeeds at reconnecting vendors and consumers. The constructed physical space is responsible for seeding the construction of the social and imagined spaces. Much in the same way, the physical space runs opposed to the American food system so does the constructed social space. The constructed social space is built on a barter economy, which is foreign and insulting to the suburban-supermarket wasteland of the second half of the 20th century. The successes surrounding the construction of the physical space of the Market and the construction of the social space of vendors also form how and what people think about the PSU Farmers Market. The social space of the Market answers what it means to have access to the Farmers Market as a vendor. The imagined space of the Market answers what it means to have access to the Farmers Market as a consumer.

The imagined space if the Market is that views the authentic space as a commodity. Understanding the Market as a commodity is understood through the Fetishization of Ideologies as depicted by Nana Okura Gagné in *Eating local in a U.S. city: Reconstructing “community”*—a thirdplace—in a global neoliberal economy, it is derived off of fetishism of commodities as presented by Karl Marx (*Capital and the Fetishism of Commodities*). Under Capitalism, one’s life is valued by the commodities they hold, and those who produce those commodities lose the social and economic capital of those commodities. Within the space of the market alienation

within the capitalist food system is redeemed, and for the most part is not fetishism of commodities. However, within the space of the Market there is a fetishism of ideology, “The ‘fetishization of ideology’ at the farmers’ Market, as opposed to fetishization of simple commodities, enacts participants’ idealized forms of buying and selling, and it also references a personally meaningful, idealized ethos of ‘liberal open-mindedness’” (Gagné 2011, 282). It’s the commodification and disorientation of the space of the Market. The social capital, embodied knowledge, and the ideology of the Market are what are both being consumed and obscured. It is within the thirdspace of the Market the people who influenced the construction of the thirdspace are unable to control how the Market is fetishized and commodified. The vendors and the administrators have no control over the Market as a commodity.

Running opposed to the American food system is not an affordable endeavor. It is expensive to produce authentic, artisanal goods. The price of the Market is one of the most challenging hurdles for access. To be a consumer of the food products of the Market takes financial capital. To understand the workings of the Market takes embodied knowledge. It is not the only hurdle for access. Due to time constraints, among another shortcoming, I was not fully able to examine the ways in which where someone lives in a city, their race, among other qualifiers impact that persons access to the space of the Market. At the same time, Administrators at the Market actively work to construct the Market as a true community space, working to make the Market more accessible. On a broader sense, administrators at Portland Farmers Markets make the broader Market more accessible through where they open up Farmers Markets. Through programs like Double-Up Food Bucks, administrators attempt to make the Market a more economically inclusive space. It is not always affordable to combat alienation and

dissociation between producers and consumers, but the Market does succeed at reconnection producers and consumers. There are broader societal implications to this. The Farmers Market apart of a much more significant shift in American society and explicitly in cities that values localizing the food system and authentic spaces.

The thirdspace of the PSU Farmers Market is a space which succeeds at localizing the food system within Portland. It is space that would not exist without the rise and fall of the American public Market. It is a space that gives the residents of the city access to the goods produced in and around the city. It is a space which gives Producers a space to sell their goods, supporting local farmers and small business. It is a space that is treated as a commodity, as well as being a space where barter and trade are supported and reproduced in a mode that is not seen in many other aspects of U.S. society. It is a space that is every year holding a significant role in the American food system. This paper leaves me with more questions of how the space of the Farmers Market become the primary space for feeding cities? Would removing the Market from the fringes of the American food system and placing it at the center of the American food system be a good thing? What is the role of Farmers Markets in solving the environmental impacts of food production in the U.S. over the last 60 years? What is the role of Farmers Markets and gentrification? Would we be better served in reforming the American public Market? The PSU Farmers Market, as a case study of the contemporary Farmers Market, shows a unique space that reintroduces the act of Marketing the American city and holds unique importance and purposes to the different people who occupy and reproduce it.

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