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## The Role of Place in Community Cooperative Food Markets in Lexington, Kentucky

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Emily Rodes Spencer, Student

Dr. Rosalind Harris, Major Professor

Dr. Patricia Dyk, Director of Graduate Studies

THE ROLE OF PLACE IN COMMUNITY COOPERATIVE FOOD MARKETS IN  
LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

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THESIS

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Science in the  
Community and Leadership Development in the  
College of Agriculture, Food and Environment  
at the University of Kentucky

By

Emily Rodes Spencer

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Rosalind Harris, Professor of Community and Leadership Development

Lexington, Kentucky

2019

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## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

### The Role of Place in Community Cooperative Food Markets in Lexington, Kentucky

Food justice movements focus on providing communities with local, sustainable, culturally appropriate, healthy food while empowering local economic systems that allow for autonomy of both producers and consumers (Caruso, C., 2014; Cadieux, K., 2015; Hayes, C. & Carbone, E., 2015). However, current food justice movements often price out and leave behind large portions of the population. Research has shown that engagement with local food systems contribute to feelings of place attachment and a sense of place (Solin, J., 2017; Alkon, A., 2011). The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between volunteers at two alternative, cooperative community food markets in Lexington, Kentucky and their sense of place. Using an amalgamation of black feminist thought and ecofeminism, this qualitative study sought to better understand volunteer participation in the markets and, as a result, illuminate potential barriers to participation in the future. Interviews were conducted with market volunteers. Results indicate that place was significant in their decisions to participate in the markets, though participants did not conceive “place” as a geographical location, but rather a social and cultural atmosphere. In other words, volunteers presented a social construction of place. Other factors contributing to participation came about as a result of the study, including resistance and empowerment and geographies of care and responsibility. In relation to volunteer participation in alternative agro-food movements, the findings of this study indicate that more attention needs to be paid to the ways in which the social construction of place affect volunteer retention.

KEYWORDS: Cooperative Economics, alternative food movements, community-led food movements, food justice

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Emily Rodes Spencer

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9/18/2019

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Date

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LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

By  
Emily Rodes Spencer

Dr. Rosalind Harris

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Director of Thesis

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Director of Graduate Studies

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Date

## DEDICATION

*To Granddaddy, who taught me to love food and love people.*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank my committee for their diligent work in helping me create and execute this research. Dr. Dyk, thank you for your kindness and patience these past several years. I will always cherish our long weekly talks about research and life. Thank you for having an open door, hot tea, and a kind heart. These things helped be through the research process and all of the “life” that happens outside of research. To Dr. Appler, thank you for inspiring me to think critically about the physical spaces I use, live in, and look past. I will forever be indebted to you for opening my mind about geography and the ways in which I am impacted by it. Dr. Harris, thank you for your humanity and grace throughout this entire process. Every meeting, I came with an agenda that included stressing out about the task ahead of me and every meeting, I left more calm, excited, and full. You are one of the most passionate people I have ever come across and know that it shows and impacts your students positively.

I am grateful to have a partner and supporter like Dylan. Without you, this work would not have been possible. Thank you for the countless times you washed the dishes, took care of the dogs, and cleaned the house while I worked. Thank you for the encouragement and respect you give me every day. Thank you to my parents, who have always pushed me to reach beyond what I thought I was capable of doing.

I would also like to acknowledge the difficult and noble work being done by those involved with the Lexington Community Markets. If one thing stays with the reader, I ask that it be this: community work is hard, but this does not mean that it is not worth it. Thank you to the volunteers that spent time with me throughout this research process and to those that work to keep the markets running every week.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

### **Background and Setting**

The small city in which I grew up in central Kentucky has an established and thriving local food scene. Every Saturday, the farmer's market in downtown Lexington is bustling from 7 am, when farmers and growers begin to arrive to set up for the day's work until 3 or 4 in the afternoon, when people begin to head home with reusable bags full of colorful produce and locally produced canned beer. The draw to the Saturday market, Lexington's largest farmer's market, is held by people both young and old. Young couples with their dogs grab a coffee and a pastry on the way to the market and older couples rest on the benches underneath the beautifully constructed, bank-sponsored awning, known as "Cheapside Park and 5/3 Pavilion." Noticeably missing, though, is a presence of visible diversity. Shoppers and onlookers at the market are largely white and mostly upper middle-class. There are many possible reasons for this, and surely more beyond what I can speculate. Perhaps the food prices are too high, culturally inappropriate, or undesirable for people outside of this demographic; or, perhaps, there is a greater narrative contributing to Lexington's food story and its most prominent local food market.

In *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability*, Alison Hope Akon notes "...the food movement's failure to incorporate the histories and experiences of people of color into its narrative leads to the creation of ostensibly colorblind alternatives that subtly reflect white cultural histories" (333, Kindle edition). Perhaps this is what has happened in Lexington's local food scene. Cheapside Park, where the market takes place,

is so named after a prominent slave auction site prior to the United States Civil War, located between Mill and Upper Street (See Fig. 1). The park dawns two recently refurbished historical markers of the market that was once located there (See Fig. 2 and 3), telling a brief history of a whipping post and slave auction site. Adjacent to the market and Cheapside Park is Lexington's newly renovated Courthouse Square where, until as recently as Fall 2017, the statues of two confederate soldiers, John C. Breckenridge and John Hunt Morgan stood overlooking the market and all of downtown Lexington, including the county courthouse. Though these are the most evident and visible examples of Lexington's local food movement, Lexington's food landscape does not begin and end with Cheapside Park and Courthouse Square. Just as Lexington's history is grappling with over 200 years of legacies of racial processes, so too is its local food movement (Schein, 385).



Figure 1.1 A map of Lexington's downtown farmer's market, provided by [www.lexingtonfarmersmarket.com](http://www.lexingtonfarmersmarket.com). This map shows the location of the market, as well as the location of "Cheapside Park," adjacent to the Historic Courthouse, where the Farmer's Market takes place.



Figure 2. A historical marker placed next to the Historic Courthouse in 2018, after the original marker was vandalized several years prior. The downtown Farmer’s Market is located adjacent to the Historical Courthouse, as shown in Figure 1. Figure provided by Kentucky.com.

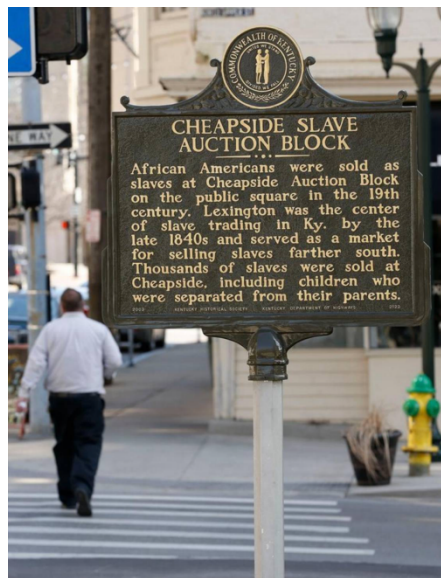


Figure 3. A historical marker placed near Cheapside Park. The marker was placed after a local movement called “Take Back Cheapside” argued that the narrative of downtown Lexington needed to be more inclusive in order to make the place itself more inclusive. Photo provided by Kentucky.com.

Though historical markers are important in helping to address racialized pasts, the presence of the farmer’s market at a place that may have been one of the largest slave

markets in the southern United States. Richard Schein states, “the plaques have helped to restart local conversations about these practices [the suppression of race, slavery and racism in public spaces] which linger throughout the city and the region. Those conversations rely, in part, upon the physical or material presence of this space, as well as its visual and spatial order-not only as something from the past but also as a material representation of the past and the present commingled, both looking toward the future. The site is filled with tension, forgotten by many, remembered almost viscerally by some, and inevitably caught in the web of ‘race relations’ in this quasi-southern city. It is also part of a landscape that provides an entry into a method for systematically interpreting cultural landscapes in the United States and their place in everyday life without losing sight of the landscape's very particularity: the ‘basic stuff of human existence’” (Meinig 1978, 1186) (Schein, abstract).

Place matters. Place affects our ability to access resources, relationships, and professions. Place affects what schools we go to and with whom we become friends. Place is both produced and constructed through historical processes and social interactions. The ways in which we think about and understand place- the places we visit, live, and work; and our own place in our community- affect our opportunities economically, politically, and socially. This study uses place as a form of understanding community participation in local food movements. By focusing on human interactions at two pop-up cooperative food markets in Lexington, Kentucky, this ethnographic study seeks to understand how perceptions of place affect participation. Ethnography is an important method used to understand individuals’ perceptions of place in this study for one primary reason: “the ethnographic study of space and place is critical to

understanding the everyday lives of people whose homes and homelands are disrupted by globalization, uneven development, violence and social inequality” (Low, S. (2017) *Spatializing Culture*, p. 1). Both place and food, in the context of the history of development in the United States, are deeply connected to the history of race and racialized space. In addition, the spaces that have been historically left out of modern food system are disproportionately low-income and black (Alkon, A., 2011). Alongside this, the neighborhoods in which these two pop-up cooperative food markets take place are historically vulnerable to food insecurity and uneven development.

### **Need for the Study**

The ways in which we understand place affect our identity. In the same way, so too does the food that we eat, as “dietary practices are deeply rooted in history and culture” (Liburd, L., 2003). Food serves us in two different ways: 1) food nourishes our body and gives us energy and 2) it nourishes our sense of community, togetherness, and intimacy (Roberts, 2017). The food that we choose to eat is necessarily affected by the places we occupy- our community, the groups to which we belong, our city, and our country more broadly. Just as groups have worked to create spaces that exclude some groups, so too has our food system. The historical processes that have created our food systems have disproportionately undermined low-income communities and communities of color (Alkon, A., 2011., Agyeman, J. & McEntee, J., 2014., Guthman, J., 2012). This leads us to ask ourselves about the ways in which we structure and simultaneously restructure the places and systems in which we live- Who makes the decisions? Who participates in the resulting outcomes? Within the context of the historical processes that construct identity around food and place, these questions led to this study.

In *The Place of Food Systems: Exploring the Relationship between Sense of Place and Community Food Systems Engagement* (2017), Jeremy Solin found that there is an inextricable link between sense of place and community food systems engagement, alongside a unique contribution that food has in connecting people and creating a sense of community. See Figure 4 for a visual diagram of the ways in which engagement in local food systems and a sense of place are interrelated. The most striking result from this study was the authors' results regarding an individual's connection to place in relation to his or her connection to their food- the stronger connection to their food, the stronger their sense of place. The author leaves us by asking about the reciprocal- does a loss of engagement with our food system negatively affect our sense of place?

The Fresh Stop Markets (now renamed Lexington Community Markets) in Lexington are at a pivotal point in their development to serve the city. Though the need to expand is there, the capacity with which to do so is problematic. The impacts of this study reach beyond the markets themselves. The markets represent something that many people have lost: communities of place. Place is too often uprooted in exchange for online forums and impersonal exchange patterns. With the displacement of place, inevitably comes an undermined sense of community. In "Liberating Service Learning," Randy Stoecker (2016) defines *community* as this: "a face-to-face collectivity characterized by a multiplicity of interconnecting and overlapping roles that mutually enhance the sustainability of the collectivity and all of its constituents" (p. 114). I want to highlight the idea of communities being "face-to-face." Stoecker references Bridger and Alter (2006) in describing the importance of face-to-face communities:



“...communities as fields of interaction in local place. In such circumstances, people come to know each other in a multiplicity of ways. They come to know their diverse backgrounds, diverse skills and talents, and diverse interests...interaction in ways that maximize the sustainability of diversity.”  
(115)

The Lexington Community Markets model is one in which people from different backgrounds gather in one place over one of the most evident bonds we all have in common: food. Through interactions with those that are different themselves, understanding, compassion, and empathy are created. I know this because I have experienced it first-hand at the markets. This study will aid in an understanding of the ways in which place affects our decisions to participate in community-led efforts. Though this is a study about a community-centered cooperative food market, implications of the study reach far beyond the local food system. In order to understand how we can work toward a community that is more inclusive, sustainable, and just, we must seek to understand the places in our community that are already working towards being so. Through the stories of those that support and work with the Lexington Community Markets, I hope to better understand the importance of “face-to-face” place in our community.

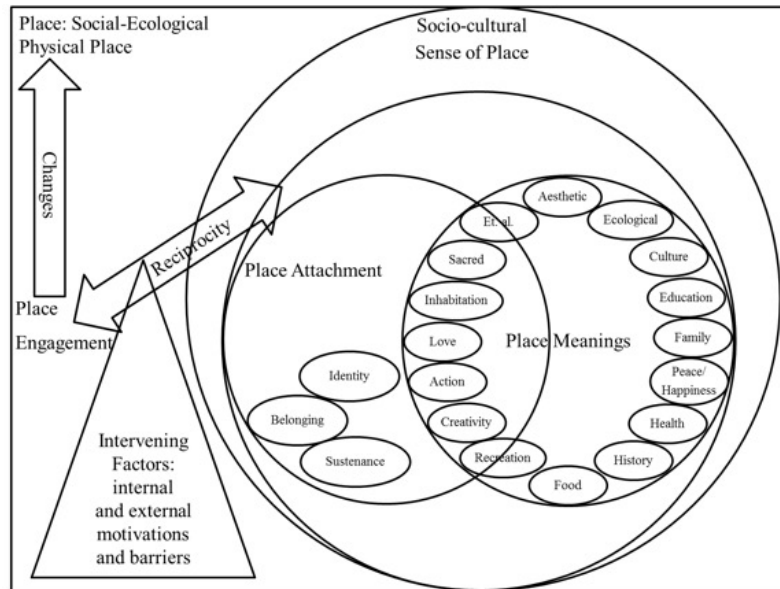


Figure 4. Jeremy Solin, The Place of Food Systems: Exploring the Relationship between Sense of Place and Community Food Systems Engagement.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the ways in which place affects volunteer participation in the Lexington Community Markets, community cooperative food markets in Lexington, KY. While the markets operate with and for the communities in which they are located, community participation and citizen engagement can be low. This study seeks to illuminate potential barriers to participation in the food markets by understanding the stories of those that choose to participate in them and those that have become part of a core group of volunteers that, because of their time spent dedicated to the markets, are noticeable leaders at the markets. This study is not meant to be representative of Kentucky food movements or food movements more broadly, though it does provide some further research suggestions for other local food movements.

### Research Questions

The research questions for this narrative qualitative study are as follows:

**RQ1:** How do people that participate in the markets conceptualize the ‘place’ of the markets and how might this affect them?

**RQ2:** How do identities of place and food affect perceptions of power and leadership of these place-based food nonprofits?

### **Definition of Terms**

**Community Engagement-** Encompassing a large range of activities, community engagement broadly refers to processes that seek to include community members to achieve communal outcomes for certain areas of the community. Community engagement often refers to engagement by a university or business with the larger community in decision-making and planning processes and creating collaborative relationships with community members. (Tanaka & Mooney, 2010).

**Community Organizer-** Community organizers are individuals and groups of people that work to empower community members in order that they have the knowledge and ability to make informed decisions that affect their communities. Community organizers often work with leaders within a community to create opportunities for people to establish better democratic practices within the community itself (Putney & Broughton, 2011).

**Cooperative Economics-** Cooperatives are organizations and businesses that are democratically-run, where members of the cooperative make the decision for the outcomes of the cooperative. Cooperative economics refers to this same process, but specifically in terms of an organization or business’ finances. Members pool their resources to create an

opportunity for better buying power. Finances are contributed to by all members and members have a say in how the money is spent (Gordon Nembhard, 2010).

Food Desert- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food deserts as: “parts of the country vapid of fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods, usually found in impoverished areas. This is largely due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers’ markets, and healthy food providers” (<http://americannutritionassociation.org/newsletter/usda-defines-food-deserts>).

Food Justice - Communities exercising their right to grow, sell, and eat fresh, nutritious, affordable, and culturally appropriate food (What is Food Justice?, 2018).

Food Security- Food security refers to a wide range of familial and individual situations regarding food. Being food secure means that one is able to acquire healthy amounts of food and does not experience anxiety about where their next meal may come from. Food insecurity refers to the opposite, where one may not be getting the proper nutrition they need and/or do not know where their next meal(s) will come from (ERS, USDA, 2018).

Fresh Stop Markets- Volunteer, community-driven, farm-fresh food markets that pop up bi-weekly at local churches, community centers, and businesses in fresh food insecure neighborhoods... ‘shareholders’ are not just ‘customers,’ they are the volunteer leaders that run and sustain each and every [Fresh Stop Market]” (<https://newroots.org/fresh-stop-markets/>).

Lexington Community Markets- Formerly Fresh Stop Markets, the Lexington Community Markets now operate independently from Fresh Stop and are called “Lexington Community Markets.”

Sliding Scale- A type of economics in which the price of something is adjusted in accordance with one's income, wages, profits, etc. (Taylor, 2019).

### **Positionality of the Researcher**

*I found the reading this week to be incredibly insightful and challenging. I was able to learn about food movements from several different perspectives, as well as have my own views challenged in a way that forced me to rethink what I believed "food movements" to be, both philosophically and practically. The beginning of the book, when the authors detail "The Food Movement," referring to the mainstream, dominant movement in food, I was locating myself within the narrative that they were telling- how to empower communities to take control of their food, their food sources, etc. However, upon further reading, this food movement is the exact movement to which the authors challenge. Beginning the book in this way was a useful tactic in allowing the reader to be on page with the authors, only to have my own ideas challenged entirely. The story that I most often referred to and related to is only one story- a story that entirely ignores other important and critical narratives of food justice and food relationships; namely, the injustice of both the current food system and the dominant food movement, where low-income communities and communities of color are largely being left out of the conversation and consideration entirely (Emily Rodes, October 2018 class assignment, referring to reading the book Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability).*

Before I began my thesis work, I was in a class called "Community Engagement," an elective offered by my department at the University of Kentucky. Through this course, I was able to volunteer with one of the Lexington markets every other week. I was also challenged to read several books about the ways in which community movements are discussed and framed, and how this framing often comes from an outsider's perspective. McKittrick (2014) presents black geographies as an exact opposite alternative to this idea. Narratives and movements come from within a community and efforts to change or improve upon community assets should be community-led and community-driven. This means ownership. It is important for me to include a journal entry such as the one above in order to show my own journey in this research process. Coming from a white, upper

middle class family in which I had a home-cooked meal with my entire family every night, I chose to use McKittrick as a guiding theoretical perspective in order to directly challenge my own tendencies and background.

## **History of Fresh Stop Markets in Kentucky**

Special note: Since the beginning of this research, the markets in Lexington have disassociated from the nonprofit New Roots and also disassociated from the TWEENS FNC are no longer called Fresh Stop Markets. They have renamed themselves “Lexington Community Markets.” Though they are no longer associated, their roots began with Fresh Stop and thus Fresh Stop needs to be considered.

Though the Lexington Community Markets are no longer affiliated with the Fresh Stop Markets, they were until very recently. Because it is a recent development, it is important to understand the context in which the markets initially arose and thus, requires a brief history of the Fresh Stop Markets.

Fresh Stop Markets are the result of years of work and organization by countless people in Louisville and Lexington, KY as well as Southern Indiana. Fresh Stop Markets were first organized under the nonprofit organization New Roots, which was established as a 501(c)3 in 2009. New Roots’ mission, “is to develop a just and thriving food system in Louisville metro communities by improving education and access to fresh and local food for urban residents” (Moskowitz, 2016). New Roots organized Fresh Stop Markets as pop-up community-driven food distribution programs, in which “families pool their resources (food stamps and/or cash) to purchase fresh local produce from small farmers in the region” (Moskowitz, 2016). Farmers had previously wanted to set up markets in

West Louisville, where the Fresh Stop Markets began, but were deterred by crime and low earning potential. The Fresh Stop Model uses existing networks and organizations in which people trust and operate regularly, such as churches and other neighborhood-based organizations. Community leaders were asked to participate as a means of recruiting other people to the program.



Figure 5. New Roots Logo

Alongside the markets themselves, the Fresh Stop Markets transformed into a leadership development model. New Roots held classes for community leaders on issues of food justice, inclusion, and leadership. The classes “stressed a dialectic or dialogical model between educator and student,” (Moskowitz, meaning the classes were more of a conversation and exchange of knowledge between New Roots organizers and community leaders. The community leaders were then asked to run the Fresh Stop Markets for the following season, rather than New Roots employees and volunteers running it. Depending on the market, food is purchased by share-holders weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. Food is purchased on a sliding scale based on income. For instance, if a family qualified for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programming (SNAP, also known as Food Stamps), their share would cost \$12. If a family does not qualify and can afford the produce regularly, their share would cost \$25. By pooling the resources of those in the community with different income levels and purchasing abilities, everyone came out on top with fresh food in their neighborhoods. Organizers speak with and work with small

farms in the area to coordinate vegetable choices and amounts each market. Farmers are paid as they drop the vegetables at the market, which is different from a farmer's market model, as they are paid upfront for their produce.

Karen Moskowitz, the founder of New Roots and Fresh Stop Markets, notes three main challenges in creating and sustaining Fresh Stop Markets: funding, leadership engagement, and networking. In terms of funding, it is difficult to find money to compensate the volunteers and organizers for their time and effort. Leadership engagement can be difficult because the work is extremely time-consuming and difficult, and organization can be tricky. Lastly, networking can be incredibly burdensome- finding and establishing relationships with small farms and farmers is not easy because there is no established network or database of them in the state of Kentucky.

Despite these challenges or starting new markets, community organizers in Lexington chose to do so.

### **Situating Cooperative Food Markets in Lexington, Kentucky**

Lexington is a city with a complicated and rich history in relation to development and race. This is important to know because the history of Lexington has contributed to the Fresh Stop Markets in the city and continues to impact the lives of those that live here. Richard H. Schein describes this history by discussing the importance of race to the city's story. The very fiber with which Lexington's business economy was born has been woven with racial divisions and segregation. Having been largely bypassed by the Industrial Revolution, Lexington's population has never included large numbers of European migrants, but its social classes have predominately been along lines of white/black/rich/poor (Schein, 2009). A history of racialized practices and production of



space has resulted in long-standing and increasing polarization in Lexington, “with both racially concentrated poverty and affluence on the rise since 1970” (Shelton, 2018).

Schein notes that, “race is an especially important theme here in Lexington, Kentucky, given the importance of the black-white binary in the U.S. South more broadly, the centrality of slavery to the economic, demographic, and social foundations of the city and region, and the present attempt to grapple with the legacies of those practices” (384). Lexington continues to try to understand its past with racialized practices and racialized spaces. As recently as 2018, the city government chose to remove the statues of confederate soldiers John Hunt Morgan and John C. Breckenridge from downtown Lexington to the Lexington cemetery following the white nationalist riots and violence in Charlottesville, Virginia.

#### 1.1.1 Market Operation in Lexington, Kentucky

Fresh Stop Markets in Lexington were associated with a nutrition-focused nonprofit known as Tweens. Tweens Nutrition and Fitness Coalition, according to their Facebook page, is “A community coalition in Lexington, KY dedicated to making healthy eating and physical activity more popular and accessible in Lexington” (<https://www.facebook.com/tweenscoalition/>). Tweens was organized by Anita Courtney, alongside other community members interested about and concerned with the amount of fresh, healthy food options in Lexington. TWEENS administers several programs in Lexington to create more opportunities for access to fresh, healthy food, as well as other wellness programming and advice. TWEENS has primarily been focused on youth nutrition education. Most notably, the *Better Bites Program* and *The Fresh Stop Markets*. The Better Bites Program is a marketing campaign to encourage people to create healthy

snacking habits. The program was in place at a local ballpark, public schools, and a YMCA in Lexington.

The first Fresh Stop Markets were in the Castlewood and East End neighborhoods in Lexington in 2015. The Herald Leader, Lexington's newspaper, reported that the markets moved more than \$100,000, fed more than 2,000 people, and supported more than 50 farmers in its first years (<https://www.kentucky.com/opinion/editorials/article92015337.html>). The markets kept with New Roots' idea of anchoring them in neighborhood organizations as a support network and were established at a church (Castlewood) and a community center (East End). Today, Lexington has two affiliated Fresh Stop Markets: East End, now located at the Lyric Theater, and The Woodhill Market, located at the Woodhill Community Center. Both neighborhoods historically have minority populations and are predominately low-income.

#### 1.1.2 The Lexington Community Markets: Markets, Re-distributed

As recently as Spring of 2019, the Lexington markets became independent of the Fresh Stop Markets, New Roots, and Tweens. This means that the markets operate independently from these three entities. According to the Lexington Community Markets' Facebook page, the markets are: "veggie-lovers working together for a food system run by the people, for the people." They, "believe that ALL families have the right to access the healthy food they need to thrive, and that all of us have something important to share with our community" (May, 2019). There is more of an emphasis on the democratic values of the markets through the re-organization.



Figure 6. Lexington Community Markets Logo

The Lexington Community Markets have two current locations: The East End and Woodhill neighborhoods. In order to better understand the context within which these markets operate, I provide a brief history of each of the neighborhoods and centers where the markets take place.

### 1.1.3 East End Market: Where Culture and Development Collide

The Lyric represents far more than a place where stories are told, and its history is deeply intertwined with a rich story of race and development in Lexington. In 1983, the city of Lexington put forth a revitalization effort of the East End neighborhood called *The East End Neighborhood Development Plan*. What this ultimately meant was a complete restructuring of the buildings and roads in the neighborhood. A street that used to be called Deweese Street, once a center for black economic endeavors, was completely torn down, aside from the Lyric Theater. Because of this, the theater became a symbol for resilience of the black community in Lexington (Jones, 316). Jones notes that the theater was also important for politicians in the city and state, who wanted to show that black spaces and black people were important and that black history in Lexington mattered. The vision for the Lyric Theater, “put forward by the city and the Lyric Foundation was a very nostalgic one; it sought to re-create the best aspects of the Lyric era (music, culture,

community, pride), while ignoring the worst ones (racism, poverty, inequality)” (Jones, 316).

While the neighborhood has been subject to several development projects, both voluntary and involuntary, from the city, it is largely recognized as a symbol of a rich history in Lexington. As recent as February 2019, Lexington’s newspaper, the Herald Leader, published a story about the preservation of the neighborhood. The article noted: ““The East End is unique in that we have elderly people who still live in the house where they were born, or in a house that’s been in their family for more than 100 years,” said Thomas Tolliver, one of the project coordinators. “Personal characteristics like those are important components of our neighborhood, so we decided to celebrate the people as well as the structures””

(<https://www.kentucky.com/news/local/counties/fayettecounty/article84868627.html#storylink=cpy>).

According to the Lyric Theater website, the theater was a vibrant community theater and community centerpiece for Lexington’s African American families from 1948 to 1963. Performers such as Duke Ellington, Ray Charles and Count Basie even performed at the theater during its prime time. Not only was the theater a center for entertainment, many black-owned businesses in Lexington were launched through the theater. The theater closed in 1963 and re-opened in 2010.

Because one of Lexington’s Fresh Stop Markets is located at the Lyric Theater, the history of the Lyric Theater and the East End neighborhood are important to the story and context of the markets today. When someone attends a market at the Lyric Theater,

the Lyric's history is presented alongside the fresh vegetables that day and, thus, the Lyric's history is part of the history of Lexington's markets.

#### 1.1.4 The Woodhill Market: Increasing Diversity and Development

About three and a half miles down the road from the East End Neighborhood is the Woodhill neighborhood, which houses the second Fresh Stop market in Lexington. Though Woodhill's history is far less documented than the East End neighborhood, it is no less important to Lexington's history as a whole and it, too, has a profound and contentious history in Lexington. Woodhill has one of Lexington's highest eviction and foreclosure rates, which at times has had eviction rates of greater than 100% (Shelton, 2017). Housing instability, as demonstrated by eviction and foreclosure, have contributed to sustained marginalization and poverty, as it has shown to result in a rise in crime, a decrease in educational fulfillment, good health, and wealth. Shelton details Lexington's climate of eviction and foreclosure by explaining that none of the neighborhoods with the highest rates are predominately white. The Lexington Leadership Foundation, which runs the Woodhill Community Center describes the neighborhood as follows:

One of Lexington's most diverse and economically disadvantaged populations live in the Woodhill neighborhood. Most of Woodhill's elementary age students attend Breckenridge Elementary where almost 80% of its students receive free or reduced lunches. This is significantly higher than the state average. Housing conditions and employment are ailing. Criminal activity and drug abuse are traps for neighborhood youth. Additionally, this area is home to an increasing refugee and immigrant population. There is a great need of strong programming and mentorship for the children youth and families in the Woodhill neighborhood (<https://www.lexlf.org/woodhill-community-center>).

The Lexington Leadership Foundation, a faith-based organization, whose mission is "Through Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit we connect leaders, unify the body and mobilize people to transform Lexington into a city for God" runs the community

center (<https://www.lexlf.org/mission-and-vision>). The Foundation has four main initiatives in Lexington: Urban Impact, The Prayer Room, Amachi Central Kentucky, and the Fatherhood Initiative. Urban Impact is a youth program that seeks to empower youth to “grow, succeed, and lead.” Foundation partners create relationships with youth in the area to teach life skills in leadership and development, as well as contributing to the creation of an environment in which youth are able to grow safely and successfully. The Prayer Room is a way to strongly incorporate prayer into the other programs the foundation administers. The Prayer Room holds near daily services of prayer and devotion in an attempt to bring people together in fellowship. Amachi Central Kentucky is directed at youth who have been affected by parental or guardian incarceration. Working with data that suggests youth affected by incarceration have a much higher likelihood of becoming incarcerated themselves or acting out, Amachi pairs youth with mentors through the center. By creating avenues for sustained mentorship, Amachi volunteers work with youth to create goal-setting plans and other future-minded strategies. The Fatherhood Initiative works with fathers and other community members to educate about the importance of positive fatherhood practices. By educating fathers in the community, the center seeks to create more civically engaged men and healthy families. The center also uses statistics to support the Fatherhood Initiative, noting that, “if a child's father is affectionate, supportive, and involved he contributes greatly to the child's healthy development, academic achievement, sense of self-worth, and other critical elements associated with positive life outcomes” (<https://www.lexlf.org/fatherhood-initiative>).

These programs and initiatives show the ways in which the Woodhill Community Center both conceptualizes the Woodhill neighborhood as well as how the Lexington Leadership Foundation seeks to ameliorate these prescribed issues.

### **Two sites, many stories**

The two locations in which the Lexington Community Markets are rooted- the East End's Lyric Theater and The Woodhill Community Center, carry very different historical backgrounds and stories. However, both neighborhoods have historically been low-income and neighborhoods in which many of the city's minority populations live. That Lexington Community Markets are located in two predominately non-white neighborhoods indicates that the markets may be working toward a racially-inclusive food justice in which those that have been historically disenfranchised from the food system have other ways to participate in it fully.

Though it has endured a strenuous past with Lexington and Kentucky's governments, the East End neighborhood is one of Lexington's oldest and longest standing neighborhoods. The East End neighborhood has a Fresh Stop Market rooted in a cultural and social stronghold at the Lyric Theater, where black culture is celebrated and honored. In contrast, Lexington's Woodhill neighborhood has a more recent history of dispossession and crime and its Fresh Stop Market is located inside and on the lawn of a brand-new construction run by an outside foundation which seeks to improve upon the neighborhood and its constituents as a whole.

The two histories of these neighborhoods, though sometimes parallel, are very different. The neighborhoods themselves carry entirely different connotations with them in the city of Lexington. The ways in which Lexingtonians think about the neighborhoods

and their constituents may play a role in the way the markets are thought of as well. By understanding the ways in which the core volunteers at the markets understand the places in which the markets are located and how these ideas may have affected their decisions to participate and become market leadership, this study seeks to better understand motivations to participation in the markets and the ways in which the identities of those that volunteer are interwoven into the spaces the markets occupy.



## CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### **Theoretical framework**

This study uses an amalgamation of ecofeminism and black feminist geography with special attention paid to place in order to better understand volunteer leadership at two cooperative food markets in Lexington, Kentucky. Theory of Place is used in order to illuminate attitudes and perceptions of space, while ecofemism and black feminist geography work to keep social, cultural, political, and historical implications of place at the forefront of the study. Race, gender, and place are explicitly and implicitly tied to issues of food and are all very present in the case of the Lexington Community Markets. The ways in which food is grown, sold, and consumed have ties to a broader social and political economy that cannot be ignored throughout this study.

“Food and drink figure into our everyday lives in countless ways. A diet expresses ethnic, religious, and class identification; it prescribes gender roles; it is embodied in rituals and manners; and it relates directly to our aspirations to perfect ourselves. Food and drink tap our pleasures and anxieties, memories and desires, and pride in or alienation from our heritage. This connection between diet and identity raises a number of philosophical questions. Nothing we eat (short of poison) determines an identity. And yet dietary preferences are indeed a part of who I am individually, and who we are collectively. Sometimes the role of food is trivial (e.g., one’s idiosyncratic tastes and food memories), sometimes significant (e.g., sugar and the Atlantic slave trade, or Ireland and the potato in the 1840s). Either way, food is a marker of identity” (Kaplan, 2011).

I begin by introducing a brief overview of Place Theory, in which I discuss the complexities of studying place. Place as an idea and theory is incredibly interdisciplinary and, thus, has a huge array of definitions and arguments associated with it. I chose to represent a small portion of these definitions, including how place relates to development

and Sense of Place. Then, I discuss the importance of Black Feminist Geography and Ecofeminism to this study and food movements on a broader scale.

## **Place Theory**

Place is used as a focal point for this study because of the nature of this local, community-led food movement. Local implies geographical proximity (place) and this community initiative involves the necessity of people coming together in one another's physical presence to work toward a goal. Place includes more than the physical environment. It includes the social, cultural, and political environments in which people live and understand themselves and their place. All of these factors contribute to the social construction of place, as well as the construction of meaning surrounding place (Stedman, 2011). Place-based approaches to development have a long history in the social sciences. Ignoring the importance and centrality of place in development practice, where local knowledge and resources are utilized in order to serve the needs of development. This is in contrast to outside knowledge and resources. Place-based approaches can contribute to a better sense of community and this sense of community can be a form of social capital with which people relate and organize (Barca, et. al., 2012). Policy and practice that operate without consideration of place can lead to approaches that are not contextual or appropriate (Bolton, 1992).

### **2.1.1 Sense of Place**

Within place theory is a notion of 'sense of place.' Sense of place is not entirely straightforward as an idea or a theory. Similar to Place theory more broadly, ideas of sense of place are contested, interdisciplinary, and dynamic. Principally, a sense of place encompasses one's connection to a physical space via their social, cultural,

environmental, and political relationship with the place. However, one's sense of place can be tied to places that are not only physical, but also emotional. Tuan is credited with bringing ideas of place to the forefront of theory by presenting the idea that place is more significant than place and that space and place are two different entities entirely; where space is place that has been giving meaning and significance over time through one's interaction with it (Tuan, Y. 1974). However, since then, literature has developed significantly surrounding sense of place. Sense of place forces place to become a sum and exchange of ideas greater than its physical features, including cultural, political, emotional, and social aspects of one's idea about a physical space (Feagan, 2007 and Relph, 1976).

Solin (2015) provides us with an array of definitions of sense of place in *The Place of Food Systems: Exploring the Relationship between Sense of Place and Community Food Systems Engagement*, noting that our sense of place is inextricably related to our sense of place attachment and connection to place. Sense of place is developed through personal experiences, continuity, dependence, and cultural worldview (p 50-51). Solin also explains the obvious nature of which people have a sense of place, but the more elusive explanation as to how and why (p 50).

The ways in which we understand our sense of place affects our identity. In the same way, so too does the food that we eat, as "dietary practices are deeply rooted in history and culture" (Liburd, L., 2003). The food that we choose to eat is necessarily affected by the places we occupy- our community, our neighborhoods, our cities, and our country more broadly. Just as groups have worked to create spaces that exclude some groups, so too has our food system. The historical processes that have created our food

systems have disproportionately undermined low-income communities and communities of color (Alkon, A., 2011., Agyeman, J. & McEntee, J., 2014., Guthman, J., 2012). In *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability*, Alison Alkon argues that, “...communities of color have been subject to laws and policies that have taken away their ability to own and manage land for food production...moreover, low-income communities and communities of color often lack access to locally available healthy food, and what food is available is often more expensive than similar purchases in wealthier areas” (Alkon, A., 2011, p.4.; Winnie, M., 2008).

Taking into consideration the literature on place-attachment and geographies of exclusion, coupled with literature on racially-exclusive food movements, we turn to literature on food justice movements. Food justice movements focus on providing communities with local, sustainable, culturally-appropriate, healthy food while empowering local economic systems that allow for autonomy of both producers and consumers (Caruso, C., 2014; Cadieux, K., 2015; Hayes, C. & Carbone, E., 2015). Consumption of local foods has been attributed with a stronger connection and relationship to place than food at supermarkets. The philosophy of place is at the heart of relationships with food and food and eating affect relationships to place (Kaplan, 2011).

Solin’s most significant findings that contribute to this study are two-fold: 1) his finding that locally grown and locally eaten food can contribute to a stronger sense of place and 2) that the development of a sense of place is multi-dimensional, in which sense of place, “includes interrelated dimensions of place, socio-cultural sense of place, individual sense of place, and place action” (vi., 2015). In order to better understand the ways in which sense of place and place attachment are formed and re-formed, particularly

though our engagement with food, I chose to use Black Feminist Geography and Ecofeminist Theory. These two theories help contribute to my understanding and analysis of the ways in which market volunteers develop relationships with the place of the markets.

### **Black Feminist Geography and the Market Neighborhoods**

Physical spaces in which we operate today are not stagnant. Every space is contested- historically, culturally, and socially. Lexington's Saturday Farmer's Market is an example of this. Though the market is beautiful and well-organized every Saturday, the ground upon which the market stands has a deeply racialized and debated past and present. The two Lexington markets with which the volunteers work are located in neighborhoods that have predominate minority populations, thus utilizing theory that puts race at a focal point was essential. Black Feminist Geography contributes to this study by illuminating the concept of space and place as mere vessels for human interactions and complexities (McKittrick, 2006). In *Demonic Grounds*, a foundational work for black feminist geography, Katherine McKittrick explains that, "geography is not secure and unwavering- we produce space, we produce its meanings, and we work hard to make geography what it is" (xi). This means that the physical and cultural spaces in which we find ourselves are not there by accident. Every space and place have long histories of participation, investment, concealment, marginalization, and exclusion. In short, black feminist geography focuses on the centrality of the *social production* of space, rather than the mere physical construction. McKittrick outlines four processes that contribute to the social production of space: 1) "naturalization of identity and place," 2) "the ways in which geographic enslavement is developed through the constructs of black womanhood

and identity and femininity,” 3) “the spatial practices black women employ across and beyond domination,” 4) “the ways in which geography, although seemingly static, is an alterable terrain” (xvii). Hyden (2017) explains McKittrick’s theory and use of black feminist geography in relation to the markets by explaining that it, “acknowledges and confronts historical, collective trauma, which is another food justice characteristic embodied in the work of Fresh Stop Markets” (32).

### **Ecofeminist Theory and the Lexington Community Markets**

The primary reason the markets exist is based upon the New Roots belief that “fresh food is a basic human right.” Thus, the conversation must keep returning to food. Ecofeminism incorporates many of the same ideas as black feminist geographies, though places particular emphasis on our interactions with our environment through a feminist lens and the food we eat is entirely dependent upon the environment in which we live. In *Food Justice: What is It? Where has it been? Where is it going?*, Hayes and Carbone (2015) argue that the problem with current food movements is that the ideals with which they promote- local, sustainable, healthy, empowering food- are largely ideals of white, middle-class people and it is these very power dynamics that resulted in the food system we have today: a food system that is fundamentally imbalanced, where fresh and healthy food is realistically inaccessible and unaffordable for large portions of the population (Alkon, A., 2011).

If it is true that consuming local foods and interacting with local producers contributes to a stronger sense of place and a more cohesive sense of place identity (Dilley, 2009; Malloy, 2013 and Solin, 2015), then a racially exclusive local food movement has higher stakes than just accessing healthy food. Creating a local food

movement that excludes groups of people, whether socially, politically, economically, or culturally, could contribute to further marginalization of already isolated groups.

Combating marginalization is at the forefront of the mission of the markets, which are intentionally located in food insecure neighborhoods and work to address food insecurity within those neighborhoods. In order to contest long-standing marginalization of communities (i.e. food deserts), the markets go to the communities themselves.

Ecofeminism helps unpack the complexities of local food movements by highlighting the ways in which power dynamics and differentials can be flipped through ownership. Delind (2006), argues that, through engagement with local food systems, “we will be engaging in place-based identity politics that has the potential to keep us grounded, affirmed, and diverse- to provide us with a solidarity for resisting, exposing, and perhaps restructuring the institutionalized sources of power and inequity that currently dominates our lives” (p. 19). In other words, ecofeminism provides a way for us to think about confronting and flipping the current local foods movement to be more racially and gender inclusive. Ecofeminism can provide a platform upon which we can recognize that, “it is in *place* that social encounters are replicated, but [we must also] [recognize] that they can be transformed there as well” (Mallory, conclusion, emphasis added).

### **Opportunity for Research**

As previously stated, this study is site-specific. I wanted to work with one organization and work to find solutions for sustainability for its future in Lexington, the city in which I grew up and also currently live. There is a huge amount of research on the ways in which identity is related to place and it is evident that not all places are inclusive.

In addition to this, communities of place seem hard to find. When so much of our lives are on the internet, face-to-face places are becoming rarer. However, through my personal experience with the Lexington Community Markets, I have learned the importance of place-based communities. Thus, is the reason for this research- how do volunteers, who sustain the mission of the markets- find motivation to participate in them? Why do they? And how can we transfer those motivations onto others?



### CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

This study was qualitative in design and utilized aspects of narrative interview of volunteers at Lexington Community Markets. Approval was obtained from the Office of Research Integrity (IRB) at the University of Kentucky with the approval number 50226. Participation by market goers was voluntary and they did not receive any compensation for participation in the study. I established a transformative worldview, and this was used in partnership with narrative interviews. Though the interviews included a set of pre-determined questions, participants were able to take the interview in the direction they chose, as many of the questions were open-ended. A transformative worldview, “holds that research inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and a political change agenda to confront social oppression at whatever level it occurs (Mertens, 2010). Thus, the research contains an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher’s life” (Creswell, 2014, p. 38).

#### **Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between volunteers’ participation and their view of *place* of two local food markets in Lexington, Kentucky. In order to understand the relationship between the volunteers and the space and place of the markets themselves, the data must come from the volunteers primarily. The markets take place in two neighborhoods in Lexington, both of which are broadly considered “food insecure.” The primary reason for the study and chosen methods are to better understand the volunteers’ relationships with the markets and how these relationships

affect their decision to participate in the markets. The research questions for this qualitative, narrative interview study are the following:

RQ1: How do ideas of place affect volunteer relationship and retention with the markets?

RQ2: How do identities of place and food affect perceptions of power and leadership in the Fresh Stop markets?

## **Methods**

This study utilized two primary methods: narrative interview and historical analysis. This study was guided by principles of ethnography in order to better understand how perceptions of place effect participation. Ethnography is an important method used to understand individuals' perceptions of place in this study for one primary reason: "the ethnographic study of space and place is critical to understanding the everyday lives of people whose homes and homelands are disrupted by globalization, uneven development, violence and social inequality" (Low, S., *Spatializing Culture*, p. 1). Both place and food, in the context of the history of development in the United States, are deeply connected to the history of race and racialized space. In addition, the spaces that have been historically left out of modern food system are disproportionately low-income and black (Alkon, A., 2011). Alongside this, the neighborhoods in which these two pop-up cooperative food markets take place are historically vulnerable to food insecurity and uneven development. The intent of this method is to include the voices that support the market at the front of any conversation about the markets. Though this is not a traditional ethnographic study, many aspects of ethnography are included in the method. The primary methods included in this study are narrative interview and active

historical analysis, wherein the historical nature of a location plays an active role in what is happening currently.

Narrative interviews about volunteers' experiences with the markets will allow me to understand individual stories and perceptions. This is the heart of this research study. In conjunction with an understanding of the physical space in which the markets take place, individual narratives are critically important to understanding how the markets effect individuals and the spaces in which they operate. Narrative inquiry is a ubiquitous way in which people make sense of their environment, experience, and a way to construct and communicate meaning (Lincoln and Denzin, 2003). Narrative interview allows for the participant to tell their story and can be used as a method of empowerment. This method was chosen because of my transformative worldview.

### **Narrative Interview**

Narrative interview as a qualitative method is critical in allowing a deeper understanding of the participant's story and allowing the participant to have ownership of their story. Narrative interview implies ownership of the participant (Lukacs, 1965). Narrative interview is descriptive in style and seeks to integrate the researcher's experience with the participant's story in a way to create a comprehensive understanding of the subject, in this case the markets (Benjamin, 1975). The main goal of narrative interview is *to understand* (Minayo, 2012):

“Minayo refers to the verb understand as the main action in qualitative research, in which questions such as the singularity of the individual, his/her experience and expertise within the group and the community to which he/she belongs, are critical to contextualize the reality where he/she is inserted. In seeking to answer questions in a given space- time or historical-social context, qualitative studies are not generalizable. This does not mean that they are somewhat objective,

inaccurate or they do not have scientific credibility, but they address and treat the phenomena otherwise.” (Muylaert, Sarubbi, et al., 2014, p.187).

Narrative interviews can be semi-structured or unstructured. For the purposes of this study, interviews were semi-structured in nature. Narrative Interview elicits stories as a form of data collection (Allen, 2017). Central to the use of narrative inquiry is understanding the historical and current context in which the interview is taking place. For the purposes of this study, the historical analysis is about the markets themselves and the interviews are taking place at a pivotal time during the development and story of the markets. Recently, the markets disassociated themselves from Fresh Stop and Tweens and are now operating independently of these non-profit organizations.

## **Procedure**

Research questions were developed by the researcher after significant time was spent at the markets the previous season. The researcher spent time every other week at the Woodhill Market and, through this experience, was able to form relationships with market volunteers. A convenience sample was completed by the researcher. The project focused on the two Lexington markets that, at the time of initial contact, were associated with the Fresh Stop Market nonprofit based out of Louisville, Kentucky.

Participants were contacted in two ways: either in-person at market leadership meetings or over email. The email provided a brief overview of the study, followed by a call for participants. Once participants responded with a willingness to participate, the researcher sent a consent form for participation. The consent form detailed the purpose of the study, as well as provided interview questions for the study prior to the interview. Via email, the researcher set up times with the participants on when to interview. During the

interview, the researcher provided space for the participant to elicit any questions he or she may have about the study. All interviews took place over the phone, though the researcher gave participants the option to conduct the interview in person.

At the beginning of each interview, the researcher made it clear to each participant that neither their names or any identifying information would be used in the study report, as a means of protecting the identities and relationships among a relatively small group of people. Participants were invited to speak to their own experiences on the markets- how they became involved, what a typical market day looks like for each of them, and challenges they believe their market may face in the future. Each interview concluded with space for the participant to add anything they wanted to include about their market experience. Each participant was then asked about the possibility of a second, brief interview or email exchange to discuss any necessary clarification about topics discussed in the initial interview. Following interview, the audio files were converted into digital transcripts for further analysis. Transcripts were coded using inductive coding by the researcher.

### **Qualitative Validity**

Qualitative validity relies on the perceptions of the participants and the accurate and authentic representation of data by the researcher (Creswell, 2014). This study utilized several means of validity and reliability.

### **Credibility**

Credibility was established by the use of outside transcript review, clarification of bias, and member checking. Validity was achieved by utilizing several theoretical

perspectives and data sources throughout the research process. The integrated framework of several different theoretical perspectives allowed for a stronger analysis. An external reviewer, another social scientist unrelated to the project, was utilized in order to ensure that the transcriptions were accurate and made sense. The researcher was sure to employ a clarification of bias, a form of reflexivity, in order to remain entirely open and honest with readers. Reflexivity contributes to strong qualitative research because it shows how the research both shapes and is shaped by the researcher (Creswell, 2014). Lastly, member-checking was utilized to ensure the accurate representation of words from the participants. A few weeks after each interview, the researcher emailed the participant with themes and descriptions of themes from their specific interview. Participants were then invited to disclose whether or not these themes accurately represented their views and perceptions of the markets. Participants were also invited to participate in follow-up interviews to discuss emergent themes.

### **Transferability**

This study used thick description in order to show the ways in which this research may be applicable in other settings. Thick description of how the interviews took place and the markets themselves allows for a more robust understanding of the participants and their responses (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The historical data presented also lends itself to thick description of the setting in which the markets take place, including the social and cultural landscape. Though this is not necessarily the goal of this study, there are implications for the study to have significance outside of the Lexington markets. The Lexington Community Markets are at a pivotal point in their development to serve the city. Though the need to expand is there, the capacity with which to do so is

problematic at this point. This will be current story of the markets, as told by a combination of the stories. The interviews of volunteers will serve as a means of understanding motivations for participation and, thus, will hopefully translate into better recruitment tactics for future volunteers. In addition, this will be hopefully helpful for the markets when applying for funding in order to sustain and expand their mission, while maintaining the integrity of the markets as they are currently. The most important aspect of the markets is their story- the impact the markets have on real lives of people in Lexington, as well as the city as a whole.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability was established with an audit trail and reflexivity in order to allow the readers to better understand the researcher's own thoughts and attitudes toward the study and data. An audit trail helped to provide information about the researcher's thought process on the development of the research study, as well as the researcher's methods for interpreting the data. This was also done by providing a description of codes of interview transcripts. Reflexivity, again, was used in order to establish the researcher's bias and to determine the researcher's own relationship with the data. The researcher kept a reflexive journal that included entries after each interview was conducted. The researcher also kept personal notes about thoughts that came up during each interview, in order to establish a relationship between the researcher and the data in which the data was not being impacted explicitly by the bias of the researcher. The researcher was able to utilize journal entries throughout the data interpretation process in order to keep bias in check. The following was taken from a journal entry following the first interview:

I'm really surprised about how this market got started. I have been to the Woodhill Market so many times and met all of these people and I never even asked how it got started. It's weird because I was pretty surprised by the people that started it. I don't know why. When I met them at the markets, they just seemed like normal volunteers, I would have never thought that they were actually responsible for starting it. Why though? Is it because they were women? Or teachers? Or black? Or did I just not see them as leaders? I automatically knew [redacted] was a leader...Even though they are there every single week the market is open. This has really challenged me for some reason. Note to try to interview one of the other women who initially got the market started and talk to her about it too.

The researcher challenged herself to step outside of her own view of the markets to see a bigger picture in order to remain unbiased about her own experiences and time spent at the markets.



## CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

### **The WHERE: How Volunteers conceptualize the “place” of the markets**

In this chapter, I discuss the ways in which market volunteers conceptualize the place of the markets, and how this affects their participation. I begin with a brief overview of the chapter and a short summary of my findings. Following this, I break down the elements of place that contributed to participants’ feelings about the place of the markets.

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between volunteers’ participation and their view of *place* of two local food markets in Lexington, Kentucky. Place is necessarily involved in local food movements, and particularly the Lexington Community Markets, because local is inherently geographic and place is the geography. In order to understand the relationship between the volunteers and the space and place of the markets themselves, the data must come from the volunteers primarily. The fundamental reason for the study and chosen methods are to better understand the volunteers’ relationships with the markets and how these relationships affect their decision to participate in the markets. The research questions for this qualitative, narrative interview study are the following:

**RQ1:** How do ideas of place affect volunteer relationship and retention with the markets?

**RQ2:** How do identities of place and food affect perceptions of power and leadership in the Fresh Stop markets?

Throughout each interview, it was evident that each volunteer has a positive relationship with the place of their respective markets and that this relationship contributed to their sustained commitment to the markets. The ways in which people understand “place” varies significantly based on their own life experiences and relationship to both the geographical location of “place” and the non-tangible things that often constitute place, such as the way somewhere makes us feel or the way we are treated in a specific place. Ideas of place are incredibly personal and are not always so easy to understand. Though place has been written about and researched for several decades, the ways in which we, as researchers, talk about “place” and the way that “place” is experienced through lived encounters look very different. Though there was overlap in how I, as the researcher, approached the place of the markets and how the volunteers that were interviewed thought about the place of the markets, the ending result was overall very different. Place, to the volunteers, had very little to do with the historical and social background of the geographical location of the markets. Instead, place was something much less concrete, but just as palpable. In only one of the interviews did the volunteer mention the actual location of one of the markets- the Lyric Theatre- as being significant. However, in the same sentence, he noted that while it was nice to have the market at a location of cultural significance, the end result was the exact same: people who needed fresh food were able to get it, regardless of the market’s location. The rich background behind the Lyric had nothing to do with the physical transfer of vegetables from farmer to consumer.

Overall, it was clear that the atmosphere of the market contributed most to feelings about place: the friendly faces, conversations, and beautiful vegetables, among

other things. It was also evident that these feelings about place contributed to each volunteers' decision to keep working hard for the markets, though it was definitely not the only reason they chose to do so. The second research question, "How do identities of place and food affect perceptions of power and leadership in the Fresh Stop markets?" was much harder to understand through the interviews. Partially, this is because of the research questions I created. Knowing this, through the interviews and particularly the follow-up interviews, it became more apparent that leadership within the markets is something that can be very difficult to navigate. Though the volunteers want the market to be run efficiently and effectively, they are certainly aware that they are not able to do it all themselves.

#### 4.1.1 Community Markets and Communities of Place

The markets provide a space where communities of place and communities of interest intersect. The 'interest' is the organization of people around the common goal of food justice or accessing fresh food, and the 'place' is the market itself. Communities of place is not a new notion. For as long as human beings have been around, they have gathered in geographic areas around common goals or common bonds. However, these face-to-face interactions in a geographical location are become less prevalent with the proliferation of the internet and mobile devices. Rather than engage in-person, one is able to order groceries over their phone and have them dropped off in their car, all the while never interacting with any other person if they so choose. This is one of the main ideas that led me to become so interested in the community markets in Lexington- the necessity of face-to-face interaction in a necessary geographic location. The face-to-face interaction is necessary in the markets because of the current infrastructure: rudimentary,

but in a nostalgic way. The geographic location is necessary because of the goal of the markets- to serve neighborhoods that do not have fresh, local food available within them.

Communities of place is often put in contrast with communities of interest (Robin and Simon, 2012). Though they are related, they are different. Communities of place are physical locations in which a community is formed or brought together, while communities of interest are areas in which people choose to come together over other things (friendships, spending habits, etc). Communities of interest, therefore, are relatively easy to achieve over the internet (chatrooms, Facebook groups are some examples). We are able to form communities with those whom we have common interests.

Place is an area where global intersects with local, time intersects with geography and history converges with the present. Though these ideas of place are known and lived, they are experienced and talked about differently on the ground. Throughout the interviews, it became evident that each of the volunteers did not think of the “place” of the markets as significant due to their physical location, as I had originally thought. Though the physical location was important because of its embeddedness within the community of need, the attributes and characteristics which created the “place” of the markets were not necessarily physical or geographical. The markets serve as placed where impromptu parent-teacher conferences occur. Where volunteers learn about people from vastly different backgrounds come together for food.

The ways in which we think about place matters when it comes to how we treat a place.

Though the markets are communities of place and interest, the place at which each market takes place was not necessarily important to the volunteers that participated in this study. Though the actual location itself was not important, the other factors contributing to place were overwhelmingly important; things like atmosphere, visibility, and community embeddedness. In other words, it mattered that the markets were located inside neighborhoods that needed access to fresh food and it mattered that the markets were welcoming and visible, though it did not matter which street corner or building the markets were located. The following sub-categories show the aspects of place that were important to the volunteers.

#### 4.1.2 To Be and Feel Welcoming

Each participant spoke of the emotional aspect of the market- how welcoming and warm everyone is. Those that run the market (volunteers) and those that participate in the market (shareholders) were both described as welcoming and warm. The aspects of place that are not necessarily physical, but emotional, are evident in scholarship on place attachment. People feel more connected to a physical place when they feel emotionally joyful in that place. Experiencing place attachment contributes to individual well-being by contributing to positive self-esteem, meaning making, and a sense of belonging (Scannell and Gifford, 2017). The most evident aspects of place attachment came about as a result of participant descriptions of the “atmosphere” or “feeling” of the markets. The atmosphere was described as welcoming, helpful, and warm. “...I would pull into the parking lot and there were usually people outside if the weather was nice. All the tents with the different vegetables sorted and volunteer at each table. So...they help me figure out how to cook things you know if they were unfamiliar to you. And it was, it was very

informal. I usually spent more time there than I had intended to. I would tell my partner I'm was going to pick up the veggies and I'll be right back. And then I'd get caught up for like 45 minutes talking all the people that I ran into there. So I was always late but, but I really enjoyed it" (R2, 2019). The idea that people would spend more time at the markets than they had originally intended shows feelings of contentment in the place. Another participant talked about how he always moves slowly through the vegetable tables, talking with each of the volunteers about potential recipes or combinations of produce. Participants discussed the benefits of being able to see the same people at the market every other week, "People (volunteers) are greeting them (shareholders:) 'Hey how are you?' 'How you been?' You know. Are you excited about this week's share or what have you been up to or if we haven't seen them for a while asking them where they've been. Because we've just had one so far this year so it's kind of like oh I remember you from last year." Another participant described how she is able to check in with her students' parents at the market through impromptu parent-teacher conferences. These aspects, though emotional, all are rooted in place. Because they are able to interact in place with the same people every other week, they are able to be more emotionally connected to one another.

#### 4.1.3 To Be Seen from the Street

"The Lyric Theater... it's a really old theater that's been remodeled and built back up. We have the market out in front of it on the on the street corner...the corner of Elm Tree and 3rd Street that is about... 8 blocks from my house is that it's about, about eight blocks from my house. So it's really not that far away. They...the community... there's a lot of people walking in this community, there's a lot of low income housing in the neighborhood. There's well, like I said, a lot of people who walk in lots of low income housing. So there's all sorts of diverse people that would come to this market and I think it really helps that its right there on the corner.... That's right down the corner because sometimes people who don't know

anything about it will stop and see what's, what's going on. They're driving by, walking by. So it's a great location for it" (R4, 2019).

The Lexington Community Markets are not easy to understand. From personal and anecdotal experience, the model is difficult to understand the first time you encounter it. People see the markets and think they are a farmer's market. People often do not understand that they have to purchase a share in advance and, when they do hear that, a lot of times they think that it is a CSA (Community Shared Agriculture) and they have to have a share every week. Several volunteers mentioned that it is difficult to communicate the model of the markets to new people. However, this interaction only occurs because new people see the market from the outside, approach the market, and ask about the market. This would not happen if the markets were not visible to the street or sidewalk. Though both of the markets sometimes take place inside the buildings for weather-related reasons, they try to be outside as much as possible. This is some of the best marketing the markets have going for them- accidental encounters. When I volunteered for the Woodhill Market, we often would have people stop their cars as we were setting up: "Can I buy some tomatoes? Are you all a Farmer's Market?" Though we had to respond "no" to both of these questions, it provided an opportunity to engage with neighborhood folk about the markets and the mission of the markets. One volunteer suggested even having a table explicitly for the purpose of describing the market to those that happen upon it because this happens so often, "Yeah that too but also have stations to lead them through the process because that's... what I think that they don't understand. Yeah. Because like I see it a lot, lot of people will ride through that neighborhood and they'll want to stop and they'll come up and they'll say can we buy some of these produce and sometimes we've said a lot of these shares have already been purchased if we have something extra in the

next hour ride back by here and maybe you can buy a share” (R1, 2019). Though it seemed important to the volunteers that the markets are visible from the street, they also expressed there needs to be a way to talk with people that come to the market from the street.

#### 4.1.4 To Be Inside the Community

“So yeah, I don't know it then and, and that neighborhood as well, there are a lot of apartments. There are a lot of people that rent. And I do know that the people that live in that neighborhood that like own the homes, I know that they aren't going to go anywhere because if they move to another part of town they would... The mortgage will be a lot higher for them, so they just stay there. Even though there is a lot of crime in that neighborhood” (R1, 2019).

Participants discussed the importance of having the markets pop-up inside the communities that need them. The markets are necessarily a place-based approach to combatting food justice because they address food deserts (geographical locations). Place-based community organizations face challenges that other organizational approaches may not always encounter. These community organizations and efforts navigate a multitude of environments in the communities in which they are located (Rymsza and Zimmer, 2004). This hearkens back to the idea of communities of place versus communities of interest. Because place-based initiatives are basing their approach based on the physical space, rather than necessarily the need (or interest), then needs and interests are more likely to be multi-faceted and changing. Despite these challenges, each participant communicated the importance of meeting the communities where they are. Participants cited reasons such as lack of internet, housing costs, and a general need for fresh food in proximity to where the neighborhood residents live. One of the participants discussed the effectiveness of the market by noting, “Another reason is I mean, it's



located right there in the middle of that community. So people can walk there...” (R1, 2019). Participants describing the need for the markets to be located in these specific neighborhoods reflects a deeper understanding of the needs in the community and that the needs are multi-faceted. People who are facing food injustice face other injustice at the same time- hunger is not experienced in isolation.

#### 4.1.5 Emplacing Empathy

“So my partner to pick up a share one time because I wasn't going to be able to make it like I had work or something. And. And he's usually a little like shy around new people anyway. So he was like okay I guess I can go in there and do that and he walks in and everyone was friendly like they usually are and helped to figure out where he was going since he hadn't been there before. And. He comes home with these two massive bags of food and he just... I got home and he looked like he was about to cry. I was like “What's wrong?” And he was like, “Why did they do this.” Because I want you to have food. So, so he goes “Why?” Because you're a person. He was just so overwhelmed” (R2).

Sense of place can deeply affect one's ability to empathize with others (Walker and Chapman, 2003). Empathy is created through the markets by a restructuring of social interactions between shareholders and volunteers, both of whom the sustainability of the markets rely upon exclusively. Empathy and sustainability are negotiated in place. When empathy is created via place, then sustainability in that place becomes more of a possibility (Brown, et al., 2019). Essentially, when empathy is created in a specific place, people feel more connected to that place and, as a result, seek to sustain it. While much of the research on empathy and sustainability is related to environmental sustainability, this research shows that it may be able to contribute to organizational sustainability. When empathy is created in the place a market takes place, people feel more connected to that market and, as a result, seek to sustain it.

When people are involved in any scenario, many decisions and actions do not compute. Not because they are irrational or not thought through, but because human emotion and the need for connection cannot always be measured. The markets are messy, volunteering is hard, and communities of place are becoming increasingly difficult. While we can choose communities of interest- communities we are a part of because we have common hobbies or shared values- communities of place are much more difficult. To some degree, we can choose communities of place, too. We can choose the neighborhoods we live in and the places that we hang out. However, we cannot always choose the people that share that space with us. This is why communities of place are difficult and perhaps becoming even more so. Communities of place require a great deal of empathy- understanding that others are different than you, have different views and different interests- and sharing space and community with them anyway. Empathy arose time and time again throughout each interview. People connecting face-to-face created an atmosphere of openness and understanding. One participant noted that she would get to know people more each time she saw them. She would gain one more insight into their life, and this insight created a deeper understanding of their need for fresh food and, in turn, deepened her connection to the market. She explained:

“So I don’t know...and then each week that I would go I would hear another story. I would hear somebody’s story. And so it would make me want to come back one week. I heard, heard one that one of the kids I had. Maybe four years ago and in fifth grade...his mom came and said that she needed some fresh fruits and vegetables because this kid...had been diagnosed with diabetes and he’s in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. So just stories like that. Those are the kinds of things that you just keep me going back...I had one...A girl came one week and said that she had just moved in with her mom and her grandmother had to come and live with them and she didn’t know how they were going to be able to eat, but she got introduced to a fresh stop. And they were able to eat...off the food she got for like \$12 for two weeks” (R1).

R1 noted at the beginning of her interview that she helped recruit many of the volunteers for the market. She explained that her criteria for asking someone to be a volunteer entailed an understanding that they didn't necessarily *need* the market but could help someone that does. She explained that she asked people who were part of "two-income households or making a decent wage," and that these kinds of people were "not the people that I see at [Lexington Community Markets]." In addition to this, she is also a teacher at a neighborhood school near where the markets take place. Through the markets, she was able to gain a better understanding of some of the circumstances that many of her students experience and, thus, has a more complete view of each of her students' stories.

Another respondent (R2) had a similar experience at the market. She was able to gain a better understanding for those that are not able to gain access to fresh food. She noted, "Well I've got to meet a lot of people from different neighborhoods and it's really opened my eyes to just how many food deserts there are. I mean I knew they existed but I didn't realize how big an issue that was in this area. Yeah I've always had a car for the most part. Lived with someone with a car. And I think I just always underestimated how difficult it would have been to get fresh food had I not been able to drive." (R2). Both of these instances show ways in which the volunteers were able to better understand people in the community and, alongside this, have a deeper understanding for food injustice in Lexington more broadly.

## **Closing**

It is evident that participants showed a profound sense of place in relation to their respective markets. However, in contrast to what I had originally conceived ‘place,’ as a significant geographical location fraught with history and politics, participants thought of place was very different. Participants described the place of the markets as the tables of fresh vegetables, kind interactions, and community embeddedness. Outside of being located within the community, the actual location of the market did not seem to matter really at all. This speaks to the emotional ties and powerful relationship between the volunteers at the markets themselves, as well as the markets’ ability to be reproduced in other neighborhoods or communities. A neighborhood does not have to have a space of social or cultural significance in order to be successful, but it should be conspicuous and have an atmosphere of kindness.

## CHAPTER 5. SECONDARY RESULTS

### **The WHY: Volunteer motivations for participation in the Lexington Community**

#### **Markets**

In this chapter, I look beyond place to create a deeper understanding for volunteer participation in the Lexington Community Markets. I begin with a brief overview of participation literature, followed by an explanation of emergent themes related to participation in the markets. I begin this chapter by citing each volunteer's question to the question: "what is your primary motivator for participating in the markets every other week?" Stated motivations for participation included community service, neighborhood welfare, reciprocal relief, and food access. Following this, I present secondary themes that emerged through the interviews. These motivations speak to ways in which volunteers' choose to participate in the markets, even when facing big challenges from outside sources (time, funding, etc). I asked each participant, The answers I got to this question were different from emergent themes that answer the same question. In other words, the explicitly spoken motivations of the volunteers were different from motivations that came out during interviews. The primary concern of this study was to hear and be able tell the stories of the markets in Lexington. The themes presented seek to tell a broader but also deeper story of the Lexington Community Markets, though no data could ever tell the full story.

#### 5.1.1 Participation

Citizen engagement that leads to citizen participation has been widely researched through the lens of participation in local government initiatives, as well as non-profits.

Citizen participation in community programming is at the core of what it means to have a democratic society: everybody participates in the decisions that affect the lives of the people in the community (Pateman, 1970). While citizen engagement and participation have been heavily researched and discussed among nonprofit organizations, governmental entities, and other agencies for decades, it is still difficult to create sustained partnerships with communities in terms of participation in community programming.

Sherry Arnstein's *A Ladder of Citizen Participation* (1969) details the extent to which citizens have actual power in decision making processes. She breaks participation down into 8 "rungs" of a ladder. The rungs moving up the ladder represent the amount of power that citizens may have. The bottom two rungs represent "non-participation," meaning that the citizens have no real power, while the objective of the official is simply to make it seem as though they are including them in the decision-making process. Secondly, the third and fourth rungs, the voices and opinions of citizens are heard, though they citizens have no power themselves to ensure that their opinions are carried out. Further up the ladder, she moves to three concepts: Partnership, Delegated Power, and Citizen Control. These rungs indicate that the citizens work in partnership with the government or organization in a tangible way- ways in which they, themselves, have the power to execute decisions. Since Arnstein's ladder was created, it has been revisited countless times, both overtly and implicitly.

Jyldyz Kasymova explored the relationships between citizen participation and good governance in *Analyzing Recent Citizen Participation Trends in Western New York: Comparing Citizen Engagement Promoted by Local Governments and Non-Profit*

Organizations (2010). In this, Kasymova observed four stages of citizen participation, the least of which was “Informing,” and the stage in which citizens had the most power was “Empowering” processes, where people were able to realize and implement their own decisions in partnership with the agency. By comparing three different programs in Buffalo, New York, Kasymova found that the programming in which citizens were involved throughout the decision-making processes, from education to execution, yielded the most sustained participation. In other words, agencies and programs that include citizens in the decision-making processes are more successful. On the other side of this, programs and policies that are held accountable by the citizens themselves are also more successful (Handley & Howell-Moroney, 2010). The process, then, works both ways: citizens participate more when they are held more accountable, and administrators are held more accountable when citizens participate more.

### **Situating Participation in the Lexington Community Markets**

This study sought to understand the relationship between place and participation in the case of the Lexington Community Markets. Chapter 4 showed the ways in which participants (volunteers) have come to understand and perceive place in the markets- that the physical space had little to do with their sense of place and connection to the markets. Several other motivating factors emerged through participant interviews that are important in understanding their participation. This section begins with the explicitly stated answers to the question “what is your primary motivator for participating in the markets?” Following this, I disclose other motivations that emerged from the data.

#### **What is your primary motivator for participating in the markets?**

In each interview, after I asked about how each person initially became involved with the markets and how they conceived of their role at the markets, I asked each volunteer “What is your primary motivator for participating in the markets?” The volunteers have very different life experiences that initially led them to the markets- from one volunteer creating a market to another volunteer vitally needing the market. Each participant noted that they get a share every market and expressed feelings of satisfaction and joy in relation to the availability of fresh food. Each participant also expressed feelings of obligation to their respective communities, though they cited different reasons for these obligations. I titled each volunteers’ cited obligation, and each is listed in bold after their quote.

These are the answers I received:

**R1:** Community service...not necessarily like the general community service. What I mean by that is the kids that we service at school. We service that family, those families. So we are basically [other volunteer] and I...and [other volunteer] are basically stakeholders in that Community because we...teach their kids.  
(2019) **Community Service**

**R2:** Just my own experience... I mean I couldn't have predicted like just how much better it make me feel. It wasn't just the food. Like we were struggling to like have the energy to cook good food and the money to buy it and all of that stuff. But, but you know that kind of struggle just like wears you down emotionally to the point where like...we didn't want to put the energy into like taking care of ourselves. And that's just a really bad cycle. That hurts your health and your emotional well-being. (2019) **Reciprocal Relief**

**R3:** Personally I want to have access to the fresh fruits and vegetables at a reasonable price. And then um having that be available to other people as well to take advantage of that. (2019) **Food Access**



**R4:** Like yeah, we're still getting shares but really, I have so many friends and neighbors and people that I know that really rely on the market and even, even the winters are hard to them. And I know some people that are getting the market getting their market share is super important to them because they can get like fresh food another way because they can't really afford it. (2019) **Neighborhood Welfare**

## **Secondary Motivations for Participation**

In this section, I present emergent themes from the interviews with volunteers on motivations for participating in the market. Though their explicit and straightforward motivations are listed in the previous section, it is important to consider secondary motivations that emerged throughout the interviews in order to gain a full understanding of participation in the markets. The motivations in this section are listed under categorical themes that I created on the basis of consultation with black geographic and ecofeminist thought.

### **5.1.2 Resistance and Empowerment**

Resistance and empowerment have a long intertwined and contentious history with one another. They also have layered meanings within themselves. Resistance and empowerment both mean very different things in different contexts. Particularly in the case of feminist literature, both resistance and empowerment can be contentious. However, knowing this, I move forward with a thoughtful analysis of volunteer interviews in terms of resistance and empowerment. By resistance, I mean a resistance to dominant narratives of what food “is” and who “deserves it.” By empowerment, I mean shared community power, not power from an outside source.

“A key component of these newer definitions of food security is attention to building *local capacity* to produce and distribute food and control food supplies . . . [and] to keep decision- making power within the *community* rather than losing it through dependence on external sources of food . . . *localized food production* can meet many of the diverse *community needs* more effectively than globalized food systems because it can give priority to *community and environmental integrity* before corporate profit- making . . . while reinforcing social identity and cohesion. (Anderson and Cook, 2000: 237; italics added) (as seen in Feagan, 2003: 28).

Local food movements are, in themselves, structures of resistance. To what or against whom they are resisting can vary. Namely, local food systems resist a globalized, industrialized agricultural system in which food is transported from hundreds or thousands of miles away on to your plate. Local food systems resist a nationalized culture in which inexpensive, processed food is marketed, priced, and placed into our homes. However, in many instances *the resistance* has priced out, left behind, and forgotten many in the process of progress. This study shows the ways in which the cooperative food markets in Lexington fit into the resistance put forward by local food movements but also justifiably stand apart from them in three primary ways: decision-making power, diversity, and inclusion.

### 5.1.3 Empowerment through Resistance

The market volunteers that participated in this study were acutely aware of how the markets are serving their communities and the city more broadly. They could actively see the change in themselves, their neighbors, their students, and their partners through the availability and affordability of fresh, local food. By creating an alternative to the large farmer’s markets in town, there was a strong sense of ownership. This is what empowerment is for the Lexington markets. The power that is “bestowed” did not come from outside of the community itself, it came from within the community and was spread

among its members. Volunteers spoke of the ways in which they contribute and run the markets themselves, with little to no acknowledgement of outside organizations or power.

“Black geographies theory offers praxis that illuminate collective action that has happened and is continuously reorganizing against economic, social, and political violence” (Hyden, 2017). The way The Woodhill market began is a story of community empowerment by a group of women who chose to resist the dominant narrative that describes the Woodhill community from the outside. This market was started by a group of women, all of whom work within the Woodhill community and with families that live in the Woodhill neighborhood. One of the women was a part of another one of the markets in town and realized how needed fresh food was in her community, so she made it happen. She “pestered” the right people just long enough for her to hold community interest meetings and find a location for the neighborhood market. She did not wait for the opportunity to arise and for help from the outside, she took a chance and established the power to create within. When she knew that it would be a good idea for the community, she mustered up as many volunteers as she could- most of which still volunteer for the market. When I spoke with her about her vision for the future of the markets, she said, “I would like to see more locations...and in all areas of Lexington... not just, well we know that there are food deserts... So definitely we want to get the food the areas where it's needed the most first. But I would like to see...But you know it would be great to see more locations and. More participation I guess across all socio-economic backgrounds of people” (R3, 2019). She knows how hard it is to put the time and effort it takes in getting every market off the ground and running every other week,

yet she still sees the potential for the markets to spread all over the city. Through her ownership of the market and the market's success, she knows its power.

#### 5.1.4 Resistance through Empowerment

“I think most of the things that I pay attention to right now regarding food justice or racial justice you know there's a lot of issues that I organize around or volunteer for and I think most of them suffer from a lack of urgency. Even, even things that aren't urgent...I think it's really easy for people to overlook that urgency. And to put things off and not get involved because they always feel like they can do it later or they underestimate the impact it would have like they you know not having fresh vegetables for a week doesn't actually kill someone but it slowly like you know breaks down their health and you know it breaks down their soul in a way that they feel like they can't take care of themselves. And I think that urgency is there. But I think it's really easy to be like, ‘So you eat out a lot. It's fine.’ Like say you eat junk food or whatever. It's only one week. Yeah and it's probably because most of us have done that at some point when we've been stressed or broke or whatever.” (R2, 2019)

This volunteer (R2), discussed earlier in the interview that they had previously not known anything about food deserts or food injustice until she had been introduced to the markets. Through her experience with the markets, she was able to better understand the impact fresh food had on her physiologically, mentally, and emotionally. She struggled with food insecurity for a long time and had never understood the health impacts she was suffering as a result. This change then affected the way she thought about Lexington and Lexington's foodscape more broadly. Thus, the reason she notes the sense of urgency with which these issues need to be approached. Just as volunteers became empowered by their work to resist the dominant narrative for the 'local food movement' in Lexington, they also became more resistant to these ideas as a result of their empowerment.

#### 5.1.5 Geographies of Care and Responsibility

Geographies of care describe the ways in which everyone needs to give and receive care, regardless of how strong, able, or powerful one is. The ethics of care begin with the need for social connection, “foregrounding social relationships of mutuality and trust (rather than dependence)” (Lawson, 2007, 3) Care challenges autonomy and neo-liberal ideas of privatization and individualism by asserting the power of community, group work, and shared resources (Milligan and Power, 2009). These ideas came up throughout each interview, and also speak to the purpose of the markets’ existence. The cooperative economics model that the markets employ is, itself, a geography of care. Geographies of care create geographies of responsibility because they create a shift from the reliance on outside power and policy to social responsibility and concern for your neighbor (Lawson, 2007). Geographies of care and responsibility are also inherently feminist, where attention is paid to emotional labors of connection and interest, while at the same time demanding ownership of these labors and the actions that come about as a result. The Lexington Community Markets are absolutely emotional labors that require a great deal of time and humility to plan and run. Participants in this study spoke of communities of need that they see in their neighborhood, though no language of inadequacy.

The interviews reflected that each of the volunteers see the populations that benefit from the markets (immigrant populations, low-income populations, etc) as populations that have been underserved, not as groups of people that have brought any of this upon themselves. In other words, where outside politics may see communities of

low-income as lazy, depraved, or inferior; the volunteers see communities of disenfranchisement that have been subjected to unjust policy or planning. Again, going back to geographies of care, these communities are not describing communities in need of outside care, but a realization of the notion that “difference(s) are socially constructed” (Lawson, 2007, 3) and realizing these differences may be able to contribute to better care. In the case of the markets, ‘better care’ would be enacting changes in the market that better suit the needs of the communities that they are serving. The two most prominent populations mentioned in the interview were immigrant, or refugee, populations and food insecure populations. Both of these groups of people are incredibly diverse and thus create a challenging task for the markets, as serving diverse populations requires a lot of care and concern. Alongside acknowledgements of care, participants provided solutions to evident obstacles to serving these communities. Participants recognized the ways in which the markets were not serving the communities in the neighborhood. One participant explained,

We know from what the kids come to school and tell us. Do you guys eat fresh fruits and vegetables at home? And most of the time they eat... Like the African families more beans more rice, more meat. And you hear very little about the fresh vegetables, but we know that the African families do eat quite a bit of vegetables, but not... I don't think they have access to a whole lot of them of them like they did in their own country. And, you know, got the other kids to come to school what you ate for dinner last night? We might have some soup. We might have had some hot dogs and some chips. So trying to provide them with... Trying to provide them with other food choices and along with the recipes too because he had a lot of families that would come and say Hey, I want this I want to try it but I don't know how to cook it. Well his recipe and then for us being the veggie cheerleaders sitting there we all share our own experience. For instance if I'm sitting there and I said, I really don't know how to cook this butternut squash. Okay. Just chop it up put a little bit of brown sugar on it some squirt butter put it in the oven (R1, 2019).

Crowd-sourcing ideas for how to prepare the produce available each week is an incredibly rich example of geographies of care. Volunteers showed that they are thinking about the ways in which each market experience can benefit each individual person, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

## **Closing**

Yeah I definitely want to see that idea of everything kind of community-run being preserved. Right now I don't want the idea of having someone from outside in charge and making decisions. Like if somebody lives in that... that neighborhood, they should be making decisions about food in the neighborhood. That's what I think should be preserved (R4, 2019).

When I asked participants about the things that need to be preserved in order for the markets to thrive and, in the case of new markets, begin, ownership was overwhelmingly the answer. Ownership ensures needs are being met in a culturally appropriate, relevant way. Ownership safeguards neighborhood development and protects the markets from being co-opted and possibly excluding residents that need them. In an America that prides itself on privatization and individualism, community-shared assets prove through the markets to be empowering and enriching.

## CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Our sense of place is positively affected by our engagement with community food systems. People feel more connected to their community when they are able to eat food that is grown and prepared within it (Solin, 2015). Many people are unable to participate in community food systems for a number of reasons, including price of goods, knowledge about produce, and proximity to where the goods and produce are sold. So, what happens when some people are left out and are unable to participate in the local food system? Though this is not the question this research study sought to answer, many of the themes that emerged throughout this study show ways in which two neighborhoods are trying to reclaim their right to participation through community-led organizing.

Through interviews with volunteers at the Lexington Community Markets, participants were able to tell their own story of market participation. Participants were able to guide the interview with the qualities of their experiences they thought were most important to discuss. This study sought to better understand participation in the markets, in order to illuminate ways in which the markets can garner more volunteers. I wanted to understand the ways in which volunteers conceive and perceive the place of the markets and whether or not these were related to their participation. The volunteers showed that place did positively impact their participation in the markets, though the ways in which participants conceived of “place” was very different than I had originally set out to understand with this study.

Before I dive into the conclusions, it is important to keep in mind the theoretical grounding for this study- a synthesis of place, black feminist geographies, and ecofeminism. This theoretical grounding puts place at the focal point, while providing



insight into the ways in which place is produced and cultivated through social interaction and meaning making. I assert that place is largely ultimately socially constructed (Stedman, 2011), unequal power dynamics have historically produced place (McKittrick, 2006), and that we interact with place and our environment through the food that we eat (Kaplan, 2011). Place is primarily socially constructed through our interactions, experiences, and memories.

Participants illustrated the place of the community markets through the use of social language. There was description of the set-up of the market- the way the tables were organized or the vegetables stacked- but the ways in which participants garnered and created meaning was through the social construction of place. Participants described the ways in which their market interactions created a sense of acknowledgement and kindness by way of storytelling and idea sharing. Participants illustrated the necessity of market visibility and the need for interaction with those that had not yet encountered the market and emphasized the value of being embedded in the community itself. These perceptions of place contributed positively to their commitment to volunteer for the markets and were talked about in a very positive form.

The place each participant constructed is their own. Each participant comes to the market with a different life story and background and, thus, experiences that market in a different way. Though there was overlap in the ways that the market was talked about, no interview was remotely the same as another. Participants return to the market every other week to support their neighbors, themselves, and a greater community vision. Participants were empowered by the work that the market has been able to do thus far and felt a sense of ownership of the hard work that has been accomplished in creating an alternative food

system that is open and available to all people. In turn, participants learned more about the injustices fixed into the current food system and felt more knowledgeable to make decisions for their respective communities. Lastly, participants felt deeply connected to the work the markets do, as a result of deep connections they have with the people in the communities the markets serve.

Though the concept of place and how place is constructed has been heavily researched and written about, particularly in the last 15-20 years, I believe more attention needs to be paid to the ways in which our social constructions of place affect the decisions we make. This study showed the importance of the social construction of place in volunteer retention at two small food markets in a small Kentucky town. Research that considers the social construction of place and meaning making may help us to understand more complex issues or organizations, as well as other choices people make. For this particular study, I would recommend trying to find similar markets or perhaps the Fresh Stop Markets in Louisville and interview as many volunteers as possible to see where social constructions overlap and diverge. By doing so, our understandings of cooperative food markets and their ability to serve diverse communities may deepen and, hopefully, contribute to a more just and equitable food system.

## **Reflections**

The story of the Lexington Community Markets is one of hard-fought battles for ownership and reclamation. Even in the midst of community organizers and nonprofit organizations that work to combat food injustice in community settings, ownership has proven to be difficult to retain. Where power and money are involved, it can be incredibly difficult for everyone involved to remain on equal footing and harness equality

in decision-making. At the beginning of this research, the markets were associated with the Louisville nonprofit organization New Roots and the Lexington nonprofit organization TWEENS. As this project concludes, the markets have disassociated from New Roots and also TWEENS and now operate independently of both of those entities. Operating independently has proved to be fruitful in terms of ownership and community-power, but it has also proven to be especially burdensome on the volunteers. Though disassociation means more freedom, it also means less structure and even less funding. The markets have proved to make real, impactful differences in the lives of those they serve but I fear that they cannot sustain in this way. Participants in the study noted that they thought they would be able to do it “alone,” but it has proven to be “too much,” (R1, follow-up interview). One volunteer described this burden by expressing how she would like to move forward with the markets, “I would like to see them have enough volunteers and staff that no one is exhausting themselves to do this. I want this just to be sustainable work for us for it to be divided up to where it's just part of our lives but doesn't feel so consuming. I know when ...when something is starting up like this it's easy for a lot of work to fall on one or two people. And for it to take up all of their free time. Sometimes that happens and is unavoidable for a short period of time but we, I really want us to move away from that as best we can” (R2, follow-up interview). The markets work to combat historical violence on communities of color and lower income neighborhoods by working outside the normative economic practice to provide fresh, healthy food to those who need it. The markets began with an acknowledgement of the history that led to the current food shed and, in order to survive and spread, will have to move forward with an acknowledgement of the recent history as well.

Throughout the research process, I struggled with my own positionality in the study. Through volunteering at the markets all last Fall, I was able to create relationships with volunteers and grew to care deeply about the market's success. As I took on this project as a researcher, I sought to create richer bonds with volunteers through shared stories, which I do believe happened through the interview process. The point at which I struggled came about as a question of access and motivation. When I tried to reach out to some volunteers, it was difficult to navigate relationships in which I had originally been seen as someone who helps to someone who asks questions. If I did this study over or conducted another research project with an organization that I care about, I would go about it differently. Though this project was done within a somewhat rigid time constraint, I would move forward with another project with the intention of conducting a true ethnographic study- where the data are richer, the relationships deeper, and the stories more complete.

As I have been thinking about and discerning the results of this study, I think about my own socially constructed places and the reasons that I choose to spend time in the places that I do. Although I think I have always known that I choose places based on the way they make me feel or my interactions within them, this study has challenged me to re-evaluate the reasons I give myself as to why I like or dislike a certain place. I am grateful that this study has challenged my own thinking about place and I will move forward as a researcher, community member, and person with the social construction of place at the forefront of my thought.

## APPENDIX: BLIND TRANSCRIPTS

R1.

R: Hello.

I: Hello, Thank you so much for connecting with me.

R: I said let me call her before I fall asleep. I was thinking I told you eight but I said, you know, let me call her before I go to sleep...fall asleep.

I: I totally feel that I and I also appreciate that. I'll probably be asleep here soon, too.  
How's the end of the school year shaping up?

R: How crazy a lot of assessments and things like that and of course, you know, field trips

I: Right

R: So, other than that. Yeah, I mean everything is going okay so far.

I: That's good

R: I'm just ready for it to be over.

I: Yeah, I don't blame you at all. I'm sure this time of year. It's hard to I mean, I know it's hard for me to focus. I can't imagine. A bunch of like 5 to 10 year olds.  
Yeah, right. Exactly Yeah.

I: So basically what this whole project is is we're trying to create a best practices manual for the markets going forward just so you know, we can make sure they're successful and then also for other communities that might want to start a community market how how to...You know how to do that and the part that I'm really focusing on is volunteer leadership. So people that you know consistently show up to volunteer and aren't paid and just kind of like motivations behind that and yeah, so I have a list of questions that

I'm going to go through and if there's any questions you like I just don't have an answer just feel free to be like, let's go to the next one. Okay is very informal. There's no like requirement to get all of them or anything like that. So, all right, so I guess we'll start out with just how long you have been at the fresh stop markets

R: Just a year, yeah. But we were we were in the we were in the planning stages long before that... Act not actually. Yeah, I guess I could say planning stages because apparently Sandra Barnes had got ahold of Jeremy and he came and met us at the Senior Citizens Center and then you know, we met we do they gave us the information. And then we didn't hear back from them for a while and then we had another meeting and then basically I think we just went ahead and said, you know, we have enough information. Let's go ahead and get it started. And then the [anchor organization] became available. It was finished. So they let us come there. So I'd say maybe a couple maybe a couple years that we had been in the process of trying to get it started.

Okay. Yeah, that's really cool. I didn't realize that you were with it from the beginning. Yeah, awesome. Yeah, and so I guess like how did you first get involved with? Like how did you have it or I guess how to Sandra get connected with Jeremy or what was like that initial conversation like if you...

R: See, I don't really know how she got involved with. I mean, you know contact with Jeremy she might have gone to the one on the east end, but I'm not really sure and then we had I was in charge of the school garden at [school]. And you know, we mean the kids we will go out there and we were working in a little bit and just grow stuff and then when summer came I would just go back to pick the produce we cook because of course the kids were gone. And then they asked us to get rid of the garden spot at [school]. And I said, okay, this is my second one here and. They want this torn they want this one taken out too. So I'm basically done and so [other volunteer] came in my room one day and she said how about we just move it up to the front of the building. We're actually on the side where the parking lot is parking lot is and I said, okay and so. That's how I got involved because she knew that I had a garden here at home and I had them at school. So she approached me with it to be involved with fresh stop.

I: Oh, I gotcha. that is really cool.

R: Yeah,

I: So there's no Garden at [school] anymore?

R: Not anymore.

I: Okay. Cool. Next is so. This goes for all of these questions. Yeah, you can be as descriptive or as brief as you want. It's all up to you. But what what is it that keeps you involved in the markets? Like why do you keep? Doing it even though it's frequent and it's hot sometimes and tiring. And what is it that makes you come back?

R: Well, well, let me back up. Community service. First of all in our economy not necessarily like the general community service what I mean by that is the kids that we service at [school]. We service that family, those families. So we are basically [other volunteer] and I and and [other volunteer] I are basically stakeholders in that Community because we teach to teach their kids.

I: Yeah for sure

R: Yeah, and you know and for me, I mean, I'm all about some fresh fruits and vegetables. And I know that we have a large Refugee population at our school and a lot of those families they like to have access to fresh fruits and vegetables so that that was another thing and I mean, I just really like the atmosphere of how. Of how it was ran. It was not like a regular farmers market and which I really do think that the produce is expensive and a lot of people cannot afford it. Another reason is I mean, it's located right there in the middle of that community. So people can walk there and also too, for me, sometimes it's it's. It gives me the opportunity to do a real impromptu parent-teacher conference. Hey [her name], how are you? How's my kid doing school? Your kids doing great. Okay, these vegetables are are great this year pretty sure blah blah blah would like them. Talking about their kid. So I don't know and then each week that I would go I would hear a story. I would hear somebody's story. And so it would make me want to come back one week. I heard heard one that one of the kids that I had. Maybe four years ago and fifth grade his mom came and said that she needed some fresh fruits and vegetables because this kid hit had been diagnosed with diabetes and he's in the 10th grade. So just stories like that. Those are the kind of things that you just keep me going back...I had one... A girl come one week and said that she had just moved in with her mom and then her grandmother had to come and live with them and she didn't know how they were going to be able to eat, but she got introduced a fresh stop. And they were able to eat floppy off the food that she got for like \$12 for two weeks.

I: Yeah, wow, that is really cool. So the people and the stories that you were just talking about would you say that that's the kind of people you see most often at the markets?

R: yeah, okay, so we, [volunteer], and I. And, and [volunteer] we're going to try to involve the teachers at [school] to have them come out and participate and then some other people that I know most of the people that do participate. They are probably on a fixed income low income. Um, not...I dont know. I guess what I'm saying is most of the people that I reached out to would be people that have two incomes at their house or making a decent wage. Those are not the people that I see at Fresh Stop

I: Right. Yeah, can you describe for me the [neighborhood name] neighborhood?

R: What do you mean per se?

I: You know, why is it important that the market is located in that neighborhood?

R: well, okay, I guess I can go back with the reason why that we targeted that neighborhood because. What I said before we are servicing those children that we teach and I guess what I'm saying is [other volunteer] introduced [other volunteer] and I to Fresh stop and so she really did feel like that we would... That our families would benefit from it because the people that live there are low income. They do not... Oh also, this too. we know from what the kids come to school and tell us. Do you guys eat fresh fruits and vegetables at home? And most of the time they eat... Like the African families more beans more rice, more meat. And you hear very little about the fresh vegetables, but we know that the African families do eat quite a bit of vegetables, but not... I don't think they have access to a whole lot of them of them like they did in their own country. And, you know got the other kids to come to school what you ate for dinner last night. We might have some soup. We might have had some hot dogs and some chips. So trying to provide them with. Trying to provide them with other food choices and along with the recipes too because he had a lot of families that would come and say Hey, I want this I want to try it but I don't know how to cook it. Well his recipe and then for us being the veggie cheerleaders sitting there we all share our own experience. For instance if I'm sitting there and I said, I really don't know how to cook this butternut squash. Okay. Just chop it up put a little bit of brown sugar on it some squirt butter put it in the oven.

R: That's it. Yeah, I mean, yeah, I mean, I mean like that and then they'll come back the next week and they'll say I tried that and it was really good. Okay. Did your kids like it too? Yes and another. One of the best parts is is when they bring their kids and the kids get to try it try the recipes that we prepared and they also help the parents pick up the vegetables. Okay, I watched a little boy. His mom told him to pick out the best tomatoes so he came over and he was looking at them making the comparison he would go back to her and she said okay, you picked out two good ones put them in the basket. So yeah, I



don't know it then and that neighborhood as well, there are a lot of apartments. There are a lot of people that rent. And I do know that the people that live in that neighborhood that like own the homes, I know that they aren't going to go anywhere because if they move to another part of town they would... The mortgage will be a lot higher. For them, so they just stay there. Even though there is a lot of crime in that neighborhood. If that answered if they're answered your question. If not, I can say more.

I: Oh, yeah. No, I mean, that's perfect. Yeah, whatever. I mean whatever you want to say about it. It's great.

R: Right?

I: So what do you see as some common challenges that the [neighborhood name] Market faces. That could be like, you know Market to Market or just like specific challenges you've seen.

R: Well, one of the things that we see is access to more volunteers and we need to get the word out that the market is there and a way to simplify. What actually is involved with the Fresh Stop market How do they? How they get online and purchase it, some people think that you have to buy a share every week or something then other people...Then other people think that what we get each week is too much for them and their families. There are a lot of seniors that will come and I know if they did not cook it and freeze it for stored some other way if it would go to waste. Yeah, so somebody had thought about taking a share and cutting it in half. Or maybe, giving them a simplified share say for instance, you have these ten items and you know that you only want five, can you come and get those five and pay a certain price in then take those veggies home?

I: Yeah, yeah, I know like for me it's just my husband and I and we have to either. Cook it or freeze it or you know do something with it, so.

R: Right.

I: Outside of I guess needing more volunteers, what else do you think could be improved or changed about the [neighborhood name] Market?

R: Well, like I said just getting the word out that the market is there now. So seeing those families at [name of school], there are a lot of families in the...community that do not

have access to Internet. I mean some of them have a cell phone, but unless they have... You know it is is there somewhere to where they can get in to somebody's internet. That's the only way that they can do it. So what like I said and also if you get a group of community members together in one place. Explain it to them and lead them through the process because a lot of people still don't understand how it works.

I: Yeah.

R: Yeah, so I think that that is the biggest problem. Is, you know, we give them the Flyers at a back-to-school Jam. We try to explain to them how it works, but. Some people think if they're riding by in the in the cars, they think that they can just come over and purchase a share and then take it home like a regular farmers market. So basically that that is the number one thing that people just don't understand how it how it works.

I: So this is getting to the end here. What do you for you personally? What what do you want the future of the [name of neighborhood] Market to be? It could take that... Or just fresh top markets in Lexington in general.

R: I mean, I just want it to be a place where for families can come and pick out produce, produce for their families at a reasonable price. And I would like to for them to have a wide variety of things to choose from and people make jokes all the time. You can only have butternut squash so many times. Right, so it was almost like almost every week there was butternut squash and one, one lady came and said, I don't want any more of that. So I'm also thinking that maybe we can look at when we forecast and keep track of what we got, maybe two weeks ago. Yeah, and so it may be the next week. We won't get an abundance of some of the same stuff.

Yeah, so just having more variety.

I: I couldn't you... you were breaking up a little

R: just having more of a variety of produce available. Well for me one of the best parts about the Fresh Stop Market. Was I was able to try some things that I knew I would never have ever tried. If it wasn't for Fresh Stop like, like for instance butternut squash and what was it Swiss chard?

Oh, yeah, I grew up. I grew up eating collard greens only. My mother would cook kale or any other kind. So when we go to my grandma's house, she would have like her greens,

they will be mixed and we were like, we just don't eat our greens like that. So when I went to Fred Stop and I saw all these different types of greens, I said uhh, I might try it. So I got em home and I cook them all together and I really liked it. So, I mean it just changed the way that I started to cook and how I mean I started to see different types of food.

I: Yeah, definitely.

I: Yeah, do you think that through the fresh stop markets, you've learned more about Lexington's like local food system?

R:: Yes. Well, for instance, I knew I did not know what a food desert was and once I got the definition I will start to look around and say hey this place right here is in a food desert um [neighborhood name], I would say I would maybe give it maybe half. I'm not very sure because I know a lot of people... They walk to the family not Family Dollar the Dollar Tree?

I:: Okay.

R:: The Dollar Tree does not have fresh fruits and vegetables, but I know that people go up there and buy groceries. Yeah, and certain then. I also know. Where are... I think somewhere on [nearby road]. Somebody has set up a farmers market somewhere. I'm not pretty sure but other than that and then you have the Kroger up the road. That's the closest place for people to gather fruit the better food.

I: Yeah, right and that's yeah fairly far away.

R: Yes its pretty far and I know a lot of African familes... There's a place off Leestown Road. It's near the speedway out thing. A lot of the families have told me a lot of my African families have told me that they go all the way to that store to buy some of the things that they can buy in their own country.

I: Yeah.

R: Yeah. So I you know, I was thinking. Maybe do a little survey and say hey, what kind of things did you guys eat in your country or what kind of things have you supplemented since you've been in the United States and maybe we could have that at the first stop. I

know they love sweet potatoes. What else? Tomatoes, a lot of tomatoes, sweet potatoes, onions. Yeah, so I mean maybe maybe also look at forecasting for those families as well. And then that maybe we can get them on board as well. And of course we have a large Latino population tomatoes, onions, peppers. Not so much like greens or anything like that, but it just the stuff that I just named.

I: Yeah, that's a really good idea.

R: Yeah, so.

I: Well, is there anything else about the Woodhill Market or fresh stop markets or anything that you would like to add? It's okay if there's not.

R: No, I mean I just I just really think that we need to get the word out a little bit better. So it the these families would would know what's going on. There are a lot of kids that that participate at the [anchor organization]. You know, I'm thinking maybe when the parents come pick the kids up, have something set up so that parents could you know, see what's going on? And maybe that way we can get more participation at the [name of neighborhood] Market. Yes, like today we did Garden Club. So we took the garden from [name of school] and a little girl in my classroom wrote a letter so that so we could apply for this grant. Sandra found a grant. And so we got \$1,500. We partnered with Home Depot, Home Depot built this four six by six by three by three raised beds, and we've got donations from Locust trace the vessels from the greenhouse and we have Garden club at [anchor organization] on Wednesdays from 4 to 5, so.

With that being said, the kids love to plant these, they love to see things grow. So today when I went there. I know they were every bit of maybe 30 kids in that building in the after-school program. So the parents are coming and picking them up. So if we had would have something to explain to the parents what's going on, maybe we can get them to stop at the ffresh stop market when they when theyre picking their kids up. I know they have kids over there Monday. Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, and Wednesdays as well.

I: Yeah, so like do you envision like um, leaders like a table like information and people there to talk to them?

R: Yeah that too but also have stations to lead them through the process because that's that's what I think that they don't understand. Yeah. Because like I see it a lot lot of people will ride through that neighborhood and they'll want to stop and they'll come up and they'll say can we buy some of these produce and sometimes we've said a lot of these shares have already been purchased if we have something extra in the next hour ride back by here and maybe you can buy a share.

I: Yeah,

R: That's just my take on it.

I: Yeah, and I am extremely appreciative of you taking time to talk to me. This has been really helpful. Yeah, all like work through all of this and then probably in a couple weeks if I have any more questions that come out of me looking through my notes, but do you mind if I gave you another call or email?

R: I don't mind.

I: Okay. Yeah. Well, thank you so much here. And I truly deeply appreciate you talking to me and once we pull all of this together. Hopefully, hopefully sometime this summer. I'll definitely make sure you can get a copy of this manual we are putting together. All right. Well you have a great rest your night and good luck finishing up this year.

R: Thank you. You too. All right.

I: All right.

**R2.**

R: Hello?

I: Hey [name] sorry about that. I tried to answer my phone... but I don't know what's going on

R: It's okay

I: How are you doing?

R: I'm good. How are you?

I: Yeah I'm pretty good...it's Friday. So happy about that. Yeah

R: Remind me what you do for work again?

I: So I actually work at [local business].

R: Yeah that's cool

I: So.. this is um a super informal interview. And if at any time, you know, if I ask a question and you don't want to answer or just want to go to the next question just say so it's no big deal at all. It's really just kind of a general interview with volunteers at the markets to try to better understand like your motivation in participating and then also just kind of your understanding of where the markets are at and where you want them to go. That kind of stuff.

R: Sounds good to me.

I: All right.

R: So are these going to be like written out or are you using a recording?

I: Yeah. So I am using a software that just like automatically writes it out for me which is super nice.

R: Oh, That's awesome. Yeah.

I: Yeah it's awesome. Yeah. So your name or anything... No identifying factors will be used at all.

R: Yeah. All right.

I: So just to start out... Let's see, So I guess we could start with.... How did you first become involved with the fresh stop market?

R:I first got involved about halfway through the season last summer. And that was really just as someone going to pick up my, my share. I had sat down with [leader] one time and told her that my family was really struggling with money and we hadn't been eating well. Um And so, she got me a free share to try that week and I just stuck with it.

I: So wow yeah, that's really cool. Yeah. In which market do you most often go to?

R: [neighborhood name]

I: Right okay cool. And since that initial time of kind of buying the shares and anything like that I ...I mean obviously I've seen you at the leader meetings and things like that but have you done any other volunteering regularly with the market?

R: Not yet. This is really the first way that I've been getting involved was kind of... Was looking into how the markets were run. And how TWEENS was run because I was just kind of curious how they worked.

I: Yeah, definitely.

R: So that's what got me at those meetings and I'm planning to help in any way I can... especially since I live in [nearby town] and so if I can make some calls or do emails or anything remote like that. I definitely plan to do that but I also plan to be at all of the [neighborhood] markets.

I: Awesome. And then as far as the [neighborhood name] market, can you kind of walk me through what a typical day looks like at that market and then with that kind of describe the market itself and then the [neighborhood name] neighborhood and just kind of how you see all of that.

R: Well, The market was actually the first time I had gone to that community center and I go there because it's... it's closest to my home. I used to live in Lexington and had kind of just moved when I found out about these markets and so that's how I got involved. Even though I don't live around here. But I mean as a customer it was pretty much how I attended. And I would pull into the parking lot and there were usually people outside if the weather was nice. All the tents with the different vegetables sorted and volunteer at each table. So...they help me figure out how to cook things you know if they were unfamiliar to you. And it was, it was very informal. I usually spent more time there than I had intended to. I would tell my partner I'm was going to pick up the veggies and I'll be right back. And then I'd get caught up for like 45 minutes talking all the people that I ran into there. So I was always late but, but I really enjoyed it. There's generally food samples there's always a chefs preparing some of that week share... again as a way to show people. You know... one of the many ways they can use these vegetables especially if it's something new to them.

I: Yeah, yeah. That's actually one of my favorite parts about it to you and I feel like I personally have learned so freakin much about vegetables and like in particular acorn squash... I'm obsessed with it now because I had it last year and I've never had it before.

R: Yeah I got really good at tomato sauces last year because we kept getting like so many tomatoes and I don't really eat them raw. A whole lot. But I love having them in things. And so I would just be like Okay why don't I make the same thing of last time. So how many ways can I use this?

I: Yeah that's awesome. And yeah I really need to get better about like food preservation and all that kind of stuff. And I feel like I mean the share was just so massive you know and...



R: My God they're huge yeah. It's really cool. I would come home and just like I, I don't know where to put all this. It was such a good problem to have.

I: Yeah definitely.

R: So my partner to pick up a share one time because I wasn't going to be able to make it like I had work or something. And. And he's usually a little like shy around new people anyway. So he was like okay I guess I can go in there and do that and he walks in and everyone was friendly like they usually are and helped to figure out where he was going since he hadn't been there before. And. He comes home with these two massive bags of food and he just... I got home and he looked like he was about to cry. I was like "What's wrong?" And he was like, "Why did they do this." Because I want you to have food. So, so he goes "Why?" Because you're a person. He was just so overwhelmed.

I: That's... that's honestly incredible. And it's so true. I mean I feel like they...they you know are such a bigger impact than we even know.

R: .Mm hmm I mean I couldn't have predicted like just how much better it make me feel. It wasn't just the food. Like we were struggling to like have the energy to cook good food and the money to buy it and all of that stuff. But, but you know that kind of struggle just like wears you down emotionally to the point where like...we didn't want to put the energy into like taking care of ourselves. And that's just a really bad cycle. That hurt your health and your emotional well-being.

I: yeah definitely

R: So somebody like people caring enough to like give us this food really energized us to you know to eat well and to take care of ourselves in a lot of other ways and it's just gave us a little bit of hope.

I: Yeah. Wow, that is awesome. Have you learned anything about Lexington? Or... you know I know you live in [nearby town] now so maybe you like greater Lexington um and kind of the food system around here?

R: Well I've got to meet a lot of people from different neighborhoods and it's really opened my eyes to just how many food deserts there are.

I: Yeah

R: I mean I knew they existed but I didn't realize how big an issue that was in this area. Yeah I've always had a car for the most part. Lived with someone with a car. And I think I just always underestimated how difficult it would have been to get fresh food had I not been able to drive.

I: I Gotcha. Yeah for sure. And what as far as... I guess transportation would be one but what do you see as like either your biggest challenge participating in the markets or other challenges you might see people having in participating?

R: I think most of the things that I pay attention to right now regarding food justice or racial justice you know there's a lot of issues that I organize around or volunteer for and I think most of them suffer from A lack of urgency. Even, even things that aren't urgent...I think it's really easy for people to overlook that urgency. And to put things off and not get involved because they always feel like they can do it later or they underestimate the impact it would have like they you know not having fresh vegetables for a week doesn't actually kill someone but it slowly like you know breaks down their health and you know it breaks down their soul in a way that they feel like they can't take care of themselves. And I think that urgency is there. But I think it's really easy to be like So you eat out a lot. It's fine. Like say you eat junk food or whatever. It's only one week. Yeah and it's probably because most of us have done that at some point when we've been stressed or broke or whatever.

I: Right. Yeah it's definitely like the more accessible option for most of us.

I: So you know I know the markets are in kind of um an in-between phase right now of transitioning to being their own their own non-profit kind of in Lexington and kind of outside of that huge challenge. What do you see as the biggest challenge for the markets moving forward? or you can also frame that as like you know where do you want them to go? Like what. Ideally what for you...What do you want to see out of the Lexington Markets?

R: I would like to see them have enough volunteers and staff that no one is exhausting themselves to do this. I want this just to be sustainable work for us for it to be divided up to where it's just part of our lives but doesn't feel so consuming. I know when when something is starting up like this it's easy for a lot of work to fall on one or two people. And for it to take up all of their free time. Sometimes that happens and is unavoidable for a short period of time but we, I really want us to move away from that as best we can.

I: Yeah I think I mean I totally agree with that. And do you have any thoughts on how to get more volunteers or how to retain volunteers.

R: I think having consistency is good... consistency in how we communicate, when we communicate. You know it's, it's easy for somebody to think they're not needed if nobody is following up with them or double checking that they're still available. And for them to not prioritize it. So I think just consistent communication with our volunteers so call them after a market and you know let them know that we appreciated them being there. And to ask for feedback and confirm that they're gonna be the next one. Something as simple as that keeps it at the forefront of someone's mind and lets them know that it's not over, like they're not finished. We don't not need them anymore.

I: Yeah definitely. Yeah. No I. I mean I totally agree with that. Um, so that's pretty much all I have. Unless there's anything that you wanted to add about you know I mean literally anything about the markets or your thoughts about them and your participation or anything like that. But no pressure.

R: I don't... I think I have anything else.

I: So all you know once I get all this transcribing and stuff I'll read back through it and then probably in a week or two I'll send you an email if I have any further questions about your answers or anything like that if that's all right with you. All right well thank you so much [name]. I can't tell you how much I appreciate it.

R: I'm glad you're doing this. Yeah I was going to ask what is that. What is good translation..?

R: Yeah yeah. It's called descript. Yeah.

I: And it's really cool because basically if you share it with people you can just like send them a link and if they sign up for a free trial then you get so many minutes added on to your account so so far I haven't had to pay for it. Which is awesome.

R: Feel free to send me the trial. Yeah. Yeah. There's a good chance I'll use it at some point. Definitely been times where that would have been far easier.

I: Yeah and it's actually it's super accurate too which is really cool. I mean it's, it's incredibly impressive. I just learned about it from someone else. I'm going to school with a while ago and it's been incredibly helpful.

R: But yeah all right. Yeah that would be great. I've done something like a video recorder. Oh I could break down the audio.

I: Yeah for sure. Yeah. That's awesome. Cool. All right well [name] have a great weekend. Hope you're having time to relax and enjoy the sun.

R: Thank you. See you soon, Bye.

**R3.**

Hello?

R: Hey Emily, its [name], how are you?

I: Hey [name], I'm doing well! How are you?

R: Good. Pretty good.

I: Is it is my voice clear enough for you? I'm in a room with like a tin roof... So it's kind of... the rain is kind of loud.

R: No, I can hear you fine.

I: OK. Awesome. So just really quickly going over kind of what I said a little bit about the email but, I'm a student at U K. We're kind of going through and, you know, trying to learn about how the markets got started. You know, how they can improve and just looking forward. How they can survive in Lexington and, as a part of this, we're interviewing just a couple of people who have been kind of like consistent volunteers at both of the Lexington markets. And so... The words and ideas that we talk about will be used in those materials but your name and identifying information will be completely left out of it. All right. And then so I have this about like ten or twelve questions and you know if I ever ask why you don't want to answer or. Just want to move along just say you know we go to the next question and that. It is no problem at all.

R: Okay.

I: All right. So. I guess. We'll just start off on how did you become involved with the Lexington markets.

R: So, um, I originally got involved with purchasing from the [neighborhood] market um and I don't remember I guess I saw it on Facebook or something I don't remember how I got to that location but anyway.... And so I thought it would be a good idea to have a market in the [neighborhood name] community. Because that's where a lot of the families that either interact with professionally from my job come from that neighborhood. And so probably pestered [leader] for every time I saw him... between you know after purchasing from the [neighborhood] market and then we would have conversations about that. And it just kind of led to having meetings in the community to see what the interest and the support would be.

I: OK. OK. And then what do you consider your role at the [neighborhood name] market to be?

I: On a weekly basis or overall...both or either.

R: Okay. Well I guess originally it would be like a leader an organizer for the market. By bringing it to the community and and having several meetings and talking to people about hey what do you think about this idea. What do you think you know would you want to participate. And then as far as when the market Occurs I am the farmer liaison, I meet the farmer to... farmers I should say in plural when they are dropping off The vegetables for the week or the day at the market. And then just volunteering whatever needs to be done from that point forward.

I: Okay. And as the farmer liason, Are you the person that kind of talks in about what it is they're bringing or you can coordinate all of that the day of.

R: I'm there the day of just to make sure that there's someone there to meet them or to drop off what they're bringing and to count to make sure that what what, what we ordered is what we received or if there's a substitute that we're aware of what that is.

I: Oh. Okay, very cool. What is your primary motivator for participating in the market?

R: Personally. Just the...Personally I want to have access to the fresh fruits and vegetables at a reasonable price. And then um having that be available to other people as well to take advantage of that.

I: Yeah, And as far as the [neighborhood name] market can you describe kind of a [neighborhood name] neighborhood or the place that Market actually takes place? that you can be as descriptive as you'd like

R: it takes place at [anchor organization]. The neighborhood is very diverse. There are families from the Congo. There are residents should have lived in the neighborhood forever. There are.... Latinos, Hispanics, African-Americans and probably some other cultures that I'm not aware of that are in the community.

I: Okay. And this was a typical day at the market. You can do this from your own perspective or kind of where you see people coming to the market. Can you walk me through like a typical day at the market?

R: So like I said I'll I'm there for... for the before anybody. Well usually there's one other person. And so we're greeting the farmers are bringing and they're bringing the stuff in and then I'm just gonna go from my most recent typical since usually there is a group of volunteers that can be student, student organization or church organization that would show up and so we'll start sorting if, if something has to be sorted or package different differently for folks to take home then we'll start that process of bagging or putting that in paint containers or what have you. And then at a certain point there... if we're going to be outside...Excuse me if we're gonna be outside we'll set up tables and tents and chairs and there's tablecloths to be set up and then the vegetables will be trimmed for from wherever they are either in a box or in containers and put up and there's markers for each vegetable that we have that like on a chalkboard. So somebody will have to do that. There are information sheets about each item that we have.

R: So those will be need to be placed at the tables where the vegetables are. Those information sheets have how to store, how to prepare, recipes on them and so that's probably about the first... but that probably takes about anywhere from 2:30 to 4:30 to get prepared to do all that. and then um around 5 o'clock people more volunteers will come between 4:30 and 5 and in between that other two hour window. Other people will show up and help wherever needed just you know, what can I do. What. What needs to be done? That kind of thing. And then at 5:00 shareholders start to arrive and pick up their, their items and you know, you see familiar faces or you see new people and so you see familiar faces...People are greeting them Hey how are you. How you been. You know. Are you excited about this week's share or what have you been up to or if we haven't seen them for a while asking them where they've been. Because we've just had one so far this year so it's kind of like oh I remember you from last year. You know this is the second year, or if it's new people were curious to know how they found out about the market. And maybe at this time some of the volunteers have. Maybe that they were there on the front end and they needed to leave and they're going to get their share and go ahead and then somebody else is coming in to replace those people. And then at about somewhere between six and 630... let me back up first before 5:00. If there's extra shares like maybe we might have three or four that we haven't sold. That might be made known to the group so that if you want to call a friend or put it on Facebook or you know get the word out that there's extras that may happen. And then around between six and six thirty if there are people that haven't come to pick up Their shares, then those phone calls are starting to be made and you know just to make sure that they haven't forgotten. And when I was when I was participating in. [neighborhood] that would be me... I'd get that phone call and about oh shoot I forgot. Yeah. Let me run over there. Yeah. That would be me. And so. And then we may start to consolidate some things just to kind of... When we're done just make that tear down and break down a little bit easier or if there's somebody that needs their share delivered to them we might start to assemble some of those as needed.

And then I guess around six forty five to seven we really start to break down and see what the status has been from those phone calls. Maybe somebody forgot, they were out of town, so they don't want their share. We might divide it up amongst the volunteers that or if there, if there's a few things left on a table that maybe somebody did want but you might want. There's maybe a way to to take care of those extra items that way. And then like I said everything is broken down and put back in its place and we go home.

I: All Right. That sounds like a lot. Um, have you learned anything about Lexington as a result of the markets?

R: I don't think so.

I: Yeah. Um, What about Lexington's food system?

R: I don't think I've learned anything different. Or if I I have I don't know that I have.

I: Yes yeah no worries at all. Going forward with the market is one of the biggest challenges that you see?

R: Um, I think they're... well and I don't know. You may know this and you may not. You may know this or you may not know but I guess it's gonna be like An overall sustainability of a funding stream. Because grants have been written in the past two years. And so I guess funding just it even if it's just to start off a season or... Excuse me, to maintain equipment. Whether that be tables or no repurchase tents because you know they can to live out their existence and they might have a hole in it or whateve,r but just enough money to replenish items that need to be replaced and then also to have a start up. For a future season.

I: Yeah Definitely. What about umm Outside of funding. Things like Volunteer retention and you see that being an issue or do You feel like it has a pretty steady support.

R: I think that, um um, I mean it's always a possibility the fact that that could be a problem. But right now I don't see that being an issue.



I: For you what kind of ideally....Would the markets look like in the future for Lexington.

R: I would like to see more locations. Um and In all areas of Lexington... not just, well we know that there are food deserst. So I get that. So definitely we want to get the food the areas where it's needed the most first. But I would like to see... So right now is every other week there is potentially a market being held in one in one section or one part of town. But you know it would be great to see more locations and. More participation I guess across all socio economic Backgrounds of people.

I: Yeah definitely, definitely.I can see that. And then last... Is there anything else you would like to add about the markets or your experience or anything you feel like we really need to Include?

R: Yeah I don't think there's anything else to add.

I: No worries at all. And then you know if you like later on today or later on the weekend be like oh shoot I really should have said that. Feel free to the shoot me an email or text me or you can even give me a call.

R:There is no problem at all.

I: But [name] thank you so much for taking time to talk to me. I really appreciate it. I see. All right. Have a good day.

R: Bye.

I: Bye bye.

**R4.**

R: Hello!

I: Is this [name]? Hey [name] This is Emily.

R:Hi.

I: How are you?

R:Great! How are you?

I: I'm doing well ,thanks. And I also again wanted to thank you for being patient and understanding with me all over the place.

I:No problem at all, no worries.

R:Thank you.

I: So this basically will take you know kind of however long you like, its just a general interview about the Lexington markets and I don't know if I mentioned this in the email but basically what we're doing is creating a best practices manual for the markets know moving forward without being associated with fresh stop and that kind of stuff just so we can preserve the good things that have already happened and kind of think with the leaders about the good things we can do in the future. So all right. So and if there's any questions that ever come up feel like you don't really know or don't feel comfortable answering. Just say so, very laid back.

R:All right.

I:So I guess we'll just start off about yourself. So how did you become involved with the Lexington Markets?

R: Well last year I guess 2018 Summer 2018 was the very first time that the market was there and so we got a share. But we we got to share every single time they had it. And we used it all the time and we got a lot of people on board to get shares as well. Me and my wife, and we started with the [neighborhood] market when they had a it because it was actually really close to our house but then that one kind of closed down and they merged with the [neighborhood name] Market. So we actually started going that and that one is at

the I[anchor organization] after After that,um [name of 2 leaders] reached out to me and they were kind of leading the ship on the this stuff and asked if I'll be around to help out with the transition. I don't want anything else. So I'll be trying to help out as much as I can. You know doing some consulting and also I was doing some marketing and helping them get technology set up, Web sites, I developed a logo. We haven't launched it yet but during that you know, basically I just kind of keep on keeping on keeping up keeping a brand that's recognizable.

I: Yeah. Definitely. That's awesome. I actually did not know that you did that. That's really cool.

R: Yeah.

I: So you know I know you said that you used to get shares and you still might get shares Is that kind of your primary motivator for staying with the market or is there something else that.

R: Oh well that's not the primary motivator. Like yeah, we're still getting shares but really, I have so many friends and neighbors and people that I know that really rely on the market and even, even the winters are hard to them. And I know some people that are getting the market getting their market share is super important to them because they can get like fresh food another way because they can't really afford it.

I: Yeah for sure. OK.

R: Yes I want that. I'd like that to continue as well as. Of Course it's a community of sharing food and sharing resources and also like keeping the vegetables like super local and I love the idea of just having what's available like we don't get there like to go out and pick, we just get what we're given and that's what we have. So we're trying to be creative with it.

I: Yeah sure. So you said that you most often are involved with the [[anchor organization]] market the [neighborhood name]. Yeah.

I: And so can you kind of describe the location of that market for me and just kind of the neighborhood or the [anchor organization] and you can be as descriptive as you'd like.

R: Yeah. [anchor organization] it's a really old theater that's been remodeled and built back up. We have the market out in front of it on the on the street corner...the Corner of elm tree and 3rd Street that is about... [respondent lives nearby]. So it's really not that far away. They...the community there's a lot of people walking in this community there's a lot of low income housing in the neighborhood. There's well like I said a lot of people who walk in lots of low income housing. So there's all sorts of diverse people that would come to this market and I think it really helps that its right there on the corner.... That's right down the corner because sometimes people who don't know anything about it will stop and see what's what's going on. They're driving by walking by. So it's a great location for it.

I: Yeah definitely.

I: And do you think as far as the [anchor organization]'s involvement and markets do you think. I don't know I feel like the l[anchor organization] is kind of like it's a cultural staple for Lexington you know you have a right and I just always think about you know if people feel the significance of that space or if it's just you know oh this is another building

R: Yeah you know for the market, I really don't think it matters that, that its at the [anchor organization]. Yeah I don't think that's what's important. I just think it's important... It's it's just it's special that they provide this space and I think its important that people understand that I think that's part of them helping and they're trying to be part of the community which is important to them and important for us to have someone like them be a part of this. But. Yeah I don't.... I don't think having it at the l[anchor organization] or not would make a big difference you know, but the l[anchor organization]s important because a lot of people drive by and a lot of people know where it is. When we say its at the l[anchor organization], a lot of people know where to go.

I: Yeah that makes sense. as far as an actual market day. Can you kind of walk me through what that looks like that looks like for you.

R: Yeah. You know so I I don't actually volunteer for the market day at all and I haven't yet. No one's ever asked me to and I haven't really asked to . So I always just come as a shareholder and out you know it just comes whenever I get off work or work with it ends and they usually open between five and seven or six and eight some like that and I'll

come will come and bring our own bag and warm greet everyone they usually sign in or just of walk through and we like talking with people who are sitting there and kind of taking up the recipes and and just walking through kind of slowly and talking with people saying hello.

R: Seeing what's there and getting ideas for dinner you know. But usually there's someone there cooking a meal at the end with some of, some of the ingredients or so it's cool to try to taste that and some ideas we definitely made some dinners based on what's been cooking there.

I: Yeah. That's awesome. I also often get ideas of the markets for my vegetables. Like last year I just discovered acorn squash was even a thing. I know I literally obsessed with it.

R: Oh so we don't know anything about shishito peppers. So now we're buying them whatever we can find them now. I planted some in my garden. And I wouldn't have known a thing about it if it wasn't for fresh market and that provided a little recipe and basically you just saute them with some olive oil and it's great.

I: Yeah. That's really cool. Have you learned anything about Lexington as a result of the markets.

R: Yeah I've been connected to a lot more people through the markets. a lot more people who are super about community owned.... I guess organizations I've learned a lot about that, I didn't know anything about that. I've met a lot of people who are really passionate about communities working together basically communities owning either like you know emotionally or physically or actually financially owning something like that. But it's really important to a lot of people.

I: Yeah for sure. And then as far as Lexington food system have you learned anything about that as a result of the markets?

R: Yeah. Um, I uh. Not like a ton but like I didn't know before I like. How there's like there is a gap between the people that qualified for food stamps and the people that can actually afford fresh food because the people who do qualify for its food stamps say they can get this fresh food but then there's people who don't qualify for food stamps and they still can't afford to buy fresh produce like like we can offer at the market on the sliding

scale. And in the end though... the farmer's markets are too expensive. So this... is definitely provides opportunities for people to get that scarce resource and in our neighborhoods like I don't know about [other market], but like where I live Is around the [neighborhood name] area near the [anchor organization]. And we don't have any grocery stores within walking distance. None.

I: And that's huge.

R: Yeah.

I: So now kind of looking forward with the markets. What do you see if you can think of two or three main challenges you see the markets facing moving forward.

R: I think part of it is still recognition and trust and stuff like that. there's a lot of people who don't even know about it. And I think if they about it or that it is even in the neighborhood, in the state knew about it....like knew how its run, they would be all in to be apart of it. I think there's a lot of people who just don't know what to think about it or that maybe they know something about it but don't really trust it or they have lots of questions. And also I think it's important to realize how important it is to have more than 2 markets. We need more than 2.

I: And going back to your first point about recognition and then also people just knowing about the market do you think of any ways of you know I mean I know you're trying to develop the brand which I feel like is huge but just kind of ways like you know accessing people to get them to know about it.

R: Yeah

I:...about ways to do that.

R: It's probably two big things are... one of them is probably the door to door or word of mouth type of thing because really like I hate to do that kind of stuff but it's like the most important just going into neighborhoods like say hey you know this is what we offer, this is what we do... that's kind of the biggest thing and I I would say, I would say probably

want sharing like what you got. Like showing people like pictures or is like sharing it with other people and actually sharing to those people saying hey we got this from the Lexington community market or making a dinner and showing people or you can sit sharing on social media showing a picture of what you've made showing a picture of what you got.

R: Okay. I mean my wife I've done that every single time I've got to share basically as we post the whole share on social media. So this is what we got and what this is what we're doing with it. And you've got three people that have signed up because of that. Oh yeah.

I: Yeah. That's a really cool idea. OK. Is there anything else you'd like to add more than just about. Anything. Things you definitely want to see preserved with the markets as we move forward or new ideas.

R: Yeah. Yeah I definitely want to see that idea of everything kind of community-run being preserved. Right Now I don't want the idea of having someone from outside in charge and making decisions. Like if somebody lives in that that neighborhood they should be making decisions about food in the neighborhood. That's what I think should be preserved.

I: Yeah for sure.

I: [name], thank you so much for talking to me and Basically I'm going to go through all of these and think about them and then if I have any questions. Would you mind if I just sent you an email or call in a couple weeks or so. OK. Awesome. And if you have any other thoughts. Feel free to send me an e-mail or shoot me a text or something anything is totally fine.

R: All right that sounds great.

I: Well thank you so much. I really appreciate everything.

R: All right. Have a good night.

I: Bye

R: bye.



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